WEAVING ON A HISTORICAL THREAD:

William Camden's Elizabethan documentaries

By Geoffrey Eatough

Lord Burghley, chief advisor of Queen Elizabeth I, gave William Camden access to a wide range of official documents and ordered him to take the basic elements in the reign of Elizabeth and weave them together on a historical thread. Camden gained access to a vaster range of documents than those offered by Burghley and made himself the authority on the reign. He admired Elizabeth enormously, but his history is far from uncritical. This paper reviews Camden's conception of history as seen in his address to the reader. It then looks at the primordia of the reign, the social and religious context and the queen's unmarried state, and also her involvement in the downfall of Mary Queen of Scots and the clumsy attempt by her and the English establishment to shift the blame for Mary's death on to secretary William Davison. Her control weakened. In an age of expansion and dramatic overseas developments leadership necessarily devolved on to others, even to foreigners such as the persistent Dutch, and new men, such as Drake, who were not entirely answerable to the old order. Camden was an outstanding writer of Latin. His Latin as a vehicle of these modern events is a major concern of this paper.

Camden's England was very much part of Europe, and only survived as an independent nation by making the right diplomatic and military choices. It was a country of four million, with the population concentrated in the south and especially south east, compared with a French population of sixteen million and a Spanish one of eight million. Elizabeth, its queen, who talked so much about her people, never travelled far from London. London as now dictated the politics of the country, though there were two Londons, Westminster where the government was concentrated and the City of London. Camden (1551–1623) was for a considerable time deputy head and then head of the new Westminster school,[1] though he was not parochial, as

[1] Herendeen 2004 on Westminster School; see also Kay 1995, 2–8 on Ben Jonson's experience at Westminster School under Camden.

Londoners can be, since he had travelled the country to write his *Britannia.*[2] He must, however, have been totally familiar with what we still call the Westminster scene and its actors, that is parliament and the court. He is less informative about the City, but it was the city, the traders, and adventurers, who were the driving force in the English expansion, often determining England's allies. Elizabeth was aware of the importance of the city. She was in her early reign in debt to it, for she had elements of an accountant in her nature, and at a late age took lessons in advanced accountancy, which enabled her to shake the complacency of senior advisers who were part of the corruption.[3] She considered her greatest achievement the restoration of the currency. For 1560 Camden writes:

> Quodque maiori, imo maximae gloriae cedit, aeratam pecuniam paulatim tollere, probamque ex puro puto argento restituere coepit ad regni gloriam restaurandam.
>
> (What turned out to be the greater glory, indeed her greatest glory was that she began gradually to get rid of the coinage which had been debased by brass, and to bring back a sound coinage made of pure unadulterated silver, in order to restore the glory of the kingdom.)[4]

Base money caused inflation and Camden tells us the chief sufferers were those on salaries, soldiers, servants and all who earned their daily wage by their own labour. From these early days, when the treasury was empty, peace seemed to her a better option than even the most just war. For 1559 he had written:

> Et sane pax pro sexus ratione, et ob aerarii inopiam iustissimo bello optatior ipsi visa, quae gloriosius esse pacem prudentia firmare quam bellum per acies conficerere, dicere solebat.
>
> (And certainly peace, by reason of her sex and the lack of money in the treasury, seemed more desirable than the most just war; she was accustomed to say it was more glorious to strengthen peace through being wise than win war on the battlefield.)[5]

War, however, was unavoidable. She and the nation had to be defended and the politics meant that European neighbours had to be helped, but then reminded of England's contribution in men and money to their theatres of war.

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[2] Camden 1607 & 2004. Even for those who do not entirely trust their Latin it would be worth seeing the 1607 edition on *EEBO*.

[3] Camden 1627, 21–22 = Camden 2001, 1590 §2, tr. Norton 2001, 1590 §2.

[4] Camden 1615, 61 = Camden 2001, 1560 §16, tr. Norton 2001, 1560 §16.

[5] Camden 1615, 30 = Camden 2001, 1559 §7, tr. Norton 2001, 1559 §7.

Camden's history contains a good deal of what we call diplomatic history, sometimes in excess. It might seem that Latin is for that reason the language in which Camden wrote. Yet though it was a diplomatic language, it was also a live language, which Elizabeth spoke with ease.[6] The original title of this paper was *Speaking to Europe: Camden's documentaries.* First readings made me think that it was a work tending to impartiality, which would appeal to European intellectuals with whom Camden was in constant communication.[7] It is essentially however a most English work, though written in Latin, at a time when English itself was being Latinised, which can leave the reader with a strange sense of familiarity as they read the Latin. Camden's Latin is excellent, at times even exciting, which leaves problems of ownership when Camden translates official documents, originally written in English or French, even personal letters, into Latin.[8] Latin could also make the history not immediately accessible to local troublemakers both of his and of the later generation under Elizabeth's successor, James, or accessible to continental enemies whom he was happy to offend. The conclusion to his address to the reader is full of fighting spirit.

A brief word about the text and its translation

I have read Camden's *Annales* a number of times in the Latin; I am the common reader not a historian. A major purpose of this paper is to draw other readers to the Latin text. It is the Latin text which leads us to Camden and back into the Elizabethan age. My reading among modern Elizabethan historians has been opportunistic, occasionally dated, but enough to confirm that Camden sometimes shapes events to his own ends, whatever they might be. I have confined myself on the whole to the Latin edition which was published in 1615 and which deals with the years from 1558 to 1588 the year of the Armada, that is the first three books. The post Armada England of the fourth book became rather a different place and the queen grew older.

I had intended throughout to use Richard Norton's translation for the Latinless.[9] It is used by Dana Sutton in his electronic bilingual edition,[10] on

[6] Camden 1615, 91 = Camden 2001, 1564 §6, tr. Norton 2001, 1564 §6. Camden 1615, 103 = Camden 2001, 1566 §4, tr. Norton 2001, 1566 §4. Camden 1627 53 = Camden 2001, 1592 §13, tr. Norton 2001, 1592 §13. Camden 1627, 132–139 = Camden 2001, 1597 §13, tr. Norton 2001, 1597 §13.

[7] See Smith 2002. This contains only the life but that allows us to see the high regard in which he was held by European scholars. Smith 1691 includes a substantial correspondence with scholars in England and in Europe.

[8] See note 44. Mary's letters are woven into a Latin speech by Camden.

[9] See Norton 1635 in the bibliography.

[10] Cited as Norton 2001 in the bibliography.

the grounds that it is a translation of a close contemporary. Norton's translation has a plausibility, and I shall generally resort to it, but where it is particularly unsatisfactory or bad, as in this first passage quoted below, I shall translate the passages myself, in ways that I trust seem closer to the meaning. It will become clear that it is difficult for any translator to capture the flavour of the *Annales*. Camden presents himself as an austere man in his writing style, but it is an austerity which is inimitable; in fact he has many styles, and his Latin is also inimitable. I will make it clear which translations are Norton's and which are mine.

Since one can easily switch between English and Latin in the Sutton edition, it would have been convenient to use Sutton regularly for the Latin, but I am aware that there may be those who do not have access to the site where Sutton's text can be found, and my own reading was almost mainly with the 1615 edition of the *Annales* on the *Early English Books Online* site (*EEBO*). I have, therefore, made reference to this edition of the Latin text, except for the *Address to the reader* where there is no pagination in the 1615 edition, but which is brief enough, and with which I deal immediately. However, when I quote from the Latin text or paraphrase the Latin text I have also made reference to Sutton's online Latin text,[11] which will also bring the Latinless reader easily to Norton's translation.

Camden's address to the reader: gaining possession of the text

Camden prefaces his *Annales* with an address to the reader. It begins as follows:

> Ante annos octodecim, Guilielmus Cecilius baro Burghleius, summus Angliae thesaurius, mihi ne cogitanti quidem, primum sua, deinde regia tabularia aperuit, atque inde primordia regni Elizabethae filo historico contexere iussit [...] Obsecundavi, nec invitus quidem, ne optimae principis memoriae, eius expectationi, et veritati, quae mihi utriusque instar, defuisse viderer. Illam enim subterfugientem, et sese occultantem, aut ibi, aut nullibi, deprehendere speravi.
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> More than eighteen years ago, William Cecil, Baron Burghley, the Lord Treasurer of England opened up first his own registry and then the royal registry – when such an event had not even been in my thoughts – and then he ordered me to take the basic elements in the reign of Elizabeth and weave them together on a historical thread [...] I fell in with his command, happy to do so, I did not want to seem to have failed an excellent queen and her place in history, or his

[11] Cited as Camden 2001 in the bibliography.

> expectation or the truth which for me is pattern of them both. Truth quietly slips away and hides, my hope was that I should grasp her there, or she would be nowhere.[12]

This was both a story-telling age and an age of text, both written, printed and indeed truly woven text. A brief digression into the *tex–* root in the *Annales* is interesting.

Besides *contexere* we find in the *Annales texere*, *intexere*, *intertexere*, *attexere*, *subtexere*, *pertexere*, *retexere*, and most frequent of all *praetexere,* a word based on an image of a thick outer garment which will cover things, since this was an age of subterfuges and alibis. The following are some examples of the *tex–* root in use:

1) "ne gens Hibernica inculta et ideo magis superstitiosa, in rebellionem Gallorum artibus religionis praetextu concitaretur" (lest the Irish race uncivilised and therefore more superstitious should be roused to rebel through the trickery of the French using religion as a cover).[13]

2) The most important text of the period was truly inwoven. The French king ordered his son Frances and daughter-in-law Mary to use on their official documents the title *Francis and Mary by the grace of God King and Queene of Scotland, England, and Ireland,* and "he displayed everywhere the arms of the kingdom of England joined with the arms of Scotland in household furnishings and painted on walls and woven into the official cloaks of the heralds" ("Insigniaque regni Angliae coniunctim cum insignibus Scotiae in supellectili et parietibus ubique depicta, et foecialium paludamentis intexta passim proposuit.")[14] Elizabeth would never allow Mary to forget the implications of this inwoven tale.

3) If caught on a treason charge your life could depend on the ability to weave a plausible story. Francis Throckmorton who had remained Catholic and who was found with two catalogues on him, one of English ports and the other of the locality of English nobles, confessed quickly and wove together a plausible story ("huiusmodi narrationem contexuit").[15] Camden tells us the story, later Throckmorton denied it, claiming he had made it up to avoid torture, a respectable mode of interrogation in the period; then he reclaimed it when given what was obviously a specious chance to gain a pardon from the queen, and then he started to deny it again on the gallows, at which point the noose tightened.[16]

[12] Camden 2001, To the Reader §1, tr. Eatough.
[13] Camden 1615, 47 = Camden 2001, 1559 §27, tr. Eatough.
[14] Camden 1615, 42 = Camden 2001, 1559 §20, tr. Eatough.
[15] Camden 1615, 357 = Camden 2001, 1584 §9.
[16] Camden 1615, 353–358 = Camden 2001, 1584 §5–10.

4) Gawdy, the prosecutor at Mary's trial, gives her a history lesson of the recent events, which had finally doomed her, that is her contact with the Babington plotters. Gawdy is a member of a body of men determined to kill Mary by a legal process and prepared to bring together every shred of evidence however circumstantial: "At hinc historicam Babingtoniae coniurationis narrationem contexuit" (And then he wove together a/the historical story of the of Babingtonian conspiracy.)[17]

5) Davison, the secretary of Queen Elizabeth, when he was framed on a charge of precipitating the death of the Queen of Scots, found himself in the Star Chamber, the 'fall guy' of the guilty men who were trying him. The pedant Manwood, no doubt for something to say, weaves the whole story of Mary's treason all the way from those misappropriated English emblems through to the Babington plot (*narrationem pertexuit*), of no relevance to Davison.[18]

To return to Camden's address to the reader, a *tabularia* was a place originally where you kept the *tabulae*, for very ancient Roman writing tablets. This word will come into view with a different meaning in a poetic touch at the end of The Address. Norton translated it "Roles, Memorials, Records" and *contexere* as "compile", which is quite the reverse of what Camden did with his historical documents. Camden turns out to be more of a free agent than Norton suggests. He does not compile, but weaves or creates.

When Camden stood on the threshold of the registry, he was horrified by the difficulties he saw involved in the scene of confusion ("implicatissima difficultas quodammodo absterruit"). He stumbled on dense piles of every kind of writing and document (*instrumentorum*). There may be irony here, since *instrumenta* are meant to ease labour. The material was well enough arranged in chronological sequence, but documents also need to be arranged by content, and here there was total confusion (*confussisimas*). In shaking out these papers he became covered in dust, and he sweated profusely. He gathered together (*conveho*) some suitable material which he had found by concentrated search, but what he had found was less than expected. Then he (that is Burghley) stopped living and Camden's passion for this work rather cooled ("industria mea admodum deferbuit").[19]

[17] Camden 1615, 423 = Camden 2001, 1586 §58, tr. Eatough. Norton's translation is here insipid.

[18] Camden 1615, 462 = Camden 2001, 1587 §22.

[19] Camden 2001, To the reader §2.

But when, as Norton translates, "that incomparable Princesse also had rendered her celestiall soule to God,"[20] Camden waited to see if anyone of the learned men, whom Elizabeth had favoured with wealth and leisure, would write her history, but when they were not forthcoming, he says, "I buckled myselfe againe to my intermitted study, and plied it harder than before."[21] This is Norton of course – it is wonderful that the English still use the expression 'buckle to'; from Camden's Latin we could, with the rest of the sentence extract, "pressed on more keenly than before."[22]

Camden would find his independence as a historian, yet first he needed the right kind of historical documents, and a great body of these were supplied by Robert Cotton,[23] a former pupil of Camden's, who, travelling round the north of England with Camden, had been of considerable help in the development of Camden's *Britannia,* and who, along with Camden, was a member of the College of Antiquities (deemed a subversive body under James I, and closed down). Cotton is an example of the varied ways in which private enterprise could sustain the state in Elizabethan and Stuart England.

> From all places I procured all the helpes I could to write: Charters and Letters patents of Kings and great personages, letters, consultations in the Councell Chamber, Embassadors Instructions, and Epistles, I carefully turned over and over. The Parliamentary Diaryes, Actes, and Statutes I ran thorough, and read over every Edict or Proclamation. For the greatest part of all which, as I am beholden to that most excellent man Sir Robert Cotton, Knight and Baronet, who hath with great cost, and successefull industry, furnished himselfe with most choice store of matter of History and Antiquity (for from his light, he hath most willingly given great light to me). So (Reader) if I shall in any thing helpe or delight thee in this behalfe, thou art most worthily to give him thankes for the same.[24]

Camden also had his own papers. Though famous as an admirer of antiquity, he says that he had taken an interest in recent events and seen and observed much; and he had learned from a previous generation and from people who could be relied upon, who had taken part in government, and from supporters on both sides of the religious divide. And we can see that he had the ability to make us visualise events clearly, even where he had not

[20] Norton 2001, To the reader §2.
[21] *Ibid*.
[22] The Latin reads: "ad intermissum studium denuo me accinxi, et acrius quam antea incubui" (Camden 2001, To the reader §2, tr. Eatough).
[23] About Cotton see Handley 2011.
[24] Norton 2001, To the reader §2.

been present, such as the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, or Sir Francis Drake's voyages in the Pacific.

He had cleared away the items which blocked the doorway to truth, an image (missed by Norton) which perhaps went back to the registry experience, in this case items standing for ignorance and its offspring doubt and falsity. This clear-out meant that he had acquired no less knowledge of events, by which he surely means more knowledge, than those with long and vast experience in state affairs. He might, we could conclude, know more than Lord Burghley ever did. Such knowledge, of course, means that he could control the narrative, and locate the threads of history.

The historian has however to be fearless. Camden says he has not feared danger, not even from those who think that memory can be wiped out by ever present power in a succeeding age. Nor will anyone find that he is lacking in "parrhesia, that noble freedom of speech, which respects the boundaries worthy of a historian, to be distinguished from the specious freedom of slander and abuse."[25]

> Manifesta non reticui, dubia mollius sum interpretatus, occultiora non indagavi. "Abditos principum sensus", inquit magnus ille historiarum antesignanus, "et si quod occultius parant, exquirere illicitum; anceps nec ideo assequare." Atque cum Halycarnassaeo curiosulis succenseo, qui plura quam legibus permissum, quaerere, aut cognoscere volunt.
>
> (About things evident I have not kept quiet; about things uncertain I have been more gentle in my interpretation; the more hidden things I have not investigated. "About the private feelings of Princes", says the great standard bearer of Histories, "and if they plan anything to be kept secret, it is not permissable to enquire; it is fraught with danger, do not go after it." And with the man from Halycarnassus, I feel anger at those prying people who want to seek and know more than is permitted by the laws.)[26]

The object of their prying was principally Elizabeth, who had to maintain a royal persona, and yet her privacy was constantly being invaded. She also had to conceal her opinion and her feelings. Mary Queen of Scots complained that Elizabeth "personam non transgreditur", that is she did not come out from behind her public persona.[27] For various reasons, mainly reasons of state, Elizabeth refused to meet Mary. Elizabeth's court was full of tittle-tattle by which people's reputations could be destroyed. And

[25] Camden 2001, To the Reader §4, tr. Eatough.

[26] Camden 2001, To the Reader §4, tr. Eatough.

[27] Camden 1615, 75 = Camden 2001, 1562 §4. Norton's translation does not make great sense: "'which', to use her owne words, 'goeth no farther than the person.'" (Norton 2001, 1562 §4).

Elizabeth was mixing with courtiers often in a private capacity. She did enjoy the gossip of her ladies-in-waiting, which was also a means of accessing the outside world. Leicester seemed to have a special relationship with her and people might speculate about what she and Anjou discussed. Camden, by being aware of the boundaries, leaves us with the feeling that he might have known more than he tells us. Nonetheless the execution of Mary Queen of Scots leads to the devastating indictment of Elizabeth and the English establishment, as they attempt to find stories which will be acceptable to a critical public. Thus Camden also allows us to glimpse weaknesses of the queen whom he admires, here and elsewhere.

Camden tells us history deals with the big issues, though there can, according to taste, be room for some minute matters. Circumstances which might seem trivial must always be included because they can explain why things happened. History deals with why, how and to what end. He has not interposed his own opinion. As far as he is concerned people are free to make what they want of it according to their taste. He has not scattered around in the text *sententiolae,* that is smart memorable remarks which might influence people. He has not adorned his narratives with what the Greeks appropriately called *epistaseis*, that is where the author stops the action and stands over you to express his opinion.[28] Actions and their consequences should reveal themselves, but that they can only do, of course, through the text of the historian.

The author does not make speeches, the people in the narrative do. What people caught up in an event say is important; speeches have a major historical role reaching back to Thucydides and even Homer. Historians might still, you could argue, manipulate speeches so that they become platforms for their own views, but Camden claims that he has only included actual speeches, or summaries of actual speeches.[29] The *Annales* are, in fact, full of brilliant speeches, mainly by Elizabeth, but also by Mary, in Latin, a language with dynamics of its own, and were certainly often not the actual words used. Further, summaries of speeches gave the historian great creative freedom, as did crowd or party speech, and rumour.

Camden says that he writes annals because Tacitus teaches us that famous deeds must be entrusted to annals, which ensure that virtue is talked about and those who speak or do evil fear the damnation of posterity. The style of annals, he says, is also his style, rather dry and terse ("aridius et contractius scribendi genus") in Norton's words "a more niggard and succinct kind of writing."[30]

[28] Camden 2001, To the Reader §5.
[29] Camden 2001, To the Reader §5.
[30] Camden 2001 and Norton 2001, To the Reader §6.

Camden says that when he reached the end and polished his work, he planned to bestow it on Jacques Auguste de Thou who was writing a universal history, but was clearly not doing justice to English matters, because he was like some stranger wandering in a foreign country.[31] Unfortunately very rough drafts of Camden's work were sent to de Thou, and he hacked them up and interpolated, selecting just a few English and Irish matters, not pleasing either English or European readers. So Camden revised his work, making many additions and giving it some literary qualities using natural language ("aliquem orationis cultum adhibui, sed sine conquisitis verborum lenociniis"). The result can be likened to a *tabula*, in this case not a literary document but a picture; the documents relating to Elizabeth's reign have been transmuted into a picture. He writes: "Satis enim mihi videtur, si tanquam tabulam dilutioribus coloribus minus eleganter pictam, bono lumine collocavero." This is not easy to translate: "It seems to me enough if it is like a picture not too refined in the subdued colours in which it has been painted, which I will have placed in a good light."[32] 'To place in a good light' is a phrase still used of presenting something or some situation, which is imperfect, in a way which makes it more acceptable. I suggest that Camden is saying that he has not aimed for literary effect with heightened language, but that he is relying on the narrative he has created and on the way he has presented events to clarify history.

Primordia of the Elizabethan reign: religion and the unwedded queen

When the young Elizabeth was acclaimed queen Camden writes:

> nec alterum unquam Principem populus proniore et constantiore mente et amore, maiore observantia, laetiore applausu, et votis repetitis, quoties in publicum prodiret, toto vitae decursu, unquam prosecutus est.
>
> (neither did the people ever embrace any other Prince with more willing and constant mind and affection, with greater observance, more joyfull applause, and prayers reiterated, whensoever she went abroade during the whole course of her life, then they did her.) [33]

The facts do not quite match this publicity. In the final weeks of 1558 occurred the counter coup which re-established the protestant religion:

[31] Camden 2001, To the Reader §7.
[32] Camden 2001, To the Reader §8, tr. Eatough. Norton's translation of this passage is appallingly bad: "if as a Table ill-favourable painted with grosse colours."
[33] Camden 1615, 18 = Camden 2001, 1558 §1, tr. Norton 2001, 1558 §1.

> Primis auspiciis primam curam, sed cum pauculis intimis adhibet de protestantium religione restauranda, quam sacris literis, et primaevae ecclesiae synceritati maxime consonam et verissimam esse tum ex informatione a teneris, tum ex iudicio, ad veritatem sibi persuaserat; et restaurare quidem certa et stabili sententia apud animum statuerat.
>
> (In the first beginning of her Raigne, she applyed her first care (howbeit with but a few of her inwardest Counsailors) to the restoring of the Protestants Religion, which both by her instruction from her tender yeeres, and by her own judgement, shee verily perswaded her selfe to be most true and consonant to the sacred Scriptures, and the sincerity of the primitive Church, and to restore the same she had with a settled and constant resolution determined in her mind.)[34]

This is an emphatic piece of Latin writing, perhaps offending the Camden rule to cleave to the arid style *primis…primam...pauculis… protestantium… primaevae*; *sacris…ecclesiae synceritati maxime consonam…verissimam esse*; *tum…informatione a teneris, tum...persuaserat et restaurare…stabili sententia…statuerat*. Norton's is, however, a lumbering translation, but his *howbeit* perhaps sounds a critical note which we may pick up more quickly than with the Latin *sed*. Should one conduct a religious revolution with so few people? This small group of people certainly did not carry a great swathe of the English people with them. The Anglican church which Elizabeth established was hardly a recreation of the early church. *Informatione* traverses a whole range of experiences from being taught to being formed or shaped, and Camden may be aware of that. "Sibi persuaserat" (she had persuaded herself) is ambiguous, and the last sentence reminds us that Elizabeth's motto was "semper eadem" (always the same). She had stable opinions – the unkind might say set opinions – but in fact her stability was also founded on a perception which was sharper than some of those around her.

Religion was inseparable from politics and was to determine England's allies. Elizabeth closed the ports and made sure that the Tower of London was in safe hands, she renewed the commission of Sussex, Viceroy of Ireland. Money was not to be exported to countries across the seas for exchange, a beginning to the establishment of sound money, as important as religion. Ireland was always high on the agenda. It generally forms the tag end of the year in Camden's annalistic format: a confession that it was a different country.

[34] Camden 1615, 19 = Camden 2001, 1558 §3, tr. Norton 2001, 1558 §3.

The queen's unmarried state

At the end of the parliamentary session in 1559 everyone in the three estates were agreed that Elizabeth should be asked to find a husband. Since there were those in the Upper House, the nobility, who hoped they might be the lucky man, the task of addressing Elizabeth was given to a Speaker of the Lower House, Sir Thomas Gargrave. Gargrave approached Elizabeth most graciously, and delivered a perfect speech on human beings and the state, who can only find immortality through marriage: rulers have a special responsibility to breed.

> Hanc vero immortalitatem Anglis donare poteris, si quod humana natura, aetas, forma, et fortuna postulant, aliquem in maritum adsciveris, qui sit solatio et adiumento, secundarum adversarumque consors. Unius enim mariti opera magis ad res gerendas quam multorum coniuncta industria proculdubio valet. Nihil esse potest a publicis rationibus magis alienum, quam eam principem, in cuius matrimonio salus reipublicae et pax continetur, caelibem quasi Vestalem virginem vivere. Regnum e maioribus acceptum liberis relinquendum, qui regno futuri et ornamento et firmamento.
>
> (This immortality may your Majestie give to the English, if (as your humane nature, age, beauty, and fortune doe require) you will take some man to your husband, who may be a comfort and helpe unto you, and a Consort in prosperity and adversity. For (questionlesse) more availeth the helpe of one onely husband for the effecting of matters, then the joynt industry of many men. Nothing can be more contrary to the publicke respects then that such a Princesse, in whose marriage is comprehended the safety and peace of the Common-wealth, should live unmarried and as it were a vestall virgin. A kingdome received from ancestors is to be left to children, who will be both an ornament and strength to the Realme.) [35]

Elizabeth replies with her defining speech, the high point of which is the following piece of theatre

> "Et ecce", *inquit*, "quod vos oblivisci demiror, maritalis huius foederis, et matrimonii mei cum regno meo pignus," *(simul digito extento aureum ostendit annulum, quo in inauguratione se regno in matrimonium conceptis verbis rite dederat). Respiratione hic facta, "*Nec mihi quaeso", *inquit, "*miseram orbitatem exprobando obiicite: vos enim singuli, et quotquot existunt Angli, mihi liberi, mihi cognati."
>
> ("I have already joined my selfe in marriage to an husband, namely, the Kingdome of England. And behold", said she, "which I marvaile

[35] Camden 1615, 33–34 = Camden 2001, 1559 §9, tr. Norton 2001, 1559 §9.

> ye have forgotten, the pledge of this my wedlocke and marriage with my Kingdome" and therewith she drew the Ring from her finger and shewed it, wherewith at her Coronation she had in a set forme of words solemnly given herselfe in marriage to her Kingdome. Here having made a pawse, "And doe not", saith she, "upbraid me with miserable lacke of children; for every one of you, and as many as are Englishmen, are children, and kinsmen of me.")[36]

In 1566 when Mary Queen of Scots, a Catholic, had produced a son who was in line to become king of England, and did become King James I of England in 1603, there was panic at the English Court and in Parliament. The mood on the marriage question was different: "Tempestates formidolosissimi temporis…ominarentur."[37] The English language translates this Latin for the reader without the aid of Norton. Angry seething minds broke cover to accuse the queen of failing the country and posterity. The Earls of Pembroke and Leicester openly, and Norfolk very secretly, even went so far as to say that a husband should be imposed on Elizabeth. The Upper House, where the aristocracy were, spoke through Nicholas Bacon, Keeper of the Great Seal, but his speech is the multiple voice of the aristocracy. It is a conventional speech, which, with its row of gerundives, heavy and insistent, Camden clearly mocks as hyperbolic and academic. "Omnes omnium penates penitus" near the end is particularly poor stuff:

> Praeterea proponunt quanta malorum tempestas Angliae impendeat, si illa successore certo non designato mortalitatem exueret, seditiones et intestina bella, in quibus ipsa victoria est miserrima, proruptura; religionem eliminandam, iustitiam obruendam, leges proculcandas, cum non fuerit princeps certus qui legis est anima, regnum in praedam exteris cessurum. Et alias id genus calamitates enumerando exaggerant, quae, illa sine sobole defuncta, omnes omnium penates penitus involverent. Ex sacris etiam literis praecepta, consilia, et exempla modeste adiungunt.
>
> (Moreover they propound how great a storme of calamities would hang over England if she should put off her mortality, designing no certain Successour; that seditions and Civill warres would breake forth, wherein the victory itselfe were most miserable; that Religion would be abolished, Justice smothered, the Lawes trodden under feet, when there would be no certaine Prince, which is the soule of the Lawe, and that the Kingdome would fall as a prey to forrainers. And other calamities of that sort they reckon up and exaggerate, wherein all men would be involved if she should dye without issue. Out of the

[36] Camden 1615, 34–35 = Camden 2001, 1559 §10, tr. Norton 2001, 1559 §10.
[37] Camden 1615, 104 = Camden 2001, 1566 §5.

> sacred Scriptures also they modestly joyne hereunto precepts, counsels, and examples.)[38]

The Lower House were in a state of rebellion. Individuals were prepared to speak. There were those too inclined to snatch at the authority of her royal majesty. They make it clear that in the relationship between monarch and subjects, the subjects were the important party, "unicum fulcrum et firmamentum" (their onely prop and pillar).[39] By not naming a successor she was provoking the wrath of the deity and alienating her citizens. Describing shiftless princes as fearful little women was a disrespectful image.

> Ut vero numen propitium habeat, et cives amantissimos et obstrictissimos, statuasque sibi in animis hominum nunquam perituras erigat, successorem designet. Sin minus, non nutrix, non patriae parens, sed noverca, imo patriae parricida audiat, quae Angliam eius spiritu iam spirantem simul cum ea expirare mavult, quam superesse. Principes nullos nisi ignavos, suis exosos, et meticulosas mulierculas a successoribus unquam timuisse, et pericula a successore designato, illi principi, qui civium charitate circumseptus erit, minime esse formidanda.
>
> (But, that she may have God favorable to her, and her people most loving and fast tyed unto her, and that she may erect Statues for her selfe in mens mindes never to decay, let her designe a Successour. If not, she may be spoken of not as a nurse, not as a mother of her Country, but as a step-mother, nay, as a parricide of her Country, which had rather that England which now breathed with her breath, should together with her expire, then survive her. That no Prince but cowards, and such as are hated of their owne people, and timorous women, have ever stood in feare of their Successours, and the dangers of a designed Successour are not to be feared of that Prince which is fortified with the love of his people.)[40]

The Latin is vivid. It captures the language of people dangerously lost in their own rhetoric, forerunners of the popular journalism of our own times, a reminder that rebellion could lie close to the surface. The sibilants convey contempt, almost hatred.

The Queen was not pleased. She despised their arguments, and she brooded secretly. Camden enters her mind, as Lytton Strachey was to do nearly four centuries later.[41] Three times in Camden's text (§8) she uses the word *norat* (she had learned) and in the first instance through having once

[38] Camden 1615, 104–105 = Camden Norton 2001, 1566 §6, tr. Norton 2001, 1566 §6.
[39] Camden 1615, 105 = Camden 2001, 1566 §7, tr. Norton 2001, 1566 §7.
[40] Camden 1615, 105–106 = Camden 2001, 1566 §8, tr. Norton 2001, 1566 §8.
[41] Strachey 1928.

been a designated successor to Mary Queen of England. She called in representatives of both Houses and subjected them to a withering speech, where she is the "simplicis veritatis cultrix", while they are the schemers. She has found deception walking around in Parliament under the masks of Liberty and Succession. At the end she says that they might one day have a wiser prince, but not one who loved them more, though without naming anyone she made it clear that she loved some more than others.[42]

In 1559 she had replaced Catholic bishops with Protestant ones, the mass was abolished, liturgy was established in the vernacular, images removed from churches and many other changes instituted. Camden describes it as no sudden change, but slow and by degrees, and all Christendom was surprised (Norton translated *mirante* as 'admired'). It had in fact been a very rapid change. Camden writes that as a result of this change, as the political philosophers observed, England was made the freest of all the kingdoms in the world of Christendom.[43] This is immediately belied:

> Religione protestantium authoritate parlamentaria iam constabilita, Elizabethae prima et praecipua cura fuit, ut eandem sartam tectam contra omnes omnium machinationes inter medios eo nomine hostes constantissime tueretur, nec tantillum quidem unquam innovari permisit. Secunda, ut aequabilitatem in universa vita singulisque actionibus conservaret. Unde pro symbolo usurpavit semper eadem.
>
> (The Protestants Religion being now by authority of Parliament established, Queene Elizabeths first and chiefest care was for the most constant defence thereof, against all the practises of all men amidst the enemies in that behalfe, neither indeed did she ever suffer the least innovation therein. Her second care was to hold an even course in her whole life, and all her actions; whereupon she tooke for her Motto, *semper eadem*, that is, always the same.)[44]

Almost every word in Camden's Latin here has found its way into the English language. Norton does not translate *sartam tectam* which means 'repaired roof'. The repaired roof completes the protection, ironical perhaps to describe the actions of a queen of a country which was removing roofs from monasteries. She is the arch conservative *semper eadem*, and appropriately *conservaret* defines her action.

Innovari is a glance in the direction of the *congregati*, the people who have formed a flock, the innovators, or *separati,* which was to become an even more appropriate term when members found exile first in Holland, and

[42] Camden 1615, 106–108 = Camden 2001, 1566 §8–10, tr. Norton 2001, 1566 §8–10.
[43] Camden 1615, 35–40 = Camden 2001, 1559 §11–15, tr. Norton 2001, 1559 §11–15.
[44] Camden 1615, 40 = Camden 2001, 1559 §16, tr. Norton 2001, 1559 §16.

then as the Pilgrim Fathers settled in America. They almost immediately make their proper appearance in Camden's narrative. Their way of changing religion is different from Elizabeth's. They are republicans. They were violently active in Scotland, an independent kingdom whose future was increasingly enmeshed with England's.

> Iam protestantium religionem in Scotia professi, qui congregationis nomen sibi assumperant, a ministris quibusdam importunis, et imprimis a Knoxo, perfervido regiae authoritatis impugnatore, persuasi, procerum esse sua authoritate idololatriam tollere, et principes intra legum praescripta per vim reducere; obsequium regenti, reginae matri, matronae modestissimae praestare detractarant, religionem, tumultuose loca sacra incendendo et diripiendo, mutarant.
>
> (Now the professors of the Protestants Religion in Scotland, who had taken upon them the name of The Congregation (being perswaded by some importune Ministers, and especially by Knox, a most fervent impugner of the Queenes authority, that it was the duty of the Nobility and Estates by their own authority to abolish idolatry, and by force to reduce Princes within the prescript of the Lawes), had refused to yeeld obedience to the Regent the Queenes mother, a most modest Matron, changed Religion, tumultuously firing and sacking Religious places.)[45]

In terms of rhythm and sound the Latin version is a lively piece, and the *congregati* are an active people. The sentence where the Queen Mother's social position is built up comes to a shattering end with *detractarant*, itself picked up by *mutarant*; *tumultuose*, a term for violent behaviour out of control, is set between religion and the sacred places.

This paragraph ends with a quick introduction to the prior of Saint Andrews, James Stuart,[46] who will become the Earl of Moray, sometimes introduced as The Bastard. He was the illegitimate half-brother of Mary Queen of Scots. Camden does not remind us that Moray's father, James V, had wanted to divorce his wife and had not been given papal dispensation, nor that the King's choice of new wife, from among many mistresses, might have been Moray's mother. Moray could have been the Scottish equivalent of Elizabeth. Camden gives us a perfect picture of religious hypocrisy. Accused of being the leader of those wanting to dispossess Mary, Moray responds:

> Ille suspicionem amolitur sanctissime protestando se nihil aliud quam divina gloriam et patriae libertatem sibi proponere, eandem a regente et Gallis oppressam, non posse non dolenter deplorare.

[45] Camden 1615, 44 = Camden 2001, 1559 §23, tr. Norton 2001, 1559 §23.
[46] About Stuart see Loughlin 2011.

> (He laboureth to remove a suspicion, most religiously protesting that he sought nothing else but Gods glory, and the liberty of his Country, and could not but sorrowfully bewaile the oppressing thereof by the Lady Regent and the French.)[47]

Sanctissime with its connotations of saintliness works better than Norton's *religiously*. Liberty of the fatherland, then as now, is the rogue's pretext, as too often are laments of oppression, especially when the oppressor is a gracious queen. This hypocrisy leads to the performance of grief by people I would call Lords of the Congregation, Norton calls them "Masters of the Congregation". One of their complaints make them sound serious people. They complain that their coinage is being debased by the costs of the French occupation. William Cecil, later to be Lord Burghley,[48] using as his agent Henry Percy, later to be the Duke of Northumberland, who was from the very North East of England, the area closest to the Scots, asks him to find out what was the aim of these Lords of the Congregation. This is what agents, moving behind enemy lines, are asked to do, to assess the mood of the dissidents. The result is a priceless piece of satire on evangelical religion, but in fact it has extremely serious implications:

> Respondent illi, oculis in coelum sublatis, non alium sibi propositum scopum, quam ut Iesu Christi gloriam, sinceram verbi divini praedicationem promoverent, superstitiones et idolatriam extirparent, persequentium furorem cohiberent, avitamque libertatem conservarent. Quibus rationibus haec conficere valeant plane nescire, sperare autem divinum numen, quod incoepit, cum adversariorum confusione ad optatum finem perducturum. Mutuam vero inter regna amicitiam summam esse votorum, atque ad eam firmandam opes, fidem, et constantiam devovent.
>
> (They answer, with eyes lifted up to heaven, that they have no other ayme but to advaunce the glory of Jesus Christ and the sincere preaching of Gods Word, to roote out superstitions and idolatry, to restraine the fury of their persecutours, and preserve their ancient liberty. By what meanes they may be able to effect this, flatly they know not; but what God had begunne, they hope he will bring to an happy end, with the confusion of his adversaries. And that a mutuall amity betwixt the two Kingdomes is the summe of their prayers, and for confirmation thereof they vow their wealth, their fidelity, their constancy.)[49]

[47] *Ibid.*
[48] About Cecil see MacCaffery 2004.
[49] Camden 1615, 45 = Camden 2001, 1559 §24, tr. Norton 2001, 1559 §24.

Their simple aim is quite a difficult list. What is dangerous about these people is that they are religious first and foremost. Elizabeth ties politics and religion together but not in this way. These people need no human authority. They can talk to God as they walk down the street. In 1560 Elizabeth expelled Anabaptists and heretics of that kind, who on the pretence of avoiding persecution, had flocked from regions across the sea into the coastal towns of England, and who were scattering their sectarian poison in England. Whether they were English or foreigners, she ordered them to leave the kingdom within twenty days, or find themselves in gaol and their goods confiscated. Anabaptists were in fact a most persecuted sect.[50]

There is more satire in the middle of events for 1560, the wooing of Elizabeth. There was William Pickering living in fantasy land, a mere knight with a bit of money, with some knowledge of what Camden calls the fine arts, and a tiny bit of public service abroad to his credit. Still he fancied Elizabeth. There was also Henry FitzAlan, Earl of Arundel, with a house full of statues, lots of money, but whose age was beginning to diverge from Elizabeth's. Finally there was Robert Dudley, the future Earl of Leicester.[51] He was at the peak of youthful manhood and his features so arranged that they made him stand out. The Latin "conspicua lineamentorum compositione" (comely feature of body and limbes)[52] seems to drool, malevolently, on the author's part. What Camden has to say here can be verified by the portraits in Elizabeth Goldring's *Robert Dudley*: he was strikingly handsome and no one had their portrait painted as often as he had.[53]

Camden writes that to the degree that his father and grandfather had had burning hatred from among the people, to that same degree Dudley burned (*flagravit*) in the favour of the queen, who with a rare royal kindness heaped honours on a man whom she had saved, yet whose father had wished her dead. Whether this was because of young Dudley's qualities, of which he displayed some shadowy signs (*adumbrata signa*), or from the imprison-ment which by chance they had experienced together (*communi carceris sorte*) under Queen Mary, or from their horoscopes, and the secret agreement of the stars at their hour of birth, and thence the tight embrace of mind kinship (*arctissima animorum cognatione*), one could not easily say. (Certainly monarchs seem to have a forward leaning towards these people, and a deadly aversion to those people.) [...] [Elizabeth] in the first year of her reign elected him to the Order of Saint George which among the English

[50] Camden 1615, 60 = Camden 2001, 1560 §14, tr. Norton 2001, 1560 §14.
[51] About Dudley see Adams 2008.
[52] Camden 1615, 56 = Camden 2001, 1560 §10, tr. Norton 2001, 1560 §10.
[53] Goldring 2014, 8.

is by far the most honourable order, to the wonderment of everyone.[54] Camden, in reporting thus, seems to be rehearsing the salacious gossip of the court. Dudley may have become a threat to rivals at court, but he was not an evil genius who dominated the age. In Camden's account he has a tendency simply to be unpleasant and to fall short.

Marian sympathies: the dangers of being near the throne and the sad downfall of the Scottish queen

The events of 1561 commence with Elizabeth sending Thomas Randolph to Scotland with a message for the Scots. He teaches them – Elizabeth has a penchant for teaching and Camden's *Annales* have a didactic undercurrent, whether from him or actors in his narrative – that the German princes have formed an alliance against the Roman pontiff, and Elizabeth wishes for the English and Scots to be included in the same.

> Iam commodissimum tempus adesse (cum Scotorum Regina sit vidua) consopiendi omnem inter Anglos et Scotos discordiam, qui multo et mutuo sanguine tot seculis concertarunt.
>
> (Now the most suitable time was at hand (when the Queen of Scots was a widow) of putting to sleep the discord between English and Scots who had striven with one another for so many centuries with great shedding of one another's blood.)[55]

Camden's Latin expresses the sentiment so much better. *Mutuo* for those who like to read behind the text almost suggests a blood bond, as of course there can be between warring societies. This was a very early move in a complicated process, which would lead over the years to the unification of the countries. Elizabeth also quietly warns the Scots not to let Mary marry a foreigner again. Mary, tragically for herself, eventually obeys. Meanwhile Mary asks permission to sail through English waters home to Scotland; Elizabeth refuses because the treaty of Edinburgh has not been ratified by Mary. Mary is upset by this repulse and has long talks with Elizabeth's man in France, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton. Camden has found records of these letters in the papers of Throckmorton. He will summarise them, even though some have already been mentioned and will have to be reworked into the text (*retexenda*). Camden will do this so that we can see the beginnings and development of the accusations between the greatest and wisest princes of our age, and, courtesy of Throckmorton's records of Mary's long talks, Camden delivers for Mary a powerful speech. Throckmorton does not have it

[54] Camden 1615, 56 = Camden 2001, 1560 §10.
[55] Camden 1615, 63 = Camden 2001, 1561 §1, tr. Eatough.

in his brief to reply to the points she has made, but he lays aside his persona as legate, and speaks to Mary as a private individual. He tells her it all goes back to the time when Elizabeth had just been crowned queen, and Mary had seized on (*invasisti*) the insignia and title of England, a symbolic invasion. Injuries of that kind even private people never digest, let alone princes.[56]

There was a body of Scots, especially Protestants, who supported the English. They feared this Mary would be like Mary, Queen of England. Camden reports William Maitland of Lethington, (called Lidington by Camden), who was destined to become Mary's principal secretary, expressing their views thus:

> Illa reversa tragedias excitaret, omne commercium literarum et nuntiorum cum Anglis intercluderet, factionem Anglis addictam labefactaret, et demum in Protestantes Scotiae non tanquam in proditores, sed tanquam in haereticos, perinde ac Mariae Anglica non ita pridem saeviret.
>
> (She returning, should raise Tragedies, stop all intercourse of Letters and messages with the English, weaken the faction that was addicted to the English, and finally exercise cruelty against the Protestants of Scotland, not as Traitors, but heretickes, as Queene Mary of England had done not long before.)[57]

In fact she proved a good, gentle, impartial queen before she was undermined by the various factions, above all by the *nothus*, James Stuart, destined to be the Earl of Moray. In Camden it is she who has the tragic role. Lidington, who has his reservations, becomes her messenger. She was to be betrayed by messages true or false as comes clear at her trial, and near the end Sir Patrick Grey, known as Master of Grey, (from 1609 6th Baron Grey) sent by her son James to plead for her life whispered for her death, whereas Lidington had eventually become a loyal subject who thought she had been badly treated.[58] Camden reveals all this.

Catherine Grey

A distinctive event in 1562 is the treatment of Catherine Grey, daughter of the Duke of Suffolk and the granddaughter of the second sister of Henry VIII. She was divorced from her husband, a son of the Earl of Pembroke, was then long neglected and eventually found to be pregnant, indeed close to term, and thrown into the Tower of London. She claimed to be

[56] Camden 1615, 64–67 = Camden 2001, 1561 §2–6.
[57] Camden 1615, 67 = Camden 2001, 1561 §7, tr. Norton 2001, 1561 §7.
[58] Camden 1615, 239 = Camden 2001, 1573 §11, tr. Norton 2001, 1573 §11.

legitimately married to the Count of Hertford. He, summoned from France where he had been cultivating his mind with permission of Elizabeth, openly stated this was true. She was thrown (*coniicitur*) into the Tower, unborn child and all; he was placed (*conditur*) there. No witnesses to the marriage could be found, so no less than the Archbishop of Canterbury pronounced a definitive sentence, that this was an illicit and illegal carnal relationship or *copula*, and that that man and that woman must be punished. You might think that the Hertfords were simply three or four hundred years ahead of their time, but they were acting outside their class norms.

At this point a man called John Hales said that the archbishop's sentence was unjust, arguing that they were a legitimate married couple based solely on their own consent. If accepted this would have destroyed a major foundation of Elizabethan upper class society.[59] It would also have weakened the church. Camden calls Hales "homo opinosissimus, sed eruditione multiplici" (a man most opiniative, but of much variety in learning).[60] One senses a sneaking admiration from Camden. He had strong reservations about churchmen. Hales was stressing the actualities, as Hertford was to do in his account of his relations with his wife in prison. But Hales too was put in prison. Even in the Tower the love of the Count for Catherine Grey was such that he gained access to her by bribing the guards and she became pregnant again. Hertford was called before the Star Chamber on three charges. That he had corrupted in the palace a virgin born of royal stock, that he had broken out of prison, and that he had compressed her (that is squeezed her in a sexual embrace again). His reply was that the doors were open, he walked through, consoled her over the sentence she had earned, and paid his conjugal dues. He was fined 5,000 pounds and detained for nine years. Catherine became seriously ill, and begged the Queen's pardon commending her children and her husband, still to be freed, to Elizabeth, before she "pie et placide in Christo obdormivit" (slept piously and peacably in Christ).[61] She becomes a kind of Christian icon in death.

Her mother Frances, Dutchess of Suffolk did not die in peace. In 1563 "miseram vitam exuit" (she divested herself of her miserable life).[62] One daughter had been Lady Jane Grey, proclaimed queen of England and soon beheaded, as was Frances' husband and a third daughter she saw married to Keys, whom Norton describes as "Groom-porter at the Court", but who

[59] Pye 2014, 255, says that marriage started with the mutual consent of the man and woman in the North Atlantic countries. Clearly this could not apply to parties close to the royal house or those with powerful status to maintain.

[60] Camden 1615, 73 = Camden 2001, 1562 §1, tr. Norton 2001, 1562 §1.

[61] Camden 1615, 74 = Camden 2001, 1562 §1, tr. Norton 2001, 1562 §1.

[62] Camden 1615, 87 = Camden 2001, 1563 §14, tr. Eatough.

looks rather like the man who acts as umpire among the gamblers at court ("aulico aleatorum arbitro"). Frances herself, to her shame but also to her security, married a noble from the lesser gentry.[63] They were a tragic family, who might have expected better.

Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk

Camden witnessed both the trial and execution of the Duke of Norfolk. There are a lot of public executions in the *Annales*. The stories of how various people ended their lives on the scaffold is one of the fascinations or horrors of his history. He was particularly interested in how a state of mind could betray a person, the classic case being the Welshman William Parry.[64] The case of Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, is not unakin to this genre of stories. It also illustrates another theme in Camden, that is how chance events can develop a momentum of their own.

At the execution Camden was amazed at the love which the common people had for Norfolk, who had been the premier duke in the land: "Incredibile est quanta charitate multitudo illum complexa sit, quam benignitate et comitate singulari, nec tanto Principe indigna, conciliaverat."[65] *Princeps* is an ambiguous word, 'leader', 'prince', 'king' even. He was a great English gentleman and the common people loved him.

The more perceptive had differing opinions, some saw the dangers he and his party posed if he survived. This was also the view of the Lower House, of counsellors at Court, who were of course his rivals, and of the preachers who stood outside the parliamentary tradition and were opposed to the nobility as a body. Others were moved by pity for the man, a supreme example of nobility and goodness, conspicuously handsome and with a manly face, who would have been a bedrock for his country and adorned it, if the cunning scheming of rivals and slippery hopes, presented to him with the appearance of being for the public good, had not deflected him from the course he had started out on in life. They noted that his father, twenty five years before, had been beheaded on an insubstantial charge. Camden is offering us a guide to modern tragedy, the inevitabilities thereof.

Elizabeth in an extraordinary move had offered Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester as he was to become, as husband to Mary Queen of Scots. Mary's family were appalled at the prospect. Leicester was socially well below their class,[66] though in the minds of the salacious perhaps not beneath the

[63] Camden 1615, 87 = Camden 2001, 1563 §14, tr. Norton 2001, 1563 §14.
[64] Camden 1615, 366–370 = Camden 2001, 1585 §2–5, tr. Norton 2001, 1585 §2–5.
[65] Camden 1615, 218 = Camden 2001, 1572 §18.
[66] Camden 1615, 84 = Camden 2001, 1563 §9.

Queen's. Lidington was involved in the negotiations to bring Dudley to Scotland, when he met with Norfolk and it occurred to him that Norfolk was a better prospect. He offered him the chance and Norfolk modestly declined.[67] When Norfolk, Arundel, Sussex, Leicester and Norfolk were negotiating with Mary, they accepted a proposal from Mary, which infuriated Elizabeth, who said "that the Queene of Scots would never want an advocate as long as Norfolke lived."[68] Later, in conjunction with the Earl of Moray, Lidington once more offered Mary to Norfolk and again Norfolk modestly declined.[69] The spies were out. A servant of Norfolk's had been seen constantly visiting Bolton Abbey, where Mary was confined, on the pretence of visiting the lady of the house. Nicholas Throckmorton advised Norfolk to step back and allow Leicester precedence, or alternatively to work with Leicester. He followed the second piece of advice and Leicester gained control of this shy man and destroyed him. Soon it became common rumour that Norfolk would marry Mary.[70] There is an extraordinary scene where Leicester takes to his bed and Elizabeth visits him at Tichfield:

> Reginae invisenti, consolatione permulcenti, et deprehendenti spiritum et sanguinem ex timore intra retrahi, cum suspiriis et lachrimis culpam deprecatus, rem totam ab origine explicavit.

This is extremely difficult to translate. *permulcere* can cover a spectrum from 'stroke', to 'sooth', to 'beguile'. That she strokes him is irresistible:

> As the queen was visiting him, and stroking him as she consoled him, and discovering that his breath and pulse from fear were very faint, with sighs and tears he begged her to forgive him and explained the whole story from its beginnings.[71]

When Elizabeth confronted Norfolk, he said he was happy to abandon Mary. His income was not much less than the kingdom of the Scots, in other words he had the financial clout of a king, and, when he was on his tennis court in Norwich, he felt himself in a way to be the equal of many kings. It was a tactless response – words kill. Day by day he sensed the queen's looks and voice grow more hostile, that Leicester was alienated (*abalienatum*) from him, and that many of the nobles scarcely greeted him, or broke off conversation. When the Scottish ambassador came to negotiate with the Queen, she told him to tell that woman, i.e. Mary, to keep quiet, or else she

[67] Camden 1615, 97 = Camden 2001, 1965 §3.
[68] Camden 1615, 145 = Camden 2001, 1568 §18, tr. Norton 2001, 1568 §18.
[69] Camden 1615, 146–147 = Camden 2001, 1568 §20 & §21.
[70] Camden 1615, 160 = Camden 2001, 1569 §18.
[71] *Ibid.* tr. Eatough.

would see those on whom she relied trunks without heads.[72] There was a brutal side to Elizabeth.

Norfolk, without realising it, had been caught up in a large conspiracy of whose ramifications he was undoubtedly unaware, though he was undone by his own vanity. He could never escape because of the cowardice of the peers, and the coincidence of the Northern Rebellion sealed his fate. He was tried in 1572, without access to papers or legal aid, in a trial where the most junior of those who sat in judgment was asked his opinion first, in full knowledge beforehand of what his seniors wanted, which was death. As a result the verdict was unanimous.[73]

The execution of Mary

Mary Queen of Scot's execution at Fotheringay many years later was great theatre. She was extremely brave and we must all admire great bravery. The Duke of Kent, *fervide flagrans*, translated by Norton as "in hot burning zeale to religion", came out with a silly sententia "Tua vita exitium erit nostrae religioni, ut contra tuum exitium eiusdem erit vita" (Your life will be the death of our religion, as contrariwise your death will be the life thereof).[74] She seizes on this remark, and conducts her final hours as a religious drama. She has a last supper with her people; she comforts them, telling them she is now to emigrate from the abyss of evil; she drinks to the health of her servants; they respond by kneeling, mixing tears with their wine, and seeking pardon for their neglect of duty, as she does from them. She dresses for her execution as for a feast day. The Dean of Peterborough tries to impose on her an official Anglican procedure, and the crowd milling around pray with him, while Mary on stage conducts in competition a Catholic service in Latin.[75] One can admire her, while noting that it would have been impossible for this lady to have been a queen of a protestant England. Someone fixed an epitaph near her grave which was soon removed. Camden lets us read it after its removal. It fills a whole page of text with its bold capitals, as if it declared something of importance. It is a rant on Mary's royal status, the obsession which had doomed her.[76] She was in his account, though bound by her class, better than that.

[72] Camden 1615, 160–161 = Camden 2001, 1569 §19.
[73] Camden 1615, 210–216 = Camden 2001, 1572 §3–15.
[74] Camden 1615, 446 = Camden 2001, 1587 §10, tr. Norton 2001, 1587 §10.
[75] Camden 1615, 456–458 = Camden 2001, 1587 §11–14, tr. Norton 2001, 1587 §11–14.
[76] Camden 1615, 458 = Camden 2001, 1587 §15.

The power of hypocrisy and the implosion of the Scottish nation

When Mary was sentenced to death, Elizabeth responded to this sentence "magna et vultus et vocis maiestate" (with great Majestie of Countenance and voice).[77] It is a stately speech, in pitch not unlike the speech where she described herself as mother of her people. She omits her refusal to engage directly with Mary. Instead she says:

> Tantumque abfuit ut erga illa fuerim malevola, ut cum molitiones in me nonnullae dilucescerent, ad eam clam scripserim, si eas privatis ad me literis fateretur, silentio involverentur. Nec eo sane animo scripsi ut irretirem, cum mihi innotescerent quaecunque fateri poterat.
>
> (And so farre have I beene from bearing her any ill will, that upon the discovery of certaine treasonable practises against me, I wrote unto her secretly that if she would confesse them by a private letter unto my selfe, they should be wrapped up in silence. Neither did I write thus in minde to intrap her, for I knew then as much as she could confesse.)[78]

She did not need to entrap Mary, she already had the information to do so. In the world of spies knowledge could be put in storage for another time. With her high sentiments she refers the death sentence, which was eventually passed on Mary, back to the two houses of Parliament to consider again, and they come to the same conclusion with reasons given. The Queen made another speech of this kind ("Regina huiusmodi habuit orationem").[79] "Of this kind" does not tell us the degree to which Camden has edited her words or had input. The high philosophical tone of this speech is set by the first sentences:

> Perquam grave est illud iter e quo, et dum pergitur, et cum conficiatur, nihil nisi molestia percipiatur. Conflictata sum hodie, si unquam alias, loquerer, an silerem. Si loquar, et non conquerar, certe simulabo. Si sileam, vestra opera luditur; sin autem conquerar, novum plane videatur.
>
> (Full grievous is that way, whose going on and end yeelds nothing but cumber for the hire of a laborious journey. I have this day beene in greater conflict with my selfe then ever in all my life, whether I should speake, or hold my peace, If I speake and not complaine, I shall dissemble. And if I should be silent, your labour taken were all in vaine. If I should complaine, it might seeme strange and rare.)[80]

[77] Camden 1615, 433 = Camden 2001, 1586 §76, tr. Norton 2001, 1586 §76.
[78] *Ibid*.
[79] Camden 1615, 436 = Camden 2001, 1586 §80, tr. Eatough.
[80] Camden 1615, 436 = Camden 2001, 1586 §81, tr. Norton 2001, 1586 §81.

The simple Latin which is characteristic of the speech is here captured by Norton's translation. Mary wrote a letter, which deserved reply but Camden will not have it said whether it came into the hands of Elizabeth. The controversial nature of the situation is then laid out by a rehearsal of the kind of statements made on various sides of the debate on whether Mary should die. These are speeches, which are not really speeches, of things that were said by whoever had an opinion. Then there were the actual communications of James, Mary's son, and a strangely pedantic list setting out the French position, which brings the reader to the end of 1587.

At the beginning of 1588 Camden tells of a plot to assassinate Elizabeth which emanated from the French ambassador, but never gained traction because of the lack of agreement and commitment by the conspirators. Those who wished Mary Queen of Scots dead then created an atmosphere of panic by spreading rumours of the arrival of a Spanish fleet in Milford Haven, and, more improbably, that the Duke of Guise had landed in Sussex with a strong army.[81] And so Elizabeth panicked and signed Mary's death warrant.

> Huiusmodi terriculamentis et formidulosis argumentis fluctuantem et anxium reginae animum eo pertraxerunt, ut literas consignaret, quibus funesta sententia executioni mandaretur.
>
> (With such scarr-crows and frightful arguments as these they drew the Queenes wavering and perplexed mind to that passe that she signed a warrant for the execution of the sentence of death.)[82]

She was assisted into that position by Patrick Grey, King James' emissary, who while officially pleading for Mary to be spared, drummed (*inculcavit*) into Elizabeth's ears "mortua non mordet" (a dead woman does not bite).[83]

"Then that woman by nature a delayer (*natura cunctatrix*) began to balance in her mind whether it was more advisable to take her out or to spare her."[84] Perhaps Elizabeth aired her concerns to close advisers who could tell Camden about these things later. Whatever his source Camden gives the impression that he has access to Elizabeth's mind. Her desire to strike a balance is blocked by the *aulici* (the courtiers) who have a penchant for trite *sententiae* of the kind which we now associate with cheap journalism. To make the point Camden in conclusion writes that not only did courtiers come out with these sentiments in the presence of the queen, but also preachers with a keener edge, and some plebeians "either in hope or

[81] Camden 1615, 451 = Camden 2001, 1587 §4, tr. Norton 2001, 1587 §4.
[82] Camden 1615, 451 = Camden 2001, 1587 §5, tr. Norton 2001, 1587 §5.
[83] *Ibid*., tr. Eatough.
[84] Camden 1615, 451 = Camden 2001, 1587 §6, tr. Eatough.

feare, more sawcily exercised their wits at their pleasure in this argument", or rather as Camden's Latin points "they shamelessly exercised the libido of their minds" ("ingeniorum libidinem in hoc argumento procacius exercuerunt.")[85]

We are then asked to believe that Elizabeth fell into a serious depression. We have an even more intimate picture of her, which could of course have derived from a lady-in-waiting or someone with private access to her, but reads like the script from a novel:

> Inter has anxias cogitationes, quae reginam adeo solicitam et ancipitem habuerunt, ut solitudine gauderet, sine vultu, sine voce subinde sederet, et saepius suspirans, AUT FER, AUT FERI, et e nescio quo emblemate NE FERIARE, FERI sibi immurmuraret.
>
> (With these anxious thoughts which kept the queen so worried and not knowing which way to turn, solitude was her only pleasure, she kept sitting there expressionless, voiceless, repeatedly moaning, either strike or be struck, or from some motto, 'don't be struck, strike,' she would mutter to herself.)[86]

It is in this depressed state that she hands William Davison the death warrant, signed in case some crisis should arise. The warrant then is passed on by Davison to senior figures, who have been eager to implement it. The Queen in a change of mind responds belatedly to its departure to the keepers of Mary. After the death of Mary, Elizabeth has to write to James. Without naming names she prepares the ground to shift the blame from herself, leaving it for others to explain more fully.[87] Davison is summoned into the Star Chamber to stand judgment. The consequences were a long term in prison. But he was not guilty. We have the most remarkable passage in the whole of the *Annales*. Privately he tells Walsingham what really happened. Camden published this private confession.

> "Regina", inquit, "post Gallicorum et Scotorum legatorum discessum sponte iussit ut mandatum de sententia in Scotam exequenda exhiberem, exhibitum sua manu lubens signavit, signatum magno Angliae sigillo muniri imperavit, et iocans dixit, 'Haec Walsinghamo aegrotanti significes, etsi male metuo ne inde prae maerore expiret.' Causas etiam tam diu differendi addidit, nimirum, ne videretur violenter vel malitiose eo pertractam fuisse, cum interea minime ignoraret, quam hoc sit necessarium. Porro Powlettum et Drurium

[85] Camden 1615, 451–453 = Camden 2001, 1587 §6–8, tr. Norton 2001, 1587 §6–8. The quotation is the last phrase of §8, the first translation Norton, the second Eatough.
[86] Camden 1615, 453–454 = Camden 2001, 1587, §9, tr. Eatough.
[87] Camden 1615, 460 = Camden 2001, 1587 §17.

culpavit, quod eam hac cura non liberassent, et optavit ut Walsinghamus eorum animos hoc de re tentaret. Postridie, postquam magno sigillo munitum esset, per Killegraeum iussit ne fieret, cumque iam factum docuissem, festinationem tantam reprehendit, innuendo aliam rationem, ex prudentum quorundam iudicio posse iniri. Ego respondi, eam rationem semper esse optimam et tutissimam, quae iustissima. Sed veritus ne in me crimen derivaret (ut Norfolcii supplicium in Burghleium contulerat) rem totam Hattono communicavi, protestatus me nolle memet altius tanto negotio immergere. Ille mox Burghleio impertiit, Burghleius reliquis consiliariis, qui omnes de supplicio maturando consenserunt, et singuli voverunt ex aequo culpam praestare, Bealumque cum mandato et literis miserunt. Tertio post die, cum ex somnio quod de morte Scotae narravit, eam animo fluctuare sentirem, rogavi an sententiam mutarat. Negavit, at inquit alia ratio excogitari poterat, simulque an a Powletto aliquid responsi acceptum quaesivit. Cuius literas cum monstrassem, in quibus plane recusavit id suscipere, quod cum honore et iustitia non coniunctum, illa commotior eum et alios qui associatione se obstrinxerant periurii et voti violati accusavit, qui magna pro principis salute promiserant, at nihil praestabunt; esse tamen innuit qui hoc sui causa praestabunt. Ego autem quam infame et iniustum hoc foret demonstravi, simulque in quantum discrimen Powlettum et Drurium coniiceret. Si enim illa factum approbaret, et periculum et dedecus non sine iniustitiae nota sibi traheret; sin improbaret, homines optime meritos et eorum posteros prorsus pessumdaret. Posteaque me, eodem quo Scota sublata est die, quod supplicium nondum sumptum, leviter perstrinxit."

("The Queene", saith he, "after the departure of the French and Scottish Embassadours, of her owne motion commanded me to deliver her the warrant for executing the sentence against the Queene of Scotts; being delivered she signed it willingly with her owne hand, an in jeasting manner sayd, '*All this you may signifie to Walsingham who is sicke, though I feare mee hee will die for sorrow thereof.*' She added also the causes of her differring it so long, namely least shee might seeme to have beene violently or maliciously drawne thereunto, whereas in the meane time she was not ignorant how necessary it was. Moreover she blamed Powllet and Drury that they had not eased her of this care, and wished that Walsingham would feele their mindes touching this matter. The next day after that it was under the great seale, shee commanded me by Killigrew that it should not be done; and when I had informed her that it was sent already, she found fault with such hast. But fearing least shee would lay the fault upon me (as she had layed the putting of the Duke of Norfolke to death upon the Lord Burghley), I acquainted Hatton with the whole matter, protesting that I would not plunge my selfe any deeper in so great a businesse.

> He presently imparted it to the Lord Burghley, and the Lord Burghley to the rest of the Counsell, who all consented to have the execution hastened, and every of them vowed to share equall blame, and sent Beale with the warrant and letters. The third day after, when by a dreame which she told of the Queene of Scotts death, I perceived that she wavered in minde, I asked her whether shee had changed her purpose. She answered no, 'but another course', said she, 'might have been devised', and withall shee asked me whether I had received any answere from Powllet. Whose letters when I had shewed her, werein he flatly refused to undertake that which stood not with honor and justice, shee waxing angry accused him and others which had bound them selves by the association of perjury, and breach of their vow, who had promised great matters for their Princes safety, but would performe nothing; 'Yet there are', saith she, 'which will doe it for my sake.' But I shewed her how dishonorable and unjust this would be, and withall into how great danger she should cast Powllet and Drury. For if shee approved the fact, shee should draw upon herselfe both danger and dishonour, not without note of injustice; and if shee disallowed it, she should utterly undoe men of passing good desert, and their whole posteritie. And afterwards she lightly blamed me the same day that the Queene of Scotts was executred, because shee was not yet put to death")[88]

This puts the fine speeches Elizabeth made after sentence was passed on Mary into context. What trust could one put in this monarch again. Camden, the teacher of Ben Jonson,[89] uses a stage image to explain the contemptuous treatment Davison received.

> Ita Davisonus, vir ingenue bonus, in auleis artibus minus versatus, in scenam aulicam ex composito, ut plerique existimaverunt, inductus, ut huic personae in ista tragaedia tantisper serviret, detracta mox persona, quasi extremo actu defecisset, e scaena extrusus, et non sine multorum commiseratione in carcere diu conclusus.
>
> (Thus was Davison, a man ingenuously good and simply practised in Court artes, brought upon the Court stage, of purpose (as most men thought) to act for a time this person in this tragedy; and soone after, this person being taken away, as if hee had failed in the last acte, hee

[88] Camden 1615, 465–466 = Camden 2001, 1587 §28, tr. Norton 2001, 1587 §28.

[89] Kay 1995, Jonson was a pupil at Westminster school and Camden was the most influential person in his life 8–11. Westminster school developed a strong theatrical tradition, 5–7. "Every Man in His Humour" was dedicated to Camden, 21. A folio of *The Works of Ben Jonson* was printed in 1616 by William Stansby who also printed a folio of Camden's *Annales*.

> was thrust downe from the stage and, not without pitty of many, shutt up a long time in prison.)[90]

This is a clever piece of writing, quite well translated by Norton. Courtiers were actors constantly presenting themselves, brought out by *auleis… aulicam*; *ex composito* can be translated "deliberately" but also "as a result of a plot". He who has been a state servant serves a role, *detracta* (is dragged down) could refer to the character in the play being dragged down to disaster by those who have plotted against him, and it is tempting also to think of a mask being dragged off, becoming something other in reality. "As most men thought" is echoed by "with the pity of many". The majority verdict is that this man is innocent. Unlike many who came to disaster at court, this man was deserving of pity. Camden is rehearsing his Aristotle.

Almost the most interesting point of this case is the sheer hypocrisy of those who played the roles of judges, whether they performed as they really were, or whether they too put on the mask. Certainly the sentence Davison received seems real, though there is uncertainty about the actual outcome. The best intervention is by Baron Grey who plays himself, the outspoken, loquacious Scot who has his own mind. Mildmay is wonderfully condescending; he criticises Davison for his lack of experience in the affairs of royalty. Davison had in fact performed important missions in the Netherlands and Scotland.[91]

The Earl of Moray and James Hamilton

Some of the great disturbers of the Scottish peace had already departed the stage, their deaths lessons on chance, the uncontrollability of events, and of how great men can fall in ways which are unexpected, except by some. Mary's half brother, the Earl of Moray, had been causing havoc in the Scottish borderlands, especially to ingratiate himself with Elizabeth in the hope that his sister might be handed over to him. He seemed irresistible.

> Eodem autem mense, cum iam magnis laboribus perfunctus, sercuro animo videretur, Limnuchi (*Lithquo* vulgus vocat) ex insidiis globulo plumbeo infra umbilicum dum per plateam equitaret, transfossus occubuit.
>
> (But the same moneth, when after great labour sustained, he seemed secure in minde, hee was slaine at Limnuch (commonly called

[90] Camden 1615, 465 = Camden 2001, 1587 §27, tr. Norton 2001, 1587 §27.
[91] Camden 1615, 256 = Camden 2001, 1574 §7; Camden 1615, 282 = Camden 2001, 1579 §1; Camden 1615, 339 = Camden 2001, 1583 §1 & 4.

> Lithquo) being shot with a leaden bullet beneath the navell as he rode in the streete by one that lay in waite for him.)[92]

Camden writes that his killer was one James Hamilton (of Bothwellhaugh and Woodhouselee) who fled to France. Some French wanted to hire his services, as what we might call a professional killer, to dispose of people such as Coligny. But Moray was the only man that Hamilton had wanted to kill, because of the abuse he had suffered from Moray. In particular Moray had robbed him of a farm which had come to him by way of his wife."Unde uxor mente capta, et ille in furorem versus, carcere effracto, caedem admisit". (Whereby his Wife became distracted in minde, and he himselfe in a rage brake prison, and committed the murther.)[93] Norton's translation is nice, but Camden captures the pent up fury of the man, while not answering the question of how he broke out of prison. To the end of his days he repeated "that he had beene a just revenger of his own griefe, whereof he repented him, but to be a revenger of another mans he would never be drawne, neither by intreaty nor reward."[94] In Norton's translation here one can almost detect a Scottish accent.

This is the story that Camden wished to use. There is another version of the event, that Hamilton was part of a gang and there was a horse waiting for him to make his escape. This is Wild West stuff, deserving to be captured on film, as was much that happened in Ireland. Camden himself tells us that shortly afterwards an Anglo-Scottish army on its way to Glasgow turned aside to destroy the castle of the Hamiltons: "maioribus machinis diverberatum, brevi deditum, et semirutum" (which being battered with the great Ordinance, was soone rendred and halfe razed). The Latin captures the violence of destruction. Camden goes on to tell us that a magnificent town was torched, and in the quest for plunder Clydesdale was ravaged, as on the return journey was Hamilton's palace.[95]

James Douglas, Earl of Morton

The Earl of Morton, James Douglas, the successor of Moray as Regent to the young James VI, was the last of James' sole regents. In 1578:

> Interea Mortonius ingenio (quod sane erat acerrimum), longo rerum usu, et numerosa clientela fretus, dum nihil recte factum nisi quod ipse faceret putaret, et eundum non esse qui fuerat ferre non posset, rerum

[92] Camden 1615, 171–172 = Camden 2001, 1570 §2, tr. Norton 2001, 1570 §2.
[93] *Ibid*.
[94] *Ibid.*
[95] Camden 1615, 174 = Camden Norton 2001, 1570 §7, tr. Norton 2001, 1570 §7.

> administrationem, collegis neglectis et praescripta administrandi ratione posthabita, ad se retraxit, regem in potestate sua in Sterlinii castro detinuit, et quos voluit pro arbitrio vel exclusit vel admisit.
>
> (In the meane while Morton, presuming upon his own wit (which certainely was very sharpe), and upon his long experience and number of adherents, while hee thought nothing to be well done which hee did not himselfe, and could not endure not to be the same as he was, resumed unto himselfe the government, neglecting his Colleages, and sleighting the prescribed manner of government; the King he deteined in his own power within the Castle of Sterlyn, and at his own pleasure, either excluded or admitted whom he listed.)[96]

This is a very human weakness with which we are all familiar. Morton a good man, and a useful Anglophile, was thrown into prison as a result of his wanting to be what he had always been, and in 1581 just at the very moment when English protection had to withdraw, he was convicted of being implicated in the murder of the king's father long ago, and beheaded.[97]

In 1573 when Morton had become Regent, he had placed William Kirkaldy of Grange in charge of Edinburgh Castle. The French, as always supporters of Mary, were opposed to Morton, and Kirkaldy and Lidington did indeed think that Mary had been harshly treated. Elizabeth, who was tightening her grip on Scotland, proposed a general Scottish amnesty for murders committed in the past. This provoked Kirkaldy to rebel and to start bombarding the city of Edinburgh from its castle, or as Camden vividly describes it "urbem Edenburgensem iustitiae sedem eiaculationibus et irruptionibus indies infestarent" (infest the Citty of Edinburgh the Seat of Justice every day with their Ordnance and irruptions),[98] and to summon help from France. The situation was decided by a four-day bombardment by the English, and, then, outside the usual practice, by permission for the ordinary soldiers to leave without retribution, a clemency which was not allowed their noble leaders. The besieged, without their troops, could not hold out. The two Kirkaldy brothers were hanged along with two counterfeiters,

> though for saving of Kircalds life, an hundred of the familly of Kircald offered themselves to bee ever retainers to the Regent, to pay a yearely pension of 3000 markes, and twenty thousand pound of Scottish money in hand, and security to be given that he should from thenceforth continue faithfully in the Kings obedience.[99]

[96] Camden 1615, 278–279 = Camden 2001, 1578 §12, tr. Norton 2001, 1578 §12.
[97] Camden 1615, 316–317 = Camden 2001, 1583 §3.
[98] Camden 1615, 239 = Camden 2001, 1573 §11, tr. Norton 2001, 1573 §11.
[99] Camden 1615, 241 = Camden 2001, 1573 §13, tr. Norton 2001, 1573 §13.

As an offer it was impossible to refuse, and yet it was refused. Lidington died of sickness, so unexpectedly that "yet not without suspicion of poison; a man amongst all the Scottes of greatest experience, and of an excellent wit, had it not been less wavering" ("ingenio splendidissimo, si minus versatili").[100] He was so versatile that the Scottish humanist and tutor of James VI, George Buchanan (1506–1582), wrote a piece on him called *The Chameleon*.[101] Scotland had a respite from civil strife at this point. The leaders and soldiers of the various parties left for Sweden, France and the Netherlands to win praise for their courage and ability in war, no doubt on occasion fighting one another on opposing sides.

The great intercourse: Dutch, Russians, pirates, and the dilution of royal power in a wider world

An important section in the *Annales* for 1561 is the rearming of Britain. Although she found the treasury exhausted, Elizabeth spent a great sum of money on arms and weapons from throughout Germany, after Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, the Duke of Alba (1507–1582), had seized the materials she had contracted for in Antwerp. She made the fleet the best equipped which Britain had ever seen. Camden tells us that she built a fortress on the river Medway near Upnor, where Sir Francis Drake's father was vicar, and she raised the pay of the sailors and marines.[102] She deserved, writes Camden, the recognition she was given by foreigners as "navalis gloriae restauratrix" (the restorer of the glory of shipping) and "Arctoi Regina Maris" (the Queene of the North Sea).[103] This last title has massive implications. The northern seas gave England confidence to develop as an imperial nation. People living near the sea followed Elizabeth's example and competed in building ships, so that there was capacity to carry 20,000 *belligerantes* into battle. One can see why piracy, which so often can be another name for private naval enterprise, became particularly associated with the English. On land noblemen and common people were quick to acquire weaponry, so that there were arsenals in the houses of nobles and they had a very complete range of weaponry. So much hardware leads to exports in arms to undesirables, so Elizabeth brought in severe measures to prevent the selling of weaponry both to the Russian Emperor for use against the Poles and to the enemies of Christianity.[104]

[100] *Ibid*.
[101] *Ibid*.
[102] About Sir Francis Drake and his expedition in the pacific see p.114 and p.118.
[103] Camden 1615, 70–71 = Camden 2001, 1561 §12, tr. Norton 2001, 1561 §12.
[104] *Ibid.*

In 1563 the English found themselves fighting in France in occupation of Franciscopolis, or New Haven, by agreement with the Protestants of France. But their allies proved to be Frenchmen first and foremost, and the English forces found themselves isolated in a difficult situation, rendered impossible by onset of plague. Camden gives us an unusually long list of men from the higher classes, who died of the plague at New Haven, and other men with technical skills.[105] One man deserved special mention:

> Ultimus mansit Edwardus Randolphus tribunus militum, qui pietate nunquam satis laudata misellos milites aegros et peste laborantes suis humeris in naves convehere non destitit.
>
> (The last that stayed was Colonell Edward Randolph, who in piety never sufficiently commended spared not to carry the poore Souldiers sicke and labouring of the plague upon his shoulders into the ships.)[106]

It is useful to know that *tribunus militum* can be translated as 'colonel'. Randolph was to die in Ulster fighting against Shane O'Neill in a devastating war caused by O'Neill's wild ambitions. There Camden says there was no one who combined greater authority with greater charity among the soldiers.[107] His act at New Haven was later to a lesser degree matched by the Admiral of the Fleet, Lord Howard, helping to launch the English navy as the Armada approached, by joining the crowds of soldiers and sailors in the physical work of hauling the ships into the sea.[108] It would be interesting to know what exactly Norton understood by *pietate* (piety) in the case of Randolph.

The plague was taken back by the English soldiers to England with the result that in the City of London alone 21,130 corpses were carried out for burial.[109] On every count the retreat of the English was a bonus for the French, not least the fact that the international protestant movement had been split. Camden shows his contempt for what he wishes to portray as the excessive rejoicing ("Rex Galliae immortales Deo gratias publice egit") over the recovery of what modern English might translate as a piddling little town ("oppidulum receptum").[110] It did however carry the corollary that, if England could not hang on to New Haven, what power did they have to demand Calais back. It is embarrassing to read English attempts to recover Calais in 1567. The door is in effect slammed in their faces when the

[105] Camden 1615, 81–84 = Camden 2001, 1563 §4–8.
[106] Camden 1615, 83 = Camden 2001, 1563 §7, tr. Norton 2001, 1563 §7.
[107] Camden 1615, 130 = Camden 2001, 1567 §34.
[108] Camden 1615, 487 = Camden 2001, 1588 §17.
[109] Camden 1615, 84 = Camden 2001, 1563 §8.
[110] *Ibid*.

Virgilian line (*Eclogue* 1. 67) which had graced the opening description of Britain in Camden's *Britannia* to suggest that Britain was another world, "Et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos" (or Britain, from the whole world sundered far)[111] is thrown back at them. That, suggests the French wit, is where they belong.[112]

But History is not like that. In 1563 the enmities roused by the battle for New Haven had spilled over on to the sea and Camden says, such a force of English pirates invaded the seas that they shut out the French and even the Spaniards. The Queen found it necessary to apologise to the Spanish for their "praedatoriam insolentiam", and to restrain the pirates by proclamation; Norton here translates "necessarium fuerit" as 'was faine', which in modern English might be translated as 'was pleased to', meaning it was the diplomatic thing to do.[113] One enemy, the French, was enough. But edicts did not restrain pirates. Later within the context of this year we are told that Philip of Spain was becoming more angry with the English, because English pirates were attacking the French off the Spanish coast and were planning to sail into the West Indies.[114] This was a seminal moment.

The Netherlands

In 1564 a sanctions dispute between England and the Netherlands came to a head, two peoples described as "mutuo commercio beatos", which Norton translates as 'happy by mutual commerce';[115] *beatos*, however, can also be translated as 'blessed' or 'rich', and all meanings can apply here. Under the reign of Mary and Philip the Netherlanders had been irritated by excessive imposts from the English, which remained in force, and by a great number of mechanical devices being banned by the English parliament. The English complained that their goods in the Netherlands were being confiscated on the tiniest pretexts through new edicts, by which some goods were also forbidden export. Further, passage of vital goods from Italy and Germany, including horses and gunpowder, was being prohibited, and heavy duties, previously unheard of, were being most rigorously exacted on foodstuffs, anchors, houses etc. The language, although Latin, is frighteningly familiar. Camden writes "haec omnia contra foedus commercii (intercursum magnum vocant) olim initum" (all this contrary to the League of commerce

[111] Tr. Greenough 1895.
[112] Camden 1615, 123 = Camden 2001, 1567 §22, tr. Norton 2001, 1567 §22.
[113] Camden 1615, 81 = Camden 2001, 1563 §4.
[114] Camden 1615, 86 = Camden 2001, 1563 §11.
[115] Camden 1615, 89 = Camden 2001, 1564 §2, tr. Norton 2001, 1564 §2.

heretofore concluded, called The great Intercourse).[116] The Duchess of Parma, Governess of the Netherlands, attempted to turn the screw by forbidding the import of English cloth. She hoped according to Camden, to cause riots in England among the clothiers (*pannarios*) and those dependent on them, and at the same time to set up a clothing industry in the Netherlands. [117] But that is not how economies work. Economies have laws, or to use the Aristotelian phrase "changes of fortune".

The English in response to the Duchess simply moved their market to Emdem in Frisia, ironically the location of the greatest commercial empire in post Roman Europe and a place of origin of the English.[118] The main sufferers meanwhile were the Netherlanders, since the fabled wealth of medieval Bruges had been, in part, a by-product of trade with England. The English had in those distant days been given great concessions and people had come from everywhere to buy articles made of English wool and other English goods, and had brought their own to sell, so that it became a market for everything. The tradition had persisted. Camden had studied the account books for the modern period and claimed that trade between England and the Netherlands amounted to twelve million ducats every year, and more. Sensibly agreement was now reached in Bruges that there should be free trade between the countries once more, until it was decided otherwise.[119]

Russia

Nor could England be shut out of Europe by the French. Soon after the French wit had suggested that the English should confine themselves to England, Camden offers us the amusing picture of the Earl of Sussex, clearly a pro-European, enjoying a leisurely journey through Europe to find a foreign prince for Elizabeth to marry. Leicester, his rival, who had his own ambitions for Elizabeth, having attached a spy to Sussex, remained at home, where Camden gives us a summary of a discourse Leicester made to Elizabeth against foreign marriages. True as some of the points made might be, it reads like a school exercise from a convinced anti-European. Meanwhile Sussex and his large party continued their journey through famous German cities and on to Austria.[120] It is at this point that two emissaries arrive from Russia, and that Camden chooses to give an account of English relations with Russia, going back to the voyage of Hugh

[116] *Ibid*.
[117] Camden 1615, 89 = Camden 2001, 1564 §2 & 3.
[118] Pye 2014.
[119] Camden 1615, 90 = Camden 2001, 1564 §4.
[120] Camden 1615, 125–127 = Camden 2001, 1567 §25–27.

Willoughby and Richard Chancellor to find a North East passage to Cathay, launched as King Edward VI lay dying. Willoughby was trapped in the ice and froze to death, but Chancellor landed at the mouth of the Dvina, from where he and his people were brought by sledge over the ice to Moscow. The Tsar, Ivan the Terrible, promised great privileges if they would trade in his empire. So under Mary Queen of England the Muscovy Company was formed. But only now does Camden introduce us to the Russian enterprises. This is Camden manipulating one of the turning points of history.

Camden says that with these Russian ambassadors came Anthony Jenkinson (1529–1610), who had made an exact survey of Russia, which became a map which was taken up by Ortelius.[121] In fact Jenkinson, who is one of the most remarkable people of his generation, was used by the Tsar to survey Russia. Camden waits until his account of 1569 before describing in more detail the journeys of Jenkinson. Here he merely says that he was the first Englishman to sail on the Caspian Sea and to penetrate as far as Bokhara (in Uzbekistan), what Camden refers to as the land of the Bactrians. Tsar Ivan was desperate to trade with England and to bind himself with Elizabeth in a treaty both defensive and offensive. In exchange for English technology, the English would get cheap hemp, flax and furs. Jenkinson's journey along the Volga to Astrakhan, across the Caspian and on to Bokhara occurred in 1558, and he returned to England in 1560. His second expedition, a journey into Persia occurred in 1561, and he came close to gaining access to the Persian Gulf, which could have taken him on to India; he returned to England in 1564. His return to Russia in 1567 was his third journey to Russia and it was to resolve a trade dispute, which Jenkinson did with great success.

The Battle of Ulloa

In 1568 there occurred the battle of Ulloa in Mexico between English privateers and Spanish forces. Camden talks of the injury done to John Hawkins:

> Ille cum mercibus et nigritis mancipiis quorum frequens iam erat per Hispanos, et eorum exemplo, per Anglos in Africa venatio, et in America venditio (nescio quam honesta) quinque navibus ad commercium ad portum Sancti Ioannis de Ullua in sinu Mexicano exercendum appulerat.

[121] Hakluyt 1598–1600, 1. 324–335 & 1. 343–352. There are six letters from Ortelius to Camden (letters 2, 21, 25, 26, 29 and 35) in Smith 1691.

> (This Hawkins had arrived at Saint John de Ullua in the Bay of Mexico, with five ships for commerce, laden with marchandises and Black-more slaves, which were now commonly bought in Africa by the Spaniards, and by their example by the English, and sold againe in America, how honestly I know not.)[122]

"Nescio quam honesta" begs a lot of questions about slave trading, and saying that the English were following Spanish example, shows a guilty conscience. Nor were Hawkins' five ships simple commercial ships. They were heavily armed and took on the Spanish royal Navy within the confines of Ulloa, suffered devastating losses. Yet there were those who escaped, including Sir Francis Drake who was luckily not inside the close harbour, though he is not mentioned here.

> Hinc viri militares et natio nautica per Angliam fremuerunt, contra Hispanos bellum expoposcerunt, eos foedifragos esse clamitantes, quandoquidem foedere inter Carolum V imperatorum et Henricum VIII convenerit, ut liberum esset commercium inter subditios utriusque princips *in omnibus et singulis regnis, dominis, insulis* (America quidem quae tunc ad Carolum spectavit ne excepta).
>
> (Hereat the military and sea-faring men all over England fretted, and demanded warre against the Spaniards, exclaiming that they were League-breakers, inasmuch as it was agreed by the League betwixt the Emperour Charles the fifth and King Henry the eighth that there should be free commerce betweene the subjects of both Princes *in all and singular their Kingdomes, Dominions, and Isles,* not excepting America, which then belonged to the said Charles.)[123]

Norton's translation is wanting. *Viri militares* suggests a military establishment, *natio nautica* that there is within the state a race of seafarers, *fremuerunt* that they roared, *expoposcerunt* has the sound of demands that must be heard, *clamitantes* that they kept shouting, *foedifragos* looks like name calling, and free trade is of course someone else's slavery. Moreover *spectavit* does not quite mean 'belonged to'; it has more the sense of 'looking to a person for guidance or protection', perhaps against the New World exploiters, since actual possession could be still be contested. Elizabeth shut her ears to this clamour, says Camden, having been called away by Scottish matters. Mary Queen of Scots had broken out of Scottish custody and was in England. However the chance encounter in Ulloa was tantamount to a declaration of war.

[122] Camden 1615, 134 = Camden 2001, 1568 §3, tr. Norton 2001, 1568 §3.
[123] *Ibid*.

Bellum Belgicum

In that same year what Camden calls the *bellum Belgicum* (Netherlands War) broke out. Camden writes:

> Ab instituto non alienum videatur si paucis hic perstringam quibus initiis bellum Belgicum hoc tempore proruperit, cuius saepius necessario meminero, quandoquidem cum rebus et rationibus Anglicis sit colligatum et implicitum.
>
> (Let it not seem alien to my topic if in a few words here I touch on the beginnings of the Netherlands war which broke out at this time. I shall have to make mention of it fairly often since with it was bound in and tangled with English matters and policies.)[124]

In fact Camden had in the previous paragraph been telling how Elizabeth had been sending money and war munitions on a large scale to co-religionists in France, and receiving refugees not only from France but also from the Netherlands, whom she settled in an arc stretching from Norwich to Southampton. He adds, as if meeting criticism from English nationalists, that these refugees brought great rewards for England with their own particular skills in textiles, an ironical response by events to the Duchess of Parma's policies.

The few words in which he touches on the outbreak of the war in the Netherlands are of concern to everyone. Increasing use of torture to attack people's consciences, a practice which could be found in England of course within a different context, abolition of parliamentary assemblies, government by decree on policies originating in Spain, and not from the deliberations of the indigenous people, these according to Camden caused the dregs of the people or plebs to riot and smash images. Camden does not make clear why the dregs did revolt. Although this riot was quickly put down, Philip of Spain allowed himself to be influenced by people whose burning desire was to place a yoke on a completely free nation, and so they put the blame for the riot on the whole people. As if their liberty were now quite lost, the Duke of Alba, whom he calls "a wild man", was sent "ad dominationem invadendam". The direct translation, 'to seize total power', does not quite do justice to this phrase; law courts were abolished, replaced by places of hearing, where leading men were sentenced by foreigners, then executed. [125]

[124] Camden 1615, 149 = Camden 2001, 1568 §23, tr. Eatough.
[125] Norton 2001, 1568 §24.

Anthony Jenkinson's exploits in Russia

At this time a great sum of money belonging to Genoese and other Italian merchants, was in transit from Spain to the Netherlands with a small fleet of ships. Pursued by a French pirate, and ultimately protected by William Winter, a leading English naval commander, these ships found refuge in English ports. The ownership of the money became a major international dispute, which led to English goods being held in the Netherlands.[126] The English now moved their continental market to the safety of Hamburg.[127] There was increased piracy from the English, and face-saving proclamations against the purchase of pirated goods.[128] It is here that Camden finally gives us some detail on Jenkinson's exploits in Russia. Trading restrictions had developed in Russia too; Jenkinson had gone there and resolved them. The English could move around more freely in Russia ("confidentius regiones illas perlustrare coeperunt" (the English began more confidently to survey those Countries).[129] He gives us, for example, a glimpse of their goods being brought upstream along the Dvina by rowing and hauling with boats made of one tree. Then he describes a seven-day journey across land before sailing down the Volga, which was more than a mile wide, to Astrakhan, making frequent crossings of the Caspian, and penetrating the vast solitudes of Hyrcania and Bactria. Camden recognised that the Tsar was a tyrant, but he was our tyrant, the Duke of Alba was not. Russia was in fact a New World. The Tsar in return wanted England as a place of refuge if he were forced to leave Russia in a hurry. Elizabeth granted him that wish, even with provision that he could practice his own religion, something she would never grant a Catholic. He was a difficult man to please; he complained that Elizabeth was neglecting him and was too intent on the business of merchants, which was unfitting for a ruler.[130]

Elizabethan excess

The Tsar was not to see the Queen at the beginning of 1571 when she entered the City of London:

> Primo anni mense Elizabetha regia pompa Londinum ingressa, peristyllium pulcherrimum (*bursam* vocant) quod Thomas Greshamus eques auratus civis Londinensis, regiusque mercator in mercatorum

[126] Camden 1615, 149–150 = Camden 2001, 1568 §25.
[127] Camden 1615, 152 = Camden 2001, 1569 §4.
[128] Camden 1615, 152–153 = Camden 2001, 1569 §5, tr. Norton 2001, 1569 §5.
[129] Norton 2001, 1569 §7.
[130] Camden 1615, 153–155 = Camden 2001, 1569 §6–8.

> usum extruxerat, invisit, et excambium regium voce praeconis tubis clangentibus quasi dedicando nominavit.
>
> (In the first month of the year Elizabeth entered London in royal pomp and visited the extremely beautiful courtyard with its surrounding pillars (they call it the Burse) which Thomas Gresham, golden knight, London citizen, and royal merchant had reared for the use of merchants, and to the blare of trumpets in a kind of dedication through the voice of a herald she named it The Royal Exhange.)[131]

Camden spoils the effect somewhat by going on to write at much greater length of the raising of William Cecil to the peerage. Like the Tsar he was not entirely happy with merchants. He spoils a glamorous event:

> Summus vestium luxus his temporibus in Angliam se infuderat, et patrius cultus peculiari gentis imitatricis vitio ita sordescebat, ut homines nova vestium forma, et apparatu nimis splendido, animorum deformitatem et insolentiam quandam proderent, dum sericati auro et argento, vel intexto vel bracteato rutilantes passim volitarent.
>
> (In these times extreme luxury in clothing poured into England and the traditional manner of dress, by a vice which is peculiar to the people who are followers of fashion, was deemed so shabby, that men by their new form of clothing and over ostentatious apparel betrayed the deformity of their minds and a kind of arrogance, as in their silks they flitted everywhere, flashing with gold and silver, inwoven or veneer.)[132]

This was Elizabethan flash. The country was losing money on importing this extravagance, nobles were falling into debt and debt could initiate social unrest, so the official story went. Elizabeth tried to prescribe what people should wear, but through the malignity of the times (*temporis malignitate*), says Camden, failed. When one looks at the extravagant dress of the court, of Elizabeth and Leicester especially,[133] this does not ring wholly true. Extravagance of banquets crept in, omitted by Norton, and of buildings built both for the nobility and private individuals, elegant, spacious, stylish in a way that compelled attention, an adornment to the country. They were a sign of a changing society, of a spread of wealth, of a desire to be conspicuous, but as Camden concludes "hospitalis gloriae detrimento",[134] presumably that kind of generosity which is the mark of a civilised society was lost to personal display. People were breaking free in their various ways.

[131] Camden 1615, 189 = Camden 2001, 1571 §1, tr. Eatough.
[132] Camden 1615, 250 = Camden 2001, 1574 §5, tr. Eatough
[133] See Goldring.
[134] Norton 2001 1574 §5.

The adventures of Sir Francis Drake

Camden writes that educated minds, inflamed by a simple curiosity (*honesto studio*) to explore the most remote countries on earth and the secrets of the ocean, had encouraged those well provided with money (*bene nummatos*) to attempt to discover, if there was a North West passage to rich Cathay, so that the wealth of East and West might be joined together through trade exchange with one another. This was private, not state, enterprise. "Opes mutuo commercio coniungerentur" (the wealth of the East and West might bee conjoyned by mutuall commerce)[135] seems to be edging in intent to the conjugal relationship enjoyed by English and Netherlanders. The result was the Frobisher expeditions which are interesting but ended in farce.[136]

Soon afterwards there was Sir Francis Drake's circumnavigation of the world (1577–1580). Camden had spoken to Drake personally. Uniquely within the context of the *Annales* he tells us of Drake's origins, which were fairly humble, and of his development, of his grudge against the Spaniards because he had participated in the battle of Ulloa, of his wealth gained by seamanship and also piracy, of his interception of a mule train in Panama loaded with gold and silver, and of his first sighting of the Pacific which he vowed to sail. There is by Camden's standards masses of detail on the voyage. When he returns everyone admires Drake, though enemies remind people, as does Camden, of Drake's second-in-command, Thomas Doughty, whom Drake had executed, of a Portuguese navigator whom Drake had callously abandoned to the cruelty of the Spaniards, and of a beautiful black girl who became pregnant during the voyage and was inhumanely cast away on an island. The voyage up the western coast of the Americas so took the Spanish by surprise that many of the episodes of contacts between Drake and the Spaniards have a comic aspect, as does his landing in California, though this had a serious angle. The naked dancing natives make a long speech, in which they seemed by their signs to choose him as their king, and he claimed the land in the name of the queen, naming it New Albion. Both actions were a challenge to the social order in England, perhaps reminding some of Hernán Cortés, the Conquistador.

On his return Elizabeth came on board, took control of the money in case the Spaniards should want it back, turned the ship into a memorial, banqueted on it and knighted Drake. She liked him, though many of the nobility at Court did not: when he offered them some of the gold from his voyage, they spat it back at him as being pirate money. They were obviously jealous of this upstart. Camden then writes something remarkable. The

[135] Camden 1615, 262 = Camden 2001, 1576 §6, tr. Norton 2001, 1576 §6.
[136] Camden 1615, 262–263 = Camden 2001, 1576 §6.

common people (*vulgus*) celebrated him with wonder and praise. They thought it was as glorious to have extended the bounds of England's praise as of her empire (or power). I take it that they meant an increase in England's prestige, especially in Europe, was glorious, though it could also mean that the country's name would become renowned everywhere, not only in Russia, or in Turkey, for example, but increasingly in areas such as the Far East. Drake's voyage, in modern colloquial English, was a game changer strategically, economically, and socially.[137]

Allegiance with the Netherlands

In 1575 the Netherlanders had approached Elizabeth for an alliance which would protect them. They had considered alternatives and they lighted upon the English for the following reasons.

> Anglos vero quasi sub eodem parallelo, eiusdem cum illis esse ingenii, religionem plane eandem, linguam haudquaquam diversam, regionem esse vicinam, portuosam, navigationi commodam, mercimoniis copiosam; reginam terra marique praepotentem, mitem, benignam, immunitates conservaturam, eiusque imperium temperatum, nec exactionibus grave futurum, disseruerunt
>
> (But as for the English, they were as it were under the same Paralel, of the same nature and disposition with them, their Religion the very same, their language not much differing, their Country neere at hand, full of havens, commodious for Navigation, and plentifull of Marchandize; the Queene very strong both by Sea and Land, curteous, benigne, one that would maintaine their priviledges, and her government temperate, and would not bee heavy by exactions. Thus they argued.)[138]

In a sense, especially where communications were by sea, they were claiming to be more or less the same people. Elizabeth was pleased to be approached, but she was wary of incurring the enmity of the Spaniards, and of the uncertainties of war. She did not want to be seen entering into a treaty with the subjects of another prince. However she did not believe, what some dinned into her ears, that the Netherlands had come to the ancestors of the Spaniards by election, that is by choice, of the subjects, not by law of inheritance. Elizabeth, who styled herself as always being the same, was happy with the status quo among the international ruling class, accepting

[137] Camden 1615, 301–309 = Camden 2001, 1580 §19–28.
[138] Camden 1615, 254 = Camden 2001, 1575 §4, tr. Norton 2001, 1575 §4.

that in time past the Spanish had inherited the Dutch. One should observe inheritance law.

Events dictate. As early as 1577 the idea of an Armada against England was on the Spanish agenda.[139] Elizabeth was arranging securities with the City of London to enable the Netherlanders to borrow money from wherever they could, and she entered into a defensive alliance with them explaining her actions to Philip. She felt genuine pity for the Netherlanders, and "provinciae magna situs opportunitate, et mutua necessitudine, Angliae, quasi maritali amore coniugatae, pluribus seculis adhaeserant" (the provinces because of the great opportunities offered by their location and the bonding arising from the exchanges had clung to England for many centuries as if joined in married love).[140] 'Marital love' is a powerful image sadly omitted by Norton. By his time perhaps the relationship was fraying. Elizabeth immediately sent an army into the Netherlands consisting of many volunteers who still had to learn the rudiments of warfare. It found itself in action sooner than expected, was forced to retreat and then learnt how to resist with English and Scots fighting side by side in the heat of the day, throwing off their garments and fighting with their tunics knotted between their thighs. It was the start of a commitment for British troops to re-engage with Europe. British, of course, included Welsh, and indeed the Irish, who, to the cost of the English, learnt the art of modern warfare, as indeed the English were having to do.[141]

In 1585 Elizabeth formally accepted the *patrocinium* of the Netherlanders. Camden reports the debate which took place in the Netherlands, then their approach to the English, where Camden gives just one side of the debate – that of those who wanted to reject the Netherlanders – at extraordinary length. The views expressed were extremely reactionary, or politically blind, such as: God has given them (the Spaniards) supreme power; he has left those (the Netherlanders) the glory of obeying. It was true, as opponents of intervention argued, that people in need of help might have to be continually helped, and that they might be ungrateful and look after themselves afterwards, which was often the case with the Netherlanders, but nonetheless action had to be taken then: "Sed qui in hac sententia, ut in Hispani partes propensiores, degeneres et ignavi gravem offensionem apud viros militares incurrerunt." (But they which were of this opinion incurred heavy displeasure amongst maritall men, as inclining to the Spaniards party, degenerate and faint-hearted cowards.)[142]

[139] Camden 1615, 268 = Camden 2001, 1577 §4.
[140] Camden 1615, 274 = Camden 2001, 1578 §1, tr. Eatough.
[141] Camden 1615, 274–275 = Camden 2001, 1578 §2.
[142] Camden 1615, 382–383 = Camden 2001, 1585 §24, tr. Norton 2001, 1585 §24.

Camden leaves the impression that the military are now in control. They are men of few words and Elizabeth herself comes to a simple conclusion. Camden presents Elizabeth as taking her time while she makes her decision, after a thorough analysis of all the factors in the situation. The decisive fact is the realisation that if the Netherlands' fleet were joined to the English it would be easy to gain control of the sea. In 1572 at the request of the Duke of Alba, Elizabeth, had driven rebels from the Netherlands out of their havens in England. They had responded by capturing Briel, Flushingham and other towns, immediately cutting Alba off from the sea,[143] and the following year they destroyed a fleet of Alba's which could have taken troops into England[144] – a demonstration so early that an Armada launched from Spain might well fail.

While Elizabeth was accepting the *patrocinium* of the Netherlanders, a fleet under Drake was wreaking havoc in the West Indies. Nonetheless there were great losses of men owing to disease, and the fleet as it returned helped to evacuate founders of the Roanoke colony in Virginia, a seeming failure. At this point Camden chooses to introduce a digression on how tobacco and nicotine were becoming a part of English culture, with barbarising effects on Englishmen's bodies – an American connection, if you like. Yet John Davis was heroically pushing into what would be known as the Davis Straits between Greenland and America, and a favoured few, in another form of expansion, were being granted concessions in the cloth trade in Mauritania, one of the beneficiaries being Leicester.[145]

Leicester and the Netherlands

In 1585 Leicester was made Governor General in the Netherlands. Part of the agreement with the Netherlanders was that Elizabeth would send five thousand infantry and a thousand horse under a governor general who would be a man of some distinction ("viro clarius notae").[146] Such was Leicester. He had wanted to marry Elizabeth and this was the nearest he got to being royalty. He was given a royal welcome by the Netherlanders and Elizabeth was infuriated. She wrote a wonderfully savage rebuke to him in which she described him as a man she had raised from the dust. Then she chastised the Netherlanders on the grounds that they had given absolute power to a subject of hers. But these democratically-minded citizens, who had resisted the Spaniards for over twenty years, replied in measured speech. They said that

[143] Camden 1615, 224–225 = Camden 2001, 1572 §25.
[144] Camden 1615, 232 = Camden 2001, 1573 §1.
[145] Camden 1615, 385–389 = Camden 2001, 1585 §29–32.
[146] Camden 1615, 385 = Camden 2001, 1585 §27.

to avoid political turmoil it was necessary to give authority to someone. And certainly no one should take the word absolutely at face value, since princely office and supreme lordship, and the dignity which went with being a lord, remained in the hands of the people, inviolable. However to revoke an authority already delegated was simply to send the state of the Netherlands headlong into extreme danger. They were taking a firm line with Elizabeth, the voice of a republic is having to be heard:

> nec illa sane tanta sit, quanta verbum absoluta prae se ferre videatur, cum ipse principatus, et dominatio suprema et dominii dignitas penes populum integra maneat. Authoritatem autem delegatam revocare nihil aliud esse quam in extrema pericula rem Belgicam praecipitare.
>
> (neither indeede was the same so great, as the word Absolute might seeme to import, considering that the principality it selfe, and the supreme rule and dignity of dominion remained wholly in the peoples hands. And to revoke the authority already passed, were nothing else but to plunge the State of the Netehrlands into extreme dangers.)[147]

This was how the Netherlanders managed the crisis; Leicester did it by weepy letters, since he had learned how by tears and simulated pain to win back the favour of his most gentle princess. His offence was gradually forgotten and it disappeared ("His ordinum et flebilibus Leicestrii literis qui lachrimis et simulato dolore mitissimae principis gratiam reconciliare noverat, offensio paulatim obliterata evanuit").[148]

But he did not know how to handle the Netherlanders. He imposed new taxes on them and this they did not forget; they turned against him. The English fought bravely and with success, and Leicester proved himself a competent leader. But when he returned to the Hague he was met with a barrage of complaints. His response was to give himself dictatorial powers before crossing over to England.

When he returned in 1587 the Netherlanders did not give him enough troops to be effective, they held the real power and despite giving him titles, they held the same power over him as governor, as the great Spanish king, Charles V, had held over his governors in the Netherlands. He was also undone by English traitors, William Stanley and Roland Yorke who defected to the Spanish side betraying Deventer to them. Leicester saw his authority cheapened (*evilsecere*), and retaliated by attempting to create factions among the Netherlanders. He was recalled by the queen. "excellentiaeque titulo quo primus Anglorum usus est, exploso" (and the title of his Excellencie, which of all Englishmen he was the first that ever used, exploded [or if you prefer:

[147] Camden 1615, 392 = Camden 2001, 1586 §4, tr. Norton 2001, 1586 §4.
[148] Camden 1615, 392 = Camden 2001, 1586 §4.

'blew up in his face']).[149] He attempted to outmanoeuvre the Netherlanders by an amateurish form of lobbying but as Camden tells us the Netherlanders had learnt the art of surviving. They were the only people he knew who could make a profit from war.[150] They caused trouble for Leicester's successors. Leicester had a survivor's instincts. Camden tells us that scenting that a charge of maladministration in the Netherlands was being put together by his enemies, he threw himself in private at the feet of Elizabeth, her suppliant, weeping. Others out at sea were more self-reliant. 1587 was a year of proven heroes, when Drake made his brilliant attack on Cadiz, and Cavendish became the second Englishman to sail round the world.

In 1588 the Armada was dispersed with crucial help from the Hollanders and Zealanders who prevented the Spanish governor of the Netherlands, Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma, from joining the action. Drake perhaps had a more telling role than Camden suggests in this battle.[151] Nonetheless if the Spanish had invaded England, the man in charge of the land forces, the last line of defence was Leicester. He died unexpectedly amid the public rejoicing over the defeat of the Armada. Camden writes sarcastically "Nec laetitiam imminuit mors Leicestrii, etsi regina permolestissime tulit" (Leicester's death did not diminish the happiness of the occasion although the queen took it very badly indeed).[152] *Permoleste* is in itself a kind of superlative with the prefix *per-* but it has an additional superlative ending, and the length and rhythm of the word suggests a grief which was unabating. She had been considering raising Leicester to dangerously high honours, she had signed the papers, but was advised otherwise by the two most powerful politicians in the land, Burghley and Hatton.

Camden sets out to destroy Leicester's reputation in a lengthy obituary from which I extract:

> Aulicus habebatur omnibus numeris absolutus, lautus et largus, viris militaribus et studiosis beneficus, tempori et suo commodo inservire gnarus, ingenio obsequioso, in aemulos insidioso, aliquandiu mulierosus, demum supra modum uxorius.
>
> (Hee was esteemed a most accomplished Courtiour, neate, free and bountifull to Martiall men and Students, skilfull to serve the time and his owne commodity; of an obsequious disposition, guilefull towards

[149] Norton 2001, 1587 §39.
[150] Camden 1615, 473 = Camden 2001, 1587 §40.
[151] Martin & Parker 1988, 176–179.
[152] Camden 2001, 1588 §37, tr. Eatough.

his adversaries, given a while to women, and in his later days doting above measure upon wiving.)[153]

Camden hisses as he describes the character of Leicester. He could loath courtiers, there are hints of the puritan about him, though he also disliked Puritans since they showed too much political independence. There was one limit to Elizabeth's grief. She, who could be easygoing in other things, would not forego debts. Leicester was indebted to her in the common meaning of the term, he owed her money, and so his estate was sold at auction.

What happened next ...

Life continued, and death. The Duke of Parma who failed to launch his ships to facilitate the Spanish invasion of England conducted a fruitless campaign in the Netherlands, the Puritans continued their insolent or unaccustomed ways, the Great Rebellion, long in the making, started in Ireland, the Danes remained offended at the English having found a way to Russia which avoided Denmark, and the new Tsar of Russia, in effect the regent Boris Godunov, like the old tsar, attentively and with all due regard, was attempting to win the friendship of the Queen, or as Norton more easily puts it, "was seriously bending himselfe by all good offices to procure the amity of the Queene."[154] So much seemed the same, but people die and others step forward, and the stories on which Camden had to adapt his weaver's craft had their own fierce dynamics. It was the great decade of Elizabethan literature. Centre of Camden's stage for a while stood the Earl of Essex, imaginative, theatrical and doomed to fail, unable to escape his own inner nature and the complications of his time, lacking his historian's insight, his ability to grasp the threads of history.

[153] Camden 1615, 496 = Camden 2001, 1588 §37, tr. Norton 2001, 1588 §37.

[154] Camden 1615, 497–499 = Camden 2001, 1588 §38–42, tr. Norton 2001, 1588 §38–42.

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