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The Politics of Intelligence Gathering: Sir Edward Stafford's Embassy in France (1583-1590)*

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In the 1580s, the Elizabethan intelligence system, which had been taken over by the Principal Secretary Sir Francis Walsingham from Lord Burghley (William Cecil), is believed to have reached a high degree of efficiency. English spying on the Catholic plotters exiled in Paris can be seen as a representative of its covert operation overseas. This article will move the focus of the research on Elizabethan intelligence gathering away from the

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traditional concern for national defence, towards a new location within the factional politics of the Elizabethan regime. By this new approach, the embassy service of Sir Edward Stafford in Paris from 1583 to 1590 will be reconsidered. Stafford, with a vivid pro-Cecil factiousness, devoted himself to the special mission for Burghley and Queen Elizabeth, in intelligence work, lobbying Catholics, and secret diplomacy with Spain. Through the model of Stafford, this research will give a new eye of the acute competitions to provide news in the Elizabethan regime, as well as of the role of the female Privy Chamber.

Keywords: Intelligence, Faction, Edward Stafford, Francis Walsingham, William Cecil(Lord Burghley)

A great deal of attention has been given to the intelligence system in Queen Elizabeth I's reign, which is usually labelled as a kind of security service against conspiracies at home and abroad. But as a necessary piece of equipment with a leading part in the regime the intelligence work has not received the attention it deserves. This essay will move the focus of this research on English intelligence work away from the traditional concern for national defence, towards a new location within the factional politics of the Elizabethan regime. Via the varied spy works led by the English authorities, some issues of high politics will be rethought: the change of foreign policy in the 1580s, personal authority and power, the rise of the female privy chamber, and queenship.

This article considers the covert missions of Sir Edward Stafford, the English ambassador in France from 1583 to 1590, in terms of intelligence work and faction. It begins by revealing briefly why Paris in the 1580s became one of the top priorities for English spying operations. Then the article will present how Stafford was used by William Cecil (Lord Burghley) as a hidden route away from the Principal Secretary Francis Walsingham, as a messenger, an informant, and an intermediary between Catholic exiles or foreign authorities. Through the model of Stafford, we will deepen our understanding of the English competition to provide intelligence. More importantly, this research will provide an alternative interpretation of the concern Burghley and Queen Elizabeth shared together facing the Secretary's increasing power and his control over information, as well as their attempt to check and balance against one-power dominance in the regime from 1580.

1. English Catholic Exiles in Paris

The Elizabethan intelligence service, taken over by Walsingham from Lord Burghley, is believed to have reached a high degree of efficiency in the 1580s.[1] Its speedy development can be ascribed partly to the significant growth of the Catholic double agents and converts in overseas exile, and more to Elizabeth's tightening policy against Catholic recusancy. The latter factor directly stimulated urgent demand for a more efficient spy network.

Far from being established, Elizabeth's early regime, at least until 1569, had to have a degree of reliance on the traditional ruling group. The majority of these were either religious conservatives or Catholics. As Protestant rule became steadier, recusants came to be labelled as potential rebels defying a matter of supreme authority for the national ruler, and as 'spies or intelligencers' serving foreign enemies.[2] The Northern Rising in 1569, and the publication of the papal bull of excommunication in the following year, were both read as a proof of high treason. Elizabeth's government began a more consistent drive of penalization, in number, intensity and severity.[3] The Spanish ambassador in London Bernardino de

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[1] Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth*, II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), 287.

[2] Patrick McGrath, *Papists and Puritans Under Elizabeth I* (London: Blandford Press, 1967), 3.

[3] A series of acts regarding treason was passed in 1571 and 1572. In 1571, *An Acte wherby certaine Offences bee made Treason* (13 Eliz. I. c.1.), *An Acte agaynste the bringing in and putting in Execution of Bulls and other Instruments from the Sea of Rome* (13 Eliz. I. c.2), and *An Acte agaynst Fugytyves over the Sea* (13 Eliz. I. c.3); in 1572, *An Act for the punyshement of suche as shall rebelliously take or deteyne or conspire to take or deteyne from the Queen Majesty any of her Castelles Towers Fortresses Holders* (14 Eliz. I. c.1), *An Acte againste suche as shall conspire or*

Mendoza reflected this shift when he reported to Philip II in 1578, that Queen Elizabeth had 'sent all through the country fully authorised officers with powers such as never have been granted before, to seize and imprison Catholics, without appeal'.[4]

About 1580, the international climate which became extremely disadvantageous to England forced Queen Elizabeth to further tighten her Catholic policy. The union of Spain and Portugal from 1580, along with Alexander Farnese's (the later Duke of Parma) huge garrison in the Netherlands, placed the east of England, including London, under an approaching shadow of Spanish invasion. In Scotland, the Protestant Anglophile government headed by the Earl of Morton was overthrown by King James VI's new favourite from France, the pro-Guise Duke of Lennox (Esmé Stuart). Meanwhile, three Jesuit missionaries, including two priests, Edmund Campion and Robert Persons, and a lay brother, Ralph Emerson, landed on English soil in 1580. In the year after, the Pope's emissary Dr. Nicholas Sander also actively interfered in the Irish rebellion. These crises called for new legislation in England. The Parliament in 1581 passed an 'Acte to retayne the Quenes Majesty's Subjects in theire due Obedyence.' The definition of treason was extended. English subjects who reconciled others or themselves to the Catholic Church, or sought to withdraw

practyse the enlargement of any Prinsoner committed for Highe Treason (14 Eliz. I. c.2), and *An Acte for thexplanacon of a Statute made againste Fugitives over the Seas in the thirteenth yeere of the Queenes Majesty Raigne* (14 Eliz. I. c.6), *Statutes of the Realm* (London: Dawsons, 1963), IV, 526-34, 588-9, 598-9. G. R. Elton, *The Tudor Constitution: Documents and Commentary* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 72-6, 419-23; Patrick McGrath, *Papists and Puritans*, 102-3, 114.

[4] Mendoza to Philip II, 22 Apr. 1578, *Calendar of State Papers Spanish* (London: H.M.S.O., 1894) *1568-1579*, 577-8.

others from the established church to Rome, or from their allegiance to Queen Elizabeth, would be indicted for treachery.[5] The fine for absence from divine service at the parish church was greatly increased. Recusants, only of Catholic backgrounds, would be fined more heavily: £20 a month for the first offence and for the fourth would be punished with the penalties of praemunire.[6] Unavoidably, high-born gentry also suffered double dispossession, in society and in politics. In order to escape from endless persecutions or to aspire to greater liberty of faith and education, from 1580 there was a significant outflow of English Catholics to the Continent.

For reasons of co-religion and geographic convenience, the Spanish Netherlands, Spain, and France were the primary shelters English exiles preferred. John Bossy indicates that the foundation of the seminary at Douai in 1568, and especially the revolt of the Netherlands, encouraged the use of the French route. From 1578 to 1589 when the last civil war in France broke out, the majority of the English exiles, over a thousand, settled in big cities in France, such as Orleans, Rouen, Bordeaux and Reims. Particularly, more than 300 of them were centralised around its capital Paris in 1582.[7] They there not only appealed for political asylum and financial sponsorship, but also for cooperation with foreign princes in armed intervention, accompanying their dream of re-establishing English Catholicism.

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[5] 23 Eliz. I. c.1. *Statutes of the Realm*, IV, 657-8.

[6] J. E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments 1559-1581* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1958), 369-92.

[7] John Bossy, "Rome and the Elizabethan Catholics: A Question of Geography", *The Historical Journal* 7.1 (1964), 135-42; Catherine M. Gibbons, "The Experience of Exile and English Catholics: Paris in the 1580s" (Ph.D. thesis, University of York, 2006), 149.

The Catholic foreign princes, notably the French Guises and Philip II of Spain, had proposed to well use these émigrés in Paris. The failure of Lennox in late 1582 obliged the Duke of Guise to give up hope of an invasion of England by the way of Scotland. He 'turned his eyes towards the English Catholics,' especially those in French exile.[8] His leadership was replaced by Spain while its new ambassador Mendoza arrived in Paris in 1584. As early as in his English service, Mendoza had advised Philip II that any business promoting Catholic restoration in England, Scotland, and Ireland 'would have to be directed from France.'[9] After being ingloriously expelled from England on a charge of involvement in the Throckmorton Plot in 1583, this diplomatist, with rich experience in English affairs and contriving plots, was soon designated to another embassy appointment in France. The appointment was promoted by Mary Queen of Scots in English captivity. Mary was convinced that 'it is necessary that they [conspiracies] should be managed from France'.[10] This imprisoned Queen begged Philip II through one of her strong advocates, Sir Francis Englefield, for the new assignment for Mendoza. Englefield was a leading English Catholic exile in Madrid and was pensioned by Philip as an adviser on English affairs in his council of state. She also tried to persuade Mendoza into seconding this assignment 'in the interests of the business, because not only have you a full knowledge of my intentions, and of the

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[8] Stuart Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers: The Guise Family and The Making of Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 242-55.

[9] Mendoza to Philip II, 20 Oct. 1581; 6 May 1583, *CSP Spanish, 1580-1586*, 197, 471. Gibbons, "The Experience of Exile and English Catholics: Paris in the 1580s", 103-20. 149.

[10] Mary to Mendoza, 28 Feb. 1583, *CSP Spanish, 1580-1586*, 448.

state of affairs here, which makes you more capable than anyone else to deal with these people, as will be necessary'.[11] Along with Mendoza's transfer, the tinder of plot was brought from London to Paris. It marked an announcement of the open and direct intervention Spain led in anti-Elizabeth schemes.

Faced with the plotting alliance in Paris, the English government did not treat it lightly. In public, it kept suppressing the émigrés through strict punishment as well as diplomatic approaches. For example, in the terms of *An Acte agaynst Fugytyves over the Sea* of 1571, for those going overseas without special license, and who did not return within six months, 'all theyre Manors Lands Tenementes and Hereditamentes' would be forfeited to the Queen.[12] The large properties of the exiled gentry like Thomas Lord Paget and Sir Thomas Copley were confiscated thus. To Henri III, King of France, strong requests were made by Queen Elizabeth for secure restraint, expulsion, extradition, and dispossession of these 'disturbers of the common quiet of the realm'.[13] For the sake of strengthening the surveillance of Catholics, and of the need for up-to-date intelligence regarding their 'trayterous, rebellious, seditious and slaunderous' practises, a highly efficient spy service became necessary and urgent. Doubtless Paris was labelled as one of the top priorities for the English spy work. Meanwhile, Paris also became another arena of

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[11] De Lamar Jensen, *Diplomacy and Dogmatism: Bernardino de Mendoza and the French Catholic League* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), 103-5. Mary to Mendoza, 29 Jul. 1582, 28 Feb. 1583, *CSP Spanish, 1580-1586*, 329-4, 448.

[12] 13 Eliz. c. 3, *Statutes of the Realm*, IV, 531-4.

[13] Thomas Lord Paget, Charles Paget, Charles Arundel, Thomas Morgan, and Thomas Throckmorton, were specifically named, for their being detected of 'manifest practise tending to the alteration of [g put sow] of her government and danger of her person.' Walsingham to Stafford, 3 May 1584, The National Archives, State Paper 78/11/89.

Elizabethan factional politics. For Elizabeth's councillors, high-level intelligence would potentially be very helpful in ensuring they could take a leading part in policy debates in the Privy Council. In Paris, therefore, there was a competition to provide news, between the embassy service under the shadow of the conservative Burghley, and the more personal spying led by the radical Walsingham. Both systems at most times worked independently, with the two exceptions of mutual monitoring and of special requests for official assistance.

2. The Suspicious Embassy Appointment of Sir Edward Stafford

It is a reasonable presumption, that the English permanent ambassadors in France would be trustworthy chief associates in the continental intelligence work under Principal Secretary Walsingham's leadership. English official envoys had come to be regarded as directly subordinate to the Secretary, who had entire charge of English foreign affairs. After Dr. John Man, the last Elizabethan ambassador in Madrid, was recalled in 1568, until the succession of James I there was no other resident continental ambassador except in France. The significance of the embassy in Paris as a centre of continental intelligence increased progressively, due to the increasingly white-hot Reformation battles, and the mass exile of English Catholics at Paris in the 1580s. Particularly, after Mendoza was expelled from Elizabeth's court in 1583, this overseas office was given an extra duty to supply the government with Spanish news. As a prominent ambassador there, Stafford's fidelity to the state should be absolutely undoubted. But, rather than this existing official service, why did Secretary Walsingham prefer to build and rely on his own intelligence system during the 1580s? Possibly his distrust of Sir Edward Stafford who held the embassy at Paris during 1583-1590, was the main reason. There is a grave charge of

Stafford's treachery, which has received scholarly attention throughout the last century. Through the prism of the *State Papers Spanish,* and *Foreign*, Martin A. S. Hume, A. F. Pollen, Conyers Read, and Sir John Neale found themselves drawn to two opposing positions. They were either in defence or refutation of the charge that this diplomatist, lacking money, damaged state interests by selling valuable secrets to the Guises and Spain.[14] More recently, Mitchell Leimon and Geoffrey Parker have identified him as a double agent; this seems more convincing.[15] The accusation of his betrayal appears more tenable.

Conyers Read asserted that Walsingham's spies were arranged in Paris mainly due to the ambassador's treachery. But this is questionable. Walsingham might have distrusted Stafford before his assumption of this diplomatic office in 1583, and simultaneously started to organise his own personal spy network. This can be inferred from the reports of Walsingham's spies in France, most of which were made after 1585. It reveals two meanings. First, some treasonable discoveries and rumours about the embassy did cause a certain degree of alertness in the Secretary. Two of Stafford's servants, Michael Moody and William Lilly, in 1584 and 1585 were detained in sequence by Walsingham. They were accused of conveying letters to and from Catholics, of selling information to the plotter Thomas Morgan, and of reading *Leycester's Commonwealth*, a scandalous pamphlet published in September

[14] *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, VII-LXVIII. A. F. Pollard, "Reviews of Books", *English Historical Review* 16 (1901): 572-7; Conyers Read, "The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford", *American Historical Review* 20.2 (1915): 292-313, and 35.3 (1930), 560-6; J. E. Neale, "The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford", *EHR* 44.174 (1929): 203-19.

[15] Mitchell Leimon and Geoffrey Parker, "Treason and Plot in Elizabethan Diplomacy: 'The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford' Reconsidered," *EHR* 111.444 (1996): 1134-58.

1584.[16] After the year 1585, and especially from 1587, Stafford's integrity was also called into question. Secondly, these spies would have been trained and arranged by Walsingham before 1585. In other words, Walsingham might have prepared his personal spying at an early stage or before Stafford's inauguration; at that time the suspicions were not yet clear. It is readily believable that this preparation was in consequence of the Secretary's preexistent hostility to Stafford. It was provoked by three of Stafford's characteristics: his pro-Catholic background, connection with Queen Elizabeth via her bedchamber, and especially his factious favour to Burghley. Hence, in the following, Stafford will be re-analysed in terms of intelligence service and regime politics. There will be a special interest in his secret work for the Queen and her Treasurer Cecil. This may be why Walsingham isolated the official embassy at Paris, and preferred his own spying in the 1580s.

Maybe it was not the Secretary's wish to give his assent to such an important and sensitive appointment for Sir Edward Stafford, who was short of diplomatic experience, and had vivid pro-Catholic and pro-Cecil backgrounds. In terms of qualification, Stafford was not the best. He had little apprenticeship, aside from the Alençon marriage negotiations. This four-year practice from 1578, indeed, honed his diplomatic skills in international affairs, and enlarged his acquaintance among the noble circle in France. Yet it just made him a fitter candidate, but not the fittest. His close relation with Catholicism also offended Sir Francis. It was closely connected by the two lineages of his mother Dorothy Stafford, and of his second

[16] Conyers Read, "The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford", 298; Leimon and Parker, "Treason and Plot in Elizabethan Diplomacy", 1143. Stafford to Burghley, 14 Apr. 1584, TNA, SP 78/11/76.

wife, Douglas Howard (Lady Sheffield), whose houses of Pole and Howard were disposed to the Roman Church. This pair, mother and daughter in law, were possessed by enmity for Walsingham and Leicester. What made the Secretary more scrupulous was Stafford's being 'a creature' of Burghley, with an opposite attitude in policy to the Leicester-and-Walsingham faction.[17] Between 1574 and 1576, this gentleman had undertaken business to Emden and France for Cecil. Then in the diplomatic mission regarding the Alençon courtship, he again aligned himself with the conservative side of Burghley and the earl of Sussex, favouring this match. Stafford's inclination in council politics had been clearly exposed. The Secretary came to believe that Stafford, if he was once designated in the government, would make his pledge to support Cecil's side, but not Walsingham's.

Although Stafford's pro-Burghley ground in the Alençon match was unpleasant for Walsingham, this diplomatic test fortunately brought the former into close association with the Queen and her councillors especially Burghley. Their support determined his eventual winning-out for the Paris post. After Sir Thomas Smith retired from the post of Secretary in 1577, Cecil felt jealous of Walsingham 'as the younger man confirmed his control over the day to day business of policy formation'. At the same time he was also reduced to read the second-hand materials from his colleagues notably from Walsingham.[18] Elizabeth and Cecil started to develop a common fear, that Walsingham, who until 1586 exclusively occupied the position of the Principal Secretary, had almost total dominance of the Queen's foreign affairs. In her refusal to conduct her foreign policy and intelligence solely

[17] Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Jan. 1587. *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 7.

[18] Alan Haynes, *The Elizabethan Secret Services* (Stroud: Sutton, 2000), 35.

through Walsingham, Neale suggested, the Queen sometimes acted without his knowledge; probably through Cecil who closely shared her conservative outlook.[19]

Stafford met both Queen Elizabeth's and Burghley's requirements, of high privacy and pro-Cecil stance. Through his family connections with Elizabeth, whose aunt Mary Boleyn was the first wife of his father, he had appealed naturally to the Queen's attention. The service of his mother Dorothy, Lady Stafford, acting Mistress of Robes from 1564, provided a secret channel of correspondence direct to the sovereign through the Privy Chamber. It was what Elizabeth needed in an emergency. The calculating Cecil preferred Stafford as well. While being asked by Walsingham about his intention of accepting the embassy offer, this gentleman immediately pledged his loyalty to Cecil. He would like to wholly dispose himself 'to depend of your good counsel and help, to do what you think best and to go as far and to do as much and as little as you think good'.[20] Moreover, his bedchamber influence on the Queen through his mother, and occupation of the embassy in France, in certain degree, could reinforce Burghley's faction at a time of decline. The Secretary, after all, had to obey the Queen's command in spite of disliking Stafford.

3. Stafford's Pro-Cecil Service in France

This new Ambassador Stafford in Paris was given high expectations by Elizabeth and her Treasurer, to be a covert route away from Secretary Walsingham. He did perform well in the roles of a messenger, an informant, and an intermediary in secret diplomacy. The copies of letters and diplomatic dispatches between him and

[19] J. E. Neale, "The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford", 218.

[20] Stafford to Burghley, 12 Jun. 1583, British Library, Harley MS. 6993/44.

the Secretary were often sent to Burghley or the Queen, via his mother. Henry Lord Cobham, the outgoing ambassador, offered his successor few documents, and even refused to make him acquainted with the local informants in the houses of the Spanish ambassador, or the Scottish, or the Guise.[21] His reluctance to cooperate was possibly because of an old grudge that Stafford, on his former mission regarding the Alençon match, had reproached the intelligence provided by William Waad who was cherished by Cobham, or perhaps because of Walsingham's secret instruction.[22] The resentful Stafford retorted by sending Burghley a copy of all his and Cobham's dispatches submitted to the Secretary 'in a packet to my mother'. Cecil was requested 'to seal up this in another paper, and to deliver ytt to my mother, sealed, as all coppyes else that heereafter I shall send you'.[23] Naturally they were to be forwarded to Elizabeth. Sometimes the ambassador provided a hidden channel between foreign Catholic authorities and the Queen of England. The King of Navarre (Henri de Bourbon) in early 1587 wrote to Elizabeth, and said that the duchess of Guise was aware of certain of her private affairs which 'could not possibly have reached her except through this ambassador'.[24] Through her bedchamberers, the Queen might well know some information withheld by her Secretary. It also marked an interference of the female privy chamber into foreign

[21] Stafford to Burghley, 21 Oct. 1583, TNA, SP78/10/58; Stafford to Walsingham, 21 Oct. 1583, TNA, SP78/10/61; 31 Oct. 1583, TNA, SP78/10/68.

[22] Julian Lock, 'Brooke, Sir Henry (1537-1592)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), online edn.

[23] Stafford to Burghley, 21 Oct. 1583, TNA, SP78/10/58. Same to same, 31 Oct. 1583, W. Murdin, *Collection of State Papers Relating to Affairs in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth from Year 1571 to 1596* (London, 1759), 380.

[24] Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Jan. 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 7.

affairs of government. In addition, to Burghley, Stafford sometimes offered certain highly secret letters, which 'no lyvinge creature knew of' but the Queen and Walsingham.[25]

The Secretary knew of this covert intercourse which he was entirely secluded from, and tried to obstruct it. In the initial stage of Stafford's embassy, Walsingham had suggested him to write home less often, since the Queen 'is many tymes so offended with the charges of often posting as I dare not make her prevy of all the dispatches I receave from you.'[26] The ambassador's private letters were intercepted as well. In March 1584, a packet of letters from Stafford at the port of Rye was opened by Walsingham's 'searchers' and read. Except for an insincere apology, the Secretary did nothing else, and further warned him to 'do well to packet up all your private letters in a packet directed to me'.[27] But even under Walsingham's supervision, the delivery between Stafford, Burghley and the royal bedchamber, still worked in secret.

It was Stafford's first duty to collect intelligence for his government, as well as for Cecil's faction. His pro-Catholicism was excellent bait, attracting Catholic refugees like Charles Paget and Charles Arundel to knock at the back door of his French residence. The Archbishop of Glasgow, James Beaton, the ambassador of Mary Stuart at the French court, was one of the interesting visitors. In his conference with the new English ambassador, Beaton made 'assurances of good

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[25] Stafford to Burghley, 31 Mar. 1588, TNA, SP78/18/108.

[26] Walsingham to Stafford, 16 Dec. 1583, TNA, SP78/10/107.

[27] Walsingham to Stafford, 27 Mar. 1584, TNA, SP78/11/65. Stafford to Burghley, 14 Apr. 1584, TNA, SP78/11/76.

proceedings on the part of the Queen of Scots'.[28] He might expect to improve her captive situation in England through Stafford's powerful friend Burghley, who had been suspected of having a close friendship with Mary.[29] Facing these uninvited visitors, Stafford declared he would use them well by keeping 'credit with them heere yet serve her Majesty truly and well', and prevent them 'from doing any good of me'.[30] But the Secretary disapproved of Stafford's close contact with the Catholics in Paris. He warned the ambassador not to be remiss in performing his duty, which might be badly affected by the Catholic alliance his wife had with the refugees.[31] Clearly, the ambassador felt aware of Walsingham's ill-feeling towards him. To his 'only friend' Cecil, he complained that the Secretary was interfering with embassy service, and had 'thinges misconstered and to have thinges well ment evyll taken'.[32] He also attributed the rebuff of certain of his intelligence schemes to the jealousy of the Secretary.[33] Ignoring Walsingham's unpleasantness, Stafford

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[28] Stafford to Walsingham, 27 Oct. 1583, TNA, SP78/10/66.

[29] Burghley to Shrewsbury, 24 Dec. 1575, Edmund Lodge, ed.,*Illustrations of British History* (London: John Chidley, 1838), II, 52-6. Mary to Guillaume de l'Aubépine, French ambassador (1585-9), 17 Jul. 1586, Conyers Read, *Walsingham*, II, 51. Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Jan. 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 7. John Daniel Leader, *Mary Queen of Scots in Captivity* (Sheffield: Leaser& Sons, 1880), 287.

[30] Stafford to Walsingham, 31 Oct. 1583, TNA, SP78/10/68.

[31] Walsingham to Stafford, 1 Dec. 1583, TNA, SP78/10/95.

[32] Stafford to Burghley, 6 Apr. 1584. BL, Cotton MS. Galba E vi. f.210, cited in J. E. Neale, "The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford", 215; 16 Apr. 1584, TNA, SP78/11/79, but the extract cited from Walsingham's letter on 6 April 1584, at the bottom, seems lost in the archives; 1 May, 1584, TNA, SP78/11/85.

[33] At the beginning of his embassy, Stafford persistently invented certain schemes for obtaining news of their enemies like the Jesuits and Mary's adherents, but they were often rebuked by Elizabeth. Stafford to Walsingham, 21 Oct. 1583, TNA, SP78/10/61; Walsingham to Stafford, 16 Dec. 1583, TNA, SP78/10/107; Stafford to

continued his socialising with the Catholic exiles, with pretended friendship.[34] Particularly via Charles Arundel, his kinsman by marriage, who was a pensioner of Spain and close to Mendoza, Stafford secured some Spanish information, and further established a hidden contact with the Duke of Guise and Mendoza, the two highest leaders of the Catholic plotters in Paris.[35] So began the suspicion of his treachery.

Regarding Stafford's reputation, the points of Neale, and Leimon and Parker that he was a double agent, making commerce of intelligence on both sides, are partly acceptable.[36] Sometimes it may have been with the connivance of Burghley, on the possible ground that certain highly secret intelligence sold by Stafford was from Burghley. According to what Thomas Rogers reported to his spymaster Walsingham, the ambassador was charged with being bribed by the Duke of Guise with 6000 crowns to show his diplomatic dispatches.[37] It is noticeable that the Secretary deliberately kept the ambassador ignorant of news.[38] How valuable the

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Burghley, 1 May 1584, *CSP Foreign*, *1583-4*, 474-6; 9 Aug. 1585, *CSP Foreign*, *1584-5*, 653-4.

[34] Walsingham almost certainly had known that, and even advised it. Bishop of Glasgow to Mary Stuart, 21 Mar. 1586, *CSP Scotland*, *1585-86*, 255-62. [Walsingham] to Stafford, 16 Dec. 1583, *CSP Foreign*, *1583-4*, 272; Stafford to Walsingham, Jan. 1588, *CSP Foreign*, *1586-8*, 664.

[35] Philip II to Juan Bautista De Tassis, 8 Oct. 1584, Mendoza to Philip II, 11 May 1586, *CSP Spanish*, *1580-1586*, 528-529, 575; 24 Jan. 1587, 28 Feb. 1587, *CSP Spanish*, *1587-1603*, 7-8, 25.

[36] Mendoza to Philip II, 28 Feb. 1587, 'He offered himself entirely through me, in the assurance that your Majesty would not order him to do anything against the interest of his mistress the Queen'. *CSP Spanish*, *1587-1603*, 25.

[37] [Thomas Rogers] to Francis Mills, [Jun,?] 1586, TNA, SP78/16/50.

[38] Stafford to Burghley, 6 Apr. 1584, BL, Cotton MS. Galba E vi., f.210; 7 Nov. 1584,

information in his dispatches was seemed very doubtful. Furthermore, the Duke and Mendoza were not innocent squanderers, who would like to spend considerable monies on insignificant or outdated news, current gossip, or even misinformation. Notably for Mendoza, a sophisticated diplomatist who had had a long-time embassy in England and still retained some spies there, accuracy of intelligence was what was required. Hence, nothing could remain their business apart from high-grade intelligence. These news items might be from very senior ministers in regime, like Stafford's brother-in-law Lord Admiral Howard of Effingham, and Burghley. A significant example is the intelligence about the proposed expedition of Sir Francis Drake in 1587, which in the English regime was known by 'no living soul but the Queen and the Treasurer'.[39] Either Elizabeth, or Cecil more probably, hoodwinked Spain by divulging this false news via Stafford.[40] But in this mystification Stafford did not lose Spanish confidence. In fact, he was a pawn in the chess game between two cunning politicians, Burghley and Mendoza.

In contrast with Walsingham's informally personal spies, Stafford, by his obscure relationship with Catholics, and official status as ambassador, owned an absolute advantage over negotiations with exiles, and secret diplomacy with Spain. In short, he was an ideal intermediary between Burghley and overseas Catholics. This official at Paris assisted in drawing exiled converts away from the sides of Catholicism or of Walsingham, towards Cecil's. Thomas Morgan, the chief director of Mary Stuart's intercourse, and also one of the leading figures within exiled

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Cotton MS. Galba E vi., f.271, cited in J. E. Neale, "The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford", 217-8.

[39] Mendoza to Philip II, 19 Apr. 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 69.

[40] *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, VII-LXVIII.

circles, was doubtless a focus. Walsingham, Burghley, and Queen Elizabeth all hoped to win him over and for their own use. As early as 1578, Sir Amias Poulet, the ambassador in Paris then, had suggested Walsingham to handle Morgan well, who would be helpful to discovering many things 'which are now secret'.[41] While Morgan was detained in the Bastille in 1585, Queen Elizabeth promised, that if this traitor 'carries himself dutifully in discovering what he knows, she would "for his sake, if he desire it," extend extraordinary grace to him'.[42] Nevertheless these canvasses seemed all in vain. In 1586, unable to endure the long captivity, Morgan eventually expressed his yearning for release to the ambassador Stafford, through Giordano Bruno, a pensioner in the French embassy in London. He promised,

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

His yielding through fear was indirectly promoted by the imprisoned French noble Comte de la Magnane, 'who is trying by daily admonitions and exhortations

[41] Amias Poulet to Walsingham, 24 Jan. 1578, TNA, SP78/2/5.
[42] Walsingham to Stafford, 12 Feb. 1585, TNA, SP78/13/28.

to uproot the evil will he has against her Majesty'.[43] It is plausible that this lobbyist personally known to the ambassador might be arranged by Stafford to 'sometimes haunt him [Morgan] in the Bastille'. It was a good chance, he suggested to Burghley, to draw this leader of the anti-Jesuits into their group by allowing his 'hope of fair promises and hope of liberty'.[44]

The ambassador also interfered in the negotiations between Walsingham's spies and certain leading Catholic exiles. From the early 1580s, the Secretary had decided to take advantage of the inner division of Roman Catholicism.[45] His spies Solomon Aldred and Gilbert Gifford were assigned to be secret envoys due to their previous backgrounds as Catholic exiles.[46] In 1585 they were dispatched to Paris, and began secret communications with Dr. William Gifford and Father Edward Grately, two leading younger figures among the secular anti-Jesuits.[47] Beyond expectation, Ambassador Stafford had a hand in this lobbying directed by Walsingham's spies only. He had 'sweet speches' with Gifford in Aldred's lodging. But surely Walsingham was not informed in advance; Aldred was also 'persuaded you [Walsingham] will not mislike of' Stafford's unpresented coming. It was perhaps a private requirement made by William Gifford, who preferred trusting in official

[43] John Bossy, *Giordano Bruno and the Embassy Affair* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 246, cited from Giordano Bruno to Sir Edward Stafford, late Oct. or early Nov., 1586, BL, Cotton MS. Nero B vi, f. 389 v.

[44] Stafford to Burghley, 6 Nov. 1586, TNA, SP78/16/148 .

[45] Thomas Rogers to Walsingham, 11 Aug, 1585, TNA, SP15/29/52.

[46] Leo Hicks, "An Elizabethan Propagandist: The Career of Solomon Aldred" *The Month* (1945): 181-191.

[47] Solomon Aldred to Walsingham, 15 Nov. 1584, BL, Harley MS. 286/56; 27 Mar./ 6 Apr. 1586, TNA, SP15/29/146; 14/24 Apr. 1586, TNA, SP15/29/154.

authority rather than personal spies.[48]

In Aldred's conference of 1586 with another exiled noble Charles Neville, the earl of Westmorland, Stafford's deliberate intervention, and the exiles' favour for official envoys or for the moderate Burghley, appeared much clearer. Neville, this head of rebellions, was once condemned by Cecil in his pamphlet of 1583 with extreme severity, saying that his body had been eaten 'with ulcers of lewd causes'.[49] But while negotiating about his return to England, the earl begged Aldred to 'get the Ambassador to talk with him'.[50] This might be due to his distrust of a personal spy, or his inclination to the moderate Burghley. On the eve of the Spanish Armada, Neville, through a mediator, Richard Hakluyt, again earnestly begged Cecil to move the Queen 'to become his gracious maistresse' again. As to this suit, he beseeched the Treasurer to 'have hym in remembrance and to vouchsafe by one or other means to let hym heard.'[51] In reward for this mercy, he offered some intelligence relating to 'the archtraitor' Morgan in Paris, and to the Duke of Parma in the Netherlands. In this letter, Ambassador Stafford can almost be confirmed as a personal mediator between Cecil and overseas émigrés.[52] Exiles' distrust of personal spies might be a

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[48] Stafford to Walsingham, 15 Apr. 1586, After this secret conference, Stafford reported to the Secretary, and praised both Catholics as 'very good and proper wise fellows, and fit to do that which your intent is'. TNA, SP78/12/94.

[49] Robert M. Kingdon, ed., *The Execution of Justice in England by William Cecil and A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense of English Catholics by William Allen* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1965), 4.

[50] Aldred to Walsingham, 14/24 Apr. 1586, TNA, SP15/29/154.

[51] Richard Hakluyt to Burghley, 11 Apr. 1588, TNA, SP15/30/190.

[52] Later, through Stafford, Neville again earnestly pleaded for royal mercy, and sent some intelligence 'touching the intended Spanish invasion'. He declared 'his stomach is against a stranger's setting for in his country.' Stafford to Walsingham, 25 Apr.

result unexpected to Walsingham, but it did bring Burghley a chance to learn the personal spying of his colleague.

It is inappropriate to attribute certain Catholics' favour to Stafford completely to his official credibility. His factional leader Burghley's moderation in the English Reformation, and his authorities concerning exiles' home interests, would also be the important attractions as well. In 1583, Cecil endeavoured to repel the charge of persecution by his well-known pamphlet, entitled *Execution of Justice in England, not for Religion, but for Treason*.[53] It was an unusual moment, around which the proposed Anglo-French marriage Cecil favoured had failed, and his man Stafford was just appointed to France. With the failure of this match, and Alençon's death in 1584, Elizabethan Catholics' new hope for freedom in religion, or even to have some influence over national policy, came to naught.[54] Disappointment and hostility towards Elizabeth's rule again spread around the Catholic community. The

1588, BL, Harley MS. 288/187.

[53] Its translations, into four languages including Dutch, French, Spanish and Italian, were widely circulated on the continent. The first edition was published on 17 December 1583, and the second on 1584. A translation into Latin was published in March of 1584, and then in the same year the French and Dutch ones were also done. In 1589, the Italian edition was published. Robert M. Kingdon ed., *The Execution of Justice in England by William Cecil*, xvii-xviii.

[54] John Bossy asserts that the disappointment at the Anglo-French marriage may have invoked the common hostile sentiment most English Catholics had against France; some of them even became pro-Spanish. There is some doubt about this argument. Actually this failure brought little help in reuniting exiled Catholics. After the mid-1580s, the dissension in English Catholicism, regarding the different attitudes to Spain, did not hence soften because of this. Most anti-Spanish exiles still generally preferred living in France; their resistance to armed intervention led by Philip II remained unchangeable. Therefore, the effect of the collapse of this proposed marriage on Elizabethan Catholicism is overestimated. Gibbons, 81.

Catholic League reorganised by the Guises with Spanish support in 1584 further instigated Catholic hostility to Elizabeth's Protestant regime. Timely, Burghley's new work was done to pacify this uneasy sentiment, but with more caution. First of all, Cecil gave a frontal caution to those malcontents ready to rebel. He began *The Execution of Justice* with condemning the pretensions of revolts. 'It hath been in all ages and in all countries a common usage of all offenders…, to make defense of their lewd and unlawful facts by untruths and by coloring and covering their deeds (where they never so vile) with pretenses'.[55] Then, he aimed at making the émigrés aware that there was no real persecution for religious beliefs in England, only for high treason and sedition. Only traitors, in the service of the Pope, who made plots against the security of their native country and the life of Queen Elizabeth, would be treated with the punishments of expulsion, torture, or execution. More importantly, he suggested in public, that people, who resisted foreign invaders and eschewed civil wars stirred up by rebellion, would be allowed 'in their own like cases for a truth and rule'.[56] It was another kind of conditional toleration. His clear distinction between faith and treason, might helpfully win some good feeling amongst Catholics, especially semi-conformists, to him. His man as ambassador in Paris might serve as his propagandist.[57]

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[55] Robert M. Kingdon, ed., *The Execution of Justice in England by William Cecil*, 3. Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 248-51.

[56] Robert M. Kingdon, ed., *The Execution of Justice in England by William Cecil*, 21.

[57] The Jesuit historian Leo Hicks asserts that the chief purpose of this work was to sow division among Catholics, and to prevent or at least delay any concerted movement from abroad. L. Hicks, *An Elizabethan Problem: Some Aspects of the Careers of Two Exile-Adventurers* (London: Burns&Oates, 1964), 136-7.

The pardons that Burghley could offer through his posts and patronage network, were a great attraction for Catholic exiles. Liberty, estates and possession of family, official licence for returning home, and other official benefices were the mercy expected. For those in jail, Cecil, as a councillor, had the authority of release in hand.[58] For the émigrés with gentry estates, their family security, wealth, and even future were also indirectly and directly controlled by Burghley. In terms of the statute *An Acte agaynst Fugytyves over the Sea* in 1571, the Lord Chancellor Sir Thomas Bromley (1579-1587), under Cecil's patronage, was responsible for allocating and recovering the exiles' properties. For their desolate wives and children, he had to restrictively provide with between one-third and one-quarter of their estates. If a refugee returned to England, 'yeeld himself to any one of the Queenes Majesty Privy Counsell, acknowledging his Faulte', and submitted himself to the Queen's obedience, after one year he woule be allowed to restore 'all his Landes and the Profittes', also by the Lord Chancellor.[59] Furthermore, under the terms of *An Acte for thexplanacon of a Statute made againste Fugitives over the Seas in the thirteenth yeere of the Queenes Majesty Raigne* in 1572, the property forfeited from refugees should be under the survey of the Exchequer and become a part of possessions of the Duchy of Lancaster.[60] In other words, the exiles' property would become a part of the royal treasury, under the direct supervision of the Lord Treasurer Burghley. Their children's guardianship, higher education, marriage, or public service, were completely dominated by Burghley as the Master of Wards. In

[58] Penry Williams, *The Tudor Regime* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 392-3.

[59] 13 Eliz. c. 3, *Statutes of the Realm*, IV, 531-4. This post after 1587 was replaced by Sir Christopher Hatton, in the side of Leicester.

[60] 14 Eliz. c. 6, *Statutes of the Realm*, IV, 598-9.

short, the subsistence of exiles' families in England was almost wholly held in the hands of Burghley.

Certain émigrés, feeling fervent about these pardons, would prefer Cecil's way. For example, Sir Thomas Copley, exiled on the continent from 1570, in May or June 1573 kept begging Burghley to retain his stable revenues from his confiscated property.[61] Copley hoped to get some back to continue his overseas life. He hence at some time rewarded the authorities with some, albeit not high-level, news. The exiled brother of the Pagets also attempted to recover their possessions and estates. But the stewardship of the Paget lands in Staffordshire and Derbyshire, which belonged to Thomas Lord Paget, was obtained by Sir Amias Paulet in 1585, by Burghley's influence.[62] Perhaps in request for and later in acknowledgement of Cecil's help, Paulet who was a friend of Walsingham and also the new guardian of Mary Queen of Scots, sent Burghley copies of his many letters from and to Leicester and the Secretary in 1585. It may have helped Cecil, who was almost isolated by Walsingham from his secret design on the Babington Plot, to learn some related information.

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[61] Lord Howard of Effingham took possession of his house at Gatton. Richard Copley Christie, ed., *Letters Sir Thomas Copley of Gatton, Surrey, and Roughey, Sussex, Knight and Baron in France to Queen Elizabeth and Her Ministers* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1970), xxvi-xxvii. Copley to Burghley, 23 May, 18 June 1573, 18-22. It is interesting to find out that from 1582 the letters Copley sent to Walsingham, who at that time had been the only Secretary, significantly increased.

[62] Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (London: Cape, 1960), 342. Charles Paget to Mary Stuart, 14 Feb. 1584. *CSP Scotland, 1584-85*, 28-32. Poulet to Burghley, 10 Jan., 28 May, 8 Jun., 16 Jun., 22 Jun., Jul., 1585, John Morris, ed., *The Letter-Books of Sir Amias Poulet* (London: Burns&Oates, 1874), 32-3, 35-6, 44-5, 47-8, 66-7, 129-30.

Finally, Stafford's intelligence business with Mendoza also made him a suitable mediator in Burghley's secret diplomacy with Spain. In the 1580s, the Leicester-Walsingham group had been greatly strengthened in the English regime. This predominance was in consequence of Walsingham's monopolisation of the post of the Secretary after 1581, and the successful discovery of the Babington Plot and of Mary Stuart's involvement. By the latter in 1586, fevers of indignation and of fear were intentionally being constructed among Parliament and the public. The climate of public opinion supported the militant policy Leicester and Walsingham led towards the more radical side. Undoubtedly, the execution of Mary Queen of Scots and the proclamation of war with Spain, were made to satisfy the demands of the dominant extreme Protestant policy in England. The moderate Elizabeth and Burghley were displeased with this inclination to open hostility, which would infuriate Philip II. Their ambassador Stafford, in the pay of Spain, was delegated secretly by them to propitiate the Spanish king.[63] For instance, to Philip II, via the multiple informants of Stafford, Arundel, and Mendoza, Burghley kept striving to exonerate both himself and the Queen from the sacrifice of Mary. Cecil ascribed all the blame to 'a pair of knaves', Leicester and Walsingham. They were strongly censured that in Cecil's absence through illness, they both allied with Lord Hunsdon and Lord Admiral Howard to menace the Queen to execute Mary, while vetoing 'any money to maintain the war in Holland, or to fit out a naval force to help Don Antonio'. Burghley clarified that Mary's death 'has been against his will'.[64]

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[63] Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Jan. 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 6-9.

[64] Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Jan., 28 Feb., 6 Mar., 26 Mar. 1587, *CSP Spanish*,

Stafford's secret mission for Elizabeth and Burghley is possibly the key reason why he was allowed to keep his place even when suspicion arose. The Secretary would never give up hoping to replace this partisan of Cecil with a more favourable official like Edward Wotton. When the rumours about his treachery spread into the Council, Leicester and Walsingham seized chances to attack him. Yet, surprisingly he was not recalled until 1590. Read asserted that this was because of lack of sufficient and weighty evidence carried by Walsingham's spies.[65] His special tasks, beyond his official activities, may provide an alternative explanation. On the other hand, after his exceptionally long embassy up to eight years, Stafford did not occupy any office of significance, apart from a seat in the Commons. This was contrary to the customary rule. Returning ambassadors had in the past often become natural candidates for the Secretaryship of State, like Sir Thomas Smith and Walsingham serving in Paris, and Sir Thomas Wilson in Brussels. And by 1590 his main opponents Leicester and Walsingham had also died. Hence, although the Queen and Cecil outwardly revealed no signs of a distrust of Stafford, their suspicion of him had probably risen, or else his value had come to the end.

Around this untrustworthy ambassador, Walsingham had arranged some of his personal spies and kept more watchful eyes on him.[66] In 1584, the Secretary appointed a new chaplain, Richard Hakluyt, to the ambassador, with orders to monitor on this diplomatist.[67] In the following year, Thomas Rogers, alias Nicholas

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1587-1603, 6-9, 25, 26-8, 47-8.

[65] Conyers Read, "The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford", 312-3.

[66] J. E. Neale, "The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford", 218-9.

[67] Alan Haynes, *Walsingham:Elizabethan Spymaster & Statesman* (Stroud: Sutton, 2007), 41.

Berden, commonly recognised as the most important spy in France for Walsingham, was sent to Paris.[68] Directed by Francis Mills, Walsingham's secretary, he 'have hereunder set down the matter that concerneth the Lord Ambassador, which matter being both dishonourable and very perilous is worthy to be noted and wisely to be foreseen'. The allegations in his report were extremely adverse to Stafford's reputation. In brief, it accused Stafford of imparting secrets to Arundel, and of providing ways to forward letters and messengers into England. The gravest one was his being bribed by the Guises to show diplomatic letters.[69] Stafford was certainly aware of these eyes around him. In reply to Rogers's report to the Secretary, he cleared for himself that what the 'badd disposed people' talked of him was 'so bad a meaning…with such untruthes', but he was 'so used to be evyll delt withall'. In the end Rogers was heavily blamed as 'very a knave and as very fale withals as many is in England or France'. [70] Walter Williams who was arranged in his embassy in 1586 was also exposed and derided as 'a drunk knave'.[71] At the end

[68] In original Rogers was a servant of George Gilbert, an English gentleman in exile, but as late as 1584 for Walsingham he had 'professe myself a spye which is a profession…that I persecute the same nott for gayne, butt for the safete of my nature country…' Nicholas Berden to Thomas Phelippes, 1 Jan. 1584, TNA, SP12/167/5.

[69] [Thomas Rogers] to Francis Mills, [Jun,?] 1586, TNA, SP78/16/50.

[70] Stafford to Walsingham, 24 Apr. 1586, TNA, SP78/15/107.

[71] Conyers Read, *Walsingham*, II, 327. Stafford to Burghley, 6 Nov. 1586, TNA, SP78/16/157; 8 Jan. 1588, TNA, SP78/18/14. Walter Williams might have served Walsingham as a personal informant from 1575. Under the latter's direction, he pretended to be a servant of the two exiles, the earl of Oxford and Sir Thomas Copley in sequence on the Continent, and then to be a prison spy at Rye. From 1586, he was sent to spy on Stafford. Walter Williams to Walsingham, 9 Jul. 1575, *CSP Foreign, 1575-1577*, 85-6. Burghley to Cobham and Walsingham, 18 Jul. 1578; Leicester to Walsingham, 7 Aug. 1578, *CSP Foreign, 1578-1579*, 74-5., 121-3. George Gilpin to

of the following year, some copy letters of the spy Gilbert Gifford, who was assigned by Walsingham's cipher secretary Thomas Phelippes to France in 1587 to monitor their embassy, came into Stafford's hands when he was arrested in Paris. The ambassador criticised these letters as 'the most villainous against me and mine that could be'. To Burghley, he poured out his soul, and condemned Gifford's charges, as such 'as both I and mine are in worse predicament than the confessed traitors that are on this side the sea'.[72]

The reports of Walsingham's spies against Stafford can hardly be taken as conclusive proof of his treachery, because of the competitive mentality between them. Read suggested that most of Walsingham's secret agents were disreputable characters, good at the arts of deceit.[73] This is overly negative. Admittedly, most of the spies were opportunists, but this was due to their special occupation. They might be well aware of Walsingham's hostility towards this pro-Cecil man. Naturally they were desirous of cultivating Walsingham's good graces, perhaps even by creating false witness against him, or by exaggerating the ambassador's dissatisfaction with their master.[74] Blackening Stafford (or other officials) might have come to a 'custom' for spies.[75] Their behaviour is comprehensible. Compared with official

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Walsingham, 19 Nov. 1580, *CSP Foreign, 1579-1580*, 484. Stokes to Walsingham, 29 Dec. 1581, *CSP Foreign, 1581-1582*, 419. Sir T. Smith to Burghley, 21 Aug. 1575 *CSP Domestic, 1547-80*, 502. The confession of a servant of Sir Thos. Copley's, a papist, being prisoner at Rye. 27 Aug. 1582, TNA, SP12/155/44. Anonymous (under the signature of Pasquinus Romanus), to the most reverent Signor, 1 Feb. 1583, TNA, SP12/158/150.

[72] Stafford to Burghley, 8 Jan. 1588, *CSP Foreign, 1586-8*, 485.

[73] Conyers Read, "The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford", 301.

[74] [Thomas Rogers] to Francis Mills, [Jun,?] 1586, TNA, SP78/16/50.

[75] Stafford to Walsingham, 24 Apr. 1586, TNA, SP78/15/107.

envoys whose living had been guaranteed by the government, the work of this private group was very uncertain. Their survival was heavily reliant on the favour of their spymaster. In order to ensure the reliance Walsingham had on them, sometimes they had to undermine Stafford's credit. It was not just a game between Elizabeth's Protestant regime and their traitorous Catholics, or between Walsingham and Burghley in antagonism; it was also a competition between personal spies and the official diplomatic system, in which one or more secret services often stumbled across another.

4. Conclusion

This article moves the concern for the research on Ambassador Sir Edward Stafford away from the traditional arguments about his fame and treachery, towards a new focus on his pro-Cecil secret service. Through the model of Stafford's embassy in Pars, the research expects to give a new eye of the Elizabethan intelligence work in regime: a necessary piece of equipment for Elizabeth's high-level ministers to compete for power. Lord Burghley had no wish to be a reader of selected second-hand materials. He cooperated with Queen Elizabeth, through posts, patronage, and the female privy chamber, to build another intelligence system with the new power location, the royal court. The appointment of his creature Sir Edward Stafford to France was one of the attempts he had break Secretary Walsingham's monopoly on intelligence. Besides, the Cecil-way via Ambassador Stafford certain Catholic exiles preferred in negotiations may reflect a fact that Burghley's power in regime during the 1580s did not declined as often supposed. Even in overseas exile these Catholic gentry still retained some degree of sensitivity to their home politics, in which Burghley was still at the unchallengeable

top.

As to English spying in Paris, there are three interesting issues. First, due to the distrust for the official embassy controlled by a self-proclaimed 'creature' of Burghley, Walsingham organised his personal intelligence service through his administrative and personal resources. How it worked, and what advantage or influence it brought to Walsingham in the regime politics are worth examining. Secondly, it is notable that in this secret service Queen Elizabeth was silent. Her roles, as well as those of her royal court, will be discovered in later research. The last one is about a significant increase of conversion or double service of Catholic exiles to Protestant England in the last two decades of the sixteenth century, which added great strength to the English spy service. According to Michael Questier's argument, it is not enough to say of these converts merely that they surrendered themselves due to a sense of fear, time-serving, and irresistible grace.[76] In short, cunning English operations of punishment and mercy were not the only reason. The internal divisions in Elizabethan Catholicism, and the anti-Jesuit moderates' hope of personal survival and Catholic restoration, were also key motivations.

[76] Michael C. Questier, "English Clerical Converts to Protestantism, 1580-1596", *Recusant History* 20.4 (1991): 455-77; Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Questier, "Conformity, Catholicism and the Law", in Peter Lake and Michael Questier. eds., *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c. 1560-1660* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), 237-61.

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