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Losing my Religion: Contextualizing Continental Catholic Seminaries in the Elizabethan Reformation, 1558-1603

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Losing my Religion: Contextualizing Continental Catholic Seminaries in the Elizabethan
Reformation, 1558-1603

Coleburn Volman

Dissertation submitted
To the Eberly College of Arts and Science
At West Virginia University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctorate in
History

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ABSTRACT

Losing my Religion: Contextualizing Continental Catholic Seminaries in the Elizabethan Reformation, 1558-1603

Coleburn Volman

This dissertation examines the impact and influence of a portion of the early modern Jesuit seminary network within the narrative of the Counter Reformation. Following the rise of Elizabeth I, a significant number of Catholic recusants fled England to take up residence in a series of schools spread across Europe with the intention of completing their education and later contributing to the efforts to preserve Catholicism in their homeland. This dissertation argues that these schools played a significant role in the course of the “English Mission,” contributing to its conception, escalation, and eventual collapse in the late sixteenth century. Despite the unified vision for the reconversion of England shared across these schools, divisions within the varied factions of the Catholic response to Elizabethan Protestantism, as well as within the Jesuit seminaries themselves, led to divided approaches to the English Mission’s conduct. As a result, reconversion efforts proceeded haphazardly, and they gradually intensified to the point of violence and crusade against Elizabeth and her realm before the Mission collapsed following the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. Even in the waning years of Elizabeth’s life, the main organizers of the seminary network and the English Mission continued to call for Elizabeth’s removal from power; however, new developments in European political theory turned the major European powers away from England and left the remaining recusants with little support in their efforts. By the time of Elizabeth’s death, the English Mission had failed as a result of internal divisions and an inability to reconcile with the shifting nature of early modern political thought on the part of the administrators of the continental seminary network.

For my Mother,
Who still calls me “Coleburn”,
And for my Father,
Who calls me “dude”

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Finally, I assert that, to the best of my knowledge, what follows is a firmly accurate depiction of education, community, adolescence, and family across the Elizabethan era in Europe. The fault for any and all subsequently uncovered errors lies squarely with the Duo Two-Factor Authentication System, COVID-19, Manchester City Football Club, and Tyler Krahe.

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Introduction

Would God all could be so, for then should we poor sinner be also; but that golden world is past, if ever any such were.

-William Allen, 1577

In 1557, in the weeks leading up to Christmas Day, the Queen of England had many reasons to rejoice and to be fearful. Following the departure of her husband, Mary Tudor announced her latest pregnancy and heightened the expectations within her court that a child would soon be born to strengthen the stability of the volatile English state over which she had presided for the past four years. A crisis within the Church of England had erupted from the initial days of Mary's reign as Protestant bishops opposed the Catholic policies of their new monarch. Political crisis soon followed as Mary linked England with Spain through her marriage to King Philip II, leaving the future of English sovereignty revolving around the question of her royal issue. And all the while, hundreds of Protestants were burned at the stake.

Even before Mary's ascension, England had been plunged into a state of uncertainty, division, and strife as the uneven policies of her father, King Henry VIII, had gradually forced England beyond the point of no return and initiated an English Reformation. With the passage of the Act of Supremacy of 1534, England officially broke with Rome and replaced the Pope with the English monarch as the supreme head of English religion. What many saw as a dramatic break in the European religious landscape became little more than a superficial tweak in English religious life as Henry altered little pertaining to English church worship or belief. Real change did not arise under Henry; however, his son Edward VI and the regency council that governed during much of his rule led England down a far more radical path that installed distinctly Protestant practices into the liturgy during his

five-year reign from 1547 to 1553. Mary's subsequent ascension following her brother's death was seen by many as a means of easing these tensions, yet her ardent adherence to Catholicism only deepened the divides between the Protestant and Catholic sects of England.

And then, Mary became pregnant.

In 1554, the royal physicians affirmed (incorrectly) that Mary was with child. The Queen's court was so certain of the birth of an heir that they even issued the release of the Queen's younger sister Elizabeth, who had been under house arrest due to her suspected role in plots against Mary and her strong claim to the throne in the event that Mary failed to produce an heir. The union of England and Spain was at hand and the succession of Catholic rule was all but assured.

But no child was born of Philip and Mary in 1554.

Nor was a child born in 1558.

Despite the Queen's hopes, her second pregnancy was as fruitless as her first. By the spring of 1558, it was clear that Mary would have no children and her younger sister would succeed her to the throne, and it would be only a few more short months before Elizabeth Tudor ascended to power. Following her second false pregnancy, Mary grew ill, likely suffering from cancer in the last days of her life. On November 17th, 1558, Mary died, leaving a volatile England in the hands of her younger half-sister.

Elizabeth initially attempted to implement a moderate approach to reform by immediately passing a religious settlement that standardized Protestant worship across her realm but did little to compel non-believers to attend the services. For a little over a

decade, this approach preserved some degree of peace in England, allowing Elizabeth to consolidate her position and increase her popularity with her people. However, the lack of truly compulsory church attendance allowed the Catholic population of England to persevere, and these newly branded recusants bided their time and waited to see what might befall the young Queen. Her siblings had ruled for little more than a decade between themselves. Was it too much for them to hope that Elizabeth's reign would be similarly brief?

Ten years into her reign, these hopes were growing steadily more forlorn. Through an isolationist foreign policy, a powerful propaganda machine run by her highly skilled ministers, and the lingering issue of a potential marriage between Elizabeth and a Catholic royal on the continent, the Elizabethan state survived and grew steadily more secure in the 1560s. Unlike Mary, the Queen was in good health and the Catholic community of England began to fear that a revival of the traditional faith might never occur. The wave of Protestant fervor that Elizabeth quietly promoted swept over the latest generation of English children with the intention of instilling the new Anglican religion in place of the old Catholic faith.

But in spite of Elizabeth's position of authority in England, she certainly did not command the respect, and in some cases the loyalty, of her recusant subjects. As John Bossy has shown, the English Catholic community had remained very much intact by the time of Elizabeth's ascension, despite the turmoil of the preceding decades.¹ Indeed, Henry VIII had done little to seriously compel the English to change their religious practices during his break with Rome, and Edward VI had not ruled long enough to enact serious change

¹ John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 193-94.

through his policies. Then Mary had come to power and, though her reign was even briefer than Edward's, she restored a number of marginalized Catholic bishops, priests, and officials to prominence. It would be with these men that Elizabeth contended when she took the throne.

Likewise, it was these men who took the earliest steps to foster a true resistance movement against Elizabeth's religious policy. Indeed, the ten-year anniversary of Elizabeth's ascension was immediately followed by the founding of the first continental English Catholic seminary, established at Douai with the explicit aim of countering the rise of English Protestantism and reviving the traditional faith through the instruction of students who soon began to cross the channel and pursue their education in exile. Douai was just the first of dozens of English seminaries that would be founded on the continent as colleges soon arose in southern France, the Low Countries, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and the Catholic provinces of the Holy Roman Empire. By the last few decades of the sixteenth century, the Catholic seminary network on the continent appeared strong, and the organizers of these schools began to draw on it for participants in the emerging "English Mission" to preserve Catholicism in England in the hopes of outliving the ruling Protestant regime. The Jesuit order played a crucial role in this effort to bring Catholicism back to England. Despite fervent support in continental Catholic countries and a formidable network of seminaries, Elizabeth's Protestant faith would not only survive her death in 1603, but also persist as the official English faith into the modern era.

The overarching goal of this study is to track the progression and evolution of the English Mission that underwent significant and relatively rapid change during the waning decades of the sixteenth century. In its earliest conception by leading recusant priests, the

Mission was conceived as a peaceful movement, one that aimed to restore and foster Catholicism through aggressive but non-violent missionary work. This missionary preaching would grow more aggressive in the 1570s following Elizabeth's excommunication by Pius V and this approach to the reconversion of England grew steadily more hostile in the ensuing years during the captivity of Elizabeth's cousin, Mary Stuart. By that point, the deposed Mary, Queen of Scots, would come to play a prominent role in the second phase of the English Mission as she rapidly became the focal point of several plots against Elizabeth that sought to remove the queen and replace her with a Catholic ruler. Mary, indirectly or otherwise, served as the ideal candidate to succeed Elizabeth and she remained a constant threat to the queen's position for most of the 1580s.

The changing nature of the English Mission can be seen through the gradual uptick in the intensity of the plots that emerged in these years. Ironically, the initial revolt against the queen in the winter of 1569/1570 would see the most violent fighting of any of the later plots as several northern English nobles raised their forces and marched south before Elizabeth was able to raise troops of her own to put the rebellion down. In spite of the fighting, the rebel earls never called for violence against the queen herself, maintaining the goal of merely removing her from power and seating her cousin on the throne. This relatively passive approach towards Elizabeth's deposition would carry over into subsequent plots against her crown, but by the mid-1580s, patience appears to have run thin among the conspirators and the last years of Mary Stuart's life culminated in one final plot that called for Elizabeth's assassination. It was this last conspiracy that would directly implicate Mary in the schemes against her cousin and the Queen of Scots was executed almost immediately afterwards.

Mary's death led directly to international retaliation in the form of the Spanish Armada in 1588 in which the English faced off against a Spanish-led crusade to remove Elizabeth once and for all. The resulting defeat of the Armada effectively signaled the end of the English Mission as no further serious attempts would be made to invade England until the Napoleonic Wars. Despite the failure of the Armada, the recusant community on the continent did not universally stand down in their opposition to Elizabeth. Though there would be no further plots or invasions, some exiles persisted in their resistance against Protestant rule and continued to wage war against Elizabeth, mainly through treatises and dialectics pertaining to the queen's legitimacy. Notwithstanding these desperate attempts to preserve the Mission, the remaining recusants eventually recognized that the failure of the Armada had altered the priorities of the major continental Catholic powers. By the end of the sixteenth century, the staunchest opponents to English Protestantism had largely turned their attention to other matters of state. As a result of both the Renaissance and the Reformation, a new scientific approach towards virtually all social and political affairs had arisen in Europe with a particular emphasis on the systemization of warfare, state management, and political thought.² As a result of this "Neostoic" approach, the priorities of early modern European monarchies grew more attached to state security, which led many monarchs to seek policies of toleration that might ease the tension in their realms that had intensified throughout the sixteenth century as a result of the Reformation. As such, support for English exiles and the Jesuits rapidly evaporated and Elizabeth's England would ultimately survive the English Mission as the sixteenth century drew to a close.

² Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 4-7.

With support from the traditional Catholic monarchs waning by the start of the seventeenth century, the remaining continental recusants were forced to accept that English Protestantism was here to stay. This did not prevent some recusants from continuing to produce more writing against Elizabethan religious policies, but the situation never improved and no further incursions into England were made. In 1603, Elizabeth was succeeded by her Protestant cousin, James I, and the last major figure involved in the English Mission passed away only seven years later (Robert Persons in 1610). By that point, no serious proponents of the Mission remained and the efforts to reconvert England faded away for good.

In the midst of this shift in attitude towards the English Mission, the network of Catholic seminaries on the continent continued to function and played an important though understudied role in the evolution of recusant responses to Elizabethan rule. These schools, initially founded a decade after Elizabeth's ascension, were central to the formation of the Mission and provided refuge and support for the many exiles and recusants fleeing across the Channel in search of alternatives to the Protestant educational reforms that Elizabeth had installed in her realm. This study examines a selection of these schools and contextualizes their roles in the English Mission through an examination of their aims, management, curricula, daily life, finances, administrators, and residents. By examining three schools—the seminaries at Douai (France), St. Omer (Flanders), and Rome (Italy)—a clearer picture of the role that each school played in the Mission emerges, though this reality often clashed with the official mission to which each school claimed to adhere.

Universally, each seminary claimed that its primary aims were to train students in Catholic doctrine so that they might simultaneously preserve the traditional faith and

potentially serve as missionaries in the reconversion efforts that seminary organizers hoped to see commenced in England. While this goal has often been seen as clearly defined and unified across Catholic Europe, the varied nature of these seminaries reveals fractures within the educational foundation of the English Mission that would later play a role in the Mission's failure. As such, the goal of this dissertation is to explore several of these seminary communities and their varied approaches to preserving Catholicism in order to show both the diversity of the motives, opinions, and interests of those who resided there and the impact that these divisions would eventually have on the collapse of efforts to restore Catholicism in England. One critical result of these differences within the recusant community was that the methods for reconverting England grew steadily more aggressive until they manifested as outright plots against Elizabeth's life. The failure of these plots and the changing political views on resistance against monarchical rule would ultimately ensure the failure of recusant efforts as late sixteenth-century monarchs, particularly Spanish monarchs, turned away from the English Mission in order to focus on the more secular side of securing their realms.

Literature Review

In many ways, the historiography of English Catholicism and the Mission to reconvert England can be traced back to the Reformation itself. As John Vidmar's work has shown, Catholic and Protestant historians alike were regularly occupied with controlling the narrative of the Elizabethan era, producing works that legitimized their position while

demonizing their opponents'.³ Peter Lake and Michael Questier argue that this polemical war of words transformed the Elizabethan state. Similar to her siblings Edward and Mary, but on a more pronounced and prolific scale, Elizabeth and her government exerted its influence over the public sphere, countering Catholic polemics in the interest of national security.⁴ This development ultimately succeeded as Protestant narratives of the English Reformation came to dominate the historiography of the era for the next several centuries, effectively marginalizing historians of the English Catholic community until the twentieth century.⁵

In this interval, the history of the English Reformation solidified as a Whiggish narrative of progress for English religion and thought. The story of the triumph of Protestantism over the outmoded and internally corrupt Catholic Church became so prevalent that the study of English Catholicism virtually ceased until the works of William Raleigh and Bernard Basset in the 1960s. These scholars were among the first to refocus the English Reformation on the English Catholic community, addressing its relationship with the Elizabethan state and the impact of the Jesuit mission to England respectively.⁶ Although these works offer little in the way of thesis-driven arguments and have been subjected to more recent critique and revision, they nonetheless opened the way for a new branch of English Reformation history.

³ John Vidmar, *English Catholic Historians and the English Reformation, 1558-1954* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 3.

⁴ Peter Lake and Michael Questier, "Puritans, Papists, and the 'Public Sphere' in Early Modern England" *The Journal of Modern History* 72, 3 (September 2000), 589-92.

⁵ John O'Malley, "Catholic Church History: One Hundred Years of the Discipline" *The Catholic Historical Review* 101, 2 (2015), 3-4.

⁶ William Raleigh, *The Catholic Laity in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964); Bernard Basset, *The English Jesuits: From Champion to Martindale* (London: Burns & Oates, 1967).

This shift occurred contemporaneously with the emergence of new historiographical approaches championed by the French *Annales* School that promoted the study of the ordinary in contrast to the traditional study of great men and events.⁷ Catholic history was certainly no exception and the piety of men and women of the lower strata of European society quickly drew the attention of Reformation historians. Perhaps the earliest scholar to devote considerable work to this subject was John Bossy, whose study *The English Catholic Community* served as the first work that dealt with English Catholicism as a body of people rather than a monolithic religion. Delving into the conventions and attitudes of the Catholic community, Bossy asserted that this group, and Reformation Catholicism as a whole, was not a continuation of the medieval faith.⁸ Rather, the religion and adherents that emerged following the ascension of Elizabeth I were built upon the ashes of the old order of medieval Catholicism that had collapsed in the sixteenth century. To support this point, Bossy pointed to the Jesuits and their mission in the early 1580s as the impetus behind this dramatic change.⁹ The new practices that Bossy saw emerging in the Catholic community reflected the threads of the Catholic Reformation on the continent and, once this renewed form of Catholic worship was exported to England by the Jesuits, the emerging recusant community that staunchly opposed the Elizabethan state began to take on the appearance of an entirely different strain of Catholic faith. In Bossy's view, by the time of the Enlightenment, this new version of Catholicism had completely supplanted traditional Catholic practices.

⁷ O'Malley, "Catholic Church History," 16.

⁸ John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850* (Dartington: Longman & Todd, 1975), 5.

⁹ *Ibid.*

Bossy's depiction of English Catholicism has remained popular since he initially proposed this discontinuity thesis, though it has received some pushback from more recent scholars. Eamon Duffy's work has offered similar conclusions with regard to the demise of traditional Catholicism in England. As his study of the village of Morebath reveals, the reforms of Henry VIII and his children represented a significant break with tradition that was not popularly welcomed by the English laity.¹⁰ Throughout the first half of his book, Duffy explores the complexities of the cult of saints, the Mass, and the variety of other religious practices and beliefs by which the late medieval English structured their lives. The traditional faith was alive and well on the eve of the Reformation, which built upon Duffy's earlier work that argued that the success of the Tudor reforms was more a matter of luck than a Whiggish inevitability.¹¹ Indeed, perhaps the main way that Duffy's conclusions differed from Bossy is that Duffy viewed the success of the Tudor reforms as an obliteration rather than a transformation of English Catholicism. While Catholicism was not extinct by the end of Elizabeth's reign, Duffy notes that the queen's religious settlement had led to the rise of a new generation of English men and women who had been raised on the Anglican sermons of Elizabeth's ministry and "did not look back to the Catholic past as their own, but another country, another world."¹² In the wake of the apparent victory of Protestantism during Elizabeth's reign, Bossy suggested that the Catholic faith survived, but in a radically altered form due to the actions of the Tudors; however, Duffy reached a more destructive

¹⁰ Eamon Duffy, *Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 190.

¹¹ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 8.

¹² *Ibid.*, 593.

conclusion, arguing that the Tudors saw to the death of the traditional faith as older forms of Catholic worship were gradually purged from the English landscape.

Other scholars have been more critical of Bossy's interpretation. In the same years that Bossy crafted his arguments, his contemporary Christopher Haigh conducted similar research that led him to very different conclusions. Although he agreed with Bossy with regard to the state of pre-Reformation Catholicism, Haigh did not accept Bossy's main thesis that Catholicism underwent a dramatic transformation under Elizabeth.¹³ Instead, Haigh broke the Reformation in England down into smaller parts, complicating the larger narrative of the English Reformation by examining the various groups in England that played a part in the gradual and inconsistent changes taking place across much of the sixteenth century. In Haigh's narrative, there were scholars like Hugh Latimer and William Tyndale, who called for immediate, wholesale reform in England. Conversely, there were staunch opponents to reform and defenders of tradition, such as John Fisher and Thomas More. And then there were those who fell somewhere in between the extremes, who could accept some aspects of the Reformation while denying or ignoring others.¹⁴ As Haigh explores the choices that those living through the English Reformation made with regard to the changing nature of the church, his depiction of English reform becomes more complicated than a struggle between Catholic and Protestant factions.

Indeed, Reformation England became a bit of a bizarre anomaly in Haigh's work as he compared the violent and abrupt religious shifts seen in the cities of the Holy Roman Empire and the Swiss Confederacy to the gradual and subtle changes that took place under

¹³ Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 13.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

the Tudors.¹⁵ Though the Church of England officially became Protestant under Henry VIII, the people of England, for the most part, did not.¹⁶ This does not mean that Haigh entirely agreed with Bossy's transformational thesis on early modern Catholicism; instead, Haigh's work complicated the picture of the English Reformation by introducing a new means of viewing the English men and women who witnessed and reacted to the religious changes that the Tudors initiated. This new category of English men and women was certainly not Catholic, as Haigh argued that nearly all of the English population now lay outside of the influence of the Catholic Church. Nor were they Lutheran. Instead, Haigh posited, most of the men and women of England were conformists; but they conformed in a manner that suited themselves on an individual basis. Rather than the dramatic shift in religious views that Bossy described, Haigh has pushed for a more uneven, gradual, and unpredictable shift taking place within the English population.

Haigh's ideas have influenced many of the histories on this topic over the last thirty years and the last major development in the field of recusant history has emerged mainly from his conclusions on the diverse nature of the English laity. More recently, Alexandra Walsham's work has added further complexities to the arguments that have diverted scholarly attention towards the more elusive topic of personal faith. The works of Bossy, Haigh, and others regularly cast Elizabethan England as a battlefield between two faiths competing for supremacy over the English population. Walsham counters this view by examining a relative minority in England, popularly identified as "Church Papists" by

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 290.

Elizabethan authorities.¹⁷ These English men and women straddled the line between Catholicism and Protestantism by outwardly conforming to Anglicanism while maintaining their true faith internally, much to the distaste of reformers on both sides of the religious divide.¹⁸ Papistry was condemned by some Catholic writers as a blatant rejection of the traditional faith, while others welcomed the approach as a necessary strategy for the survival of English Catholicism. Regardless, Walsham argues that papists may well have made up a significant proportion of the English population due to the impressive response that they drew from authorities.¹⁹ More significantly, the recognition of this group has altered the approaches of historians to English Catholicism. The narrative is no longer a conflict between two faiths, but rather an uneven patchwork of belief that recent histories have only begun to uncover. Walsham's approach is not without its limitations as uncovering the internal beliefs of historical figures remains difficult due to the secretive nature of Church Papistry. Nevertheless, her work has undeniably altered the shape of the study of English Reformation Catholicism by calling attention to the multiplicity of Catholic worship and belief in the early modern era.

Walsham's work has had a tremendous influence on the recusant histories of the last decade. Some historians have taken up the challenge of uncovering internal belief, as in the case of Donna Hamilton's reappraisal of Anthony Munday. Munday, long believed to have acted a spy for the Elizabethan state, appears as much more sympathetic to the Catholic cause in Hamilton's depiction as he worked to revive Catholic texts that had been

¹⁷ Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity, and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1993), 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

suppressed by the crown.²⁰ Hamilton refrains from making a hard claim as to Munday's true beliefs but her work demonstrates a new attention to the complicated nature of Reformation faith. On a grander level, Walsham's ideas have also led to the expansion of the scope of histories of Catholicism as seen through her own large-scale history of the British Reformation. Anachronistic as the title may be, Walsham's *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain* attempts to situate the Catholic Reformation in Britain within the larger movement of Catholic renewal on the European continent. Returning to her earlier arguments concerning conformity, Walsham works to show that England, alongside much of Europe, was undergoing an evolution of social norms that placed more emphasis on individual autonomy. Where outward expression had been the norm for espousing one's faith, inward and private belief became the standard for most Christian denominations. Further, she argues that these groups should no longer be viewed as divided or incompatible as they interacted with one another on a daily basis. As a result, Walsham maintains that the English Catholic community was instrumental in shaping the English state.

Despite its title, Walsham's work does not focus heavily on Scotland or Ireland; happily, this shortcoming has been remedied through the work of Thomas McCoog. McCoog's study offers greater attention to the religious complexities of the British Isles. What he finds are three distinct communities that created their own varied responses to reform, all of which ultimately converged as the looming succession question in England arose when Elizabeth's health deteriorated in the early seventeenth century. The debate over conformity most popularly associated with England reemerged in Ireland, where

²⁰ Donna Hamilton, *Anthony Munday and the Catholics* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), 3.

ideas on faith were tied to Irish cultural identity and divided Catholics over issues of what McCoog construes as early Irish nationalism.²¹ Similar issues of faith emerged in Scotland, where many were divided over their allegiance to James VI. James becomes an intriguing figure in McCoog's work as the king plays England, France, and Spain off of one another and beguiles them by keeping the matter of his faith a closely guarded secret. Ultimately, he succeeds to the English throne without ever having to wage a war with any of these major powers.

This broadening of the scope of English Reformation studies has likewise led to studies that add further connections between Elizabethan England and the rest of the European continent. Teresa Bela's collection of essays reveals a wide variety of publishing practices across Europe that arose in response to the situation in England. These responses to Elizabeth's reign took the form of translation efforts of Catholic, often Spanish, texts in England, the establishment of a recusant printing press in Southwark at the behest of the Jesuits, and the establishment of several Catholic seminaries on the continent, particularly in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.²²

For many historians, these colleges and their counterpart schools in France, Spain, and the Low Countries formed the basis for Catholic missionary work during the reign of Elizabeth. They have often been portrayed as schools that were meant to produce priests and missionaries who would return to England with the training necessary to maintain and potentially restore Catholicism there. This latter goal was eventually attempted in 1580

²¹ Thomas McCoog, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England, 1589-1597: Building the faith of St. Peter on the King of Spain's Monarchy* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 7.

²² Teresa Bela et al., *Publishing Subversive Texts in Elizabethan England and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 5.

when the Jesuits led missionaries, including graduates from the continental seminary network, into England on an official reconversion mission. Led by the English Jesuits Robert Persons and Edmund Campion, the mission lasted just over a year with the two men moving covertly through southern England and secretly publishing pamphlets critiquing the Elizabethan regime and the state of English Catholicism. Their efforts would ultimately fail in 1581 when Campion was apprehended by Elizabethan authorities and Persons would depart for the continent, never to return.

Although this mission into England was brief, it has often been tied to the continental seminary network that arose following Elizabeth's accession. Francis Courtney provided one of the earliest examinations of the French colleges of Liège, Douai, and Rheims, examining the curriculum and structure of these schools and noting the significant number of English students enrolled there.²³ These colleges have remained tied to later twentieth-century studies of the English Mission; however, they have occupied a liminal place in terms of their importance to the mission itself. They receive only a passing reference in Malcolm South's retelling of the Mission, and Robert Scully's more recent and more nuanced approach to the story of the events of 1580 devotes little attention to the influence of this network of seminaries.²⁴

This trend does not appear to have changed much in recent decades as histories of the English Mission regularly follow the lead of South and Scully, presenting a narrative of the Jesuit infiltration of England, their movements and the network of recusants that they

²³ Francis Courtney, "English Jesuit Colleges in the Low Countries, 1593-1794" *The Heythrop Journal* 4, 3 (1963), 254.

²⁴ Malcolm South, *The Joint Mission to England, 1580-1581* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1999); Robert Scully, *Into the Lion's Den: The Jesuit Mission in Elizabethan England and Wales* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2011).

worked through, and the ultimate unraveling of the Mission in 1581. Some historians have taken a more critical approach to the Mission, as seen through Michael Carrafiello's presentation of the Mission as an attempt at forcible conversion of English Protestants rather than pastoral care for the recusant community.²⁵ But by and large, historians have generally ignored the influence of the continental seminary network, viewing it mainly as a source of missionaries to be utilized in the course of the 1580 mission. This dissertation aims to rework this interpretation by simultaneously offering greater insight into the experiences of those who lived at these schools in the buildup to 1580 and examining how the interests and motives of these priests and students changed during the years of Elizabeth I's reign. As such, this dissertation will present a new view of the English Mission that is not restricted to the 1580 return to England led by the Jesuits Robert Persons and Edmund Campion. Instead, I see the Mission as a much longer-term process that grew more aggressive and deadly as the sixteenth century progressed. The 1580 mission is just one episode in this decades-long story within which the seminaries of Italy and the Low Countries played a significant role.

With regard to the schools themselves, scholars have written on each of the three institutions that will be examined here; the historiographies of each individual school have been limited by specific factors. In the case of the town of Douai, the work has focused solely on the Irish and Scottish colleges as most recently demonstrated by Mark Dilworth and John Brady's examination of each respectively.²⁶ For St. Omer, founded in what was

²⁵ Michael Carrafiello, "English Catholicism and the Jesuit Mission of 1580-1581" *The Historical Journal* 37, 4 (1994), 761.

²⁶ Mark Dilworth, "The Curle-Mowbray family and the Scots College Douai," *The Innes Review* 56, 1 (2005); John Brady, "The Irish Colleges at Douai and Antwerp," *Archivium Hibernicum* 13 (1947).

then the Spanish Netherlands, little is written specifically on the college and what little there is focuses on the Stuart era after Elizabeth's death in 1603.²⁷ The English College in Rome is easily the most studied of the three seminaries assessed in this study; however, recent scholarship has chiefly focused on such disparate topics as the college's musical output, literary production, and cultural overlap between English and Roman subjects.²⁸ Few works delve into the intricacies of the individual schools; Jason Nice's relatively recent examination of the English College in Rome serves as a prime example of the sort of insights further study can reveal regarding the impact of these spaces. Nice details the experiences of Welsh students at the English College in Rome and shows the gradual decline in influence and numbers of Welsh students there relative to those from England as English influences began to take hold.²⁹ While the situation in Rome appears to have been more extreme than other locales, it was certainly not the only space in which recusants disagreed on how to counter English Protestantism. This study will begin by working through the variety of experience that these schools offered before moving into a broader examination of the course of the English Mission that these schools influenced throughout the second half of the sixteenth century.

²⁷ Michael Walsh, "The Publishing Policy of the English Jesuits at St. Omer, 1608-1759," *Studies in Church History*, 17 (1981).

²⁸ Thomas Culley, "Musical activity in some sixteenth century Jesuit colleges, with special reference to the venerable English College in Rome from 1579 to 1589," *Analecta Musicologica* 19 (1979); Peter Davidson, "The Literary Material in the archives of the Venerable English College, Rome," *Bulletin of the Society for Renaissance Studies* 20, 1 (2002); Carol Richardson, "The Venerable English College: a study in Anglo-Roman cultural relations," *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 76 (2005).

²⁹ Jason Nice, "Being British in Rome: The Welsh at the English College, 1578-1584," *The Catholic Historical Review* 92, 1 (2006), 2.

Allen and Persons

Central to the story of the English Mission are two men who were instrumental in the founding of the continental seminary network and the initiation of efforts to reconvert England. The lives of both men, William Allen and Robert Persons, have been covered by twentieth-century biographers; however, these accounts provide little more than a basic accounting of their lives and offer little analysis of the role that they played in the English Mission nor the role of the colleges as components of the politics surround the Mission. Thus, I offer a brief addendum in the following biographical sketches of each man, and their respective critical roles in the schools of the English Mission.

The oldest biography of Allen was published in 1908 and moves steadily through his early education before his departure for the continent in the 1560s.³⁰ Allen's role in founding the Douai seminary, as well as his later involvement with the colleges in Rome and Rheims, is certainly covered; however, there is little contextualization of the role of these colleges in the overall English Mission nor the diversity of experiences and approaches that each college developed. Little space is devoted to the discord within the colleges, particularly the Roman college, and the account is written mainly as a glorification of Allen's "heroic" efforts in the founding of continental schools.³¹ This narrative of Allen's life was expanded upon six years afterward by Martin Haile, who offers some contextualization of Allen's role by including more on the developments in Elizabeth's court, but once again the focus of this work is firmly on Allen's achievements rather than the impact of the colleges that he founded.³² A further examination of Allen's theological

³⁰ Bede Camm, *William Allen: Founder of Seminaries* (London: Macdonald and Evans, 1908), viii.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 81.

³² Martin Haile, *An Elizabethan Cardinal, William Allen* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1914)

writings was published in 1939, but in this case, the colleges are mentioned only in passing.³³ Historians after World War II have contributed little more to Allen's biography.³⁴

Much the same can be said of the historiography of Robert Persons, despite the noticeable difference in the number of texts written on his life compared to Allen's, and the more recent scholarly interest in his life and career. Persons' life was first examined in the 1960s in John Edward Parish's monograph, which praised Persons' written works that contributed to the course of the Counter Reformation.³⁵ He next appeared in Ernest Reynolds' narrative history of the Jesuit Mission to England in which Persons and Edmund Campion's venture into England in 1580 was chronicled.³⁶ A similar narrative is presented in Malcolm South's examination of the causes and events that led to the Jesuit Mission to England; however, this too is limited to tracing the movements and actions of men like Persons and Campion while connecting the mission to the English political situation surrounding Mary Stuart and continental tensions arising in the aftermath of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre.³⁷ And finally, much like Allen, Persons also possesses an extended biography that chronicles his life but does little in the way of analyzing him as a link between continental seminaries and counter-reformation efforts in England.³⁸

³³ Thomas McElligott, *The Eucharistic Doctrine of Cardinal William Allen (1532-1594)* (Rome: Catholic Book Agency, 1939).

³⁴ *Letters of William Allen and Richard Barret, 1572-1598* (London: Catholic Records Society, 1967); Garrett Mattingly, *William Allen and Catholic propaganda in England* (Geneva: E. Droz, 1957); Thomas Clancy, *Papist Pamphleteers: the Allen-Persons party and the political thought of the Counter-Reformation in England, 1572-1615* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1964); Stewart Foster, *Cardinal William Allen 1532-1594* (London: London Catholic Truth Society, 1993).

³⁵ John Edward Parish, *Robert Persons and the English Counter Reformation: Monograph in English History* (Houston: Rice University Press, 1966).

³⁶ E.E. Reynolds, *Campion and Parsons: The Jesuit Mission of 1580-1* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1980)

³⁷ South, *The Joint Mission to England*, xi-xiii.

³⁸ Francis Edwards, *Robert Persons: The Biography of an Elizabethan Jesuit, 1546-1610* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1995).

Since the late 1990s, analytical monographs focused on Persons have been published; however, these generally focus on Persons' publishing history, particularly his works on politics and theology. Michael Carrafiello has documented Persons' political career, showing Persons' active involvement in the schemes to promote a Catholic heir to the English throne.³⁹ Similarly, Victor Houliston's work focuses on Persons' adaptation of Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* as another form of missionary work during his career.⁴⁰ Indeed, Houliston has routinely returned to Persons' writing for a variety of purposes, including examining his rhetoric when responding to slander in the early seventeenth century along with his correspondence during the 1580 Mission into England⁴¹ While some of these topics will feature in this dissertation, Persons involvement in plans against the Crown will be analyzed not only by expanding the network of continental recusants alongside whom Persons worked (many of whom were connected with Persons' seminaries), but also by focusing on Persons' connections to the plots surrounding Mary Stuart and his later political writings on resistance theory.

Sources:

The sources utilized for this dissertation come mainly from the English National Archives, the British Library, the British Jesuit Archives, and the archives of Stonyhurst College. For the initial three chapters that each focus on one particular seminary, the chief sources

³⁹ Michael Carrafiello, *Robert Persons and English Catholicism, 1580-1610* (Selingrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1998), 14.

⁴⁰ Victor Houliston, *Catholic Resistance in Elizabethan England: Robert Persons's Jesuit Polemic, 1580-1610* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 20.

⁴¹ Id., "Baffling the Blatant Beast: Robert Persons' Anti-Appellant Rhetoric, 1601-1602," *The Catholic Historical Review* 90, 3 (2004); Id., "Robert Persons' Precarious Correspondence," *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, 1, 1(2014).

examined are records pertaining to the maintenance of the schools or lists of the student body, as well as texts and manuscripts written by the organizers of the seminary network.

Chapter One relies mainly on an extended record of the general activity and occurrences at Douai College, supplemented by letters and other writings from William Allen. Chapter Two relies on Robert Persons' memoirs and reflections on his time spent at the Venerable English College in Rome, and chapter three draws heavily from the St. Omer Customs book, which presents the vision of the school's initial rector for the college and its students. Each of these batches of sources provide direct access to some of the principal administrators and benefactors related to each college, which offers some insight into the official mission and goals for each seminary.

The natural drawback for these sources is that they often present an idealized vision for their respective schools, the validity of which is often difficult to ascertain. The St. Omer Customs Book in particular was written by the school's rector from his deathbed and often proscribes rules and guidelines for the handling of the school's students. While this is useful in understanding what was expected from day-to-day life at St. Omer, more work would be necessary to better recreate the actual experiences of those living there. The records of college expenses utilized for several schools provide some aid in understanding student numbers, activities, diets, and living situations; however, these records are far from complete and leave even basic information regarding the number of students living in these spaces as estimates.

Finally, these sources are all products of English writers, which limits the conclusions reached in chapter Two in which the English clash with the Welsh students in Rome. Without a Welsh perspective, the assessment of the dispute is presented exclusively

from an English point of view that unsurprisingly casts the Welsh in a negative, adversarial light. The inclusion of accounts from visitors to the college during these years has helped to corroborate the version of events presented by Robert Persons; however, additional work on the college's Welsh rector would allow for further insight into the controversy that that chapter centers on.

While the first three chapters focus on the individual schools themselves, the remaining two address broader themes related to the English Mission and utilize a variety of sources, including letters, confessions, political pamphlets, and additional writings of the two main historical actors examined in this dissertation. Chapter Four relies on correspondence and other documents related to the many plots and conspiracies against Elizabeth I, particularly the network of conspirators connected to Mary Stuart that included Jesuits like Robert Persons. With regard to materials connected to these plots and the subsequent interrogations and confessions of those apprehended by Elizabeth's spy network, it is difficult to identify which elements of these sources have been exaggerated, cyphered, or fabricated entirely in the course of either concealing a given plot on the part of Elizabeth's enemies or eliciting information and confessions on the part of her protectors. However, my analysis is less concerned with the intricacies of these plots and more focused on establishing the degree to which the proponents of the continental seminary network were connected to Mary Stuart and the attempts to make her Queen of England.

Lastly, the sources for chapter Five are drawn predominantly from the bibliographies of William Allen and Robert Persons. By this point in the latter stages of the English Mission, these two men remain the key facilitators of the Mission and their writing during the French Wars of Religion correlates with the evolution of late-sixteenth century

political philosophy. Significant attention has also been paid to the political writings that circulated through France during these years and my analysis aims to situate the work of Allen and Persons in that intellectual environment. The main limit here is the degree to which these particular men truly influenced the monarchical courts of France and Spain, given the wide array of political theorists active during these years. Nonetheless, Allen and Persons' stance on resistance theory and royal power is clear and stands in stark contrast to the political developments that *Reason of State* thinking facilitated.

Chapter Outline

The following dissertation is divided into five chapters, each focusing on a different aspect of the English Mission: the seminaries tied to its initiation, the recusant exiles and their allies who managed and lived in these schools, and the steadily changing nature of the Mission's character as the sixteenth century progressed.

The first three chapters highlight three of the schools founded by recusants and eventually managed by the Jesuits. The first of these chapters is set predominantly in Douai at the college founded there in 1568 by Cardinal William Allen, and it examines the strategies that the earliest proponents of the recusant community intended to utilize in preserving Catholicism abroad.

The second chapter considers the next major college founded by the English in Rome in 1579. While a natural location for a prominent Catholic seminary, the English college in Rome would reveal some of the earliest fractures within the growing English Mission as the English student majority clashed with the relatively small contingent of Welsh students over matters of preferential treatment. Over time, this struggle would

divide the college over the issue of the college's purpose and mission when it came to the reconversion of England, as the Welsh students and their administrative supporters eventually made it clear that they had no intention of returning home. For them, the English Mission was over before it ever really began.

The third chapter touches on the last major seminary in this study, one that survives to this day in the form of Stonyhurst College in northern England. Founded in 1593 in what was then the Spanish Netherlands (sometimes known as Flanders), the then College of St. Omer enjoyed direct support from the Spanish crown well into the seventeenth century. Unlike its counterpart schools examined in the first two chapters, St. Omer was founded after the mission to England in 1580 and played little role in the actual reconversion projects concocted by Persons, Allen, and Campion. Nonetheless, the school maintained similar standards to the Douai College and represented the last stage of the English Mission as the remaining recusant leaders held on to their fleeting hopes that a new reconversion effort might yet emerge in the coming years. Additionally, thanks to the records preserved at Stonyhurst, this chapter includes a more complete examination of the day-to-day experience of the students, instructors, and administrators living in recusant seminary communities. Also noted in Chapter Three, this school relocated multiple times and regularly changed its name as a result of these movements.

As much as St. Omer aimed to preserve what remained of the English Mission, it rapidly became clear that the methods of the Mission would have to change if any real headway was to be made in England. As such, the final two chapters broadly examine the last stages of the Mission's evolution and collapse, while situating the position of these colleges and the key figures associated with them in this final phase. Following the failure

of Persons and Campion's mission to England in 1580-81 the proponents of the Mission grew noticeably more desperate as their missionary attempts to reconvert England steadily failed and many began to promote more direct and eventually violent means for reestablishing Catholicism across the Channel. This evolution can best be seen in the conspiracies that arose around Elizabeth and Mary, Queen of Scots in the 1580s. Chapter four will examine how the plots against the English Crown grew more and more disjointed and disunited until one final conspiracy planned a direct attempt on Elizabeth's life, which set in motion Mary's execution and the ill-fated Spanish Armada in 1588. After that year, what hope the recusant community still harbored for a restoration of their ways was fleetingly optimistic at best.

The final chapter examines the final stage of the English Mission. While the chronology of this chapter will overlap with earlier sections of this study, this section is mainly focused on the steady shift in attitudes towards Jesuit missionary efforts by monarchs, courtiers, and political theorists. As the conspiracies against Elizabeth grew more aggressive in the 1570s and 80s, the priorities of Catholic powers on the continent underwent their own transformation as political theorists on both sides of the religious divide debated theories of resistance against the unchecked authority of sovereign powers. From the Catholic standpoint, these theories of resistance were meant to devalue the authority wielded by Elizabeth, but Protestant thinkers naturally utilized the very same arguments to conduct similar challenges against Catholic monarchs as well. This back and forth expressed itself notably during the French Wars of Religion that raged from 1562 until 1598, which would feature the betrayal and assassination of several kings and nobles in response to their perceived inability to rule adequately. The execution of Mary, Queen of

Scots in 1587 only added to the distress that Catholic Europe was beginning to experience as resistance theorists challenged the traditional hierarchy of European political power. Even more distressing to Catholic monarchs were the tendencies of Jesuit thinkers to elevate the Pope as the lone supreme authority over all of Europe. As the Reformation led to a reimagining of the relationship between secular and religious leaders, Catholic monarchs in particular came to resent the promotion of papal power over their own, an attitude that would grow more prominent in subsequent centuries as the anti-Jesuit Gallican movement steadily gained popularity in continental courts.⁴² Even in the sixteenth century when the Catholic world was expected to unite against Protestant forces in England, Catholic rulers were already jealous of papal authority and power, and the regular exaltations of the Pope's supremacy further alienated these rulers from the English Mission. Following the defeat of the Armada, Catholic rulers in Spain and France began to redirect their attention to other matters of state and this reevaluation of priorities would cause a sudden loss of support for what remained of the English Mission.

By 1603, the missionary work that had begun so enthusiastically forty years earlier would be concluded and no further serious attempts would be made to bring England back into the Catholic fold. In the end, the English Mission was undone through a combination of disorganized reconversion efforts and changing political attitudes in the latter half of the sixteenth century. This deadly combination of circumstances would prove fatal to recusant English hopes of restoring the traditional faith in their homeland. Despite significant

⁴² Originating in the Middle Ages in France, Gallicanism is the view that the authority of a independent state's secular powers (often a monarch) is superior to that of the Roman Catholic Church. This belief stands in contrast to Ultramontanism, which argues in favor of the Pope's supreme authority over the secular, civil authorities of Europe. Gallicanism remained influential throughout the Reformation Era and continued to influence French, and later broader European, politics during the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.

optimism for the restoration of Catholicism in England at the time of Elizabeth's ascension, inner tensions and divisions within the recusant community made it virtually impossible to successfully navigate the changing political environment of western Europe of the sixteenth century. And as this dissertation will show, those inner divisions emerged most prominently within the continental seminary network founded by William Allen and Robert Persons.

Chapter 1: Douai

Lastly, by frequent familiar conversations, we make our students thoroughly acquainted with the chief impieties, blasphemies, absurdities, cheats, and trickeries of the English heretics, as well as with their ridiculous writings, sayings, and doings. The result is that they not only hold the heretics in perfect detestation but they also marvel and feel sorrow of heart that there should be any found so wicked, simple, and reckless of their salvation as to believe such teachers, or so cowardly or worldly-minded as to go along with such abandoned men in their schism or sect, instead of openly avowing to their face the faith of the Catholic Church and their own.

-William Allen, c. 1576

Le College des Grands Anglais was a seminary founded in France in 1568 in direct response to the rise of Elizabeth Tudor a decade earlier. Unlike her siblings, Elizabeth proved to be in far better health and more secure in her person than either of her predecessors and after ten years of rule, many within the recusant English Catholic community were beginning to grow leery of their queen's surprising vitality. Among them was William Allen, the mastermind behind the founding of a number of seminaries in continental Europe, whose goal was to produce missionaries who would carry out a peaceful crusade into England to revive the traditional faith at home. Yet, despite the college's clear desire to restore traditional Christian worship, the instruction carried out there suggests that Catholicism itself was also changing as a result of the Reformation. Thanks to the impact of Luther, Henry VIII, and Elizabeth, learned Catholics like Allen reasoned that the restoration of the true faith in England would be impossible without adapting to the new rules that governed the religious landscape of Europe that Protestantism was now dictating. To this end, the administration of the English college at Douai, though resolute in its singular goal of English conversion, began to direct its students towards noticeably Protestant proselytization practices. In the course of its early years, the college of Douai would steadily move towards the encouragement of students to

develop their oratorical and rhetorical skills for public preaching as well as their language skills for utilizing vernacular translations of scripture in their impending missionary work. This latter development would ultimately culminate in a new translation of the Bible into vernacular English, a task assigned to and carried out by the members of the college at Douai and one that would come to reflect the new views of Catholic authorities towards Church authority, biblical interpretation, and Catholic traditions. Douai may have been founded as a refuge for Catholic exiles, but the students who advanced through its programs before graduating and returning home to England departed with new skills that were heavily influenced by Protestant practices.

This shift in approach demonstrates both the early enthusiasm for the English Mission in the wake of Elizabeth's rise to power, as well as the beginnings of the gradual shift towards more direct means of preserving Catholicism through the continental seminary network. While missionary work remained the primary focus at Douai throughout its early years, the move towards more public and accessible tactics deemed necessary to reach a wider population of potential converts reflects the start of more aggressive methods of conversion, well before Robert Persons and Edmund Campion would lead seminary graduates back into England in 1580. Further, the experiences at Douai demonstrate noticeable differences between its own administration and that of other English colleges on the continent. As later chapters will reinforce, Douai's methods of instruction differed from its counterpart colleges in Rome and St. Omer and these differences would later serve to undo the English Mission by the end of the sixteenth century.

The chief source for examining the early years of the college is the Douai Diary, a Latin compendium of the “principal occurrences at the college” that details the observances of the Jesuit administration that conducted the school through its early terms and beyond.⁴³ The first diary, entitled *Catalogus Sacerdotum*, begins not long after the initial founding of the college in 1568 and consists of lists of those who came to the college and were later sent to England as part of the English Mission. The second diary picks up around 1575 and continues through the bulk of Elizabeth I’s reign, coming to a close in 1593. After an interruption of five years, the third diary covers the years between 1598 and 1633, after which another interruption of eight years follows. The fourth diary begins in 1641 and concludes in 1647, while a fifth diary records the years between 1647 and 1654. From this point until 1676, no further entries were made until a sixth diary described the events of the college up through 1692. Beyond this point, no diary was kept until the president of the college, the reverend Robert Witham, undertook a search for the diaries that had been unused for about two decades. Upon uncovering these texts in 1715, Witham began recording a seventh and eighth diary that would narrate the events from 1715 through 1778.

With regard to the Tudor and early Stuart era, the writing of the first two diaries was likely carried out by rectors and presidents of the college. Of the four different handwritings that appear in the first diary’s construction, that of Thomas Worthington is the only one identified with the records kept during the reign of Elizabeth.⁴⁴ Worthington was the third president of the college, having been graduated from Douai in 1577 and

⁴³ The First and Second Douai Diaries, compiled by Thomas Knox (London, David Nutt 270 Strand St, 1878) *Archivium Britannicum Societatis Iesu* 43/1/7, iii.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vi.

lectured on theology there for one or two years afterwards.⁴⁵ After traveling to England independently in 1579 for missionary purposes, he returned to the Low Countries in 1585 and moved between Douai and Rheims while working on a number of publishing ventures. He became president of the Douai college in 1599, and his duties likely included editing and adding to the growing records of the college's diaries. The second diary is similarly written in several different hands, however none of them have been identified. Given Worthington's involvement in the initial diary, as well as the diary's own stipulation that the text be kept in the president's room at all times, it is likely that it and the other diaries were written and maintained by seminary authorities that preceded and succeeded Worthington.⁴⁶

Given that these diaries were written by Catholic and eventually Jesuit authors, the descriptions of the activities at the college and the depictions of those involved with the college's founding (particularly Allen) are unsurprisingly positive. The history of the college is presented as a narrative of resistance against the acts of the newly ascended Queen Elizabeth and the college's impact on the survival of Catholicism in England is heavily emphasized throughout, with the author claiming that the diary "should be consulted by all who desire to form for themselves a correct estimate of that eventful period [1558-1601]."⁴⁷ In spite of this partisan defense of the Catholic position, the diary remains useful for the descriptions of the manner in which the college was run and how its students were educated. Also useful are several lists of the students who attended the college, priests who were ordained there, students who took oaths and professions of faith

⁴⁵ A.J. Loomie, "Worthington, Thomas (1549-1626)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2012).

⁴⁶ *Diarium Primum*, in *The First and Second Douai Diary*, *Archivium Britannicum Societatis Iesu* 43/1/7, 48.

⁴⁷ *The First and Second Douai Diaries*, cviii.

introduced several decades after the college's founding, and priests who were sent back to England during the remainder of Elizabeth's reign and into the seventeenth century. While many of these lists are dated to the years after Elizabeth's death, a number of earlier ones allow for some insight into who was present at the college in the years leading up to Persons and Campion's return to England in 1580-81 and who from among the college's inhabitants followed their example well after the conclusion of their missionary efforts.

The diary was begun in the context of the ascension of Elizabeth Tudor to the English throne in 1558 and opens with a total denunciation of the new monarchy.⁴⁸ Blatantly disregarding the stated intentions (and actions) of the Queen, the diary asserts that Elizabeth had long desired to break England away from the Catholic Church. The text touches upon the religious situation in England in 1558, reflecting that a strong Catholic contingent still survived in England, as evidenced by its reemergence under Mary Tudor, and laments that Elizabeth's religious settlement passed Parliament by only the slightest of margins.⁴⁹ This version of events simplifies what was a complex debate involving Elizabeth, her councilors, and the House of Lords that included a large voting block of Catholic bishops installed by Mary Tudor.⁵⁰ The initial introduction of a renewed Act of Supremacy, along with two bills meant to revive the Protestant church services introduced under Edward VI was met with strong opposition, and Elizabeth was forced to make several concessions to eventually pass her legislation through Parliament. This included modifications to the Edwardian Book of Common Prayer, revisions to the Litany to remove criticism and abuse towards the papacy, the inclusion of vestments and ornaments during

⁴⁸ Ibid., xv.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Haigh, *English Reformations*, 239.

mass, and several other procedural adjustments to align Anglican church services with traditional masses.⁵¹ Opposition to these bills persisted; however, Elizabeth's concessions were enough to gain the approval of the lay peers in Parliament. Nonetheless, the Douai Diary's account is still correct in its depiction of a close voting margin for a portion of the queen settlement as the modified Act of Uniformity passed by only three votes.⁵²

But pass it did and what followed was a reinforcement of the Acts of Supremacy that had made Henry VIII and Edward VI the supreme heads of the church of England. In order to placate her political opponents, Elizabeth took a different approach to reform than her father and brother. Rather than assume to the role of head of the Anglican Church, the queen took the title of supreme governor of the Church of England, a subtle means of reinforcing her religious authority in her realm while avoiding controversial comparisons to the traditional head of the Roman Church. As Caroline Levine has shown, forms and titles such as these could be powerful ways to reinforce political hierarchies and the Elizabethan state carefully crafted Elizabeth's image to present her as a humble servant of God while simultaneously securing her civil and religious authority in England.⁵³

Although Elizabeth's regime was skilled in molding the queen's popular image for her people, English Catholics abroad remained staunchly opposed to her rule, particularly when it came to the more direct methods that Elizabeth would later take to secure her rule. In the wake of the queen's settlement, the crown began to demand oaths of loyalty to the new queen. Those who refused were stripped of their property and offices in the

⁵¹ "The Act of Uniformity of 1559." in *Tudor Constitutional Documents, AD 1485-1603*, J.R. Turner, ed, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 136-39.

⁵² Haigh, *English Reformations*, 240-41

⁵³ Caroline Levine, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Network* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 16.

government or the church, with further offenses garnering a punishment of prison time and possibly execution.⁵⁴ A host of similar proclamations followed, which had the immediate effect of driving a number of English Catholics into exile. The diary records the departure of men from England including Thomas Harding, William Allen, Nicholas Sanders, Thomas Heskins, Thomas Stapleton, Alan Cope, John Rastell, Thomas Hide, John Yarshall, Thomas Dorman, and Robert Pointz, among others who flocked to France, Italy, Spain, and in particular the Netherlands, which was still nominally under the control of Philip II.⁵⁵ Many congregated at Louvain (modern Belgium), where they spent several years producing treatises against the English crown, writing in English so as to attract not only the learned community but the English masses as well. The diary reports that their efforts gradually attracted many of those English Catholics who were seen as wavering between conformity to Elizabeth's decrees and resistance against the Reformation.⁵⁶ However, these critiques likewise drew the ire of the English crown, leading to more and more decrees restricting the rights of English Catholics that continued to make the position of non-Protestants untenable. Because loyalty oaths were now required by all who wished to join the English clergy or serve in any sort of educational vocation, it was only a matter of time in the eyes of the government before the old order of Catholic priests died out and the English laity would gradually transition to a homogenous Anglican community. Elizabeth and her ministers needed only to wait for the ensuing generations of English subjects to

⁵⁴ The First and Second Douai Diaries, xvi.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, xix.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

lose their ties to the old faith as its defenders were steadily forced into conformity, silence, and exile.⁵⁷

Although the Elizabethan regime's goal of eradicating Catholicism in England would not totally succeed, the state's methods and aims have been routinely noted in studies of the English Reformation. As noted in this dissertation's introduction, Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars* concludes in the 1570s by which point a new generation of English subjects was already taking shape in the wake of the Elizabethan Religious Settlement that had replaced Catholic practices and liturgy with Protestant customs.⁵⁸ Christopher Haigh has also noted the gradual nature of England's Reformation and although Catholicism survived Elizabeth's reign, both Haigh and Duffy note the remarkable change in the English religious landscape that was initiated by the queen's subtle reforms and sustained by her surprising longevity.⁵⁹

On the continent, the exiles recognized the queen's tactics and knew that something must be done immediately to thwart the crown's plans. Even if a Catholic monarch were to take the throne after Elizabeth's death, an idea that many Catholics optimistically clung to given the recent reign of Mary Tudor, there might well be no trained Catholic priests to fill the offices of the English church and restore the traditional faith there. The Diary laments that none of the exiles were willing to take up the task of training new priests; however, it dramatically singles out William Allen as a sort of "Second Moses" to lead the way in preserving Catholic doctrine abroad.⁶⁰ The Diary's portrayal of Allen is highly favorable in

⁵⁷ Ibid., xxi.

⁵⁸ Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 590-93.

⁵⁹ Haigh, *English Reformations*, 13.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

crediting him as the sole factor behind the salvaging of some small vestige of Catholicism in England and keeping the country somewhat connected to Rome, drawing a contrast with the situation in Scandinavia where Lutheranism had come to dominate.⁶¹

There can be little doubt that Allen was tremendously influential when it came to organizing the foundations of the mission into England that would take place in 1580. Born in 1532, in the same year that Henry VIII famously married Anne Boleyn, Allen grew up as part of the landed gentry and attended university at Oxford, where he distinguished himself as a fellow of Oriel College in 1550.⁶² Coming of age amid the upheaval of the English church, Allen had seen the Reformation in England evolve in the later years of Henry's life and the brief reign of his son, Edward VI. Upon the ascension of Mary, Allen was primed to devote his life to ecclesiastical study and thus pursued a master's degree that propelled him into administrative roles at Oxford. His career was well on the rise until it stalled when Elizabeth came to the throne and the requirement of oaths of loyalty forced him to resign his offices at the university. He still retained a residence there due to lax enforcement of the new laws, but Allen did not wait long before departing from Oxford and ultimately from England in 1561. He crossed the channel into Flanders and found refuge at Louvain where many of his countrymen had made their way in the few previous years. There, he began writing treatises against the Anglican church and tutored several students who would return to the Elizabethan court to promote the preservation of Catholicism. Allen himself would return to England in 1562 due to his failing health and he spent three years there moving between Oxford, Norfolk, and the homes of sympathetic friends as he continued to

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Eamon Duffy, "Allen, William, (1532-1594)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008).

promote his faith in an increasingly intolerant England. Next, he was compelled to flee his homeland once more in 1565 and returned to Louvain, where he received his holy orders and began to teach theology at a convent.⁶³

Two years later, Allen set out for Rome in the company of Jean Vendeville, Regius professor of Canon Law at the University of Douai, intending to secure funding for missionary seminaries in the Low Countries. Over the course of the following winter, both men failed to gain the support of Pope Pius V and returned to the north emptyhanded, but undeterred in their efforts. As they left Rome, Allen suggested the founding of a college for English students who might be drawn to the continent and trained to preserve the traditional faith. A later letter from Allen to Vendeville relates these intentions more clearly, explaining that:

Our first purpose was to establish a college in which our countrymen who were scattered abroad in different places might live and study together more profitably than apart. Our next intention was to secure for the college an unbroken and enduring existence by means of a constant succession of students coming and leaving; for we feared that, if the schism should last much longer owing to the death of the few who at its beginning had been cast out of the English universities for the faith, no seed would be left hereafter for the restoration of religion, and that heresy would thus obtain a perpetual and peaceful possession of the realm, there being no one to make reclamation, even though an opportunity should offer at the death of the Queen or otherwise. For we thought it would be an excellent thing to have men of learning always ready outside the realm to restore religion when the proper moment should arrive, although it seemed hopeless to attempt anything while the heretics were masters there...And certainly if nothing else had been effected, our labours and the contributions of others would not have been useless in the Lord, since from that time till now more than five hundred persons have been at different times instructed in religious knowledge in this college, and God only knows how many more there will be in the future.⁶⁴

⁶³ The First and Second Douai Diaries, xxv; Duffy, "Allen, William, (1532-1594)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008).

⁶⁴ Letters of Dr. Allen to Dr. Vendeville, 1578 or 1580, *The English College, Rome*, excerpted in the First and Second Douai Diaries, *Archivium Britannicum Societatis Iesu* 43/1/7, xxvi.

From the very beginning of the soon-to-be founded college, Allen was quite clear on his plans for it and for the students who passed through its doors. On one level, the college would serve as a refuge for exiles as the religious climate of England became more and more restrictive; in addition, the aim was to build a contingent of faithful priests who would be ready to return to England if an opportunity to reconvert the realm presented itself. Allen openly acknowledged the hopelessness of attempting a mission to England while Protestantism reigned at court; however, his prioritizing the instruction of a new generation of Catholic priests to ensure the continuation of the traditional faith reflected his hope that his plans for Douai might one day provide a tangible payoff.

As to the actual instruction, the planned education at Douai would naturally be grounded in scripture, which was later recited and internalized by students on a daily basis at strictly defined points of a given day. According to Allen, it was:

of great consequence that they [the students] should be familiar with the text of the holy scripture and its more approved meanings, and have at their fingers' ends all those passages which are correctly used by Catholics in support of our faith or impiously misused by heretics in opposition to the church's faith.⁶⁵

This suggests that the key problem created by the Reformation was the misuse of biblical interpretations and, to remedy this problem, students were required to attend a daily lecture on the New Testament, during which time the “exact and genuine sense of the words” was explained.⁶⁶ A further examination of scripture occurred during evening mealtimes with a chapter from the Old and New Testaments recited and explained over the course of each dinner. Students were expected to carefully note these passages and connect

⁶⁵ The First and Second Douai Diary, xl.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

them with the current controversies associated with the Reformation. Defenses of pro-Catholic passages were to be composed while also proactively attending to counterarguments that Protestants might make in their own defense. Weekly disputations would then be organized to test these defenses, pitting students against one another in defense of not only Catholic doctrine but Protestant viewpoints as well. The instructors present would oversee such debates, interjecting whenever the need arose to further examine particular points or assist the course of the exercises. Through this method, Allen believed that students would “all know better how to prove our doctrines by argument and refute the contrary opinions.”⁶⁷

Beyond rhetoric, the Douai curriculum included a wide variety of subjects and readings. Students were taught Greek before progressing to Hebrew, which would further strengthen their ability to counter Protestant preaching practices through their knowledge of the original translation of both testaments.⁶⁸ Scholastic theology was also taught at Douai with a particular emphasis on the works of Thomas Aquinas. However, much of this curriculum appears to have been restricted to higher levels of study to which students could only progress if they had mastered the catechism of the Dutch Jesuit Peter Canisius, as well as a breviary on the proper conducting of the Mass.⁶⁹ This hierarchy of learning was a signature of the Jesuit curriculum; the Society of Jesus insisted that students master lower subjects before moving on to more advanced topics. The *Ratio studiorum* (plan of studies) that solidified by end of the sixteenth century emphasized language skills, mainly Latin and Greek, while also introducing students to grammar, rhetoric, ancient history, moral

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., xlii.

philosophy.⁷⁰ Interestingly, the *Ratio studiorum* mandated little theological instruction.⁷¹ While daily mass was required in Jesuit schools, there was significant leeway for Jesuit instructors to use their own judgement when determining catechetical learning, resulting in varied sources and lessons for students across the Jesuit seminary network.⁷² At Douai, student readings also included the *Manual* of Martin de Azpilcueta, and Allen recommended further texts for students to read privately, among which were the Venerable Bede's *History of the Church*, the works of St. Augustine with a particular emphasis on his letters to the Donatists and other writings that deal with heretics, the writings of Cyprian on church unity, the works of Vincentius Lirensis, and the books of St. Jerome that dealt with early opponents to Christian orthodoxy, such as Vigilantius and Jovianus.⁷³ The works of Thomas Waldensis were also suggested for their value in refuting all of the teachings of John Wycliffe. And finally, though the diary did not offer much detail on this point, Allen suggested that his students also be exposed to the works of English Protestants in order to instill a sense of "perfect detestation" and "sorrow of heart" towards their opponents and familiarize them with the arguments and viewpoints that they would be expected to confront upon returning to England. It is unclear exactly what "impieties, blasphemies, absurdities, cheats, and trickeries" the students were expected to learn during their studies; however, Allen's final note on Douai's educational model suggests that he and his colleagues were highly interested in understanding Protestant practices, so

⁷⁰ Paul Grendler, *Jesuit Schools and Universities in Europe, 1548-1773* (Boston: Brill, 2019), 15-17.

⁷¹ Id., *Jesuit Schools in Europe*, 18.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ The First and Second Douai Diaries, xlii.

much so that they even began to suggest utilizing one of their opponents' chief means of proselytization.

This last tenet in Douai's instruction is its encouragement of language training to aid in vernacular preaching. A core aspect of the Protestant Reformation movements in numerous states had been the transition from Latin to vernacular scriptures and church services, which arose chiefly as an attack on Church authority. This move was not new as medieval sermons were likewise delivered in vernacular languages; however, Douai administrators appear to have noted a clear drawback to the traditional means of preaching that had dominated the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. While most sermons were delivered in the vernacular, preachers would often cite passages from the Bible, which required an immediate translation in the moment in order for an audience to make sense of the sermon as a whole.⁷⁴ Allen himself notes this problem, lamenting that Protestants possess the means to pass off the select passages that they preach to the laity as the totality of the Bible.⁷⁵ He further accused Protestants of inventing passages, claiming that their use of the vernacular allowed them to present whatever message they wish to spread to the public under the guise of translated scripture. For the moment, Allen saw little that the Church could do to counter this development as even the most learned of university-trained Catholics did not possess the language skills to compete with their adversaries. "Hence," he wrote:

when they are preaching to the unlearned, and are obliged on the spur of the moment to translate some passage which they have quoted into the vulgar tongue, they often do it inaccurately or with unpleasant hesitation, because

⁷⁴ Larissa Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ: Preaching in Late Medieval and Reformation France* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 56.

⁷⁵ The First and Second Douai Diary, xli.

there is no English version of the words or it does not then and there occur to them.⁷⁶

Allen was not without hope for the future prospects of the English Mission; however, his plans went beyond drilling his charges in the liturgical use of the vernacular. Additionally, he proposed the composition of an English-language “Catholic version of the Bible,” which could preserve a faithful and true translation of the text approved by the Church.⁷⁷ Along with simplifying difficult passages for the benefit of lay readers, Allen saw this solution as the principal means of countering Protestant preaching and the task of producing such a work would eventually fall to him and his colleagues.

A vernacular New Testament to suit the purposes of the Church and the English Mission was commissioned in the early 1580s and published in 1582 in Rheims.⁷⁸ A vernacular Old Testament was likewise produced a few decades later with the first volume published in 1609 at Douai.⁷⁹ Both texts show the importance of biblical translation and explain the Church’s history of maintaining holy scripture in the original Latin for fear of its distortion and misinterpretation in the vernacular. What follows echoes Allen’s rationale for these new translations of scripture, which were necessitated thanks to Martin Luther’s

⁷⁶ Ibid., xl-xli.

⁷⁷ Ibid., xli.

⁷⁸ Gregory Martin, *The Nevv Testament of Iesus Christ Faithfully Translated into English, out of the Authenticall Latin, Diligently Conferred with the Greeke, and Other Editions in Diuers Languages: Vvith Arguments of Bookes and Chapters: Annotations, and Other Helpes, for the Better Vnderstanding of the Text, and Specially for the Discoverie of Corruptions in Diuers Late Translations: And for Cleering the Controuersies in Religion of These Daies: By the English Colledge Then Resident in Rhemes. Set Forth the Second Time, by the Same Colledge Novv Returned to Dovvay. Vvith Addition of One Nevv Table of Heretical Corruptions, the Other Tables and Annotations Somevwhat Augmented.* ed. Early English Books Online. Printed at Antwerp: By Daniel Vervliet, 1600.

⁷⁹ Gregory Martin, *The Holie Bible Faithfully Translated into English, out of the Authenticall Latin. Diligently Conferred with the Hebrew, Greeke, and Other Editions in Diuers Languages. With Arguments of the Bookes, and Chapters: Annotations. Tables: And Other Helpes ... By the English Colledge of Doway.* Early English Books Online. Printed at Doway: By Laurence Kellam, at the Signe of the Holie Lambe, 1609.

protest against the Church's monopoly of biblical interpretation.⁸⁰ Indeed, the preface to the New Testament translation offers a softer stance by the Church towards vernacular scripture. It suggests that, while the Church frowned on such texts, some degree of toleration was extended towards the vernacular translations maintained by the many diverse peoples who had occupied Europe throughout the medieval era:

In this matter, to marke onely the vvisdom & moderatio of the holy Church and the gouernours therof on the one side, and the indiscrete zeale of the popular, and their factious leaders, on the other, is a high point of prudence. These later, partly of simplicitie, partly of curiositie, and specially of pride and disobedience, have made claim in this case for the common people, vvith plausible pretenses many, but good reasons not at all. The other, to vvhom Christ hath giuen charge of our soules, the dispensing of God's mysteries and treasures (among which holy Scripture is no smale store) and feeding his familie in season vvith foode ht for euery fort, have neither of old or of late, euer vvholly condemned all vulgar versions of Scripture, nor have at any time generally forbidden the faithful to reade the same.⁸¹

This introduction goes on to list the diverse peoples who possessed vernacular translations of scripture. This includes vulgar texts brought to the Armenians, Slavonians, and Goths in the early days of the Christian church, but there have also been Italian and French translations commissioned by archbishops and even the King Charles V of France himself.⁸² According to Martin's preface, there had even been English translations created well before the beginnings of the Reformation; however, the tolerance shown towards such versions of the Bible appears to have been tempered when such texts became the chief tool utilized by the Lollard movement led by John Wycliffe in the late fourteenth century.⁸³ Shannon McSheffrey has noted the Lollard's use of scripture in discussions of church doctrine as well

⁸⁰ Martin, *The Nevv Testament of Iesus Christ*, Preface, 2.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 2.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

as public readings of scripture before audiences of potential converts to their movement.⁸⁴ While McSheffrey's work focused more on the gender dynamics of Lollard education, her examination nonetheless notes the use of vernacular scripture as an important aspect of the Lollard movement that likely worried the then Catholic English regime of the fifteenth century. Despite the clear distaste expressed toward the heretical translations that the Lollards used in the new vernacular translation of the Bible, Martin maintained that the Church never completely forbade the possession of such works. This version of events omits the ban on vernacular Bibles (often referred to as Wycliffe Bibles) in 1409 by Henry IV, as well as other instances in which medieval and early modern popes condemned similar translations.⁸⁵ These success of these prohibitions was mixed with the aristocracy almost entirely unaffected by lax enforcement on the part of the English state and the Lollard adherence to vernacular scripture gradually spread to the continent, particularly the Holy Roman Empire where Jan Hus and later Martin Luther would adopt similar views.⁸⁶

Indeed, Luther's protest movement forced the Church to take a stricter stance on vernacular scripture. As part of the countermeasures taken at the Council of Trent (1543-65), the Church decreed that:

the holy Scriptures, though truly and Catholically translated into vulgar tongues, indifferently readde of all men, nor of any other than such as have express license thereunto of their lawful ordinaries, with goode testimony from their curates or confessors, that they be humble, discrete, and devout persons and like to take much good and no harm thereby.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Shannon McSheffrey, *Gender and Heresy: Women and Men in Lollard Communities, 1420-1530* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 58.

⁸⁵ David Daniell, *The Bible in English: Its History and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 69. In the twelfth century, Waldensian translations of the Bible were banned by Pope Innocent III. A similar ban was enacted in 1538 by Pope Paul III, who called for the burning of English translations of scripture.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁸⁷ Martin, *The New Testament of Iesus Christ*, Preface, 3.

After Trent, the Church effectively made a complete reversal of the more tolerant stance noted in the New Testament translation's history of the church and resolved to limit access to vernacular translations of the Bible to learned men approved by Catholic officials. The chief fear that Catholic authorities maintained was not so much the simple existence or possession of vernacular scripture but its misuse by men like Luther and Wycliffe. In the eyes of the Church (according to Martin), Protestantism had effectively perverted the true meaning of the Bible for its own gain and masked this deceit with claims of Catholic corruption and obscurantism.

In response, the Church seems to have conformed to the image that Protestants reformers had crafted for it. The Douai Bible goes on to defend the limiting of access to scripture with numerous disparaging critiques of the common Christian, effectively stating that such men do not possess the capacity for consuming and properly interpreting scripture. Drawing on the words of Gregory of Nazianzus, the Douai Bible defends the Church's new stance by condemning the apparent arrogance of the common man, particularly the Protestant man, in attempting to claim authority over biblical interpretation:

He [Gregory] saith, that some in his time thought themselves to have all the wisdom in the world, when they could once repeat two or three words, and them ill-couched together, out of Scriptures. But he there divinely discourseth of the order and differences of degrees: how in Christ's mystical body, some are ordained to learne, some to teach: that all are not Apostles, all doctors, all interpreters, all of tongues and knowledge, not all learned in Scriptures & Divinitie: that the people went up not to talke with God in the mountaine, but Moses, Aaron, & Eleazar, nor they neither but by the difference of the callings: that they rebell against this ordinance, are guilty of the conspiracie of Core: that in Scripture, there is both milke for babes, and meate for men, to be dispensed, not according to every one's greediness of appetit or willfulness, but as is most meete for each one's necesitie and

capacitie: that as it is a shame for a Bishop or a Priest to be unlearned in God's mysteries, so for the common people it is often times profitable to salvation, not to be curius, but to follow their pastors in sinceritie & simplicitie.⁸⁸

The text continues with further encouragements of moderation and simplicity:

How much more may we gather, that all things that be written, are not for the capacitie and diet of every of the simple readers, but that very many mysteries of holy writte, be very far above their reach, & may and ought to be (by as great reason) delivered them in measure & meane most meete for them? Which in deede can hardly be done, when the whole booke of the Bible lieth before every man in his mother tounge, to make choice of what he list. For which cause the said Gregorie Nazianzen wisheth the Christians had as good a law as the Hebrues of old had: who...tooke order among them selves that none should read the *Cantica Canticorum* nor certaine other pieces of hardest Scriptures, til they were thirtie yeres of age. And truely there is no cause why men should be more loth to be ordered and moderated in this point by God's Church and their pastors, than they are in the use of holy sacraments: for which as Christ hath appointed priests and ministers, at whose hands we must receive them, and not be our own cauers.⁸⁹

According to the compilers of the Douai Bible, scripture was never meant to be read and interpreted by all men, but rather restricted to a select few ordained by God. The Church's rationale maintains that these restrictions were meant to prevent the misinterpretation or manipulation of the Bible's meaning; however, it is unlikely that these arguments would sway Protestant sympathizers, who may well have seen this stance as a confirmation of Luther's critiques of the Church's handling of scriptural access. Ironically, this Protestant criticism appears to have galvanized the Church into adopting the very measures against which Luther and Wycliffe had protested from the start. Thanks to Protestant claims of Catholic dominance over biblical interpretation, the Church appears to have responded

⁸⁸ Ibid., 4-5.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 5.

with a total abandonment of tolerance for vernacular scripture and placed further limitations on who could access such texts.

Allen's intentions for his new college clearly aimed to adapt Protestant preaching methods to aid in the mission to England and his plans for the college motivated Vendeville to commit all of his resources to the project. Vendeville was already a professor at the university in Douai when he invited Allen to found a college there. Douai itself was located in the county of Flanders, near the border with France, and the region had endured considerable religious conflict throughout the Reformation era as Protestantism grew more and more popular in the Low Countries. However, Douai never seems to have fallen sway to Lutheran and Calvinist influences, remaining steadfastly Catholic throughout the sixteenth century and drawing the eye of many Catholic authorities across Europe.⁹⁰ Charles V had attempted to found a Catholic university there in 1531 but the plan never came to fruition. However, Philip II of Spain proved much more successful, securing the permission of Pope Paul IV in 1559 to build a university in the town, specifically for the aim of preserving Catholicism in a region surrounded on all sides by heretical forces. By 1561, construction of the university was underway, and the school opened with facilities for the study of theology, canon law, civil law, medicine, and art. The establishment of the university surely encouraged Allen to found a college there for English students.

The initial university contained no colleges, but that changed with the establishment of the Anchin College in 1569 for the benefit of aspiring Jesuits and the Marchiennes College in 1570 for local law students. Before either of these colleges were officially

⁹⁰ The First and Second Douai Diaries, xxvii.

founded and endowed, Allen had set to work creating a proto-college.⁹¹ In 1568, with support from Vendeville, Allen secured a large house near the university grounds and took up residence there alongside several students from England and Belgium. Unlike the official colleges founded in the next few years, Allen's literal house of study was not endowed with funds from Rome or Spain, forcing Allen to support the venture with his own money and the charity that Vendeville was able to draw from nearby patrons, such as the Duke of Alva in the Low Countries. Because of these meager beginnings, the early response of Allen's colleagues to the "college" was highly critical of Allen and many were skeptical that such a school would ever be able to secure the funding to support a large body of students.

In the initial days of the college, Allen had only six pupils living under his roof.⁹² Four were from England and their number included Richard Bristow, John Marshall, Edward Riden, and John White. All four had been educated in England; however, each had departed England in the same fashion as Allen years before. Several had taken up their studies at nearby colleges, as in the case of Bristow's tenure at Louvain before being called to Douai by Allen. Others had joined monastic orders for a time, as in the case of Riden's time with the Carthusian monks of Bruges. The other two initial students under Allen's tutelage had come from the Low Countries and soon returned home, unable to cope with the frugal lifestyle. Marshall also departed for the same reason. Within a year, however, the college was sustained by the arrival of three more students, this time priests from England who had gone into exile. These new arrivals were joined by two important benefactors to whom Allen and Vendeville attributed the survival of the school. The first of these men was

⁹¹ Ibid., xxviii.

⁹² Ibid., xxix.

Morgan Philips, who provided considerable financial support for Allen and Vendeville's project and left his entire estate to the college after his death.⁹³ The other, Owen Lewis, was later involved in the founding of the English College in Rome and the subsequent clash between the English and Welsh students there. In the early years of the Douai College, these two men worked closely with Allen to expand the school beyond Allen's initial lodging. The financial and administrative support of these men allowed the school to survive a tumultuous infancy with the college officially confirmed in accordance with the decree *Cum Adolescentium Aetas* in 1563 at the Council of Trent.⁹⁴

Over the next few years, the numbers at Douai college swelled with incoming exiles flocking to the college as its reputation increased. In 1571, eight more students arrived, predominantly from Oxford as former students, graduates, and faculty from the university made their way across the Channel.⁹⁵ In 1574, twelve more students appeared with roughly half of their number having studied at Oxford. In 1576, ten students arrived along with no fewer than six Doctors of Theology.⁹⁶ 1577 seems to have been a particularly successful year in terms of matriculation as at least twenty-three new students were admitted and the numbers for the remainder of the decade remain fairly consistent with these early totals. By the 1580s, averages in the high twenties and low thirties became the new standard, with admittance peaking in 1581 with forty-three new students.⁹⁷ This growth is also consistent with the Diary's figures regarding the ordination of graduates from the college that saw a similar increase in the 1570s and early 1580s. In 1573, four

⁹³ D. Ben Rees, "Phillips, Morgan (d. 1570)," *Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

⁹⁴ The First and Second Douai Diaries, xxix.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, xxxi.

⁹⁶ *Diarium Primum*, 7.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

students were ordained and received their orders. Six more students followed suit the following year, with ten additional ordinations in 1575, eleven in 1576, twenty-four in 1577, and twenty-two in 1578.⁹⁸ As these numbers increased exponentially in the early years of the college, so too did the numbers of graduates who would take part in the English mission. Beginning in 1574, three of the six that received their orders returned to England, with some successfully evading capture by Elizabethan authorities for over a decade.⁹⁹ According to the Diary, Allen himself would later report to Rome that as many as one hundred and sixty priests from the college had begun their work in England by 1580; however, the college's registers only list some one hundred names.¹⁰⁰

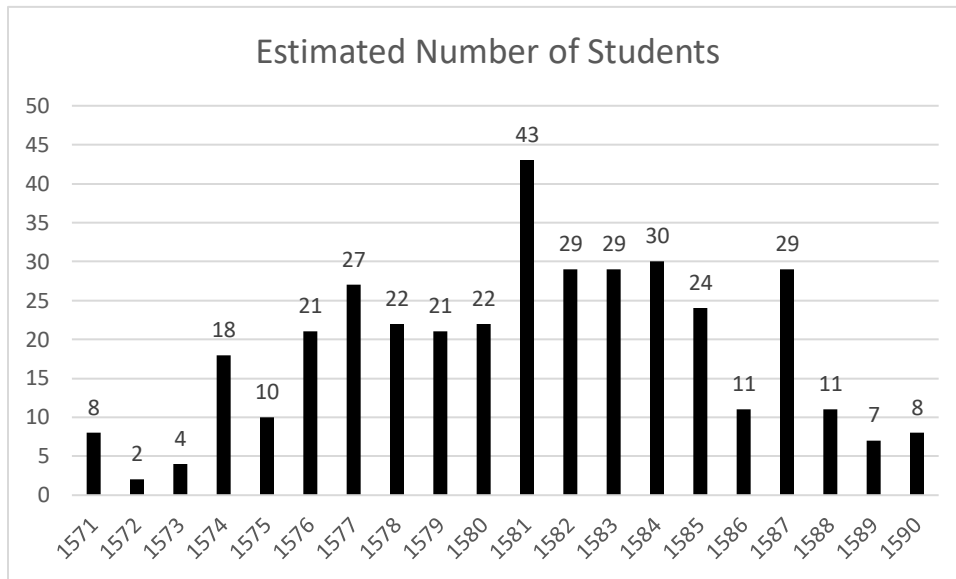


Figure 1: Estimated Student numbers based on Matriculation and Ordination Records

Further figures regarding the participation of college graduates in the English Mission remain elusive in the diary's catalogues; however, the failure of mission to England

⁹⁸ The First and Second Douai Diary, xxxii.

⁹⁹ Ibid. The diary notes that one Louis Barlow was finally apprehended in 1584 and was still imprisoned in Wisbeach Castle as late as 1594.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., xxxviii.

conducted by Robert Persons and Edmund Campion in 1581 does not seem to have hindered or deterred new arrivals from England. The numbers only began to fall in 1588, perhaps owing to the failure of the Spanish invasion of England that summer as well as fines and legislation introduced by Elizabeth's government to dissuade Catholic families from sending their children overseas. After twenty-eight new students arrived the previous year, only eleven were admitted in 1588 and the following years witnessed a steady decline in admittance numbers falling into the single digits or low teens twice between 1589 and 1592.¹⁰¹ In 1593, no new students were admitted and the sixteenth century would come to a close for the college with admittance numbers hovering at an average of roughly seven or eight new students per year.

As for Allen, even as he managed the school, he pursued his own theological studies and gradually ascended through the educational ranks. In the Autumn of 1569, he received a degree of Bachelor of Divinity before acquiring his doctorate in 1571.¹⁰² This promotion earned him an annual stipend of 200 gold crowns from Phillip II, which he promptly donated to the seminary in order to afford the maintenance of more theology students. Indeed, it was these funds that allowed for the initial influx of students in the early 1570s but, beyond this funding, Allen could only rely on charitable alms from Catholic benefactors in England and the Low Countries. Soon, these sources dried up as revolution in the Netherlands directed funds to domestic needs and new restrictions in England against donations to exiles effectively cut off what little money Allen had been relying on in his

¹⁰¹ *Diarium Primum*, 14-15. The Diary Catalogue features the following totals: 7 students in 1589, 8 in 1590, 11 in 1591, and 13 in 1592.

¹⁰² *The First and Second Douai Diary*, xxxi.

early stewardship over Douai.¹⁰³ So, Allen turned to the only financial backer that remained to him and appealed to newly elected Pope Gregory XIII for aid. Thanks to the success of the college and its growing reputation, Rome responded with an annual stipend of one hundred crowns, which established a permanent and predictable source of funding. One 1575 letter from the reverend Gregory Martin to Edmund Campion reflected on the enthusiastic and optimistic character of these early years, reporting “swarms of theological students” arriving on an almost daily basis.¹⁰⁴ Martin also described the school environment, referencing a mealtime in which “nearly sixty and youths of the greatest promise were seated at three tables eating so pleasantly a little broth, thickened merely with the commonest roots, that you could have sworn they were feasting on stewed raisons and prunes, English delicacies.”¹⁰⁵ Accompanying this “feast,” portions of the Bible were read aloud and explained at the conclusion of each meal.¹⁰⁶ Martin’s letter also noted an interesting development introduced in Douai during this period. Every Saturday or during the observance of a saint’s day, Douai would host sermons in its refectory that were open to the public. Beyond the students that attended, Martin noted that “all our country people come from their lodgings in town,” specifically remarking on the attendance of the family of Richard Bristow, prefect and vice-rector of the school. According to Martin, Bristow’s mother, brother, sister, and her husband would attend these sermons, as would the family and friends of other school officials that happened to live in the town. His letters sadly do not expand on the size of these gatherings; however, they do suggest that the early

¹⁰³ Ibid., xxxv.

¹⁰⁴ Gregory Martin to Edmund Campion, S.J. December 20th, 1575, in *The Douai Diary*, Appendix and Index, 309-13.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 310.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

administration of Douai had sought to integrate the surrounding community into the workings of the college.

The students who graduated from the college could pursue a number of obligations and duties when it came to furthering their career within the church hierarchy; but a large number of them appear to have returned to England to carry out the college's primary mission. Despite the hopeful optimism expressed by the college for the reconversion of the English, the return to England was naturally unwelcome by the Elizabethan state and the conditions that the newly returned priests encountered deteriorated rapidly as the 1560s drew to a close. In 1569, the Catholic nobles of England's northern counties rose up in rebellion against the crown with the aim of deposing Elizabeth and replacing her with her cousin, Mary, who had fled to England the previous year following her own forced abdication in Scotland. Led by the earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, the rebels occupied the town of Durham and celebrated the Mass in the cathedral there in blatant display of their intentions for the kingdom.¹⁰⁷ They further proclaimed their aim to restore "ancynet customes and usages" in religion in order to dissuade "divers foren powers [that] doo purpose shortlie invade ths relms."¹⁰⁸ However, the rebellion was short-lived as those nobles loyal to the crown raised enough knights to force the rebellious nobles to disperse. Elizabeth had the conspirators executed and Douai's accounts suggest that she then had no fewer than three hundred inhabitants of Durham hanged as a warning against future insubordination.¹⁰⁹ This figure falls well short of the seven hundred executions that

¹⁰⁷ The First and Second Douai Diary, xliv.

¹⁰⁸ "The proclamation of the earls, 1569," source cited in Anthony Fletcher and Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 168.

¹⁰⁹ Fletcher and MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 101-09.

Elizabeth had called for, indicating unwillingness on the part of her commanders to carry out the purge that the queen and her ministers desired.¹¹⁰ Regardless, the reprisals that the Elizabethan state levied on the north had the intended effect of limiting rebellion against Elizabeth to a handful of smaller conspiracies against the queen that will be examined in Chapter Four. No organized insurrections would arise in England for the rest of Elizabeth's life.

Naturally, the Crown's harsh response made it difficult for returning Catholic priests to effectively minister to the laity and the situation only worsened after two more plots against Elizabeth were uncovered in 1571 and 1586, along with Pope Pius V's excommunication of the Queen in 1570.¹¹¹ Elizabeth would be excommunicated once again in 1586 by Pope Sixtus V. The wording of the later excommunication bull likely worried the Queen as it effectively called for her subjects to rebel against her or suffer together with their monarch's damnation. Using language based on the 1570 papal bull, Sixtus referred to Elizabeth as a pretender Queen, a usurper, and a bastard, highlighting the legitimacy question surrounding her father's marriage to Anne Boleyn.¹¹² A list of her alleged crimes followed: her violation of the medieval pact between Rome and England requiring papal consent to claim the throne in retribution for Henry II's assassination of Thomas Becket, inciting rebellion in the kingdoms of her neighbors, harboring Protestant fugitives, persecuting Catholic bishops and priests, desecrating holy sites and churches, stripping Catholic nobles of their lands, and conducting herself as an absolute tyrant with regard to

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 107-08.

¹¹¹ "Confession relating to the Ridolfi Plot of 1571" in *The Letters of William Allen (1570-78) Archivium Britannicum Societatis Iesu* 46/24/4, 184-186; *The First and Second Douai Diary*, xlv.

¹¹² "A Declaration of the Sentence and deposition of Elizabeth, the usurper and pretended Quene of Englande" (1588), *British Library General Reference Collection* 1879.cc.4.(47.).

her subjects and their souls. The papal document even goes so far as to accuse Elizabeth of consorting with the Ottoman empire, plotting to assist the Church's enemy in its conquest of eastern Europe. With her crimes listed, Sixtus then renewed the excommunication orders of his predecessor and moved to:

*Excommunicate, and deprive, her of all authority and Princely dignitie, and of all title and pretention to the said crown and Kingdomes of England and Ireland; declaring her to be illegitimate, and an unjust usurper of the same; And absolving the people of those states, and other persons whatsoever, from all obedience, Othe, and other bande of subjection unto her, or to any other in her name. And further doth straightly commande, under the indignation of almighty God, and payne of excommunication, and the corporal punishment appointed by the lawes, that none, of whatsoever condition or estate, after notice of these present, presume to yield unto her, Obedience, favor, or other succurse; But that they and every of them concur by all means possible to her chastisement. To the Ende, that she which so many ways hath forsaken God and his church, being now destitute of worldly comfort, and abandoned of all, may acknowledge her offence, and humbly submit herself to the judgments of the highest.*¹¹³

While excommunication may not have affected Elizabeth personally, the wording of the papal decree was meant to turn her subjects against her, preying on fears of damnation to force their abandonment of the queen. This was not the first time that the Catholic Church had utilized excommunication to exert papal influence in European politics. Indeed, popes of the late medieval era frequently used excommunication during disputes over the appointing of bishops (as best seen through the excommunications of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV and the English King John), the improper dissolution of royal marriages (as in the case of the French King Philip I and the English King Henry VIII), and the justification of Church sanctioned military campaigns.¹¹⁴ This latter use of

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Aislinn Miller, *The Excommunication of Elizabeth I: Faith, Politics, and Resistance in Post-Reformation England, 1570-1603* (Boston: Brill, 2020), 3.

excommunication featured prominently in William the Conqueror's invasion of England in 1066 as the Pope issued an excommunication bull against William's opponent, Harold Godwinson, and the same sort of motive played into Pius V's excommunication of Elizabeth.¹¹⁵

By the eve of the Reformation, the use of excommunication in international politics had become a rarity over the previous two centuries, mainly due to loss of papal credibility brought about by the removal of the papacy to Avignon in 1309 and the subsequent Western Schism between 1377 and 1417. The Reformation revived this practice as seen through Henry VIII's excommunication for his marriage to Anne Boleyn, but Elizabeth's excommunication differed from her father's in several ways. To start, The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 had ruled that bulls of excommunication would be preceded by a warning and a period of time in which the offending ruler could seek absolution from the Church.¹¹⁶ Even Henry had been given several months to seek papal forgiveness, but Elizabeth received no such warning. Additionally, Elizabeth's excommunication bull singled her out for ostracism from the Church, a rarity in the context of the late medieval and early modern eras. Annually, the Church issued the recurrent bull *In Coena Domini*, which included an excommunication declaration against anyone who committed apostasy, heresy, or schism. Because of this bull's inclusion of other prohibitions, particularly those related to the taxation of church lands, many monarchs forbade the bull's publication in their lands. Pius avoided this problem by issuing a unique excommunication of Elizabeth in spite of the fact that she would be included in the recurrent bull's purview.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 32.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

In the context of the Northern Uprising, Elizabeth's excommunication bull was likely meant to justify the rebellion and to encourage loyal masses of England to support and unite themselves with an expected Spanish armada and the Catholic armies led by Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma that was regularly proposed throughout the 1570s and 80s.¹¹⁸ Great care was taken to present the impending invasion of England as a civil restoration of holy authority rather than an outright conquest of the kingdom by Spain. All told, it would not be shocking to expect the Elizabethan state to react with more stringent restrictions on the rights of its Catholic subjects.¹¹⁹ Those restrictions, which included capital punishment at Durham, severely impeded the progress of the English mission during the 1570s.

Following the initial excommunication order of 1570, Parliament prohibited the printing and posting of any decrees or writings from Rome.¹²⁰ Further, the possession of Catholic tokens and symbols, including crosses, beads, images, or holy relics, was prohibited. The violation of these acts would now legally constitute an attempt to assert papal authority over England and be grounds for imprisonment and possibly execution. According to Allen, this act only enhanced the desire of English Catholics to possess such items as a means of enhancing their reverence for the true faith. This may be an exaggeration, but regardless it is clear that the lives of English Catholics became significantly more difficult during the 1570s, to say nothing of the likely miserable

¹¹⁸ As will be shown in Chapter 4, plans for a Spanish naval invasion of England were regularly proposed throughout the decades leading up to the actual Spanish Armada in 1588.

¹¹⁹ Muller, *The Excommunication of Elizabeth I*, 33.

¹²⁰ The First and Second Douai Diary, xlv.

experience of priests returning from France in the midst of these growing religious tensions.

As Elizabethan England grew steadily more tense, Allen and his contemporaries took note of the hardships and dangers that faced priests returning to their homeland in these years. In a letter to Maurice Chauncy, Allen described the experience of Catholic missionaries in England as one of extreme caution, avoiding the watchful eye of Crown informers while moving carefully between the households of loyal recusants.¹²¹ Allen continued with a clear reaffirmation of the qualities that he promoted in the men that the Douai college continued to produce for missionary work and his description once again bears some similarity to the traits that he identifies in Protestant preachers. To start, Allen believed his charges should exercise a degree of flexibility when it came to adhering to Church laws, advising that his students “measure themselves never so exactly by council and canon, and keep the straight line of holy Church’s laws never so precisely (which to do without all blame I know requireth much wisdom and discretion).”¹²² He continued by relating the skills and knowledge that these missionaries gained from their time with the college, including their language skills and knowledge of art and scripture; however, he concluded his overview of his charges by confirming the need for cunning and intrigue when it came to the preservation of Catholicism in Protestant lands:

Although the delicate curiosity and opiniatry of this evil time require in spiritual men more skill and cunning than before, yet on the other side the necessity of our realm is such, by reason the unjust laws have sequestered the old, true and learned pastors from the exercise of their function, that among many laborers some must needs be admitted of moderate knowledge, otherwise neither wanting the age nor other quality that the decrees of the church require. It is not requisite, as you full well know, that everyone should

¹²¹ Ibid., xlv.

¹²² Ibid., xlvi.

be so profound to resolve all cases that may fall, specially in man's life and conscience; and if any of our order in England should be so presumptuous or his master before him to challenge so much cunning, he were too proud to be a priest or ghostly father; as he also is over simple or rigorous that would have none admitted to hear confession that be not resolute in every point that may be propounded, or of so perfect life that no man may possibly reprehend them. Would God all could be so, for then should we poor sinner be also; but that golden world is past, if ever any such were.¹²³

Although the faith in the quality of the students produced by the school certainly continued in the 1570s, the number of actual qualities that were valued appears to have expanded as a result of the crackdown on recusants in England. As Allen noted, the success of their mission at home would require some degree of cunning and guile on the part of missionaries as they navigated an increasingly dangerous English countryside. Further, Allen stated that a flexible adherence to Church doctrine would also be necessary in order to make Catholicism more accessible to the men and women that missionaries might encounter during their labors in England. This shift from a strict maintenance of Catholic standards likely arose from a need to appeal to those within the English laity who occupied the middle of the religious spectrum—the Church Papists who outwardly conformed to the Elizabethan regime while privately maintaining their personal faith in Catholicism. Reaching this group would require a degree of flexibility and cunning on the part of recusant missionaries never seen before this point, and this shift in approach to the English laity aligns with earlier tactical innovations in vernacular preaching and printing that Douai pioneered in the early years of its administration.

Unfortunately for Douai and its residents, the changing political climate along the English Channel would create notable problems for the college in the late 1570s. As this

¹²³ Ibid., xlvi-xlvi.

decade began, the political turmoil that had gripped the Low Countries for several years finally made its way to Douai, where it seems that the Calvinist preachers in the region had made little headway in their missionary efforts.¹²⁴ The Douai Diary tells of the strength of Catholicism in the area surrounding the college; however, it also notes the precarious position of many English exiles at Douai as the emerging Dutch Revolt intensified. Many received pensions and support from the Spanish Crown, the authority against which the various princes of the Low Countries had revolted, and as Spanish military action intensified in the region, the perception that residents surrounding Douai had of the English exiles grew more and more negative. The Diary notes that following the sack of Antwerp by Spanish forces in 1576, the Douai residents began to interpret any sign of levity from the English as a sign of support for Spain's brutal handling of the revolt; however, the reason for this shift in attitude was attributed less to changing political circumstances and more to the intrigues of Calvinist ministers in the region.¹²⁵ Despite asserting the strength and resilience of Catholicism in Douai just a page before, the Diary goes on to accuse Protestants of infecting the region with propaganda that turned the Douai citizenry against the English exiles at the college. The climate surrounding the school grew more heated in 1576 and 1577 and the decline in English student arrivals in these years reflects the problematic situation in which many students found themselves and likely described in letters home.¹²⁶ Then, the Dutch revolutionary party won a series of victories as 1578 began and a new governor was appointed in Douai by the revolutionaries. Within a few months, the governor expelled the English and the Jesuits as a means of

¹²⁴ Ibid., xlix.

¹²⁵ Ibid., l.

¹²⁶ Ibid., liii.

pacifying the restless population at Douai and the college effectively removed itself to Rheims. It remained there until 1593 and then made a successful return to Douai, though Allen would not be among their number as he had returned to Rome to see to his declining health before his death in 1594.¹²⁷

All told, the College at Douai represented an early and enthusiastic phase of the English Mission. Allen's early writing on the college expressed optimistic goals for the college with regard to the role that it would play in training priests and missionaries who would help preserve Catholicism in England. However, the means by which this preservation effort would be carried out promoted the use of noticeably Protestant methods. Perhaps noting the success that Protestants had seen through their preaching methods as well as their use of vernacular scripture and liturgy, the instructors at Douai began to turn their charges towards these methods as they adjusted to the changing works of Reformation missionary activity. As time went on, administrators at Douai also began to encourage their students to adopt a less stringent adherence to Church rules in the course of the missionary work, suggesting an approach to conversion that mirrored the cunning tactics of Protestant preachers. The residents of the Douai seminary grew all too aware of the effectiveness of such tactics when the English and Jesuit exiles were driven out of the town in 1578 as a result of the restless social atmosphere of the town that had been stirred into a frenzy by Calvinist preachers.

While the impact of this shift in methods is difficult to assess, the experience of those associated with Douai in its early years shows both the initial enthusiasm shared by many English exiles in the wake of Elizabeth's ascension, as well as the beginnings of the

¹²⁷ Ibid., xci-xcii.

recusants' gradual turn towards more aggressive tactics as the English Mission progressed. Further, the management of Douai and the experience of those involved differed markedly from that of the other colleges examined in this study. As the next chapter will show, divisions within the English Mission were not limited to differences in the management and educational approach in a given school. Indeed, strife could also arise within the seminary community itself.

Chapter 2: The Venerable English College

I have laboured in yt, but I lost my labour, and do utterly despayre in the same; and therefore what this difference may import to the hindrance of good matters I do much feare.

-Robert Persons, c. 1580

Though Douai displayed considerable commitment to the Catholic cause, this sort of unity was noticeably lacking in the next major seminary founded in the wake of the Counter Reformation. As noted in the last chapter, William Allen found financial backing for his college through John Vendeville, who in 1567 had failed to procure support from Pope Pius V for an expedition into the Muslim world.¹²⁸ Allen successfully persuaded Vendeville to finance a new seminary for English theology students and, in the following year, Allen rented a small house near the theological schools of Douai and began teaching to a handful of English and Flemish students. Over time, this small gathering of scholars grew through the influx of exiled Catholics from England—a number that would swell dramatically following Elizabeth’s excommunication in 1570—and soon the college would require additional support from Rome.¹²⁹ The success of the college had drawn the attention of the Pope by this time and, along with increasing the stipend for Douai, he proposed the establishment of a new English college in Rome to admit students whom Douai could not properly house. It was in this new college—ironically known as the Venerable English College—founded on the model of Douai, that some of the earliest fractures within the English Mission would emerge.

¹²⁸ Eamon Duffy, “Allen, William, (1532-1594),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008).

¹²⁹ *The Memoirs of Father Robert Persons*, ed. Reverend J.H. Pollen S.J., in *Publications of the Catholic Record Society*, vol. 2 (1906), 96.

The Venerable English College, as it later came to be known, was established in 1579 in the midst of the Regola Quarter of Rome on the foundations of an English hospice that had been founded nearly two hundred years prior. Initially, the Hospice aimed to provide care for “the poor, sick, needy and distressed people coming from England to the City,” a large and growing population during the fourteenth century due to the impact of the Black Death.¹³⁰ Gradually, the Hospice evolved into an important outpost in the English spiritual world, thanks mainly to Roman restoration efforts carried out by Pope Martin V after the conclusion of the Western Schism.¹³¹ It quickly attracted the attention of the English Crown, as both Henry V and Henry VII would take personal control of the Hospice during their reigns, and over the course of the fifteenth century, the Hospice received visits and donations of books and coin from the likes of Margery Kempe, John Capgrave, and William Caxton.¹³²

Between all of these efforts, the Hospice rapidly developed strong ties with the English Church, evidenced by the hundreds of English visitors to Rome throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. However, these ties grew strained under the combined weight of the 1527 sack of Rome by the mutinous army of Charles V and Henry VIII’s subsequent break with Rome altogether. Henry himself had never had as much interest in the Hospice as his father had and the Act of Supremacy, which elevated Henry to the head of the English Church, cut the flow of English pilgrims to Rome down to almost nothing. The Hospice saw a brief revival of its former fortunes under Mary during the

¹³⁰ John Allen, “Continuity, 1362-1962,” in *The English Hospice in Rome* (Herefordshire: Gracewing Publishing, 2005), 1.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 5.

1550s, but the rapid succession of Elizabeth terminated these efforts before they truly began.¹³³

Given the historical ties that the Hospice had shared with the Church of England, it seemed only natural that it should serve as the foundation for William Allen's latest project, particularly after receiving support from Pope Gregory XXIII. Much like the college at Douai, the English College in Rome was founded with the explicit intention of directly and immediately supporting Catholicism in England. When reflecting on the founding of the English college in Rome, Allen remarked:

Further fruit of the said colleges is, to instruct in all cases of conscience and controversies, and to breed in them zeale and desire to be Priests, even in these daises specially, vvhe they can look for no worldly honor, lucre, preferment or promotion thereby, but by manifold dangers, disgraces, persecution, vexation: onely by praiers, and Sacrifice...to make intercession for our desolate frendes at home: and to adventure into England, there to serve them, whose hartes God shal touch to admitte spiritual comforts, and to prefer salvation before worldly commodities: and to minister unto them al sacrements necessarie for the life and grace of their soules.¹³⁴

From the 1581 "apologie," it is evident that Allen had an active approach to countering the Protestant influence of the Elizabethan regime in mind when he began organizing the college in Rome. His plans for the immediate reconversion of England would be implemented just as stringently in Rome as they had been in Douai. However, despite Allen's zeal, the English College would develop a markedly different academic environment that divided the school over the trajectory of the English mission.

Despite the support of the papacy and Allen's influence in establishing a new seminary in 1579, the English College did not immediately conform to Allen's vision for it,

¹³³ Ibid., 145.

¹³⁴ William Allen, *An apologie and true declaration of the institution and endeouours of the tvvo English colleges, the one in Rome, the other novv resident in Rhemes* (Mounts in Henault, 1581), 26.

mainly due to the actions of its initial rector. At the insistence of Pope Gregory XIII, Allen agreed to retain most of the staff from the original English hospital upon which the college had been founded. As such, the hospital's warden, a recusant exile of Welsh descent called Maurice Clenock, was appointed as the first rector of the college and his administration caused a series of obstacles and problems for Allen and his colleagues.

Maurice Clenock was born in Wales around 1525 and grew up during the tumultuous years of Henry VIII's "Great Matter." He attended Oxford during Henry's final years and likely graduated sometime in the early reign of Edward VI.¹³⁵ In the following years leading up to the rise of Mary I, Clenock travelled to Padua, where he spent several years as an aide to Cardinal Reginald Pole.¹³⁶ It appears he passed the five years of Mary's rule in this or a similar capacity before the Queen appointed him bishop-elect of Bangor.¹³⁷ Unfortunately for him, this appointment came just before Mary's death and the rise of Elizabeth effectively delayed his consecration until the introduction of the Elizabethan oath of supremacy made his appointment an impossibility.¹³⁸ Like many other Welsh Catholics of his day, Clenock refused to take the oath and fled to the continent in the summer of 1559, taking up residence in Louvain where he and his brethren began crafting plans for their return home.¹³⁹

Clenock seems to have been one of the earliest exiles to propose an invasion of England by a foreign power such as Spain or France to overthrow Elizabeth and reinstall

¹³⁵ Glamor Williams, *Wales and the Reformation* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999), 211.

¹³⁶ Anthony Kenny, "From Hospice to College," in *The English Hospice in Rome* (Herefordshire: Gracewing Publishing, 2005), 221.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Glamor, *Wales and the Reformation*, 220.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 221.

Catholicism as the kingdom's dominant faith.¹⁴⁰ He asserted his belief that it would be better for his countrymen to gain eternal salvation under a foreign lord than be cast into hell by the heretic who currently occupied the throne and joined many of his colleagues in pressuring the Council of Trent to excommunicate Elizabeth.¹⁴¹ Ultimately, the Council refused to take that step (though later Popes did), but that did not mean that work had not already begun within the exiled community. In 1568, Allen founded the seminary at Douai and the college initially attracted a relatively high proportion of Welsh students.¹⁴² After 1578, the number of Welsh entrants declined significantly until their presence at Douai ceased entirely by 1589. Clenock's place in these developments is unclear, though he seems to have continued calling for an invasion of England into the early 1560s and he was almost certainly in Rome by 1567, where he testified against Elizabeth during her excommunication trial overseen by Pope Sixtus V.¹⁴³ Eleven years later, Pope Gregory XIII proposed the establishment of a seminary in Rome using the foundation of the old English hospital, where Clenock had recently been appointed as warden. At least two dozen students were sent to the new college from Douai in 1578 and their numbers would nearly double the following year to include roughly forty-two students, along with three Jesuits fathers as teachers, six servants, and Clenock himself as the newly promoted rector of the college. Notwithstanding his initial success, his term of office would not last very long.

While Allen does not appear to have harbored much resentment towards Clenock upon his appointment, the Welshman drew considerable criticism from Robert Persons,

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 249.

¹⁴² Ibid., 251. Williams estimates that roughly 1 out of every 5 students at Douai were Welsh between 1574 and 1578, at a time when Wales' overall population was only 1/12th that of England's.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 259.

another major organizer of the English Mission, during his visits to the college in the late 1570s. Describing Clenock in his memoirs many years later, Persons began his recollection by referencing the ancient division between the English and Welsh. He wrote of Wales as “the refuge of the ancient Britons when they were conquered by the English” and noted that “between these Welshmen and true Englishmen dissensions easily arise from memory of their ancient rivalry, they being of the stock of different peoples.”¹⁴⁴ In a letter to Allen, Persons elaborated on the differences between the English and Welsh, recalling a former colleague’s comparison of their relationship to the squabbles between the Biscayans and Castilians in Spain.¹⁴⁵ Though Persons often refers to Clenock as a good man in his letters and writings, these brief compliments were consistently followed by exceedingly negative depictions of the Welsh people. This undercurrent of discomfort (or even thinly-veiled xenophobia) mirrors the struggles that broke out in Rome during the initial years of the college’s administration.

Maurice Clenock had not served long as rector in Rome before he became the target for intense criticism and complaint from the English scholars there. As early as his first year as rector, Clenock was widely accused by these scholars of nepotism and favoritism towards the minority of Welsh scholars and students at the college.¹⁴⁶ Persons writes that “the Welsh seem to have thought that this seminary was founded for the peculiar benefit of their race,” implying that he saw Clenock steering the college away from the original goals that Allen had set out for it.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ *Memoirs of F. Persons*, 97.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 136.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 118-20. Persons provides excerpts for the specific complaints of eleven English scholars in Rome. These excerpts; however, are provided in Latin.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 97-98.

Neither Allen nor Persons provides much detail of the strife between the English and Welsh beyond the general concerns of favoritism on the part of Clenock.¹⁴⁸ This was not the case for Protestant writers, particularly English Protestants, who traveled to the continent to report on Catholic developments there. Prominent among these writers was Anthony Munday, who set out from England for Rome by way of Paris and Milan in 1579.¹⁴⁹ Arriving at the college, Munday noted the intense interest of the scholars and students he encountered there, who asked him for news of England.¹⁵⁰ Under the pretense of delivering a letter to the college, Munday dined with the college's archdeacon as well as Clenock before meeting with more Catholic students in the evenings. Munday then revealed his true purpose as he appealed to one of the students and succeeded in gaining a list of recusant Catholics purportedly residing in England, some maintaining noble households such as the earl of Leicester and the lord of Bedford.¹⁵¹ Munday then continued his investigation of the college, possibly under the auspices of the English crown, by relating his impressions of the strife within the wall of the seminary. His intrusion into the college did not go unnoticed though, as Persons would later name him as a spy in his memoirs, noting the apparent success of Munday and other spies in rooting out "as many [recusants] as they could hunt out".¹⁵² Regardless of his aims, Munday's account crucially makes note of the dispute between the English and Welsh members of the college and offers some sense of the complaints leveled against Clenock's administration. Within a few days of his arrival,

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 144.

¹⁴⁹ Anthony Munday, *The English Romayne lyfe, published By Iohn Charlewoode, for Nicholas Ling: dwelling in Paules Church-yard, at the signe of the Maremaide* (London, 1582), 3.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 13.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 15.

¹⁵² *Memoirs of F. Persons*, 181.

Munday witnessed a formal appeal by the English scholars to Cardinal Giovanni Morone in which the English laid bare their particular complaints.

To start, Clenock was accused of tampering with the recruitment process of new students, allegedly turning away worthy English students while welcoming all Welshmen regardless of their qualifications and character. The pastor Sherwin, who delivered these complaints, added that “if a Welshman come, yf he bee never too oylde a kannagate, never too lewde a person, he can not come so soone as he [Clenock] shall be welcome to him, whether he have any learning or no, it maketh no matter, he is a Welshman.”¹⁵³ The unequal treatment did not stop there as Sherwin details further examples of Clenock’s conduct, such as spending his nights drinking with the Welsh students in his chambers while the English students attended to their studies over a subpar supper.¹⁵⁴ In all areas, the English accused Clenock of favoring his countrymen over the majority of students in Rome and, in the wake of Munday’s dismissal from the college at the insistence of the Welsh rector, the strife within the school would soon boil over.

Soon enough, petitions arose in 1578 against the administration of the college as some thirty-three English scholars called for the removal of Clenock and begged the Society of Jesus to take over the college. Their demands were not so easily met, as the corruption within the college appears to have extended beyond Clenock. In his memoirs, Persons would later implicate the archdeacon Owen Lewis in the apparent scandal within the college, pointing to Lewis’ initial hiring of Clenock to remove undesirable officials in the English hospital as evidence for his continued support for the Welshman and the

¹⁵³ Munday, *The English Romaine lyfe*, 59-60.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

prolonging of the strife within the college.¹⁵⁵ The petition of the English scholars was not immediately addressed, and indeed Clenock and Lewis delayed the matter indefinitely while they dealt with scholars through a series of bribes, rebukes, and threats, according to Persons.

These measures do not seem to have dissuaded the scholars in any way as many felt obliged to depart from the college if their petitions were not met. The sides reached an impasse later in 1579, when the scholars were offered a choice between resignation from Rome or obedience to Clenock. The English chose the former option and made ready to depart Italy entirely and return to take their chances in England.¹⁵⁶ This decision appears to have forced the Pope's hand, for within two days, a summons for the scholars arrived at the private home of one of their countrymen, calling them to an audience with the Pope. Following this meeting, the scholars were promptly sent back to the college with the understanding that their petitions would be immediately addressed.¹⁵⁷

After the Jesuits conducted an inquiry and collected accounts from the scholars, the rector, and other witnesses (such as Persons), the Pope removed Clenock from his post, much to the delight of the newly returned English scholars.¹⁵⁸ Additionally, the Pope agreed to have the Jesuits take control of the school permanently, noting that they had briefly assisted in its original conversion from hospital to college.¹⁵⁹ A new rector was not immediately named due to the fears of inciting the wrath of the scholars with another

¹⁵⁵ *Memoirs of F. Persons*, 97-98.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ Maurice Whitehead, "Established and putt in good order': The Venerable English College, Rome, under Jesuit Administration, 1579-1685," in *Jesuit Intellectual and Physical Exchange between England and Mainland Europe, c.1580-1789* (Boston: Brill, 2019), 320.

¹⁵⁹ *Memoirs of F. Persons*, 100.

ineffective choice, and so Persons himself was appointed interim rector until April of 1579 when the Jesuits later selected Alphonsus Agazzari, who filled the position for the next seven years.¹⁶⁰ Persons' memoirs provide little detail on Agazzari's contributions to the college, though in truth they provide only the briefest of notes on Persons' own time as rector. Agazzari appears to have at the very least satisfied the immediate concerns of both the English scholars and the Pope during his time at the college. Described as industrious and fond of the English, Agazzari successfully eased the tensions in the college, constructing several new buildings and dramatically increasing the school's revenue by roughly three thousand ducats per year.¹⁶¹ Indeed, all appears to have been put right by the mid-1580s and soon Allen himself would be called to Rome by Persons to help plan the emerging English Mission.

Despite Agazzari's effective resolution of the scandals under Clenock's administration, the divisions do not seem to have healed. In a letter to Father William Goode in 1580, Persons related in more detail the fallout from Clenock's troubled time as rector in Rome and touches upon the fundamental issue that he saw with the Welshman's treatment of the college. For Persons, it was not the fact that Clenock treated the Welsh and English students differently that brought his career to an abrupt end. This behavior was more of a byproduct of Clenock's overarching failings as a rector. Instead, Persons reveals the far more important point that the Welshman and his cohort of Welsh students appeared to have had no interest in returning to Britain to contribute to the mission there.¹⁶² When confronted on this matter, Clenock openly admitted his desire to remain on

¹⁶⁰ Whitehead, "The Venerable English College under Jesuit Administration," 320.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² *Memoirs of F. Persons*, 144-45.

the continent and went so far as to threaten expulsion to any student who challenged his authority or his direction of his students' education.¹⁶³ The fallout from this division has already been explored, but this hijacking of the English Mission reveals both the fragility of the mission conceived of by Allen and Persons and the severe blow that these divisions dealt to the mission itself.

Clenock's declaration to Persons that he did not wish to return to Britain stood in stark contrast to his earlier attitude towards the English mission. He had been among the earliest Welsh exiles to call for Elizabeth's excommunication in 1559, as well as one of the earliest voices to call for a foreign invasion of her kingdom. In fact, as late as 1575 (just four years before he became the Roman college's rector), Clenock went so far as to submit an outline of his own proposed plans for an invasion of England in support of the imprisoned Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, to Pope Gregory XIII.¹⁶⁴ He proposed that the Pope raise a force of some 6,000 men, which would be supplemented with another 4,000 recruits from a variety of Catholic countries, and send this army to the island of Anglesey, located just off the northern coast of Wales and from which the invasion of England would commence. Clenock even provided a list of reasons for optimism with regard to the plan, which included the apparent lack of English naval vessels patrolling the western shores, strong Catholic sympathies in Wales, the popularity of prophecies of Wales' deliverance from England by Rome itself, and the fond memories of Henry Tudor's (presumably, Henry VII) successful invasion of England.¹⁶⁵ This plan was almost immediately dismissed by the Pope

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Williams, *Wales and the Reformation*, 262.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

for its noticeably far-fetched elements.¹⁶⁶ Clenock was no general, but his proposition indicates a high degree of enthusiasm for an invasion of England, which conflicts noticeably with his later refusal to even consider a return home. Perhaps the recent failures of a series of plots against Elizabeth, which will be examined later in this study, had turned Clenock away from his original plans. It's also possible that the dissension within the college between the college's students forced Clenock to take up an antagonistic position to the English's persistent calls for a return homewards. Perhaps he simply changed his mind as the years passed and a return to Britain seemed less and less appealing as Elizabeth's regime consolidated its position. We will never know precisely why Clenock's views changed, only that by 1579 he had apparently undergone a complete reversal in his Counter-Reformational attitude and plans.

The lone concrete result from Clenock's impractical proposition to the Pope was that Gregory XIII began seriously to consider the possibility of an English Mission and summoned William Allen to Rome in 1575 to discuss a joint operation between the papacy and Spain to free the captive Mary, Queen of Scots.¹⁶⁷ Indeed, the election of Gregory in 1572 had catalyzed a new period of liveliness within the Church and the new Pope believed that the renewal and strengthening of the Church could not be achieved without well-educated and well-prepared clergymen.¹⁶⁸ While their initial plans for Mary's liberation and subsequent marriage to one of Philip II's brothers ultimately stalled due to Spain's efforts to suppress the Dutch Revolt, plans for the English Mission were not totally abandoned. However, the subsequent scandal within the English College tarnished these

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Whitehead, "The Venerable English College under Jesuit Administration," 320-21.

plans and, as the mission commenced in 1580, new divisions and problems emerged in the Venerable English College.

After the dismissal of Clenock, the Welsh students still in Rome, led mainly by the Welsh Bishop Owen Lewis, had grown highly distrustful of the Jesuits after their takeover of the College. Indeed, tensions grew so intense that Lewis was eventually sent by the Pope to Milan in 1579 to take up a position as vicar-general there; however, he nonetheless continued to exert his influence in Rome.¹⁶⁹ Lewis' nephew, Hugh Griffitt, remained a student at the college until his dismissal in 1580 due to troublesome behavior, but Persons tells of how the boy continued to cause problems for the college. The young man began to degrade the success of the seminary, slandering the students it produced, and sharing these accusations with cardinals associated with the Roman Inquisition.¹⁷⁰ Further, he then proceeded to recruit other Catholics to his cause, garnering their support, according to Persons, specifically because of their non-English heritage. Persons directly notes one such man, a Franciscan Friar called Batson, who joined the young man's crusade against the college due to his Flemish roots, despite the fact that he had a brother enrolled at the college at the time. The progress of this campaign is difficult to ascertain as Person's manuscript abruptly ends in the middle of the following page, but it is nonetheless clear that the tensions within the English mission had not eased after the end of Clenock's administration.

In fact, the situation seems to have continued deteriorating after the conclusion of the mission to England as the quarrel that the factions of the college waged took on a quasi-

¹⁶⁹ *Memoirs of F. Persons*, 184.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

nationalistic tone. As Jason Nice has shown, the Welsh students continued to defend their place at the college by invoking their own ancient historical traditions, particularly those included in a 1565 publication of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*.¹⁷¹ Impressively, this strategy did not merely involve referencing a few passages from Geoffrey's work, but the Welsh exiles went even further in attempting to prove factually one of Geoffrey's stories that had direct relevance on their circumstances.

The story in question dealt with Cadwaladr, the king of Gwynnedd in Wales from 655 to 682. According to Geoffrey, Cadwaladr renounced his British throne in the late seventh century and left it to the invading Saxons, in order to make a pilgrimage to Rome. Cadwaladr died shortly afterwards and, nearly nine hundred years later, the reconstruction of St. Peter's Basilica that took place from 1506-1615 revealed a tombstone that the Welsh would asserted as marking the tomb of their ancient king and therefore legitimizing their claims for control over the Roman College. Having so recently lost control of the college to the Jesuits in 1579, the following years saw a resurgence of Welsh protests against the new administration. It revived a longstanding tradition of resistance by the Welsh to English dominance that dates back to the medieval era.¹⁷²

This time, however, the battle for the Roman College would be fought along historical lines that gave way to a clash between Welsh and English cultural identities. For centuries, the Welsh had used Geoffrey's history, particularly his stories regarding the British King Arthur, to protect Welsh cultural identity and resist English aggression by maintaining that Wales possessed a special relationship with Rome that legitimized their

¹⁷¹ Jason Nice, "Being 'British' in Rome: The Welsh at the English College, 1578-1584," *The Catholic Historical Review*, 92, 1 (January, 2006): 2.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 3.

hold on their segment of the British Isles. Couched mainly in a series of prophecies that Geoffrey attributes to the legendary wizard Merlin, the history predicted the future Welsh reconquest of Britain from the Saxons, which was initiated by the pilgrimage of Cadwaladr to Rome. The story goes:

A short time passed, in which the English grew stronger. Then Cadwaladr remembered his kingdom, now free from plague, and sought help to restore him to his former power. But as Cadwaladr was preparing a fleet, an angelic voice rang out, ordering him to give up the attempt. God did not want the Britons to rule over the island of Britain any longer, until the time came which Merlin had foretold to Arthur. The voice command Cadwaladr to go to Pope Sergius in Rome, where, after doing penance, he would be numbered among the saints. It said that through this blessing the British people would one day recover the island. When the prescribed time came, but that this would not happen before the British recovered Cadwaladr's body from Rome and brought it to Britain; only then would they recover their lost kingdom, after the discovery of the bodies of other saints had been hidden from the invading pagans.¹⁷³

As the prophecy indicates, Rome acted as a crucial backer for Welsh claims to the British Isles and the students of the sixteenth-century college quickly rallied around this mythological relationship to back their interests in the Roman College.

This process bears some resemblance to the medieval lineage manufacture practices discussed by Constance Bouchard. From late antiquity through the thirteenth century, medieval chroniclers and historians played an active role in forging new identities for French noble families by revising and often fabricating ancestral ties back to prestigious royal families, such as the Carolingians.¹⁷⁴ Indeed, Geoffrey's history can be seen as a similar production to the one's analyzed in Bouchard's study except that his work appears

¹⁷³ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain: An Edition and Translation of the De gestis Britonum (Historia Regnum Britonum)*, trans. Neil Wright (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2007), 278.

¹⁷⁴ Constance Bouchard, *Rewriting Saints and Ancestors: Memory and Forgetting in France, 500-1200* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 2-3.

to operate on a broader, more nationally-focused level, linking the Welsh people to Rome itself. In fact, the prophecy later came to link numerous Celtic peoples together as it specifically calls upon the men of Ireland, Scotland, Cornwall, Strathclyde, and all others associated with the Gaelic cultural group to join Wales “behind the banner of Saint David” in driving the Saxons out of Britain.¹⁷⁵ This prophesized Celtic alliance was now beginning to form in Rome between 1579 and 1580 and the coalition grew even more fervent when the construction of St. Peter’s unearthed relics that the Welsh immediately connected with Cadwaladr.¹⁷⁶ For the moment, it seemed that the prophecy that Merlin had predicted was about to come true.

But the English residents of the college were not about to accept the prophetic claims that the Welsh were suddenly unveiling. The English students responded with archival research of their own. Their solution, while far from decisive, involved a simple reconfiguring of the Welsh students’ evidence, by claiming that Gregory of Monmouth had confused Cadwaladr with Caedwalla, a Saxon King of Wessex in the seventh century.¹⁷⁷ This counter-accusation was based in the works of the Venerable Bede (c. 673-735), who presented a depiction of Caedwalla that almost mirrors Geoffrey’s writings on Cadwaladr. In the *History of the Church of England*, Bede describes Cadwalla as having ruled his kingdom for several years before the king, “for Gods’ sake and hope for an eternall kingdome in heuan, forsooke his owne vpon earth, and went to Rome.”¹⁷⁸ The immediate similarities between these two narratives continue as Caedwalla sailed for Rome and was

¹⁷⁵ Nice, “Being ‘British’ in Rome,” 16.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 17.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ The Venerable Bede, *The Historie of the Church of England. Compiled by Venerable Bede Englisman. [Sic] Translated Out of Latin, into English, by Thomas Stapleton Doctor in Diuinitie, Saint-Omer, Printed by Charles Boscard for Iohn Heigham, with permission of superiors, 1626, 423.*

baptized by Pope Sergius in 689.¹⁷⁹ It took almost no time for the English students at the college in 1579 and 1580 to claim the newly unearthed relics of St. Peter's for their own medieval Saxon king. In turn, the Papacy accepted this interpretation.

Naturally, the Welsh rejected the English's counter claims and pressed the matter further with the Vatican in the hope of confirming the occupation of the tomb by Cadwaladr. At least two attempts were made to convince the Church to rule in favor of the Welsh, one by Owen Lewis in 1580 and another four years later by Robert Owen.¹⁸⁰ Of the two, the latter attempt by Robert Owen effectively took the strategy that both the Welsh and English students had utilized in earlier episodes of their debate and plunged even deeper into the archives to reclaim the tomb for Cadwaladr. The sticking point for both sides appears to have been the burial inscription upon the tomb in question granted to its occupant by Pope Sergius, which Bede had presented in his history just after the death of Caedwalla. Just as the English had claimed that Geoffrey of Monmouth had mistaken Caedwalla for Cadwaladr, Owen claimed that Bede had mistaken the recipient of this burial epigraph.¹⁸¹ Owen proceeded to point to records of a license granted to Cadwaladr by Sergius with dates that corresponded with Geoffrey's account of Cadwaladr's arrival and death in Rome as further evidence that some mistake had been made when it came to whom the burial inscription was intended for and therefore who occupied the tomb itself. Believing he had sufficiently defended the Welsh interpretation and their fabled connection to Rome, Owen claimed that the English had lost all credibility for insidiously attempting to lay claim to Cadwaladr's tomb and urged the church reverse its previous ruling, if not to

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Nice, "Being 'British' in Rome," 18.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 20.

regain the primacy of the Welsh in the English college than to at least revive the credibility of the Welsh's prophetic ties to Rome for their eventual salvation in Britain.

Unfortunately for the Welsh, neither of these hopes were realized, in part due to prior actions by the Inquisition in the late 1550s. In 1559, the first Index of Prohibited Books had been published under Pope Paul IV. It specifically condemned the prophecy of Merlin and made it highly unlikely that the Welsh claims to and requests in the matter of Cadwaladr's tomb would be taken seriously by the Church two decades later.¹⁸² Indeed, when Gregory XIII issued a papal bull that acquiesced to all of the requests of the English students following their rebellion in 1579, he also signaled his intention to side with the English on the matter of British claims to the newly uncovered tomb and, by extension, claims to the college itself. By 1580, when the new bull was officially published, the college in Rome had become a truly English college and the Welsh students who remained were about to experience a reversal of their previous fortunes. Without their defenders like Owen, who had been forced out of the college by his superiors, and Clennock, who drowned at sea while making his way to Spain after his dismissal, the remaining Welsh students were caught up in a sort of purge conducted by the English who desired to see those whom they deemed mediocre peers expelled from the college.¹⁸³ Far from stabilizing the situation in Rome, the results of the revolt of the English students and the subsequent dispute over Cadwaladr and Caedwalla's tomb drove the two factions of the college further apart with both groups maintaining a mutual disgust for one another as the new Jesuit regime began.

¹⁸² Ibid., 22.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 25.

By the closing years of the sixteenth century, the apparent disunity within the college had not dissipated. Writing in 1603, Persons offers one final reflection on the tumultuous decades in which he reveals the shocking degree of national mistrust and disunity. In a letter to his companion, Father Anthony Rivers, Persons reveals that this mistrust was not limited to Britain but appeared to include potentially all Catholic powers on the continent. The opening lamentations of the letter focus on the failure of the English Mission, which forced the Jesuits to rethink their approach to spreading Catholicism in Britain and shift their attention to Scotland.¹⁸⁴ A series of gifts and propositions were sent to the Scottish court as the Jesuits saw vast potential in supporting the advancement of the relatively young King, James VI, who they believed could be steered towards Catholicism. A 1580s plot to encourage the marriage of James with a Spanish princess briefly encouraged Persons and the Jesuits with the prospect that Scotland might return to the church. But their dreams were shattered when James “was maryed and had yssue” with the Danish princess Anne “and [seemed] like to be confirmed in his former heresy.”¹⁸⁵ The plan had failed, but Persons seems to disapprove less of James’ choice of bride and more of the failure or refusal of the Kings of France and Spain to take action against this unexpected development. The King of Spain earned considerable scorn from Persons, who attacked the Catholic monarch’s apparent ambivalence towards these developments.¹⁸⁶ Persons likely took this lack of support as a personal affront, given the regular audiences he had with Philip II between 1589 and 1597.¹⁸⁷ Further, Persons considered the numerous desires of

¹⁸⁴ *Memoirs of F. Persons*, 213.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 214.

¹⁸⁷ Victor Houlston, “The Most Catholic King and the ‘Hispanized Camelion’: Philip II and Robert Persons,” in *Jesuit Intellectual and Physical Exchange between England and Mainland Europe, c.1580-1789* (Boston: Brill, 2019), 69.

the Spanish crown that included armies, munitions, soldiers, and wealth that did not align with the English mission in any way and concluded that, “albeit they be good men, and have good desyre to helpe us,” Catholic Spain saw little profit in assisting the Jesuits in their British endeavors.¹⁸⁸

Persons’ rebuke of the Spanish displays the sheer size of the mission into Britain that he envisioned, but further complicates the overall image of the mission. The problems of disunity that pervaded the Roman College dispute would arise on an international level soon after. It is clear that Persons expected the intervention and support of the Spanish based on his criticisms of their lack of action in the Jesuit attempts to influence James VI, which continue at several points of Persons’ reflection.¹⁸⁹ Persons also notes that his own role in the Mission had declined markedly in the years leading up to Elizabeth I’s death as both English and Spanish Jesuits began to exclude him from meetings on their activities.¹⁹⁰ This portion of Persons’ memoirs likely refers to the fallout from the Archpriest Controversy that persisted within the recusant English community from 1598 to 1603. This controversy arose following the death of William Allen in 1594, which left the English Mission without a direct overseer.¹⁹¹ It was widely expected and frequently feared that Persons would succeed Allen as the face of the Mission, but factions within the Church who opposed the Jesuits persuaded Pope Clement VIII to appoint George Blackwell as archpriest over the English recusant community. What followed over the next five years was a series

¹⁸⁸ *Memoirs of F. Persons*, 215.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 215-18. Persons claims that Philip II could have easily maintained the Catholic restoration begun by Mary had he simply stepped in to impede the rise of Elizabeth. Similarly, Persons is equally displeased that Philip took no action towards England following Elizabeth’s death in 1603 and references the King’s failure to assist in halting James’ progression towards Protestantism.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 215.

¹⁹¹ Edwards, *Robert Persons*, 232.

of appeals and debates between the Jesuits led by Persons and a segment of the secular clergy. Although the controversy would officially be closed in 1603 when the Pope maintained Blackwell as Archpriest but conceded increased autonomy to the secular clergy regarding their involvement in the Mission, the friction between these two groups did not ease in the years leading up to Persons' death and he increasingly found himself at odds with Colleton and his supporters.¹⁹²

With the Mission now more fractured than ever before, the impetus to retake England for Catholicism rapidly deteriorated as well. As the sixteenth century came to a close and England remained officially Protestant, much of Catholic Europe seems to have given up on the possibility of reviving Catholicism in Britain. On the international stage, Persons highlights the lack of unity between the Spanish or the French at the time of Elizabeth I's death as a clear sign that the mission had failed by 1603. The kings of Europe, particularly the Catholic kings, had responded to the ascension of James in England with messages of congratulations rather than the condemnation of Protestantism that Persons expected.¹⁹³ Similar to the Welshmen in Rome, the Catholic powers of Europe appeared content with the continuation of Protestantism so long as it suited their interests. Though their goals may be difficult to ascertain, and Persons' appraisal of the Spanish may relate more of his impression of the Spanish crown than their actual political aims, it stands to reason that the Spanish and French viewed an invasion of England to be highly unprofitable by the end of the sixteenth century. The failure of the Spanish Armada in 1588 likely lingered in the thoughts of every European monarch as the sixteenth century drew to

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 238.

¹⁹³ *Memoirs of F. Persons*, 216.

a close and many likely saw greater benefit in supporting or, at the very least, tolerating Protestant England.

Even the Roman Catholic Church had backed away from England by 1603. Persons writes that the Pope, though still supportive of missionary work in England, had resigned himself to accept the ascension of James despite his Protestant leanings.¹⁹⁴ Indeed, this hesitancy to renew tensions with England in the wake of Elizabeth's death may be nothing new for the papacy as much of the planning behind the English Mission was fraught with disagreement within the church itself. In 1580, Persons, Allen, and Edmund Campion set out for England, along with roughly ten other chaplains and students of the Roman and French seminaries.¹⁹⁵ These men recognized the high likelihood of their potential martyrdom in England and their time in Britain has been covered extensively by modern historians and early modern Jesuit reports on the mission.¹⁹⁶ However, Persons reveals that this journey was by no means inevitable as the Jesuits struggled to procure Papal authorization and support for their plan. In the same year, the Pope was weighing alternative options to the mission proposed by Allen and Persons, appearing to favor military intervention in England over missionary work. An English knight called Sir Thomas Stukley had recently arrived from Spain and rapidly curried favor with the Pope, gaining the title of marquis of Ireland, soldiers, and financial support for a voyage to

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 217.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 160.

¹⁹⁶ E.E. Reynolds, *Campion and Parsons: The Jesuit Mission of 1580-1* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1980); John Edward Parish, *Robert Persons and the English Counter Reformation: Monograph in English History* (Houston: Rice University Press, 1966); Malcolm South, *The Joint Mission to England, 1580-1581* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1999); Robert Scully, *Into the Lion's Den: The Jesuit Mission in Elizabethan England and Wales* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2011); Michael Carrafiello, "English Catholicism and the Jesuit Mission of 1580-1581," *The Historical Journal* 37, 4 (1994), 761.

Ireland from which the invasion of England could begin.¹⁹⁷ Though the Pope certainly supported the venture of Allen and Persons, Persons' memoirs strongly imply that the Pope's attention was divided between numerous groups that desired his Papal support. Just as the kings of France and Spain would later weigh the benefits of supporting the Jesuits against the expenses such a mission would entail, the Pope appears to have made the same calculations and deemed military force as a quicker and more efficient means of dethroning Elizabeth.¹⁹⁸

The Pope undoubtedly considered the risks associated with an invasion of England, likely contemplating the probability of Stukley's victory over the English army. The one risk that he appears to have overlooked was Stukley's own personal vices, which became apparent when the knight's greed and national fervor quickly brought the invasion to a premature end. Shortly before departing from Rome, Stukley and his companions conducted a sort of vendetta against his personal rivals, dragging men from their beds to be held for ransom, executed, or forcibly conscripted into Stukley's mercenary army.¹⁹⁹ Most of these men were targeted, according to Persons, for speaking out against Stukley and his business in Rome and, despite the intercession of the Pope, many of these men were put to death or effectively sold into slavery in the Portuguese navy patrolling the Barbary Coast. Many of the men captured by Stukley were English, but Persons notes that Stukley had only sought out particular Englishmen who had done him injury. This was not the case when dealing with the Irish in Rome at the time and Persons indicates that Stuckley did not seem to have any personal qualms with the Irish and captured them solely because they were

¹⁹⁷ *Memoirs of F. Persons*, 161.

¹⁹⁸ Williams, *Wales and the Reformation*, 262-63.

¹⁹⁹ *Memoirs of F. Persons*, 161-62.

“men of the marke of the Irishe nation.²⁰⁰ As in the Roman seminary, national identity once again factored into dividing the English Mission into factions with varied goals and ideas that often had little or nothing to do with journeying to England. Just like the Welsh faction in Rome led by Clenock, Stuckley also had little desire in returning home as he abandoned Rome soon after to enter the service of the King of Portugal.²⁰¹ He never reached Ireland, or England for that matter, but instead traveled to the Barbary Coast to conduct war on behalf of the Portuguese. The Pope had clearly misplaced his trust in this mercenary knight, and he very likely exercised greater caution in the following years, especially given the considerable financial backing that had been lost when Stukley defected.

In conclusion, by the time that James VI of Scotland became James I of England in 1603, the unsuccessful Jesuit mission into England had long been concluded and hopes of its revival had faded as nearly all of the Catholic factions of Europe had extended some degree of toleration toward the new Protestant King. But this new policy was long in the making. Even before the Jesuit expedition into England in 1580, the mission was far from unified in its aims and methods as numerous groups across Europe demonstrated their unwillingness to pursue the reconquest of England. Maurice Clenock demonstrated this in converting the English College of Rome into a haven for recusant Welshmen, admitting his total disinterest in returning to Britain later in his life. Though the Jesuits would deal with Clenock and take over the college, the splits within the mission persisted as rival factions, such as Stuckley’s, effectively conducted war with one another in the streets of Rome,

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 161.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 162.

mainly as a competition for Papal favor but often due simply to perceived national differences between the recusant peoples of Britain. As early as 1580, church leaders had likely begun to lose confidence in the mission and by the end of the sixteenth century, nearly all support for a crusade into England had evaporated. Persons lamented as early as 1580 that “these broyles hath utterly ceased the practice of bringing our Company into England, and as I iudg is not like to go forward.” His disappointment with the early mission would only increase over its declining viability.²⁰² The tensions in Rome had not dissipated several years after Clenock’s removal as Persons wrote on the ongoing problems that plagued the English College in the 1580s:

I am right sorry to se things stand as they doe, for I see bothe the schollers and all the Nation here at such square with him [The Welsh Archdeacon Lewes] and to have conceived so deepe and rooted a mislike of his proceedings in English matters...that in man’s reason it is impossible to think it able to bring them to deale with him againe, or to come any more to him. I have laboured in yt, but I lost my labour, and do utterly despayre in the same; and therefore what this difference may import to the hinderance of good matters I do much feare.²⁰³

Though the mission would begin soon afterwards, their optimism for success was likely tempered by the memory of disunity and division within the ranks of the recusant community in Rome. Two decades later, these issues had not been remedied and the mission would collapse due to deep-rooted divisions within its ranks that developed alongside the national identities of early modern European states.

²⁰² Ibid., 159.

²⁰³ Ibid., 160.

Chapter 3: St. Omer

Despite the failure of the mission to England in the early 1580s, English exiles on the continent were not dissuaded from their goal of reconverting the island, and the network of seminaries founded throughout western Europe remained operational as the final decades of the sixteenth century approached. Indeed, it seems that Rome remained optimistic about the Mission's chances as it continued to fund the founding of new colleges, including the final case study that this project will examine. This last college would prove to be remarkably flexible and mobile throughout its history as the changing circumstances of the early modern era forced the school to relocate on several occasions, including one final, ironic move across the Channel into the northern counties of England itself. Yet through all of this movement, this last college, founded at St. Omer (in the Spanish Netherlands, and later part of France), displayed considerable consistency in its commitment to Catholic education and, as this chapter will show, the administrators at St. Omer worked tirelessly to maintain the same sorts of standards that had been in place at Douai during the initial founding of the continental seminaries. In spite of the remarkable movement that this college would undergo in the years following the collapse of the English Mission, St. Omer's commitment to the Mission's standards did not wane even as the early modern period drew to a close.

St. Omer's modern descendant is Stonyhurst College. It is located in Northern England in the county of Lancashire, just a few miles to the northeast of Preston and immediately north of the village of Hurst Green. Nestled in the valleys of the English countryside, the college consists of several stone halls, many of which date to the original

settlement of the school in 1794, that serve today as the learning and living spaces for English students. Although the school was originally intended as a seminary for training Catholic priests and carried out that function through much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Stonyhurst now mainly provides preparatory and primary education for students between the ages of three and eighteen. Despite the expansion of the school's curriculum, the school retains the Roman Catholic philosophy that played a central role in the school's original founding. Indeed, Stonyhurst represents only the most recent permutation of the school's existence, and its history can be traced back to the sixteenth century in Western Flanders, where it carried out similar functions to its continental counterparts.

Founded by Robert Persons in 1593, the college has its origins at St. Omer, where it initially appeared as something of an oddity in the grand scheme of the Catholic Reformation.²⁰⁴ While most colleges were in or near major urban centers, such as Madrid, Seville, or Rome, St. Omer represented a decidedly more rustic environment during the early history of the college as it remained seemingly detached from the political forces at work during the English and Continental Reformations.²⁰⁵ Yet, based on the college's subsequent history and the numerous writings and prescriptive works produced by its founder and subsequent rectors, St. Omer appears to have become one of the main focal points for the then waning Jesuit Mission to England. Indeed, over the following century after its founding, fifty percent of students who would later move to the Venerable English college in Rome would receive their education up to the age of twenty-one at St. Omer.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ T.E. Muir, *Stonyhurst College, 1593-1993* (London: James & James Publishers Limited, 1992), 5.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ Whitehead, "The Venerable English College under Jesuit Administration," 318.

Unlike its predecessors at Douai and in Rome, St. Omer was consistently seen as one of the last bastions for the survival of English Catholicism after the failure of the original English Mission and the disaster of the Spanish Armada. Despite its humble beginnings as more of a waypoint for students traveling to more established seminaries on the continent than an outright college, St. Omer gradually became one of the most prominent schools devoted wholly to the preservation of the Catholic faith and the revival of traditional Christianity in England. Though this mission never came to fruition, and the school was ultimately forced to flee from France in the buildup to the French Revolution, the stewardship of the school, its highly structured and firmly enforced codes of conduct, and its unrelenting drive to survive, reinforced its image as a beacon of hope for recusant English Catholic families throughout the seventeenth century and secured its position as one of the most unified and important centers for Catholic education. Unlike the Venerable English College in Rome or the College at Douai, St. Omer never faltered in its commitment to reviving the traditional faith in England and the members of its community remained firmly attached to the ideals of the English Mission long after its failure in 1581.

This powerful image of stability and resilience was a far cry from how the school projected itself in its beginnings. In many ways, the survival of the college beyond its initial decades is something of a miracle unto itself. From its earliest creation, the college faced numerous challenges that frequently threatened its continued existence. From the very beginning, the school suffered from volatile finances and aggressive attempts by the English crown to dissuade Catholic families from enrolling their children abroad. Heavy fines—generally, one hundred pounds—imposed on the English Catholic community severely diminished the ability of many Catholic parents to pay school fees, and those

students who managed to secure transportation to the Low Countries found themselves virtually impoverished upon arrival.²⁰⁷ The Elizabethan state likewise discouraged Catholic education through a variety of acts during Elizabeth's reign.²⁰⁸ The 1559 renewal of the Act of Supremacy demanded a strict oath of loyalty to the Queen in order to teach in a university setting, virtually demanding acceptance of the Anglican church, and later legislation would continue to limit Catholic educational opportunities.²⁰⁹ The Act for the Assurance of the Queen's Majesty's Royal Power required oaths of loyalty from schoolmasters at all educational levels and the 1581 Act to Retain the Queen's Majesty's Subjects to Their Due Obedience imposed a ten pound fine for anyone found maintaining a Catholic tutor, along with a yearlong prison term for any instructors found absent from Sunday church services.²¹⁰ The Elizabethan state then went one step further in 1593 to address the problem posed by foreign seminaries, such as those active in Douai and Rome, by passing the Act against Jesuits and Seminary Priests, which flatly prohibited families from sending their children abroad without a special license.²¹¹ Violating this act incurred the aforementioned fines that dissuaded many from opposing the financial pressure imposed by the crown.

²⁰⁷ Janet Graffius, Joseph Reed, and Stas Callinicos, eds, *The Customs Book of St. Omer: Selections from the Original Manuscript written by Giles Schondonch S.J., Rector of St. Omer English College 1601-1617* (Stonyhurst: St. Omer Press, 2019), 9.

²⁰⁸ Muir, *Stonyhurst College*, 15-16.

²⁰⁹ "Act of Supremacy, 1559" in *Tudor Constitutional Documents, AD 1485-1603*, J.R. Turner, ed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 130-35.

²¹⁰ "The Act to Retain the Queen's Majesty's Subjects," in *The Statutes of the Realm*, Vol. 4 (London: Dawson's of Pall Mall, 1963), 657-658; "An Act for the Assurance of the Queen Majesty's Royal Power over all Estates and Subjects within her Highness' Domains" in *Tudor Constitutional Documents, AD 1485-1603*, J.R. Turner, ed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 402-05.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

Yet some families threw caution to the wind and some sixteen boys succeeded in gaining admittance to the newly erected school in 1593.²¹² What they found, however, was not particularly impressive in the early going. Despite Robert Persons' lofty expectations for the college, the school had been founded as a combination of a steppingstone and an afterthought. Prior to 1593, Persons himself had been heavily involved in the business of continental education. As previously noted, having joined the Society in 1575, Persons spent several of his early years in Rome as an administrator and transitional headmaster of the Venerable English College following the Anglo-Welsh feud there described in the last chapter.²¹³ Two years later, Persons led the first Jesuit Mission into England alongside Edmund Campion. The failure of the mission resulted in Persons' permanent exile and, despite his desire to return to England with the prospect of martyrdom awaiting him, Persons resigned himself to quiet study and missionary work and dedicated the remainder of his life to supporting Catholic education on the continent.²¹⁴

Following in the footsteps of William Allen, Persons was singularly responsible for the founding of a small preparatory school at Eu (France) in 1582.²¹⁵ Initially, French Jesuits accommodated Persons and his students by providing them a house in Eu.²¹⁶ Later, Persons succeeded in gaining an annual stipend of one hundred pounds from Henry, duke of Guise, and managed to acquire the *Hôpital Normand* as the new college's main building.²¹⁷ This college, however, seems to have been more of staging area for newly

²¹² Muir, *Stonyhurst College*, 15.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 16.

²¹⁴ John Bossy, "The Society of Jesus and the Wars of Religion," in *Monastic Studies: The Continuity of Tradition*, edited by Judith Loades (Bangor: Headstart History, 1990), 231.

²¹⁵ George Oliver, *Collections towards illustrating the biography of the Scotch, English, and Irish members, of the Society of Jesus* (London: C. Dolman, 1845), viii.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

arrived English students as it merely provided lodging for the boys who would attend classes at the colleges of Douai, Verdun, and Pont à Mousson.²¹⁸ The school soon ran into financial difficulties as the French Wars of Religion intensified. Henry of Guise was assassinated in 1588, depriving Eu of his financial backing and protection, and the vengeful response in the form of King Henry III's assassination a year later only escalated the tensions that surrounded the school. Persons quickly appealed to the Spanish King Philip II for funding but, despite gaining a substantial grant to support the school, the forces of the French Crown captured the nearby city of Dieppe, and the subsequent arrival of an English army forced the Jesuits to abandon the neighboring province.²¹⁹ The boys were gradually discharged to other colleges with the last of them reaching the newly established college at Rheims in 1592.

Out of this chaos arose the college at St. Omer. Although Eu was not a direct ancestor of Persons' newest project, he founded St. Omer with similar ideas regarding its function. As early as 1592, Persons had begun to draft petitions for a new school that would act as a feeder school for the Jesuit Walloon College as well as for the college at Douai.²²⁰ Much like Eu, St. Omer initially appeared as little more than an afterthought in the grand scheme of the Catholic Reformation. Its early students were initially destined for other colleges due to the close proximity of the college in Douai—indeed, the establishment of St. Omer was originally seen as a superfluous waste of finances given the abundance of options in Northern France and the Low Countries—and the young college was further expected to supply students for larger schools to the west. Between 1589 and 1592, Persons

²¹⁸ Muir, *Stonyhurst College*, 17.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

established seminaries at Valladolid and Seville in Spain, and St. Omer's imminent founding a year later was seen as an opportunity to funnel students out of England and into the Catholic heartland that was Spain and Italy. Such was the case for Robert Drury, who left Middlesex for St. Omer in the early 1600s.²²¹ There, he passed a single course in humanities before pressing on to Rome to continue his study of philosophy before finally joining the Jesuit order in 1608. For the moment, the college would serve as little more than a steppingstone for students on their way to larger, better-funded institutions.

Additionally, St. Omer's actual foundation was less than stellar in the early going, as the school itself suffered continual financial problems. Although Persons succeeded in gaining an annual grant of roughly two thousand crowns from the Spanish crown, these donations were often paid inconsistently if at all.²²² As a result, the college struggled from its inception to provide even basic learning spaces for its pupils. The school would not gain a building to call its own until 1610 when its first rector, the Flemish Giles Schondonch, purchased a sizeable mansion to serve as the foundation for the college administration.²²³ Indeed, it was under Schondonch, who became rector in 1601, that the school came into its own as the school gradually expanded and drew the attention of both Catholic and Protestant Europeans during his sixteen-year tenure.²²⁴ The donations contributed by these impressed visitors allowed Schondonch to further expand the school into a full-fledged college that drew more and more students to the invigorating educational program that the rector sought to instill in St. Omer.

²²¹ Oliver, *Collections towards illustrating the biography of the members of the Society of Jesus*, 83.

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ Graffius et al., *Customs Book of St. Omer*, 11.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

Schondonch's idealized educational philosophy is best recorded in the St. Omer Customs Book that he dictated in the waning months of his life in 1617. A hastily constructed work commissioned by Schondonch on his deathbed, the text offers not only the ailing rector's ideas concerning education but also the regulations of the college and the routines that students were expected to follow during their time in St. Omer. A standard school day began at five in the morning, regardless of season, and immediately launched students into a strictly regimented schedule that included hearing Mass, independent study, and communal breakfast before lessons began promptly at seven.²²⁵ While lessons covered a variety of topics, Schondonch explicitly prescribes the holding of "academies" in which elite senior students would gather at half past nine to practice their rhetorical skills through debate, improve upon their Greek and Latin language comprehension, and engage in spiritual exercises prescribed by the Society of Jesus.²²⁶ These gatherings gave students an opportunity to internalize the knowledge gleaned from lessons and prepared them for a more formal demonstration at the annual prizegiving ceremony, later known as the "Great Academies."²²⁷ The boys would break for lunch at eleven, which doubled as recreational time in which they might practice music, walk in the gardens, or engage in games and play. Studies and lessons recommenced at half past twelve and continued until half past six in the evening when dinner was provided. Another period of recreation would then be offered after supper, lasting until eight o'clock when the boys returned to their studies.²²⁸ This final study period also included a brief "Examen" in which the boys would reflect upon the

²²⁵ Customs Book of St. Omer College, *Stonyhurst College Archives*, 16.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ Graffius et al., *Customs Book of St. Omer*, 63.

²²⁸ Customs Book of St. Omer College, *Stonyhurst College Archives*, 16.

events of the day and contemplate their spiritual future in a manner similar to the prescriptions of Ignatius Loyola.²²⁹ This exercise was meant to prepare oneself for confession and was also included as part of one's evening prayers. Schondonch apparently wished to see this practice adopted by the boys at St. Omer and mandated its inclusion in their daily lives before they went to bed at nine.

The same sort of rigidity can also be found in Schondonch's plans for organizing his charges on feast days. Despite the lack of lessons, Schondonch filled these days with activity, shepherding students out of bed and immediately to an elaborately ordered Mass service:

At seven o'clock they go to Mass, in the church, sitting in the galleries overlooking the church, kneeling in order of age. If the boys are taking communion, they descend after the celebrant priest has consumed the Host. Figures [prefects] first, then the remaining pupils by playroom. When the first row of boys has filled the communion rail, those who will follow next kneel each in a long row at the corner of the Gospel lectern, one after the other, right back to the church door. At a signal, those who have received communion rise at the same time as those who are kneeling behind them, and genuflect, and when the reverential adoration of the venerable Sacrament has been made, those who have received communion leave from one side while those behind take their place. When the first boys reach the back of the church, they turn towards the Altar and kneel again until the others have received communion. When the signal is given, all rise again, adore the Sacrament, and those who first received communion depart while the second group remain kneeling until the third have finished and so forth. Someone appointed by the Superior enters with the first group and kneels in the middle of the church not far from the communion rail, gives the sign for rising and adoration. It is also his duty to see that all behave decently and with great reverence during communion. He himself will go to communion last.²³⁰

Following Mass, the boys were shuffled through a series of familiar activities such as meals and study times, before assembling in the afternoon to sing litanies and vespers in the

²²⁹ Graffius et al., *Customs Book of St. Omer*, 65-66.

²³⁰ *Customs Book of St. Omer College, Stonyhurst College Archives*, 17-18.

church. While some time was allotted for students to visit the gardens, Schondonch specifically mandates that the boys would not receive time for recreation and play on feast days, instead filling the evening hours before supper with further time for silent study. Similar restrictions were applied on holidays such as on the feast day of St. Remigius that took place roughly at the midpoint of the academic term. Schondonch's remarks on this day are noticeably brief as he expresses his aversion to allowing these days to "be merely boring and unproductive."²³¹ To stave off this possibility, the rector prescribes the continuation of study time on holidays and specifically decrees that students would pass the time on holiday afternoons engaged in practicing Greek and Latin calligraphy.

Student hygiene was likewise strictly regulated. In order to house its students, the college featured four dormitories, each supervised by its own prefect. These prefects were drawn from the more senior priests of the college and the rector entrusted them with disciplinary responsibilities with regard to the students.²³² Prefects also tended to student's health and dormitory organization and maintenance. Schondonch expected them to periodically open and close the dormitory windows to refresh the dormitory air and to tend to the candles fixed around these various spaces.²³³ No student would be allowed to tend to these responsibilities and Schondonch specifically forbade prefects from allowing candle-use near students' bedsides in order to minimize the risk of fire. The boys who lived in these rooms seem to have exercised little to no influence within their own living spaces as prefects were even charged with organizing the boys' personal possessions, ensuring that they remained fixed beside their beds. Schondonch specifically dictates that "this shall

²³¹ Customs Book of St. Omer College, *Stonyhurst College Archives*, 16.

²³² Graffius et al., *Customs Book of St. Omer*, 68.

²³³ Customs Book of St. Omer College, *Stonyhurst College Archives*, 12.

be done by the prefects, not by the boys, so that the woodwork is not spoiled by rusty nails or by unsightly glue,” further stripping the boys of any real freedom in organizing their personal spaces.²³⁴

The rector is a bit more vague when it comes to the cleaning of these living spaces, though he seems to imply that prefects would remain in control of cleaning duties even if students ultimately carried out the variety of hygienic tasks that he laid forth. The dormitories were swept every other day. The windows and woodwork were dusted and cleaned and any damage to the dormitories, particularly window damage, was expected to be dealt with immediately. The straw beneath students’ beds was replenished annually in the summers and the boys were permitted to clean their beds of fleas and lice on certain days during the summers as well. On a daily basis, the beds were expected to be properly made up and upon retiring for the day, the boys’ clothing was to be folded neatly and placed at the foot of each bed. Although it is unclear who would carry out these daily tasks, Schondonch further asserted that the dormitories would be closed off to students during the day and commanded prefects to admit students only during proper hours. In the same breath in which he declared that “dirt is not to be tolerated in this community,” the ailing rector similarly restricted students from their own living quarters.²³⁵

This regimented nature of daily hygienic tasks appears to have originated in the Middle Ages, where questions related to bodily and spiritual health were regularly addressed by monastic rule writers.²³⁶ In the Carolingian era, Frankish monks linked bodily

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Belle S. Tuten, “The *Necessitas Naturae* and Monastic Hygiene,” in Albrecht Classen, ed. *Bodily and Spiritual Hygiene in Medieval and Early Modern Literature: Explorations of Textual Presentations of Filth and Water* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017).

functions with practices of discipline and self-control and, while most of their discourse on the body focused on sexuality, control over more routine bodily functions was regularly addressed in Frankish monastic writing. This attention to cleanliness and hygiene appears to have carried over into the early modern Low Countries with St. Omer's rector apparently emphasizing the same sort attention and discipline towards monastic spaces as their medieval counterparts.

The only spaces in which the boys appear to have exercised any freedom were recreational areas. Despite its focus on education, St. Omer provided four distinct areas for outdoor play, as well as three indoor recreational areas for use during the winters, the hot days of the summers, and rainy days.²³⁷ The boys were given free rein to choose their preferred play spaces, but the actual physical activities were closely regulated. The boys were expected to speak only in Latin or Greek during their playtime and, as with the dormitories, prefects were ever-present during recreational times. As before, Schondonch entrusted the care of the boys during playtimes to the prefects, but also gave prefects the responsibility to dictate what sort of games the boys would play. No new games were to be introduced before receiving approval from the prefects to ensure they did not "prove to be detrimental to morals or edification."²³⁸ Shouting during indoor play was strictly prohibited and the boys were directed to properly deposit their caps or clothes in designated places before engaging in play. On certain days, outdoor walks were permitted after lessons; however, students needed to acquire permission from the Jesuit Superior and could not set out without two prefect chaperones. Once again, prefects were tasked with

²³⁷ Customs Book of St. Omer College, *Stonyhurst College Archives*, 15.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

organizing the boys and keeping them from wandering off the approved outdoor paths. Schondonch also mandated that the prefects were not permitted to play with the boys and that they must also keep boys from outside of the college from engaging their charges as well. This, as he vaguely asserted, was “for serious reasons.”²³⁹ Unfortunately, Schondonch did not elaborate on this warning, but he clearly did not want the children venturing far from the college and strongly desired to keep them within arm’s reach and away from outside influences. This highly controlling manner speaks to the intense focus that the schoolmaster had towards ensuring the proper upbringing of his charges and strong adherence of the college administrators to the goals of the school.

In the same way that the students were strictly organized by the prefects, prefects themselves did not escape Schondonch’s deathbed proscriptions and were subject to strict regulations and rules of their own. He stated that “these offices of Prefect demand men who are both serious and mature of morals and agreeable in manner” and the rector further elaborated on the character of the men he expected to instruct and manage the boys.²⁴⁰ He prescribed a fatherly role for prefects, asking them to blend gentleness with maturity “in such a way that nothing of the prudent dignity, in which these youths take singular delight, should ever fail.”²⁴¹ An entire section of the customs book is devoted to the conduct of the First Prefect, further reflecting the ailing rector’s unscrupulous precision in organizing the school as it was this prefect who was tasked with ensuring that each boy properly conduct themselves on a day-to-day basis.

²³⁹ Ibid., 16.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 8-9.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 9.

Exactly how these boys were to be disciplined for improper conduct was left unclear in the customs book, though it is quite possible that force was involved when compelling students' obedience. Although corporal punishment was widely condemned in Renaissance and Reformation pedagogical treatises, instances of violence certainly took place in the early modern educational settings.²⁴² The frequency of such instances is nearly impossible to ascertain; however, given the extensive scholarship on the emotional bonds between early modern parents and their children and the ease with which parents could replace abusive teachers with less stringent tutors, there is no reason to accept the notion that severe physical punishments were routine in Renaissance and Reformation classrooms.²⁴³ Instead, it is more likely that early modern schools promoted systems of competition and rewards as the primary means of encouraging good behavior.²⁴⁴

While early modern education did not emphasize corporal punishment, it could still be a highly regimented and strict system as evidenced by the instructions to prefects in the St. Omer customs book that offered little in the way of leniency. Boys caught out of their proper place during study times were to be immediately restrained—by word or possibly punishment.²⁴⁵ Even making noise was subject to immediate sanction and the same level of strict enforcement of the rules accompanied the boys during leisure time as none were permitted to walk without the express permission of the head prefect. Attendance at study times was also strictly enforced and, upon taking down each latecomer's name, the prefect would conduct a minor interrogation, noting down the excuses the boys offered with

²⁴² Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300-1600* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 35-36.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Customs Book of St. Omer College, *Stonyhurst College Archives*, 19.

varying measures of disappointment. And, of course, this level of attentiveness was maintained during Mass with the prefect ensuring the attendance of each boy or compelling them to pray when not required to attend services. The study space, the Athenaeum, effectively became this prefect's home as he was expected to occupy it from six in the morning until evening prayers with several breaks for meals. Feast days featured reduced hours but not a reduction in the head prefect's duties, which (much like those of his counterpart prefects) included cleaning the Athenaeum, lighting and extinguishing candles, removing student belongings and returning them to their proper places, opening and closing the windows as dictated by the season, and ensuring absolute tranquility during study times. These duties were carried out daily and Schondonch left his prefects with hardly any leeway when it came to the management of students and their own personal conduct. Prefects were not to be the friends of their charges, but rather a form of inflexible enforcement meant to direct students from one activity to the next regardless of its academic qualities and to ensure the absolute discipline of their charges. It is unclear to what degree students proved unmanageable and rowdy during Schondonch's tenure as rector and whether or not disrespectful and unfocused student behavior were led to these strict measures. Regardless, the idealized school that Schondonch envisioned was heavily ordered and geared towards maintaining the obedience of its students through the highly regulated and ordered functions executed by the prefects.

With little warning, Schondonch's prescriptions come to a sudden halt and the next segment of the customs book turn to a discussion of the *Doctrina Christiana*.²⁴⁶ According to archival notes that accompany the primary source (the date of the notes is unclear but

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 44.

probably contemporary with the source), it appears the ailing rector had become too ill to continue dictating his final words and his final address came to a close with his final thoughts unfinished. He died in 1617, with the college still in a state of gradual transformation. However, the Customs Book does not end with Schondonch; later proponents of the college added a variety of supplementary material to the original regulations between 1623 and 1657.²⁴⁷ The most significant of these additions builds on one part of Schondonch's reflections and expands on this point to show a facet of St. Omer that may well have grown in importance during the seventeenth century as the school itself continued to grow. While Schondonch touched upon the subject of the St. Omer Sodality, it would be his eventual successor Henry More who would lay down a significantly longer and more detailed set of instructions for this aspect of the college.

The Sodality was a group of boys within the college who wished to take on additional acts of devotion as a means of enhancing their spiritual knowledge.²⁴⁸ Every Jesuit institution possessed a sodality, and they were widely regarded as intense groups focused on spirituality and prayer, as well as a necessary requirement for seminary members to participate in to gain admittance into the Jesuit Order itself.²⁴⁹ The St. Omer Sodality had been developed during the initial administration of Robert Persons; however, it lacked a clear set of regulations to govern how it would function.²⁵⁰ Schondonch barely

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 1.

²⁴⁸ Janet Graffius, "Relics and Cultures of Commemoration in the English Jesuit College of St. Omer in the Spanish Netherlands," in *Jesuit Intellectual and Physical Exchange between England and Mainland Europe, c.1580-1789* (Boston: Brill, 2019), 117.

²⁴⁹ Lance Lazar, *Working in the Vineyard of the Lord: Jesuit Confraternities in Early Modern Italy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 132-36.

²⁵⁰ *Rules of the Sodalitie of the Most Glorious Assumption of the Immaculate Virgin Marie, Mother of God, Erected in the English Seminarie under the charge of the Societe of Jesus in St. Omer* in *The Custom's Book of St. Omer College*, Stonyhurst College Archives, 53.

mentions the sodality in his dictation, implying that he either did not prioritize it in comparison to basic student conduct and care or that he simply did not reach the topic before his passing. Regardless, the succeeding years would see the appointment of rectors who desired to rigorously define the functions and procedures of the St. Omer Sodality in the course of expanding its numbers.

The opening of the document leaves little doubt regarding the goals of the reformed sodality, expounding:

The proper and peculiar end of this soldalitie is to furnish all such as shall be admitted into it with those virtues which make them worthy instruments to cooperate with Allmightie God for the reducing of our poore afflicted country, labouring under the burden of heresie, unto the true knowledge and sincere service of Allmightie God; that, true devotion towards the most sovreigne Queen of Heaven flourishing therein, she may have once again a full and quiet possession of her ancient dowry.²⁵¹

The title of “Queen of Heaven” has a long history for its application to various deities in antiquity with the early modern European usage referring exclusively to the Virgin Mary. It is no coincidence that the Jesuits would evoke this title while referencing the affliction that they see plaguing England as it places Elizabeth I at odds with an even more senior Queen in Christian Europe. The queen’s supporters responded with analogies that drew comparisons between Elizabeth and Mary, highlighting Elizabeth’s apparent virginity as a means of setting the two monarchical figures at odds with one another as rivals—but crucially, equal rivals—of competing Christian orthodoxies.²⁵² In calling Elizabeth’s spiritual authority into question in this way, St. Omer aligned even more firmly with its traditional aims of preparing charges to reinvigorate the English Mission with the ultimate

²⁵¹ Ibid., 55.

²⁵² Peter McClure and Robin Headlam Wells, “Elizabeth as a Second Virgin Mary,” in *Renaissance Studies* 4, 1, (March 1990), 39.

goal of reinstalling Catholicism across the Channel. Unlike Rome and Douai, St. Omer never appeared to falter from these lofty aims.

The procedures of the sodality mirror the exercises of Ignatius Loyola with an intense focus on individual discipline when it comes to their spiritual and temporal lives. Of chief importance in *The Spiritual Exercises* was the examinations of one's conscience and Loyola expected his followers to make such an examination three times a day. In his initial instructions, Loyola writes:

He should demand an account of himself with regard to the particular point which he has resolved to watch in order to correct himself and improve. Let him go over the single hours or periods from the time he arose to the hour and moment of the present examination, and...make a mark for each time that he has fallen into the particular sin or defect. Then he is to renew his resolution, and strive to amend during the time till the second examination is to be made.²⁵³

This methodical form of reflection and prayer formed the basis of early Jesuit spiritual practices and, while early Jesuits did not emphasize Loyola's ideas in their early pedagogical initiatives, they gradually gained greater importance in Spanish learning communities, particularly in Valladolid.²⁵⁴ In due course, this attention to discipline and self-reflection would spread to educational centers in the Spanish Low Countries, including St. Omer.

From the start, modesty was the ideal quality to pursue, and students were expected to devote themselves continuously to their prayers and studies. Any student who was found deviating from these foci would be reported to the prefects and would be

²⁵³ Ignatius Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises*, translated by Louis J. Puhl (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1951), 15.

²⁵⁴ Angelo J. Disalvo, *Spanish Devotional and Meditative Literature of Renaissance Spain* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), 10.

admonished and forced to perform penance for his lapse in effort.²⁵⁵ Repeated offenders would face suspension or even expulsion from the sodality, further emphasizing the exclusivity of the group. In addition to dictating student conduct towards their own spirituality, this guide touched upon virtually all other aspects of student interactions, including conduct towards their superiors, other students, and the sodality itself. Students were expected to internalize each of these sets of rules or face disciplinary action for any infringement. More than anything, extensive guidance towards student conduct with regard to the sodality emphasizes a continuation of Schondonch's initial prescriptions for the school. This continuity reflects the intense focus of the school's administrators when it came to preparing students to return to England. Unlike their counterpart schools, St. Omer's commitment to the English mission did not appear to waver as the seventeenth century began.

As for the boys who attended the college in its early years, their numbers were not particularly plentiful, further reflecting the significant obstacles that many faced in fleeing from England. In 1622, the college enrolled roughly thirty boys across their five classes.²⁵⁶ The boys were divided evenly between classes on rhetoric, the humanities, and three levels of grammar through which they would gradually progress. This curriculum falls in line with the initial plans for Jesuit education proposed by Diego Lainez while establishing a Jesuit-led university in Messina during the late 1540s.²⁵⁷ Early curriculum plans included courses

²⁵⁵ *Rules of the Sodalitie*, Stonyhurst College Archives, 56.

²⁵⁶ The St. Omer Lists (Part 1), 46/22/1/1, *Archivum Britannicum Societatis Iesu*, 3.

²⁵⁷ Paul Grendler, *Humanism, Universities, and Jesuit Education in Late Renaissance Italy* (Boston: Brill, 2022), 348-49.

in the humanities and arts, particularly Aristotelian Philosophy.²⁵⁸ Additionally, the university was expected to offer four Latin classes, one course on rhetoric, one on Greek literature, and one on case of conscience. Among the readings that instructors would utilize were Cicero's *Epistulae ad familiares*, Manoel Alvares' *De institutione grammatica libri tres*, Cipriano Soares' *De arte rhetorica libri tres*, and additional works of Livy, Ovid, Catullus, Virgil, Aesop, Agapetus, Demostenes, Plato, Thucydides, Homer, Hesiod, and Saints Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, and John Crysostom.²⁵⁹ These proposed courses and literary works were subsequently incorporated into the Messinian university with additional courses on Scholastic theology based on the works of Thomas Aquinas included in the final curricular plans.²⁶⁰ As Jesuit colleges proliferated across Europe in the 1550s and 60s, this educational model was utilized in some form or another in the over ninety schools founded by the time of Lainez's death in 1565.²⁶¹

As standardized as St. Omer's curriculum was, the journeys of those who came to the college were highly varied. Richard White, an eighteen-year-old student among the new charges, had come from a poor family in Winchester and had begun his education at Douai in the 1620s before pressing on to St. Omer the following year.²⁶² James Adams began his career at Watten in 1766.²⁶³ Following his completion of his courses, he joined the faculty at St. Omer, teaching courses in humanities. He later acted as a missionary before retiring to Dublin in 1802.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Id., *Jesuit Schools in Europe*, 16-17.

²⁶⁰ Grendler, *Jesuit Education in Late Renaissance Italy*, 350.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 351.

²⁶² Thompson Cooper, revised by Paul Arblaster, "White [alias Johnson], Richard (1604-1687)" *Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

²⁶³ Oliver, *Collections towards illustrating the biography of members of the Society of Jesus*, 41.

Faculty experienced a similar variety to their paths to St. Omer. Englishman John Floyd came to the Society of Jesus while traveling through Rome in 1592.²⁶⁴ Not long after, he was sent back into England as part of the ongoing attempt to maintain the failing mission there. He did not see much success during his travels as he was arrested and detained in Worcester in 1606. He spent one year in prison before he was finally sentenced to permanent exile from his homeland. From here, he traveled to St. Omer, where he was given a post as a preacher until he left the school to once again take up the English mission abroad. He was considerably more successful than before, evading capture for several years until his eventual recall back to Louvain where he served as a professor of Divinity. After several more years filling this post, he retired to St. Omer in 1649, where he almost immediately died from a stroke. Edmund Plowden likewise passed through the college in the 1680s.²⁶⁵ Having taught one humanities course, he was then ordered to join the English mission for a time before passing through numerous positions at the Colleges of St. Ignatius, Liège, and Ghent.

By the eighteenth century, St. Omer appears to have achieved what Persons had set out to create a century earlier. Growing from little more than a waystation for incoming students from England, the college had emerged as one of the premier seminaries on the continent and had come to be seen as one of the most important bases of operations for the continuing English mission. Unlike Rome and Douai, St. Omer lacked the divisions and conflicting interests that had characterized the turbulent relations between members of its counterpart schools. Where others had fallen short, St. Omer stood alone in unifying its

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 94.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 168-69.

community around its singular goal of preserving the traditional faith and gradually reviving Catholicism in England. By this point, their goal seemed more attainable than ever before; however, the changing nature of European religious and political culture would seal the fate of the English mission through the suppression of the Jesuits and the subsequent closure of virtually all of its educational institutions. St. Omer had risen to the height of its influence during the seventeenth century, but soon it would face challenges that even it could not surmount.

In 1762, the Parlement in Paris issued expulsion orders for the Jesuits in Artois, and St. Omer put up little fight in the face of the oncoming wave of Jesuit suppression that had already begun in the Portuguese Empire and would soon spread to Spain and other western European countries.²⁶⁶ By July, inspectors had begun to draw up inventories of St. Omer's holdings, yet hope remained that the college might soon reopen once the Jesuits had been replaced by secular instructors. Provisioning the school had required significant investment in local businesses that would provide materials and resources to maintain the priests and students alike. The account book of St. Omer lends some idea of the variety of goods that the college required. To start, the school drew on the local community for a considerable amount of food, particularly during the years in which it saw the largest influx of students. In September 1678 alone, prefects purchased eggs on a biweekly basis, totaling some two thousand one hundred eggs in just one month.²⁶⁷ A large supply of wheat was likewise deemed necessary as the prefects procured about one hundred and nine bushels

²⁶⁶ Emanuele Colombo and Niccolo Guasti, "The Expulsion and Suppression in Portugal and Spain: An Overview," in Jeffrey Burson and Jonathon Wright, *The Jesuit Suppression in Global Context: Causes, Events, and Consequences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 137.

²⁶⁷ *St. Omer Accounts 1678-1684*, Stonyhurst College Archives, 1.

over the course of the same month.²⁶⁸ The primary meal for students and faculty alike appears to have been largely seafood-based as an entire section of the months accounts were devoted to a variety of local catches, including carps, trout, barbets, saltfish, and pickled herring.²⁶⁹ While the quantities are not specified, purchases for a “portion” or “selection” of fresh fish were made on nine separate days during September, amounting to roughly one hundred and sixty-eight pounds.²⁷⁰

Expenses for repairs are likewise included in the school’s accounts and similarly took up a sizeable portion of its monthly budget. For the same month, the school appears to have required major renovations as prefects purchased a variety of materials for its upkeep, including twenty-seven feet of wood, three thousand five hundred bricks, an unspecified number of nails, and several hundred feet of oak boards, among other materials.²⁷¹ Further, skilled labor was naturally required for these repairs and the school employed five stonemasons, eight carpenters (including one master carpenter), and one cartman and his horse for the transportation of these materials. All told, the reparations budget narrowly exceeded the food budget, costing about eight hundred and twenty-eight pounds compared to the roughly six hundred pounds set aside for eggs, wheat, and fish.

The next major purchase was made for clothing and comfort items for the members of the school community. Funds were earmarked to hire tailors and cobblers for extended periods of time to provide shoes and school attire for the students. In one instance, a generic order for wholesale clothing was made as in the case of Joseph Mannering.²⁷² Cold

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ For reference, this sum was just over double what the college had paid for the massive number of eggs that it acquired for the school’s morning meals.

²⁷¹ *St. Omer Accounts 1678-1684*, Stonyhurst College Archives, 1-2.

²⁷² Ibid., 2.

weather items, such as hats and blankets, were similarly commissioned and practical items, such as candles, were purchased by the hundred.²⁷³

Finally, transportation for students and faculty alike was commissioned locally as the college frequently hired carriages and carts when shipping their charges off to other nearby colleges or locations, such as Watton and Maastricht.²⁷⁴ As noted earlier, St. Omer acted as a bit of a waypoint for incoming students and priests from England, with many quickly ushered on to other schools located further inland.

The purchases of the college naturally varied from month to month but remained generally fixed to these categories. The following month, the college made similarly large purchases for food, but appear to have shifted to stimulate an entirely different industry. The butcher was likely overjoyed to receive the school's order for four pigs on October 2nd and downright overwhelmed when the prefects returned four days later to purchase a wide variety of poultry, including chickens and hens, as well as numerous quantities of meat, which included beef, pork, and mutton.²⁷⁵ Regardless of the actual purchases, these accounts reveal the extent to which the school drew upon the local community that surrounded it for its survival. Likewise, the town of St. Omer may well have come to rely on the college for its significant investment in the local economy. Although the locals may have been less than enthused by the arrival of penniless English children in the early years of the college, by the late seventeenth century, these reservations were less likely to have been shared by the entire community.

²⁷³ Ibid., 4.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 2-3.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 4.

Despite this investment in the surrounding community, St. Omer could not continue as it was.²⁷⁶ The secular clergy that had been gifted positions in the college administration voiced their reluctance to take over the college and soon a renewed edict was issued in August of 1762 by Louis XV, calling once more for the closure of the college as part of a larger Jesuit suppression movement. An appeal was launched by the Jesuits associated with the college, but it appears to have gone unheard. Not long after the September visitation from Artois in that year (1762), the French crown audited St. Omer's property and introduced new restrictions on the faculty and students. The remaining English boys attending the college were confined to their dormitories through the seizure of the property, which in turn spurred the Jesuit administrators to abandon their protest and take action before the state could formally arrest them. The remaining students soon found themselves shuttled out of St. Omer later that summer, traveling by boat through the Low Countries before arriving in Bruges, where the college reestablished itself.²⁷⁷ The administration that arrived soon after at the original physical college of St. Omer briefly attempted to maintain its function; however, this resuscitated version of the college only managed to survive its rebirth until 1793, when it was eventually closed by proponents of the French Revolution.²⁷⁸

Bruges

Although, the college had lost its original foundation, it survived through its reestablishment to the northeast in Bruges in 1762. Rising anew in the Habsburg-

²⁷⁶ Muir, *Stonyhurst College*, 61.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

controlled Low Countries where they would enjoy protection from French authorities, the St. Omer exiles set about reviving their college, which soon saw increased enrollment—as many as one hundred and seventy-five students by 1765.²⁷⁹ The college went to great lengths to expand accommodations and facilities; however, it could not survive the continued campaign of Jesuit suppression that engulfed the entire Church. French pressure on the Papacy soon yielded the desired results as Pope Clement XIV suppressed the entire Society through the papal bull *Dominus Ac Redemptor* in 1773.²⁸⁰ This time secular authorities did not miss their opportunity to take control of the school. Having confined and interrogated the staff and students, Habsburg reinforcements soon arrived by night and arrested the Bruges administration in 1773.²⁸¹ The students were dispersed and shuttled to a variety of locations while many more were repossessed by their parents in England. A few remaining students made their way to Liège (then part of the Holy Roman Empire, and today part of Belgium), where St. Omer clung to life while its counterpart schools across Europe hibernated or simply ceased to exist and as its waning church support dried up in the face of secular pressures.

Liège

Against all odds, the peripatetic college in Liège survived and actually appears to have benefitted from the benevolent attitude of the local prince.²⁸² Immediately, the new arrivals began to formulate plans for a new academy within the Liège college. In fact, even

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 63.

²⁸⁰ *Dominus Ac Redemptor* in Thomas McCoog, eds, *“Promising Hope”: Essays on the Suppression and Restoration of the English Province of the Society of Jesus* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2003), 296-312.

²⁸¹ Muir, *Stonyhurst College*, 64.

²⁸² Ibid., 67.

before the arrival of the new students, plans were already in place to establish such a facility as evidenced by the college's log book:

Today his Highness the Prince gave public notice in the *Liege Gazette* that he had established in our English College an Academy in which youths of all ages would be taught a full course of subjects. On the same occasion to our great delight he named the Rev. John Howard as Director of the Academy. That this announcement might be more widely known he took steps to have it published in all the Gazettes of Holland and Germany.²⁸³

The logbook further relates that within a year the community within the newly created academy had swollen to forty-seven members as more and more of the St. Omer castoffs made their way into the Low Countries. Additionally, the academy featured a revamped curriculum that replaced the now suppressed *Ratio Studiorum*. While classes on Rhetoric and mathematics remained firmly intact, Liège began to integrate Enlightenment science into the academy's classrooms.²⁸⁴ Courses included geography, the study of the globe and sphere, natural history and philosophy, vernacular languages, sacred and profane history, and a number of practical skills such as needlework, account-keeping, drawing, painting, and knowledge of weights and measures in various countries.²⁸⁵ Previously, such courses had been restricted to students over the age of eighteen and even then the classes were generally restricted to those students who intended to become Jesuits themselves. This shift could represent a gradual but steady trend of softening the previously rigorous and inflexible constraints that prior rectors, such as Schondonch, had implemented to facilitate the education of their charges.

²⁸³ *Liege Day Book* in Whitehead, *English Jesuit Education*, 126.

²⁸⁴ Whitehead, *English Jesuit Education*, 127.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

Despite the apparent secularization of the Liège academy, its worldlier character could not protect it in 1789 when French locals, inspired by revolutionary patriotism, seized Liège's citadel.²⁸⁶ The college immediately took action. Some boys were sent home to England, but most were shuttled to a small house in Maastricht, some twenty miles north of Liège.²⁸⁷ This move no doubt saved the boys as Liège quickly fell under the control of the French military the following year. With no clear path to restoring the college in Liège, the school's administrators were left with little choice but to abandon the Low Countries in the face of revolutionary fervor.

However, this choice was not as simple as it might seem. The suppression of the Jesuits would not be lifted until 1814 when the political pressure that had forced the church's hand decades earlier had dissipated due to the changing nature of monarchical politics brought about by the French Revolution. In the twenty-year interval between the loss of Liège and the fall of Napoleon, there was no option to be in France or the Low Countries. Unexpectedly, the most unlikely of opportunities presented itself five years later. In 1794, English landowner and philanthropist Thomas Weld offered up his newly inherited house and grounds in Lancashire County for the preservation of the college and the college officials were immediately seized upon the opportunity, despite the irony that such a move entailed.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ Muir, *Stonyhurst College*, 70.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁸ F. J. Turner, "Weld, Thomas (1750-1810)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

Stonyhurst College

In the years that followed, St. Omer survived. Settling in Lancashire, far from the turmoil that would engulf the continent, the school reestablished itself in the very land that it had hoped to convert. Business carried on as usual as classes resumed in 1794 in the then meager accommodations erected on the land secured for the school.²⁸⁹ The success that followed for the school reflect the undying perseverance of the college that, with the exception of the three months needed to move from Liege to Stonyhurst, had remained in continuous operation since 1593. A feat unto itself, this longevity further reflects the continued commitment to Catholic education set down in the early dictations of the school's founders. Yet, the emphasis on Catholic education does not seem to have diminished even after the flight of the school across the Low Countries and into the Anglican heartland. In the prospectus of the newly created school at Stonyhurst, the administration reaffirmed their commitment in ensuring that "the greatest care is taken to instruct the children in the duties of RELIGION and MORALITY; and they are constantly under the eye of one or more of the directors, who see that those duties are practiced, and that the rules of civility are not violated."²⁹⁰ The same commitment to religion that Persons and Schondonch called for in the early days of the college is emphasized in the earliest articles of the school's charter. Likewise, the same promise of constant supervision remains ever heavily emphasized and may have been linked to the emergence of Neostoic discipline that will be examined in chapter five of this study. As new ideas regarding the ordering of a disordered society emerged during these years, Neostoic ideas may have had the same kind

²⁸⁹ Whitehead, *English Jesuit Education*, 179.

²⁹⁰ Prospectus of Stonyhurst College, 1797-1798 in Whitehead, *English Jesuit Education*, 224. Emphasis included in original source.

of impact at St. Omer in triggering a more disciplined approach to piety as will be seen in chapter five's examination of the turn European powers made towards Reason of State theories that emphasized both a more prominent promotion of state power and secular interests. But in spite of the departure of the school from France and its arrival in the Protestant lands that the English Mission had failed to convert, the school remained continually committed to its original mission. The same unifying spirit cannot be found in similar institutions in France and Italy, leaving St. Omer as a unique phenomenon in the context of the English Reformation.

Chapter 4: Conspiracies against the Crown and the Escalation of the English Mission

Despite their differences, the colleges in Rome, Douai, and St. Omer arose in the context of Elizabeth's years as queen, each with the official aim of producing priests and missionaries for the preservation of the traditional faith in England. As discussed in the preceding chapters, the degree to which this official mission statement was upheld in the various colleges of the Low Countries and Italy varied markedly depending on the goals of the schools' rectors, the influence of the Jesuits, and the origins of the exiles who came to settle in these locales. In short, there was a wide range of interests and ambitions at work in the seminaries founded across Europe that disrupted the purported unity of the Catholic response to the English Reformation and complicated the management of these colleges to varying degrees. Nonetheless, as the 1570s began, the political climate in the lands on either side of the English Channel underwent a dramatic transformation that recentered the focus of these colleges from their originally intended goal. The initial impetus for the English Mission and its many ancillary conspiracies against the English Crown was the arrival of the refugee Mary, Queen of Scots, in England in 1568. A second important factor was the subsequent excommunication of Elizabeth in 1570. Both were developments that the Catholic community could not and did not ignore. These two events respectively encouraged the recusant and exile English communities on both sides of the Channel to believe in the possibility of ousting the Elizabethan Protestant regime. This renewed enthusiasm could also be felt in the continental seminary network, regardless of the individual college's actual commitment to the reconversion of the English kingdom. Seminary graduates quickly became part of the missionary efforts of the 1570s and 1580s

and the primary drivers behind the founding and administration of many of the prominent colleges would gradually become influential figures in the emerging English Mission.

As the members of these colleges and the larger Catholic community of English recusants and exiles came together to launch their response to Elizabethan Protestantism, their mission was marred by similar tensions and divisions that had already come to characterize the college in Rome. Beginning in 1569, a number of conspiracies would form against Elizabeth, each aiming to remove the queen in order to replace her with her cousin Mary. Yet none of these schemes ever came to fruition. Indeed, not until 1588 would Catholic Europe witness anything approaching a successful invasion of England in the form of the ill-fated Spanish Armada. The earlier plots against Elizabeth justly possessed a degree of optimism for their success; however, each would be unraveled not only by the network of spies and informers managed by Elizabeth's chief advisors Francis Walsingham and William Cecil, but also through the distinct lack of a unified approach to organizing the mission into England.²⁹¹ Just as the college in Rome had struggled under the weight of competing interests and nationalistic differences, these problems gradually arose in the various plots and schemes that surrounded and influenced the English Mission in 1580. Following the Mission's failure the following year, the coordination of subsequent attempts to remove Elizabeth declined persistently as various groups within the continental Catholic community chafed against one another with competing visions for the reconversion of England. With their efforts divided between Jesuit and lay factions that gradually ceased to

²⁹¹ Although Elizabeth's regime would weather roughly a dozen conspiracies against her rule, this chapter will focus mainly on the Northumberland Uprising of 1569, the Ridolfi Plot of 1571, the Throckmorton Plot of 1583, and the Babington Plot of 1586.

organize with one another, a variety of approaches to removing Elizabeth were proposed but none ultimately succeeded.

Further, the evolution of these plots followed the general trend of the late sixteenth century that saw the English Mission move on from a phase of benign missionary work to steadily more aggressive and eventually violent schemes against the Crown. Indeed, the final plot, conducted by Anthony Babington in 1586, to remove Elizabeth would be the first to propose outright violence against the queen, something that had never entered the calculations of prior conspirators. While this assassination attempt would not succeed (indeed, it would not even be carried out), its failure would ultimately push Spain to launch an overt assault upon England in 1588. The failure of the Armada would lead directly to the final phase of the English Mission in which the defeated recusants watched as the major powers of Europe turned their focus away from reconversion efforts in England and devoted their attention to more temporal matters. This turn towards matters of state over matters of faith will be covered in the next and final chapter of this study, after the many plots against Elizabeth failed and once Phillip II's battered fleet had limped back into port in Spain.

Mary Stuart

Central to nearly every plot that emerged against Elizabeth in the 1570s and 80s was her second cousin, Mary Stuart, who came to epitomize the last great hope for restoring Catholicism in England following her arrival in the kingdom in 1568. A brief description of her situation and circumstances is necessary to understand the motivations of the various conspirators who supported her. While Mary's life has been analyzed from

numerous angles in modern histories, the focus of such works has generally been on her role in the Scottish Reformation, her role as a queen in the sixteenth century, and her relationship with Elizabeth.²⁹² While her potential as a possible Catholic claimant to the English throne has been a regular facet of the historiography of her life, Mary's direct connection to the English Mission has rarely been touched upon and her correspondence with the Jesuit organizers of the continental seminary network has generally been overlooked in comparison to sources pertaining to her role in the Babington Plot of 1586, her subsequent trial, and her execution in 1587. While some of these sources will be considered in this chapter, the main goal of the following pages is to situate Mary in the varied plots and schemes that steadily grew more aggressive towards Elizabeth as the 1570s and 80s progressed. A second goal of this chapter is to connect Mary with the central figures of the English Mission in the latter stages of her life. Of particular note will be the correspondence between Mary and her chief supporter, Thomas Morgan, whose role in the latter years of Mary's imprisonment in England has been analyzed in recent scholarship but rarely in connection with the chief organizers of the English Mission, particularly Allen and Persons. As such, this chapter will work to link these various members of the English Mission in a single narrative that simultaneously shows how their visions for the reconversion of England gradually diverged from one another and how the efforts of some factions of the Mission, particularly Morgan's camp, eventually proposed the assassination of Elizabeth after many failed attempts to remove the queen from the throne.

²⁹² Stefan Zweig, *Mary Queen of Scotland and the Isles* (New York: The Viking Press, 1935); Allison Plowden, *Two Queens in One Isle: The Deadly Relationship of Elizabeth I and Mary Queen of Scots* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1984); Angela Royston, *Mary, Queen of Scots* (London: Pitkin, 2020).

Mary Stuart was born in 1542, towards the end of the reign of her great-uncle, Henry VIII.²⁹³ Six days after her birth, her father, James V, passed away and left Mary as the sole heir to the throne of Scotland. Soon after, the Catholic Scottish nobility began to make plans to strengthen Scotland's Auld Alliance by arranging a marriage between Mary and the French Dauphin. In 1548, the French King Henry II decided to honor the Alliance and Mary was sent to France and would remain there for the next thirteen years.²⁹⁴

According to Stefan Zweig's biography of her, Mary was adored by the entire French court of Henry II. She received a first-rate education and later married the Dauphin, Francis II, in April of 1558.²⁹⁵ Seven months later, Elizabeth I succeeded to the English throne and her ascension had the immediate effect of drawing significant attention to Mary. Despite the Third Succession Act, which recognized Elizabeth as Mary Tudor's heir, many Catholics came to view Mary Stuart as the legitimate heir to the English throne. For them, Elizabeth was a bastard, having been born of Henry VIII's bigamous marriage to Anne Boleyn, while Mary could derive a legitimate claim to the throne as a descendent of Henry VII by way of her grandmother, Margaret Tudor.²⁹⁶ The lawyers of the English Crown naturally countered these claims, promoting Elizabeth's legitimacy through repeated contentions that Henry VIII's marriage to Anne had been sanctioned by an ecclesiastical court and that his previous marriage to Catherine of Aragon had been legally annulled. In the end, the English Parliament refused to declare Elizabeth a bastard and Mary Queen of Scots was left in an intriguing (and dicey) position. Now aged sixteen, she was the Queen of Scotland and

²⁹³ Zweig, *Mary Queen of Scotland*, 3.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 21-22.

²⁹⁶ Plowden, *Two Queens in One Isle*, 39.

the expected queen consort of France once her husband ascended to the throne. The Catholic world suddenly found its attention fixed upon this embodiment of the Auld Alliance, and wondering if Mary's claim to royal power could be extended to England. For the rest of her life, Mary's claim to the English throne would be a constant source of hope for the Catholic community of Europe while the Protestant world remained perpetually on edge towards Elizabeth's perceived rival.

Whatever hope there was for a French-led crusade into England evaporated shortly after Elizabeth's ascension. With the new queen ruling by way of her relatively weak claim to the throne, it was left to Mary and the French court to dictate how to respond to this perceived usurper. But rather than challenge Elizabeth through military means, Henry II chose a much less direct course of action that ultimately undermined any claim Mary had to England. Rather than invade, the French court recognized Mary as "Regina Franciae, Scotiae, Angliae, and Hyberniae," removing any lingering doubts as to France's official policy towards Elizabeth.²⁹⁷ But for all of the bravado and pomp that came with this declaration, the French did nothing to back their public support for Mary. Elizabeth—who herself held the titles of Queen of England, Ireland, and France (if only superficially)—was assuredly peeved with this overt insult to her authority but apart from that, Henry's titular promotion of Mary had virtually no tangible effect on the English court, rendering this move somewhat absurd. Rather than support Mary's claim, the French effectively nullified it by making it plain to the English precisely who their new queen's chief rival was. If Elizabeth had any lingering doubts about her political relationship with Mary, with whom

²⁹⁷ Zweig, *Mary Queen of Scotland*, 24.

she had generally maintained an amiable correspondence for several years, her uncertainty was more or less washed away within just a few months of her ascension.

Compounding matters was Mary's later refusal to deny her titles after her father-in-law's death, which came the following year in 1559.²⁹⁸ Mary ascended to the throne of France, but her tenure was brief as the death of her father-in-law was followed by the death of her husband seventeen months later in 1560. This left Catherine de Medici as regent over Francis' younger brother and Mary decided that it was time to return home. But Mary seems to have underestimated just how much things had changed when she made her way back to Scotland. By this point, the Protestant nobility had ousted their Catholic counterparts and Mary returned to a Scottish kingdom that had been largely turned against her by preacher John Knox. Mary was thus welcomed with suspicion and unease that Knox would only exacerbate in his subsequent sermons. Even after Mary chastised him at court, Knox continued to preach against the queen's continued promotion of Mass in Latin (as well as the concept of female rule in general) and his complaints continued to turn public opinion against Mary.²⁹⁹ Soon enough, the Queen of Scots' position became untenable.

In 1565, Mary married her cousin, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, which quickly made her shaky position even weaker. Elizabeth was infuriated with her cousin for not asking for her consent to the match, but the bigger problem was that Darnley was one of the leading Catholic nobles in Scotland, and Protestant reformers did not miss the significance of the marriage. Before long, a coalition of Scottish Protestant and Catholic lords soon rose up in revolt and abducted Mary. Imprisoned in Loch Leven Castle, Mary, Queen of Scots, was

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 26.

²⁹⁹ Jane Dawson, *John Knox* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 213-15.

forced to abdicate and the throne passed to her son, James, who had been born in June 1566. Scotland now had a young, malleable heir and Mary was quickly cast aside in favor of her son, with Mary's illegitimate half-brother, the Earl of Moray, established as regent. Mary remained in custody at Loch Leven until she escaped the following spring and fled south into England, taking refuge at Carlisle Castle and entreating Elizabeth for aid.

At this point that Mary fully expected her cousin to help her reclaim her throne, but Elizabeth refused to help. The controversy surrounding Mary's fall from power, along with her place in the dynastic politics surrounding the English crown immediately put Elizabeth on the defensive and the next phase of Mary's life was characterized by carefully organized confinements and transfers between a variety of castles in northern and central England.³⁰⁰ Over the next nineteen years (1568-1587), Mary lived as Elizabeth's prisoner and it was during this time that she became involved in a number of conspiracies against the English crown. Several plots appear to have involved the Jesuits, particularly those involved with the administration of the continental seminary network in France and Italy.

Over the course of Elizabeth's reign, the English Queen survived no fewer than eight separate conspiracies against her, at least three of which strongly implied the involvement of Mary. Just over a year after Mary's escape into England in 1568, the northern Catholic earls of Westmoreland and Northumberland revolted and attempted to replace Elizabeth with Mary. Elizabeth caught wind of the plot and sent an army north to put down the revolt but the Pope, expecting the rebellion to succeed, took the opportunity to officially excommunicate Elizabeth. As noted earlier, this act released Elizabeth's subjects from any ties of allegiance to their queen, which left Elizabeth and her advisors uneasy regarding the

³⁰⁰ Zweig, *Mary Queen of Scotland*, 257.

prospect of the disloyalty of the Catholic population in her realm. Parliament responded with punitive measures against the recusant community, but this would not prevent numerous plots from unfolding over the following fifteen years.³⁰¹

The Ridolfi Plot

In the year following Elizabeth's excommunication, a second conspiracy emerged around the Florentine banker Roberto Ridolfi. While the Ridolfi Plot and its successor conspiracies have been examined by other scholars, much of the following analysis has been drawn from letters taken from William Allen's papers, which suggests that Allen and others involved in galvanizing the continental seminary network and the English Mission remained engaged with the plots to replace Elizabeth with Mary. Between the correspondence of the direct conspirators and the English Jesuits, particularly Allen and Persons, continental English recusants continued to seek the reconversion of England even after the mission led by Persons into England and exercised continued influence of the plots against Elizabeth.

Hailing from Florence, Roberto Ridolfi rose to prominence as a financial agent for many members of Elizabeth's court.³⁰² By the late 1560s, Ridolfi grew obsessed with the reconversion of England, and he began using his contacts at court to funnel information to the French and Spanish ambassadors in London.³⁰³ Pope Pius V later named him as a secret

³⁰¹ "An Act whereby certain Offenses be made Treason" in *Tudor Constitutional Documents, AD 1485-1603*, J.R. Turner, ed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 526-528; "An Act against the bringing in and putting in execution of Bulls and other instruments from the Sea of Rome" in *Tudor Constitutional Documents, AD 1485-1603*, J.R. Turner, ed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 528-531; "An Act against the fugitives overseas" in *Tudor Constitutional Documents, AD 1485-1603*, J.R. Turner, ed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 531-34.

³⁰² L.E. Hunt, "Ridolfi, Roberto," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (September 2004).

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

envoy in 1566 and he would become one of the most fervent distributors of the Pope's papal bull excommunicating Elizabeth in 1570. His ties to the English recusant community drew the attention of Elizabeth's informant network, which suspected Ridolfi of complicity in the Northern Uprising. Nonetheless, Ridolfi revealed little under subsequent interrogations and a search of his residence produced no incriminating evidence. For the moment, the banker was free from captivity.³⁰⁴

Not long after the Northern Uprising, Ridolfi departed from England and travelled through the Low Countries, Spain, and Italy, gathering support for his plan to depose Elizabeth and replace her with Mary.³⁰⁵ Along with foreign support, the crucial cog in Ridolfi's plan was one of Elizabeth's other cousins, the Duke Thomas Howard of Norfolk, who had been involved in the northern rebellion and imprisoned for nine months.³⁰⁶ Despite his imprisonment for sedition, Norfolk appears to have been Ridolfi's intended marriage partner for Mary as indicated by Ridolfi's letters and those of the Duke of Alva. But Norfolk's involvement in this new plot has been called into question by modern scholarship and indeed by Norfolk himself. Several reasons indicate why Norfolk was not a good match for Mary, Queen of Scots. To start, Norfolk was devoutly Anglican throughout his life, having openly criticized the Roman Church on numerous occasions while also ensuring his children received their education from Protestant tutors.³⁰⁷ This would make him a highly unexpected candidate for royal marriage if Ridolfi's aim was to restore Catholicism in England. Norfolk further distanced himself from Mary through his appeals to

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Francis Edwards, *Plots and Plotters in the Reign of Elizabeth I* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), 29-30.

³⁰⁶ Letter from William Cecil to Thomas Norton, found in *The Letters of William Allen (1570-1578)*. *Archivium Britannicum Societatis Iesu* 46/24/4, 3-4.

³⁰⁷ Edwards, *Plots and Plotters*, 30.

the crown while in the Tower of London. In a letter to William Cecil and another to Elizabeth herself, Norfolk cited his deteriorating health in his appeals for a pardon, which Elizabeth later granted in August of 1570.³⁰⁸ He further asserted that, while he had indeed maintained some sort of dealings with Mary in the past, he had no intention of continuing in his correspondence with the imprisoned queen, now recognizing how “unpleasant” such dealings were to Elizabeth.³⁰⁹ His pleas apparently resonated with the queen for he was released several weeks afterwards and placed under house arrest in his London residence.³¹⁰

Despite his assurance that his relationship with Mary was now terminated, Norfolk remained central to Ridolfi’s plans, whether he liked it or not. In a letter from Philip II to the duke of Alva in July of 1571, Norfolk is mentioned twice in conjunction with Ridolfi, indicating a continued interest in seeing the duke married to Mary as part of the plot against Elizabeth.³¹¹ This feeling appears to have been mutual between the Spanish and English court as three months later, Cecil officially presented a list of charges against Norfolk, consisting chiefly of accusations regarding the Duke’s correspondence with Mary as well as a series of financial transactions between himself, Ridolfi, several of Mary’s loyal Scottish ministers, and the Duke of Alva.³¹² These charges were drawn mainly from

³⁰⁸ Letter from Norfolk to Cecil; Letter from Norfolk to the Queen, found in *The Letters of William Allen (1570-1578)*. *Archivium Britannicum Societatis Iesu* 46/24/4, 5-6.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ Michael A.R. Graves, “Howard, Thomas, Fourth Duke of Norfolk,” *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (September 2004).

³¹¹ Letter from Philip II to the Duke of Alva, July 14th, 1571, found in the *Letters of William Allen (1570-1578)*. *Archivium Britannicum Societatis Iesu* 46/24/4, 163-68.

³¹² The Principal Heads of the Matters wherewith the Duke of Norfolk is chargeable, partly by his own confession, partly by others, and by writing and letters in cypher and otherwise, October 10th and 11th, 1571, found in the *Letters of William Allen*. *Archivium Britannicum Societatis Iesu* 46/24/4, 171-72.

Norfolk's confessions after he was conveyed to the Tower once more in late 1571, and he would be formally tried in the following January and executed in June of 1572.³¹³

While the Jesuits do not appear to have been closely involved in the Ridolfi Plot, this early conspiracy in the wake of Elizabeth's excommunication galvanized an increased optimism for opportunities to remove the queen from power and replace her with her cousin. In the decade that followed, the English crown was spared further threat to Elizabeth's personal safety; however, Catholic forces were mobilizing on the continent as the 1570s saw the initial foray of Cuthbert Mayne, a priest trained on the continent at Douai, into England where he was arrested and executed the following year.

As the 1580s began, it became increasingly clear that Elizabeth had little intention to marry, which subsequently increased the danger posed by Mary as a potential usurper. Every passing year increased the likelihood that Elizabeth, or more accurately her advisory council, might eliminate the threat that Mary posed, and so the 1580s became a decade characterized largely by the two remaining major plots that would ultimately dictate Mary's fate.

The Throckmorton Plot

The next plot took its name from a fairly inconsequential member of the conspiracy itself. Francis Throckmorton came from an upwardly mobile family that entered the royal court in the early sixteenth century when Francis' grandfather became a personal

³¹³ Edwards, *Plots and Plotters*, 72-73.

attendant to Henry VIII.³¹⁴ Though a few of Francis' siblings ultimately converted to the new Reformed faith under Edward VI, the family remained predominantly Catholic and received considerable favor during the reign of Mary Tudor.³¹⁵ By the time of Elizabeth's ascension in 1558, Francis was just a boy but his parents ensured that he received a nominally Catholic education. He subsequently enrolled at Oxford and later entered the Inner Temple in London in the hopes of becoming a barrister. It was during this phase of his life that the 1580 Jesuit mission to England took place, and Francis was among the recusants in London who strove to covertly support the arriving missionaries. A summary of his 1584 confession to his involvement in the conspiracy that would later bear his name reveals that Francis, in league with other recusant noblemen and gentlemen, offered up their homes to the newly returned exiles, though what part he played in the mission beyond this is uncertain.³¹⁶ Yet Francis does appear to have begun to support the proposed plot to remove Elizabeth in favor of Mary by the early 1580s as evidenced by the later discovery of several pedigrees of the English crown among his papers that supported Mary's claim to the throne.³¹⁷

Whether or not the Crown was aware of Francis's early dabbling with treason remains unclear, but there certainly was no move made against him in 1580. The same cannot be said for the men that Francis harbored during that year as the English government decided to respond to the new Catholic arrivals with brutal force.³¹⁸ Catholic

³¹⁴ Alison Plowden, "Throckmorton, Francis," *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (September 2015).

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

³¹⁶ A True and Perfect Declaration of the Treasons practiced and attempted by Francis Throckmorton, late of London, against the Queen's Majestie and the Realm, found in the Letters of William Allen (1584). *Archivium Britannicum Societatis Iesu* 46/24/4, 143.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

³¹⁸ Thomas McCoog, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England, 1541-1588* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 149-57.

priests, especially Jesuits, were rounded up and subjected to excruciating tortures that included the rack, the Pit in the Tower of London, and one particularly gruesome case of needles inserted underneath one conspirator's fingernails.³¹⁹ All of this was naturally meant to frighten the remaining Catholic sympathizers in England and these efforts ultimately succeeded. The recusant community largely abandoned the mission by the end of 1580 and what remained of the Marian clergy retired to the fringes of public life, tolerated by the Crown so long as they remained docile. But despite the success of these brutal tactics at home, the Elizabethan state failed to ward off future efforts to carry out the mission's aims from the continent. While Campion had perished during the previous year, Persons had escaped apprehension and returned to France to continue mobilizing a response to the Elizabethan regime.³²⁰ Along with Allen, Persons spent the next few months petitioning any major power that would listen for funds and resources to aid in their cause, which had rapidly evolved from one based in benevolent preaching and conversion to a militant reconquest effort conducted by the major Catholic power on the continent.

This was the latest iteration of the Catholic response to the English Reformation in which Francis Throckmorton found himself embroiled when he left England not long after the 1580 mission's failure. While the Crown may have suspected Francis in one way or another, the government apparently possessed no hard evidence of his early treason, and he was permitted to leave England and travel to the Low Countries and later to France for several years afterwards. During these travels, Throckmorton entered into several

³¹⁹ Edwards, *Plots and Plotters*, 78.

³²⁰ Victor Houlston, "Persons, Robert," *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 September 2004).

conferences with exiled English recusants, first in the Low Countries at Spa (modern Belgium) and then in Paris, with the aim of formulating a plot to overthrow the Queen.³²¹ While a meeting between Throckmorton and Persons may have taken place, it is uncertain exactly when or where such a conference may have been, if it happened at all. Nonetheless, it is almost certain that Francis encountered the new militant character that the English Mission had taken on after 1580, within which Person and Allen played significant roles. In 1582, Persons dispatched the Scottish Jesuit William Crichton to Scotland to drum up support for their fledgling invasion plans.³²² Several months later, Crichton returned with positive news from the Duke of Lennox, who agreed to leverage his position as a close advisor to the now teenaged James VI as a means of restoring Catholicism in Scotland and then in England.³²³ So long as he received military support from the continent, Lennox was confident that the plan would succeed.

Unfortunately for Lennox, getting the Catholic powers of Europe to cooperate with one another proved far more difficult—if not impossible—than previously expected. The two main powers that Persons and Allen had hoped to draw on for support were France and Spain, two states that had regularly flipped back and forth between friendship and rivalry for much of the century and who were both presently engaged with domestic crises of their own.³²⁴ At the moment, France was embroiled in its wars of religion and King Henry III was in no position to sponsor Persons and Lennox's invasion plan as he dealt ineffectively with the many factions that had arisen in the course of the fighting. With his

³²¹ A True and Perfect Declaration of the Treasons practiced and attempted by Francis Throckmorton (1584). *Archivium Britannicum Societatis Iesu* 46/24/4, 146.

³²² Mark Dilworth, "Crichton, William," *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (September 2004).

³²³ *Ibid.*

³²⁴ *Ibid.*

appeals to the French Crown met with little enthusiasm, Persons changed course, sending Crichton to Rome to appeal to the Pope for support while he traveled to Lisbon to meet with Philip II.³²⁵

Much like Henry, Philip was embroiled in his own form of civil war. In 1579, Protestant forces began to seize the advantage in the Dutch Revolt, tying down one of Philip's best generals, Alexander Farnese, in the Netherlands along with much of the Spanish military. Philip had also just concluded his conquest of the Portuguese throne, which brought with it significant colonial interests that very likely turned his attention away from Protestant England. Compounding matters, this Iberian union created a dynastic struggle between Philip and the competing claimant Don Antonio, prior of Crato.³²⁶ With Portuguese power failing, Antonio fled first to France and the court of Catherine de Medici before eventually making his way into England, where he was well received by Elizabeth.³²⁷ Philip naturally asked to have Antonio turned out of England, if not returned directly to Spanish custody, and his promises of unsurpassed gratitude indicate at least some degree of concordance between the Hapsburg and Tudor regimes. Although Elizabeth would never abandon Antonio (indeed, he soon became one of her favored privateers in the English navy towards the end of the 1580s), Philip did not respond with force as he had initially threatened in his earlier letters, most likely due to the turmoil that had engulfed the Netherlands.³²⁸ While Elizabeth's support of the Dutch rebels in the north only further

³²⁵ Edwards, *Plots and Plotters*, 80.

³²⁶ Ana Isabel Lopez-Salazar, "General Inquisitors and the Portuguese Crown in the Seventeenth Century: Between Political Service and the Defense of Faith (1578-1705)," *Mediterranean Studies*, 21, 2, (2013), 85.

³²⁷ Letter from the King of Spain to the Queen, Aug 23rd, 1581, *The National Archives, Kew*, found in *The Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, 1558-1559*, Vol. 15, Entry 314, Page 302, Ref. SP 94/1 f.73.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*

annoyed the newly crowned king of Portugal, Philip simply had too many other pressing matters to attend to when Persons arrived to beg for support.

Luckily for Persons, Crichton was making ground in Rome, possibly spurred on by calls from Mendoza and Allen in 1582 to accelerate Crichton's mission in the hopes of facilitating Mary's escape from imprisonment.³²⁹ More concrete invasion plans were concocted, and the Pope was fairly enthusiastic in his support for the scheme until Protestant forces drove Lennox out of Scotland and rendered the plot inert.³³⁰ Things took an even graver turn when Crichton set out for Scotland once more in 1583, but was apprehended by Dutch Protestant pirates and eventually turned over to the English. He spent two years in the Tower and managed to partially destroy letters in his possession that outlined the Lennox invasion plans upon his capture, though these plans were by this time almost entirely meaningless due to Lennox's death in the same year.³³¹

Despite the failure of the first open call for an invasion of England, another conspiracy was forming alongside Persons and Crichton's abortive scheme. In 1580, Francis Throckmorton left England for the continent and made his way through the Low Countries and into France, participating in secret conferences with likeminded recusants along the way.³³² A meeting in Paris was particularly significant for Francis as it was here that he encountered Sir Francis Englefield, a staunch Marian supporter who had lost his position on the privy council following Elizabeth's ascension and subsequently retired to

³²⁹ Letter from Bernardino di Mendoza to Persons, London, March 1582; Letter from William Allen to Persons, Rheims, March 1582 in *The Correspondence and Unpublished Papers of Robert Persons, S.J.*, eds. Victor Houlston, Ginerva Crosignani, and Thmas McCoog, S.J. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2017), 297-98.

³³⁰ Dilworth, "Crichton, William" (September 2004).

³³¹ *Ibid.*

³³² Plowden, Throckmorton, Francis" (September 2015).

the continent.³³³ Englefield spent much of his exile petitioning Philip II for financial support once Elizabeth had confiscated his English properties, and he was on hand in Rome with William Allen when the two appealed to Gregory XIII for support of the English Mission. By the time of his meeting with Throckmorton in the early 1580s, he had made the acquaintance of Thomas Morgan, a confidant and spy for Mary, and Francis was put in contact with this go-between, who would play a significant part in the unfolding plot and its successor conspiracy. At some point during these interactions, Francis was put in contact with Mary by way of Morgan and it was agreed that an invasion of England would be launched with the duke of Guise leading a Catholic liberation force in support of Mary.³³⁴

In order to carry out this new enterprise, the conspirators recognized that they would need financial support, which they sought in Rome, as well as an agent in England to galvanize covert support to supplement the incoming invasion forces.³³⁵ For this latter role, Throckmorton was the ideal candidate for the job. He had remained well-connected to the English Catholic community in England, and he had yet to come under any significant suspicion on the part of the crown's network of spies. By 1583, Throckmorton was back in England and involved in organizing a growing band of recusant insurrectionists.

For its part, the English Crown appears to have been suspicious, if not totally aware, of Francis' activities once he returned home. The report of Throckmorton' confession relates that he was in regular communication with two ambassadors in London, through whom he sent and received letters presumably to and from Englefield and Morgan.³³⁶ In

³³³ A.J. Loomie, "Englefield, Sir Francis" *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (January 2013).

³³⁴ A True and Perfect Declaration of the Treasons practiced and attempted by Francis Throckmorton (1584). *Archivium Britannicum Societatis Iesu* 46/24/4, 148.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 146.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 149.

addition to these daily conferences, Throckmorton also visited the Spanish ambassador Don Bernardino de Mendoza twice a week under the pretense of exchanging money for his brother Thomas, who had remained behind in France.³³⁷ Indeed, Throckmorton was so close to Mendoza that at the time of the former's arrest in November 1583, he had arranged for a certain casket that had been kept hidden in his home to be conveyed to Mendoza before it could be seized by the Crown.³³⁸ This casket was so important to him that he immediately inquired after it when visited by his lawyer while under his initial house arrest of two or three days and was relieved to hear of its acquisition by Mendoza not long after his apprehension.³³⁹

Nonetheless, Throckmorton was transferred to the Tower several days after his arrest and a subsequent series of tortures revealed the contents of casket to be a series of letters from Morgan and intended for Mary.³⁴⁰ Further interrogation revealed that Charles Paget (another recusant conspirator who would be tied to the next significant plot against Elizabeth) had also arrived in England at some point in the preceding weeks for, as Throckmorton phrased it, "evil purposes." But the most damning confirmation of Francis' treason came from two additional documents found in his possessions that effectively detailed the unfolding of the proposed invasion of the realm.³⁴¹ Between the two papers, a list of the proposed locations to land and house the invasion troops was uncovered and it appears that this invasion force, once reinforced and resupplied, would move to capture the northern city of Chester by way of Wales. An additional list of noblemen and gentlemen

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Ibid., 151.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 152.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

was also found in these papers, which Throckmorton's interrogators interpreted as a roster of potential supporters for the invasion. Whether or not this assessment of the northern nobility was fair is not entirely clear, but the simple fact that both letters were written in Throckmorton's handwriting (not to mention his outright confession to authoring at least one of them himself) was enough to seal his fate.

In order to procure his confession, Throckmorton's interrogators subjected him to torture that would have been considered excessive even by the standards of the sixteenth century.³⁴² Following his arrest, Throckmorton was confined to the "Little Ease" in the Tower, which was effectively a small cage of roughly four-square feet that had been hollowed out in the wall. After at least a week in this state, he was subjected to the rack and then thrown into "the Pit," a deep hole in the ground that isolated him from his surroundings in the cold, dark depths of the Tower. It is unclear how long Francis was left to rot in this state, but two weeks later, he was again racked—this time, twice in the same day. It was at this point that Throckmorton finally broke and confessed to his transgressions against the crown. Given the nature of this confession and the means by which it was procured, the validity of Throckmorton's words is somewhat dubious. Indeed, he later denied nearly everything that he had confessed to, raising questions as to whether torture had been implemented to secure the truth or to ensure that Francis merely admitted to the crimes that the Crown had levelled against him.

The letters found in Throckmorton's possession, along with the sheer breadth of his subsequent confessions, were enough to bring him to trial. Following his final torture sessions, Throckmorton wrote and signed a letter to Elizabeth in which he submitted

³⁴² Edwards, *Plots and Plotters*, 91.

himself to her judgement and begged mercy for his alleged crimes.³⁴³ Along with this, Francis also signed a declaration of his offenses against Elizabeth that provides much of the context for his previous years of activity as part of the plot against Elizabeth, particularly the involvement of the Jesuits.

The confession begins with Throckmorton detailing his early communication with Mary, which had begun just before Christmas in 1582.³⁴⁴ Their letters were concealed by way of a cypher that Throckmorton had received from Thomas Morgan while on the continent and additional letters from continental recusants, such as Godfrey Fulgeam and Robert Tunstead, were subsequently passed to and from Mary by Throckmorton. He then details his travels to the continent and his meetings with the likes of Englefield, Morgan, and Paget, all of whom played a role in drawing him into the plot and directed him to confer with Mendoza regarding the logistics of landing an invasion force in northern England. Morgan and Paget had also apparently been contacted by Robert Persons as a letter to the Superior General of the Jesuits indicates that Persons had consulted with Allen at Rouen and discussed the impending invasion plan with the other conspirators.³⁴⁵ It is unclear if Persons and Throckmorton ever actually met as the former is absent from the latter's confession.

While this confession could have been completely fabricated as it had been drawn from Francis by way of torture, an anonymous 1584 letter from the city of Tournai (modern Belgium) to Alfonso Agazarri, the rector of the English College in Rome at the

³⁴³ A True and Perfect Declaration of the Treasons practiced and attempted by Francis Throckmorton (1584) *Archivium Britannicum Societatis Iesu* 46/24/4, 153-54.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 155.

³⁴⁵ Letter from Persons to Claudio Acquaviva, Paris, 11 July 1583 in *The Correspondence and Unpublished Papers of Robert Persons, S.J.*, 354.

time, notes that Throckmorton was provided information regarding the potential invasion by Mendoza and that his confession to English authorities had alienated the Spanish ambassador from the plan.³⁴⁶ Mendoza wasn't the only one who appears to have gravitated away from the plot as it seems that Throckmorton's final years in England prior to his arrest saw a gradual loss of continental support as his communications with Morgan and Englefield declined, most likely due to emerging fractures between the conspirators. Francis notes in his confession that one of his final meetings with Mendoza revealed that the Jesuits, particularly Persons, had begun to make political moves of their own without the knowledge of their compatriots.³⁴⁷ According to Francis, Mendoza was particularly vexed at having been left out of Persons' most recent negotiations with the French Crown, as well as the Jesuit's sudden departure from France to confer with the Pope. Persons' motivations behind these moves are unclear, but his letters indicate the significant struggle he faced in securing support for the duke of Guise as he spent most of September 1583 negotiating with Pope to eventually secure four thousand crowns for their plot.³⁴⁸ It is possible that Persons was conducting similar visits to the court of France, but Mendoza ultimately seems primarily peeved by Persons' apparent autonomy from the rest of the conspirators, which would prove problematic moving forward.

Regardless, Francis certainly seems to have believed that the support for the plot that would soon bear his name was clearly waning and it was not long after this point that he was apprehended and ultimately condemned. On July 10th, 1584, Francis was executed

³⁴⁶ Letter to an unidentified addressee (probably Alfonso Agazzari), Tournai, 8 March 1584 in *The Correspondence and Unpublished Papers of Robert Persons, S.J.*, 429.

³⁴⁷ A True and Perfect Declaration of the Treasons practiced and attempted by Francis Throckmorton (1584). *Archivium Britannicum Societatis Iesu* 46/24/4, 158-59.

³⁴⁸ Papal briefs issued by Gregory XIII, 24 September 1583 in *The Correspondence and Unpublished Papers of Robert Persons, S.J.*, 368-75.

at Tyburn, apparently refusing to ask for the queen's forgiveness in spite of his earlier submissions to her mercy.³⁴⁹ He was the only member of the conspiracy to receive the death penalty, which ultimately contributed to the growing fractures that had begun to appear within the English Mission in the preceding years.

The Babington Plot

While the Throckmorton Plot had been foiled before it ever truly began, the death of Francis did not stop the communication between Mary and her continental supporters. Thomas Morgan's role in the conspiracies against Elizabeth became more prominent than ever before, particularly due to his connection with the Jesuits. Morgan was born during the last few years of Henry VIII's reign and had grown up mainly under Edward VI and Mary I's divergent approaches to English religious policy.³⁵⁰ He began his career as a scrivener for the bishop of Exeter before he received a promotion to act as a secretary to the archbishop of York. Following the archbishop's death in 1568, Morgan entered the household of the earl of Shrewsbury, who had only recently received the captive Mary Stuart as his charge. In the years that followed, Morgan became a close confidant of Mary. Initially, Morgan acted as something of a spy for Mary, using the information he could obtain from Shrewsbury to warn Mary of impending searches of her rooms and later helping to conceal and facilitate her correspondence with continental benefactors. Morgan began to draw suspicion from the Crown following the Ridolfi Plot and he was committed to the Tower in 1572 for a term of ten months before gaining his release with the strict

³⁴⁹ Plowden, "Throckmorton, Francis," (September 2004).

³⁵⁰ Alison Plowden, "Morgan, Thomas," *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (September 2004).

understanding that he was to neither leave England nor communicate in any way with Mary.

In 1574, however, the Crown once again became aware of Mary's continued correspondence with the continent and Morgan once again fell under suspicion of delivering her letters. Francis Walsingham issued a warrant for his arrest, but Morgan evaded capture this time and fled to France, where he began pleading his innocence to William Cecil via post and petitioning for his safe return home. While Morgan returned to England early in 1579, he left almost immediately afterwards and travelled to Rome, where he became embroiled in the feud between the English and Welsh students at the college there. Morgan's role in this feud is not particularly well documented, but it is possible that his time in Rome contributed to the gradual division between the Jesuits, including Persons and Allen, and the community of unaffiliated recusant exiles of which Morgan soon found himself a part.

Even before the failure of the Throckmorton Plot, tensions had emerged between the Jesuits and the lay community of recusant conspirators who developed increasingly divergent views on the English Mission. The conflict at the English College in Rome had already demonstrated the varied views between those committed to returning to England as part of the Mission, and the others who considered these efforts futile; however, conflicting approaches to reconversion were also beginning to emerge even within the community of committed English recusants. Essentially, two groups emerged. The first consisted of Jesuits, including Allen and Persons, who supported the overthrow of Elizabeth through military force. The second was made up chiefly of the English recusant laity who desired a more peaceable solution and sought to sway the English government by way of

diplomacy and persuasion.³⁵¹ While historian Francis Edwards has included Morgan in the latter group, he also noted that these groups and the loyalty of those within them were extremely fluid.³⁵² Indeed, trust was difficult to come by within the lay conspirators' circle as Morgan, while consistently loyal to Mary, appears to have fallen out with his fellow loyalists and his views on how best to free the captive queen grew more aggressive during his time away from England.³⁵³

As the 1580s began, Morgan was predominantly based in Paris, where he continued his correspondence with Mary and ultimately became her *defacto* ambassador in France. As a result of this position of confidence, Morgan quickly became a central figure in the Throckmorton Plot and the succeeding conspiracy that formed around Anthony Babington. The Elizabethan regime was already on edge as a result of the arrival of Jesuit missionaries led by Persons and Campion in 1580-81, as well as the foiled Throckmorton Plot in 1583. Elizabeth's ministers thus tightened the network of security that they had been weaving around the queen ever since her ascension. For Morgan's part, he had remained in regular contact with Mary and was influential during the Throckmorton Plot to the point that Elizabeth demanded Morgan's extradition after the conspiracy was unearthed.³⁵⁴ In response, Henry III had Morgan arrested and confined in the Bastille, which had little impact on his correspondence with Mary as evidenced by the consistent correspondence that persisted between the two in the subsequent years in spite of his imprisonment. In March of 1585, Morgan wrote to Mary informing her of his arrest, asking for her support

³⁵¹ Edwards, *Plots and Plotters*, 86.

³⁵² *Ibid.*

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 87.

³⁵⁴ Plowden, "Morgan, Thomas," (September 2004).

and attendance to his family's affairs.³⁵⁵ A month later, Morgan wrote Mary again, this time providing a more detailed account of his apprehension and confinement while also imploring Mary to provide financial support for a fellow conspirator, Thomas Throckmorton (Francis' cousin).³⁵⁶ He also included a list of fellow supporters of Mary, including William Allen whom Morgan mentioned several times. In a subsequent letter, Morgan indicated that the band of supporters had recently grown in France thanks to the arrival of more recusant exiles from across the Channel, though he admitted that he was unable to fully bring them into his confidence due to his arrest in the middle of his communication with them.³⁵⁷ Shortly afterwards, Morgan again wrote to Mary to relate the news of the election of Pope Sixtus V and the formation of the Catholic League in France by Henry, Duke of Guise, as the latter stages of the French Wars of Religion progressed.³⁵⁸ In this letter, Morgan also implored Mary to write to Rome in the hopes of convincing the Pope to intercede on his behalf with Henry III to secure his release from prison and his request was almost immediately granted. Using Morgan's name as a pseudonym, an agent of Mary, or possibly the Queen of Scots herself, wrote to Owen Lewis to request papal support for Morgan's release.³⁵⁹ By this time, Lewis had returned from Milan to serve as the secretary to the congregation of Bishops while also conducting the affairs of the Jesuit

³⁵⁵ Letter from Thomas Morgan to the Queen of Scots, March 30th, 1585, *The National Archives*, Kew, Ref. SP 53/15 f.64.

³⁵⁶ Letter from Thomas Morgan to the Queen of Scots, April 9th, 1585, *The National Archives*, Kew, Ref. MC4304900310.

³⁵⁷ Letter from Thomas Morgan to the Queen of Scots, April 19th, 1585, *The National Archives*, Kew, Ref. MC4305400153.

³⁵⁸ Letter from Thomas Morgan to the Queen of Scots, April 28th, 1585, *The National Archives*, Kew, Ref. SP 53/15 f.78.

³⁵⁹ Thomas Morgan? To Dr. Lewes, in Rome, April 18th/28th, 1585, *The National Archives*, Kew, Ref. SP 78/13 f.103.

seminary in Rheims.³⁶⁰ Lewis would soon come to represent Mary's interests in the Papal See; however, he was unable to secure Morgan's release until August of 1587, several months after the failure of the Babington Plot and Mary's execution.

In the intervening months, Morgan continued his correspondence with Mary, though he seems to have struggled to find a suitable courier to carry his letters to her. In consecutive letters, Morgan recommends Christopher Blunt as his replacement, only to later lament Blunt's apprehension by Elizabeth's agents as soon as he arrived in England.³⁶¹ In response to this setback, Morgan then replaced Blunt with Anthony Babington, bringing this final major conspirator into contact with Mary.³⁶² Born shortly after Elizabeth's ascension, Babington came from a predominantly Catholic family in Derbyshire and was in his early twenties when Morgan arranged for him to serve as his letter carrier to Mary. This arrangement did not last long as Morgan was once again recommending Catholic loyalists to Mary's service just three months later, but Babington's contact with Mary would make him a prime target for the final conspiracy when it came to deciding who would carry out the most aggressive move against the Crown up to this point: Elizabeth's assassination.³⁶³

In May of 1586, Babington was drawn into the conspiracy that Morgan by this point no longer controlled. Writing in January of the same year, Morgan expressed his resentment that his captivity had finally become too great an impediment to his participation in the unfolding conspiracy.³⁶⁴ With much regret, Morgan informed Mary of

³⁶⁰ Michael Williams, "Lewis, Owen" *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (September 2004).

³⁶¹ Letter from Thomas Morgan to Mary, July 10, 1585, *The National Archives*, Kew, Ref. SP 53/16 f.8; Letter from Thomas Morgan to Mary, July 18, 1585, *The National Archives*, Kew, Ref. SP 53/16 f.17.

³⁶² Letter from Thomas Morgan to the Queen of Scots, July 26, 1585, *The National Archives*, Kew, Ref. MC4304900312.

³⁶³ Thomas Morgan to Mary, October 5th, 1585, *The National Archives*, Kew, Ref. SP 53/16 f.50.

³⁶⁴ Thomas Morgan to the Queen of Scots, January 25th, 1586, *The National Archives*, Kew.

his inability to continue organizing his latest efforts to free her and named several men whom the queen could trust to press this matter forward. Among the men listed were Bernardino de Mendoza, Owen Lewis, and William Allen, all of whom Morgan named as reliable intermediaries between Mary and the Catholic powers of Spain and Rome and all of whom would play some part in the scheme the unfolded over the next several months. Within the conspiratorial network that Morgan and these men had created, Babington would soon find himself enmeshed in a plot that he frankly wanted nothing to do with.

Within weeks of his return to England following his latest courier mission, Babington encountered the priest and former student at the English College at Rheims John Ballard, who had been in contact with Mendoza over the matter of a foreign invasion of the island.³⁶⁵ According to the ambassador, Phillip II was now in position to launch the massive Spanish fleet that would work in tandem with the Catholic League led by the Duke of Guise to facilitate precisely the sort of crusade that the recusants had been hoping for over the last two decades. For his part, Babington was initially skeptical of the proposal and even went so far as to attempt to depart the country permanently. However, his association with Ballard appears to have been noted by Walsingham, who repeatedly denied Babington's application for a passport as the spring progressed. By July, Babington appears to have changed his mind and wrote to Mary expressing his loyalty to her and detailing the intricacies of the plan to restore her to freedom after the murder of her cousin. Not long afterwards, Mary responded with gratitude for Babington's support and proceeded to detail the particulars of her extrication from captivity while assenting to Elizabeth's assassination at the hands of Babington's fellow conspirators. Unbeknownst to either Mary

³⁶⁵ Penry Williams, "Babington, Anthony," *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (September 2004).

or Babington, their communication was allowed and likely encouraged by Walsingham with the intention of implicating Mary in the plots against the Queen.³⁶⁶ Mary's response was all the spymaster required to condemn the imprisoned queen.³⁶⁷

In spite of his captivity and voluntary turnover of the conspiracy to other men, Morgan remained actively apprised of the scheme's developments as the spring and summer months progressed. Like his comrades, Morgan likewise appears ignorant to the agents and methods that Walsingham employed to entrap Mary, having written to the queen in May to further assure her of Babington's devotion to their cause.³⁶⁸ For her part, Mary seemed uncertain of what course to take with her affairs. Just two months before the Babington Plot would be uncovered, Mary replied to Morgan, once again comforting him on the subject of his imprisonment while adding that she did not intend to make any move until she had conferred with other contacts.³⁶⁹ By July, Mary likely grew more confident in her prospects when Morgan responded to her a month later with optimism regarding the apparent preparation of the Spanish fleet and news of English failures during one of their frequent interventions in Holland.³⁷⁰ This news may have encouraged the queen for when Babington wrote to her in early July to recommit himself to her service as Morgan had instructed him to do, Mary assented to the plot against her cousin and her response to Babington was immediately seized by Elizabeth's agents. It has been suggested by some scholars that this letter may have been concocted in its entirety in order to incriminate

³⁶⁶ Edwards, *Plots and Plotters*, 143.

³⁶⁷ Mary, Queen of Scots, to Anthony Babington, 17 July 1586. The National Archives, Kew, SP 53/18/53.

³⁶⁸ Thomas Morgan to the Queen of Scots, May 9th, 1586, *The National Archives, Kew*.

³⁶⁹ Queen of Scots to Thomas Morgan, May 20th, 1586, *The National Archives, Kew*, SP 53/17 f.80.

³⁷⁰ Thomas Morgan to the Queen of Scots, July 9th, 1586, *The National Archives, Kew*, SP 53/18, entry 329, 528.

Mary or to extract information from Babington if he were to respond.³⁷¹ Despite this, some scholars suggest that, while the letter may have been altered to exaggerate the plans to invade England, it genuinely reflects Mary's aim of freeing herself from captivity and her commitment to the Catholic cause. As such, it is plausible that even if the letter's scheme was exaggerated in some way, Mary still assented to a plot of some kind that would liberate her.³⁷²

The following months saw Mary, Babington, and his fellow conspirators put on trial and eventually executed for their roles in the plot against Elizabeth. Mary's execution naturally caught the attention of nearly every significant Catholic power in Europe; however, there seems to have been little reaction from the man who claimed to be her chief supporter. Morgan was finally released from the Bastille roughly seven months after Mary's death and he spent the rest of his life bouncing from one court to another across Holland, Italy, France, and Spain in search of financial support.³⁷³ By this point, it seems the major recusant organizers had come to distrust Morgan and his role in the Babington Plot quickly came under scrutiny in his own time. Indeed, Robert Persons all but accused Morgan of conspiring against the Catholic cause, lamenting that Morgan received nothing more than a scolding from the duke of Guise for his misguided choice of Babington as Elizabeth's assassin.³⁷⁴ The Italian friar Giordano Bruno also indicated his belief that Morgan was prepared to give up Mary in return for his freedom from prison before the conspiracy was found out.³⁷⁵ Even before the collapse of Babington's Plot, Morgan appears to have drawn

³⁷¹ Edwards, *Plots and Plotters*, 145.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Plowden, "Morgan, Thomas," *Dictionary of National Biography*.

³⁷⁴ Father Persons to Don Juan de Idiaquez, June 30th, 1597, *Mary Queen of Scots and the Babington Plot*, ed. John Pollen (Edinburgh: University Press, 1922), 175.

³⁷⁵ John Bossy, *Giordano Bruno and the Embassy Affair* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 246.

significant distrust from other principal members of the recusant community, notably Persons and William Allen. Sometime in 1583 or 1584, Allen began writing to Mary, keeping her apprised of continental developments and assuring her of her impending liberation. One 1585 letter from Allen to Mary informed the captive queen that the duke of Parma had once again been enlisted to lead an invasion of England and that he would undertake that enterprise following the recapture of Antwerp, which had fallen under Protestant control.³⁷⁶ Allen makes no reference to Morgan in this letter and even notes that Parma had been directed by Philip to speak only to Persons and their colleague Hugh Owen on this matter, possibly indicating a breakdown in communication between these men or an outright break between the Jesuits and Morgan's conspiratorial circle regarding how best to approach extricating Mary and removing Elizabeth.

The same absence of Morgan is noted in Persons' letters to Mary that grew more frequent after the failure of the Throckmorton Plot. Before Francis Throckmorton's capture and execution, Persons complained at having received only one or two letters from Mary, as opposed to Morgan and Charles Paget who had received considerably more.³⁷⁷ His correspondence with the queen picks up again later in 1584 with a letter informing Mary of plans to wed her to the prince of Parma, as well as efforts to induce the conversion of her son, now King James VI of Scotland, to Catholicism by way of substantial payments of Spanish gold.³⁷⁸ The following February, Persons again wrote to Mary, expressing his annoyance at the apparent failures to convey earlier letters to the queen, indicating that

³⁷⁶ Letter from Allen to Mary, February 5th, 1585-6, *The National Archives, Kew*, Ref. SP 53/17.

³⁷⁷ Correspondence with Mary, Queen of Scots, November 1583 to July 1584 in *The Correspondence and Unpublished Papers of Robert Persons, S.J.*, 413.

³⁷⁸ Persons to Mary, Queen of Scots, Rouen, 10 October 1584 in *The Correspondence and Unpublished Papers of Robert Persons*, 519-26.

several attempts had been made over the previous months.³⁷⁹ While the letter itself contains little on the progress of Persons' earlier plans for Mary and Parma, it does hint at growing tension between the conspirators as he requests Mary send her reply by Godfrey Fulgeam instead of her usual agent, Thomas Morgan himself. Mary took Persons' advice and sent a reply by way of Fulgeam in 1586 in which the queen assents to Persons' plans for her marriage to Parma.³⁸⁰ This may well have been their last exchange as Mary would soon assent to Morgan and Babington's plan to eliminate Elizabeth just two months later. As Mary's trial began that August, Persons made one final attempt to convince Parma to join the Duke of Guise in invading England and Scotland, his pleas appear to have gone unaddressed, possibly due to the changing nature of national priorities on the part of European nobles that will be examined in the following chapter.³⁸¹ Persons' plans ultimately failed to come to fruition, likely due to an apparent breakdown in relations between himself and the other key members of the conspiratorial circles that formed against Elizabeth. For his part, Morgan spent the rest of his life on the fringe of the recusant world and he abruptly disappears from the historical record after playing some role in a plot against one of the French King Henry IV's mistresses.

Though there would be subsequent plots against the English Crown, none met with any more success than their predecessors. For their part, the Jesuits pressed on in their support of any cause that might remove Elizabeth from power but after 1588, the defeat of

³⁷⁹ Persons to Mary, Queen of Scots, Rouen, 15 February 1585 in *The Correspondence and Unpublished Papers of Robert Persons, S.J.*, 575.

³⁸⁰ From Mary, Queen of Scots to Persons, Chartley, 29 May 1586 in *The Correspondence and Unpublished Papers of Robert Persons, S.J.*, 633-34.

³⁸¹ To Alessandro Farnese from Robert Persons, Rome, 22 August 1586 in *The Correspondence and Unpublished Papers of Robert Persons, S.J.*, 639-42.

the Spanish Armada effectively closed the door on any serious schemes to launch a successful crusade into England. Over the course of the first twenty-five years of her reign, Elizabeth had weathered recusant missionary work, put down an uprising led by her northern nobles, and uncovered three conspiracies that intended to remove her from power and replace her with Mary. As these plots and conspiracies developed during the 1570s, the methods and motives of the conspirators grew noticeably more aggressive until they finally began to make designs for her assassination in the 1580s. But in the midst of this gradual move towards violence, the plots against the crown were undone by the steady breakdown in trust and communication between the various factions within the conspiracy. As the plots against Elizabeth grew more aggressive as the century drew to a close, the Jesuits began to distance themselves from other recusant conspirators, creating a set of uneven attempts to oust the queen and replace her with Mary that were generally undone before they could be put into motion. As had taken place in the Roman College, the English Mission never approached the level of unity that it purportedly maintained and the Mission's failure to reconvert England to Catholicism once again stemmed from the distrust between its proponents. As the next chapter will show, these failings would ultimately lead to a total abandonment of the Mission by the Catholic powers of Europe, who steadily grew more focused on matters tied to their own states as the sixteenth century drew to a close.

Chapter 5: *Ragion di Stato* and the End of the English Mission

If S. Ambrose had seen the Emperor to have gone to the Panims Temples, or S. Augustine the other to frequent the Donatists Churches, what then would they have said? What excuse then would they have received? and this is our very case.

-Robert Persons, 1580

As examined in the previous chapter, the character and aims of the English Mission were undergoing significant changes in the second half of the sixteenth century as members of the Society of Jesus and other lay counter reformers exercised their influence over the many plots against the Elizabethan throne. Over the course of Elizabeth's reign, the threats against her authority gradually evolved into threats against her position before finally solidifying as outright threats against her life and kingdom by 1588. While this evolution progressed in part due to the frustrations and impatience of the various counter reformers working towards the resumption of Catholic authority in England, the calls for Elizabeth's removal would not have eventually condoned her assassination without the influence of continental political theorists, whose views towards monarchy were rapidly changing in the wake of the Reformation.

The evolution of French political thought has most recently been analyzed in Sophie Nicholls' study on the Catholic League that emerged during the French Wars of Religion in opposition to the French Crown's conciliatory policies towards Protestants. Through an examination of League theologians' interpretations of Protestant resistance theory, Nicholls reveals that the League was likewise working to create a unified theory of resistance to the monarchy that presented the French Catholic community as a political

entity in its own right.³⁸² However, despite their attempts at unity, League theologians developed a wide range of views on resistance, which Nicholls suggests indicates some degree of disunity that prior historians have largely overlooked. As this chapter will demonstrate, challenges to French monarchical authority grew more virulent during the course of the wars and these developments eventually came to influence the nature of the English Mission that likewise began to challenge the supremacy of the English crown on religious and civil grounds.

Indeed, the latter half of the sixteenth century would feature persuasive arguments against the unchallenged authority of monarchical rulers, which gave way to powerful calls for resistance against the unjust acts of secular governing bodies. As these new ideas emerged, Jesuit writers—particularly Persons and Allen—appear to have followed this rhetorical trend and drafted numerous challenges against the English Crown, often with the explicit purpose of undermining Elizabeth’s sovereignty.

Calls for Elizabeth’s removal date back to the writings of John Knox who, as this chapter will show, wrote extensively on Elizabeth’s accession in 1558. More overtly, Pope Pius V would later call for the queen’s removal in her excommunication bull in 1570.³⁸³ Subsequent works from the recusant community would emerge that called for rebellion against Elizabeth in the form of William Allen’s *Copy of a Letter Concerning the Yielding up of the City of Daventry* (1587), his *Admonition of the Nobility and People* (1588), and Robert Persons’ *Conference about the Next Succession of the Crowne of England* (1594). These calls for Elizabeth’s removal would once again routinely call the legitimacy of her birth into

³⁸² Sophie Nicholls, *Political Thought in the French Wars of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 8-9.

³⁸³ Muller, *The Excommunication of Elizabeth I*, 29.

question, but they moved beyond this line of argument to criticize her actions following her assumption of temporal and religious authority in her kingdom. Jesuit writers regularly contrasted Elizabeth, among other monarchs, with the Pope, arguing in favor of the resumption of supreme spiritual sovereignty by the Holy See.

Ironically, the Jesuits' challenges to political authority would ultimately lead to the breakdown of attempts to return England to the Catholic fold. In promoting the concept of political resistance, the Jesuits regularly presented the Pope as a figure whose authority surpassed that of the secular rulers of Europe. This stance left the Pope open as an obvious target for Protestant resistance theorists and their attacks on Catholic supremacy would soon lead to challenges to the authority of Catholic monarchs that culminated in the assassinations of the French King Henry III and his successor Henry IV. These events naturally distressed other Catholic monarchs across Europe, but perhaps more damning to the efforts of the English Mission were the regular promotions of papal authority in the writings of Jesuit resistance theorists that further aggravated Catholic kings who viewed the power of the Pope as a challenge to their own temporal authority. And finally, these two developments coincided with the rise in popularity of a relatively new vein of political thought that would turn the attention of Catholic monarchs away from the English Reformation to more immediate matters related to the state of their respective kingdoms. As *ragion di stato* or "reason of state" philosophy grew more prominent in the courts of western Europe, the last remaining proponents of the English Mission would soon find themselves alone in their fading attempts to reverse the Reformation in England as their chief supporters in France and Spain steadily withdrew support for their efforts during the last years of the sixteenth century.

All told, these developments played into the thinking of Catholic continental monarchs as their support of English Mission waned towards the end of the sixteenth century. As English resistance theorists began to promote rebellion and even violence against political authorities while simultaneously promoting the supreme authority of the Pope, Catholic monarchs grew more and more distant from the English Mission until it effectively collapsed following the failure of the Spanish Armada. Although some Jesuits, like Persons, would cling to fading hopes for a resumption of Jesuit conversion efforts in England, the shifting political realities of Europe rendered such efforts an impossibility by the end of the century.

The backdrop for these shifts in European political theory, particularly the development of a formalized doctrine of Catholic resistance to secular sovereignty, were the wars of religion that dominated France from 1562 until 1598. This era of unrest pitted French Catholics against Calvinist and Reformed French inhabitants, often referred to as Huguenots, and both sides of this conflict would work to develop their own rationale for resistance to the power of the French monarchy. As the minority faith in France, the Huguenots naturally took the lead in this endeavor, building on the justifications for political resistance developed by John Calvin and his successors.³⁸⁴ In truth, Calvin's role in developing a Calvinist-based resistance theory was relatively minor. His *Institutes of the Christian Religion* was highly significant in winning a leading role for Geneva within the

³⁸⁴ Robert Kingdon, "Calvinism and Resistance Theory, 1550-1580," in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, eds. J.H. Burns and Mark Goldie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 193.

French-speaking Reformed Church; however, it was not until after his death in 1564 that his successors would begin to formulate clearer conceptions of political resistance.

The conclusions that Calvin's successors reached built upon slightly older ideas developed by Protestant exiles during the reign of Mary Tudor in England. Over the course of her five-year rule, Protestant exiles fled to the continent, taking refuge in the reformed cities of Switzerland where many began to publish political treatises on the subject of resisting the authority of divinely ordained monarchs. The first of these publications came by way of the writing of John Ponet, the former bishop of Winchester under Edward VI who had fled England following Mary's ascension and taken up residence in Strasbourg.³⁸⁵ In 1556, Ponet had his seminal treatise on resistance published anonymously, most likely due to the radical nature of its contents. Of particular note is Ponet's analysis of the legality of deposing and killing an unjust ruler and his conclusion that such an act would be morally justified in the eyes of God.³⁸⁶ Indeed, Ponet points to a number of examples of such an action as evidence for its legality, such as the deposition of the unsavory Frankish King Childeric III in favor of Pepin the Short, Henry Lancaster's usurpation of the English throne from the unfit King Richard II, and the overthrow and probable assassination of King Edward II whose mishandling of the Great Famine and abuses towards his barons and people were used to justify the transfer of power to his young son, Edward III.³⁸⁷ Ironically, Ponet's reasoning actually comes to Mary Tudor's defense as he opposed the attempt made at the end of her brother Edward's reign to remove Mary and Elizabeth from the royal

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 194.

³⁸⁶ John Ponet, *A Shorte Treatise of Politike Pouuer and of the True Obedience which Subiectes Owe to Kynges and Other Ciuile Gouvernours, with an Exhortacion to all True Naturall Englishe Men, Compyled by. D. I.P. B. R.* Strasbourg, Printed by the heirs of W. Köpfel, 1556, 51.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 51-52.

succession by installing their cousin Jane Grey as Queen.³⁸⁸ In fact, Mary is barely mentioned at all as Ponet regularly targets the queen's bishops and advisors without actually taking aim at the legitimacy of the Queen herself.³⁸⁹ This hesitancy to attack one's sovereign would not be featured in later works of Calvinist resistance, particularly those of John Knox who targeted not one, but three separate Queens in the British Isles—all of whom shared the same name.

Across numerous letters and treatises, Knox first attacked the authority of Mary Tudor before turning his attention to his homeland to attack the legitimacy of Mary of Guise and later her daughter, Mary Stuart. He is best known for his *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, *The Copy of a Letter delivered to the Lady Marie, Regent of Scotland*, *The Appellation to Nobility, Estates, and Communalty of Scotland*, and *A Letter addressed to the Communalty of Scotland*, all of which work to undermine the authority of the three Queen Marys. Like Ponet, Knox condemns each ruler for their inability to properly rule over their respective kingdoms; however, his influence was limited by the misogynistic overtones in each of his works that created a theory of resistance against female rulers, rather than ineffective government in general.³⁹⁰ It did not take Catholic reformers long to rebuke Knox's attacks by pointing out that his very same arguments could be used to undermine the authority of Elizabeth, who came to power in the same year that Knox published most of these pamphlets, and the Calvinist community on the continent was considerably embarrassed once Knox's works came into wide circulation. Calvin himself wrote directly to William Cecil to distance himself from Knox;

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 31-32.

³⁸⁹ Kingdon, "Calvinism and Resistance Theory," 195-96.

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 199.

however, it seems that Elizabeth was well aware of Knox's attacks on her sister, aunt, and cousin and grew noticeably colder towards Geneva, where a number of British exiles had taken up refuge. Knox was never welcomed back into England and his reform movement was limited to Scotland, where he did indeed enjoy considerable success in ousting the regime of Mary of Guise and later driving Mary Stuart into England.³⁹¹

Taken together, the early works of Calvinist writers on the theory of resistance to monarchical rule were generally ineffective in stimulating a sustained resistance movement in Europe. Apart from Scotland, where Knox galvanized a Reformation movement more through force than actual political theory, Calvinist influence on the political dimensions of organized resistance was fairly limited and it would fall to Lutheran reformers to create a fully-fledged resistance theory in the coming years. This perhaps should not come as a shock, since the nominally Lutheran lands of the Holy Roman Empire had already experienced considerable struggle between the imperial ruling class and the general population in the previous decades. In 1525, the German peasantry rose up in revolt in the central regions of the Empire and waged a significant, if short-lived insurrection against the German aristocracy. The movement was condemned by a number of Lutheran reformers, most notably Martin Luther himself; however, the Peasant Revolt likely raised a number of questions in the minds of contemporary Lutheran rulers as to the nature of resistance to political authority. Indeed, it would take fewer than six years after the Revolt for Lutheran leaders Philip of Hesse and John Frederick of Saxony to establish the Schmalkaldic League as a means of checking the authority of the Emperor Charles V. Even before Ponet and Knox began to develop resistance theories of their own, German

³⁹¹ Ibid., 199-200.

princes had begun to organize a defensive alliance to resist the expected encroachment on their lands by the emperor, an alliance that would be called into action when Charles began to make preparations for an imperial war in the early 1540s.³⁹² Although the Emperor would emerge victorious in his war against the League, the princely leaders of the League played a significant role in directing their ministers to develop a justification for their formation of the League in the first place, which gave way to new rationales for resistance altogether.

In the aftermath of the Schmalkaldic War, reformers began to base their arguments within the framework of the Empire itself.³⁹³ Operating mainly in Hesse and Saxony where they printed numerous pamphlets on the subject, the reformers argued that the emperor, though supreme, was an elected official and that his election was conditional on his ability to wield the powers granted to him by the electors in reasonable and responsible ways. As such, they insisted that the emperor's authority was not absolute and left certain matters and powers in the hands of the imperial princes, such as the power dictate religious policy in their lands. A move against the religious policies enforced by the princes could therefore be seen as an unlawful overextension of power on the part of the emperor, which would in turn forfeit his right to rule. Under these circumstances, resistance to imperial authority would not only be necessary but encouraged by Lutheran political theorists, and these writings found a welcome audience in the norther cities of the Empire, particularly

³⁹² Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought, Volume II: the Age of Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 189.

³⁹³ Kingdon, "Calvinism and Resistance Theory," 201.

Magdeburg, where open revolt against the emperor's postwar religious policies erupted in the 1550s.³⁹⁴

This interpretation of imperial politics gained support from Roman law in the form of the Emperor Justinian's *Corpus Juris Civilis*, which was steadily gaining a wider readership in the royal courts of Europe throughout the sixteenth century.³⁹⁵ Justinian's Code maintains the legality of repelling force with force, and it even includes specific clauses that permitted citizens to resist the decisions of unruly judges. From the viewpoint of the Lutherans, the emperor was performing this exact role in unjustly enforcing his religious policies upon his subordinates, a violation of the conditions of his election that would necessitate resistance.³⁹⁶ In their minds, the emperor should have no role at all in the enforcement of religion in the empire because of the secular nature of his position that negated any jurisdiction that he believed himself to possess in these affairs. In short, the emperor did not possess the authority to rule on religious matters because he was simply not a figure of religious authority like the Pope or an ecumenical council. The power of the emperor was therefore not absolute, and his decisions and decrees could be resisted when necessary.

Armed with these theories, the Schmalkaldic League persisted in resisting the emperor and, even after a heavy defeat to the imperial army in 1547, the League eventually managed to force the emperor to negotiate a provisional toleration policy in the form of the Peace of Augsburg.³⁹⁷ Under this uneasily organized treaty, the princes earned the legal

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 202-03.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 201.

³⁹⁶ Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 198.

³⁹⁷ Kingdon, "Calvinism and Resistance Theory," 202.

right to dictate the official religion of their portions of the empire, which for the moment eliminated the need for Lutheran resistance at all. As such, Lutheran reformers grew more passive in matters of political theory for the rest of the century, but the intellectual revolution that they had galvanized in opposition to Charles V was far from over.

With the outbreak of the French religious wars in 1562, the politics of resistance continued to develop and shift as a response to the changing political and military context. Some Huguenots adopted a moderate stance towards royal authority, restraining the more virulent arguments for resistance from Ponet and Knox while waiting to see whether or not the Crown might continue in its pursuit of toleration negotiations.³⁹⁸ But perhaps the most notable development during the initial years of the war came during the revolt of Louis de Bourbon, prince of Condé, who claimed that King Charles IX had been effectively kidnapped by the duke of Guise and other royal advisors. Until his execution in 1569, Condé maintained that his support for the Huguenot cause was perpetuated by his desire to see the king liberated from these kidnappers and the first ten years of the war were largely characterized by Huguenot claims of fighting in support of the king against the unjust nobles who manipulated him for their own gain. This rationale for resistance would indeed outlive Condé, but only for a few more years. Whatever optimism the Huguenots maintained for reconciliation with the monarchy was abruptly shattered in 1572 when the Guise family moved to assassinate the Huguenot admiral Gaspard de Coligny and then, when the attempt initially failed, sanctioned the elimination of the entire Huguenot

³⁹⁸ Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 242.

leadership in Paris altogether.³⁹⁹ The subsequent massacre carried out on St. Bartholomew's Day that saw the murder of some two thousand Huguenots in Paris alone left the Huguenots convinced that toleration was now a virtual impossibility and they soon adopted even firmer attitudes towards resistance. It had now become impossible to persist in Conde's approach towards resistance in support of the king against his counselors; instead, the king was now nothing more than a tyrant himself and subsequent Huguenot resistance theorists would treat him as such for the remainder of the war as they pushed for rebellion against his ineffective rule.

While the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre had shocked the Protestant world, the Huguenots were far from defeated in spite of the loss of many of their primary leaders. Though they were still marginalized and now apparently considered a direct target for extermination by the monarchy, the Huguenots found support for their position in the works of moderate Catholic political theorists who had grown discontent with the rising trends of absolutist rule in France. Indeed, the centralization of royal power and authority had been underway since the Hundred Years War in the fourteenth century, as best represented by the establishment of the *taille* as a direct tax on the French population carried out solely through the authority of the King.⁴⁰⁰ This tax enabled the Crown to raise ever increasing revenues without the consent of the masses, who were effectively shut out from political representation when King Charles VIII dismissed the States General in 1484 and never reconvened it. Indeed, it would not be until 1560 that the monarchy would be forced to revive the traditional meeting of the French estates, when economic and social

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 255.

tensions had grown untenable, particularly among the members of the Third Estate who were struggling under the weight of new, more extensive taxes in the sixteenth century. Complicating matters was France's lack of a formal constitution, a problem that would not be remedied until 1791 and the outbreak of the French Revolution.⁴⁰¹ As a result, the power of French kings was largely governed by a few sets of traditional customs and principles that the kings ruling in the first half of the sixteenth century began to roll back. As the monarchy gradually absorbed more and more political power while abolishing the various uncodified checks to their authority, the state of French politics grew noticeably more absolutist and led moderate writers in the second half of the century to push back with a new wave of resistance literature.

These writers, particularly Bernard de Girard du Haillon and Etienne de Pasquier, spent much of the 1560s and 70s examining and unraveling the theory of royal supremacy, employing a humanist approach to attack royalist views of early modern kingship as an extension of Roman *imperium*.⁴⁰² As the applicability of ancient Roman laws, such as those found in Justinian's Code, became less practical in the eyes of constitutional theorists, these writers turned their attention to the ancient traditions and customs of France and produced national histories that, while not denying French kings their positions as supreme authorities, championed a revival of ancient checks to monarchical power.⁴⁰³ Indeed, Du Haillon goes so far as to consider the States General as essential to the maintenance of the French state, while concluding further that the king's legal authority is checked by the power of French courts, particularly the Parlement of Paris. These varying

⁴⁰¹ James Collins, *The State in Early Modern France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 14-15.

⁴⁰² Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 269.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, 272.

checks to royal authority were widely accepted by political theorists of the late sixteenth century, including those who would write in defense of royal supremacy, and they would continue to form the basis of the Huguenot resistance theory that developed as the Wars of Religion progressed.

The development of Huguenot resistance theory began with the publication of a radical constitution that emerged in 1572 and was noticeably anti-monarchical.⁴⁰⁴ Indeed, while declaring their continued desire to see their unfit ruler removed from power, the authors of this constitution created a Huguenot assembly of locally elected councilors to manage the affairs of the remaining Huguenot regions of France. In effect, the Huguenots had created a republic that stood in opposition to the French monarchy and confirmed the suspicions of many French Catholics that the Huguenots intended to overthrow the traditional social order of the realm.⁴⁰⁵ The French court certainly took notice of this dramatic shift; however, a political crisis involving the defection of the king's heir presumptive to the Huguenot cause forced the monarchy to negotiate two separate toleration edicts with the Huguenots in 1576 and 1577 respectively and concede to several of their demands, particularly their call for regular assemblies of the Estates-General.⁴⁰⁶ Both of these agreements were undermined by resistance from French Catholics who ignored the settlements' toleration towards Protestant worship, royal officials who refused to enforce these new policies, and the Huguenots themselves who remained distrustful of the monarchy due to the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre.⁴⁰⁷ In spite of these moves

⁴⁰⁴ Mack Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 99.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 112.

towards peace, the monarchy found itself unable to enforce its own toleration initiatives thanks to growing resistance towards its authority from both Catholic and Protestant factions.

In opposition to the Huguenot constitution, there remained a significant faction that began to plant the seeds of what would later grow into a theory of absolutism. Standing in stark contrast to resistance theorists were the works of Jean Bodin, particularly his *Six Books of the Republic*. Of primary concern for Bodin in this work is the nature of sovereignty, which he defines as “the most high, absolute, and perpetual power over the citizens and subjects of a commonwealth.”⁴⁰⁸ In the course of his work, Bodin presents an early conception of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s Social Contract theory by arguing that sovereignty is derived by a monarch from the people who “may purely and simply give the sovereignty and perpetual power to anyone, to dispose of the goods and lives, and of all the state at his pleasure.”⁴⁰⁹ However, though Bodin locates power in a monarch’s subjects, he nonetheless views this acquired sovereignty as absolute and subject to nothing except for God’s law.⁴¹⁰ Given the backdrop of the French Wars of Religion, Bodin appears to argue in favor of a strong central monarchy that he believes would be necessary to restabilize the kingdom. He defends his position by examining numerous instances throughout history in which the absence of an absolute monarch has left a given commonwealth vulnerable to collapse. His most prominent example is the dictatorship of Julius Caesar, which (according to Bodin) failed due to Caesar’s retention of Rome’s republican offices, particularly the

⁴⁰⁸ Jean Bodin, *The Six Bookes of a Common-Weale. VVritten by I. Bodin a Famous Lawyer, and a Man of Great Experience in Matters of State. Out of the French and Latine Copies, done into English, by Richard Knolles*. London, Printed by Adam Islip] impensis G. Bishop, 1606, 84.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*

senate and tribunes that conspired against him and eventually staged his assassination.⁴¹¹ He then contrasts this example with that of Caesar's predecessor, Lucius Cornelius Sulla, who likewise declared himself perpetual dictator but took a more tyrannical approach to power in the course of ending his civil war with his rival Gaius Marius and then reforming the failing republican system.⁴¹² Yet, even with the repressive reforms that Sulla introduced that crippled the power of the Roman tribunate and aligned the Republic (at least, in theory) with its initial iteration in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Roman monarchy, Bodin views Sulla's continuing of republican traditions as the same weakness that plagued Caesar's reign as dictator. Elections continued to take place annually, the Senate continued to meet, and according to Bodin, the delegation of authority to the various magistrates of Rome persisted in checking Sulla's power to some degree. He even suggests that this may have been what led Sulla to retire from the dictatorship after just four years in power.

Bodin applies the same rationale to defend royal power by next turning to France itself, particularly the regencies that had occasionally arisen throughout the kingdom's history. While he does not mention the queen mother, Catherine de Medici, by name, Bodin once more decries the deputization of others to wield power in the stead of an absolute monarch. His primary examples are the senates of Milan and Naples to whom Charles V regularly granted sovereignty over their lands while he managed the affairs of the empire elsewhere.⁴¹³ While such a maneuver would naturally lessen the responsibilities of the emperor and could certainly be reversed if necessary, Bodin nonetheless points to the

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 86.

⁴¹² Ibid.

⁴¹³ Ibid., 87.

granting of sovereign privileges and regencies as another of the main ways by which monarchical rule might be challenged, weakened, and ultimately collapse. Finally, Bodin presents possibly his most direct attack on the Huguenot resistance theory in the second book of his work, in which he considers the legality of deposing an unjust ruler. Having laid out the varying forms that monarchy can take with regard to royal, lordly, and tyrannical regimes, Bodin turns to possibly the most divisive subject with regard to resistance theories and sternly rejects the propositions of his Huguenot contemporaries on the legality of assassinating a ruler deemed unjust and tyrannical.⁴¹⁴ He notes early in his exploration of this topic that many of his opponents have conflated the terms “King” and “Tyrant” with little regard for the complex subtleties surrounding a sovereign prince’s acquisition and management of political power.⁴¹⁵ To remedy this issue, he proceeds with an exhaustive examination of regicide, drawing examples from ancient and medieval history, and concludes that:

If the prince be an absolute Sovereign, as are the true Monarchs of France, of Spain, of England, Scotland, Turkey, Muscovy, Tartary, Persia, Ethiopia, India, and of almost all the kingdoms of Africa, and Asia, where the kings themselves have the sovereignty without all doubt or question; not divided with their subjects: in this case it is not lawful for any one of the subjects in particular, or all of them in general, to attempt anything either by way of fact, or of justice against the honor, life, or dignity of the sovereign: albeit that he had committed all the wickedness, impiety, and cruelty that could be spoken; For as to proceed against him by way of justice, the subject hath no such jurisdiction over his Sovereign prince: of whom depend all power and authority to command: and who may not only revoke all the power of his Magistrates; but even in whose presence the power of all Magistrates, Corporations, Colleges, Estates, and Communities cease, as we have said, and shall yet more fully in due place say.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 225.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 220.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 222.

The sticking point for Bodin is whether or not a given ruler wields power without needing to share authority with their subordinates or subjects. Drawing mainly on Roman history, he notes that the emperors, particularly those of the Principate era, officially ruled by way of consent from the Roman Senate and the general populace. While the reality of early imperial Roman rule is slightly more complicated than Bodin's presentation of it, he nonetheless uses this rationale to explain the permissibility of certain royal assassinations, such as the Roman emperors Nero and Maximinus Thrax, who were both removed from power by the Roman military after alienating their subjects in various ways.⁴¹⁷ According to Bodin, early modern rule functioned differently. In his view, early modern rulers possessed no checks to their authority, certainly none arising from their subjects, and he flatly labels any attempt to depose or assassinate a sovereign prince as an act of treason.⁴¹⁸ Bodin goes so far as to claim that even the mere suggestion of the removal of an absolute ruler constituted a breach of natural law and he notes several prominent historical moments in which conspirators and assassins carried out plots against their sovereigns in the hopes of gaining favor with rival political elements, only to be executed themselves by the newly promoted rulers whom they had hoped to impress. These examples include the Roman Emperor Septimius Severus' purge of the Praetorian Guard following the assassinations of his predecessors Pertinax and Didius Julianus, the Emperor Vitellius' execution of his rival claimant Otho and his agents following the assassination of the Emperor Galba during the Year of the Four Emperors, Alexander the Great's disposal of the Persian satraps who betrayed and murdered Darius III, and Julius Caesar's wrath upon

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 221.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 222.

learning of the murder of his rival Gnaeus Pompey by agents of the court of the Pharaoh Ptolemy XIII.⁴¹⁹ By the time Bodin concludes his work, he had established a strong defense of absolute monarchy with limited checks to monarchical power, which would quickly come under fire from his contemporaries.

Perhaps the most famous counter to Bodin's work came in the form of the *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos*, a brief tract whose authorship is contested but likely Reformed, which explored several questions pertaining to the liberties of a prince's subjects when it came to resisting unjust laws and commands.⁴²⁰ The document quickly moves through several questions regarding whether or not subjects are bound to obey princes who defy the law of God or bring about the ruin of their realm and whether or not a neighboring prince might support the subjects of unjust princes in revolt against their rule. For each question, the document places the whole body of a ruled people over a king and supports the rights of the people to resist unjust rulers; however, it stops short of encouraging outright rebellion on the part of the masses and instead places the responsibility for such revolt in the hands of other princes, imploring them to depose unjust rulers in the name of God and the common good.⁴²¹

In a similar vein, Protestant writer Francois Hotman presented his own arguments against absolute rule after having been forced into exile after the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre.⁴²² While taking up refuge in Geneva, Hotman completed his greatest work, the

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 228-29.

⁴²⁰ Hubert Languet, *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos, a Defence of Liberty Against Tyrants, Or, of the Lawful Power of the Prince Over the People, and of the People Over the Prince being a Treatise Written in Latin and French by Junius Brutus, and Translated Out of both into English* [Defense of liberty against tyrants. Of the lawful power of the Prince over the people, and of the people over the Prince.]. London: 1648, 1.

⁴²¹ Ibid., 148.

⁴²² Donald Kelley, *Francois Hotman: A Revolutionary's Ordeal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 218.

Franco-Gallia, in which he drew upon the traditions of two major contributing cultures in the formation of the early modern French national character: that of the Gauls and that of the Franks. From each culture, Hotman built his argument for resistance around the Franco-Gallic historical tendencies towards liberty, which expressed itself through the region's traditional resistance to Rome throughout the ancient and medieval eras.⁴²³ In his own time, Hotman saw the rise of the Renaissance papacy as a massive problem for France and he spent much of his work calling for a resumption of resistance to Rome and the continuation of the "struggle for liberty—whether 'the ancient liberty of the Gallican church' or the 'liberty of the Christian man'".⁴²⁴

In the course of promoting Franco-Gallic traditions over the influence of the ancient Roman ties to French territory, Hotman presented a number of radical conclusions regarding the rights of the French people. These included the principle of popular sovereignty, which became the cornerstone of Hotman's rationale for popular resistance as it led him to place the supreme power for deposing princes with the people.⁴²⁵ Further, Hotman presented similarly radical ideas regarding the state of the French government. Drawing mainly on Cicero, Hotman flatly denied the viability of absolute rule and argued in favor of a more representative "sacred council," such as a Parlement, curia, or the Estates General, as the chief means of securing the peace of the state.⁴²⁶ This latter point in particular proved somewhat shocking to contemporary readers, particularly those of the ruling classes of Europe, and it came as little surprise that Hotman became something of a

⁴²³ Ibid., 241-42

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 243.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 244.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

suspicious character following the work's publication, even from the point of view of Protestant authorities.⁴²⁷ Nonetheless, Hotman's ideas would survive the Wars of Religion and play a major role in the coming centuries of Enlightenment thought and the rise of such ideals as the social contract, legal uniformity, and individual liberty.⁴²⁸

These theories soon came to a head in 1584 when the duke of Anjou died. As the brother King Henry III, Anjou had been the presumptive heir to the throne due to Henry's lack of a son, and the duke's death upended the French succession in shocking fashion. According to Salic Law, this meant the throne would pass to the king's cousin, Henry of Navarre who was currently leading Huguenot forces against the Catholic League. Naturally, this event immediately drew the ire of resistance theorist within the Catholic League, who employed theories similar to those proposed by Hotman to oppose the rise of a potential Huguenot King. However, the opposition to the rise of Navarre was not universal and when he eventually ascended to the French throne, resistance to his rule was countered by the support he received from Gallican authorities, as well as League political theorists. As Sophie Nicholls has shown, resistance to Navarre was not uniform through the Catholic League and by the time of his accession, many within the League were willing to tolerate Navarre as a means of ending what had become over three decades of violence.⁴²⁹ This was not the case, however, for the English Jesuits like Persons and Allen who persisted in their resistance to monarchical rule and soon found themselves opposed not only to Protestant supporters of Elizabeth and Navarre, but Catholic monarchists as well. By the latter stages of the of the French Wars of Religion, the political alliances that the English Jesuits had

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 249.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 333.

⁴²⁹ Nicholls, *Political Thought in the French Wars of Religion*, 9.

formed with other Catholic factions in Europe were rapidly eroding and their persistence in promoting resistance theory would spell disaster for their dying Mission.

As all of these various theories and pamphlets circulated throughout France, it did not take long before they became enmeshed with the writings of the chief organizers of the English Mission. By 1584, the Mission was largely failing, and Persons and Allen had returned to France and Rome respectively to continue drumming up support for a renewal of the missionary efforts that they had now been organizing for the last decade. Yet it was in this year that Allen would publish his own treatise on politics, linking the English Mission to the everchanging world of monarchical politics.

In his *Sincere and Modest Defense of English Catholics*, the monarch whom Allen attacks is naturally Elizabeth; however, he challenges her authority by presenting Elizabeth as an unfortunate victim of circumstance and argues that it was not the Queen herself who was responsible for the arrest and execution of Catholic Englishmen, but rather the Protestant clergy that had come to power at the start of her reign.⁴³⁰ In discussing Elizabeth's status as the supreme head of the Anglican Church, Allen states that the title was "thrust upon her against her will" during the first meeting of parliament under her rule as a means of granting Elizabeth the power to alter English religious laws.⁴³¹ The fact that Elizabeth was styled "Chief Governess" rather than "Supreme Head" of the Church matters little to Allen as he further argues that Elizabeth's status as the sole governor of the Church

⁴³⁰ William Allen, *A True, Sincere and Modest Defence, of English Catholiques that Suffer for their Faith both at Home and Abrode Against a False, Seditious and Slanderous Libel Intituled; the Exectuion of Iustice in England. VVherein is Declared, Hovv Vniustlie the Protestants Doe Charge Catholiques Vvith Treason ..* Rouen, Fr. Parsons' press, 1584, 8.

⁴³¹ Ibid.

effectively meant she reigned absolute over temporal and spiritual matters in her realm. Here, Allen abandons his initial treatment of Elizabeth as an unwitting actor on the political stage and begins to critique her direct influence over English religious law. When Elizabeth issued a declaration to her clergy at her next visitation that she did not intend to reign as a spiritual sovereign, Allen notes that she worded her declaration in a manner that implied her actual intent to do so. In promising her clergy that she would exercise no greater influence over the church affairs than her father, Elizabeth gives the impression that she, at the very least, would not seek to enhance her role as head of the Church; however, Allen notes that this would still allow her to require spiritual oaths of loyalty from her subjects, which would effectively cement the queen's status as a religious authority and eliminate the influence of Rome.⁴³²

Allen proceeds to detail the harsh treatment of English Catholics who refused to accept their new head of the church and argues that such depravity stemmed from the seizure of religious authority by the English Crown. In this way, he attacks the efforts by the English government, specifically the writings of William Cecil, to encourage Protestant resistance to the Pope, remarking that such efforts granted Protestant subjects the right to "rebel and throw down their superiors, on their own head and willfulness."⁴³³ For Allen, the chief difference between Catholic and Protestant theories of resistance was that Protestant resistance efforts were meant to be organized and carried out by secular princes of Europe, while Catholic resistance was handled by spiritual authorities. He writes:

The Protestants plainly hold in all their writings and schools, and so practice in sight of all the world; that Princes may for tyranny or religion be resisted

⁴³² Allen, *A Sincere Defense of English Catholics*, 9.

⁴³³ Allen, *A Sincere Defense of English Catholics*, 121.

and deprived. We and all Catholics likewise affirm that for heresy and some other great enormities, they may be excommunicated and further censored. But the Protestants would have themselves and the subjects to rebel and throw down their superiors, on their own head willfulness; and themselves to be judges of their sovereign's deserts and religions.⁴³⁴

In response to this issue, Allen promotes the authority of the Pope in spiritual matters as well as temporal affairs, particularly the right of the Pope to depose and replace unjust monarchs with more suitable candidates.⁴³⁵ This tendency of the Popes from earlier centuries had been a major point of criticism by Protestant reformers in crafting their theory of resistance against Rome, but Allen counters by directing his audience to a series of political insurrections across Europe that were carried out by Protestant forces rather than the Pope. He reminds his audience that it was not the Pope but Protestant nobles who deposed Mary Stuart and seized her son to be brought up as a Protestant heir to the Scottish throne.⁴³⁶ Likewise, Allen levels no blame against the Pope for the outbreak of the French Wars of Religion, noting once more that:

It was not the Pope that licensed the subjects of the king Catholique, to fight so long and obstinately against their Lord and master: nor that encouraged them to deprive him of his sovereignty and ancient inheritance. It was not the Pope that hath hazarded three mighty Kings, his most Christian Majesty that now is, and his two crowned brethreñ before him, of their States; and bereaved them of many great parts and cities of their kingdom: or that went about to deprive them, even in the time of their innocence and young years.⁴³⁷

For Allen, the Pope appears as a stabilizing agent, one whose power and influence might mediate these varied conflicts were it not for the intrusive interference of Protestantism. Indeed, he goes so far as to promote the Pope's right to absolute power, which:

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 121-22.

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 123.

⁴³⁶ Ibid., 122.

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

in very truth by Christs special providence, is the greatest protection, guard, and stay, that innocent Princes and their people can have: the awe and reverend respect of his holy authority keeping thousands from rebellion and intrusion; and a number of just Princes in their empires, which else had been in diverse countries overthrown.⁴³⁸

In a later letter in 1587, Allen increases his support of papal authority in temporal politics by encouraging Europeans to resist the tyranny of their monarchs. In the course of responding to a letter from a friend, Allen encouraged his acquaintance to promote the yielding of the city of Daventry in central England to the Spanish, whose armada was only about a year away from its expected launch in the wake of Mary Stuart's execution. On the matter of revolting against Elizabeth, Allen works through a series of the queen's apparent injustices, specifically those pertaining to her involvement in the Spanish Netherlands and the revolt of Dutch Protestants against Philip II.⁴³⁹ Elizabeth had dispatched English soldiers led jointly by the Duke of Leicester and Sir Francis Drake, and Allen lambasted this move for several reasons. To start, Elizabeth held no claim to Holland, Zeeland, or any of the other regions of the Low Countries that her forces had occupied. Next, Elizabeth's armies had arrived in the Low Countries to support Dutch rebels, whom Allen argues likewise had no right to rebel against their Spanish sovereign. And finally, Allen points out that Philip had done no harm to Elizabeth or her interests, making the English incursion into the Low Countries an unjustified attack on the Spanish. Allen later remarks that this sort of action was indeed nothing new for the English as they had already lent support to rebel factions in

⁴³⁸ Ibid., 123.

⁴³⁹ William Allen, *The Copie of a Letter Vvritten by M. Doctor Allen: Concerning the Yeelding Vp of the Citie of Dauentrie Vnto His Catholike Maiestie, by Sir VWilliam Stanley Knight. VVherin is Shevved both Hovve Lavvful, Honorable and Necessarie that Action Vvas; and also that Al Others, Especiallie those of the English Nation that Detayne Anie Tovvnes, Or Other Places, in the Lovve Countries from the King Catholike are Bound, Vpon Paine of Damnation, to do the Like. before Vvhich is also Prefixed a Gentlemans Letter, that Gaue Occasion, of this Discourse* Antwerp, By Ioachim Trognæsius, 1587. *The British Library General Reference Collection* 1607/1338, 8-9.

France and mocks Elizabeth for thinking it “honorable or needful, to protect the said rebels, & to assail with the wicked traitors, and seditious persons, the oldest, faithfulest, and greatest confoederate, that ever our realm had.”⁴⁴⁰

In response to this unjust activity, Allen openly encourages not only resistance but open rebellion against Elizabeth. He concludes his letter with a brief summary:

In these wars, & all others, that may at any time fall for Religion, against Heretics, or other Infidels, every Catholic man, is bound in conscience, to inform himself, for the justice of the cause. The which when it is doubtful, or touch Religion (as is said) he ought to employ his person, & forces, by direction of such, as are virtuous, and intelligent in such cases: but specially by the general Pastor of our souls, being Christ’s vicar on earth. Whose sovereign authority, & wisdom, derived from Christ himself, may best instruct, and warrant a Christian soldier, how far, when, and where, either at home, or abroad, in civil, or foreign wars, made against the enemies, or Rebels of God’s Church, he may, and must break with his temporal sovereign, and obey God and his spiritual Superior.⁴⁴¹

He proceeds with several examples from English history in which the deposition of the monarch was justified, including the revolt of the English barons against King John and Henry Tudor’s overthrow of Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field.⁴⁴² He likewise references the removal of Jane Grey in favor of “the lawful, and most Religious Queen Mary,” and in the case of each of these rebellions, Allen finds “neither sin, nor shame, nor scandal committed.”⁴⁴³ In his estimation, the act of revolt is “lawful or unlawful, honorable or otherwise, according to the justice, or injustice of the cause, or difference of the person, from or to who, the revolt is made” and he further argues that Catholics, by virtue of their more

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 23.

⁴⁴² Ibid., 22.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

orderly and well-reasoned disposition are far better suited to judge whether or not a revolt is warranted than their Protestant counterparts.⁴⁴⁴

Along with Allen, Persons also wrote extensively in defense of Catholic resistance with his most pointed arguments coming in his *Discourse containing certain reasons why Catholics refuse to go to church*. Written and dedicated to Elizabeth, the *Discourse* opens by attacking the Protestant position that the Catholic faith openly encourages its adherents to disobey and rebel against their rulers.⁴⁴⁵ Persons points out the numerous examples of resistance promotion in the writings of such non-Catholics as John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, John Calvin, and the author of a treatise against the rule of women published during the reign of Queen Mary (presumably the work of John Knox). In each of these cases, prominent Protestant writers condone dissent against unjust rulers in varying ways as a means of removing those they judge to act in a tyrannical manner. In contrast, Persons condemns each of these statements of resistance, which the Catholic Church likewise “utterly condemn: teaching her children, together with the Apostle, true obedience to their Princes, for Conscience sake, even as unto God himself, whose room they do possess, and to whom they are bound, under the pain of mortal sin, and eternal damnation, patiently to obey, how hardly soever they deal with them in their government otherwise.”⁴⁴⁶

Much like Allen, Persons heavily implies that the chief difference between Catholics and Protestants when it comes to temporal obedience is tied to self-control. In detailing the

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ Robert Persons, *A Brief Discours Contayning Certayne Reasons Why Catholiques Refuse to Goe to Church. Written by a Learned and Vertuous Man, to a Friend of His in England. and Dedicated by I.H. to the Queenes most Excellent Maiestie* London, By Iohn Lyon i.e. Greenstreet House Press, 1580, image 8.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

reasons why English Catholics refused Elizabeth's requirement of mandatory church attendance as part of her initial religious settlement, Persons opens by presenting the refusal as a matter founded not "upon disloyalty or stubborn obstinacy, as their adversaries give it out, but upon conscience and great reason."⁴⁴⁷ He then proceeds through nine rationales for continued resistance to Elizabeth's ordinances, which ultimately present Catholic refusals as a moral obligation. Citing the example of St. Ambrose, the fourth-century bishop of Milan, Persons argues that the basis of Catholic resistance lies the desire of the English Catholic community to simultaneously avoid endangering their souls through participation in heretical church services, along with the sincere desire to direct their Protestant counterparts away from these dangerous practices.⁴⁴⁸ In the case of Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan came to power at a period in Roman history when Christianity was split across doctrinal lines between factions adhering to the Nicene Creed and those professing the ideas of the African priest Arius. Stationed in one of the late capitals of the Empire, Ambrose was close with the young emperor Valentinian II, who favored the Arian Creed much to the dismay of his chief bishop. Likewise, Persons references Ambrose's famous counterpart Augustine of Hippo and his struggle with the preaching of the Donatists, another Christian faction deemed heretical at the Council of Arles under Constantine. In each of these instances, Persons stressed that these church fathers were obligated by their own consciences to push back against the heretics surrounding them, even the emperor of the western Roman Empire, and he ties this obligation to the case of his fellow English recusants in saying, "if S. Ambrose had seen the Emperor to have gone to the Panims Temples, or S. Augustine the other to

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., 20.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., 32.

frequent the Donatists Churches, what then would they have said? What excuse then would they have received? and this is our very case.”⁴⁴⁹

But for all of Allen and Persons’ arguments pertaining to the differences between Catholic and Protestant resistance and their emphasis on spiritual obedience as the chief difference between the two theories, the changing nature of the European political theatre ultimately turned their own arguments against them. In the years that followed the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre, the prospect of toleration was severely curtailed by the renewal of war across France and (after 1576) efforts of the Catholic League to eradicate the remnants of Protestant worship in the realm. However, despite the clear ascendancy of the Catholic cause following the Massacre, its progress was hindered by a breakdown of relations within the royal family. After Catherine de Medici’s regency ended in 1563, she had continued to wield some influence over the decisions of her son, King Charles IX, probably including the handling of the initial bloodshed on St. Bartholomew’s Day.⁴⁵⁰ But in the years that followed, Charles’ relationship with his brothers began to weaken, leading some Huguenots to align themselves with the younger brothers Henry and Francis in competing bids for support.⁴⁵¹ Ultimately, all three brothers would perish between 1574 and 1589; indeed, Henry would fall victim to assassins in 1589, which opened the way for Henry of Navarre to claim the French crown. As noted above, Navarre was a highly contentious heir to the throne for several reasons. Not only was he a Protestant and the leader of Huguenot forces in the latter stages of the war, but he had also gained the support of the rising Gallican

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰ Holt, *The French Wars of Religion*, 89.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 98.

movement that championed the authority of secular monarchs over the French Church and relative papal authority. The strength of the Gallicans and their natural alliance with Navarre would ultimately undermine Jesuit political leverage in France (even though Navarre cleverly maintained his alliances by employing Jesuit confessors).⁴⁵²

Since the 1550s, Gallicanism had gradually gained strength in the French court as a result of Henry II's dispute with Rome during the Italian Wars and subsequent calls from the Jesuits for increased papal authority in the following decades during the Council of Trent naturally situated Gallicans and Jesuits as rival political factions.⁴⁵³ While Gallican support for Navarre was far from universal at the time of Francis' death, his subsequent excommunication in 1585 immediately drew the ire of Gallican elements all across France, who viewed this development as yet another attempt to interfere in temporal affairs. In response, a number of political theorists performed an about-face, reversing their previous support for resistance theory in favor Navarre's rights to claim the French throne under Salic Law. Philippe de Mornay drafted a rebuke of the excommunication bull based on testimony from Huguenot princes, while Francois Hotman's pamphlet *Brutum Fulmen* hurled insults at Pope Sixtus V and his interference in French politics.⁴⁵⁴ These works and others like them were quickly translated into English, where they found a receptive Anglican audience who had similarly weathered the excommunication of their own monarch over a decade earlier, and the soon to come assassination of Henry III in 1589 by Catholic conspirators led Huguenot thinkers to align their theories with those of the Gallicans. In the process, these

⁴⁵² Eric Nelson, *The Jesuits and the Monarchy: Catholic Reform and Political Authority in France (1590-1615)* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), 61.

⁴⁵³ J.H.M. Salmon, "Catholic Resistance Theory, Ultramontanism, and the Royalist Response, 1580-1620" in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, eds. J.H. Burns and Mark Goldie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 231.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

writers began to meld their ideas regarding resistance to political authority with Gallican objections to spiritual interference from Rome.

In turn, the same intensification of resistance to heretical secular monarchical authority developed in Jesuit circles. Indeed, the Jesuits would be implicated in the assassination attempt on Henry IV's life in 1594, generating further push back from the Gallicans.⁴⁵⁵ As the Pope began to come under fire from Huguenot supporters, Robert Persons spent much of the 1590s continuing his assault on the legitimacy of the English monarchy, culminating in the publication of perhaps his most acerbic attack on Elizabeth in the form of his *Conference about the Next Succession of England*. In utilizing roughly a dozen candidates to succeed Elizabeth, Persons called the Queen's legitimacy into question once again and argued against the primacy of primogeniture as an unquestioned tradition of succession. According to Persons, God had never intended primogeniture to dictate royal succession and directs his reader to ancient examples such as the kings of Israel and Emperors of Rome as evidence that concerns other than royal blood were regularly taken into account during succession events.⁴⁵⁶ Persons also draws upon several more recent examples, including the election of Hugh Capet to replace the extinct Carolingian line in 988 and William the Conqueror's seizure of the English crown upon claims of having been willed the throne by his cousin Edward the Confessor.⁴⁵⁷ On this latter point, Persons also points

⁴⁵⁵ Nelson, *The Jesuits and the Monarchy*, 24.

⁴⁵⁶ Robert Persons, *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crowne of Inghland Diuided into Twvo Partes. VVhere-of the First Conteyneth the Discourse of a Ciuill Lavvyer, Howv and in Vvhat Manner Propinquity of Blood is to be Preferred. and the Second the Speech of a Temporall Lavvyer, about the Particular Titles of all such as do Or may Pretende Vvithin Inghland Or Vvithout, to the Next Succession. VVhere Vnto is also Added a New & Perfect Arbor Or Genealogie of the Discents of all the Kinges and Princes of Inghland, from the Conquest Vnto this Day, Whereby each Mans Pretence is made More Plaine. Directed to the Right Honorable the Earle of Essex of Her Maiesties Priuy Councell, & of the Noble Order of the Garter. Published by R. Doleman Antwerp, By A. Conincx]* with licence, 1595, Book 1, 142.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 165-89.

out that no evidence remained to substantiate William's claim to power, which directs his reader's attention away from the Norman kings to his real focus: the Lancastrian house where Persons locates true legitimacy for English monarchs.

After working through the various lines of descent that extended from William I through his sons and the subsequent Plantagenet dynasty that emerged following Henry II's victory during the Anarchy crisis in the twelfth century, Persons arrives at his main point of contention regarding dynastic legitimacy in the form of the deposition of Richard II in 1400.⁴⁵⁸ Here, Persons once again promotes resistance theory as he explores the justification for Henry Lancaster's usurpation of Richard's throne on the grounds that Richard's rule had endangered his kingdom and thereby infringed upon his contract with his subjects, from whom Persons asserts Richard derived his right to rule.⁴⁵⁹ Persons links this justification to his genealogical survey that argued in favor of Richard II's uncle, John of Gaunt, as the legitimate line of succession that had been passed over by John's father, King Edward III, in favor of Richard.⁴⁶⁰ All of this leads to Persons' main thesis that the Lancastrian branch of the Plantagenet dynasty represents the legitimate line of succession, which naturally led to his denigration of the Yorkist branch that subsequently supplanted the Lancastrian kings in 1461. Persons offers a fervent defense of the last Lancastrian King, Henry VI, claiming that Henry "never committed any act worthy [of] deposition, whereas King Richard the Second had many ways deserved the same."⁴⁶¹ This seems to be a bit of a stretch for Persons as Henry VI barely committed any acts at all during his tumultuous reign, but Persons moves on to the

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., 60.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 61.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 94.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 96.

restoration of the Lancastrian line through Henry Tudor (a great great-grandson of John of Gaunt along a cadet line of the Lancastrian dynasty) upon his victory over the Yorkist King Richard III.

With the legitimate line restored in 1485, Persons enters the era of the Tudor monarchy that progressed through those rulers he deems legitimate (Henry VII, Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Mary I) and those he deemed ineligible to rule (Elizabeth). By the time of *the Conference's* publication, Elizabeth had yet to marry or produce a child and seemed likely to do neither in her waning years, which brought the matter of succession into popular consciousness. The most obvious candidate was Elizabeth's nephew, James VI of Scotland, now in the prime of his life and on the verge of uniting the crowns of England and Scotland. This naturally posed a problem for the recusant community as his assumption of power over the whole of Britain could potentially entrench Anglicanism in England for good and writers like Persons used every opportunity to attack James' claim to power.

In *the Conference*, Persons claims that while James was legitimately descended from Henry VII by way of the king's daughter Margaret (James' grandmother) and therefore descended from John of Gaunt, the King of Scotland unfortunately was also descended from an illegitimate line of the Lancastrian dynasty.⁴⁶² Persons quickly dismisses the legitimization of this line by Richard II, claiming that an illegitimate king could not drive parliament to recognize such an action, and firmly places James within the Yorkist camp of the Plantagenet family. Persons conveniently neglects to comment on how this rationale would not also place Henry VII (and by extension, the entire Tudor monarchy) within the Yorkist line and his arguments grow more radical as he later denies James' claim further by

⁴⁶² Ibid., 110-11.

insinuating that the King of Scots conspired for the throne through the conspiracies surrounding his mother Mary.⁴⁶³ But ultimately, Persons chief means of denying James' claim is his continual promotion of resistance to monarchical authority. In Persons' view, James' ascension would place a heretic upon the throne of England and subsequently ensure the continual presence of Protestantism in the realm. This possibility naturally posed a threat to the stability of England and Persons uses this "vvoorst and most dangerous pointe of al" as ground for resistance on the part of the nobility of both England and Scotland."⁴⁶⁴ Even before he directly attacked James' claim, Persons established religion as the chief concern for a monarch's subjects when evaluating their ruler, arguing that:

when such a man is preferred to the crown, as is evident that he will do what lyeth in him to the prejudice of them both, I mean both of Gods glory and the public wealth, as for example, if a Turk or Moor (as before I have said) or some other notorious wicked man, or tyrant, should be offered by succession or otherwise to govern among Christians, in which cases every man (no doubt) is bound to resist what he can, for that the very end and intent for which al government was first ordained, is herein manifestly impugned.⁴⁶⁵

Even as the political tides of Europe were beginning to shift as the sixteenth century drew to a close, Persons remained committed to his earlier challenge to monarchical authority as he began to call not only for resistance to Elizabeth's regime but that of her preferred successor.

Unfortunately for Persons, the rest of Europe did not uniformly share his convictions, as best seen through the rise of a new brand of political thought that would ultimately spell the end of royal support for the English Mission. Although the term "reason of state" had been in use since the 1540s, it did not enjoy wide popularity until the 1580s through the

⁴⁶³ Ibid., 117.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., 123.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., 200.

work of Giovanni Botero.⁴⁶⁶ By the end of the century, Botero's work on this intriguing new form of political philosophy had been translated into every major western European language and the rapid rate at which his main work was reprinted (six editions within fifteen years of its initial publication) indicates that this theory was widely discussed in many European courts. As to the theory itself, reason of state effectively advocated for the pursuit of the means and knowledge through which a ruler might exert stable and secure rule over a given people. While this conception of rule is clearly influenced by Machiavelli's highly pragmatic conception of power and the means by which power may be secured, reason of state steers away from promoting a ruler's focus on their own self-interest and personal security. Instead, this new philosophy centers a ruler's interests on the security of his state and highlights the prudence such a ruler must exercise to maintain stable rule. While a ruler's personal security naturally dovetails with this promotion of state security, Botero and his contemporaries were far more concerned with the security of a ruler's realm, which they routinely define as the people over whom a prince rules.⁴⁶⁷

Of similar and perhaps greater note was the work of the Fleming Justus Lipsius, whose *Six Books of Politics* enjoyed even greater popularity than Botero's as evidenced by the fifteen editions it spawned within a decade of its publication as well as its almost immediate translation into English, French, Spanish, Italian, German, Polish, and Dutch by 1604.⁴⁶⁸ As with many works of the Renaissance era, Lipsius drew heavily on ancient authorities when developing his views on contemporary politics. In this case, Plato, Aristotle,

⁴⁶⁶ Peter Burke, "Tacitism, Scepticism, and Reason of State" in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450-1700*, eds. J.H. Burns and Mark Goldie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 479.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 480.

⁴⁶⁸ Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 57.

Xenophon, Tacitus, and Seneca play key roles in Lipsius' development of a Neostoic approach to governance that promoted reason, logic, and practicality as the key virtues of a strong ruler and stable government.⁴⁶⁹ For Lipsius, a ruler's focus ought to center on the common good, which cast early modern princes as servants to their people, rather than solely as masters and overlords. While Machiavelli's thinking on the priorities of the early modern prince certainly played a role in Lipsius' conception of political rule, Neostoicism offers a more moderate approach to rule that moderates the balance between love and fear that Machiavelli famously disrupts in *The Prince* in the 1530s. While power was certainly at the heart of strong and secure governance in Lipsius' treatise, his presentation of Neostoicism directs power towards the most practical ends in order to bring order to the chaotic world that Lipsius experienced, having lived in the aftermath of the Schmalkaldic War, along the fringes of the French Wars and directly in the midst of the Eighty Year's War that drove him from Leuven to seek refuge in Antwerp in 1570.⁴⁷⁰ As such, although Stoicism was not a political theory on its own, its application to sixteenth-century politics by Lipsius facilitated a reorganization of priorities within the major courts of Catholic Europe.

Between these two emerging branches of political theory, which collectively emphasized rational thought when determining the means by which one's state and people could best be secured, continental monarchs soon began to make decisions with the end goal of stable rule in mind. Perhaps the most notable of these decisions came in 1593 when Henry of Navarre recognized that a Protestant King would never sit upon the French throne and converted to Catholicism in order to secure his crown. This effectively ended the French

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 41.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., 70.

Wars of Religion and Henry's position gained further strength following his recovery of Paris and the defection of virtually all bishops and parliamentary judges associated with the Catholic League.⁴⁷¹ While Henry's conversion was bemoaned by the Huguenot community and quite possibly Elizabeth I as well, Gallican writers celebrated what appeared to them a victory of royal authority over papal power that would soon translate into the denigration and eventual expulsion of the Jesuits from France.

In the case of Spain, resistance to Spanish rule in the Low Countries had persisted since the 1560s, and 1588 would mark the establishment of a Protestant Dutch Republic that Spain would struggle against for the remainder of the Eighty Years' War. Coupled with the defeat of the Armada, Phillip II's priorities were rapidly shifting away from foreign religious concerns in England and his support for the English Mission grew noticeably less consistent by the end of the century.

Then in 1603, Elizabeth I died, and James VI became James I of England, uniting the crowns of the Scots and English and confirming Persons' greatest fears through the new king's continued rejection of Catholicism. Whatever hopes Persons may have continued to hold for a restoration of the traditional faith or even a policy of toleration in his homeland quickly disappeared as the Gunpowder Plot led by Robert Catesby in 1605. Following the unsuccessful attempt upon James' life, Catholicism was effectively banned as renewed oaths of loyalty forced the Catholic community to reject theories of resistance against the monarchy and recognize the authority of the King over that of the Pope. In the process, James spent the remainder of his reign strengthening his position, trending more and more

⁴⁷¹ Salmon, "Catholic Resistance Theory," 233.

towards an absolutist style of rule that would continue during the reign of his son Charles with disastrous effects for England with the outbreak of civil war in 1642.

On the continent, Persons could only watch as the hopes of the recusant community for a renewal of Catholicism in England were steadily destroyed at the dawn of the seventeenth century. In the course of promoting theories of resistance against the English crown, Persons and other Jesuit writers inadvertently alienated their traditional monarchical supporters in France and Spain through their consistent promotion of papal authority in secular affairs. In France, this trend expressed itself notably through the rise of Gallicanism that further promoted the authority of the French crown in contrast to the papacy, but the divide between Catholic monarchs and Rome had already begun to widen as Jesuit resistance writing emerged and spread in the waning years of the sixteenth century.

The English Jesuits, preoccupied with the fate of Catholicism in their homeland, failed to respond effectively to the rising tide of political thought that promoted national interests as the primary concerns of contemporary rulers. While Allen and Persons continually wrote of religion as the chief issue that rulers, particularly Philip II and Henry IV, addressed over the course of their reigns, the changing political fortunes of the Spanish and French crowns, which had formerly supported the English Jesuits, led these rulers to pursue courses of action that prioritized various other matters over religion. This cost the English Mission what little waning support it had managed to maintain as the sixteenth century came to an end.

Conclusion:

In March of 1603, after forty-four years on the throne of England, Elizabeth Tudor fell ill and never recovered. Having inherited a kingdom on the verge of collapse in 1558, Elizabeth may well have been exhausted from years of political intrigue and maneuvering that ultimately took their toll on her health. By this point, the queen was also without many of her closest friends and advisors, and the melancholy that accompanied those losses soon proved too great to bear. Elizabeth died on March 24th, 1603—well after even the most conservative predictions from the recusant community at the time of her ascension. By the time of her death, Elizabeth had never married nor produced nor named an heir, which years earlier would have been precisely what recusant elements in England had hoped for. Without an heir, the Tudor house had lost its grip on political power and the throne might well be passed to a new monarch whose policies might favor the traditional faith. Given the varied nature of Elizabeth's predecessors when it came to their respective religious settlements, this expectation was well within the realm of possibility and the death of the queen was initially met with curiosity on the part of the recusant community.

But things had changed in England by 1603. Elizabeth's reign had been nearly as long as the combined terms of her siblings and father, and the continuity of her rule had allowed the Protestant position in England to further expand its influence. Elizabeth had also outlasted the varied attempts to remove her from power as detailed in chapter four and by the final years of her reign, her advisors had already concocted a succession plan as the likelihood that the queen might marry and produce an heir grew more and more remote.

Almost immediately after Elizabeth's death, her council arranged for James VI of Scotland—the son of the late Queen of Scots—to assume the throne of England and unite the crowns of both realms. As noted in chapter two, this plan was already formulated in the decade before Elizabeth's passing and the Jesuits were also aware of this potential successor as seen through Persons' writings on James' marriage prospects. In those years, the Jesuits had clung to hopes that James might somehow be married to a Spanish princess, but by 1603, the King of Scotland was every bit the Protestant monarch that recusant England feared he might be and it was clear that the religious policies that Elizabeth had pursued would be carried on by her newly ascendent cousin.

Observing this transition of power was none other than Robert Persons, who had outlived Elizabeth only to witness the continued propagation of Protestant political power in his homeland. By 1603, Persons was based mainly in Rome, whence he continued to serve as a leader of what remained of the English Mission. With the Mission virtually inert by this point, Persons initially sought reconciliation with James' regime, but whatever hopes he had for toleration for the recusant community were crushed following the failed Gunpowder Plot against James in 1605. As a result of the Reformation, Europe had now entered an era in which monarchical supremacy was no longer a God-given fact of life and assassination plots were a regular concern for the ruling class. Resistance theorists and their successors in the emerging Enlightenment movement of the seventeenth century steadily eroded the respect for traditional monarchical authorities and this shift illustrates the transformational nature of the Reformation and the Catholic response to it. In the coming centuries of the Enlightenment, the monarchies of Europe would respond to this trend with numerous theories on sovereignty and absolutist rule that enjoyed varying

degrees of success, particularly in England where Charles I would lose his head for his promotion of the divine right of kings and the Glorious Revolution would later oust James II, linking political authority with Parliament for the rest of English history.

For his part, Persons had participated in each stage of the English Mission. He was instrumental in the earliest founding of continental seminaries and played a large role in the management of the expanding network of recusant refuges. He was one of the leaders of the actual Mission into England itself and the only Jesuit leader to escape from the isle with his life in 1581. He later engaged with the conspiracies that emerged around Elizabeth and Mary, Queen of Scots, and when these plots ultimately failed, he continued to work towards preserving what was left of the Mission itself, even as the Catholic powers of Europe were rapidly losing interest in this endeavor.

As he lay dying in Rome in 1610, Persons may well have reflected on the failure of the Mission and the many factors that led to its collapse. As examined in the first half of this study, possibly the most problematic issue that the organizers of the English Mission failed to address was the varied ambitions, desires, and priorities of the many participants in the seminary network. As chapter two has shown, the Roman College was divided in its aims from the start and while other institutions on the continent did not necessarily reach such divided views on the state of religion in England, many of the men involved with the management of these schools eventually clashed with the lay participants in the Mission as their approach towards dealing with the Elizabethan regime differed markedly from the more aggressive tactics adopted by men like Thomas Morgan and Anthony Babington. After the failure of these plots to dislodge Elizabeth, Jesuits like Allen and Persons worked to maintain a united front against England in the form of treatises against Elizabeth's right to

rule, but their forays into resistance theory discourse once again clashed with lay interpretations of the right to rule, and the tendency of the Jesuits to support supreme papal authority would further alienate the Catholic powers of Europe, who had already grown weary of the devaluation of their authority by resistance theorists on both sides of the religious divide. In the end, the divergence between the various Catholic political theorists upon whom Allen and Persons often relied to justify their mission spelled the end of any serious attempts to reverse the decline of Catholicism in England by the end of the sixteenth century.

When Persons finally died in April of 1610, he likely passed while in a state of melancholy not too dissimilar from Elizabeth's. While they were both effectively polar opposites from one another with regard to station and religion, both Persons and Elizabeth died after losing virtually every close acquaintance and friend who had accompanied and assisted them through the tumult of the latter-half of the sixteenth century. By this point, Allen had been dead for sixteen years. Campion had perished during the mission to England in 1581. By 1610, Persons was very much alone after spending decades toiling to preserve the Catholic faith on the continent and the failure of his efforts likely weighed heavily on his mind as he passed away. The optimism that had accompanied his early efforts in the 1560s when Elizabeth's reign was far from secure had steadily eroded in the remainder of the century as a combination of disunity between the residents of the various continental seminaries, conflict between the Jesuit and lay proponents of the Mission, and the promotion of resistance theory and reason of state thinking ultimately fueled the collapse of Persons' efforts to restore Catholicism in England.

On April 15th, 1610, Robert Persons died at the English College in Rome. He was subsequently buried alongside Allen before the altar in the college's chapel. His epitaph, which can still be found today, represents the last remnants of the English Mission and the efforts to see Catholicism restored to prominence in the British Isles.

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