Elizabeth’s Correspondence with the Protestant Princes of the Empire,

1558-1586

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As Queen of England, Elizabeth I wrote several hundred letters to the protestant princes of the Holy Roman Empire, and over the years her correspondence with a wide variety of personalities covered a broad range of subjects.¹ She and the princes discussed concerns of practical politics such as commercial interests, births and deaths among ruling elites, and English as well as imperial affairs. They exchanged letters so regularly that they even tended on occasion to send gifts like birds for hunting. Anglo-German relations during the period, however, cannot be characterized only by the mundane minutiae of piracy complaints, babies, and hawks.² Indeed, written (and spoken) messages between Elizabeth and the princes more often concerned comparatively grave matters of religious solidarity and protestant security. The wars of religion in France and the Netherlands necessitated some degree of Anglo-German collaboration, and the implicit common confessional bond of anti-Catholicism became the foundation for an increasingly significant relationship. This chapter surveys the correspondence up to 1586 to show Elizabeth’s activity and engagement with the German princes during the very years some historians have considered a period of relative inactivity and withdrawal from mainland Europe.³

Scholars have not entirely neglected Elizabeth’s relations with the princes, but most have either considered too narrow a body of sources or have largely dismissed religious sincerity in favor of secular interests. In some respects, the sources readily at the disposal of historians in England are limited relative to those for the Netherlands, France, and Spain. Considering the state papers in The National Archives in London is illustrative enough. Digging deeper into English collections, though, yields a much larger source base for
Elizabeth’s correspondence. Research in the British Library, Oxford, Cambridge, and elsewhere adds significantly.⁴ Materials exist scattered across these repositories, so locating copies of letters from Elizabeth to the princes can be a tricky business. Thankfully, copybooks by Elizabeth’s Latin secretaries, Roger Ascham and John Wolley, reproduce many (but not all) of her letters to the Empire.⁵ The majority of originals sent from England remain in the archives of Germany and Denmark.⁶ By comparing drafts, copies, and originals from many places, while setting these letters in the context of international religio-politics, one gets a good sense of the evolving friendship and loose alliance between Elizabeth and the protestant princes.⁷

Over thirty years ago E. I. Kouri offered impressive retrieval from the archives of Germany and Scandinavia when he published two collections of Elizabeth’s letters and his doctoral thesis on Anglo-German diplomacy during the late 1560s.⁸ Kouri rightly argued for the significance of the queen’s dealings and brought forth a great variety of material, but he proffered a distinctly secular view of the age of religious wars and discounted sincerity in religious vocabulary. More to the point, he deemed Elizabeth’s engagement with the Germans a mere “prophylactic measure” against Catholicism and her concerns more attuned to commercial and political ends.⁹

Taking seriously the language of religious diplomacy in the queen’s correspondence has much to recommend it. As research on Elizabeth’s personal religion has shown, she maintained an old-fashioned sense of Protestantism that bore affinities with the Lutheranism of Philip Melanchthon; moreover, the validity of her letters as barometers of her religious conviction has been asserted convincingly, particularly those to or concerning the religion of the German princes.¹⁰ In addition, recently it has come to light that among her tutors from 1549-54 was a Lutheran trained by Melanchthon, Johannes Spithovius. Although it would overstate the case to declare Elizabeth a Lutheran, her early relationship with Spithovius
helps to explain her familiarity with the German language and provides context for her wide exposure to international Protestantism before her accession in 1558 and pan-protestant foreign policies thereafter.\textsuperscript{11} Thus, for all the shadow that may forever remain around Elizabeth’s religious tastes, it seems reasonable that she meant what she said in her letters to the protestant princes of Germany and Denmark.

When dealing with the princes, Elizabeth always had to bear in mind the differences from one region to the next in the Empire. German protestants had not only fought for their lives against Catholic powers in the Schmalkaldic war, but they also began to splinter among themselves during the 1540s and 1550s. Indeed, far from cooling off, Lutheran theological debate heated up considerably and would continue to do so for decades.\textsuperscript{12} Protestant diversity in greater Germania meant that if the queen and her policy makers were to cooperate with their imperial brethren, Elizabeth would need to understand the religio-political contours of the territories and the theological foundations of the Lutheran fracture. To a remarkable degree the English acquired such an understanding because of the queen’s informants throughout the Empire and her representatives sent into the field on diplomatic missions. Over the course of her reign, Elizabeth’s firmest and most consistent friends (if not military confederates) were in the Palatinate and Hesse, but during the first thirty years she also experienced periods of close correspondence (if not intimacy) with those in Württemberg, Denmark, Brunswick, and Saxony.\textsuperscript{13}

During her first regnal year, Elizabeth wrote many times to the princes. In part, she was responding to their wishes of good will and congratulations, but she also discussed religious affairs and the direction her Church might take. Vital to understanding her position in 1558-9 is the recognition that German protestants wanted to know if she would accept and enforce in her realm the Confession of Augsburg. In fact, her very first representative sent anywhere, Henry Killigrew, learned in December-January that to contract a league for the
defense of religion with Christopher, Duke of Württemberg, and Otto Heinrich, Elector Palatine, Elizabeth’s adherence to Augsburg would be helpful.\textsuperscript{14} She replied via Secretary Cecil that

\begin{quote}
non cogitare se discedere ab illa Christianarum Ecclesiarum mutua consensione, ad quam Augustana illa Confessio proxime videtur accedere. [she had no intention of departing from the mutual agreement of Christian Churches, which the Confession of Augsburg appeared to agree with most closely.]
\end{quote}

In her direct letters to various princes later in 1559 Elizabeth reaffirmed this sentiment, while her resident agent, Christopher Mundt, relayed news to London from the Reichstag at Augsburg. Answering overtures from the Germans to reform her Church, Elizabeth sent out a flurry of missives on July 2. Addressed to those in Saxony, Hesse, and Prussia, her messages declared her intentions. To Johann Friedrich II of Saxony-Weimar, for example, Elizabeth noted

\begin{quote}
[n]umquam prius nihil habemus, quam ut verum Dei cultum his proximis superioribus annis apud nos valde depositum rigamus [sic] denuo atque illustremus, et id quidem, quoad fieri potest, cum in doctrina fidei tum in disciplina rituum iuxta formulam Confessionis Augustanae’; furthermore, ‘[e]t propterea, nullorum principum amicitiam et confoederationem vel sequimur libentius vel sanctius amplectemur quam eorum, qui Augustanae Confessioni sese iam addici. [we hold nothing dearer than to revive and glorify the true worship of God, which in recent years has significantly declined in England, and indeed as much as possible do so not only in the doctrine of faith but also in ritual discipline according to the Confession of Augsburg; and therefore, the friendship and confederation of no princes do we either desire more willingly or embrace more venerably than that with those devoted to the Confession of Augsburg.]
\end{quote}
Also, to princes in the Palatinate, Württemberg, and Zweibrücken, the queen wrote in religious and military solidarity that they could be confident in her steadfast program of reform.\textsuperscript{17} Writing again to Saxony, she assured Johann Friedrich II of her convictions and affirmed August’s example in religion. Accordingly, she doubted not that

\begin{quote}
\textit{si vel Diabolus ipse secreto aliquo dolo, vel Ministri eius, aperta vlla vi, . . . expeditum Euangeliij cursum apud nos impedierint, quin, quorum Principum eadem iam est, in Religione colenda, animorum consensio, eorundem quoque futura sit, quoties res postulet, in eadem defendenda, communium virium parata semper et opportuna coniunctio.} [if either the Devil himself by some secret treachery, or his servants with any open force, will obstruct the free progress of the Gospel so that the current agreement of minds among the Princes on religion may no longer be, as often as need requires, that consensus is to be defended and a union of common forces always prepared and ready to act.]\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

Elizabeth’s correspondence with the princes during the first year set the tone for decades to come. She and her Church would accord with the core tenets of Augsburg (i.e. purification of doctrine and ritual, and opposition to Catholic abuses), and attempts would be made in both directions to build a strong confederation to withstand military aggression from Catholics. In the coming years the queen’s collaboration with the princes experienced spikes during acute moments of distress due to the French and Dutch wars, but a consistent foundation of correspondence maintained amicable relations during quieter times such that when crises mounted Elizabeth and her allies were often in agreement on what to do.

In 1561 the queen and the princes established a sense of unanimity that would last the reign, for it was at Naumburg that they agreed not to send any representatives to the upcoming sessions of the Council of Trent. Refusing to participate at Trent was of course in both parties’ own interests, but Elizabeth considered it fit that protestants accord among
themselves and contract a league. Seeing an opportunity to move the loose Anglo-German friendship towards a more formal confederation by responding uniformly to Trent, Elizabeth meaneth if she be provoked or summoned to send to ye Generall Counsell she will impart to [the Protestant princes] her resolution, so also hir Majesty wisheth that she may be made prive of there determinations and resolutions, so as consideryng both there cause in this poynt is but one, there answer and dealing herin may be also one.

The princes at Naumburg replied that they would not send to Trent and desired to act in unison with the queen. Furthermore, they sent her the published summary of their position, which was soon translated into English and published in London *cum gratia & priuilegio Regiae Maiestatis*.\(^{19}\)

The agreement at Naumburg was significant in its anti-Catholic stance and gesture towards military confederation. After the massacre of French protestants in March 1562, though, Elizabeth wrote again sending Mundt to her three principal allies: Friedrich III, Elector Palatine; Philip, Landgrave of Hesse; and Christopher, Duke of Württemberg.\(^{20}\) Mundt’s charge was to convey the queen’s desire to forge a league for the defense of religion, and he met with some degree of enthusiasm from the princes, especially the landgrave. Indeed, so promising seemed the confederation that Elizabeth soon sent Henry Knolles with credentials and royal letters to these and other princes. Together, Knolles and Mundt pressed the Germans in the most direct language to date that they needed to aid the Huguenots for the short term and ally with Elizabeth for the long.\(^{21}\) In response the princes acted to support the Prince of Condé in France, but they balked at a long-term and binding contract with the English lest they violate the Peace of Augsburg and provoke Catholics within the Empire. Friedrich III informed the queen that they preferred to have a mutual understanding of support for each other rather than subscribe to written articles, or as Cecil endorsed the elector’s letter, “*pro consensu animorum potius quam scriptorum*.\(^{22}\) This loose
and flexible alliance to assist those in need elsewhere endured for years to come, but as Elizabeth soon learned, her relationship with the protestant princes required frequent contact and regular correspondence.23

The next major exchanges occurred after the outbreak of conflict in the Netherlands during the late 1560s and the rekindling of the French wars in the early 1570s. As Kouri has documented, Elizabeth’s efforts to build the alliance by way of Killigrew and Mundt did not achieve the longed-for military confederation.24 In her letters to Elector Friedrich III and his second son, Duke Johann Casimir, however, one sees the queen engaging her most valuable allies in the Empire, and her attempt to broaden her confessional cadre is suggestive. She wrote to Friedrich in April 1568 lauding the duke’s services in France the previous winter, and she addressed herself directly to Johann Casimir in January 1569 to establish a more meaningful relationship.25 Building upon the previous decade of goodwill between England and the Palatinate, Elizabeth also looked to fortify her would-be alliance with the landgrave of Hesse, elector of Saxony, duke of Zweibrücken, king of Denmark, and many others. That such a wide array of personalities and ranks was to be incorporated was evident not only in Elizabeth’s letters but also in her (and Cecil’s) directives to Killigrew, who was to negotiate the league.26 Efforts to widen the pool of allies paid off, as the queen learned that the young Wilhelm of Hesse would continue the protestant policies of his father (Philip died in 1567) and join the Palatinate in bearing the standard of active religious defense in the Empire.27 A large group of potential confederates for Elizabeth was key, particularly when war in France revived. Indeed, so energetic did the Palatinate and others become that a few years later they sent a representative to Elizabeth to conclude the league. The Germans took the initiative by sending particular articles in 1573, and Elizabeth responded that she “long agoe foresaw how necessary and profitable it would bee, that some such league against the Pope of Rome and his adherentes . . . should bee entered into, by which the vnlawefull violence of the said Pope
might bee withstood.” Accordingly, she thought if the princes could come together “with ioynt consent,” “it [was] very necessary that the foresaid princes worke all possible meanes that the kings of Denmarke and Swethland may come into the league.” As events unfolded in 1574, however, there was little pressing need for military action because the Duke of Alba had left the Low Countries and Charles IX of France had died. The Anglo-German impulse to enleague immediately and for the long term may have temporarily ebbed, but soon theological conflict among protestants engulfed the Lutheran world; and if Elizabeth would have any chance in the future at maintaining and building her body of allies, she would need to act quickly.

During the late 1570s in Germany the gulf between strict Lutherans (Gnesio-Lutherans) and moderate protestants (Philippists) widened as never before, but the deep-seated and permanent fracture embodied in the Formula and later Book of Concord was the result of a process extending back at least to the 1550s. Elizabeth and her policy makers had long been informed of the divide and tried to overcome these differences in the interest of a united pan-protestant front. More immediate to the situation were the Saxon elector’s judgment against Philippists in 1574 and the death of the philippist elector Palatine in 1576. Compounding these developments among political heads, the most powerful theological minds were busying themselves with the formulation of a body of doctrine to cordon off a narrowly defined Lutheran Church from any other anti-Catholic denominations. 1577 proved to be the most important and illustrative moment not only for Elizabeth’s relationship with her German allies but also the maturation of her policy towards them.

The four embassies Elizabeth sent to Germany in 1577 built upon one another and included several personalities. They have been discussed in full elsewhere, but representative of the queen’s intentions and goals were her direct messages to the princes. Indeed, although
just the tip of the iceberg for materials relative to these missions, her letters offer keen insight on the whole enterprise.31

The queen sent her first letters to the new Elector Palatine, Ludwig VI, and his younger brother, Johann Casimir, offering condolences for the death of their father. She also introduced Philip Sidney, who was to assess the possibility of building the religious league due to “those newe fieres nowe in kindelinge” in France.32 Because the brothers were split theologically (Ludwig was a hardline Lutheran, Johann Casimir was not), Sidney was to try bringing them together and send back news from elsewhere in the Empire. It became apparent in his report to Walsingham of March 22 that Landgrave Wilhelm was inclined to assist Elizabeth in her endeavor, and in response she sent the Hessian a letter noting her appreciation of his offices. Additionally, she wrote that

\[
\text{si quo tempore periculum facere Vestra Excellentia dignabitur, & nos impensus ab eadem amari, nostramque inter nos animorum coniunctionem diutius & firmius perdurare velle vos, cumulatissime nobis persuadebimus. [if your excellency will think it fit to make an attempt at such a time of perils, and we being rather zealously moved by the same feeling, and are willing to endure our union of minds among us still further and more firmly, we shall persuade ourselves thereto most liberally.]}\]

Sidney’s mission was cut short and he returned to court for reasons unclear, but the landgrave responded to the queen by spreading the call for aid to French and Dutch protestants, and he soon became one of her central allies just as his father had been during the 1560s.34

Elizabeth pointed in the direction of union via Sidney, but her next representatives came with her intentions in no uncertain terms. Daniel Rogers carried royal letters to a wider spectrum of princes than had Sidney and was to deliver certain articles or heads of a league (\textit{capita foederis}) to be contracted between Elizabeth and the protestant princes.35 (The queen was clearly recalling the Palatine articles of 1573 and hoped their supporters’ inclination
remained steadfast.) Elizabeth instructed Rogers that – in addition to other goals – he was to persuade Johann Casimir to assemble an army to aid the Huguenots and rally other princes to the cause. As a measure of her willingness to enter and partially fund the confederation, Rogers was to present the articles to the duke and others. In short, the queen wished that all protestants (including those of the Confession of Augsburg) willing to enter a defensive alliance would suppress division on theological points, deposit money for military forces as needed, and yield support directly or indirectly (by way of diversion) to any assailed confederates. Additionally, the first princes entering the league were to draw in potentially hesitant others, such as the dukes of Saxony and Brunswick. As Daniel Rogers was working to this end in the Palatinate and Hesse, his brother Dr. John Rogers and Anthony Jenkinson were near Hamburg, where they were meeting commissioners from the Danish King, Frederik II. Elizabeth had long wanted to incorporate Frederik in her plans for protestant alliance and, having recently been encouraged to do so, sent her representatives to negotiate; more significant than trade matters in dispute, a private memorial revealed that it was the queen’s pleasure that Dr. Rogers introduce the idea of the protestant league along with the articles. Before long, Elizabeth and Frederik traded letters on the religious and military alliance, and the queen was adamant that he help to curb theological and political fracture emanating from his brother-in-law, August of Saxony. Although the Dane was not as active as the queen wished (he did not join the league), he did write to August seeking to moderate divisive attitudes and actions.

Elizabeth’s fourth and final representative to Germany in 1577 was Robert Beale, who carried letters to nine princes (plus one to the Electress Anna, August’s wife), copies of the capita foederis for each prince, and a special oration. These materials were all in the queen’s name and constituted a uniform message. As had been the case in many of her previous, Elizabeth’s letters alluded to her concerns of avoiding discord and forging alliance
but did not often go into great detail. To one of her newer allies, Landgrave Wilhelm, though, she wrote in visceral terms:

_Habent hostes nostri crebra sua consilia, conspirationes ineunt solemnes, ad nos opprimendos, easdemque sacris suis sanciunt et resanciunt, in horas, in momenta; nos interea, quasi optima nobis vellent, et non damnosa, salutem, et non interitum, segnescimus, singuli nostra curamus, imo vero parati sumus gladios nostros in viscera nostra stringere, quo facilius patetaciamus via impotenti hosti opprimendi nos._ [Our enemies hold their frequent councils and enter sacred conspiracies tending to our overthrow, and sanction repeatedly the same with their sacrifices according to time, according to impulse; we, meanwhile, as if they wished for us the best rather than worst and not (our) destruction, we become less vigilant, we tend to our own affairs, no indeed, in truth we are prepared to press our swords to our own flesh, and in such a manner rather recklessly we may well expose the way of overthrowing us to the feckless enemy.]

In addition to her written words, Elizabeth ordered Beale to convey her arguments orally in the presence of the princes themselves. The queen felt that it was a most inopportune time for a new formula of religion to be drawn up by Lutherans looking to condemn others, particularly as the matters in dispute were not of great importance and since discord among protestants would make them easier prey for the pope. She also thought that if the princes heeded the opinions of fractious theologians, controversies would only continue and moderation (as practiced at Worms in 1557, Naumburg in 1561, and Augsburg in 1566) would be abandoned. Finally, via Beale Elizabeth called for the religious league against Catholicism and noted that it was also being introduced to the Danish king. Beale traversed much ground and visited many princes with the queen’s messages, but in the end many Germans decided to follow August of Saxony. Even so, Elizabeth’s correspondence and
communications were indicative of her personal religious tastes and wider foreign policy goals. Moreover, her efforts in 1577 proved somewhat fruitful, as Landgrave Wilhelm and King Frederik became increasingly close allies of the queen and held some degree of sway with other princes wary of the Formula of Concord’s exclusivist stance. Indeed, Elizabeth soon informed Johann Casimir and Frederik of their elections to the Order of the Garter, an honor they both took as evidence of the queen’s pleasure and trust, and one that brought obligations of mutual defense.

The relationships and loose alliances established during the first two decades of the reign became fundamental during the 1580s, when it seemed all of Europe was sinking into an abyss of religious conflict. The outbreak of war within the Holy Roman Empire – coupled with the recurrence of the Dutch and French wars – was fresh evidence to Elizabeth that the time was nigh for pan-protestant solidarity, and her correspondence with the princes accordingly reflected a heightened sense of urgency. Between 1580 and 1586, Elizabeth corresponded with a wider body of particularly close allies than ever before. Despite the fractious theological and political atmosphere omnipresent in the aftermath of the Book of Concord’s publication in 1580, she expanded her confessional cadre of German princes while other hardliners began to mollify their positions.

At the height of Lutheran discord in 1580, the queen sent Daniel Rogers to Germany to urge moderation and deliver her letters to allies in the Palatinate and Hesse (of course), but also to more hesitant princes in Brunswick, Württemberg, Anhalt, and Saxony. Her letters never made it to their intended recipients because Rogers was captured by soldiers in Spanish pay, but during the next few years theologically exclusivist positions among the princes waned, providing further avenues for the queen when looking to fortify the alliance. As a measure of her continued involvement in particularly imperial affairs during the Cologne War, she collaborated with Johann Casimir to defend the conversion to Protestantism by the
Archbishop of Cologne, Gebhard Truchsess, and eventually sent material and financial support.\footnote{43}

As Elizabeth and other English policy makers understood, developments in one area of the Protestant International could complicate those in another. As war brought chaos in northwest Germany, a string of embassies from London to the Empire made the case for a stronger front with some real reason for optimism. The diplomatic efforts of Jacques de Ségu-Pardaillan on behalf of the Huguenot Henri, King of Navarre, in 1583-4 laid the groundwork for the successive missions by Thomas Bodley, Peregrine Bertie, and Horatio Palavicino. These embassies made all the familiar arguments, and although the firm confederation of forces did not come to full fruition in all particulars, Elizabeth achieved some success in gaining still more military allies and building bridges with a new generation.

Ségu’s mission was officially in Navarre’s name, but in effect it was an extension of the queen’s policy. Indeed, before heading to Germany, Ségu corresponded with Robert Beale (by now Elizabeth’s \textit{de facto} secretary for German affairs) on how best to approach the princes and received the backing of the English sovereign in the form of her letters and encouragement.\footnote{44} Ségu soon learned the lay of the land among the princes and, furthermore, that among others Julius of Brunswick was beginning to separate Lutheran theological exclusivity from pan-protestant political activity.\footnote{45} Adding Brunswick to the existing group of allies in the Palatinate, Hesse, and Denmark paved the way for the subsequent mission by Bodley, who visited Julius and Landgrave Wilhelm on his way to King Frederik of Denmark. Elizabeth’s sending Bodley in her own name to build on Ségu’s limited success was also in response to the assassination of William of Orange and the Treaty of Joinville, which in December 1584 constituted an alliance between the King of Spain and the Catholic League in France. Armed with explicit instructions on Elizabeth’s religious motivations behind the league, Bodley was to relay Elizabeth’s message that, because of the impending conspiracy
among Catholics throughout Europe, “it behoueth suche Prynces as make profession of the Gospell to awake out of their sleepe seinge soe manifeste and daungerous a storme to hange ouer their heades.” Bodley joined Georg Zolcher in a two-pronged embassy, and between them they carried the queen’s letters of April 27, 1585 to all of the most significant protestant princes.46 Using powerful language to describe the “iugi . . . pontifici” (papal yoke), “erumpente . . . flamma . . . periculi” (bursting blaze of danger), and the “euangelii hostibus” (enemies of the Gospel), Elizabeth emphasized the gravity of the current situation. The responses from Duke Julius and King Frederik demonstrated the queen’s warming relationships with Brunswick and Denmark.47 For example, Bodley relayed to the king Elizabeth’s own words that she had an “infinite desire to see him in person” and that if her journey to Denmark were as easy as his would be to England it would “be one of the first that she would make.” In response, Frederik said that he would be “very loathe to be preuented by death” to see the queen, whom “he solemnly protested, that if it were possible, he loued better then his wife.”48 Before long, the king sent a flurry of letters to twelve of his imperial brethren, encouraging them to impede Spanish efforts and ally with English; and Elizabeth further strengthened the case with her own missives shortly thereafter.49 As before, the princes’ responses varied, but they did act in moderated ways that helped the queen’s cause, such as by impeding Catholics in Spain and France from recruiting mercenaries and getting war supplies from Germany.

Peregrine Bertie, Lord Willoughby, followed in Bodley’s footsteps when he subsequently presented Elizabeth’s letter to the Danish king and continued negotiations for a league. Frederik initially vacillated on what to do further because he felt constrained by his comparatively hesitant councilors, but he felt so strongly about the queen’s letters that he kept them in his own secret coffer and, moreover, carried with him her picture encased in a tablet of gold.50 Eventually and behind his councilors’ backs, the king changed his mind and
offered his services as a mediator in France and between England and Spain; and if the French and Spanish kings opposed Danish intervention, he would close the Sound to their traffic and (if necessary) offer direct military support to their protestant adversaries, including Elizabeth. When she learned of Frederik’s new position, Elizabeth wrote again at length on plans to withstand the encroachments of Spain in the Netherlands. Indeed, she wrote that she understood

\begin{quote}
\textit{ut non solum terrestres vestras et maritimas auxiliares copias nostris vsibus paratas, sed seipsum etiam animose et fortiter in expeditionem aduersus inimicos nostros Serenitas Vestra offerre voluerit.} [that (Frederik) wished to offer not only his plentiful land and sea forces equipped for Elizabeth’s uses but also himself personally boldly and bravely in a campaign against her enemies.]
\end{quote}

Building on this success in Denmark, the queen dispatched to Germany yet another representative, Horatio Palavicino, whose instructions were specific on military forces needed by Henri of Navarre and contributions from the protestant princes. He was to consult primarily with Elizabeth’s best allies, and as it happened August of Saxony (that long-standing obstacle to pan-protestant collaboration) died leaving his son, Christian, Elector of Saxony. Without delay, Elizabeth sent additional letters to the new elector and Johann Georg, Elector of Brandenburg, in an attempt to include the financial and political giants in the eastern half of the Empire.\textsuperscript{52} The queen’s efforts here were genuine, and an increasing number of princes were warming to her ideas, but her allies old and new in Germany preferred to await the results of their own on-going embassy to the French King, Henri III. Rather than offer diplomacy in one hand and bring military forces in the other, they would only contribute to a levy for Navarre if their plea (to permit protestant worship in France) failed.\textsuperscript{53}
In the end and after considerable negotiations and calculations, a large army from Germany did not march into France in 1586, just as one had not gone into the Netherlands the year before. Yet, the failure to contract a fully articulated military league between all the imperial protestant princes and Elizabeth should not blind posterity from the queen’s sincere motivations and consistent efforts from 1558 to 1586. (Indeed, she continually widened her network of friends and allies despite irreparable fracture among protestants in the Empire, and five years later in 1591 Anglo-German collaboration led to what Palavicino called “the finest army Europe had seen for fifty years” to defend French protestants.54) During these years Elizabeth and her German friends tried many times to move their loose ideological alliance into a concrete military confederation. Most reliable were those in the Palatinate and Hesse, but at the beginning of her reign Württemberg and Saxony were not to be underestimated – nor were Brunswick and Denmark during the 1580s. Indeed, at several points princes acted individually or in small groups to assemble troops for aid in France, send cash to Dutch protestants, or impede and otherwise divert Catholic efforts in the Empire. Up to and at the beginning of the queen’s overt intervention in the Netherlands in 1585-6, she had experienced a series of highs and lows when trying to assemble a pan-protestant front with the German protestant princes. Through her letters and representatives’ orations, she did not succeed in binding together the variable body of all imperial anti-Catholics, but she did achieve some measure of unanimity with them. After all, Killigrew’s mission in winter 1558-9 was first to “win the[ir] minds” and second “touchinge a league.” In her mostly underhand efforts to support coreligionists in France and the Netherlands during the first three decades of the reign, Elizabeth could sometimes be as frustratingly non-committal as the princes; if she had been as thoroughly steadfast as she wished the Germans to be, she would have moved with greater resolution towards the Palatine articles of 1573. Nevertheless, her correspondence with the protestant princes of the Empire provided an avenue to maintain
relatively consistent and amicable relations with a diverse and fractious group, and though her communications may well have been formulaic in their political parlance, they were also sincere in their pan-Protestantism.
Notes

1 Along with various margraves, landgraves, counts, and dukes, the king of Denmark is accounted a prince of the Holy Roman Empire as he was also duke of Holstein. This chapter does not include all Scandinavia, though, since the Swedish king was not an imperial prince and was much less a factor in international causes than the Danish sovereign.

2 Negotiations for a marriage alliance were also common between Elizabeth and greater Germania. Well known are the attempts for an Austrian match, but additional attempts were made in the names of Frederik II (King of Denmark), Johann Wilhelm (Duke of Saxony-Weimar), and Adolph (Duke of Holstein-Gottorp). Susan Doran surveys some of the matches in Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth (London: Hambledon, 1990). For an exhaustive treatment of the Austrian match, see Kurt Diemer, “Die Heiratsverhandlungen zwischen Königin Elisabeth I. von England und Erzherzog Karl von Innerösterreich 1558-1570” (PhD diss., Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen, 1969). See also Carlo Bajetta’s chapter in this volume.

3 This chapter thus corroborates David Trim’s argument in “Seeking a Protestant Alliance and Liberty of Conscience on the Continent, 1558-85,” in Tudor England and its Neighbours, ed. Susan Doran and Glenn Richardson (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005), 139-77.

4 Lambeth Palace Library and Hatfield House are of great interest, but other archives like Aberdeen University Library (hereafter AUL) are also valuable.

5 Ascham’s letterbook, 1559-68, two copies, BL, Royal MS 13, B. I; Bodleian, Clarendon MS 35. Wolley’s, 1568-85, CUL, MS Dd. III. 20; cf. CUL MS Mm. I. 43.

6 Records of the German princes are in regional archives, such as those in Munich, Stuttgart, Marburg, Dresden, Berlin, Wolfenbüttel, and Hanover; records for the Danish King are in Copenhagen. Copies of Elizabeth’s letters and diplomatic materials abound in foreign archives, but citations to originals are noted below (orig.).
For reasons of space and focus, this chapter limits itself to direct correspondence between Elizabeth and the princes as well as select other papers. For a discussion incorporating all relevant materials and contextualization see David Scott Gehring, *Anglo-German Relations and the Protestant Cause: Elizabethan Foreign Policy and Pan-Protestantism* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013).


Kouri, *Elizabethan England and Europe*, 1, 3. Despite the current author’s differences of interpretation, Kouri’s work deserves wider recognition than it currently has.


13 On English intelligence, David Scott Gehring, “International Protestantism Unties ‘the Catholique Knotte’: Anglo-German Relations under Elizabeth I” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin – Madison, 2010), 82-141.

14 According to Camden, Killigrew was “privily sent to win the minds of the German princes, out of their affection to the purer religion,” and according to Killigrew’s own record he was sent “to the princes of Germany touchinge a league to be made betwene her Majestie and them.” William Camden, The History of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princess Elizabeth Late Queen of England: Selected Chapters, ed. Wallace T. MacCaffrey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 12. Killigrew’s record, BL, Lansdowne MS 106, item 32, fol. 132r (orig.). Treat with caution: Amos C. Miller, Sir Henry Killigrew: Elizabethan Soldier and Diplomat (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1963), 32-38. Pier Paolo Vergerio wrote directly to Elizabeth with reference to religious confederation and the Confession of Augsburg, January 30, 1559, Hauptstaatsarchiv (hereafter HStA) Stuttgart, Bestand A 114, Bü 4, fols. 3r-4v.

15 Although suggestive, Elizabeth’s own letters to the princes were often measured in their language of protestant alliance, lest the courier be captured and her messages “noised to the world.” Her secretaries’ and agents’ written and oral messages were more explicit regarding her intentions and accordingly should be understood as part of her correspondence. Cecil to Vergerio, March 2, 1559, HStA Stuttgart, Bestand A 114, Bü 4, 5r-6v; draft with corrections, February 6, SP 70/2/131. The crucial passage in full: “Quod attinet ad eorum Consilium, qui Confessionem Augustanam et recipi a nobis et probari cupiunt, hoc Serenissima Majestas Sua voluit me Tibi testificari: Non cogitare se discedere ab illa Christianarum Ecclesiarum

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mutua consensione, ad quam Augustana illa Confessio proxime videtur accedere”; in draft, “Quod attinet ad consilium eorum qui Confessionem Augustanam et recipi probari a nobis et nec probari cupiunt, non cog hoc illa illis breviter testificamur, non cogitamus certe discedere ab illa Christianum Ecclesiarum mutua consensione, in quam illa Augustana illa maxime nobis videtur propendere/”. Cf. Elizabeth’s comment to the Count de Feria that she wished Augsburg to be maintained in her realm, or at least something like it. Count de Feria to King Philip, April 29, 1559, CSPSp, 1, item 29. The interpretation here dissents from the opinion that the queen’s references to the Confession of Augsburg were merely a ‘political smokescreen’ to get the Lutherans to ‘shelter her diplomatically’. Norman L. Jones, Faith by Statute: Parliament and the Settlement of Religion 1559 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1982), 58.

16 Elizabeth to Johann Friedrich II, HStA Weimar, Ernestinisches Gesamtarchiv, Reg. D. 94, fol. 26r (orig.); this letter is clearly dated July 3, though all copies in SP 70/5; BL, Royal MS 13, B. I; BL Sloane MS 4144; Bodleian, Clarendon MS 35 date it July 2; CSPF, 1, item 912 offers a looser translation. Elizabeth to August, HStA Dresden, GR, Loc. 8019/11, fol. 16r (orig.). Elizabeth to Philip, Staatsarchiv (hereafter StA) Marburg, Bestand 3, Nr. 1802, fol. 20r-v. Elizabeth to Albert, BL, Royal MS 13, B. I, fol. 13v.

17 Elizabeth to Elector Friedrich, Duke Christopher, and Duke Wolfgang, October 6 (misdated November), 1559, HStA Stuttgart, Bestand A 114, Bü 4, fols. 11r-12v.

18 Elizabeth to Johann Friedrich, October 3, 1559, HStA Dresden, GR, Loc. 8267/16, fol. 1r (orig.). Elizabeth to August, November 16, 1559, BL, Royal MS 13, B. I, fol. 22r-v.

Elizabeth to August, December 3, 1559, HStA Dresden, GR, Loc. 8091/8, fol. 48r (orig.).

19 Mundt’s memorial to the princes, December 30, 1560, SP 70/21, fol. 108v. German copies of the memorial delivered February 7, 1561, HStA Dresden, GR, Loc. 10326/3, fols. 154r-5v; StA Marburg, Bestand 3, Nr. 1294. German response, February 8, 1561, HStA Dresden, GR,
Loc. 10326/3, fols. 158r-60r; StA Marburg, Bestand 3, Nr. 1294. Elizabeth’s letter of credence for Mundt, Elizabeth to Augustus, December 20, 1560, HStA Dresden, GR, Loc. 8019/11, fol. 11r (orig.). Further credentials to multiple princes, January 10, 1561, Bodleian, Clarendon MS 35, fols. 36r-38r. The German publication became *The Actes of the Ambassage Passed at the meating of the Lordes and Princes of Germany at Naumburg in Thuringe concerning the matters there moued by Pope Pious the iiiij. in the yeare of our Lord 1561 and the fyfth day of February. Item, The answere of the same Lords and Princes, geuen to the Popes Nuntio vpon the eyght day of February* (London, 1561) (STC 18412.5). See also Robert Kolb, “The German Lutheran Reaction to the Third Period of the Council of Trent,” *Lutherjahrbuch* 51 (1984): 63-95; reprinted, idem, *Luther’s Heirs Define His Legacy: Studies on Lutheran Confessionalization* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1996), Chapter V.

Elizabeth to the princes, individually, March 26, 1562, Bodleian, Clarendon MS 35, fols. 77r-78r.

Credentials of August 8, 1562 to Landgrave Philip, Folger, MS X.d. 138, item 1 (orig.); to Christopher, Duke of Württemberg, HStA Stuttgart, Bestand A, 114, Bü 4, fol. 15r; to August, Elector of Saxony, HStA Dresden, GR, Loc. 8091/8, fol. 47r (orig.); to Johann Friedrich II, Duke of Saxony-Weimar, HStA Weimar, Ernestinisches Gesamtarchiv, Reg. D. 95, fol. 20r (orig.). Copies of these and others (to the elector Palatine, duke of Zweibrücken, and margrave of Baden), Bodleian, Clarendon MS 35, fols. 86r-89r.

Friedrich to Elizabeth, December 10, 1562, SP 70/46/952 (orig.). Landgrave to Elizabeth, December 20, 1562, SP 70/47/1035 (orig.). Duke of Württemberg to Elizabeth, December 30, 1562, SP 70/47/1086 (orig.). Cf. Elizabeth’s own “animorum consensio” in her letter dated October 3, 1559 to Johann Friedrich II.

Cf. Elizabeth to the princes, individually, March 26, 1563, Bodleian, Clarendon MS 35, fols. 100v-105r.
Elizabeth to Friedrich, April 23, 1568, Bodleian, Clarendon MS 35, fols. 269v-72r. Elizabeth to Johann Casimir, January 25, 1569, printed in Kouri, *Elizabethan England and Europe*, 28-29. The duke had long been recommended to English leadership. See Mundt’s assessment of the young man of exceptional character (“*egregie indolis adolescentis*”) to Cecil, February 8, 1564, SP 70/68/113 (orig.); cf. “The State of Germany,” 1569, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 703, fol. 5r. As early as 1563 Elizabeth desired to see a portrait of Johann Casimir, who had been entertaining the idea of a marriage proposal. Robert Dudley apparently judged the portrait, and for whatever reason Elizabeth ended up looking down upon the duke for the time being. *Memoirs of his own Life, by Sir James Melville of Halhill*, ed. Thomas Thomson (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1827), 103-104.

Elizabeth to the princes, April 12, 1569, CUL, MS Dd. III. 20, fol. 6r-v; originals and copies abound in German archives. Killigrew’s instructions, January 27, 1569, BL, Harley MS 36, fols. 91r-95v; Cecil’s comments in draft with revisions for a spectrum of princes, BL, Cotton MS Galba, B. XI, fols. 281r-4v.

Elizabeth to Wilhelm, September 24, 1569, StA Marburg, Bestand 4, Abteilung f, England, Nr. 5 (orig.).

Heads of the league with Elizabeth’s response, English version, December 18 and 21, 1573, Bodleian, Tanner MS 79, fols. 11r-13r; Latin version, SP 70/129/739, 743; Scottish version, BL, Add MS 33531, fol. 131r-v. Cf. Elizabeth to Friedrich, December 22, 1573, Folger, MS X.d. 138, item 3 (orig.).

Regular news updates from Mundt and others kept the queen and her advisors informed on German theological issues. For notice early in the reign, Mundt to Cecil, February 8, 1564, SP 70/68/113 (orig.).

Kolb, “Dynamics of Party Conflict.” Koch, “Striving for the Union.”

32 Elizabeth to the brothers Palatine, individually, January 13, 1577, CUL, MS Dd. III. 20, fols. 132v-33v; cf. Elizabeth to Johann Casimir, February 8, 1577, StA Marburg, Bestand 4, Abteilung f, Frankreich 522 (copy sent to the landgrave). Sidney’s instructions, February 7, 1577, BL, Harley MS 36, fols. 232r-5r. Sidney also travelled to the emperor offering similar condolences.

33 Sidney to Walsingham, March 22, 1577, BL, Cotton MS Galba, B. XI, fols. 356r-7v. Elizabeth to Wilhelm, April 11, 1577, StA Marburg, Bestand 4, Abteilung i, Nr. 82, fol. 49r-v (orig.).


35 Memorial and instructions for Rogers, late June, 1577, BL, Cotton MS Galba, C. VI, fols. 148v-50r. Elizabeth to Johann Casimir, with abstract of Rogers’ instructions, June 23, 1577, SP 70/145/1258. Elizabeth to Johann, June 28, 1577, SP 70/145/1264. The queen’s letters to Johann Casimir, the landgrave, the margrave of Brandenburg, August of Saxony, and Duke Julius of Brunswick; the memorials for Rogers; his commission and safe conduct; and the capita foederis in Walsingham’s letterbook, SP 104/163, fols. 9r-22v.

36 Heads of a league, SP 70/145/1276; Rogers’s copy, BL, Harley MS 1582, fol. 163r.

37 Languet to Sidney, June 14, 1577, The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet, ed. Steuart A. Pears (London: Pickering, 1845), 107-108. Rogers to Walsingham,
July 24, 1577, SP 83/1, fols. 32r-34v (orig.). Rogers’s instructions and private memorial, with commission and *capita foederis*, July 16 and 20, 1577, BL, Add MS 48001, fols. 67r-69v.

38 Frederik to Elizabeth, September 12, 1577, BL, Additional MS 48001, fols. 56r-61v.

Elizabeth to Frederik, October 29, 1577, Rigsarkivet, TKUA, SD, England, AI, 1; copy enclosed in Frederik to August, January 2, 1578, HStA Dresden, GR, Loc. 10309/2, fols. 1r-4r (orig.). Frederik to Elizabeth, December 24, 1577, Rigsarkivet, TKUA, AD, Kopibog Latina, 7, 198-202.

39 Elizabeth’s letters dated August 21, 1577, to the princes, individually, BL, Add MS 48128, fols. 151r-5v (Beale’s copies). Originals: to Brunswick, HStA Hannover, Cal. Br. 21, Nr. 362, fol. 1r; to Hesse, StA Marburg, Bestand 4, Abteilung i, Nr. 82, fol. 51r-v; to Saxony, HStA Dresden, GR, Loc. 7278/1, fols. 241r-v, 244r; to Württemberg, HStA Stuttgart, Bestand A, 114, Bü 8. Copies of the *capita foederis* and Beale’s oration in these and other German archives.

40 News of additional Germans cautious of Concordian theologies included princes in Zweibrücken, Anhalt, Brandenburg, Holstein, Pomerania, and elsewhere. For examples of Beale’s informants, see: Languet to Beale, February 15, 1581, BL, Egerton MS 1693, fol. 46r (orig); Wilhelm to Beale, January 15, 1581, AUL, MS 1009, bundle 2, item 2 (orig.); Glauburg to Beale, March 26, 1581, AUL, MS 1009, bundle 2, item 24 (orig.). See also, “A discourse of the king of Denmark’s proceedings with the duke of Saxony,” September 1579, SP 81/1/79.

41 See Walsingham’s observations on Johann Casimir’s entertainment in London, February 3 and 20, 1579, SP 83/11, fols. 110r, 135r (orig.). Elizabeth to Frederik, August 6 and 11, 1580, Rigsarkivet, TKUA, SD, England, AII, 9 (orig.). Materials on Frederik’s installation, BL, Cotton MS Titus, C. VII, fols. 218r-37v; BL, Additional MS 48001, fols. 78r-99v; Rigsarkivet, TKUA, SD, England, AI, 1 and AII, 9; SP 75/1.
Rogers’s instructions, September 7, 1580, BL, Harley MS 36, fols. 250r-2r. Rogers to Wilson, October 1, 1580, BL, Cotton MS Galba, C. VII, fol. 80r-v (orig.).

Elizabeth to Johann Casimir, February 1, Johann Casimir to Walsingham and Elizabeth, individually, April 20, Beutterich to Walsingham, June 14, 1583, SP 81/2/37, 63-64, 71 (draft and orig.). Elizabeth to Johann Casimir, July 3, 1583, CUL, MS Dd. III. 20, fols. 196r-7v; cf. Elizabeth to Johann Casimir, July 1, 1583, Briefe des Pfalzgrafen Johann Casimir mit verwandten Schriftstücken, 3, ed. Friedrich von Bezold (Munich: Rieger, 1903), 677.

Advertisements from Cologne, July 3, 1583, SP 101/27, fol. 23r-v. Cobham to Walsingham, August 4, 1583, SP 78/10, fols. 20r-23r (orig.). Elizabeth to Davison, December 29, 1584, BL, Harley MS 285, fol. 122r (orig.).

Ségur to Beale, September 1583, BL, Add MS 48149, fol. 146r-v. Heads of the instructions for Ségur, July 15, 1583, BL, Cotton MS Galba, D. XIII, fol. 107r. Elizabeth to Augustus, October 6, 1583, HStA Dresden, GR, Loc. 9304/7, fol. 73r (orig.), with copy of Elizabeth’s to the elector of Brandenburg, fol. 20r-v. Elizabeth to Frederik, October 6, 1583, Rigsarkivet, TKUA, SD, England, AI, 1 (orig.). The queen also wrote to Ludwig, Elector Palatine; Johann Casimir, Count Palatine; Ludwig, Duke of Württemberg; Julius, Duke of Brunswick; and Wilhelm, Landgrave of Hesse. CUL, MS Dd. III. 20, fols. 198v-205v.

Julius’s reply to Ségur, as forwarded to the English agent in the Netherlands, William Herle, December 20, 1583, Bodleian, Rawlinson MS C. 424, fols. 196r-9v. Ségur also secured the support of Joachim Friedrich, Administrator of Magdeburg, and Joachim Ernst, Prince of Anhalt.

Instructions for Bodley, April 27, 1585, BL, Cotton MS Titus, F. XII, fols. 46r-49r; quotation from Elizabeth’s specific instructions, April 17, 1585, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. III, fols. 202v. Elizabeth to Frederik, Rigsarkivet, TKUA, SD, England, AI, 1 (orig.); to Wilhelm, StA Marburg, Bestand 4, Abteilung f, Frankreich, 620 (orig.); to August, HStA
Dresden, GR, Loc. 7280, fols. 18r-19r (orig.); to Ludwig, with gold foil/glitter limning intact on date and first capital of each paragraph, HStA Stuttgart, Bestand A 63, Bü 64, fols. 28r-29r (orig.). Copies of these and others, CUL, MS Dd. III. 20, fols. 223r-9r.

47 Bodley to Walsingham, May 31, 1585, SP 81/3/74 (orig.). Bodley to Burghley(?), May 31, 1585, BL, Cotton MS Galba, D. IX, fol. 47r-v (orig.).

48 Bodley to Walsingham, June 28, SP 75/1/55 (orig.).

49 Frederik to the princes, individually, July 4, 1585, Rigsarkivet, TKUA, AD, Ausländische Registrant, 42, fols. 379r-85r; English copies, SP 75/1/56-57. Elizabeth to the princes, individually, July 13, 1585, CUL, MS Dd. III. 20, fols. 236r-41v.

50 Elizabeth to Frederik, November 5, 1585, Rigsarkivet, TKUA, SD, England, AII, 10 (orig.). Willoughby to Walsingham, December 15, 1585, SP 75/1/71 (orig.).

51 Materials on Willoughby’s negotiation, December 1585, SP 75/1/69, 73-75. Elizabeth to Frederik, January 3, 1586, Rigsarkivet, TKUA, SD, England, AI, 1 (orig.).


53 Palavicino to Burghley and Walsingham, June 15, 1586, with his oration and Christian’s response to Elizabeth, June 13, 1586, SP 81/4/56-57 (orig.). Palavicino’s oration before Johann Georg, with response to Elizabeth, June 20, 1586, SLUB, Handschrift G13, fols. 230v-7r. Palavicino to Walsingham, June 26, 1586, SP 81/4/61 (orig.). Palavicino to Walsingham(?), July 3, 1586, BL, Harley MS 1582, fol. 103r.

54 On Elizabeth’s later efforts and relative success, Gehring, *Anglo-German Relations*, 113-45 (notes at 200-11).