

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN THE CAREER OF WILLIAM CECIL: AN
EVALUATION OF ELIZABETH I'S CHIEF MINISTER

By

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Signature Page

THESIS APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

While most historians argue William Cecil's ultimate aim was either to build a Protestant England *or* a powerful government, my thesis concludes that a stable country, both religiously and politically, was his primary objective. How he used various tools, such as faith, to achieve his aims is a key focus of this paper. The four chapters begin with his initial steps to foster stability before Mary of Scots' arrival to England, her attempt to wed an English noble and provoke a Catholic uprising, and ending with her execution in 1587, the secretary's ultimate triumph. Examining his actions illustrates how he used religion as a device to achieve the kingdom's stability.

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Introduction

A Reevaluation of William Cecil's Motivations

In *The Prince*, Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) wrote “in order to maintain the state, it is necessary for a prince to have a mind ready to turn itself accordingly as the winds and variations of fortune force it.”¹ William Cecil's (1520-98) career parallels with this advice, which offered rulers instructions on the best way to govern.² Although we have no proof he actually read this book, his actions conform with its teachings, giving a framework for historians to better understand his decisions. Both men regarded the stability of the state as the government's most important goal, and that its leaders must utilize tools, like religion, to achieve this. The key to success, Machiavelli declared, was knowing how and when to exercise these devices. Cecil's governance shows the effects of implementing the Italian's lessons. He used faith to unite England, protect its monarch, and achieve security.

When Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603) came to the throne in 1558, her kingdom was divided by religion. She chose Cecil as her first Secretary of State on her first day in power.³ His aspirations for England were boundless and already etched in his mind. One of his main aims, which he developed from the start, was England's future union with Scotland. Their merger would strengthen his country politically, militarily, and religiously. Securing each kingdom's faith and determining Elizabeth's successor were his two main tasks. When considering each situation he first speculated how it affected

¹ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005), 86. Niccolo Machiavelli was an Italian politician whose career and writings influenced future politicians.

² William Cecil was Elizabeth's top advisor from 1558 to his death in 1598. He will be referred to as Cecil and her secretary in chapters one and two, Burghley in chapter three and four, and her treasurer in chapter four.

³ Queen Elizabeth I ruled England from 1558-1603. Her Protestant reign is known as the Golden Age.

this vision of the island's future. His unchanging strategy was "establishing a secure ecclesiastical settlement, and defending the succession interests of Elizabeth by moving to establish the profession of religion both in Scotland and in England."⁴ Faith and politics intertwined, motivating his decisions and granting a revealing look into the mind of a sixteenth-century administrator.

Protestantism was the official religion of the new monarch's realm. This branch of Christianity broke from the Roman church less than fifty years prior to Elizabeth's accession and was still finding its identity. Not only were the queen and her secretary faced with the task of solidifying a formerly papist nation into a reformed one, but they had to define it specifically for England, which would further unite the kingdom.

Catholics were enemy number one, not because they believed in different doctrines but because the continental princes had their eyes set on the island, and a strong separation was needed to combat a possible foreign invasion. Being a Protestant nation also had many incentives. Economically, Protestant nobles were making a fortune off of the fall of the Roman church, taking control over their former land holdings. The secretary was part of this rising group that promised power and wealth.

Cecil's motivations have long provided a point of contention among historians, focusing on the separation between church and state and judging the minister as either a politician or religious ruler. This question has created a false dichotomy, neglecting to acknowledge the sixteenth-century mindset, which saw no separation between spiritual and secular spheres of influence. Cecil's world lacked any distinction between the

⁴ Conference by the Privy Council on the Marriage of Queen Mary, 4 June 1565, in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 7: 1564-1565* (1870), 378. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=72206&strquery=profession both scotland england weaken contrary Cecil Elizabeth](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=72206&strquery=profession+both+scotland+england+weaken+contrary+Cecil+Elizabeth).

church and government, exemplified by King Henry VIII (1491-1547) and the Act of Supremacy, where the king assumed divine authority in addition to temporal.⁵ For Cecil, the relationship between the church and state was more complex. Every action he and other administrators made was politically motivated. To accomplish his goals, he used religion as a tool, pursuing a Protestant policy for England that would strengthen the queen and bring stability to the island nation.

Born in 1520 from an ignoble, but thriving, family and educated at St John's College and then at Gray's Inn, he was an unlikely candidate to become one of England's most powerful administrators. His political career began during Edward VI's (1537-53) reign, but he retired from court life during the sovereignty of the Catholic Mary I (1516-58).⁶ He rose to the forefront of English politics in 1558 when Elizabeth inherited the throne. He remained her top advisor for her entire reign, and was the principal protector responsible for keeping England safe.

Cecil's biographers have debated whether or not he ruled with a strict, reformed agenda at heart. Although the debate climaxed in the 1960s, Martin Hume must be given credit for first addressing the topic when he published *The Great Lord Burghley: A Study in Elizabethan Statecraft* in 1898. He recognized that most of the secretary's biographers had regarded him as an ardent reformer, but denounced their assessments, claiming Cecil focused more on foreign relations than domestic policies of faith.⁷ However, not until the 1960s, with the Marxists' historians of English history, did the real debate begin. In

⁵ King Henry VIII ruled England from 1509 to 1547. He fathered Mary I, Elizabeth I, and Edward VI. In 1534 Henry enacted the Act of Supremacy, making him the religious leader of the English church.

⁶ King Edward VI was Elizabeth's younger brother and ruled England from 1547 to 1553. His reign is known for his Protestant policies. Queen Mary I was the older sister of Elizabeth, and ruled England from 1553 to 1558. She reinstated Catholicism to the country

⁷ Martin Hume, *The Great Lord Burghley: A Study in Elizabethan Statecraft* (New York: NY McClure Phillips & Co, 1906), viii.

1960, Conyers Read's *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* proclaimed the minister was a moderate Protestant. Tudor historians took this lead until the 1990s. W. T. MacCaffrey's *The Shaping of the Elizabeth Regime: Elizabethan Politics, 1558-1572*, published in 1968, argued the advisor was nothing more than a secular ruler.⁸ Michael A. R. Graves continued this appraisal with *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley*.⁹ This political interpretation of the minister dominated for most of the twentieth-century.

However, recent scholarship has shifted, viewing him as religiously motivated. In 1997, Stephen Alford's PhD dissertation, "William Cecil and the British Succession Crisis of the 1560s," challenged Read's widely-held view of the minister as a *politique* who cared more about the masses' obedience than their faith. Alford continued his mission in 2002 with *The Early Elizabethan Polity: William Cecil and the British Succession Crisis, 1558-1569*, which judged that the advisor perceived England's prosperity as dependent upon its reformed church.¹⁰ Alford's most recent publication in 2008, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I*, also sought to mend Read's error of claiming that the minister was politically motivated.¹¹

Scholars are divided on how to view Cecil, and this thesis offers a reevaluation, of sorts, of the two principal schools of interpretation on him. The focus is on the secretary's own words and examines the intertwined political and spiritual motivations that characterized his career. My principal sources consist of over four-hundred letters,

⁸ W.T. MacCaffrey, *The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime: Elizabethan Politics, 1558-1572* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), 464.

⁹ Michael A.R. Graves, *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (New York City: Longman, 1998).

¹⁰ Stephen Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity: William Cecil and the British Succession Crisis, 1558-1569* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹¹ Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

government documents, and other firsthand accounts.¹² The minister's correspondence represents one of the largest document collections available and gives a comprehensive look at court life. As Graves attests "the volume of paper spawned by Cecil during his long career in service to the Tudors has proved a discouragement, even a deterrent, to historians."¹³ To overcome this, this work analyzes his own writings, focusing on the question of his motivations and his use of religion as a political tool.

This paper focuses on the key challenges he faced and how he used numerous state devices to achieve a stable kingdom. The first chapter begins with Elizabeth's accession in 1558 and discusses the 1560s, when her chief advisor had to stop rivals at court from supplanting him. It also looks at the chief problems he faced, including Mary Stuart, the queen of Scotland (1542-87), whose imprisonment in England was Cecil's main concern for two decades.¹⁴ Chapter two examines the northern rebellion of 1569, Mary's second venture to outmaneuver the minister and seize the English throne. Arguably the closest she came to usurping the crown was the Ridolfi Plot of 1571, which is the main subject of chapter three. The fourth, and final, chapter analyzes Norfolk's trial and the advisor's realization that a mountain of proof was needed to convince Elizabeth of her cousin's guilt. The remaining fifteen years were quiet except for the Babington Plot, which proved Mary's undoing. This chapter concludes with her death in 1587. Examining these events exposes Cecil's true motivation: his desire to use the church as a tool to assure Elizabeth's dominance.

¹² These primary sources include: the Salisbury Papers, Camden's Annals and History of Mary Stuart, the Sadler Papers, domestic and foreign state papers, and documents from Early English Books Online.

¹³ Michael A.R. Graves, *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (New York City: Longman, 1998), 4.

¹⁴ Mary, Queen of Scots was raised to be the French Queen but returned to rule Scotland in 1561 when her French husband died. She married twice more and had one child, the future king of both England and Scotland, James I. She tried to usurp Elizabeth's throne and restore Catholicism many times during her nineteen year imprisonment in England

England's religious division made navigating through each crisis even more daunting for the minister. King Henry VIII broke with Rome in 1532, inaugurating decades of religious turmoil. Each successive Tudor ruler returned the state's faith to what they deemed valid, and the latest ruler, Mary I, required her subjects to once again adhere to Catholicism. Cecil thought consolidating a Protestant nation was the best way to ensure England's prosperity. A possible Spanish invasion, a French-controlled Scotland, and a Parliament unconvinced of their new queen's capabilities added to the challenge facing the new administration. The kingdom was religiously divided after the vacillating reigns of the previous three royals, and Cecil knew exactly what must be done. By uniting England under the common banner of Protestantism, and keeping it safe from the surrounding Catholic powers, he was the key to the success of the Elizabethan Golden Age.

Chapter One

The Early Years: 1558-69

Queen Elizabeth I and her loyal secretary were the powerful duo responsible for the success of the Golden Age. They united and effectively governed a religiously-segregated nation. They needed each other; the immaculate leader to guide the masses and the competent assistant to keep her on the throne. This power couple began their rule after decades of fluctuating religious laws, a period when alliances changed daily. The secretary understood better than anyone that prosperity entailed numerous allies and perfecting schemes to keep one's enemies at bay. He was both loved and loathed among his colleagues and the masses, but he maintained enough supporters to ensure his queen remained in control. He was a key component of her achievements, the greatest of which was providing a stable country.

To keep both himself and his mistress in power, he made numerous allies and manipulated them to combat his enemies, demonstrating the art of sixteenth-century statecraft. Graves even goes so far as to assert that his accumulation of loyalties was the key to his success.¹⁵ Cecil's navigation of the waters of court life exposes its inner workings. These early years were plagued with numerous events that threatened the religious and political stability of England. The Religious Settlement of 1559, the Scottish intervention in 1560, Mary's appearance in England, and the marriage plot were each thwarted by the cunning secretary. Examining his motivations during these events will expose the pressures Tudor politicians confronted during this precarious time and will help to better understand his actions.

¹⁵ Michael A.R. Graves, *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (New York City: Longman, 1998), 107.

Cecil's reputation as a loyal Protestant with a savvy political mind, demonstrated under Edward VI, elevated him once again to Secretary of State on the first day of Elizabeth's reign, November 17, 1558. England faced a war with France and an unstable religious climate. She was determined to move her kingdom toward Protestantism and decided a gradual assertion of religious policies would be the safest measure. Its previous monarchs left a divided populace, changing the realm's religion back and forth between the two forms of Christianity. To abate this disparity she needed a more embracing policy. In response, Cecil authored "The Device for the alteration of religion," in the winter of 1558 which stated England's fragile state and the actions required to ensure it remained free from papist invaders.¹⁶ Stephen Alford claimed that the "Device" was clearly written with passionate religious feelings.¹⁷ As for the structure of the government, Elizabeth and her trusty chief advisor allowed some Catholic counselors to remain and sent ambassadors to the important continental princes.¹⁸ In this way, the secretary could plant spies in courts across Europe who would provide him with countless reports on brewing plots. Thus, he began building his network of contacts, a technique that limited conspiracies his entire career.

After decades of religious change a Protestant ruler held the scepter. If England acquired yet another ruler, changing the realm's faith yet again, then social unrest might explode into anarchy. Therefore, Cecil's duty as an administrator dedicated to his country was to ensure Elizabeth remained safely on her throne. Two pronouncements on England's religious policy was their first step, both appearing in April. The Act of

¹⁶ Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 91.

¹⁷ Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 93.

¹⁸ David Hume, *The History of England* (New York City: Harper & Bros, 2009), 282.

Uniformity forced every man to attend church and re-affirmed the *Book of Common Prayer*, which was first written in 1549 and contained prayers, ceremonial instructions, and biblical readings of the reformed church.¹⁹ The Act of Supremacy named Elizabeth as the Governor of the Church of England, a title unfamiliar to her gender.²⁰ Alford asserted that Cecil devised the religious settlement with the main goal to isolate his nation from Catholic countries that were hoping to invade and restore their religion.²¹

Cecil helped guide the queen through this delicate situation. His devotion to restoring his country to Protestantism, combined with her realization that strict rules fostered resentment, created a tolerant program. Scholars compare his piety versus that of the English queen to better understand whose true objectives prevailed. In 2004 John Guy's *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* asserted "Cecil always put the interests of Protestantism ahead of dynastic considerations, while Elizabeth took the opposite approach."²² Hume stated Cecil's faith was merely an instrument he utilized to empower England.²³ He accepted the guise as a religious enthusiast to bolster a single faith, fostering unity and ultimately forging a stronger country. Graves agrees, stating the minister valued political over spiritual stability and even claims that the advisor desired no more religious reforms after 1559.²⁴ Historians have neglected to understand that, for the secretary, state security meant having both a sacred and secularly unified nation.

¹⁹ Elizabeth I, *Act of Uniformity*, ed. Henry Gee and William John Hardy, in the Documents Illustrative of English Church History, <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/engref/er80.html> (accessed January 18, 2010.)

²⁰ Elizabeth I, *Act of Uniformity*, ed. Henry Gee and William John Hardy, in the Documents Illustrative of English Church History, <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/engref/er80.html> (accessed January 18, 2010.)

²¹ Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 92.

²² John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (New York City: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 105.

²³ Martin Hume, *The Great Lord Burghley: A Study in Elizabethan Statecraft* (New York: NY McClure Phillips & Co, 1906), viii.

²⁴ Michael A.R. Graves, *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (New York City: Longman, 1998), 38.

Catholics throughout Europe blamed his interference for the settlement, beginning a lifetime of bearing the brunt of his queen's decisions. Cecil developed the strategies he utilized throughout his career during the years leading to 1569, when his enemies at court most ardently challenged his supremacy. He solidified allies in both the English and foreign courts, realizing the strong bonds created by friendship were essential when his favor declined. He planted spies both domestically and internationally, that kept him abreast on all suspicious activity. The religious settlement was Cecil's the first major challenge and exhibited his ability to use religion as an instrument to achieve his goal of a stable, unified England. A government devoted to a single faith, he hoped, would not only entice the people to band together behind their monarch but strengthen English politics.

While Elizabeth had confidence in her minister, her subjects were unconvinced. His first military crisis came in April 1559 with the Treaty of Cateau-Cambresis.²⁵ This pact removed England and Scotland from a war with France.²⁶ Unfortunately, one of its provisions kept Calais in French hands, to the great distress of the English monarch and embarrassment of her chief advisor.²⁷ Graves contends the minister cared little for Calais, revealing an isolationist policy.²⁸ King Henry II of France (1519-59) promised to stop supporting Mary's claim to her cousin's crown.²⁹ The Scottish sovereign became

²⁵ *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 152.

²⁶ *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 152.

²⁷ *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 152.

²⁸ Michael A.R. Graves, *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (New York City: Longman, 1998), 192.

²⁹ *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 153. King Henry II ruled France from 1547 until his death in 1559.

Cecil's prime opponent, and his principal objective throughout his career was restraining her endeavors for the English throne.

The conflict with France did not cease. French troops continued to occupy Scotland, forcing the country into a civil war.³⁰ Mary of Guise (1515-60), its regent and Princess Mary's mother, and her French troops agitated the Protestant Scottish nobles, who called themselves the Lords of the Congregation, until they banded together to fight the foreign militia.³¹ Enlivened by the arrival of John Knox (1514-72) in 1559, the Lords destroyed Catholic churches throughout the kingdom, brought the Reformation to the country, and deposed Mary of Guise.³² They asked Cecil for help, already realizing the power he held behind the crown.³³ MacCaffrey affirms this was the secretary's perfect opportunity to lay the groundwork for combining the two kingdoms into a strong Protestant force to ward off continental Europe.³⁴ He sent a messenger to tell the Lords of the Congregation that their kingdoms must unite in religion against the Catholic princes.³⁵ He wrote "the nobility and common people do well conceive of amity between

³⁰ Queen Elizabeth's Instructions for Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, 9 January 1559, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 167.

³¹The Lords of the Congregation to the Queen Regent, 19 October 1559, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 155. Mary of Guise was the mother of Mary of Scots and ruled Scotland in her daughter's name from 1554 to 1560.

³² Mr. John Knox to Mr. Secretary Cecil, Edinburgh, 7 October 1561, in *A collection of state papers, relating to affairs in the reigns of King Henry VIII. King Edward VI. Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1542 to 1570* (London: William Bowyer, 1740), 372. John Knox helped bring the Protestant Reformation to Scotland.

³³ Wallace T. MacCaffrey, "Cecil, William, first Baron Burghley (1520/21–1598)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4983>, accessed 3 Oct 2009].

³⁴ Wallace T. MacCaffrey, "Cecil, William, first Baron Burghley (1520/21–1598)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4983>, accessed 3 Oct 2009].

³⁵ Memorial for Randolph, 20 March 1561, in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 4: 1561-1562* (1866), pp. 453-468. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73017&strquery=cecil randolph memorial 1561 march lords congregation](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73017&strquery=cecil%20randolph%20memorial%201561%20march%20lords%20congregation).

these two realms and this council of Scotland may be directed to do anything that our queen will command.”³⁶

His policy encompassed safeguarding both England and Scotland while keeping peace with foreign powers. He kept informants at the Scottish court and a hand in its government throughout his reign.³⁷ An encroaching French army and a Catholic ruler threatened this plan, and he spent weeks beseeching Elizabeth to intervene; he even contemplated resigning.³⁸ Threatening retirement became a tactic he often exercised when desperately requiring his queen’s assent. He explained his fears “as soon as Scotland shall be compelled for lack of power to yield to the French, forthwith will the French employ both their own strength and the power of Scotland against England.”³⁹ However, Elizabeth had her reasons for remaining neutral; Knox’s *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* was a personal blow to the new monarch.⁴⁰ The pamphlet criticized women rulers, declaring men more capable. Why should she support a group whose leader promoted such ideas? Cecil tried to shelter Knox from the sovereign’s further malice by concealing his maligning letters from her.⁴¹

³⁶ Mr. Secretary Cecil to the Lords of the Council, 19 June 1560, in *A collection of state papers, relating to affairs in the reigns of King Henry VIII. King Edward VI. Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1542 to 1570* (London: William Bowyer, 1740), 327.

³⁷ Lord Mountague and Sir Thomas Chamberlain to the Lords of the Council, 10 April 1560, in *A collection of state papers, relating to affairs in the reigns of King Henry VIII. King Edward VI. Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1542 to 1570* (London: William Bowyer, 1740), 286.

³⁸ Wallace T. MacCaffrey, “Cecil, William, first Baron Burghley (1520/21–1598),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4983>, accessed 3 Oct 2009].

³⁹ “A Short Discussion of the Weighty Matter of Scotland,” William Cecil, August 1559, in Ralph Sadler, Arthur Clifford, Walter Scott, Archibald Constable, and Henry Bickersteth. 1809. In *The state papers and letters of Sir Ralph Sadler, knight-banneret*. Edinburgh: Printed for Archibald Constable and Co. ... and for T. Cadell and W. Davies, William Miller, and John Murray, London, 381.

⁴⁰ John Knox’s Writings, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 1: 1547-63 (1898)*, pp. 540-548. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44072&strquery=Knox> John Blast.

⁴¹ Frank A. Mumby, *Elizabeth and Mary Stuart: The Beginning of their Feud* (London: Constable & Company, 1914), 41.

In August, 1559, the secretary wrote a memorandum to convince Elizabeth of the impending danger a French-controlled Scotland might pose to her kingdom.⁴² He argued “the best worldly felicity that Scotland can have is to be made one monarchy with England.”⁴³ By stating his policy publicly, he showed his adversaries how this alliance strengthened his kingdom’s safety. She finally yielded to Cecil’s appeals and signed a treaty with the Lords, promising to fight until the last French soldier had abandoned the kingdom.⁴⁴

Not a year had passed since Elizabeth became a sovereign, and already she was showing that she, like her father, knew the importance of trusted advisors. The minister’s growing influence frightened the ancient nobility, who were aristocratic families accustomed to steering English administration and protested against anyone with a humble pedigree trying to advance his status. Though most were on good terms with him, they never failed to seek out ways to ruin him. The wealth of correspondence between Cecil and the leading members of the English gentry attest to their dependence on him.⁴⁵ Knowing the principal advisor could determine a man’s fate, they used his

⁴² Cecil to Sir Ralph Sadler, Hampton Court, 31 August 1559, in Ralph Sadler, Arthur Clifford, Walter Scott, Archibald Constable, and Henry Bickersteth. 1809. In *The state papers and letters of Sir Ralph Sadler, knight-banneret*. Edinburgh: Printed for Archibald Constable and Co. ... and for T. Cadell and W. Davies, William Miller, and John Murray, London, 38.

⁴³ Cecil to Queen Elizabeth, 5 August 1559, in Ralph Sadler, Arthur Clifford, Walter Scott, Archibald Constable, and Henry Bickersteth. 1809. In *The state papers and letters of Sir Ralph Sadler, knight-banneret*. Edinburgh: Printed for Archibald Constable and Co. ... and for T. Cadell and W. Davies, William Miller, and John Murray, London, 375.

⁴⁴ Queen Elizabeth to the Duke of Norfolk, 16 April 1560, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 210.

⁴⁵ Hundreds of Cecil’s letters can be found in the: State Papers, and Sir Ralph Sadler Papers.

close relationship with the queen to win her favor and forgiveness. He, in turn, used their pride to gain their friendship.⁴⁶

One such prominent nobleman was Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk (1536-72), who the minister sent to drive out the French from Scotland.⁴⁷ Elizabeth desired a more cautious approach and allowed the duke to go north in January 1560 but with orders to not provoke war until he was certain Mary of Guise had refused to relinquish her French troops.⁴⁸ Although Cecil was unable to convince his queen to take brisk action, he did persuade her to allow Norfolk to secretly help the Lords of the Congregation, until he was forced to do so overtly.⁴⁹ Based on Cecil's letters, he desperately wanted the French removed from Scottish affairs and utilized his position to ensure they withdrew.⁵⁰ Read argues that to gain the support of his monarch, he changed the Scottish matter from a religious to a political one.⁵¹ However, once again, these two entities were inseparable for the minister. His religious policy in Scotland was meant to secure England's northern border, which had temporal repercussions.

In July 1560, the secretary used his talent for negotiation when he went to Edinburgh, after Norfolk had forced the French troops into submission, and concluded

⁴⁶ Michael A. R. Graves, "Howard, Thomas, fourth duke of Norfolk (1538–1572)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13941, accessed 3 Oct 2009].

⁴⁷ Noailles to Queen Elizabeth, 21 December 1559, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 157. The Duke of Norfolk was a cousin of Elizabeth and one of the most popular nobles in England. His proximity to the throne inflated his ambition and he tried numerous times to wed Mary of Scots and usurp Elizabeth's crown.

⁴⁸ J.B. Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558-1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 43.

⁴⁹ Aiding the Lords of Congregation, in 'Preface', Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 12 Part 2: June-December 1537 (1891), pp. III-XLI. Also available online at http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=75697&strquery=Thomas Howard Duke of Norfolk Mary Scots marriage.

⁵⁰ Sir William Cecil to George Gordon, Earl of Huntley, 18 March 1560, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 193.

⁵¹ Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 192.

the Treaty of Edinburgh.⁵² The Scottish government was now in the hands of twelve men who owed much to their neighbor kingdom's intervention, but Elizabeth refused to aid them any further, much to the frustration of Cecil.⁵³ His correspondence displays his desire to maintain a strong foothold in the northern country.⁵⁴ Read and Graves confirm the treaty as testament to the minister's talent for bold acts, even when it risked his majesty's disapproval.⁵⁵ His actions and letters support this claim. She should have been congratulating her advisor, but she berated him for failing to recover Calais, which was lost to the French during the war.⁵⁶ This French-speaking coastal town was not at the top of his agenda. The provision allowing England to intervene in Scotland's government was his ultimate design, and he succeeded.⁵⁷

Cecil made friends in Scotland's new administration and with the Englishmen he had sent to the northern plain, including Norfolk, an ally he needed to induce other members of the ancient nobility to his side.⁵⁸ His fellow politicians were impressed with his diplomatic skills, and he emerged from the Scottish venture a valued compatriot.⁵⁹ Alford also noted his abilities, crediting the minister with replacing French influence in

⁵² Articles agreed for the Interview between the Queen's Majesty of England and the Queen of Scots at York, 20 September 1562, in *A collection of state papers, relating to affairs in the reigns of King Henry VIII. King Edward VI. Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1542 to 1570* (London: William Bowyer, 1740), 389.

⁵³ J.B. Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558-1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 47.

⁵⁴ Sir William Cecil to Sir William Petre, 5 June 1560, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 230.

⁵⁵ Michael A.R. Graves, *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (New York City: Longman, 1998), 37.

⁵⁶ J.B. Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558-1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 47.

⁵⁷ Articles agreed for the Interview between the Queen's Majesty of England and the Queen of Scots at York, 20 September 1562, in *A collection of state papers, relating to affairs in the reigns of King Henry VIII. King Edward VI. Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1542 to 1570* (London: William Bowyer, 1740), 389.

⁵⁸ Neville Williams, *A Tudor Tragedy: Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1989), 63.

⁵⁹ W.T. MacCaffrey, *The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime: Elizabethan Politics, 1558-1572* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), 88.

Scotland with English and switching to an expansive, British policy.⁶⁰ Clearly, the minister cleverly paved the way for his future endeavors with the northern neighbor. Cecil capitalized on the Scottish problem in 1560 by ensuring it concluded with his influence firmly planted in its government. He declared “to avoid wars of bloodshed between England and Scotland there might be a perpetual peace made between these two realms, so as no invasion should be made of either of them.”⁶¹ His goal of uniting the two kingdoms under Protestantism could now evolve. He guaranteed England’s stability and power by his use of state and piety. Read argues that the English sovereign impeded the minister from further progress with the northern kingdom.⁶²

When the secretary returned to court he found Elizabeth and his influential rival Robert Dudley (1532-88) on the verge of marriage.⁶³ The queen’s thirty-year relationship was scandalous at times but never more so than the summer of 1560. Her advisor feared this union above other, more threatening, matrimonial prospects. Dudley’s pedigree was not at the level of most of her suitors, but the council respected him. Cecil, along with the rest of the government, had proposed the names of various European princes that would make suitable husbands since the beginning of her reign. He warned his mistress “there are degrees of danger, and if you would marry, it should be less;

⁶⁰ Stephen Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity: William Cecil and the British Succession Crisis, 1558-1569* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 29.

⁶¹ Sir William Cecil to Sir Ralph Sadler, 1560, in Ralph Sadler, Arthur Clifford, Walter Scott, Archibald Constable, and Henry Bickersteth. 1809. In *The state papers and letters of Sir Ralph Sadler, knight-banneret*. Edinburgh: Printed for Archibald Constable and Co. ... and for T. Cadell and W. Davies, William Miller, and John Murray, London, 371.

⁶² Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 187.

⁶³ *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 255. Robert Dudley was Elizabeth’s favorite at court, which made him a powerful noble. He hated Cecil’s influence over the English queen.

whilst you do not, it will increase.”⁶⁴ Elizabeth’s marriage question concerned the council who was of the traditional mindset that a woman could not rule alone, and a country without an heir was unstable. The advisor sought his queen’s marriage because it promoted stability to the kingdom, but he refused to allow the favored earl to be considered a candidate because of his personal rivalry with him.

After her minister, Dudley wielded the most influence over Elizabeth, a clout Cecil refused to allow to surmount his own. Off the throne, the advisor could control the earl, but a crowned power was more difficult to manage. Dudley had an imposing following at court. These cohorts frequently rallied behind him to try to depose the secretary. For the minister, this union jeopardized not only his rank but England’s stability. He feared his vision for a prosperous England would collapse with his place usurped. To dissuade the queen from the match, Cecil made a pros and cons list, a tactic he used regularly.⁶⁵ Under the heading “likelihood he will love the queen” he wrote, “the proof is in his former wife,” degrading the earl’s faithfulness.⁶⁶ Elizabeth ignored his advice, and the courtship persisted.

Cecil considered resigning but decided instead to make a former enemy into an ally.⁶⁷ He realized Dudley had sought the backing of the Spanish Ambassador, Alvaro de la Quadra (d. 1575), and the secretary pretended to support the earl’s matrimonial designs

⁶⁴ William Cecil to Queen Elizabeth, 16 October 1569, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 2: 1563-69* (1900), pp. 682-698. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44198&strquery=elizabeth+mary+scotland+degrees+danger+marry+increase>.

⁶⁵ Michael A.R. Graves, *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (New York City: Longman, 1998), 41.

⁶⁶ The Queen’s Marriage, 1 April 1566, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 337.

⁶⁷ Brett Usher, *William Cecil and Episcopacy, 1559-1577* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 59.

to get closer to their scheming.⁶⁸ He discovered de la Quadra was exploiting Dudley to obtain Catholic concessions, a part of the deal the minister suspected from the beginning.⁶⁹ This clever maneuver terrified him, but gave him the ammunition to combat the relationship directly. Arresting de la Quadra's accomplices, he ended the ambassador's designs but failed to damage Dudley's reputation.⁷⁰ The advisor realized the earl could do no wrong in Elizabeth's eyes. However, he knew her subjects' opinion weighed heavily on her mind and now sought his rival's public ruin.

The secretary knew which men would spread rumors even if they promised secrecy. De la Quadra was one such person, and Cecil revealed to him all his deepest fears of the marriage, including his belief that Dudley was considering murdering his wife, Amy Dudley (1532-60).⁷¹ While this information was already court gossip, the advisor's timing was perfect. When Amy, who was suffering from breast cancer, died soon afterwards from a mysterious fall down the stairs, the country suspected her spouse. Her death terminated any hope for a marriage. England, and even Europe, discerned Amy's untimely end as proof that her husband's ambitions led him to take extreme

⁶⁸ W.T. MacCaffrey, *The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime: Elizabethan Politics, 1558-1572* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), 105. Alvaro de la Quadra was a Spanish ambassador and Cecil used Philip's emissary to relay any information he wanted the Spanish king to know. His birth date is unknown.

⁶⁹ W.T. MacCaffrey, *The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime: Elizabethan Politics, 1558-1572* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), 105.

⁷⁰ W.T. MacCaffrey, *The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime: Elizabethan Politics, 1558-1572* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), 105.

⁷¹ Thomas Lever to Sir Francis Knollys and Cecil, Coventry, 17 September 1560, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 251. Amy Dudley was the wife of Robert Dudley. Her mysterious death was scandalous because many believed Elizabeth involved since the rumored affair between the queen and Robert.

measures. To silence these rumors, Elizabeth temporarily expelled Dudley from court, thus ending the discussion of marriage.⁷²

The distraught earl even sought advice from the minister on what best course to take to preserve his reputation.⁷³ However, Cecil returned to his rightful place next to his monarch while his counterpart was sent home to wait out the scandal. Both Graves and Read insist the men became allies for the remainder of their careers.⁷⁴ The Dudley affair reveals Cecil's true motives. He sacrificed a Protestant marriage capable of producing heirs to ensure he remained as Elizabeth's top advisor and that his vision for England succeeded. For the secretary, his country was the safest when he, and no one else, stood at the helm.

The minister had humbled a rival and made an ally of de la Quadra, who happily reported to King Philip II of Spain (1527-98) in October that the advisor had resumed his distinguished post next to the queen.⁷⁵ His return to power was further solidified when she bequeathed to him the office of the Master of the Wards, the surveyor of the entire court, to him.⁷⁶ Although the Dudley Affair had threatened to separate them, it ultimately strengthened their bond. To protect his dominance in the government, Cecil had presented his queen with the religious and political advantages she sacrificed by marrying

⁷² Lord Robert Dudley to Cecil, September 1560, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 252.

⁷³ Sir Robert Dudley to Sir William Cecil, September 1560, in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 1: 1306-1571* (1883), pp. 243-256. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=111980&strquery=amy+dudley+cecil+england+1560>.

⁷⁴ Michael A.R. Graves, *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (New York City: Longman, 1998), 42. Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 207.

⁷⁵ King Philip II ruled Spain from 1556 to 1598. This Catholic monarch was the leading royal contender to rescue Mary of Scots and restore Catholicism to England.

⁷⁶ Cecil's Promotion, in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, 1598-1601* (1869), pp. 77-90. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=61212&strquery=burghley+elizabeth+master+of+the+wards>.

Dudley. Keeping her free to wed a foreign Protestant prince allowed her kingdom to cultivate important alliances, resulting in its increased prosperity.

Cecil's career took an unexpected turn when King Francis II (1544-60) of France died in December 1560.⁷⁷ The significance of this event impacted the advisor in a way he could never have expected. Francis' widow, eighteen-year old Mary Stuart, had been sent from her kingdom as a baby to be raised in France with her betrothed's family. Now she returned to Scotland to rule her unfamiliar homeland. She arrived in August 1561 with her sights already set on the throne of her cousin Elizabeth, at least according to her minister.⁷⁸ The Scottish monarch immediately sent her secretary, William Maitland of Lethington (1525-73) to determine if her fellow queen would revise the treaty that barred Mary from inheriting her cousin's crown.⁷⁹ Elizabeth and Cecil tried to prevent this for the next two dozen years. The former, because she knew people preferred a younger monarch, and he because his deepest fear was having another Catholic on the throne.⁸⁰ A papist Scotland would strengthen it religiously, and therefore politically, to countries of the Roman church, distancing it from its southern neighbor. His dream of a united island would be impossible.

Elizabeth and Mary's cousinly bond was a constant worry for Cecil. The connection, he feared, could save the latter from the executioner's axe. Persistent, he

⁷⁷ King Francis II ruled France from 1559 to 1560. He was Mary of Scots' first husband, but his unexpected death forced her back to her unfamiliar homeland, Scotland.

⁷⁸ Maitland to Cecil, Edinburgh, 15 August 1561, in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 4: 1561-1562* (1916), pp. 16-29. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73001&strquery=Mary%20Scots%20August%201561%20Scotland>.

⁷⁹ William Maitland to Cecil, Edinburgh, 9 August 1561, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 261. William Maitland served as Mary of Scots secretary and continued to champion for her in the Scottish government after her imprisonment.

⁸⁰ Bernardino de Mendoza to the Queen of Scotland, 6 May 1561, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 3: 1580-1586* (1896), pp. 463-472. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=87117&strquery=elizabeth%20mary%20rising%20setting%20sun>.

warned his queen to mistrust her rival, “the Queen of Scots is and shall always be a dangerous person to your estate.”⁸¹ Suspecting the Catholics’ ultimate goal was placing the Scottish sovereign on England’s throne, he ruthlessly combated them at every turn. The English queen worried that if she failed to respect the dignity of a royal, then others would discount their loyalty to her. And with no child to inherit her throne, Mary of Scots was her next closest relative. Cecil wished most reverently for his queen to wed and produce heirs. However, he refused to allow a Catholic on England’s throne, even if it meant forfeiting the possibility of an heir. He, along with most of his country, ignored the conviction behind the statement in her first Parliament when she proclaimed she would die a virgin.⁸² The succession reached crisis level when Elizabeth contracted smallpox in 1562.⁸³ Cecil kept court schemes from becoming possible coups during this troubled time. Securing allegiance to Elizabeth through Protestantism was one way he procured supporters, which proved valuable in disrupting these designs.

He suppressed his rivals by whispering damaging rumors about them, both true and false, to his sovereign to foster her questioning of everyone’s loyalty except his.⁸⁴ His two main rivals at court were Norfolk and Dudley, the latter who was named Earl of

⁸¹ William Cecil to Queen Elizabeth, 16 October 1569, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 2: 1563-69* (1900), pp. 682-698. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44198&strquery=elizabeth mary scotland degrees danger marry increase>.

⁸² Elizabeth’s Declaration, in *A New History of London: Including Westminster and Southwark* (1773), pp. 698-717. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=46776&strquery=elizabeth die a virgin>.

⁸³ Elizabeth’s Illness, in *Spelthorne Hundred: Hampton Court Palace: history*, A History of the County of Middlesex: Volume 2: General; Ashford, East Bedfont with Hatton, Feltham, Hampton with Hampton Wick, Hanworth, Laleham, Littleton (1911), pp. 327-371. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22206&strquery=elizabeth 1562 smallpox cecil>.

⁸⁴ W.T. MacCaffrey, *The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime: Elizabethan Politics, 1558-1572* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), 235.

Leicester in 1564.⁸⁵ Although both shared his religion, their first loyalty lay with the ancient nobility. However, their rivalry with each other took precedence, and the secretary quietly encouraged their hatred toward one another. When the court wore distinguishing colors to side themselves with the respective nobles, Elizabeth intervened and ended their quarrel, at least publically, in March 1564.⁸⁶ These two men continued to quarrel, both desiring Cecil's friendship during their bouts of hostility, and making their relationship with the minister precarious.

Laying low while his rivals destroyed each other was no longer an option when Mary Stuart decided to take another husband. He actually thought he deserved a say in choosing her possible grooms. Eager mothers advanced their sons' names for Elizabeth to consider, including Margaret Douglas, the Countess of Lennox (1515-78), with her son Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley (1545-67).⁸⁷ The queen imprisoned Lennox in the Tower for such a potentially damaging offer, wanting someone on the Scottish throne whom she could control and whose pedigree could not compete with hers. She frequently punished those who married without her blessing, craving not only the ability to refuse but also fearing the power that certain couples could create.

⁸⁵ Michael A. R. Graves, "Howard, Thomas, fourth duke of Norfolk (1538–1572)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13941, accessed 3 Oct 2009].

⁸⁶ Neville Williams, *A Tudor Tragedy: Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1989), 95.

⁸⁷ Agnes Strickland, *Letters of Mary, Queen of Scots, and Documents Connected with Her Personal History* (London: Henry Colburn, 1843), 62. Margaret Douglas was the mother to Mary of Scots' second husband. Lord Darnley was Mary's second husband and the father of James I. His death sparked chaos in the Scottish government and led to Mary's imprisonment.

Her favorite companion, the earl of Leicester, was a perfect candidate in her eyes, and she promoted his union with her cousin throughout 1564.⁸⁸ She expected to use him as a puppet once in office and essentially rule both countries.⁸⁹ Cecil did not trust the earl once he was beyond the queen's grasp but relished the idea of his chief rival being far away.⁹⁰ He dreaded the excitement it would create and the possible power shift from a single monarch to an acclaimed couple.⁹¹ However, Mary refused to consider him unless she was named heir apparent to the English throne, and an enraged Elizabeth immediately dissolved the negotiations.⁹² Leicester was never enthusiastic about the idea and declared the secretary to be its proponent, trying to make him seem a turncoat.⁹³ The gentry manipulated every opportunity to discredit Cecil.

Mary resented the power Elizabeth held over her and personally chose to wed Darnley in July 1564.⁹⁴ This English noble had been prohibited from even considering the union due to his substantial claim to Elizabeth's throne. The minister denounced the marriage. He wrote a pamphlet "A Short Memorial of the State of the Realm," stating its "designs were to bring the Queen of Scots to have the royal crown of this realm."⁹⁵ The

⁸⁸ Dudley's Promotion, in *The Tower: (part 1 of 2)*, Old and New London: Volume 2 (1878), pp. 60-76. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=45075&strquery=elizabeth+dudley+mary+marriage>.

⁸⁹ Agnes Strickland, *Letters of Mary, Queen of Scots, and Documents Connected with Her Personal History* (London: Henry Colburn, 1843), 107.

⁹⁰ Michael A.R. Graves, *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (New York City: Longman, 1998), 41.

⁹¹ John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (New York City: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 204.

⁹² Neville Williams, *A Tudor Tragedy: Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1989), 90.

⁹³ Martin Hume, *The Love Affairs of Mary, Queen of Scots: A Political History* (London: E. Nash, 1903), 210.

⁹⁴ "A Short Memorial of the State of the Realm," 1569, in *A collection of state papers, relating to affairs in the reigns of King Henry VIII. King Edward VI. Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1542 to 1570* (London: William Bowyer, 1740), 581.

⁹⁵ J.A. Froude, *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Spanish Armada* (London: Longmans, 1870), 162. The pamphlet was entitled, *The Perils and troubles that may presently ensue and in time to come follow to the Queen's Majesty and safety of this realm upon the marriage of the Queen of Scots to the Lord Darnley*.

English influence over the Scottish court crumbled. The secretary's friends in Scotland, including James Stewart, the Earl of Murray (1531-70), were forced to flee to England with Mary firmly back in power.⁹⁶ The queen stopped aiding the Lords of the Congregation, lest her Catholic citizens further this setback by rebelling.⁹⁷ Cecil was livid, beseeching her to support this leading Protestant force that could combat her cousin. However, the marriage shortly proved disastrous. Their union soon turned sour, and although they had a son, James (1566-1625), opposing factions divided the country once more.⁹⁸ The advisor capitalized on Mary's delicate position, sending Christopher Rokesby without his sovereign's approval to entice her to join a coup against Elizabeth.⁹⁹ Many of his spies careers, including Rokesby's, began under the enemy's service; however, Cecil's methods of persuasion soon altered his allegiance. The minister warned him "I have heard of your dealings with the Scottish queen and I am very sorry that you bring yourself into danger. Consider your duty to God and your country and be advised by me and recover some favor."¹⁰⁰ Although the emissary complied, the Scottish monarch was not fooled and had him arrested, obtaining his letters from Cecil promising a reward if he could persuade her to commit the treacherous act.¹⁰¹ Fortunately for the

⁹⁶ The Earl of Murray was the half-brother of Mary of Scots and the Scottish regent from 1567, when Mary of Scots was forced to abdicate, until his assassination in 1570. Cecil befriended him, extending the secretary's influence in Scotland.

⁹⁷ Noailles to Queen Elizabeth, 21 December 1559, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 157.

⁹⁸ James was Mary's only child. He inherited the Scottish throne in 1567 as James VI, and succeeded Elizabeth in 1603 as James I, uniting the two kingdoms.

⁹⁹ John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (New York City: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 255. Christopher Rokesby's birth and death dates are unknown.

¹⁰⁰ Secretary Cecil to Christopher Rokesby, 16 June 1566, in *A collection of state papers, relating to affairs in the reigns of King Henry VIII. King Edward VI. Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1542 to 1570* (London: William Bowyer, 1740), 445.

¹⁰¹ John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (New York City: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 255.

secretary, who had agents everywhere, he was warned in time and informed an otherwise incensed Elizabeth against the scheme.¹⁰²

When Darnley was murdered in February 1567, probably with the support of his estranged wife, Mary's fortunes declined in England, Cecil's rose.¹⁰³ Before the shocking death, most Englishmen acknowledged the northern sovereign as next in line to their throne, but her presumed complicity in the assassination ruined her reputation.¹⁰⁴ Her credibility was again discredited in May when she married one of the men responsible for her late husband's death, James Hepburn, the Earl of Bothwell (1534-78).¹⁰⁵ After the Scottish lords suppressed this union they imprisoned their queen. England's monarch was furious with Cecil for not helping her cousin and she deliberated declaring war on Scotland.¹⁰⁶ He knew how to calm her majesty and warned how fellow royals might be a casualty of that brash decision.¹⁰⁷ He was not about to help his most formidable enemy. A year later, Mary, forced to abdicate by the Scots, escaped to England and assumed Elizabeth's protection.¹⁰⁸ The deposed queen forgot that two people ruled there, and the secretary had never been an advocate for a Catholic.

¹⁰² John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (New York City: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 255.

¹⁰³ Articles gathered out of a Communication had with the Queen of Scots, 10 October 1570, in *A collection of state papers, relating to affairs in the reigns of King Henry VIII. King Edward VI. Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1542 to 1570* (London: William Bowyer, 1740), 618.

¹⁰⁴ "History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth," *The British Quarterly Review* 45 (January 1867): 15.

¹⁰⁵ Mary, Queen of Scots and Bothwell, 29 October 1568, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 370. The Earl of Bothwell was Mary's third husband. Their controversial marriage forced him to flee the country and Mary's imprisonment.

¹⁰⁶ John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (New York City: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 353.

¹⁰⁷ John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (New York City: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 353.

¹⁰⁸ Articles gathered out of a Communication had with the Queen of Scots, 10 October 1570, in *A collection of state papers, relating to affairs in the reigns of King Henry VIII. King Edward VI. Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1542 to 1570* (London: William Bowyer, 1740), 618.

The advisor lodged Mary in Carlisle Castle on the northwest coast, a safe distance from Elizabeth where he could keep her until he decided her fate.¹⁰⁹ He immediately realized the many advantages of possessing the queen, and advised his monarch “if her person be restrained here the danger would be less, if at liberty, greater.”¹¹⁰ Hume highlighted these benefits: the secretary could strengthen the Anglo-Scottish partnership against the Catholic powers and further unite his kingdom in religion against this papist woman.¹¹¹ He then persuaded Murray to return to Scotland and become regent for his nephew James, thus formulating the Protestant upbringing of the year old child, much to his mother’s protest.¹¹² Cecil hoped to produce a sovereign that would unite the two kingdoms under the banner of Protestantism, thus reducing the Catholic threat. Meanwhile, the Scottish queen solicited the minister for help and an audience with Elizabeth, knowing one must go through her secretary to get to the crown.¹¹³ He advised the queen that such a tainted person would blemish her purity and that a trial must first prove her innocence.¹¹⁴ The Scottish monarch continued to seek, in vain, this face-to-face meeting. Whenever her cousin agreed to it, she always changed her mind at the last minute, due to Cecil’s dissuasion.

¹⁰⁹ Mary’s Removal, in *The city of Carlisle*, Magna Britannia: volume 4: Cumberland (1816), pp. 56-81. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=50684&strquery=elizabeth england 1568 fled Carlisle castle mary>.

¹¹⁰ William Cecil to Queen Elizabeth, 16 October 1569, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 2: 1563-69* (1900), pp. 682-698. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44198&strquery=elizabeth mary scotland degrees danger marry increase>.

¹¹¹ Martin Hume, *The Great Lord Burghley: A Study in Elizabethan Statecraft* (New York: NY McClure Phillips & Co, 1906), 398.

¹¹² Wallace T. MacCaffrey, “Cecil, William, first Baron Burghley (1520/21–1598),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4983>, accessed 3 Oct 2009].

¹¹³ Agnes Strickland, *Letters of Mary, Queen of Scots, and Documents Connected with Her Personal History* (London: Henry Colburn, 1843), 41.

¹¹⁴ John Lingard, *The History of England, from the First Invasion by the Romans to the Accession of William and Mary in 1688* (London: Nimmo, 1883), 176.

Mary's presence raised the question of succession, and Leicester presented her with a list of articles confirming her as heir to Elizabeth's throne, to which the imprisoned monarch readily subscribed.¹¹⁵ One provision forbade her from marrying the Duke of Norfolk, the threat of such a potent match already realized.¹¹⁶ Cecil refused to allow Leicester to countermand his plan, even if his queen wanted it. He gave Elizabeth a list of possible candidates to attend a conference at York, ensuring the earl's party had no say in the Scottish monarch's future.¹¹⁷ The duke, being one of his rivals, was chosen as one of these judges. However, an unexpected suggestion to the duke completely changed the affair.

The conference at York commenced on October 4, 1568. Its outward purpose was to determine if Mary assisted in Darnley's murder, but the true reason was to further injure her reputation. Another covert purpose of Cecil's was, Alford argued, to bolster his influence in Scotland's government.¹¹⁸ The secretary had no intention of allowing her to be found innocent and escape his grasp.¹¹⁹ He asserted "it is not meant if the Queen of Scots shall be proved guilty of the murder to restore her to Scotland, how so ever her

¹¹⁵ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

¹¹⁶ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

¹¹⁷ Agnes Strickland, *Letters of Mary, Queen of Scots, and Documents Connected with Her Personal History* (London: Henry Colburn, 1843), 88.

¹¹⁸ Stephen Alford, "William Cecil and the British Succession Crisis of the 1560s" (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 1997), 206.

¹¹⁹ John Lingard, *The History of England, from the First Invasion by the Romans to the Accession of William and Mary in 1688* (London: Nimmo, 1883), 174.

friends may brag to the contrary, nor yet shall there be any haste made of her delivery.”¹²⁰ Her freedom would risk Catholic princes defending her against their Protestant enemies.¹²¹ However, a guilty verdict would not only strengthen the temporal and religious bond between the two kingdoms, but eliminate England’s greatest threat. Never wanting to rely on uncertainties, Cecil had a backup plan. If, by some unforeseen obstacle, she was found innocent of murdering Darnley, which would assure her freedom, the advisor had a Protestant alliance ready to detain her under England’s thumb.¹²² The secretary already had assurances from the Scottish government that, if Mary returned, Murray would force her to ratify the Treaty of Edinburgh, a task the English government had unsuccessfully struggled to force her to do.¹²³

During the proceedings, Maitland, with regent Murray’s assent, proposed to Norfolk a marriage with Mary.¹²⁴ The duke replied he needed to first seek the permission of his monarch, and the Scottish sovereign refused to consider it until she was free.¹²⁵ Unfortunately for him, he never found the courage to ask Elizabeth’s consent. On October 16, 1568, the English queen moved the conference to Westminster. Hume attests the minister told her rumors of the covert marriage negotiations and therefore she wanted

¹²⁰ The Conference at York, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 2: 1563-69 (1900)*, pp. 514-544. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44186&strquery=queen scots](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44186&strquery=queen%20scots) proved guilty murder restore Scotland friends brag.

¹²¹ John Lingard, *The History of England, from the First Invasion by the Romans to the Accession of William and Mary in 1688* (London: Nimmo, 1883), 174.

¹²² John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (New York City: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 357.

¹²³ “History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth,” *The British Quarterly Review* 45 (January 1867): 12.

¹²⁴ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

¹²⁵ John Lingard, *The History of England, from the First Invasion by the Romans to the Accession of William and Mary in 1688* (London: Nimmo, 1883), 194.

to keep a closer eye on the involved parties.¹²⁶ Norfolk assured her of his innocence “that woman shall never be my wife, whose husband cannot sleep in security on his pillow.”¹²⁷ His distrust was bred when Murray showed him the Casket Letters, which the regent had withheld until Elizabeth ensured him her cousin would never be restored.¹²⁸ If authentic, these letters proved her cooperation in Darnley’s murder.¹²⁹ Cecil doubted their validity, and he tried to convince Elizabeth otherwise.

The letters were concealed from the court until December 7, Cecil waiting until Mary’s defense had departed to give Murray the go-ahead.¹³⁰ However, the documents were worthless; the Scottish monarch denounced them as forgeries and the judges doubted their legitimacy. Just as Elizabeth desired, the conference ended with no verdict.¹³¹ The judges, under the secretary’s command, placed Mary under the custody of George Talbot, the Earl of Shrewsbury (1528-90) in northern England, an imprisonment lasting nineteen years.¹³² Cecil had succeeded; his biggest threat was in a safe location he could closely monitor. What to do with the deposed queen was the next obstacle. The trial had confirmed her incarceration, but for how long? Keeping her in their kingdom

¹²⁶ Martin Hume, *The Great Lord Burghley: A Study in Elizabethan Statecraft* (New York: NY McClure Phillips & Co, 1906), 233.

¹²⁷ Matters charged against the Duke of Norfolk for the attempt to marry with the Scots’ Queen, 20 January 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 461.

¹²⁸ J.B. Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558-1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 113.

¹²⁹ John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (New York City: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 385.

¹³⁰ John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (New York City: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 419.

¹³¹ The Queen’s Instructions by Henry Skipwith for the Earls of Shewsbury and Huntingdon, and Viscount Hereford, 15 September 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 419.

¹³² The Queen’s Instructions by Henry Skipwith for the Earls of Shewsbury and Huntingdon, and Viscount Hereford, 15 September 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 419. The Earl of Shrewsbury was a trusted English noble, leading Elizabeth to choose him to shelter and guard Mary for most of her nineteen years of imprisonment.

might give the Catholic monarchs a reason to invade it. This fear kept the minister unnerved, but he knew her resolve and deviousness would produce plots for her escape. He stayed informed of her pursuits from his constant correspondence with her guardian Shrewsbury, a man whose loyalty to the crown was his first priority. Unfortunately, her charms made their relationship personal instead of political. With every scheme he begged her to stop her treasonous ways, afraid her actions would eventually be punished. Cecil was ready to swoop in and prove her guilt, with valid evidence this time.

His first chance arose when the forbidden marriage between the Duke of Norfolk and Mary almost materialized in 1569. Cecil wanted to keep the noble as an ally; not only was he the highest ranking noble in the realm, but the English adored him. The advisor sought a way to prevent his friend from the treason his ambition refused to resist. Sullyng the duke's reputation might make Norfolk repudiate the union.¹³³ Whenever Cecil wanted to make a public declaration, especially one he wanted anonymously printed, he employed Thomas Norton (1532-84) to write it and John Day (1522-84) to publish it.¹³⁴ Norton's pamphlet, "A discourse touching the pretended match betwene the Duke of Norfolke and the Queene of Scottes," informed the public that danger was eminent unless their marriage negotiations ceased.¹³⁵ The secretary pretended to be unaware of the author, so he could attain the duke as an ally. Mary's agent, John Lesley, the Bishop of Ross (1527-96), published pamphlets defending his queen, but the couple

¹³³ Stephen Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity: William Cecil and the British Succession Crisis, 1558-1569* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 158.

¹³⁴ Thomas Norton was regularly employed by Cecil to write pamphlets, many to use as propaganda. John Day was a printer Cecil used to publish writings, usually Protestant, and distribute to the public.

¹³⁵ J. Lacy, *The Arraignment of Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk* (London: Nathaniel Thompson, 1685), 3.

remained safe since no evidence of the devised union could be produced.¹³⁶ Public opinion of Norfolk was not the only thing Cecil hoped to defile. Elizabeth's regard for him was too inflated for a man her minister knew to be considering treason. Unfortunately, she failed to heed his warnings. With England's future at risk, Cecil continued seeking Mary's demise. Her union with a prominent, English nobleman would bring her one step closer to attaining Elizabeth's throne, an outcome that threatened both the country's religious identity and its politics.

In February 1569, Leicester used this intended marriage in a plot to oust the advisor.¹³⁷ Gathering a following was not difficult for the earl; most of the Privy Council had always resented Cecil's elevation to their class from an ignoble family and the amount of influence he held over their queen.¹³⁸ Most parties saw the benefits to a court without him. Catholics could attempt to reclaim England, the religion to which much of the ancient nobility remained devoted. The succession would be secured by the lineage of the newlyweds. They reasoned Elizabeth would then allow the rest of her Privy Council to help govern the country, instead of just her secretary.¹³⁹ The old nobility was one of his greatest critics and might one day rise against him.

Norfolk sided with the gentry, who supported his union versus the advisor who was one of its greatest barriers. He sought out the devious Spanish Ambassador, Don

¹³⁶ Kerby Neill, "The Faerie Queene and the Mary Stuart Controversy," *ELH* 2 (September 1935): 198. The Bishop of Ross was Mary's chief confidant throughout her imprisonment. Although he was the primary person who defended her in many cases, when he was arrested he denounced his queen as a vile woman.

¹³⁷ Anthony Fletcher, *Tudor Rebellions* (New York City: Longman, 2008), 95.

¹³⁸ Edward Nares, *Memoirs of the Life and Administration of the Right Honourable William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1828), 497.

¹³⁹ Neville Williams, *A Tudor Tragedy: Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1989), 146.

Guerau De Spes who almost convinced Philip II to invade and overthrow the minister.¹⁴⁰ However, Philip's agent in the Low Countries, the Duke of Alva, Fernando Alvarez de Toledo (1507-82), deterred him, realizing the force needed to unseat the mighty secretary must be larger.¹⁴¹ Coincidentally, encouraging a war with Spain was a policy the conspirators adopted to downgrade Cecil.¹⁴² The previous December he had seized Spanish ships laden with treasure to pay for the Duke of Alva's regiments.¹⁴³ War loomed until envoys made peace, but the English nobles were still furious the minister brought them so close to an unnecessary conflict.¹⁴⁴ If the last outcome Cecil wanted was a foreign war, then why did he provoke such a formidable and militant country as Spain? Alford argues the minister feared Philip's next target was England, and therefore wanted to hinder his troops in the Netherlands.¹⁴⁵ Perhaps he was trying to reveal England's power at sea, or possibly he wanted an event where he instructed Scotland to fight alongside their southern comrade and thus showcasing the island's unity. However, his confidence in a strong, Protestant entity was mistaken. His most powerful ally in the north was the regent Murray, and he would soon learn that this Scot could not be trusted.

¹⁴⁰ The Spanish Ambassador, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 3: 1569-71* (1903), pp. IX-XXXI. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44286&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots>. De Spes was a Spanish ambassador who assisted Norfolk in his attempts to wed Mary. His birth and death dates are unknown.

¹⁴¹ Alva's Indecision, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 3: 1569-71* (1903), pp. IX-XXXI. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44286&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots>. The Duke of Alva was Philip II's overlord in the Low Countries. His refusal to support Mary's numerous attempts to raise a Catholic army impeded their success.

¹⁴² Edward Nares, *Memoirs of the Life and Administration of the Right Honourable William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1828), 492.

¹⁴³ The Spanish Treasure, in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 9: 1569-1571* (1874), pp. XI-XLV. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73132&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots>.

¹⁴⁴ Wallace T. MacCaffrey, "Cecil, William, first Baron Burghley (1520/21-1598)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4983>, accessed 3 Oct 2009].

¹⁴⁵ Stephen Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity: William Cecil and the British Succession Crisis, 1558-1569* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 189.

Never did Cecil fear for his safety more than during these perilous months. He went so far as to send money to the continent, expecting a forced banishment.¹⁴⁶ He had friends in England who were not threatened by his power, including the Lord President of the North, Thomas Radclyffe the Earl of Sussex (1525-83) who rallied some of the northern nobility to the advisor's side.¹⁴⁷ His numerous faithful alliances proved valuable. For many nobles, the secretary was their gateway to the queen, and losing him could mean forfeiting her favor. Another reason the conspiracy against the minister failed was Leicester's change of heart.¹⁴⁸ He threatened to tell Elizabeth, and the nobles knew she would never condone any attack on her chief counselor.¹⁴⁹ The earl next warned Cecil, but by then his queen had already reprimanded all the nobles involved.¹⁵⁰ Her loyalty to her minister was impenetrable.

Norfolk commented on this unwavering devotion when Leicester berated the secretary in front of Elizabeth, forcing her to scold her favorite peer.¹⁵¹ "The Earl of Leicester is favored so long as he supports the advisor, but now that for good reasons he takes an opposed position, she wants to send him to the Tower."¹⁵² This nobleman was one of the few men close enough to the sovereign to realize her devotion to her confidant.

¹⁴⁶ J.A. Froude, *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Spanish Armada* (London: Longmans, 1870), 211.

¹⁴⁷ Wallace T. MacCaffrey, "Cecil, William, first Baron Burghley (1520/21–1598)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4983>, accessed 3 Oct 2009]. The Earl of Sussex was the Lord President of the North, and a close friend of Cecil's. His army fought the northern earls.

¹⁴⁸ Leicester's Decision, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 2: 1568-1579* (1894), pp. I-LII. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86937&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86937&strquery=Duke%20Norfolk%20northern%20rebellion%20Mary%20Scots).

¹⁴⁹ Cecil's Safety, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 2: 1568-1579* (1894), pp. I-LII. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86937&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86937&strquery=Duke%20Norfolk%20northern%20rebellion%20Mary%20Scots).

¹⁵⁰ J.B. Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558-1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 133.

¹⁵¹ Neville Williams, *A Tudor Tragedy: Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1989), 148.

¹⁵² Neville Williams, *A Tudor Tragedy: Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1989), 148.

Although Leicester's own position would rise if Cecil's fell, the queen might never forgive his part in expelling her minister. The earl's allegiance to the advisor did not change his mind, his regard for Elizabeth reminded him that her self-confidence and willpower would collapse without her trusty partner at her side. He wisely forgave all involved, hoping to prevent future assaults, but never forgot a betrayal.¹⁵³ Although he was an ambitious man, England's continuation as a Protestant, politically-prominent nation depended on his presence in politics.

The marriage discussions between Mary and Norfolk covertly persisted. In the summer of 1569, Leicester attempted to propel the marriage endeavor into existence.¹⁵⁴ He readily found support with the nobles who had plotted against Cecil the previous winter.¹⁵⁵ The earl devised terms for the Scottish monarch's consent if she married Norfolk.¹⁵⁶ The secretary would have approved many of its articles if they had revealed their designs to him. One of its clauses ordered her to ratify the Treaty of Edinburgh, a task he had failed to procure from the stubborn sovereign.¹⁵⁷ She embraced the scheme, but questioned how they would obtain Elizabeth's permission.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ Michael A. R. Graves, "Howard, Thomas, fourth duke of Norfolk (1538–1572)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13941, accessed 3 Oct 2009].

¹⁵⁴ Raphael Courteville, *Memoirs of the Life and Administration of William Cecil Baron Burleigh* (London: T. Cooper, 1738), 46.

¹⁵⁵ Raphael Courteville, *Memoirs of the Life and Administration of William Cecil Baron Burleigh* (London: T. Cooper, 1738), 46.

¹⁵⁶ Raphael Courteville, *Memoirs of the Life and Administration of William Cecil Baron Burleigh* (London: T. Cooper, 1738), 46.

¹⁵⁷ Raphael Courteville, *Memoirs of the Life and Administration of William Cecil Baron Burleigh* (London: T. Cooper, 1738), 46.

¹⁵⁸ Michael A. R. Graves, "Howard, Thomas, fourth duke of Norfolk (1538–1572)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13941, accessed 3 Oct 2009].

The conspirators thought if they could first have Mary declared successor, Elizabeth would not protest her marriage with the duke.¹⁵⁹ Since both the English queen and her minister refused to consider this option, the noblemen hoped the Privy Council might reach an agreement on the issue and the twosome might alter their decision.¹⁶⁰ The Council waited until Cecil was away from court to pass a declaration confirming the Scottish monarch as heir if she wed Norfolk.¹⁶¹ Elizabeth quickly vetoed the resolution, thinking he was just a pawn and not an active participant.¹⁶² The hesitant duke still favored the union but feared his queen's wrath too much to advance it openly.¹⁶³

Throughout August, 1569, Leicester advised Norfolk to tell Elizabeth of his determination to wed Mary, but only when the time was right.¹⁶⁴ The duke even sought the counsel of Cecil, who encouraged him to tell the queen.¹⁶⁵ Although he was plotting the secretary's demise only months prior, their feud was now forgotten and friendship restored. His trust in the minister exhibits his assurance in his forgiveness. The advisor played the merciful gentleman with ease, containing the vengeance for its appropriate

¹⁵⁹ Raphael Courteville, *Memoirs of the Life and Administration of William Cecil Baron Burleigh* (London: T. Cooper, 1738), 50.

¹⁶⁰ Mary's Possible Succession, in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, Addenda, 1566-79* (1871), pp. VII-LXI. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=60810&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots>.

¹⁶¹ The Norfolk Match, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 2: 1568-1579* (1894), pp. I-LII. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86937&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots>.

¹⁶² Elizabeth's Veto, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 2: 1568-1579* (1894), pp. I-LII. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86937&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots>.

¹⁶³ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

¹⁶⁴ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

¹⁶⁵ Cecil to Sir William Drury, Marshall of Berwick, Southampton, 9 September 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 418.

time. He decided to let Norfolk bury himself in this scheme, and if the union came close to actualizing, he would stop it in time. Choosing not to inform her Majesty, Cecil risked her displeasure, but if he waited until the duke's guilt was undeniable then he could grab the glory of detecting the plan before it transpired. He knew the noble was a coward. Secret conversations and sending treacherous letters was easy, but the duke retreated when he needed to act. Cecil wrote "he will do nothing almost of any moment in his private causes, but upon advise."¹⁶⁶ Norfolk feared the fate of several of his relatives, a life in the Tower, or a moment on the scaffold, a likely possibility.

The duke was intimidated by Leicester and decided to keep waiting for a more opportune moment.¹⁶⁷ He had several chances to communicate his enterprise to Elizabeth, who heard of his scheming from court gossip.¹⁶⁸ She invited him to a private dinner where she told him "to take good heed of his pillow," referring to their conversation the previous year.¹⁶⁹ Not even a blatant hint from the queen could convince him to deviate from the earl's counsel. Norfolk should have been wary of his motives. His chief aim was his monarch's favor, leading him to confess when he contemplated her displeasure if she discovered his betrayal. He feigned an illness to gain sympathy from

¹⁶⁶ Mr. Secretary Cecil to Sir Ralph Sadler, 30 December 1559, in Ralph Sadler, Arthur Clifford, Walter Scott, Archibald Constable, and Henry Bickersteth. 1809. In *The state papers and letters of Sir Ralph Sadler, knight-banneret*. Edinburgh: Printed for Archibald Constable and Co. ... and for T. Cadell and W. Davies, William Miller, and John Murray, London, 668.

¹⁶⁷ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

¹⁶⁸ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

¹⁶⁹ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

the sovereign, and when Elizabeth hastened to his bedside, the earl divulged the marriage plot.¹⁷⁰ She reproached both Leicester and the duke, both promising to abstain from all future involvement with Mary.¹⁷¹

Norfolk's friends deserted him, lest they be implicated in the scheme. He only lasted a week at court before he fled to his country estate in Kenninghall.¹⁷² Leicester had warned him to leave or else he would surely be sent to the Tower.¹⁷³ His only compatriots remaining were Catholics, who encouraged him to commit more treachery.¹⁷⁴ Realizing that Cecil knew his every move, Norfolk acted cautiously. Either he must return to court and beg the queen's mercy or lead the northern lords in a rebellion against the secretary. These Catholic gentry had been preparing for the marriage and subsequent overthrow of the English government. They had never favored Elizabeth, whose religious policies had kept them from practicing their form of Christianity for the last decade. They blamed the minister's influence for her Protestant program, and believed his destruction would give their religion a chance at revival. The duke, being the highest ranking noble at court and having a thirst for glory, was perfect to lead their crusade

¹⁷⁰ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

¹⁷¹ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

¹⁷² Queen Elizabeth to the Duke of Norfolk, 25 September 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 423.

¹⁷³ The Duke of Norfolk to Queen Elizabeth, Kenninghall, 24 September 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 423.

¹⁷⁴ Raphael Courteville, *Memoirs of the Life and Administration of William Cecil Baron Burleigh* (London: T. Cooper, 1738), 51.

against the advisor. The foreign ambassadors encouraged him to lead the rebellion, hoping at long last their hopes of an England without Cecil would commence.¹⁷⁵

Although Norfolk's ambition drove him to consent to marrying a queen, his weak character kept him from actively pursuing it. Mary realized this and wrote letters encouraging him to be valiant and rescue her.¹⁷⁶ The earls of the north assumed his departure from court was the signal to begin their planned rebellion.¹⁷⁷ These noblemen had cried out for Mary's release since her imprisonment in England, and had been waiting for a chance to rescue her. They were the military strength required to support the couple, and were therefore privy to the marriage plot. The union was only the first step, the second being a rebellion to drive the Protestants from power. While they quietly prepared for combat, the court anxiously expected a revolt led by Norfolk to erupt.¹⁷⁸ Cecil strove to thwart the revolt by sending Mary from Shrewsbury's care to the safer custody of Henry Hastings, the Third Earl of Huntingdon (1535-95), in Tutbury.¹⁷⁹ The secretary altered the militia, shut the ports, and secured Elizabeth in Windsor castle, a structure capable of withstanding an attack.¹⁸⁰ He was taking no chances; his greatest

¹⁷⁵ "Recueil des Depeches, Rapports, Instructions et Memoires des Ambassadeurs de France en Angleterre et en Ecosse," *The Foreign Quarterly Review* 22 (January 1839): 289.

¹⁷⁶ Examination of Sir Nicholas Throgmorton before the Lord Keeper, Sir Ralph Sadler, and Sir Walter Mildmay, 10 October 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 430.

¹⁷⁷ Anthony Fletcher, *Tudor Rebellions* (New York City: Longman, 2008), 95.

¹⁷⁸ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

¹⁷⁹ Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Shrewsbury, 22 September 1569, in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 1: 1306-1571* (1883), pp. 414-459. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=111990&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots>. The Earl of Huntingdon temporarily guarded Mary.

¹⁸⁰ Queen Elizabeth to the Earls of Westmoreland and Northumberland, Windsor, 10 November 1569, in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 1: 1306-1571* (1883), pp. 414-459. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=111990&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots>.

fear was on the brink of unfolding. Read interpreted Cecil's actions as his distrust for his government's ability to combat domestic dilemmas that involved religion.¹⁸¹ However, he probably just wanted to avoid the risk.

The ancient nobility hated the policies the minister had masterminded and the esteemed position he held in their government. Their revenge was imminent. All eyes were on Norfolk, who was lying low, deciding which fate to choose. Elizabeth ordered him to return to court immediately, "show yourself a faithful servant, as you write you are, and without any excuse do speedily reappear to us here at this our Castle of Windsor, or where forever we shall be."¹⁸² Norfolk continued to delay, blaming his fever and pledging his innocence.¹⁸³ He wrote to Cecil, begging him to assure Elizabeth of his steadfast loyalty. The secretary reassured the frightened duke his majesty would reward his obedience and show leniency, but he had no intention of keeping the noble from her fury.¹⁸⁴ Though their correspondence was cordial, Norfolk had convinced the advisor's enemies to overthrow him, and therefore owed no allegiance to this untrustworthy noble.¹⁸⁵ The duke, however, believed Cecil had forgiven him, and put his life in the secretary's hands. Choosing the legitimate queen over the deposed one, he sent a

¹⁸¹ Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 453.

¹⁸² The Duke of Norfolk to Queen Elizabeth, Kenninghall, 24 September 1569, in *A collection of state papers, relating to affairs in the reigns of King Henry VIII. King Edward VI. Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1542 to 1570* (London: William Bowyer, 1740), 529.

¹⁸³ The Duke of Norfolk to Queen Elizabeth, Kenninghall, 24 September 1569, in *A collection of state papers, relating to affairs in the reigns of King Henry VIII. King Edward VI. Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1542 to 1570* (London: William Bowyer, 1740), 529.

¹⁸⁴ Cecil to Sir William Drury, Marshall of Berwick, Southampton, 9 September 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 418.

¹⁸⁵ The Earl of Sussex to Cecil, York, 15 May 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 409.

message to the awaiting northern lords to abandon the plan.¹⁸⁶ He returned to court in early October, after two weeks on his country estate, and was promptly sent to the Tower of London.¹⁸⁷ The minister was lightly scolded for withholding the scheme from her, but he defended himself by asserting it was his job to know everything.¹⁸⁸ He assured her he had the situation under control, utilizing his numerous spies who had kept him informed of every step of Norfolk's treachery.¹⁸⁹ Read claims the advisor also endeavored to silence the situation in an attempt to spare the duke from the queen's further displeasure.¹⁹⁰ Cecil had successfully encouraged the noble to abandon the Scottish monarch, thereby eliminating the head of the developing rebellion. The uprising threatened to destroy his religious settlement and political position. He understood that a group without a leader was doomed to failure.

Cecil arrested the duke's friends and interrogated them to learn the full extent of the venture. The Florentine banker Roberto Ridolfi (1531-1612) was detained in the house of the secretary's protégée, Sir Francis Walsingham (1532-90).¹⁹¹ Although the Italian was a known mischief-maker, the minister did not suspect him. By detaining the banker, the minister terminated his correspondence with De Spes, who Cecil knew was

¹⁸⁶ Thomas Bishop to the Council, 22 May 1570, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 471.

¹⁸⁷ The Duke of Norfolk to the Council, from the Tower, 19 October 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 436.

¹⁸⁸ Neville Williams, *A Tudor Tragedy: Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1989), 166.

¹⁸⁹ Neville Williams, *A Tudor Tragedy: Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1989), 166.

¹⁹⁰ Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 451.

¹⁹¹ The Queen of Scots and the Duke of Norfolk, 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 458. Roberto Ridolfi was the chief organizer of the Ridolfi plot which attempted to place Mary on the English throne. Sir Francis Walsingham was Cecil's protégée. Cecil taught him the strategies of politics, which he utilized when he succeeded Cecil as secretary and orchestrated the Babington plot in 1586.

involved in the marriage plot.¹⁹² The charismatic trickster so charmed Walsingham that he encouraged his mentor to hire him as a spy, but the nobleman detected his disloyalty.¹⁹³ Ridolfi was released, deceiving both men by secretly conveying money from Pope Pius V (1504-72) to the northern earls.¹⁹⁴

Cecil accomplished many of his aspirations in these first eleven years of his career under the young queen. Successfully silencing the marriage possibility of Dudley and Elizabeth assured her political dominance and kept foreign Protestant princes' hopes alive they might wed her. In Scotland, he wisely replaced French influence with English, laying the foundation for the island's union. He also maintained his status as her closest counselor and helped her engineer England's religious program. To sustain Protestantism, he repelled its biggest threat, Mary Queen of Scots. This Catholic monarch's eye was set on Elizabeth's crown, a detail Cecil feared his majesty failed to realize.

As the Scottish sovereign's greatest adversary, he worked tirelessly to ensure all efforts to rescue her from prison and install her as England's papist leader were immediately quashed. Her greatest attempts to escape and claim the English throne, by way of wedding the duke, occurred during 1569-71. These three years are now known as the crisis years in the secretary's career. Since the scheming monarch was his greatest opponent, it is no surprise that this time frame earned the title. This period shaped his gift for administration, and the most essential aspect it entailed was safeguarding the

¹⁹² Stephen Budiansky, *Her Majesty's Spymaster: Elizabeth I, Sir Francis Walsingham, and the Birth of Modern Espionage* (New York City: Penguin Group, 2006), 75.

¹⁹³ Stephen Budiansky, *Her Majesty's Spymaster: Elizabeth I, Sir Francis Walsingham, and the Birth of Modern Espionage* (New York City: Penguin Group, 2006), 75.

¹⁹⁴ Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 38. Pope Pius V was the Roman Catholic leader from 1566 to 1572. He detested the Protestant Elizabeth and called on Catholic princes, especially Philip, to rescue Mary and put in her Elizabeth's place.

queen. Although now both Mary and Norfolk were locked away under Cecil's supervision, the plot to rescue her continued. The eager Catholic nobles of the north refused to allow their leader's imprisonment to deter their designs.

Chapter Two

1569-70: The Crisis Continued

England and Cecil faced a crisis in 1569 that threatened to overthrow Elizabeth's government. The northern rebellion was one of his greatest challenges. This first big military revolt against him showcases another ominous event he used to his personal advantage while strengthening the country. England's stability was in jeopardy in these final months of 1569. Although the uprising in the north had lost its intensity with Norfolk's imprisonment, it continued. News of the impending danger reached the countryside by October. With their leader incarcerated, these provincial peasants lived in suspense of what their Lords would decide to do. Like their overlords, their grievances were with Cecil, not Elizabeth. Although predominantly Catholic, they had submitted to their queen's religious decrees for the past decade. However, they had not agreed to her choice of secretary, blaming him for their problems.¹⁹⁵ They presumed if he were removed, she would relax her control on their faith and their cohorts in the Privy Council could persuade her to restore some of their forbidden religious practices. Many in their midst heightened their hope for change, and many prepared for the day when the earls would come to lead them on a mission to overthrow the minister.

Historians disagree on the advisor's impressions of the rebellion. Graves claims that the secretary regarded it as a threat to political security, while Hume argues he saw it

¹⁹⁵ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

as a religious problem.¹⁹⁶ Read maintains that he perceived it as both a spiritual and personal attack.¹⁹⁷ While each biographer contributes insightful claims, they fail to realize that he considered the uprising as a danger to England's stability, encompassing the success of both his religious and political programs. Alford claims that the revolt forced the minister to define his policy to the northern subjects. He declared that God granted Elizabeth total authority to govern them as she pleased, and therefore they should obey her every command.¹⁹⁸ This chapter, based on the minister's letters, argues that the advisor realized containing the leader, Norfolk, meant impeding the rebellion, which he used to gain sympathy for his Protestant cause.

An understanding of the northern mindset is essential to uncovering why the ancient nobility viewed Cecil as such a threat. A somewhat secluded existence in the English woodlands shaped a different kind of people from those at court. Elizabeth was their leader living in an unfamiliar capital faraway. Their primary devotion lay with religion and the land. The countryside was owned by the earls, who governed their subjects like feudal tribes.¹⁹⁹ These noblemen lived mainly at court and therefore maintained a very different existence from their subjects. However, the gentry and their vassals possessed one major similarity. "Lord and tenant were drawn closer together by a common interest in the defense of the old faith."²⁰⁰ Since many of the young northern men worked in the households of the nobility it is not surprising that they shared their

¹⁹⁶196 Michael A.R. Graves, *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (New York City: Longman, 1998), 90. Martin Hume, *The Great Lord Burghley: A Study in Elizabethan Statecraft* (New York: NY McClure Phillips & Co, 1906), 240.

¹⁹⁷ Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 464.

¹⁹⁸ Stephen Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity: William Cecil and the British Succession Crisis, 1558-1569* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 208.

¹⁹⁹ J.B. Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558-1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 135.

²⁰⁰ J.B. Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558-1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 136.

lords' beliefs.²⁰¹ Restoring their fallen religion meant deposing Cecil, who consequently had few friends from the rural aristocracy. Graves finds this surprising, and attests that the minister, to achieve political order, helped them maintain their position in government.²⁰²

The two most prominent families in the north were the Nevilles and the Percies, and many were related to them by either blood or marriage.²⁰³ The leaders of the rebels were Charles Neville, the Earl of Westmorland (1542-1601), and Henry Percy, the Earl of Northumberland (1532-85).²⁰⁴ Both men belonged to the ancient nobility, who had been in power for generations. Since the secretary's dominance, however, their influence on the queen had declined, leaving them outraged and desiring revenge. Numerous advantages awaited the earls if Norfolk married Mary of Scots. Their restored status, a return of Catholicism, and a deposed Cecil inspired their enterprise. First, the Scottish queen must be rescued, but without the prominent noble to lead the restless papists, the malcontents were left pondering their next move. Even continental papists speculated about the looming rebellion. The Spanish ambassador, Don Guerau De Espes, wrote to the Spanish king "the Catholics are many though the leaders are few, and Lord Burghley with his terrible fury, has greatly dismayed them, for they are afraid even of speaking to each other."²⁰⁵

²⁰¹ J.B. Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558-1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 135.

²⁰² Michael A.R. Graves, *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (New York City: Longman, 1998), 208.

²⁰³ Thomas Wright, *Queen Elizabeth and Her Times* (London: Henry Colburn Publisher, 1838), xxxiv.

²⁰⁴ The Earl of Westmorland was a Catholic noble from northern England. He was one of the leaders of the northern rebellion. The Earl of Northumberland was also a Catholic member of the ancient nobility, and helped lead the uprising of the north.

²⁰⁵ Guerau De Spes to the King, London, 7 September 1571, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 2: 1568-1579* (1894), pp. 334-339. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86983&strquery=cecil+leaders+be+few+terrible+fury>.

Elizabeth and her minister feared a rebellion would erupt any day, and from the testimonies of Norfolk's comrades in custody, they had ample reason. The secretary cautioned his colleagues to "regard the state of the country northward, where Mary is, and to keep suspected persons in some awe from hearkening the common people from riots, which are the cloaks of rebellions."²⁰⁶ Cecil was not naive; he knew any religious revolt targeted his removal. He prepared by confining the boys of northern families at their universities, forbidding large assemblies, and purging them of arms.²⁰⁷ He also seized the correspondence of the French Ambassador, Bertrand de Salignac de la Mothe-Fenelon (1523-89), in addition to having spies at the French court who kept him informed on the latest schemes.²⁰⁸

He ordered more spies to monitor De Espes, who informed his king that the north was eagerly awaiting the queen of Scotland's liberation to begin their rebellion.²⁰⁹ The foreign Ambassadors, encouraged by their Catholic kings, regularly conspired against Cecil. Spain and France were the reasons Mary posed such a threat to the secretary, and why he so feared a Catholic-dominated Scotland. Continental papists with a foothold on the island would bring them closer to conquering England and destroying the system he had created. She could be their excuse to attack England. Presently, however, his fellow Englishmen were the ones encroaching on this safety.

²⁰⁶ Memorial at Hampton Court, Hampton Court, 10 March 1569, in *A collection of state papers, relating to affairs in the reigns of King Henry VIII. King Edward VI. Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1542 to 1570* (London: William Bowyer, 1740), 587.

²⁰⁷ "Recueil des Depeches, Rapports, Instructions et Memoires des Ambassadeurs de France en Angleterre et en Ecosse," *The Foreign Quarterly Review* 22 (January 1839): 291.

²⁰⁸ J.B. Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558-1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 134.

²⁰⁹ The Waiting Rebels, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: Volume 3: 1569-71 (1903)*, pp. IX-XXXI. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44286&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44286&strquery=Duke+Norfolk+northern+rebellion+Mary+Scots).

The advisor took every precaution. The earls' chief objective was the secretary's head on a pike, and, if they rebelled, his numerous enemies at court might align with them. Elizabeth had thwarted their efforts earlier that year, but if foreigners joined them, all her forces would need to be ready to suppress this threat. Preparing for this foreign aid, Cecil put the navy on alert and instructed every family to acquire a weapon.²¹⁰ However, all was quiet in the countryside. The Earl of Sussex assured the minister nothing was awry.²¹¹ Although Sussex was his trusted friend and would prove a loyal servant, the queen did not believe him.²¹² She sent Sir Ralph Sadler (1507-87) to spy on the earl, but no evidence suggested he was anything but faithful.²¹³ Sadler's fidelity induced the secretary to utilize his detective skills in future enterprises. He never lacked informants. He believed them crucial to his safety, which ultimately kept England protected.

Although Sussex believed the north to be secure, Cecil discarded his friend's confidence as naivety. In October, to placate his uneasiness, Elizabeth directed the earl to summon Northumberland and Westmorland to court directly.²¹⁴ When they failed to

²¹⁰ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

²¹¹ Sussex's Reassurance, in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, Addenda, 1566-79* (1871), pp. 84-92. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=60853&strquery=sussex+elizabeth+north+norfolk+cecil>.

²¹² John Lingard, *The History of England, from the First Invasion by the Romans to the Accession of William and Mary in 1688* (London: Nimmo, 1883), 214.

²¹³ John Lingard, *The History of England, from the First Invasion by the Romans to the Accession of William and Mary in 1688* (London: Nimmo, 1883), 214. Sir Ralph Sadler was the secretary of state for Henry VIII, and a loyal confidant of Cecil.

²¹⁴ The Queen to the Earls of Westmoreland and Northumberland, Windsor, 10 November 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 441.

appear, Sussex was dumbfounded and continued to send messages to the nobles.²¹⁵ The queen perceived the reason for their reluctance and wrote “we do command you upon the duty of your allegiance to make your speedy repair unto us without any delay or excuse.”²¹⁶ Northumberland and Westmorland had two choices; submit to their sovereign and face the imprisoned fate of Norfolk or launch the rebellion.

To signal the rebellion’s outbreak the eager men who encircled the earls ordered the town bells rung backwards, the quickest way to gather a crowd.²¹⁷ Sussex sent an urgent message to London seeking aid. Although he had many soldiers, they were predominantly Catholic, and he feared their betrayal.²¹⁸ Their adoration of Sussex, however, kept his men loyal, but he worried they would be no match for the ever increasing strength of the insurgents.²¹⁹ Cecil’s fears were finally becoming a reality. Though the revolt was momentarily flustered with Norfolk’s imprisonment, their vigor returned. Their objective was obvious to everyone, even Elizabeth, who wrote to Sussex to “notify the whole county that these rebels’ enterprise is not grounded in religion but another devise.”²²⁰ The safety of her favorite councilor was a serious matter; she had never ruled without him. Also, she feared a religious civil war would further divide her

²¹⁵ Lord of Bedford to Sir Ralph Sadler, 21 November 1559, in Ralph Sadler, Arthur Clifford, Walter Scott, Archibald Constable, and Henry Bickersteth. 1809. In *The state papers and letters of Sir Ralph Sadler, knight-banneret*. Edinburgh: Printed for Archibald Constable and Co. ... and for T. Cadell and W. Davies, William Miller, and John Murray, Londonm 65.

²¹⁶ Queen Elizabeth to the Earls of Westmoreland and Northumberland, Windsor, 10 November 1569, in *A collection of state papers, relating to affairs in the reigns of King Henry VIII. King Edward VI. Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1542 to 1570* (London: William Bowyer, 1740), 553.

²¹⁷ John Lingard, *The History of England, from the First Invasion by the Romans to the Accession of William and Mary in 1688* (London: Nimmo, 1883), 209.

²¹⁸ John Lingard, *The History of England, from the First Invasion by the Romans to the Accession of William and Mary in 1688* (London: Nimmo, 1883), 214.

²¹⁹The Queen to the Earl of Cumberland, 14 November 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 441.

²²⁰Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Sussex, 1569, in *A collection of state papers, relating to affairs in the reigns of King Henry VIII. King Edward VI. Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1542 to 1570* (London: William Bowyer, 1740), 555.

kingdom, and if the clandestine Catholics believed this rebellion had political motivations they might be less inclined to join.

The northern earls led their troops to Durham, arriving on November 10, 1569. Entering its churches, they destroyed the prayer books and performed mass, an illegal act according to the religious settlement.²²¹ They created a banner with the crucifix and the five wounds of Jesus stitched into it.²²² To expose their patriotic motives, they issued a proclamation declaring themselves “the Queen’s most true subjects,” and stated that “the new nobles go about daily to overthrow the ancient nobility, misuse the queen’s own person, and maintain a new found religion of heresy.”²²³ The new nobles criticized Cecil, whose family, while wellborn, could not compete with the pedigree of the ancient nobility. These aristocrats were mainly Catholic, and Elizabeth could not risk restoring their political influence knowing they might seek to undo her religious policies. They most fervently desired the advisor dismissed, but the idea of surrendering her chief counselor was unacceptable. She abhorred that her subjects believed the secretary controlled her, wanting her decisions credited to her talents. However, his skills were irrefutable, and she refused to relinquish a man whose loyalty never wavered. The queen also ignored their professions of devotion. Obedient subjects would never refuse an order, let alone start a rebellion.

²²¹ Ralph Sadler, Arthur Clifford, Walter Scott, Archibald Constable, and Henry Bickersteth. 1809. In *The state papers and letters of Sir Ralph Sadler, knight-banneret*. Edinburgh: Printed for Archibald Constable and Co. ... and for T. Cadell and W. Davies, William Miller, and John Murray, London, 35.

²²² “The Rising in the North,” *Monthly Chronicle of North-Country Lore and Legend* 5 (August 1891): 338.

²²³ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

The rebels' first objective was to rescue Mary from captivity and marry her to Norfolk, thus securing a papist succession.²²⁴ Although he was Protestant, his Catholic sympathies were public knowledge, assuring the earls they could convert him.²²⁵ The duke's imprisonment was not part of the plan. The modified design comprised of first emancipating Mary and then triumphantly riding to London, where they hoped the closeted papists would join them. After liberating the duke, they would depose Cecil and Elizabeth and crown the newlywed couple as England's king and queen. After they returned their kingdom to Catholicism, a continental counter reformation could ensue, but foreign aid was needed to ensure this. The secretary was always vigilant of the continental princes reinforcing English rebels and worked tirelessly to contain the uprising. If they succeeded, the country's faith would once again be transformed, further dividing its people. Graves argues that the minister saw this as a threat to England's political stability.²²⁶ However, as Cecil's letters argue, he feared for both its temporal and sacred welfare.

The Duke of Alba promised to send soldiers to the earls but changed his mind, deciding their force was insufficient.²²⁷ Without his agent's support, Philip II decided not to intervene either, although Mary had vowed that if he helped her, mass would once

²²⁴ Examination of Sir Nicholas Throgmorton before the Lord Keeper, Sir Ralph Sadler, and Sir Walter Mildmay, 10 October 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 430.

²²⁵ Charles Bailly to Lord Burghley, 2 May 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 497.

²²⁶ Michael A.R. Graves, *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (New York City: Longman, 1998), 38.

²²⁷ Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Cumberland, 7 December 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 450.

again be celebrated throughout England.²²⁸ Not even the domestic Catholic leaders rallied to their cause.²²⁹ They even sent their letters from the rebels craving assistance to Elizabeth, demonstrating that their allegiance was to the crown and not their religion.²³⁰ Cecil affirmed that the lack of international papist support was due to their engagement elsewhere, not loyalty.²³¹ He noted that the two Catholic superpowers, France and Spain, had their own problems. The former was in a civil war, and the latter was squelching uprisings in its numerous territories.²³² Had they been unengaged, Cecil alleged they would have readily endorsed the endeavor.²³³

The rebellion raged on. The earls took Barnard Castle and the port of Hartlepool.²³⁴ They gained recruits at every village they encountered.²³⁵ After a decade of suffering, these newcomers were eager to dismantle the system Cecil had created.

Locked away in the safe confines of court, Elizabeth was ignorant of the insurrection's

²²⁸ James MacKay, *In My End is My Beginning: A Life of Mary Queen of Scots* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1999), 254.

²²⁹ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

²³⁰ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

²³¹ Memorial by Cecil, Hampton Court, 10 March 1570, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 465.

²³² The Emperor's Answer to the French King's Demands, Vienna, 17 October 1568, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 366.

²³³ Memorial by Cecil, Hampton Court, 10 March 1570, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 465.

²³⁴ Thomas Bishop to the Council, 22 May 1570, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 471.

²³⁵ Thomas Bishop to the Council, 22 May 1570, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 471.

seriousness.²³⁶ She refused to spend a penny to fight the uprising.²³⁷ Her secretary, however, was secretly combating the rebels by publishing scathing pamphlets.²³⁸ Once again, he utilized his friend Norton, who wrote a document condemning them called *To the Queen's Majesties poor deceived Subjects in the North Country*.²³⁹ He also wasted no time in posting a spy in the rebel's camp, a tactic he implemented in France, Spain, Scotland, and other locations. His spy, Thomas Randolph, infiltrated their camp.²⁴⁰ He fooled the unassuming earls by divulging their plans to Cecil. Randolph's reports informed the advisor where they were marching, their numbers, and what their most fervent conviction was: deposing the elevated secretary.

The rebels headed to Tutbury Castle, Shrewsbury's residence, to rescue Mary. Cecil knew this was a probable destination for them because he had planted a spy in Shrewsbury's household who informed his employer of her correspondence with the northern earls. She promised to restore her faith when she was released.²⁴¹ When news reached court of the combatants' progress, Cecil decided that by taking away the prize, they might lose confidence. He therefore had Mary immediately removed to Coventry Castle, a stronger fortress surrounded by a town loyal to the crown.²⁴² Approaching

²³⁶ The State of the Realm, 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 457.

²³⁷ J.R. Leader, *Mary Queen of Scots in Captivity* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1880), 99.

²³⁸ Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 160.

²³⁹ Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 160.

²⁴⁰ John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (New York City: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 138. Thomas Randolph's birth and death dates are unknown.

²⁴¹ Interrogatories and Answers of John Hall, 30 July 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 514.

²⁴² William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable*

Tutbury, the rebels learned of her change in location and lost morale.²⁴³ The ensuing desertion signaled the uprising's turning point.²⁴⁴ If only they had known they outnumbered Elizabeth's forces they could have been successful.²⁴⁵

The dismayed nobles returned to where only a month earlier they had declared their vengeful mission, the town of Durham.²⁴⁶ They held a council to decide whether to press onward or capitulate.²⁴⁷ Three reasons prompted their surrender: lack of funds, an inept leadership, and the secretary finally persuading his queen to send more soldiers.²⁴⁸ As for the fugitive rebels, Cecil and Leicester instructed Sussex's forces to join the Scots in the hunt.²⁴⁹ The two armies followed the retreating men across the Scottish border.²⁵⁰ They had been freely roaming the countryside since Sussex was too afraid to send in his insufficient soldiers. Most of the fleeing nobles went over the border. The minister

passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

²⁴³ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

²⁴⁴ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

²⁴⁵ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

²⁴⁶ Thomas Bishop to the Council, 22 May 1570, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 470.

²⁴⁷ "The Rising in the North," *Monthly Chronicle of North-Country Lore and Legend* 5 (August 1891): 339.

²⁴⁸ Thomas Bishop to the Council, 22 May 1570, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 471.

²⁴⁹ Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 19.

²⁵⁰ The Retreat, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 3: 1569-71* (1903), pp. IX-XXXI. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44286&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots Elizabeth sussex send 1569](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44286&strquery=Duke%20Norfolk+northern+rebellion+Mary+Scots+Elizabeth+sussex+send+1569).

wrote to Murray about strategies to track them down.²⁵¹ Philip II of Spain sent money to the Catholic nobles and, to stop an international conflict, Elizabeth ordered Sussex to return home.²⁵² Although the advisor wanted all of them found and punished, he refused to risk giving a larger Catholic force a reason to attack. England's stability meant avoiding war, which was more important to the minister than these traitors' capture.

Cecil had cause to fear the uprising might evolve into a foreign encounter. Pope Pius V had sent Roberto Ridolfi with money to secretly aid the rebels and commanded the papist princes to do the same.²⁵³ Unfortunately for the earls, it arrived too late. If they had sustained their revolt a few weeks longer the outcome might have been very different. Not only would the papal sustenance have come but Philip II claimed he was about to provide relief.²⁵⁴ The secretary trusted his informants who warned him of these schemes, but Elizabeth was not as easily convinced of the impending threat. The minister hoped the rebellion would persuade her to create an opposition capable of defeating this combined Catholic army.

The northern earls' insurrection was short-lived because of the tactics Cecil implemented. He convinced the government that a religious threat signified a challenge to their political authority. He had induced Norfolk to turn himself in by promising merciful treatment, and without the duke's leadership many abandoned the endeavor. Sussex had refused to fight until the minister ordered troops to reinforce his. The

²⁵¹ Arthur Collins, *Peerage of England, Genealogical, Biographical, and Historical* (London: Rivington, 1812), 403.

²⁵² The Duke of Norfolk's Note, 18 September 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 526.

²⁵³ The Pope's Interference, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 1: 1558-1571* (1916), pp. V-LXIV. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92522&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92522&strquery=Duke+Norfolk+northern+rebellion+Mary+Scots).

²⁵⁴ "Mignet's Life of Mary Queen of Scots," *New Monthly Magazine and Humorist* 93 (October 1851): 169.

millions of people opposed to the advisor, who were expected to rise up with the rebels, never materialized. Either out of loyalty or fear, the populace chose Elizabeth over Mary. Many who found the courage soon deserted because of their dread of the ensuing retribution if they lost and the poor leadership of Northumberland and Westmorland. The rural overlords also proved loyal to the crown. MacCaffrey noted how “the government reaped the benefits of a policy pursued for the past decade of filling the frontier posts with men loyal to the Crown.”²⁵⁵ Realizing that subjects usually obeyed these powerful men, the secretary chose only the most trustworthy servants.

Cecil’s alliance with Murray brought some of the fugitive earls to justice. The two most wanted men were Westmorland and Northumberland, who had escaped to Scotland.²⁵⁶ The former eventually fled to Flanders, where he died a pauper.²⁵⁷ The regent discovered and delivered the latter to the English government for execution in 1572.²⁵⁸ During Northumberland’s time in hiding, the minister sent one of the earl’s friends to find the concealed rebel and obtain his confidence. The plan was to betray the unsuspecting noble and bring him to Elizabeth.²⁵⁹ Unfortunately, the spy abandoned his task after observing the tremendous following Mary had in the north.²⁶⁰ Cecil made sure these enthusiasts were crushed and executed over seven-hundred people for their role in

²⁵⁵ W.T. MacCaffrey, *The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime: Elizabethan Politics, 1558-1572* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), 343.

²⁵⁶ Ralph Sadler, Arthur Clifford, Walter Scott, Archibald Constable, and Henry Bickersteth. 1809. In *The state papers and letters of Sir Ralph Sadler, knight-banneret*. Edinburgh: Printed for Archibald Constable and Co. ... and for T. Cadell and W. Davies, William Miller, and John Murray, London.

²⁵⁷ The Rebels’ Fate, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 3: 1569-71* (1903), pp. 196-241. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44296&strquery=westmorland+flanders+elizabeth+mary>.

²⁵⁸ Ralph Sadler, Arthur Clifford, Walter Scott, Archibald Constable, and Henry Bickersteth. 1809. *The state papers and letters of Sir Ralph Sadler, knight-banneret*. Edinburgh: Printed for Archibald Constable and Co. ... and for T. Cadell and W. Davies, William Miller, and John Murray, London.

²⁵⁹ Arthur Collins, *Peerage of England, Genealogical, Biographical, and Historical* (London: Rivington, 1812), 460.

²⁶⁰ Arthur Collins, *Peerage of England, Genealogical, Biographical, and Historical* (London: Rivington, 1812), 460.

the uprising.²⁶¹ They witnessed how the queen's measures were just as venomous as the punishments Mary I had inflicted on revolting Protestants. Although the dissenters were silenced, Cecil's unpopularity grew. Elizabeth's policies were difficult to enforce on a people who did not respect her closest advisor. He did not share her desire for approval, being more concerned with his country's safety.

As for the punishment of the deposed sovereign, the Privy Council proposed to put Mary of Scots to death.²⁶² However, the minister's wish of a world without his archenemy was rebuffed by his monarch.²⁶³ She refused to commit regicide, fearing her own sacredness would be compromised. Elizabeth beseeched her kinswoman to beware of instigators, writing "what malicious persons incense you with mistrust of me, I would reject their whispering tales, they seek to make you the instrument of rebellions in my realm."²⁶⁴ The head counselor missed another opportunity to remove his nemesis. However, he did convince Elizabeth to increase her guards.²⁶⁵ He had won the battle but feared this was only the beginning of the plots to rescue the captive monarch. Her devoted supporters were more than discouraged after the revolt's demise. After such a serious conflict, Cecil procured the Scottish queen's increased security, and he worried it would take a substantial attack to arouse his mistress to act.

²⁶¹ A Short Memorial of the State of the Realm, 1569, in *A collection of state papers, relating to affairs in the reigns of King Henry VIII. King Edward VI. Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1542 to 1570* (London: William Bowyer, 1740), 587.

²⁶² The State of the Realm, 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 457.

²⁶³ The State of the Realm, 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 457.

²⁶⁴ G.B. Harrison, *The Letters of Queen Elizabeth* (London: Cassell, 1935), 66. Elizabeth sent this letter to her cousin Mary on February 20, 1570.

²⁶⁵ Elizabeth's Precautions, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 2: 1568-1579* (1894), pp. I-LII. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86937&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86937&strquery=Duke+Norfolk+northern+rebellion+Mary+Scots).

The uprising's failure diminished the Catholic strength in the north.²⁶⁶ Their humiliation was continued by Sussex's army, who ransacked the disloyal villages on their way home.²⁶⁷ Not only were these rebels' spirits broken but their economy was in shambles. Numerous wealthy and influential men escaped abroad or purchased their freedom by sacrificing their lands to Elizabeth.²⁶⁸ Life was not any easier for those pardoned. They had no money to pay their restitution, and many were driven to poverty. Two centuries passed before they finally recovered.²⁶⁹ Read contends if the rebels had set out to destroy their monarch, instead of her minister, the outcome might have been different, which poses the question of who held the real power.²⁷⁰

Murray continued to pursue the remaining fugitives, driving the English further into his debt.²⁷¹ He desired authority over Mary's imprisonment, but Cecil would not relinquish his hold on the conniving queen, no matter how many rebels he captured.²⁷² Although Murray hated his half-sister, the secretary feared her well-known charm bending him toward her will. Cecil's grip on her tightened when the regent was

²⁶⁶ "Recueil des Depeches, Rappports, Instructions et Memoires des Ambassadeurs de France en Angleterre et en Ecosse," *The Foreign Quarterly Review* 22 (January 1839): 298.

²⁶⁷ Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Cumberland, 7 December 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 450.

²⁶⁸ The Northerners' Fate, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 3: 1569-71* (1903), pp. 39-65. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44291&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots men escaped abroad](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44291&strquery=Duke%20Norfolk%20northern%20rebellion%20Mary%20Scots%20men%20escaped%20abroad).

²⁶⁹ Neville Williams, *A Tudor Tragedy: Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1989), 174.

²⁷⁰ Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 431.

²⁷¹ Murray's Hunt, in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 9: 1569-1571* (1874), pp. XI-XLV. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73132&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73132&strquery=Duke%20Norfolk%20northern%20rebellion%20Mary%20Scots).

²⁷² William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

assassinated in January 1570.²⁷³ The minister mourned the loss of an ally, but was pleased that the negotiations for surrendering the queen were over. James Hamilton (1516-81), a prominent Scottish lord who supported her, killed Murray for personal reasons.²⁷⁴ If Scotland's leader could be eliminated so easily, Cecil feared he could as well.²⁷⁵ The northern kingdom plummeted into anarchy, as Mary's party joined Murray's to seize the government.²⁷⁶

The secretary convinced Elizabeth to send Sussex's army back across the border to crush the new administration.²⁷⁷ She feared the French would once again intervene in Scotland's affairs and help their former princess.²⁷⁸ The hopeful prisoner wrote to her former mother-in-law Catherine de Medici (1519-89), "I entreat you to implore the other allied princes to join with you, for the support and reestablishment of a queen, your daughter and ally."²⁷⁹ The French regent had little pity for her plight, and being occupied with the civil wars in France, resolved to leave both the turbulent Scottish government and the former monarch alone. Catherine had remained distant since Mary's departure from France. She even failed to support the northern insurrection but desired Scotland to

²⁷³ The Earl of Sussex to Cecil, Darnton, 23 January 1570, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 462.

²⁷⁴ James Hamilton was a political rival of the Earl of Murray. He shot the earl in January 1570.

²⁷⁵ Cecil's Fears, in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 9: 1569-1571* (1874), pp. XI-XLV. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73132&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots>.

²⁷⁶ Memorial by Cecil, Hampton Court, 10 March 1570, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 465.

²⁷⁷ Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Sussex, November 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 447.

²⁷⁸ The Earl of Sussex to Cecil, 4 March 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 465.

²⁷⁹ Thomas Wright, *Queen Elizabeth and Her Times* (London: Henry Colburn Publisher, 1838), 109. Catherine de Medici was Mary's mother-in-law from her first husband, Francis II. Catherine helped three of her sons rule as kings of France during the sixteenth-century.

be a Catholic nation. England was the only obstacle in her way, and its strength kept her forces on their side of the Channel.

Scotland's government continued to be torn apart by opposing parties. Wanting the Protestants to prevail, Cecil played one group against the other.²⁸⁰ The English forces helped destroy the Scottish queen's proponents. The resulting administration chose Matthew Stewart the fourth Earl of Lennox (1516-71), Darnley's father, as regent.²⁸¹ The secretary declined to challenge this appointment because he knew the earl's hatred for the woman who helped murder his son, Mary of Scots. He also had a spy at the court in Edinburgh, Sir William Drury (1527-79), to keep him informed on intrigue.²⁸² Within the next three years, Scotland was consumed with deception and power struggles. Political rivalry led to the assassination of two regents; paving an unstable path for the young King James, who was not given control until 1581. Cecil continued to wield influence in the Scottish government, suppressing any who might favor the imprisoned majesty. Their impact in that political arena jeopardized England's monarch and religious state, both of which were essential to its well-being.

The northern rebellion appeared suppressed until February, when Leonard Dacre (d. 1573) took up its banner and led his army on the continuing mission of rescuing Mary

²⁸⁰ Lord Hunsdon to Cecil, Berwick, 22 January 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 462.

²⁸¹The Earl of Bedford to Cecil, Coventry, 23 July 1570, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 477. The Earl of Lennox was Mary's father-in-law from her second husband. This Catholic noble served as Scotland's regent in 1570 but was killed in battle the following year.

²⁸² John Hosack, *Mary Queen of Scots and Her Accusers* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1869), 170. Sir William Drury corresponded with Cecil for years, informing him of the affairs in Scotland and also on Mary during her English imprisonment.

and overthrowing Cecil.²⁸³ He was about to join the uprising in December, but decided it was a lost cause and wanted to safeguard the trust of his English monarch longer.²⁸⁴ His duplicity duped the secretary, who had even commended him for his allegiance.²⁸⁵ To avoid another occasion for Catholics to rally, Cecil took quick action. He sent an army to crush Dacres' troops, extinguishing the insurrection within a month.²⁸⁶ His task required more than merely sending in troops. He utilized his spy network, which sent daily reports on the combatants' movements.²⁸⁷ To compel the masses to forsake the uprising, he published pamphlets vilifying Dacre and his enterprise.²⁸⁸ The written word was revered, convincing the masses of its claims, no matter its validity.

After the revolt's suppression, Cecil implored Elizabeth to realize how close they had been to annihilation.²⁸⁹ France and Spain had been on the verge of sending reinforcements, and the advisor had warned his allies in the north that foreign soldiers might come to reinforce the rebels.²⁹⁰ Their involvement would have given confidence to English Catholics, a boldness the secretary quelled by threatening punishments for

²⁸³ Dacres' Entrance, in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 9: 1569-1571* (1874), pp. XI-XLV. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73132&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots>. Leonard Dacre led a rebellion, with some of the remaining forces of the northern uprising in February 1570. However, Elizabeth's troops defeated them within the month. His birth date is unknown.

²⁸⁴ M. Creighton, "Naworth Castle," *English Illustrated Magazine* 17 (February 1885): 336.

²⁸⁵ M. Creighton, "Naworth Castle," *English Illustrated Magazine* 17 (February 1885): 336.

²⁸⁶ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

²⁸⁷ Interrogatories to be answered by Thomas Bishop, May 1570, in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 1: 1306-1571* (1883), pp. 460-474. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=111991&strquery=1570 dacre cecil england leonard>.

²⁸⁸ Raphael Courteville, *Memoirs of the Life and Administration of William Cecil Baron Burleigh* (London: T. Cooper, 1738), 52.

²⁸⁹ Cecil's Pleas, *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, Addenda, 1566-79* (1871), pp. VII-LXI. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=60810&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots>.

²⁹⁰ Cecil to Randolph, 18 March 1570, in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 9: 1569-1571* (1874), pp. 196-212. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73068&strquery=1570 dacre cecil england leonard>.

disobeying religious laws. Fortunately, the minister discovered this foreign aid that awaited the rebels after they freed their Catholic queen, and crushed the rebellion before it could materialize.²⁹¹ The defeat of the Dacre rebellion resulted in a stable Scottish government, allied with England. These revolts aimed at removing Cecil were actually facilitating his dream of a united and powerful island.

Two hostile factions had almost overthrown the English government with the goal of establishing Mary on its throne, and still Elizabeth refused to punish her cousin. The secretary was frustrated that so few failed to see the Scottish monarch's very existence as an immense threat to his country's safety. In the spring of 1570, the question of her restoration was once again the dominant issue.²⁹² Cecil knew nothing good could come from this debate. His enemies would multiply as they joined together to oppose his position on England's restoration. His relations at court supported him during these perilous times. One such loyal colleague was Sussex, who had proven a trusty ally during the northern uprising.²⁹³ Those who remained steadfast during times of trouble were the people the advisor could rely on most. However, many proved enemies disguised as friends, awaiting the chance to extinguish the minister's immense influence. Leicester was usually the instigator who plotted Cecil's ruin, and with every scheme former allies flew to the earl's side.

²⁹¹ The Two Rebel Earls' Protestation sent to the Earl of Derby, 2 December 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 445.

²⁹² The Queen of Scots and her Subjects, 10 October 1570, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 485.

²⁹³ The Earl of Huntingdon to Cecil, Coventry, 6 December 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 450.

Leicester publically professed that his greatest adversary was the advisor.²⁹⁴ He constantly petitioned Elizabeth to restore the members of the Privy Council who opposed Cecil.²⁹⁵ The earl placed sole blame for Norfolk's imprisonment on the minister and invented rumors that the advisor was going to kill the captive duke.²⁹⁶ Leicester's actions stem from jealousy and fear. Envy was generated from the secretary's bond with his queen, and his panic was nurtured by realizing that Cecil had the power to remove him. The two were closest to the monarch for the majority of her reign and struggled every minute to be the dominant influence in her life. Although she wanted to keep her beloved noble gratified, the counselor's intelligence surmounted Leicester's. Therefore, she usually chose her advisor over her lover. Her love for both men kept them cordial in her presence, and they worked together quite harmoniously at times, but Leicester never became Elizabeth's foremost counselor.

Enemies abroad were another obstacle for Cecil. His suppression of both Mary and her religious cohorts were usually his two main ambitions. He dedicated his life to the annihilation of both because they threatened the state's stability. Foreign pamphlets were constantly circulated to reveal his wickedness.²⁹⁷ For example, the Spanish Ambassador published a manifesto against him.²⁹⁸ Elizabeth had it destroyed, as she did

²⁹⁴ J.A. Froude, *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Spanish Armada* (London: Longmans, 1870), 211.

²⁹⁵ J.A. Froude, *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Spanish Armada* (London: Longmans, 1870), 212.

²⁹⁶ J.A. Froude, *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Spanish Armada* (London: Longmans, 1870), 212.

²⁹⁷ Foreign Pamphlets, in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 9: 1569-1571* (1874), pp. XI-XLV. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73132&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73132&strquery=Duke%20Norfolk%20northern%20rebellion%20Mary%20Scots).

²⁹⁸ The Manifesto, in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 9: 1569-1571* (1874), pp. XI-XLV. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73132&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73132&strquery=Duke%20Norfolk%20northern%20rebellion%20Mary%20Scots).

every writing that demeaned her favorite minister.²⁹⁹ No matter how fast she seized the pamphlets out of the public's hands, the damage was done. The secretary's unfavorable rating diminished his queen's too. Her esteem was essential to her success, not only to prove that a woman could rule efficiently, but because an unpopular monarch was in greater danger of coups. She needed the sympathy and support of the majority if such an overthrow occurred. Many of her subjects blamed her because she gave Cecil this power. She allowed her advisor to be the scapegoat. Elizabeth acknowledged full responsibility for every action, even if it made her loathed. Respect was more precious to her than love. Her counterpart concurred, and wielded his power with an absolute confidence that earned him reverence.

Adoration kept men loyal in times of crisis. For some, the temptation to depose Cecil was too much, but for others his repute retained their allegiance. Many English nobles respected him, and their correspondence reveals their admiration. "He is the only man that I would desire to have been privy to my secrets, Mr. Secretary."³⁰⁰ During the numerous schemes against him, the minister sought out these faithful friends, especially when it came to matters of national security. For the counselor, Mary's restoration posed the greatest threat to England's safety. He feared her cousin's devotion would free her, thus unleashing the leader of an angry mob aimed for the throne. To prevent this he ensured they never met. The deposed queen frequently wrote to Elizabeth, begging for an audience, knowing a personal encounter would attain her freedom. Cecil was always

²⁹⁹ Elizabeth's Actions, in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 9: 1569-1571* (1874), pp. XI-XLV. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73132&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73132&strquery=Duke+Norfolk+northern+rebellion+Mary+Scots).

³⁰⁰ Robert Constable to Sir Ralph Sadler, Newcastle, 15 January 1570, in Ralph Sadler, Arthur Clifford, Walter Scott, Archibald Constable, and Henry Bickersteth. 1809. In *The state papers and letters of Sir Ralph Sadler, knight-banneret*. Edinburgh: Printed for Archibald Constable and Co. ... and for T. Cadell and W. Davies, William Miller, and John Murray, London, 138.

there to remind his sovereign how dangerous she could be.³⁰¹ The Scottish monarch also sent letters to foreign princes, begging for help.³⁰² Her crowned kinswoman failed to take this betrayal seriously, even with her advisor's constant urging.

The foreign crowns ignored Mary's pleas, but favored her restoration, believing she would rule according to their will. When the English court considered her reinstatement, the Catholic princes saw their goal materializing without any effort, an event the secretary refused to allow. The council was divided. The minister led those opposed to her reinstatement, and Leicester led those who supported it.³⁰³ Elizabeth agreed with her earl, believing Mary was so desperate to return to power that she would govern as commanded. Cecil had cause to believe the foreign princes were waiting to pounce. King Philip wrote to Alva "we think the best course will be to encourage money and secret favor for the Catholics of the north and deliver the crown to the Queen of Scotland, to whom it belongs by succession."³⁰⁴ Elizabeth forced her advisor to compose a list of provisions for the restoration. However, he required a Protestant kingdom and her relinquished claim to the English throne as part of the agreement.³⁰⁵

All hope seemed lost until Cecil's plight was saved by a slanderous book. Mary's secretary, the Bishop of Ross, published a pamphlet declaring her the rightful heir to her

³⁰¹ The Earl of Shrewsbury to Cecil, 10 April 1570, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 466.

³⁰² Interrogatories and Answers of the Bishop of Ross, 31 October 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 556.

³⁰³ Wallace T. MacCaffrey, "Cecil, William, first Baron Burghley (1520/21–1598)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4983, accessed 3 Oct 2009].

³⁰⁴ King Philip of Spain to Alva, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 2: 1568-1579* (1894), pp. I-LII. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86937&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots>.

³⁰⁵ Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 22.

cousin's crown.³⁰⁶ *A defence of the honour of the right highe, mightye and noble princesse Marie queen of Scotlande* enraged Elizabeth, and she discontinued the restoration negotiations.³⁰⁷ Although the crisis was over, Cecil realized he had failed to convince his mistress of the problems that reinstatement would bring. She had not surrendered to his pleas. He realized his tactics must change. He needed all the persuasive methods in his arsenal to convince his sovereign of the dangers of Mary's freedom.

Later that month, on May 15, 1570, Edmund Grindal (1519-83), the bishop of London discovered a bull excommunicating Elizabeth nailed to his home.³⁰⁸ Pope Pius V had published *Regnans in excelsis* when the northern rebellion ended in February, but news traveled slowly in the Early Modern era.³⁰⁹ This document not only condemned the English queen to hell, but it absolved her subjects from obedience to her.³¹⁰ Graves attests that the minister feared the bull would damage his goal of political stability by creating divisions among the Protestants.³¹¹ The bull lit a fire under her; if this was how her religious tolerance was repaid, she would not be merciful anymore. She authorized

³⁰⁶ Kerby Neill, "The Faerie Queene and the Mary Stuart Controversy," *ELH* 2 (September 1935): 198.

³⁰⁷ Kerby Neill, "The Faerie Queene and the Mary Stuart Controversy," *ELH* 2 (September 1935): 198.

³⁰⁸ The Bull, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 1: 1558-1571* (1916), pp. V-LXIV. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92522&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots>. Edmund Grindal was a Protestant, and the Bishop of London from 1576 to 1583.

³⁰⁹ The Bull's Announcement, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 1: 1558-1571* (1916), pp. V-LXIV. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92522&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots>.

³¹⁰ The Bull's Articles, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 1: 1558-1571* (1916), pp. V-LXIV. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92522&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots>.

³¹¹ Michael A.R. Graves, *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (New York City: Longman, 1998), 171.

Cecil to enforce his program of Catholic prosecution.³¹² He began by dismantling all their relics.³¹³ The headless statues in cathedrals today testify to his policy of destruction.

He devised a pamphlet to boost the allegiance of the hesitating masses.³¹⁴

England Triumphant proclaimed the kingdom's separation from the papacy.³¹⁵ Just like her father, Elizabeth abhorred the head bishop stealing her clout. Although the Act of Supremacy declared her Supreme Governor of the Church of England, many still revered the pope as the ultimate authority. Decisive action was crucial to pacify these subjects. Fines were readily dispensed for everything from not attending the Church of England to condemning Elizabeth a heretic.³¹⁶ Catholic families, who were roused by the bull to defy the queen, fell into poverty.³¹⁷ The harsh policies she had originally disavowed were now ardently invoked by the secretary, who finally had more leverage to combat his papist enemies and enrich the crown's coffers.

The interdict worked to Cecil's advantage. It emboldened his monarch to combat the religious ambitions of Spain and France that he had been arduously striving to convince her were a threat. He advised "the more the cause of religion be founded and the tyranny of Rome is abased, the less is the danger of the Queen of Scots."³¹⁸ He sent

³¹² J.M. Stone, "Progress of the Persecution Under Elizabeth." *Dublin Review* 26 (October 1891): 323.

³¹³ J.M. Stone, "Progress of the Persecution Under Elizabeth." *Dublin Review* 26 (October 1891): 323.

³¹⁴ Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 23.

³¹⁵ Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 23.

³¹⁶ Catholic Fines, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 1: 1558-1571* (1916), pp. V-LXIV. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92522&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots>.

³¹⁷ Catholic Poverty, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 1: 1558-1571* (1916), pp. V-LXIV. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92522&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots>.

³¹⁸ Cecil's Advice, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 9: 1586-88* (1915), pp. 178-236. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44972&strquery=founded religion tyranny Rome less danger mary queen scots>.

his protégée Walsingham secretly to France to secure affinity with the Huguenots.³¹⁹ Building this international Protestant league would hopefully help to combat later catholic uprisings. However, the English sovereign's greatest concern was with the Spanish king. The bull ordered the papist powers of Europe to act against the unlawful queen, and Elizabeth feared Philip would use it to justify an invasion.³²⁰ The advisor promoted this worry, hoping to entice her feelings of foreign distrust. The Catholic kings actually refuted the bull, but Cecil kept this information from his sovereign. In a religious context, the bull was the turning point in Elizabeth's reign. She was exclusively devoted to the Protestants thereafter, less sympathetic to the cries of the subjugated papists.³²¹ Cecil's commitment to safeguarding England could only succeed with its monarch's support of his efforts to protect its faith and politics from Catholic enemies.

Meanwhile, Norfolk remained locked away in the Tower, and it seemed to everyone but the secretary that he had abandoned his ambitions to wed the Scottish queen. He maintained a constant correspondence with his friend Cecil, even proposing Mary replace him in the Tower.³²² The minister was not fooled, realizing the duke still aspired for supremacy. Practically every inmate sought the head counselor's favor, assuming he could win them freedom. He remained amicable with the noble for political reasons, hoping to secure his loyalty while also weakening his resolve to attempt another revolt. To cement this assurance, Cecil sided with the noble and helped him procure his

³¹⁹ The Privy Council to Worsley, 10 July 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 516.

³²⁰ Consequences of the Bull, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 1: 1558-1571* (1916), pp. V-LXIV. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92522&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92522&strquery=Duke+Norfolk+northern+rebellion+Mary+Scots).

³²¹ Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 24.

³²² Neville Williams, *A Tudor Tragedy: Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1989), 191.

freedom. If feasible, he would have kept the noble locked away forever, for his liberation meant another influential adversary capable of rallying his dismissal. He aborted the proposed trial, realizing the lack of tangible evidence would never convict Norfolk.³²³ The duke's inflated notoriety was another reason. The public would further glorify the poor nobleman if the secretary was the one to sentence him. Guy attests the minister discharged him only to mislead his Catholic conspirators. However, the minister's letters suggest he released the duke because of insufficient evidence and the knowledge that next time little proof would be needed to execute the noble. Elizabeth wanted to charge him with treason, but Cecil cautioned her from this decision by demonstrating how the law did not deem his actions treasonous.³²⁴

Norfolk composed his submission, acknowledging "I did unhappily give ear to certain motions made to me of marriage with the Queen of Scots."³²⁵ He also vowed to never again contact the sovereign.³²⁶ However, his correspondence with Mary continued. He even sent this declaration to the Scottish monarch for approval and told secretary Ross that he was misleading the minister, a feat the advisor failed to learn.³²⁷ After ten months in jail, in August 1570, Elizabeth released the duke, but not before she had a serious

³²³ Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 159.

³²⁴ Norfolk's Punishment, in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, Addenda, 1566-79* (1871), pp. 267-291. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=60860&strquery=treason+duke+norfolk+cecil+queen+elizabeth+england+1570>.

³²⁵ The Duke of Norfolk's First Submission, 23 June 1570, in *A collection of state papers, relating to affairs in the reigns of King Henry VIII. King Edward VI. Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1542 to 1570* (London: William Bowyer, 1740), 597.

³²⁶ Norfolk's Promises, in *Old and New London: Volume 2* (1878), pp. 60-76. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=45075&strquery=Thomas+Howard+Duke+of+Norfolk+Mary+Scots+marriage>.

³²⁷ "Recueil des Depeches, Rapports, Instructions et Memoires des Ambassadeurs de France en Angleterre et en Ecosse," *The Foreign Quarterly Review* 22 (January 1839): 291.

discussion with the secretary.³²⁸ Cecil advised him “that liberty might be more fatal than confinement and that as an intended marriage was the cause of his misfortune, so a proper marriage would be an easy cure of them.”³²⁹ The noble heartily thanked him and promised to one day repay his clemency.³³⁰

His freedom was restrained by Cecil, who suspected the duke’s insincerity and placed him under house arrest at his residence Howard House in York.³³¹ Less than a week after Norfolk’s release, Ridolfi paid him an ominous visit.³³² The Florentine beseeched him to petition the Duke of Alva for money to help actualize his marriage with Mary.³³³ Still shaken from imprisonment, he rejected the project. However, after a few months of solitude the noble realized his favor with the queen might never recover, and he agreed to Ridolfi’s proposal.³³⁴ Even the strict guards Cecil lodged with the duke failed to detect the plots brewing in their midst.

With Norfolk seemingly living the quiet country life and no recently discovered schemes from Mary’s camp, Elizabeth once again considered restoring her cousin. To

³²⁸ Norfolk’s Release, in *Old and New London: Volume 2* (1878), pp. 60-76. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=45075&strquery=Thomas Howard Duke of Norfolk Mary Scots marriage>.

³²⁹ Raphael Courteville, *Memoirs of the Life and Administration of William Cecil Baron Burleigh* (London: T. Cooper, 1738), 54.

³³⁰ Norfolk’s Release, in *Old and New London: Volume 2* (1878), pp. 60-76. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=45075&strquery=Thomas Howard Duke of Norfolk Mary Scots marriage>.

³³¹ Sir Ralph Sadler, Sir Thomas Smith, and Dr. Wilson to Lord Burghley, 7 September 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 521.

³³² Interrogatories and Answers of William Barker, 18 September 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 526.

³³³ Neville Williams, *A Tudor Tragedy: Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1989), 201.

³³⁴ Answers of Lord Lumley, 17 October 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 540.

negotiate a treaty, she chose Cecil to visit the deposed monarch in Chatsworth.³³⁵ The English queen wondered if he would succumb to her fellow sovereign's charisma like so many others, underestimating his animosity for her.³³⁶ The secretary had no intention of helping her escape her prison, being the last person his queen should have sent if she truly wanted to restore her cousin.³³⁷ He affirmed "the Scottish queen has never entered into any treaty but only of purpose to abuse the queen of England with some treacherous attempt."³³⁸ Before his departure, the Scottish regent's wife, Lady Margaret Lennox, gave the advisor seized letters from Mary's cohorts instructing her to do everything possible to convince the minister to release her and then attack England.³³⁹ Arriving on October 1, Cecil presented Mary with the treaty provisions.³⁴⁰ She must never marry an English nobleman, must ratify the Treaty of Edinburgh, must withdraw her claim to the throne, and must relinquish her son to her cousin as a hostage.³⁴¹ When Mary refused

³³⁵ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

³³⁶ The Chatsworth Visit, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 3: 1569-71* (1903), pp. IX-XXXI. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44286&strquery=burghley elizabeth mildmay chatsworth 1570 october](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44286&strquery=burghley+elizabeth+mildmay+chatsworth+1570+october).

³³⁷ The Duke of Norfolk to Cecil, 27 April 1560, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 215.

³³⁸ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

³³⁹ Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 27.

³⁴⁰ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

³⁴¹ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

some of the terms, Elizabeth sharply replied that she must adhere to every article.³⁴²

However, her stubbornness prevented any settlement, and Cecil returned to court.

MacCaffrey claims this meeting was merely a formality for the advisor, who had already decided to impede any compromise.³⁴³ Ross relayed the proceedings to the Catholic sovereigns, hoping to stimulate an international response for his mistreated queen.³⁴⁴

Once again they were preoccupied with domestic affairs, but soon they would aid the destitute monarch.

³⁴² Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 27.

³⁴³ W.T. MacCaffrey, *The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime: Elizabethan Politics, 1558-1572* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), 389.

³⁴⁴ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

Chapter Three

The Ridolfi Plot, 1571-72

As the months passed, Mary remained locked away in a northern castle while Norfolk remained in his luxurious Howard House. His ambitions for the English crown seemed quelled by his silence. In February 1571, Elizabeth elevated Cecil to an aristocrat as Baron Burghley, a formal declaration of his overwhelming influence in the government.³⁴⁵ A promotion, Read alleges, the minister unhappily accepted, fearing his influence would diminish.³⁴⁶ However, his increased power led to new attempts to overthrow him. He continued to profess “dangers existing are imminent; the Pope, the Kings of France and Spain, and Mary of Scots are trying to evict the English crown from Elizabeth and set it on the head of Mary.”³⁴⁷ The advisor’s greatest challenge during the crisis years of his career was the Ridolfi plot. Its aim, Mary ruling over a papist England, was his foremost worry. Not only did he prevent it, but he used it to convince his sovereign to eliminate Norfolk, a man the minister considered a huge religious threat. By exploiting her fear of Catholic conspiracies, the new baron kept his country in Protestant hands.

³⁴⁵ Cecil’s Promotion, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 2: 1572-1578* (1926), pp. 549-569. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92670&strquery=burghley+elizabeth+audience+ridolfi+1570>.

³⁴⁶ Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 34.

³⁴⁷ The State of the Realm, William Cecil, 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 457.

³⁴⁷ “Arundel Castle and the House of Howard.” *Dublin Review* 143 (July 1908): 91.

The minister's promotion from the House of the Commons to the House of the Lords spurned even more scorn from the ancient nobility.³⁴⁸ Their upstart rival was now a decorated peer, worthy of acknowledgement. Even his political accomplishments failed to convince them of his merit. Becoming a noble helped his networking. He now had access to all the aristocratic families, which not only expanded his spy network but increased his friends who would support him through perilous times.³⁴⁹ MacCaffrey contends that Leicester was never able to challenge the minister's supremacy after his elevation.³⁵⁰ Opportunities to liberate Mary came and went, with Burghley always preventing each. Delegates from Scotland came in early 1571 to lobby for her restoration, but Elizabeth once again turned control over to the secretary, and he wrote a memorandum explaining why it was unwise.³⁵¹ His fear of her cousin remained unaltered and for good reason. Her thirst for freedom frequently sprouted plots for escape, and her greatest chance developed during these quiet months with a banker from Florence.

Roberto Ridolfi was a well-known businessman who frequently sought seditious projects to revive Catholicism. His reputation compelled Burghley to seek out the banker for many secretive assignments, but he should have been wary of a man known for deception. The Florentine had smuggled money to the northern rebels without the secretary's detection and then argued his way out of the advisor's grasp when we was

³⁴⁸ The Promotion's Repercussions, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 2: 1572-1578* (1926), pp. 549-569. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92670&strquery=burghley+elizabeth+audience+ridolfi> 1570.

³⁴⁹ The Baron's Connections, in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, Addenda, 1566-79* (1871), pp. 339-341. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=60870&strquery=burghley+elizabeth+cecil+baron> 1571 february.

³⁵⁰ W.T. MacCaffrey, *The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime: Elizabethan Politics, 1558-1572* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), 452.

³⁵¹ Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 35.

questioned about the affair.³⁵² Burghley failed to uncover Ridolfi's trickery. Even with the banker's exploits, how could he have known this cunning imposter would one day orchestrate a plot that almost brought the Scottish monarch to the throne with the support of the papist powers?

A Catholic England was Ridolfi's ultimate goal, and installing Mary as its queen was the most conducive way to achieve this. Procuring her agreement was his first step. She heartily consented, as did her agent, the bishop of Ross, who became a principal conspirator.³⁵³ His next stop was Howard House, where seven months earlier the duke had sharply rebuked him for attempting to concoct another scheme. However, half a year of house arrest had convinced Norfolk that his monarch might never forgive him, and he was ready to resume the marriage proposal.³⁵⁴ He agreed to Ridolfi's plan.³⁵⁵ Marrying the Scottish queen and deposing Elizabeth seemed an enticing scheme to the noble.³⁵⁶

Mary of Scots' encouraging letters also procured Norfolk's consent. She professed "if it pleases you, I care not for the danger, we could escape."³⁵⁷ Her support, coupled with his aspirations confirmed his approval of the risky venture. He insisted that absolute secrecy be maintained; knowing he would be the first suspect if they discovered

³⁵² Ridolfi's Escape, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 1: 1558-1571* (1916), pp. V-LXIV. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92522&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92522&strquery=Duke+Norfolk+northern+rebellion+Mary+Scots).

³⁵³ Interrogatories and Answers of the Bishop of Ross, 24 October 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 550.

³⁵⁴ Examination of the Duke of Norfolk, 8 September 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 522.

³⁵⁵ Report of a Conversation between Archy Inglis and John Sinclair, servant of the Duke of Norfolk, 9 September 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 523.

³⁵⁶ Sir Thomas Smith and Dr. Wilson to Lord Burghley, St. Katherine's, 9 September 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 523.

³⁵⁷ "Arundel Castle and the House of Howard." *Dublin Review* 143 (July 1908): 91.

anything.³⁵⁸ The plot required the participation of two Catholic powers: Pope Pius V and King Philip II of Spain. However, Philip's accord required the endorsement of the duke of Alva, his general of the Low Countries. Norfolk remembered Alva's apprehension during the northern rebellion and to secure compliance he wrote letters to Philip and the pope promising to reestablish the Roman church in England.³⁵⁹ Although his Catholic sympathies were well-known, Ridolfi fervently tried to convince the hesitant leaders of the duke's religious conversion. Burghley's fear of an international papist alliance against his kingdom was developing right under his nose.

The Florentine packed his bags, complete with his numerous letters from Norfolk beseeching the possible conspirators to support his designs. Before he could depart he needed permission to leave. He sought an audience with Elizabeth to obtain a passport, and she readily acquiesced to his traveling to Italy for a private matter.³⁶⁰ The secretary believed the lie because he was simultaneously sending Ridolfi on an assignment to the general concerning trade.³⁶¹ As the banker was about to leave for the continent, the minister wrote a bill excluding Mary from the succession and removed all Catholics from Parliament.³⁶² He affirmed "the greatest danger which threatens the state is that of the

³⁵⁸ The Duke of Norfolk to the Earl of Murray, 1 July 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 414.

³⁵⁹ **Mary, Queen of Scotland to Robert Ridolfi, 22 March 1571**, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 1: 1558-1571* (1916), pp. 391-406. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92556&strquery=Thomas Howard Ridolfi woeful plight](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92556&strquery=Thomas+Howard+Ridolfi+woeful+plight).

³⁶⁰ Duke of Norfolk to Pope Pius V, London, 20 March 1571, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 1: 1558-1571* (1916), pp. 391-406. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92556&strquery=Thomas Howard Ridolfi woeful plight](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92556&strquery=Thomas+Howard+Ridolfi+woeful+plight).

³⁶¹ J. R. Leader, *Mary Queen of Scots in Captivity* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1880), 172.

³⁶² John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (New York City: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 449.

uncertainty of the succession.”³⁶³ Utilizing his queen’s fear of a religious civil war, which was developing in France, the advisor politically attacked the papists. The Italian no doubt hoped this would further arouse his accomplices to action. The minister’s task of convincing Elizabeth to fear the imminent threat continued. He declared “your strong subjects are the papists, both in number and nature; for by number they are able to raise a great army, and they may soon bring to pass a uniting with foreign enemies.”³⁶⁴

Burghley’s campaign against the Roman church, and thereby most of the ancient nobility, was gaining momentum, making the mission all the more necessary. The banker’s journey took him to meet with the duke of Alva in Brussels, the pope in Rome, and finally Philip II in Madrid.

In April 1571 Ridolfi arrived in Brussels for his interview with Alva.³⁶⁵ His reception was discouraging. The astute general gave the same response he did to the leaders of the northern rebellion when they sought his aid. He refused to send his army without prior assurance that the English Catholics would have the numbers and confidence to join his men.³⁶⁶ Ridolfi withheld Alva’s reluctance from his supporters in England, which would squelch the conspirators’ compliance. The Florentine wrote about his progress to Norfolk, Mary, and the other awaiting co-conspirators.³⁶⁷ Before he

³⁶³ Minute by Lord Burghley respecting the Queen’s Marriage with the Duke of Anjou, 2 October 1579, in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 2: 1572-1582. (1888), pp. 267-274.* Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=109898&strquery=keeping> Burghley 1579 bonds law evil subjects religion.

³⁶⁴ Francis Bacon, *The felicity of Queen Elizabeth: and her times, with other things* (London: T. Newcomb, 1651), 123.

³⁶⁵ Charles Bailly to Lord Burghley, 2 May 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 497.

³⁶⁶ Charles Bailly to Lord Burghley, 5 May 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 498.

³⁶⁷ Roberto Ridolfi to Jerome Rusticucci, Bishop of Sinigaglia, John Baptista Castagna, and Archbishop of Rossano, Brussels, 8 October 1571, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican*

moved on to Rome, he summoned Charles Bailly, the secretary of the bishop of Ross, to deliver these ciphered letters.³⁶⁸ Unfortunately, upon arrival at Dover, guards searched Bailly and discovered the treacherous correspondence.³⁶⁹

Unfortunately for Burghley, these crucial documents were seized by his enemy. The Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, William Brooke the Baron of Cobham (1527-97), arrested Bailly, but his friendship with Norfolk emboldened the warden to give the confiscated documents to Ross first.³⁷⁰ The bishop quickly secured the important letters and replaced the others with harmless forgeries.³⁷¹ He deceived Burghley by sending him these counterfeits. Although the secretary possessed the imitations, they were in cipher and retrieving the key became his foremost objective. He especially wanted to know the identities of “30” and “40”, the code names given to the intended recipients.³⁷² These secret labels, he deduced, were probably two Englishmen at the center of the plot, and discerning the culprits was imperative to terminating the plan. Undoubtedly, Norfolk was a top suspect, and the duke’s incarceration did not prove his innocence.

Archives, Volume 1: 1558-1571 (1916), pp. 457-469. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92559&strquery=Ridolfi norfolk duke 1571](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92559&strquery=Ridolfi%20norfolk%20duke%201571) mary pope.

³⁶⁸ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635). Charles Bailly’s birth and death dates are unknown.

³⁶⁹ Bailey’s Capture, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 2: 1568-1579* (1894), pp. I-LII. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86937&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86937&strquery=Duke%20norfolk%20northern%20rebellion%20Mary%20Scots).

³⁷⁰ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

³⁷¹ The Bishop of Ross’ Trick, in *Old and New London: Volume 2* (1878), pp. 60-76. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=45075&strquery=Thomas Howard Duke of Norfolk Mary Scots marriage](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=45075&strquery=Thomas%20Howard%20Duke%20of%20Norfolk%20Mary%20Scots%20marriage).

³⁷² Charles Bailey’s Examination, 17 September 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 525.

The advisor's constant fear of conspiracies kept him on guard and this new development made detection urgent. His unwavering devotion to the safety of his realm, and to avert a religious civil war, motivated him to pursue the case until he uncovered its true intentions. His first response was to send Bailly to Marshalsea Prison, where he remained silent even through torture.³⁷³ Compelling his confession was crucial for revealing the presumed scheme, and Burghley reverted to a reliable tactic. He sent in a spy. He chose William Herle (d. 1588), Northumberland's cousin, who was in jail for assisting the northern rebellion.³⁷⁴ His task was to obtain Bailly's confidence and coax him into divulging his deepest secrets.³⁷⁵ Not only did he achieve Bailly's trust and friendship, but Herle became his medium for sending letters to the bishop of Ross.³⁷⁶ However, Herle's loyalty to Burghley prevailed and he gave the secretary these crucial letters instead.³⁷⁷ The correspondence was in cipher, so the minister commanded Bailly tortured until he relinquished the key.³⁷⁸ The fate of the Ridolfi plot rested with Bailly's loyalty and his resistance to pain.

³⁷³William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

³⁷⁴The Spy, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 3: 1569-71* (1903), pp. 517-560. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44306&strquery=burghley elizabeth mary ross herle bailly letters](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44306&strquery=burghley%20elizabeth%20mary%20ross%20herle%20bailly%20letters). William Herle's birth date is unknown.

³⁷⁵Herle's Task, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 3: 1569-71* (1903), pp. 517-560. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44306&strquery=burghley elizabeth mary ross herle bailly letters](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44306&strquery=burghley%20elizabeth%20mary%20ross%20herle%20bailly%20letters).

³⁷⁶Herle's Success, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 3: 1569-71* (1903), pp. 517-560. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44306&strquery=burghley elizabeth mary ross herle bailly letters](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44306&strquery=burghley%20elizabeth%20mary%20ross%20herle%20bailly%20letters).

³⁷⁷Herle's Success, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 3: 1569-71* (1903), pp. 517-560. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44306&strquery=burghley elizabeth mary ross herle bailly letters](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44306&strquery=burghley%20elizabeth%20mary%20ross%20herle%20bailly%20letters).

³⁷⁸More Torture, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 3: 1569-71* (1903), pp. 517-560. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44306&strquery=burghley elizabeth mary ross herle bailly letters](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44306&strquery=burghley%20elizabeth%20mary%20ross%20herle%20bailly%20letters).

When Bailly remained resolute, the advisor posted another spy in the prison. This man pretended to be the famed Catholic convict Dr. Storey, and with his coercion and the joint-rending torment of the rack, Bailly sent the secretary the cipher's key.³⁷⁹ He frantically decoded the letters, which exposed Ross' involvement. The minister immediately arrested Norfolk and searched his house.³⁸⁰ No compromising evidence was found in his possessions, and the advisor sought other measures to uncover the plot.³⁸¹ False pledges of freedom and secrecy were valuable tools Burghley utilized when dealing with traitors. He produced Bailly's confession by making false promises. How the secretary convinced him to concede this crucial testimony is exhibited in Bailly's letters. "Putting all my confidence in your Lord Burghley, and assuring myself that you will keep it secret, as you have promised me, and cause me to have my liberty."³⁸²

Bailly, however, was not a main component in the plan, and while he revealed all he knew, it was not the crucial intelligence the chief counselor desired. He had caught the messenger, but not the major players. He still had no knowledge of the actual letters Ross had seized. Bailly even offered to spy on his former clerical employer for the secretary, but the advisor decided it was better to contain the courier.³⁸³ All Burghley knew was that Norfolk and Ridolfi had some form of agreement that required the aid of

³⁷⁹ The Bishop of Ross to Charles Bailly, 29 April 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 497. Dr. Storey's birth and death dates are unknown.

³⁸⁰ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

³⁸¹ Answers of the Bishop of Ross, 13 May 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 499.

³⁸² Charles Bailly to Lord Burghley, 2 May 1571, in *A collection of state papers relating to affairs in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1571 to 1596* (London: William Bowyer, 1759), 10.

³⁸³ Charles Bailly to Lord Burghley, 5 May 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 498.

Alva and his Spanish king.³⁸⁴ Since Norfolk's previous scheme requesting the former's assistance sought a Catholic restoration, it seemed any future correspondence with the Spanish general would have the same ultimate design. Even with little evidence, the advisor made uncovering the plot his top priority.

Burghley worked tirelessly to discover the details of the duke's foreign accord. He sent Walsingham to Paris to discover any French compliance with the banker.³⁸⁵ The secretary hoped France would help him uncover the plot, since an England with Mary as queen meant a powerful ally for Spain. The minister asserted "as for France, I see not why it should not rather be made a friend, for though the king agree not with your Majesty, in matters of conscience and religion, yet he does fear the greatness of Spain."³⁸⁶

A peaceful and prosperous England required political and religious stability, and Burghley knew that sometimes he must temporarily abandon one or the other to accomplish this ultimate goal. England's continuance as a Protestant nation with Elizabeth as its head lay on the brink of danger.

Burghley received evidence of the Ridolfi Plot, as it is known today, from his various spies in 1571. However, it was not only his spy network which helped him discover the plan, but unacquainted men who favored him. In April, Sussex seized

³⁸⁴ Charles Bailly to Lord Burghley, 2 May 1571, in *A collection of state papers relating to affairs in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1571 to 1596* (London: William Bowyer, 1759), 10.

³⁸⁵ The Privy Council to Worsley, 10 July 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 516.

³⁸⁶ Francis Bacon, *The felicity of Queen Elizabeth: and her times, with other things* (London: T. Newcomb, 1651), 123; Burghley's Advice to Queen Elizabeth in matters of Religion and State, pg 123.

documents incriminating Mary, which he sent to the secretary.³⁸⁷ The papers exposed the alliance of the duke of Alva with the Scottish Catholics, intensifying the advisor's fear that the conspiracy had Catholic objectives.³⁸⁸ Information was also leaked by one of Philip's men to a double agent working for the minister.³⁸⁹ His chain of allies was his eyes and ears in Europe. Their devotion exhibits their reverence for the prominent counselor, and their hope that, as the most powerful man in England, he would return the favor. No scheme could survive for long without detection by these numerous associates.

No one was ever out of reach, which explains why Norfolk was so apprehensive to begin the enterprise. Absolute secrecy could never be maintained for long when it concerned Burghley or the well-being of his country. However, since the Ridolfi plot involved parties from across the continent, it is no surprise that the design was discovered. Even the dukes of Tuscany and Florence discovered elements of the ensuing plan and sent word to the English court.³⁹⁰ The loyalty the advisor had amassed during his time in office proved most beneficial now more than ever. It was during these troubled times that people chose sides, distinguishing between friends and enemies.

One who proved to be an adversary, becoming one of the numerous accomplices of the conspiracy, was the Spanish Ambassador to England, De Spes. He aided the

³⁸⁷ Confession of John Hall, delivered to Sir Thomas Smith and Mr. Thomas Wilson, 20 June 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 507.

³⁸⁸ J.R. Leader, *Mary Queen of Scots in Captivity* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1880), 174.

³⁸⁹ John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (New York City: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 450.

³⁹⁰ Italian Dukes, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 2: 1568-1579* (1894), pp. I-LII. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86937&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86937&strquery=Duke+Norfolk+northern+rebellion+Mary+Scots).

scheme from the beginning, seeking the secretary's destruction.³⁹¹ Burghley, always suspecting his deceitfulness, gathered evidence of the Spaniard's treachery, leading to his dismissal from court.³⁹² During his previous few years in England, De Spes had been the leading proponent for Norfolk and instigator against the advisor. He entangled himself in every design to destroy the minister and elevate Mary of Scots. His correspondence with Philip testifies to his determination to oust the advisor. De Spes even informed his monarch that the real objective of the Ridolfi plot was to assassinate the chief counselor.³⁹³

The ambassador clandestinely supported the marriage design of 1568, the northern rebellion, and this latest conspiracy. His failure to depose the secretary lay with his inability to convince Philip that the duke was truly, although still covertly, a papist.³⁹⁴ The Spanish king's skepticism was shared by the other conspirators, and although Norfolk professed his Catholicism by pen, it was not enough. His refusal to openly proclaim his allegiance to the opposing faith may have saved Burghley's life. Perhaps the duke realized such a declaration would show Elizabeth his lack of commitment. He was certainly intimate enough with the secretary to apprehend what methods were utilized to persuade the queen. The head counselor built a substantial case against someone before bringing it to his sovereign for judgment. While the duke had lost her

³⁹¹ De Spes' Involvement, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 2: 1568-1579* (1894), pp. I-LII. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86937&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86937&strquery=Duke%20Norfolk%20northern%20rebellion%20Mary%20Scots).

³⁹² De Spes' Dismissal, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 2: 1568-1579* (1894), pp. I-LII. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86937&strquery=Duke Norfolk northern rebellion Mary Scots](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86937&strquery=Duke%20Norfolk%20northern%20rebellion%20Mary%20Scots).

³⁹³ Martin Hume, *The Great Lord Burghley: A Study in Elizabethan Statecraft* (New York: NY McClure Phillips & Co, 1906), 257.

³⁹⁴ Thomas Howard to Roberto Ridolfi, London, 20 March 1571, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 1: 1558-1571* (1916), pp. 391-406. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92556&strquery=Thomas Howard Ridolfi woeful plight](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92556&strquery=Thomas%20Howard%20Ridolfi%20woeful%20plight).

favor, their kinship kept him breathing, but a religious conversion might be the final blow the advisor needed to destroy him.

Throughout the months of uncovered secrets, torture, and growing suspicion, Ridolfi continued his European campaign. His first mission to Brussels proved discouraging, but he hoped the approval from his next two potential accomplices would convince Alva of success. In May, the banker reportedly entered Rome seeking the endorsement of Pope Pius V, and assured the Christian leader of the general's enthusiastic blessing, which was a blatant lie.³⁹⁵ The papal ruler supported the venture but had concerns.³⁹⁶ Again, Norfolk's religious ambiguity was a deciding factor. The duke realized the papist's misgivings and told the Florentine to "explain to the pope and Catholic king, who have so far been suspicious of me for not having declared myself, and that I desire an island under the true religion and ancient laws."³⁹⁷

Actions meant more than words, and the pontiff made King Philip's answer the decisive factor. Ridolfi had failed to gain papal compliance, a surprising outcome given the work he had carried out on behalf of the church leader to support earlier attempts to restore Mary.³⁹⁸ Why then did he now retreat from supporting a plot with the same objectives? Norfolk's faith was clearly a reason. The collapse of the previous two projects and the discovered intelligence are two other probable grounds. Another might

³⁹⁵ The Earl of Bedford to Cecil, 23 July 1570, Coventry, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 477.

³⁹⁶ Robert Ridolfi to Mary, Queen of Scotland, Madrid, July 1571, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 1: 1558-1571* (1916), pp. 431-457. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92558&strquery=Thomas Howard Duke of Norfolk Mary Scots marriage>.

³⁹⁷ Duke of Norfolk to Robert Ridolfi, London, 20 March 1571, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 1: 1558-1571* (1916), pp. 391-406. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92556&strquery=Thomas Howard Ridolfi>.

³⁹⁸ Edward Nares, *Memoirs of the Life and Administration of the Right Honourable William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1828), 560.

be the same argument the duke of Alva revealed when he refused to aid the northern rebellion: that the support from the English Catholics when foreign assistance arrived appeared unlikely. The fear Burghley instilled in these discontented subjects kept many of them locked safely inside their homes during the rebellion, and the papist leaders worried this anxiety would discourage them again.

The conspirators in England were eager for news from their Florentine emissary. If they could not procure the support of Catholic leaders for a religious uprising now, then Mary might become a perpetual prisoner. Their gamble was risky; if Ridolfi's designs were uncovered, their chances for success were nonexistent and their lives in jeopardy. The banker eased their frustration with half-truths and encouraging words. He relayed the pope's enthusiasm but failed to mention his insistence that the endeavor must wait until a more fortuitous chance presented itself.³⁹⁹ On the continent, the plot was crumbling, but on the island everyone believed Philip's approval was the only concurrence needed to launch the treasonous enterprise.

Ridolfi arrived at Madrid in June and found the Spanish monarch sympathetic to his cause and anxious to restore a papist kingdom in England.⁴⁰⁰ Unfortunately, that same uncertainty troubling Alva and Pius worried the king. Until Norfolk publically converted to Catholicism, which would jeopardize his relationship with Elizabeth, none

³⁹⁹ Michael Bonelli, Cardinal Alessandrino to John Leslie, Bishop Elect of Ross, Rome, 8 May 1571, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 1: 1558-1571* (1916), pp. 406-431. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92557&strquery=Thomas Howard Duke of Norfolk Mary Scots marriage](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92557&strquery=Thomas+Howard+Duke+of+Norfolk+Mary+Scots+marriage).

⁴⁰⁰ Robert Ridolfi to Mary, Queen of Scotland and the Duke of Norfolk, Madrid, July 1571, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 1: 1558-1571* (1916), pp. 431-457. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92558&strquery=Thomas Howard Duke of Norfolk Mary Scots marriage](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92558&strquery=Thomas+Howard+Duke+of+Norfolk+Mary+Scots+marriage).

of his Catholic allies fully trusted him.⁴⁰¹ The Florentine's words of assurance were insufficient, considering the magnitude of this conspiracy. Philip understood the imposing force they were confronting. His relationship to England was more personal; he had been married to Queen Mary I until her death in 1558. He had even sought Elizabeth's hand in marriage. Some form of entitlement was understandable, and his religious fervor drove his desire for the true faith to reign in the foreign kingdom. However, he proved indecisive and delegated the verdict for involvement to his resolute general, the duke of Alva.⁴⁰²

Philip sent Norfolk Ridolfi's proposal to capture the English queen, rally its papists, and wed the liberated Scottish sovereign.⁴⁰³ Unknown to Burghley, the decision to launch the scheme lay on the shoulders of the ruthless master of the Low Countries. Even the numerous adherents to the plot knew nothing of this vital stipulation. The active support expected from Catholic leaders was absent, which was a victory for the secretary. However, a coalition of countries united under a common banner could destroy England. Therefore, the minister continued to aid continental reformists.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰¹ Mary, Queen of Scotland to Roberto Ridolfi, Sheffield, March 1571, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 1: 1558-1571* (1916), pp. 391-406. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92556&strquery=Thomas Howard Ridolfi woeful plight](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92556&strquery=Thomas+Howard+Ridolfi+woeful+plight).

⁴⁰² John Baptista Castagna,] Archbishop of Rossano, Nuncio in Spain to Jerome Rusticucci, Cardinal Bishop of Sinigaglia, Madrid, 17 July 1571, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 1: 1558-1571* (1916), pp. 431-457. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92558&strquery=Thomas Howard Duke of Norfolk Mary Scots marriage](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92558&strquery=Thomas+Howard+Duke+of+Norfolk+Mary+Scots+marriage).

⁴⁰³ Interrogatories and Answers of the Bishop of Ross, 31 October 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 555.

⁴⁰⁴ Minute by Lord Burghley respecting the Queen's Marriage with the Duke of Anjou, 2 October 1579, in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 2: 1572-1582. (1888), pp. 267-274*. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=109898&strquery=keeping Burghley 1579 bonds law evil subjects religion](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=109898&strquery=keeping+burghley+1579+bonds+law+evil+subjects+religion).

Meanwhile, as the Catholic powers cautiously discussed their options, a discovery terminated Ridolfi's plan indefinitely.

Burghley had spent the entire summer interrogating suspects, tightening security, and receiving information on the ensuing plan. Its aims continued to elude him. His frustrating wait ended in August 1571. The French sent two thousand crowns to Mary and she wanted it relayed to her proponents in Scotland.⁴⁰⁵ Norfolk arranged for the money's transference.⁴⁰⁶ He ordered his two secretaries, William Barker and Robert Higford, to orchestrate the delivery.⁴⁰⁷ They entrusted the money to Thomas Browne, one of the duke's retainers, but informed him it only contained fifty pounds in silver.⁴⁰⁸ Browne, distrusting anything from Howard House and realizing the bag's weight betrayed considerably more coins, opened it.⁴⁰⁹ Its six-hundred pounds in gold coins and ciphered letters convinced him of the seriousness of his task, and either out of loyalty to, or fear of, the secretary he delivered the bag to the advisor.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁵William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁴⁰⁶William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁴⁰⁷ Examination of William Barker, 4 September 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 521. Both William Barker and Robert Higford's birth and death dates are unknown.

⁴⁰⁸ Sir Andrew Corbett to Lords Leicester and Burghley, 6 September 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 521. Thomas Browne's birth and death dates are unknown.

⁴⁰⁹ Sir Andrew Corbett to Lords Leicester and Burghley, 6 September 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 521.

⁴¹⁰ Sir Andrew Corbett to Lords Leicester and Burghley, 6 September 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 521.

Burghley wasted no time apprehending Norfolk's servants and sending them to the tower for questioning. At first, Higford and Barker professed innocence but the rack quickly produced their full disclosures.⁴¹¹ The minister most desired the alphabet key for Bailly's still encoded letters.⁴¹² Higford provided this vital information, taking his interrogators to Howard House, and lifting the carpet, revealing the cipher key.⁴¹³ He also divulged the location of love letters from Mary of Scots, further proving the duke's guilt.⁴¹⁴ The key revealed the identities of "30" and "40", who, not surprisingly, were Norfolk and John Lumley (1533-1609).⁴¹⁵ It also exposed the designs of the plot, which ended before it truly began. Burghley ordered the noble's swift interrogation.⁴¹⁶ The unassuming duke, believing his servants' had remained silent, denied all accusations.⁴¹⁷ When his examiners informed him of their disloyalty he exclaimed "I am betrayed and undone by mine own, whilst I knew not how to mistrust, which is the strength of wisdom."⁴¹⁸ Apparently, he underestimated the power of self-preservation. The loyalty

⁴¹¹ The Examination of Robert Higford, 2 September 1571, in *A collection of state papers relating to affairs in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1571 to 1596* (London: William Bowyer, 1759), 67.

⁴¹² The Bishop of Ross to Charles Bailly, 20 April 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 494.

⁴¹³ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁴¹⁴ Neville Williams, *A Tudor Tragedy: Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1989), 212.

⁴¹⁵ William Barker's Confession, 23 September 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 528.

⁴¹⁶ Sir Thomas Smith and Dr. Thomas Wilson to Lord Burghley, St. Katherine's, 20 September 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 528.

⁴¹⁷ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁴¹⁸ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable*

of his servants evaporated in the dark chambers of the dungeons, and the determined secretary obtained their confessions, condemning Norfolk.

Within days of his examination, Norfolk was committed to the Tower and questions, torture, and confessions consumed the last months of 1571.⁴¹⁹ A growing number of conspirators barraged Burghley with appeals for mercy. While he relished his suppression of the Ridolfi plot, he took no pleasure in the duke's downfall.⁴²⁰ Although Norfolk had frequently sought his overthrow, the advisor still believed him to be a good person, but loyalty to the crown trumped any personal attachments. The minister's years of trying to steer him away from treasonous acts had produced no effect. Norfolk had dug his own grave, and the principal counselor was tired of pulling him out of it. The duke attempted to evoke this affection by making numerous pleas throughout his imprisonment to the secretary, but was ignored.⁴²¹

In October, Burghley anonymously penned *Salutem in Christo*, a letter that familiarized the public with all the evil designs of Ridolfi's plan.⁴²² He employed his friend John Day to publish it, a tactic he used often to voice his true sentiments while evading Elizabeth's displeasure.⁴²³ This character assassination of Mary blamed her for

passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁴¹⁹ Sir Ralph Sadler, Sir Thomas Smith, and Dr. Wilson to Lord Burghley, The Tower, 7 September 1571, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 521.

⁴²⁰ The Earl of Sussex to Cecil, Cawood, 9 June 1569, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 412.

⁴²¹ Norfolk's Confession, November 1571, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 4: 1571-74* (1905), pp. 27-59. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44231&strquery=elizabeth+november+1571+norfolk+duke+confession>.

⁴²² William Cecil, *Salutem in Christo* (London: John Day, 1571), 5.

⁴²³ Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 178.

everything from the northern uprising to the current scheme.⁴²⁴ The secretary denounced her as the element threatening England's welfare, explaining "it is known that the Scottish queen hath been the most dangerous enemy against the queen's majesty."⁴²⁵ If he could not persuade Elizabeth of the threat she posed, then perhaps hostile citizens could. The advisor hoped this obvious betrayal might finally move his monarch to accuse Mary of treason, but she wanted a full investigation before punishments were bestowed. His Catholic opponents also deserved blame, and Burghley vilified them in *Salutem in Christo* by revealing the complicity of both the pope and Philip in the plot.⁴²⁶ The numerous decoded letters the minister presented to his sovereign failed to induce her to act against the foreigners. This constant encouragement conformed with Machiavelli's advice to "cleverly nourish some enmity, so that, when [the enemy] is defeated, his greatness results increased."⁴²⁷ The secretary spent months questioning the culprits, gathering a case to hopefully destroy his enemies and convince Elizabeth of the dire threat her Catholic counterparts posed. They threatened both secular and religious establishments, motivating the advisor to eliminate Norfolk, whose use as a pawn would continue if not extinguished.

The crucial confession Burghley needed to further validate his case came in October, 1571, from the bishop of Ross. He revealed every detail he knew about the Florentine's scheme and even slandered his queen. By the time he was questioned, most of the testimonies had already exposed enough of the conspiracy's elements to prosecute Norfolk. Therefore, Ross experienced no shame in confessing everything. He furnished

⁴²⁴ William Cecil, *Salutem in Christo* (London: John Day, 1571), 7.

⁴²⁵ William Cecil, *Salutem in Christo* (London: John Day, 1571), 8.

⁴²⁶ William Cecil, *Salutem in Christo* (London: John Day, 1571), 12.

⁴²⁷ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005), 106.

a detailed account of the Ridolfi plan, from its origins to its untimely end.⁴²⁸ Ross even berated his mistress by suggesting her union with the duke would have deteriorated and cited her previous husbands as proof.⁴²⁹ He explained “she poisoned her first husband, consented to Darnley’s murder, married the murderer, and then led him out to the battlefield that he in turn might be murdered.”⁴³⁰ His unexpected hatred of Mary stunned Burghley, but he used the bishop’s anger to build a prudent relationship with him. Ross wrote regularly to the minister, hoping his continuing admissions would elicit mercy from the man who controlled his fate. One of the many discoveries of the convoluted project was its aim to kill the advisor, solidifying the secretary’s apprehension.⁴³¹

Burghley worked relentlessly to hunt down every conspirator, but was unable to punish the mastermind. The banker learned of the plan’s exposure while still abroad, and never returned to England.⁴³² He lived a long, opulent life as a senator in Italy, abandoning his career of traveling to courts and stirring up trouble.⁴³³ Both Ridolfi and Mary slipped through Burghley’s fingers. However, the plot gravely diminished her followers’ support and hope of restoration. For the second time in three years, their expectations had been shattered by unsuccessful attempts to rescue their “true” queen. The minister harkened on this discontent to destroy her followers elsewhere as well.

⁴²⁸ The Bishop of Ross’s Examination, 1 October 1571, in *A collection of state papers relating to affairs in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1571 to 1596* (London: William Bowyer, 1759), 32.

⁴²⁹ The Bishop of Ross’s Examination, 1 October 1571, in *A collection of state papers relating to affairs in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1571 to 1596* (London: William Bowyer, 1759), 32.

⁴³⁰ Dr. Thomas Wilson to Lord Burghley, 8 November 1571, in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 1: 1306-1571* (1883), pp. 531-579. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=111995&strquery=She poisoned her first husband, consented Darnley murder, married.](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=111995&strquery=She+poisoned+her+first+husband,+consented+Darnley+murder,+married.)

⁴³¹ The Bishop of Ross’s Examination, 1 October 1571, in *A collection of state papers relating to affairs in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1571 to 1596* (London: William Bowyer, 1759), 32.

⁴³² Ridolfi’s Future, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 1: 1558-1571* (1916), pp. V-LXIV. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92522&strquery=italy ridolfi plot burghley mary norfolk elizabeth.](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92522&strquery=italy+ridolfi+plot+burghley+mary+norfolk+elizabeth.)

⁴³³ Neville Williams, *A Tudor Tragedy: Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1989), 223.

Safeguarding his country meant destroying the woman who would alter its religion and thereby create religious divisions. To further damage Mary's stature, Burghley once again utilized John Day's printing press. George Buchanan (1506-82), noted Scottish historian, wrote *Ane Detectioun of the duings of Marie Quene of Scottes*, a savage attack on Mary that the secretary wanted widely distributed.⁴³⁴ He had Day publish it in England and sent copies to his friends at the various European courts.⁴³⁵ To further propagate this stinging criticism, the advisor wrote *A copie of a letter*, an anonymous pamphlet validating the numerous accusations against the monarch.⁴³⁶ Graves asserts the advisor hoped it would bolster the political loyalty of the reformers.⁴³⁷

These publications compelled the all-Protestant English Parliament to ratify a bill ordering the Scottish sovereign's death, but once again Elizabeth vetoed the advisor's progress.⁴³⁸ One contributing factor for her mercy was the fact that Burghley could find no evidence that the Ridolfi plot involved his queen's murder. Her removal from office was not enough to convince her to execute her cousin, who she believed played a minor role. However, Mary's relentlessness signified she would stop at nothing to be free, and the counselor only had to wait for her to commit to a scheme that included his majesty's demise.

The closing months of 1571 were a peaceful time for the secretary, compared to the previous three years of turmoil. He terminated yet another Catholic conspiracy and

⁴³⁴ *Ane Detectioun*, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), xii.

⁴³⁵ Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 180. George Buchanan was a Scottish author who wrote disparaging pamphlets on Mary of Scots.

⁴³⁶ Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 186.

⁴³⁷ Michael A.R. Graves, *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (New York City: Longman, 1998), 175.

⁴³⁸ John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (New York City: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 455.

his position in the government was secure. Burghley had proven himself a tenacious man willing to utilize all avenues to keep his country, and himself, safe. By preventing this revolt he maintained his vision of a Protestant England led by his political policies. Graves contends that the minister became more aggressive towards English Catholics after these crisis years.⁴³⁹ However, not until 1583 did another Catholic gain such momentum. Although no closer to his fiercest enemy's death, she remained locked away under his control. Her minister, Ross, was imprisoned; he would be released in 1573 but banished forever from the island, and her beloved duke had enough treacherous evidence against him for a trip to the scaffold. The secretary worked tirelessly to produce a trial that was respectable but had a fatal outcome.

Norfolk's pleas for pardon continued during his four months of imprisonment before his trial. He wrote a six-thousand word confession, but it landed on deaf ears. He explained "I do from the bottom of my heart repent what I did, but I never consented to raising a rebellion."⁴⁴⁰ However, the minister had his letters affirming his active participation in the plan. From his initial reluctance to join the scheme to his continuous anxiety over his favor with Elizabeth, the documents revealed all. Perhaps he wanted nothing more than a royal marriage, to be proclaimed heir, and reclaim the ancient nobility's supremacy with his restored power. The benefit of any doubt was a chance Burghley was unwilling to risk.

The Ridolfi plot was the biggest campaign against the secretary throughout his forty-year career. A coalition of the powerful nations of Spain and France, with the

⁴³⁹ Michael A.R. Graves, *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (New York City: Longman, 1998), 172.

⁴⁴⁰ Norfolk's Confession, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 4: 1571-74* (1905), pp. 27-59. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44231&strquery=Thomas Howard Duke of Norfolk Mary Scots marriage](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44231&strquery=Thomas+Howard+Duke+of+Norfolk+Mary+Scots+marriage).

crucial religious support of the pope might have been too much for England to overcome. An encouraging spirit would have been instilled in Catholics throughout the island at the mere thought of such a colossal force. These same peasants, who had abandoned the northern rebellion when the foreign aid never materialized, would have gained the confidence necessary to fight. A papist invasion of a religiously divided kingdom would have been the ultimate test for the secretary. MacCaffrey cites Burghley's determination in suppressing this scheme as evidence of his isolationist foreign policy. However, his letters argue that he was attempting to maintain a balance of power that included England. The Catholic princes were conspiring to achieve his greatest fear, and politically separating his kingdom from the continent would help thwart these enterprises.

Burghley's biographers disagree on his motivations during the Ridolfi plot. Alford focused on the advisor's propaganda success, citing *Salutem in Christo* and *A copie of a letter* as proof of the minister's ability to unite his country behind his convictions.⁴⁴¹ Certain historians, including Alison Plowden, pose another theory, although widely discredited, claiming that Ridolfi and the advisor jointly planned the plot to trap Mary of Scots.⁴⁴² Although this seems highly unlikely, even Alford does not completely rule out this speculation, citing Burghley's omission of the Florentine's name in *Salutem in Christo* as evidence for the alliance.⁴⁴³ In stark contrast, Graves entirely dismisses the secretary's involvement in the scheme. He blames Ross and Norfolk's

⁴⁴¹ Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 182.

⁴⁴² Alison Plowden, *Two Queens in One Isle* (New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1984), 175.

⁴⁴³ Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 179.

inability to evade detection.⁴⁴⁴ Read, too, rejects the accepted notion of crediting the advisor with its dissolution, and claims lucky accidents led to its discovery.⁴⁴⁵ The primary sources devoted to the plot suggest that both the minister's participation and the incompetence of the conspirators allowed it to be uncovered.

The Catholic rulers' prime target was England because it was the only officially Protestant nation. Mary's restoration could only transpire with the removal of the advisor, and therefore, overthrowing Elizabeth's finest statesman was the cardinal goal of the Ridolfi plot. Burghley's vigilance and intuition helped him foresee this possibility, and he instituted preventative methods. He prepared for an attack by forging alliances with Protestant groups and discovering the scheme before it commenced. He pursued its architects, who were the usual aristocratic Catholics seeking foreign support, until he arrested all of the participants. Once again he saved his queen and country from a papist conquest. The Protestant government he had worked tirelessly to construct remained his foremost concern throughout his career, and his aggressive pursuit of its enemies preserved his kingdom's survival. By demonizing its papist conspirators, the minister used the scheme to further unite England by religion. Building their bond was essential for the nation's thriving future.

⁴⁴⁴ Michael A. R. Graves, "Howard, Thomas, fourth duke of Norfolk (1538–1572)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13941, accessed 3 Oct 2009.]

⁴⁴⁵ Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 48.

Chapter Four

Mary's Final Scheme and Burghley's Ultimate Triumph

The failure of the Ridolfi plot ended the crisis years in Burghley's reign, but his rival still lived. His relationship with Elizabeth was as solid as ever, and two of his most prominent adversaries were incarcerated and under his control. Mary of Scots put down her ciphers and contented herself with a quiet, peaceful life, at least for awhile. Norfolk abandoned all hope of the queen's mercy, since the secretary had refused to advocate for him, and awaited his trial. His death would bring the head counselor another step closer to dispatching Mary. However, Mary Stuart's demise is the main concern of this chapter. She was England's principal threat, according to Burghley, and he achieved her execution by interweaving secular and religious elements to invoke the Bond of Association, and impede the Babington plot. Her death was essential if his vision of a united, Protestant nation was to succeed.

Burghley's spy network did not cease just because he silenced some of his enemies. In January 1572 a new scheme arose, aiming for the secretary's death. Edmund Mather and Kenelm Berney, two disgruntled men of the ancient nobility, had ventured to the kingdom in 1571 to join the intended uprising.⁴⁴⁶ Frustrated and wanting blood, they devised a plan to murder the minister and release Norfolk.⁴⁴⁷ The banished Spanish ambassador, De Spes, whose desire for revenge had kept him in England, encouraged

⁴⁴⁶ Edmund Mather to Lord Burghley, London, 4 January 1571, in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 2: 1572-1582* (1888), pp. 1-10. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=109808&strquery=mather berney norfolk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=109808&strquery=mather+berney+norfolk). Both Edmund Mather and Kenelm Berney's birth and death dates are unknown.

⁴⁴⁷ *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire*. London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode.

them to act.⁴⁴⁸ As a leader of the Protestant movement, the advisor was always a main target for papists, with numerous nobles at court supporting any viable plan. Since killing the queen was not an option, revolting against governmental policies meant aiming for her leading statesman. These conspirators were not skilled in the art of deception, and they divulged their enterprise to Herle, the minister's spy, who had extracted crucial details from Bailly about the Ridolfi plot.⁴⁴⁹ Herle immediately told his employer, but Burghley was too busy preparing Norfolk's case to be bothered with this minor design.⁴⁵⁰ Two weeks before the anticipated trial, the secretary received an anonymous message warning him of the conspiracy.⁴⁵¹ The now tangible threat provoked him to swift action. The advisor reverted to his regular routine to deal with enemies. He hunted down Mather and Berney, arrested them, produced their full confessions through torture, and had them executed in February.⁴⁵²

Quelling the radicals, Burghley gave his full attention to Norfolk's trial. He composed a list of charges condemning the rebellious duke and orchestrated a prosecution wrought with corruption.⁴⁵³ The hearing commenced on January 16, 1572,

⁴⁴⁸ News from London to Guerau De Spes, 21 August 1572, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 2: 1568-1579* (1894), pp. 400-410. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86994&strquery=ridolfi plot spanish ambassador de spes](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86994&strquery=ridolfi%20plot%20spanish%20ambassador%20de%20spes).

⁴⁴⁹ The Plot Against Burghley, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 3: 1569-71* (1903), pp. 517-560. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44306&strquery=burghley elizabeth mary ross herle bailly letters](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44306&strquery=burghley%20elizabeth%20mary%20ross%20herle%20bailly%20letters).

⁴⁵⁰ The Plot Against Burghley, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 3: 1569-71* (1903), pp. 517-560. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44306&strquery=burghley elizabeth mary ross herle bailly letters](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44306&strquery=burghley%20elizabeth%20mary%20ross%20herle%20bailly%20letters).

⁴⁵¹ Edmund Mather to Lord Burghley, London, 4 January 1571, in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 2: 1572-1582* (1888), pp. 1-10. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=109808&strquery=mather berney norfolk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=109808&strquery=mather%20berney%20norfolk).

⁴⁵² Kenelm Berney to the Lords of the Council, London, 15 January 1571, in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 2: 1572-1582* (1888), pp. 1-10. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=109808&strquery=berney mather burghley](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=109808&strquery=berney%20mather%20burghley).

⁴⁵³ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

with the Earl of Shrewsbury serving as Lord High Steward, the overseer of peer trials.⁴⁵⁴

The secretary chose this weak earl because he could manipulate him. Burghley also hand-picked the judges: Robert Dudley the first Earl of Leicester, Sir Ralph Sadler the Earl of Sussex, and even himself.⁴⁵⁵ They ignored Norfolk's pleas for a defense lawyer, another unjust aspect concocted by the minister.⁴⁵⁶ The charges included unlawfully pledging marriage to Mary, supplying money to the leaders of the northern rebellion, assisting foreign powers to invade England, and, perhaps worst of all, plans to depose Elizabeth.⁴⁵⁷ The duke admitted guilt to some of the pardonable crimes but denied he had any part in the worst accusation, supporting Ridolfi's plot.⁴⁵⁸ Attempting to overthrow the monarch was high treason. The numerous letters Burghley confiscated and confessions he accumulated exposed Norfolk's obvious transgression and the judges unanimously sentenced to him to hang.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁴William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁴⁵⁵William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁴⁵⁶William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁴⁵⁷William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁴⁵⁸William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁴⁵⁹William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

The pardon that never came left many of his Catholic cohorts stunned.⁴⁶⁰ Stripped of his title, the degraded noble's banner of arms was thrown into a ditch.⁴⁶¹ Although Elizabeth signed his death warrant, she annulled it soon after.⁴⁶² Her indecision produced three more revoked warrants in the subsequent four months, alarming the determined secretary.⁴⁶³ Historians' theories on her fluctuation vary from her unwillingness to further enrage his faction to her sympathy for a close relative and the highest peer of her realm.⁴⁶⁴ Martin Hume counts as one of the few scholars who questioned Elizabeth's sincere concern for the duke. Most agreed with Graves, that the council forced her hand. Norfolk prepared for the worst, giving his children to Burghley. A surprising move, but a clear testament to the duke's enduring affection for the man whom he had betrayed. The condemned noble implored "I would hope that my good Lord Burghley, for the old love, goodwill, and friendship that he hath born to me be entreated in fathering my children."⁴⁶⁵ The minister graciously accepted their guardianship.

Burghley scrambled to convince Elizabeth of the impending danger if the popular noble lived. He was the leader of the party dedicated to deposing the baron. The advisor regarded the Ridolfi plot as a golden opportunity to eliminate one of his principal rivals,

⁴⁶⁰ Neville Williams, *A Tudor Tragedy: Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1989), 229.

⁴⁶¹ Michael A. R. Graves, "Howard, Thomas, fourth duke of Norfolk (1538–1572)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13941, accessed 3 Oct 2009].

⁴⁶² The Death Warrant, in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, 1581-90* (1865), pp. 383-391. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=61066&strquery=death+warrant+mary+scots+burghley+elizabeth>.

⁴⁶³ The Death Warrant, in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, 1581-90* (1865), pp. 383-391. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=61066&strquery=death+warrant+mary+scots+burghley+elizabeth>.

⁴⁶⁴ Conyers Read, "Good Queen Bess," *The American Historical Review* 31 (July 1926): 654.

⁴⁶⁵ The Duke of Norfolk to Queen Elizabeth, 21 January 1572, in *A collection of state papers relating to affairs in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1571 to 1596* (London: William Bowyer, 1759), 166.

which would hopefully pave the way towards the execution of Mary Stuart. He feared that failing to eradicate Norfolk would thwart future chances to destroy the Scottish monarch.⁴⁶⁶ Read disagrees, asserting the advisor reluctantly prosecuted his friend.⁴⁶⁷ Alford asserts Burghley saw the duke as a threat to national security, and when it came to a matter of state, his emotions became irrelevant.⁴⁶⁸ His actions and letters argue that he saw Norfolk merely as a stepping stone toward Mary's demise.

The duke remained in the tower for five months awaiting sentence. The queen finally succumbed to her minister's urging and executed him on June 2, 1572.⁴⁶⁹ The ambitious noble was dead. Although the secretary's efforts were successful, it damaged his relationship with Elizabeth. She publically blamed him for the noble's demise and claimed "he would not have been put to death at all, if it had not been for the persuasions of Lord Burghley."⁴⁷⁰ Perhaps, condemning him pacified the northern nobles and removed the internal guilt of killing a relative. The advisor accepted responsibility in order to protect his assets and affinity with his sovereign.

If Norfolk's ventures had succeeded, a Catholic government would have destroyed everything the minister had created. He concluded execution was his only option, if he wanted to safeguard his vision of a united, Protestant nation led by his monarch. The duke's death carried advantages for Elizabeth. Sacrificing him enabled

⁴⁶⁶ Neville Williams, *A Tudor Tragedy: Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1989), 252.

⁴⁶⁷ Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 49.

⁴⁶⁸ Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 189.

⁴⁶⁹ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁴⁷⁰ Raphael Courteville, *Memoirs of the Life and Administration of William Cecil Baron Burleigh* (London: T. Cooper, 1738), 62.

her to avoid disciplining Mary. For appearances' sake, the English queen sent a commission to question her cousin about her participation in the Ridolfi plot, but she denied everything.⁴⁷¹ Although the minister had letters that testified to her involvement, Elizabeth once again forgave her. It would be another fifteen years before he uncovered another scheme capable of condemning the prisoner and achieved success.

Burghley's continual repression of plans to rescue the Scottish monarch and restore Catholicism to England increased his prestige with his sovereign, who promoted him to Lord Treasurer in July 1572, confirming her anger with him was short-lived.⁴⁷² Although domestic affairs tempered, foreign matters became unstable. In August, Catholics went on a rampage in France, killing thousands of Protestants in what became known as St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre.⁴⁷³ Concern that the violence might spread to their shores swept through England, validating Burghley's conviction that religious upheaval could undermine political stability.⁴⁷⁴ Elizabeth was not immune to this concern but the new treasurer feared a similar fate awaited his kingdom with the Scottish queen nearby to use as an excuse. For the minister, she represented the pawn Catholics throughout Europe could use as an excuse to invade. Mary's security was strengthened,

⁴⁷¹ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁴⁷² Promotion to Treasurer, in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 14: Addenda* (1923), pp. V-XVIII. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=112079&strquery=elizabeth burghley lord treasurer promoted](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=112079&strquery=elizabeth%20burghley%20lord%20treasurer%20promoted).

⁴⁷³ St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 10: 1572-1574* (1876), pp. 221-225. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73154&strquery=st. bartholomew day massacre](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73154&strquery=st.%20bartholomew%20day%20massacre).

⁴⁷⁴ "Mignet's Life of Mary Queen of Scots," *New Monthly Magazine and Humorist* 93 (October 1851): 170.

which was barely a victory for the advisor, but he sought other means to finish his nemesis.⁴⁷⁵

Within the month, Burghley employed the English ambassador at Scotland's court, Henry Killigrew (d.1603), to convince the government that their own religious massacre was imminent unless they helped him destroy the deposed queen.⁴⁷⁶ The minister professed "we need a league of all Protestant princes for defense against the conspiracy of the pope and the Catholic monarchs."⁴⁷⁷ The Scottish regent John Erskine, the seventeenth Earl of Mar (d. 1572), agreed with him, and a plot to send Mary to Scotland, where she would be subsequently murdered, was arranged.⁴⁷⁸ Unfortunately for the new treasurer, Mar was assassinated within days of the plan's agreement, and the scheme dissolved.⁴⁷⁹ However, the new regent, James Douglas, fourth Earl of Morton (1521-81), a devout Protestant, hated the deposed sovereign.⁴⁸⁰ Burghley capitalized on this religious conviction, Hume asserts, to gain even more influence over the northern

⁴⁷⁵ J.R. Leader, *Mary Queen of Scots in Captivity* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1880), 270.

⁴⁷⁶ Burghley's Fears, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), vi. Henry Killigrew's birth date is unknown.

⁴⁷⁷ William Cecil to Randolph, 20 March 1561, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 258.

⁴⁷⁸ Alan G. Smith, *William Cecil, The Power Behind Elizabeth* (New York City: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1935), 185. The Earl of Mar was Scotland's regent from 1571 to 1572, and conspired with Burghley against Mary. His birth date is unknown.

⁴⁷⁹ Mar's Assassination, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), vi.

⁴⁸⁰ The New Regent, in *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c. &c., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), vi. James Douglas, Fourth Earl of Morton was the Scottish regent from 1572 to 1578. Both he and Burghley were Protestants who despised Mary.

kingdom.⁴⁸¹ Scotland progressed under Morton's leadership, and Guy credits the advisor with this success.⁴⁸²

With France in turmoil and the advisor's power in Scotland growing, the only major force remaining who could readily help the imprisoned queen was Spain. To keep a closer watch on this constant enemy, the minister reopened trade with Spain and tried to win the trust of the Spanish ambassador. He even proposed numerous schemes to the Spaniard to join, with the goal of discovering the lengths Philip was willing to take against England.⁴⁸³ Luckily for Burghley, Philip hesitated when it came to rescuing Mary. He ignored Catholic allies who constantly urged him to save the deposed queen. The prisoner also expected the papist leader to come to her aid. As the years passed, her letters to him became more determined explaining "I shall leave no stone unturned to escape from this imprisonment."⁴⁸⁴ As years dragged on Mary's silence seemed to denote her defeat, but perhaps she was merely waiting until a more clever escape plan surfaced.

Burghley's life was relatively stable during the years following Norfolk's execution. His attendance at court was not as vital since Walsingham, his long-time apprentice, had assumed his secretarial position, but never outranked his influence with the queen.⁴⁸⁵ The treasurer continued as her second in command until he died; all that changed was his title. Although he was not seen as often, his presence was always

⁴⁸¹ Martin Hume, *The Great Lord Burghley: A Study in Elizabethan Statecraft* (New York: NY McClure Phillips & Co, 1906), 285.

⁴⁸² John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (New York City: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 461.

⁴⁸³ Martin Hume, *The Great Lord Burghley: A Study in Elizabethan Statecraft* (New York: NY McClure Phillips & Co, 1906), 296.

⁴⁸⁴ Frederick Chamberlin, *The Sayings of Queen Elizabeth* (London: John Lane, 1923), 45.

⁴⁸⁵ Walsingham's Position, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 5: 1574-81* (1907), pp. 213-215. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44358&strquery=walsingham secretary 1576](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44358&strquery=walsingham+secretary+1576).

discernable. Burghley actively partook in, if not led, the administrative transactions, including sniffing out the plots against England.

The public continued to hear his voice through the printing press. In 1583 he wrote a pamphlet, *The Execution of Justice*, which denounced Catholics who still failed to adhere to Protestantism and defended the English government's prosecution against Catholics.⁴⁸⁶ Alford attests that Burghley wrote this to explain how their reasons for punishment were purely political and not religious.⁴⁸⁷ The minister's numerous secret pamphlets were usually published without his queen's knowledge. She refused to condone these actions, probably fearing the reprisals to such brazen words. However, her treasurer understood the impact of print and took full advantage of his friendship with the publisher, John Day, to communicate his convictions to the populace. By encouraging adherence to a single faith, he strengthened England's stability and government. Not until the Babington plot in 1586 did the Scottish monarch again attempt, on a large scale, to seize Elizabeth's crown. The minister spent more time at his palace, Theobalds, due to his gout and the relaxed political climate.⁴⁸⁸

The first scheme Walsingham encountered as secretary to place Mary on the English throne came in 1583 with the Throckmorton plot. Burghley's years of training the perfect spy master would finally be put to the test. Walsingham had spies established in courts across Europe, just as his mentor had trained him to do. One such covert

⁴⁸⁶ Henry, Earl of Pembroke to Sir Edward Stradling and William Matthew, Baynard's Castle, 2 January 1587, in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 3: 1583-1589* (1889), pp. 211-216. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=111498&strquery=The Execution of Justice 1583](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=111498&strquery=The+Execution+of+Justice+1583).

⁴⁸⁷ Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 249.

⁴⁸⁸ Sir William Cordell to the Lord Treasurer, Shakellwell, 25 September 1578, in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 13: Addenda* (1915), pp. 153-169. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=112038&strquery=burghley theobalds gout](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=112038&strquery=burghley+theobalds+gout).

informant resided at the Scottish court, and through this man the secretary uncovered the brewing scheme.⁴⁸⁹ The plan included the execution of Elizabeth, installing the Scottish queen in her place, a French invasion, and the restoration of Catholicism.⁴⁹⁰ Mary and the Spanish ambassador Bernardino de Mendoza (1540-1604) organized these designs, with Sir Francis Throckmorton (1554-84) as an active conspirator.⁴⁹¹ After Walsingham procured enough incriminating evidence, he arrested Throckmorton, who confessed and was beheaded for his role in the conspiracy.⁴⁹² The English queen banished Mendoza, but the deposed sovereign remained exempt of any punishment from the forgiving monarch.⁴⁹³ Hume argues the Throckmorton plot was a turning point for the advisor. The historian claims the treasurer had a conservative foreign policy, fearing Spanish reprisals if he harmed Mary, but was now forced to take an aggressive stand against her.⁴⁹⁴ This seems a reasonable explanation since Mary survived for so many years.

Walsingham learned the lesson Burghley had deduced many years before, the evidence must be incontrovertible before any attempt is made to convince Elizabeth to begin the process of regicide, executing a crowned sovereign. The Casket Letters, the

⁴⁸⁹ J.E. Neale, *Queen Elizabeth I* (New York City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1934), 262.

⁴⁹⁰ Juan Bautista De Tassis to the King of France, Paris, 15 November 1583, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 3: 1580-1586* (1896), pp. 507-511. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=87122&strquery=plot throckmorton 1583](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=87122&strquery=plot+throckmorton+1583).

⁴⁹¹ Bernardino De Mendoza to the King of Spain, London, 26 November 1583, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 3: 1580-1586* (1896), pp. 507-511. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=87122&strquery=plot throckmorton 1583](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=87122&strquery=plot+throckmorton+1583). Bernardino Mendoza was a Spanish ambassador at the English court. He regularly sought means to depose Elizabeth and establish Mary in her place. Sir Francis Throckmorton was one of the leading conspirators of the Throckmorton plot in 1583. He was a messenger between Mendoza and Mary. His participation led to his execution.

⁴⁹² Proceedings concerning the Earl of Northumberland, 24 June 1585, in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 13: Addenda* (1915), pp. 260-292. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=112045&strquery=plot throckmorton arrested](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=112045&strquery=plot+throckmorton+arrested).

⁴⁹³ Mendoza's Punishment, in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 20: September 1585-May 1586* (1921), pp. V-LXXIV. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=79181&strquery=banished mendoza spanish ambassador england](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=79181&strquery=banished+mendoza+spanish+ambassador+england).

⁴⁹⁴ Martin Hume, *The Great Lord Burghley: A Study in Elizabethan Statecraft* (New York: NY McClure Phillips & Co, 1906), 386.

northern rebellion, and the Ridolfi plot are three of the many incidents where the minister proved Mary's involvement but failed to convince his monarch that a fellow monarch should die. The new secretary wanted the Scottish queen gone just as much as his mentor, and the two men continued seeking other means to vanquish her. Once again the chief advisor turned a problem to his advantage by way of the printing press. He wrote *A discoverie of the treasons practiced and attempted against the Queenes Majestie*, a pamphlet detailing the plot and exposing the threat Catholics posed to England.⁴⁹⁵ He not only hoped to arouse hatred for Mary but also laid the foundation for his enterprises against her in the council. Although killing a monarch was an inconceivable goal, his prominence in the government, influence over his queen, and determination caused him to consider its possibility.

Realizing a legislative act was necessary to induce Elizabeth to execute her cousin, Burghley crafted a bill that barred the English crown from anyone who attempted to assassinate or usurp his sovereign.⁴⁹⁶ He acquired thousands of signatures for his Bond of Association, even forcing the Scottish monarch herself to sign, and it was passed in 1584.⁴⁹⁷ Any association with a plot, even unknowingly, was enough to condemn a person to death, even if that individual was a monarch. Clearly, this bill aimed at the imprisoned queen. He played on people's religious and patriotic sentiments, reaffirming the troubles that Mary could create for England.

⁴⁹⁵ Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 254.

⁴⁹⁶ David Loades, *The Cecils: Privilege and Power Behind the Throne* (United Kingdom: The National Archives, 2007), 155.

⁴⁹⁷ Lord Burghley to Lord Cobham, Westminster, 27 October 1584, in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 3: 1583-1589* (1889), pp. 67-72. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=111471&strquery=1584 burghley mary bond of association](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=111471&strquery=1584%20burghley%20mary%20bond%20of%20association).

Burghley only had to wait two years until another opportunity materialized to capture Mary, but this time he would not fail to achieve his goal. Thirty years of trial and error had molded an experienced operator with the insight to vanquish a seemingly impossible target. While Walsingham discovered the Babington plot, but his training by Burghley, on how to find and expose treachery, deserves some credit. Without the knowledge of how to manage a spy network, utilize a decipherer, and covertly operate under Elizabeth's nose, this scheme might have succeeded.

At any one time, numerous attempts to assassinate the English queen existed throughout Europe, but only a few actually gained enough momentum to become more than just words. The Babington plot began after Mendoza's banishment. Upon his arrival to the continent he immediately conspired with other men ready to overthrow the Protestant monarch. They set into motion a plan to invade the island kingdom, rouse its Catholics to rebellion, and place Mary on the throne.⁴⁹⁸ They sent Gilbert Gifford (1560-90) to England to establish correspondence between the prisoner and the awaiting accomplices.⁴⁹⁹ However, he was arrested upon arrival.⁵⁰⁰ Walsingham recognized this fortuitous event and convinced him to become his spy.⁵⁰¹ Gifford's new assignment was to continue his original mission, but instead of delivering the letters directly from the Scottish queen to her allies on the continent, Gifford would convey them to

⁴⁹⁸ Another Plot, in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, 1581-90* (1865), pp. 342-349. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=61058&strquery=babington plot elizabeth burghley mary](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=61058&strquery=babington+plot+elizabeth+burghley+mary).

⁴⁹⁹ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635). Gilbert Gifford was a primary character in the Babington plot. He was a messenger for Mary's faction until Walsingham snatched him and forced him to spy on the Scottish queen.

⁵⁰⁰ J.E. Neale, *Queen Elizabeth I* (New York City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1934), 269.

⁵⁰¹ Walsingham's Idea, in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, 1598-1601* (1869), pp. 230-273. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=61224&strquery=walsingham Gilbert Gifford babington plot](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=61224&strquery=walsingham+gilbert+gifford+babington+plot).

Walsingham.⁵⁰² The secretary's cipher would decode and copy its contents and send the originals back on their course.⁵⁰³

Walsingham began seizing Mary's correspondence in January 1586.⁵⁰⁴ For seven months he and Burghley waited, hoping a letter proving her guilt would appear. Their failure to persuade Elizabeth of her cousin's imposing threat by unveiling conspiracies, such as the Ridolfi and Throckmorton plots, taught them that ample and irrefutable evidence was needed to provoke her to action. Their patience was rewarded; in July the fatal document arrived.⁵⁰⁵ Mary wrote to Sir Anthony Babington (1561-86) confirming her compliance to assassinate Elizabeth coupled with a foreign invasion to restore herself and Catholicism.⁵⁰⁶ No doubt Burghley and his comrade-in-deception were overjoyed on this day, as the undeniable proof they had been waiting over several decades for finally materialized. Indeed, in their eyes Mary Stuart was a religious and political threat that the minister demanded extinguished.

⁵⁰² William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁵⁰³ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁵⁰⁴ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁵⁰⁵ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁵⁰⁶ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635). The Babington plot was named after Anthony Babington, a leading conspirator who was apprehended and executed for his participation.

The council's condemnation of Mary would be easily secured considering they had signed the Bond of Association, but convincing Elizabeth to change her lenient policy toward her cousin would be a challenge. As the treasurer did with every other plot after its discovery, he searched the conspirators' houses for incriminating documents.⁵⁰⁷ He seized damaging evidence, arrested Babington and some of the conspirators, who confessed to the crime, and beheaded them in September 1586.⁵⁰⁸ For Elizabeth, killing traitors was an obvious and effortless process, but she feared she would no longer be deemed a sacred entity safe from the axe if she executed a fellow royal. The Scottish monarch's punishment would have been mild as always without Burghley constantly urging her to destroy her rival. Elizabeth agreed to hold a trial in October to evaluate Mary's alleged association with Babington.⁵⁰⁹ Now the treasurer took control; this case was too important to entrust with anyone but himself. Graves affirms that the minister truly believed that his approach was always the best.⁵¹⁰ He now had the legal justification necessary to forever silence the Scottish sovereign. Walsingham remained an active participant in convicting the deposed sovereign, but his mentor was now the principal prosecutor.

⁵⁰⁷ Searching the House, in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, 1581-90* (1865), pp. 342-349. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=61058&strquery=burghley searched house babington plot](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=61058&strquery=burghley+searched+house+babington+plot).

⁵⁰⁸ Babington's Death, in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, 1581-90* (1865), pp. 342-349. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=61058&strquery=burghley arrested babington plot](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=61058&strquery=burghley+arrested+babington+plot).

⁵⁰⁹ Mary's Trial, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 9: 1586-88* (1915), pp. 73-145. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44970&strquery=burghley trial mary babington plot](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44970&strquery=burghley+trial+mary+babington+plot).

⁵¹⁰ Michael A.R. Graves, *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (New York City: Longman, 1998), 10.

Burghley relocated the prisoner to Fotheringay Castle for the trial.⁵¹¹ He managed the proceedings, from its jurors to the position of the chairs in the courtroom.⁵¹² This methodical approach confirmed his determination to guarantee a guilty verdict. He refused the Scottish queen's request for a counsel, frustrating any chance of a merciful judgment.⁵¹³ Elizabeth refused to attend, and her advisor impeded any attempts of her cousin to solicit a meeting with the English sovereign, which was her only chance of pardon.⁵¹⁴ Just two days were needed to convince the jurors of Mary's guilt. Babington's confession, the damning letters, and the imprisoned monarch's unpopularity with the privy council made the decision clear. She swore innocence and tried to brand Burghley as the villain, hoping to win sympathy.⁵¹⁵ She attested "when the Bond of Association was passed I knew that whatever danger should happen I must bear the whole blame, having many mortal enemies at court."⁵¹⁶ The Bond of Association's true purpose was never a secret; the treasurer's vendetta against the Scottish queen was common knowledge. The court was ready to declare its sentence when Elizabeth

⁵¹¹ A New Castle, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 9: 1586-88* (1915), pp. IX-XIV. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44966&strquery=burghley trial mary babington plot Fotheringay castle](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44966&strquery=burghley%20trial%20mary%20babington%20plot%20Fotheringay%20castle).

⁵¹² The Trial, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 9: 1586-88* (1915), pp. IX-XIV. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44966&strquery=burghley trial mary babington plot Fotheringay castle](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44966&strquery=burghley%20trial%20mary%20babington%20plot%20Fotheringay%20castle).

⁵¹³ Mary's Trial, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 9: 1586-88* (1915), pp. IX-XIV. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44966&strquery=burghley trial mary babington plot Fotheringay castle](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44966&strquery=burghley%20trial%20mary%20babington%20plot%20Fotheringay%20castle).

⁵¹⁴ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁵¹⁵ Mary's Pleas, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 9: 1586-88* (1915), pp. 145-178. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44971&strquery=1586 mary scots elizabeth burghley trial](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44971&strquery=1586%20mary%20scots%20elizabeth%20burghley%20trial)

⁵¹⁶ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

postponed the proceedings, forcing them to reconvene, without Mary, in London.⁵¹⁷ A different city produced the same outcome, and the council unanimously declared her guilty.⁵¹⁸ Parliament demanded the death penalty, but their monarch refused to ratify the sentence.⁵¹⁹ Adjourning in December, Parliament would not recommence until February 1587, but by then much had changed.⁵²⁰

During these tense weeks, envoys arrived from Scotland and France halfheartedly appealing for Mary's acquittal.⁵²¹ For nineteen years, Elizabeth pondered her cousin's fate; only her closest advisor would be able to influence this momentous decision. Burghley coaxed much of England to share his resolution by publishing the council's discussions.⁵²² The populace did not share their monarch's royal bond with the deposed sovereign. This attachment kept her signature from the death warrant. She protested "if your ambassadors can point out any means whereby I may preserve the Queen of Scots' life then I shall be greatly obliged."⁵²³ Killing, even lawfully, a fellow royal would give her adversaries grounds to attack England. For years the pope implored

⁵¹⁷ Elizabeth's Indecision, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 9: 1586-88* (1915), pp. IX-XIV. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44966&strquery=burghley trial mary babington plot Fotheringay castle](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44966&strquery=burghley+trial+mary+babington+plot+Fotheringay+castle).

⁵¹⁸ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁵¹⁹ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁵²⁰ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁵²¹ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁵²² Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 363.

⁵²³ Agnes Strickland, *Lives of the Queen of England* (Boston: Estes & Lauriat, 1894), 122.

Catholic princes to rescue Mary and restore the true faith. The English monarch worried her cousin's execution would enable the pope to declare a religious war and possibly an English rebellion. The treasurer feared this consequence as well, but his desire to forever silence the Scottish prisoner eclipsed his reservations. Alford stressed Burghley's disregard for his monarch's will in this case, "preservation of the commonwealth was a duty, even if it involved upsetting the queen."⁵²⁴

Elizabeth finally agreed to eliminate Mary, but she wanted it done covertly, preferably smothered by a pillow.⁵²⁵ Burghley forbid this cowardly course, realizing that this would create further cause for vengeance and undermine the lawful case he was making for regicide. The Scottish sovereign's violation of the Bond of Association was enough to legitimize her death. The secretary declared "to express her many attempts both for destruction of the Queen's person and the invasion of this realm; she is justly condemned to die, and her Majesty cannot longer delay."⁵²⁶ Another step he employed to coerce his queen was inventing a foreign assassination plot against her. The minister even went so far as to falsely report that Spanish troops had arrived on English shores.⁵²⁷ Momentarily capitulating, Elizabeth signed the warrant on February 1, 1587.⁵²⁸ She entrusted it to one of her two secretaries, William Davison (1541-1608), but ordered him

⁵²⁴ Stephen Alford, "William Cecil and the British Succession Crisis of the 1560s" (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 1997), 29.

⁵²⁵ Another Way Out, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 9: 1586-88* (1915), pp. 236-262. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44973&strquery=mary elizabeth kill 1587](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44973&strquery=mary+elizabeth+kill+1587) secretly january.

⁵²⁶ Memorial from Burghley, 2 February 1587, in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 3: 1583-1589* (1889), pp. 216-234. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=111499&strquery=express destruction invasion realm condemned die vehemently justice](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=111499&strquery=express+destruction+invasion+realm+condemned+die+vehemently+justice).

⁵²⁷ John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (New York City: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 480.

⁵²⁸ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

to tell no one, probably expecting to repeal the decision.⁵²⁹ The following day, she informed Davison to destroy the warrant but she was too late.⁵³⁰

Upon possession of the warrant, Davison immediately conveyed it to Burghley.⁵³¹ As the chief authority on anything concerning Mary, everyone who agreed with the treasurer's fatal plans for the Scottish monarch notified him first. Since most of the court craved her death, the advisor became their champion and Elizabeth's wishes were irrelevant. Throughout her reign peers had sided with either the minister or herself on the controversial affair. Two decades of her cousin's mischief convinced them that he had been correct all along. Sending her to the gallows would reinforce Burghley's influence over his queen. Her desire to be seen as the supreme ruler overshadowed her fondness of her most loyal servant.

After retention of the warrant, the chief counselor called an emergency council meeting, unbeknownst to Elizabeth.⁵³² They decided to send the document to Fotheringay and only inform the English queen with Mary's execution after its completion.⁵³³ Burghley remembered the four months it took her to decide to execute

⁵²⁹William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635). William Davison was, alongside Walsingham, one of Elizabeth's two secretaries. Elizabeth entrusted Mary's signed death warrant to him but he gave it to Burghley, and was unfairly given most of the blame.

⁵³⁰William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁵³¹The Warrant, in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, 1581-90* (1865), pp. 392-401. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=61067&strquery=davison+warrant+burghley+mary+elizabeth> 1587.

⁵³²The Meeting, in *'Historical preface: 1581-87', Charters and Documents relating to the City of Glasgow 1175-1649: Part 1* (1897), pp. CXVIII-CXLV. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=47906&strquery=davison+warrant+burghley+mary+elizabeth+1587+council+meeting>.

⁵³³The Warrant, in *'Historical preface: 1581-87', Charters and Documents relating to the City of Glasgow 1175-1649: Part 1* (1897), pp. CXVIII-CXLV. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=61067&strquery=davison+warrant+burghley+mary+elizabeth>.

Norfolk, and expected this wavering would provoke the same delay. The treasurer's plan was courageous because it not only risked violent consequences from irate Catholics but also his sovereign's displeasure. Although she would be furious with this undermining maneuver, he thought he held her best interest in mind. The ongoing civil war in France highlighted its urgency. His decision would eliminate the greatest menace to England's stability. The minister had to play the antagonist and do the dirty work so Elizabeth's hands could remain unblemished and relieve her of the charge of regicide. His status among her possible Catholic avengers was immaterial since they already loathed him.

The warrant arrived at Fotheringay and the executioner beheaded Mary on February 8, 1587.⁵³⁴ After nineteen years of captivity in castles throughout the English countryside, the troublesome prisoner was finally gone. Burghley had won, although it took nearly two decades and a plethora of clandestine operations. One failed attempt after another displayed the advisor's weakness, his inability to convince his monarch to eliminate her cousin. Elizabeth refused to lose this power struggle. Therefore, the treasurer was forced to disobey her command and have the Scottish queen terminated without informing his sovereign. Hume asserts that he did not even want her dead, fearing it would push the Spanish to declare war, and that Leicester, Walsingham, and radical Protestants forced his hand.⁵³⁵ However, this evaluation seems unlikely since he always claimed his goal was to eradicate her. Read cites Mary's execution as the

history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=47906&strquery=davison warrant burghley mary elizabeth 1587 council meeting.

⁵³⁴William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁵³⁵Martin Hume, *The Great Lord Burghley: A Study in Elizabethan Statecraft* (New York: NY McClure Phillips & Co, 1906), 416.

minister's greatest accomplishment, and that without his efforts, she would have survived.⁵³⁶ Based on the treasurer's letters, he clearly wanted her dead at all costs.

News reached London, and specifically Elizabeth, the next day.⁵³⁷ As church bells reverberated off buildings and celebrations crowded the streets, she sat brooding in Windsor Castle.⁵³⁸ A fellow royal slain without her knowledge enraged the monarch as she contemplated whom to blame. Walsingham had cleverly taken ill at his country estate, leaving the other two key players, Burghley and Davison, to bear the responsibility.⁵³⁹ Shouldering the fault was nothing new for the minister. He wrote "in respect of my services for Her Majesty, wherein I have certainly felt of long time many sharp effects for doing my duty."⁵⁴⁰ Her closest confidant's betrayal was particularly hurtful, but their relationship and his worth in the government saved him from the Tower. The treasurer, and the other scheming councilors, made Davison their scapegoat. He received the most severe punishment, eighteen months in the Tower.⁵⁴¹ Hume points to this case as evidence of the advisor's obsession with self-preservation and disregard for

⁵³⁶ Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 369.

⁵³⁷ William Camden and Robert Norton, *The historie of the life and reigne of the most renowned [sic] and victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queene of England contayning the most important and remarkeable passages of state, during her happy, long and prosperous raigne* (London: Printed for Benjamin Fisher and are to be sold at his shop in Aldersgate streete, at the signe of the Talbot, 1635).

⁵³⁸ Stafford to Burghley, 5 March 1587, in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 21, Part 1: 1586-1588* (1927), pp. 233-243. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=74782&strquery=davison warrant burghley mary elizabeth 1587 february death>.

⁵³⁹ The Repercussions, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 4: 1587-1603* (1899), pp. VII-LXVIII. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=87161&strquery=davison warrant burghley mary elizabeth 1587 february scapegoat>.

⁵⁴⁰ Burghley to Queen Elizabeth, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 9: 1586-88* (1915), pp. 324-392. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44975&strquery=1587 Burghley certainly long time many sharp effects duty>.

⁵⁴¹ Burghley's Punishment, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 4: 1587-1603* (1899), pp. VII-LXVIII. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=87161&strquery=davison warrant burghley mary elizabeth 1587 february scapegoat>.

others when his position was at stake.⁵⁴² This assessment seems likely when surveying his past actions.

The English queen expelled Burghley from court, a penalty worse than imprisonment for a man who had built his life around being an active member of court.⁵⁴³ “I find myself barred by your Majesty’s displeasure,” he lamented.⁵⁴⁴ Besides her personal grievance, her need to publicly punish him forced her to temporarily ostracize her treasurer. A myriad of outraged people demanded justice, and she hoped Burghley’s brief banishment would quell their cries. Scottish Catholics expected their king to seek retribution for his mother, but James, raised by staunch Presbyterians, was reticent.⁵⁴⁵ Elizabeth also worried the young king would use Mary to warrant invasion. She hastily wrote to the Scot begging forgiveness for “that miserable accident” and promising “how innocent I am in this case.”⁵⁴⁶ Her words of self-preservation were unnecessary. Although young in age, James was wise enough to realize any offensive against England would destroy his chance to inherit its kingdom. His English succession was unofficially promised between its monarch and him in the Treaty of Berwick in mid-1586.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴² Martin Hume, *The Great Lord Burghley: A Study in Elizabethan Statecraft* (New York: NY McClure Phillips & Co, 1906), 422.

⁵⁴³ Burghley’s Punishment, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 4: 1587-1603* (1899), pp. VII-LXVIII. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=87161&strquery=davison+warrant+burghley+mary+elizabeth+1587+february+scapegoat>.

⁵⁴⁴ Burghley to the Queen, 12 February 1587, in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 3: 1583-1589* (1889), pp. 216-234. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=111499&strquery=1587+manner+words+direct+writing+find+myself+barred+majesty+displeasure>.

⁵⁴⁵ James’ Reaction, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 9: 1586-88* (1915), pp. 324-392. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44975&strquery=burghley+mary+elizabeth+1587+february+death+scotland+james+revenge>.

⁵⁴⁶ Thomas Wright, *Queen Elizabeth and Her Times* (London: Henry Colburn Publisher, 1838), 243.

⁵⁴⁷ Walsingham to Stafford, 9 March 1587, in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 21, Part 1: 1586-1588* (1927), pp. 233-243. Also available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=74782&strquery=Mary+Queen+Scots+Burghley+Lord+Elizabeth+England,-Norfolk,-Ridolfi,-Ross,-Murray,-Westmorland,-Francis,-Northumberland,-Darnley,-Bothwell>.

Burghley could not control his ambitions during his exile at Theobalds.⁵⁴⁸ He continued to mobilize England for a possible attack and wrote an apology letter for Mary's death.⁵⁴⁹ However, instead of a woeful atonement he affirmed that his actions were necessary to protect England.⁵⁵⁰ Her death did not prove to be a disastrous blunder for him; it was a personal triumph. He affirmed that regicide was the proper course and his actions lawful. Elizabeth forgave her treasurer after four months, and he resumed his coveted spot at her side. She realized his efforts were all in pursuit of her safety, but hence forward their relationship was never the same. His dominance in government continued, but it was difficult to completely trust a confidant who was always involved in covert activities. Although his final eleven years included the invasion of Philip's Spanish Armada and the devious Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex (1565-1601), the advisor never had to use his spy network, his influence over Elizabeth, or his religion to such an extreme degree.⁵⁵¹ His main objective from his first day as secretary in 1558 never changed: ensuring his country's stability. Doing so meant protecting its religious and political institutions, and he always made them his top priority.

⁵⁴⁸ Sir Thomas Cornwallis to Lord Burghley, Highgate, 23 July 1587, in *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 3: 1583-1589* (1889), pp. 267-270. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=111504&strquery=burghley mary elizabeth death theobalds 1587](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=111504&strquery=burghley%20mary%20elizabeth%20death%20theobalds%201587).

⁵⁴⁹ Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 289.

⁵⁵⁰ Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 289.

⁵⁵¹ The Earl of Essex was one of Elizabeth's favorite during her final years. When he was unable to gain complete influence over her he led a failed [coup d'état](#) in 1599 and was executed.

Conclusion

Burghley's Enduring Impact

England has had many accomplished and memorable secretaries of state, but Lord Burghley William Cecil stands out as one of its most impressive. His ability to help govern a rising kingdom demonstrated his mastery as an administrator. During his final years, his son Robert Cecil (1563-1612) assumed his father's place, becoming Elizabeth's chief minister.⁵⁵² The English queen went to Burghley's side when he was on his deathbed in 1598. While he failed to witness the final years of her reign, he had molded a son to continue his objectives. Mary's execution left little political damage, allowing Robert to enable a smooth transition for Mary's only child, James, who ascended to the English throne in 1603, thus achieving one of Burghley's primary ambitions, uniting Scotland and England under a Protestant monarch, eliminating the threat of a Catholic Scotland. The chief advisor's years of placing reliable Protestants in the Scottish court, exploiting Presbyterianism, and secretly aiding its regents made this possible. Another accomplishment to add to his already impressive legacy, and all these exploits performed with the ultimate goal of protecting Elizabeth and England.

The leading counselor's many achievements warrant a thorough study, and this paper sheds light on one of the many insights into sixteenth-century politics, the motivations of Tudor councilors. Current scholars, including Stephen Alford and David Loades, still perceive the minister as either ruling with a religious or temporal agenda. This question is more complex than either one or the other. Historians have gravitated

⁵⁵² Robert Cecil continued his father's service as Secretary of State to Elizabeth. James made him the 1st Earl of Salisbury in 1605.

towards this dichotomy because the modern world separates the two. Pre-modern Europe had no separation between church and state. Burghley successfully navigated this climate, establishing Protestantism, and forcing conformity. The advisor used religion as a tool to build a strong and stable England. The reformed church granted independence from foreigners. To keep Mary and her Catholic cohorts at bay, Burghley employed both temporal and religious means. To ensure peace, he said, one must strive for “the maintenance of religion, surety of the queen’s person, and maintenance of the monarchy.”⁵⁵³

Religious instability was one of the most pressing concerns throughout Europe in the sixteenth-century because of the Reformation. Choosing Protestantism allowed the minister to separate and build his country without foreign control. His motivation was forging a kingdom under one monarchy, and religion can unite as well as divide. Although it took many chaotic years and papist uprisings, his goal succeeded. His placement of Protestant nobles at the Scottish court after Mary’s dethronement increased the chances of its new leaders implementing a Protestant agenda similar to his. His long-term goal was one sovereign ruling over both kingdoms, which occurred when Elizabeth died. He spent his entire career forging an island ruled by one Protestant ruler. Most of those who attempted to dethrone the minister did so in the name of faith or unfair social progress. The Protestants viewed him as their champion in England, a title he happily accepted, although it yielded him more enemies. Also, the upper nobility hated him for being elevated to the House of Lords, which challenged the traditional social order.

⁵⁵³ Burghley to Randolph, 1574, in *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 4: 1571-74* (1905), pp. 75-104. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44233&strquery=maintenance religion person burghley continuance monarchy subjects peace](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=44233&strquery=maintenance+religion+person+burghley+continuance+monarchy+subjects+peace).

The religious settlement of 1559 and his fight against the Scottish queen solidified Burghley as the Roman church's main enemy. He demanded allegiance to the crown in place of traditional loyalties to Rome and local lords. This made him an unpopular figure with the English papists and explains why so many joined the uprisings that were aimed at him. However, those who chose solitude over aggression saved him. The compromising religious policy he helped institute and their fear of the force he could organize kept their doors closed to the rebellion's leaders. Therefore, not only did the advisor's policy of halting internal outbreaks to restore Mary succeed, but he kept her international supporters at bay. He encouraged Elizabeth's distrust of foreigners, especially papists. His country's role as the only Protestant state combined with the government's ability to withstand challenges from its enemies made it an emerging power.

Burghley remained at his queen's side for her forty-four year reign. Although she detested the secrets Burghley kept from her, she trusted him more than anyone. This faith forged a relationship that shaped the Golden Age. Graves believes their common goal of political stability was what kept them together.⁵⁵⁴ However, most agree it was their religious bond. His letters indicate that it was both. The minister took control and terminated the northern rebellion, the Ridolfi Plot, and the Babington Plot. With each of these major projects, he waited longer to inform his mistress, realizing the more evidence he possessed, the more punishment she would administer. The advisor's cardinal obstacle was Elizabeth's tenacity.

Most biographers argue that ultimately the English sovereign held the real power, and while in most cases I would agree, there were occasions where the treasurer's designs

⁵⁵⁴ Michael A.R. Graves, *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (New York City: Longman, 1998), 92.

prevailed. For example, she wanted Norfolk and Mary to be spared, but her principal counselor refused to allow such treason pardoned. His continual guidance, urging his mistress to take swift, harsh action, succeeded. Even his contemporaries feared his authority, or at least stated so to influence others. The Spanish ambassador De Spes wrote “the queen’s own opinion is of little importance so that Cecil unrestrainedly and arrogantly governs all.”⁵⁵⁵ He even achieved the seemingly impossible task of committing regicide. The nineteenth-century historian J.A. Froude hailed the secretary as a hero who should receive full credit for the success of his monarch’s reign.⁵⁵⁶ Conyers Read also praised the minister and attested that Elizabeth hindered his full potential.⁵⁵⁷ J.E. Neale took the opposite stance, awarding the queen with full acclaim.⁵⁵⁸ Both sovereign and secretary were extraordinary rulers and should share the glory.

Burghley remained the main obstacle for Catholic foreigners throughout his career. Elizabeth did not possess her minister’s knowledge and methods to impede their threats. He secured the kingdom’s borders. His fears of the turmoil that would ensue with a papist sovereign made him especially cautious. This apprehension saved England from a civil war between its opposing faiths. A likely outcome if he had not destroyed Mary. With her gone, he secured the country’s stability, which was composed of two main components: its secular and religious institutions. One could not survive without the other. A Protestant England run by his political policies was his vision, and he used

⁵⁵⁵ From Guerau De Spes to Zayas, London, 5 August 1570, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 2: 1568-1579* (1894), pp. 262-273. Also available online at [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86970&strquery=fox cecil mortal king](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=86970&strquery=fox%20cecil%20mortal%20king).

⁵⁵⁶ Michael A.R. Graves, *Burghley: William Cecil, Lord Burghley* (New York City: Longman, 1998), 91.

⁵⁵⁷ Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 404.

⁵⁵⁸ J.E. Neale, *Queen Elizabeth I* (New York City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1934), 54.

religion as a tool to achieve this grand ambition. His main motivation never changed, securing a strong, stable England.

The advisor's career forever altered English politics. He embodied the advice given by Niccolò Machiavelli in *The Prince*, administering aggressively and deviously when necessary. Neale discerned this emotional detachment, which he alleged improved the secretary's effectiveness. This Italian politician provides a framework for understanding Burghley's actions and the pre-modern mindset that did not separate matters of church and state. He also understood how to use religion to achieve state stability. The minister applied his principles to the government, and future statesmen followed his lead. This cutthroat policy led to England's supremacy and allowed it to expand its empire by seizing weaker nations. He achieved his vision of a powerful country ruled by a secure leader, and his lasting impact was its continuance. Burghley left his final remarks on his epitaph "my life's achievement has been to safeguard the queen and the Protestant state."⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵⁹ John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (New York City: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 494.

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