INTRODUCTION: ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND AND THE GERMAN QUESTION

[A]t my very first entrance upon the task, an intricate difficulty did in a manner wholly discourage me. For I lighted upon great piles and heaps of papers and writings of all sorts, reasonably well digested indeed in respect of the times, but in regard of the variety of the arguments very much confused. In searching and turning over whereof whilst I laboured till I sweat again, covered all over with dust, to gather fit matter together ... I procured all the helps I possibly could for writing it.[1]

For the bringing of which into this homely and rough-hewen shape, which here thou seest, what restleße nights, what painefull dayes, what heat, what cold I haue indured; how many long & chargeable iourneys I haue traueiled; how many famous libraries I haue searched into; what varietie of ancient and modern writers I haue perused; what a number of old records, patents, priuileges, letters, &c. I haue redeemed from obscuritie and perishing; into how manifold acquaintance I haue entred; what expenses I haue not spared; and yet what faire opportunities of priuate gaine, preferment, and ease I haue neglected.[2]

William Camden and Richard Hakluyt had gifts for overstatement. Addressing English history at the end of Elizabeth's reign, they confronted enormous stores public and private of government rolls, documents and materials of all sorts. In many ways they succeeded in assembling these papers into comprehensible narratives explaining how and why events occurred. Modern historians of Elizabethan England find themselves burdened with the same task of understanding the evidence and producing sensible analyses. The nature and amount of sources depend upon the questions asked. For the German question, that source base is considerable. Camden and Hakluyt have our sympathies.

The German Question

Central to the German question is how the Elizabethan regime would engage their confessional brethren in the Holy Roman Empire and overcome the problems confronted in that relationship. Indeed, what was that relationship to be?

For English leadership at the start of the reign in 1558, England's prior association with German Protestants was a good but dated start. Henry VIII's dealings with Lutherans of the Schmalkaldic League experienced auspicious beginnings during the 1530s only to become mired in conservatism and stagnated in diplomacy the next decade.[3] Following Mary's death and Elizabeth's accession, the confessional considerations of English Protestants were driven by both domestic concerns such as the Settlement of Religion and England's position vis-à-vis other Protestant groups. For Elizabeth, her Principal Secretary, William Cecil, and others with relevant experience, the most sensible and favoured group of potential allies were in the Empire. For religious and political reasons, during the 1550s English and German Protestants looked to each other for their individual and mutual security in an increasingly tense environment. From the English perspective, having the Protestant Princes of Germany as associates added an international and historical pedigree to England's religious identity, and the Princes could be called upon as diplomatic and military allies to oppose Catholic powers in France and Spain. From the German perspective, an anti-Catholic English sovereign and Settlement offered the same assurances, with the added element that England would serve as the political head of a Protestant league.

The relationship between Elizabethan England and Germany is not a new field of study. In fact, the German question is an old one. Camden long ago recognized the confessional alliance, and ever since scholars have acknowledged many of the efforts and correspondence. Among historians of England, very much or very little has been made of the sources. Depending upon biases and points of origin, the Elizabethan Church and State have been seen as either wholeheartedly in line with Lutheran tenets or entirely of their own creation and therefore unique. A third line of argument has stressed neither confessional pole and ignored the German question, proffering instead the Calvinist character of Elizabethan England.[4]

Overstatement for English affinity with Lutheranism is easy: Elizabeth forged a 'middle way' between Rome and Geneva, and that *via media* ran through the Wittenberg of Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon. It follows, then, that the Elizabethan Church assumed German theological positions and retained the trappings of Lutheran ceremonies and appearances. In this light, Elizabeth's motivations for engaging the Protestant Princes are clear, but the issue becomes more complex when the ambiguities of English doctrinal positions are evaluated and the difficulties of the Queen's relationship with the Germans uncovered. After all, Elizabeth was not a Lutheran; nor was William Cecil. Indeed, there were few outright Lutherans in England during this period.[5]

A similarly exaggerated case is the insularity of the Church and State: Henry VIII's break from Rome set a path for Anglicanism to forge its own identity, and as Supreme Governor Elizabeth followed in her father's footsteps by choosing

none of the European Protestant options and reached her own 'English' Settlement. Accordingly, the Queen wanted nothing to do with politically dangerous Calvinists in Geneva and little regarded Lutherans of Germany. This conception of the Church and State is correct insofar as it ascertains the peculiar situation, but driving a deep wedge between England and the mainland has become a dated argument. The web of Elizabethan connections, theological and diplomatic, to Protestants elsewhere has shown otherwise.[6]

More recently, deeper investigations of Tudor and early Stuart England consider the role played by Protestants in Swiss lands and suggest a wide-ranging and general consensus on Calvinist theological and social teachings.[7] Elizabethan Puritanism was a product of the returning Marian exiles, it is supposed, and English correspondence with divines like Heinrich Bullinger and Theodore Beza ensured the continuation of a Swiss model for English doctrinal positions and austerity. Certainly, many later leaders of the Elizabethan Church were of a Genevan persuasion and used Jean Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, while several counsellors and formulators of policy advocated thoroughgoing militancy and intervention on behalf of the French and Dutch Reformed communities. This interpretation rightly acknowledges the Elizabethan debt to the European mainland but privileges the Swiss Churches' connections to the detriment of any German element.[8]

If variety of opinion on England's domestic character has muddied the waters, the Germans' role in foreign affairs has been left relatively clear. In Anglophone scholarship, studies of Elizabethan foreign policy have largely discounted or omitted entirely the Protestant Princes of Germany. Although some work highlights particular individuals or moments, none assesses the spectrum of Protestantism in the Empire and the Queen's dealings for the length of her reign. The neglect of the German question is partially due to the proportional dominance of French, Spanish and Dutch affairs in the English State Papers. Without doubt, Elizabeth needed to address the concerns of France and the Spanish Netherlands because of their geographical proximity to English shores. Accordingly, the sources readily available are as voluminous as they are instructive of domestic impulses and forces within the English State. By comparison, because of the seemingly deficient sources on Germany in London archives, German affairs are often assumed to be of corresponding insignificance.[9]

German scholarship on the Princes' relations with England, however, has in some ways moved forward. Using regional archives and English sources in the printed calendars of the nineteenth century, a few studies evaluate Elizabeth's engagement with particular leaders or during key episodes. Sound research in Dresden, for example, documents her political relations with Elector Augustus of Saxony. Augustus, the richest and most powerful Protestant Prince, was a symbolic and practical centrepiece for many of the Queen's plans for a confes-

sional alliance, but he was also hesitant to commit to anything that might affect the shaky balance in the Empire. Similarly good work illustrates the wide-ranging foreign relations of the Count Palatine, Johann Casimir, as he was one of the most active and enthusiastic military allies of the English during the wars of religion in France and the Netherlands. More recent efforts in Germany have shown the wider repercussions of Lutheran theological disputes and how different areas received divisive ideas coming from theologians such as Jakob Andreae.[10] Studies in German, therefore, shed light on Elizabethan relations with Protestant Germany and signal the promise of research in both British and German archives.

The Argument

The following examination of Elizabethan England's relationship with the Protestant Princes of the Holy Roman Empire is the widest and deepest to date. Incorporating English and German sources and scholarship, the analysis recounts some familiar events and personalities, but it also brings to light materials previously unknown or underutilized. The cumulative weight of evidence in manuscript and print brings England and Reformation Germany closer than ever before. The argument is both simple and complex. On one hand, the State and Church of England were firmly attached to the Protestant sensibilities and anti-Catholicism of their confessional allies in Germany and Denmark; this domestic affinity produced an openness in foreign policy to collaborate with the Princes on matters of international significance. On the other hand, the story does not rest solely upon affinity and openness.

The Elizabethan regime's attraction to and connections with Protestant Germania were consistent from beginning to end, but they also encountered a series of difficulties coming from both sides of the Channel. During the early years of the reign, many English leaders had had some of the same experiences as Protestants in Germany. The highs of evangelical hopes during the 1530s and 1540s, in England as in Germany, were dashed by the political realities and counterattacks of the 1550s. This common history was part of a budding sense of international Protestantism, a process and character that reached full flower decades later. By 1570, it was clear an Anglo-German alliance would be complicated due to English hesitation and the varying personalities and political situations in the Empire. Princes in the Palatinate, Hesse, Denmark and elsewhere, for example, worked with English leadership significantly more than those in Saxony, Brandenburg and Württemberg. Differences on foreign policy among the Princes were partially due to their relative proximities to conflicts in France and the Netherlands, but additional difficulties (or opportunities) could arise after the passing of one generation to the next in these lands. During the later 1570s, theological disputes among German Protestants solidified existing

divides between rivalling factions. The result, the Formula of Concord, formally condemned those outside the 'orthodox' Lutheran Church and represented a watershed in Anglo-German relations, but it did not shut the door to the historic friendship. During the 1580s and early 1590s, Elizabethan England and the Protestant Princes came together again and again. Towards the end of the reign, rather than theological or political obstacles breaking the Anglo-German axis, biological necessities for all intents and purposes ended the story in 1592. Within a span of twelve months, a generation of German Protestant leaders died, leaving heirs too young and states too fragile to continue working with Elizabeth for causes greater than themselves. Over the reign, fundamental to continuous collaboration with allies in Germany and Denmark was the English desire for maintaining a lasting friendship and mutual identity opposed to their Catholic adversaries.

Diversity among Protestants in the Empire presented problems for the Elizabethan regime, but such snags were temporary and eventually overcome. English experience with Germans was not limited to simple or occasional correspondence. Indeed, a wide variety of contacts in and ambassadors to greater Germania kept the Queen and her counsellors well informed on developments and how she could adapt to changing situations. Intelligence from place to place varied in importance, but the patterns emerging from English operations in the Empire demonstrated Elizabeth's commitment to her allies. In fact, just as openness during the early years led to the formulation of a policy to incorporate Protestant Germania, the implementation of that policy revealed religious sensibilities at both the Queen's Court and the Princes'. As such, in each land the domestic situations and foreign policies were in some ways mirrors. For the modern observer the German question demonstrates England's broad and sustained interest in maintaining a working alliance with international Protestantism in general, and it offers an entry point for assessing English collaboration with Lutherans and the later German Reformed.

Chapter 1 investigates the early connections between the nascent regime and Protestant Germany. For the domestic situation, it suggests the Settlement of Religion is best understood in a long chronological context and highlights the deliberate ambiguity that represented the Queen's open-door policy towards Protestants of mainland Europe. In foreign affairs, chapter 1 details Elizabeth's earliest marital and diplomatic interactions with the Lutherans of Germany and Denmark. Chapters 2 to 5 move chronologically from the early 1560s to the early 1590s. Showing highs and lows from year to year (in some cases, day to day), they chart the underlying consistency behind English policy towards the Protestants of the Empire. The titular theme of these chapters, *Foedus et Fractio*, implies the great challenge for the period: implementing the Queen's policy for the Anglo-German alliance, despite the potential for permanent division among those opposed to Roman Catholicism.

Sources and Terms

The sources of early modern England and its foreign policy are generally known, but for the German question they have been insufficiently excavated. The well-worn series of edited calendars and collections of state papers are key starting points, but they are just that, starting rather than endpoints.[11] The calendars summarize documents from repositories in London and elsewhere, but these synopses are uneven in detail and sometimes omit sections relevant to the present study. To overcome these deficiencies, recourse to original manuscripts has been the *modus operandi* whenever possible. Detailed examination of every original is sometimes unnecessary or impractical, so this study occasionally relies on editions and abstracts.

In addition to printed calendars, edited collections and the state papers behind them, additional stores supply an array of sources. Further researches have shed light into multiple collections in the British Library, Hatfield House, Lambeth Palace Library, university libraries in Oxford, Cambridge and Aberdeen, and in the United States. These materials illuminate English relations with Germany and include diplomatic instructions, royal out-letters to foreign powers, theological treatises and personal memoranda. Manuscripts are the core source base, but printed items are brought forward to demonstrate the wider significance of German affairs in England. For reasons of space, citations to printed editions have been omitted where preference is given to the original.[12]

To avoid an overly Anglocentric perspective, this study incorporates materials from Germany and Denmark. Apart from Kouri's broad research over three decades ago, it represents the first major investigation of these regional archives for Elizabethan studies.[13] The narrative here corroborates Kouri's efforts by documenting the depth of sources and potential boon to historians of early modern Europe. As more recent works by McEntegart and Lockhart show, many archives in Germany and Denmark contain records relevant to British affairs and wider European developments. Among these repositories, the most valuable are in Munich, Stuttgart, Dresden, Hannover, Marburg, Wolfenbüttel, Berlin-Dahlem and Copenhagen; as will be found in the notes, the materials in these archives help to fill in gaps left by even the deepest research in British collections. As with printed editions of British sources, previous German historians collected and edited much of the correspondence by key German Princes.[14] The same practice has been adopted for these items, where investigation of the original manuscripts has been made when possible, and preference in the notes has been afforded to originals over other versions. Finally, as with English sources, German printed works are cited where relevant and show how widely publicized British affairs became during the period.

Several terms and ideas recur throughout the following chapters and deserve clarification. 'Conservative Protestantism' is understood as a mindset or tendency to identify with older forms of English Protestantism that bore loose affinities and/or cooperated with reform movements in Saxony, Hesse and elsewhere in Germany. 'Conservative' is sometimes associated with 'traditional', 'old-fashioned' or 'classic' Protestant ideas of the 1530s and 1540s fundamentally opposed to Catholicism and looking to reform its abuses and theological interpretations. These convictions also harboured a sense of moderation due to lessons learned during the Radical and early Swiss Reformations. Lutheran ideas of reform were technically little 'older' than Zwinglian ones, but among English Protestants the early relative dominance of the German Reformation is distinguished from the later Swiss ascendancy among the Marian exiles and later English theologians. Moderate notions of reform included the ceremonial observance of the Eucharist with the laity in both kinds and with the preservation of a sense (if ambiguous) of the Real Presence of Christ. These ideas resonated with the practices of English Protestants during the Reformation under Henry VIII and were distinct from the Swiss practices of using a simple table for the Eucharist, which was understood in a purely symbolic or figurative manner. Also, 'conservative' or 'old-fashioned' Protestants held a view of the Church's structure retaining the hierarchy of bishops (i.e. *episcopi*, overseers, or as the Lutherans had it, superintendents) without recognizing the bishop of Rome as the supreme Archbishop. Ecclesiological conservation differed from those advocating a less hierarchical system (as in Calvin's Geneva and Presbyterian Scotland). Finally, Protestants of a conservative mindset, particularly during Elizabeth's early reign, appreciated the troubled history of religious war, persecution and the associated political compromises of the 1540s and 1550s. Indeed, English Protestants who survived the years under Mary (1553–8) as Nicodemites, such as William Cecil, Matthew Parker, Roger Ascham and the Queen, could identify with the accommodations made by Philip Melanchthon and other Lutherans during the Interim (1548–55). At a deeper level, some who privately held rather Swiss ideas in their personal correspondence embraced in their public proceedings a pan-Protestant attitude of cooperation and solidarity with Lutherans of a more conservative mould. Of this ilk were John Jewel, Henry Killigrew and Daniel Rogers. In sum, conservative Protestants looked to conserve and maintain many original goals of the Reformation, but without advancing so far as to jeopardize existing ecclesiastical structures or alienate a populace that had weathered the storm of the mid-Tudor years.

'International Protestantism' reflects the idea that the movement was not limited to any one nation but rather occurred in many places, and that across Europe those opposed to Catholicism had a common religious identity. Within those territories, some Protestants were uniquely concerned with their own

religio-political situations, while others saw their conflicts as integral to a wider pan-European phenomenon. Many leaders – English, German or otherwise – were of this international mindset in that they recognized geopolitical boundaries from one country to the next, but they also understood individual wars as components of a greater struggle. A related but more concrete entity, the 'Protestant International' refers to the body of political organizers and religious heads who collaborated with each other during periods of relative peace and moved into action by mobilizing forces at other times. Among English leaders, Queen Elizabeth, Secretary Cecil and the ambassador-cum-Clerk of the Privy Council Robert Beale were representative of those appreciating differences from one conflict to the next but seeing each country as a potential political domino, which, if it fell, could lead to the toppling of the whole collaborative. Of Protestant leadership in the Empire, at various times those in Württemberg, Zweibrücken, Hesse, Brunswick and Denmark were of this outlook – of distinct yet inseparable causes.

'International Protestantism' and 'Protestant International' are not the same as 'international Calvinism' or 'Calvinist internationalism', because the former reflect the *multi*national political impact, whereas the latter emphasize a *trans*national ideology superseding political boundaries. Calvinist and Reformed communities understood their battles in France, the Netherlands and elsewhere as indicators of a singular, apocalyptic cosmic struggle. Accordingly, their transnational organization was considered an ideological imperative, not just a gesture of religious sympathy and fear of dominoes.[15] Leaders of a transnational bent in England included Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and Francis Walsingham, Principal Secretary. In the Empire, political heads in the Palatinate, Saxony and Anhalt could sometimes be characterized as such.

'The Protestant cause' is borrowed from the study of the same name and similarly acknowledged as the general convictions and activities of those opposed to Roman Catholicism and its political manifestations.[16] The 'cause' was manifested in several ways, ranging from political or diplomatic manoeuvrings to dissuade others from recognizing the decrees of the Council of Trent, to military organization to defend those under assault. In its international reifications, the 'cause' was most conspicuous in the language used by those advocating firm and consistent intervention across political boundaries. The term, however, applies no less to an intranational context, where it could reflect the desire to settle confessional issues within one's own domestic policy. During the reign of Elizabeth, the 'cause' was most apparent on the international level across Britain, France and the Low Countries, while on the national level it also appeared within the Holy Roman Empire.

Clarification of terms relative to German affairs may help readers coming from a predominantly British background. 'Germany' is technically a modern political entity, but the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation incorpo-

rated and self-identified as such from 1512 forward. Along these lines but on a wider scale, 'Germania' is accounted as the regions spreading from modern Austria and German-speaking Switzerland to Denmark and Sweden. Within these lands, the dominant religious confession among Protestants was the Confession of Augsburg, which was usually understood as the original (1530) or *Variata* version (1540). Differences between the editions created heated debates, but in general when the Confession arose in English and German correspondence, the original of 1530 was described variously as '*Augustana*', 'Augsburg', 'Auspurch', 'Auspurg' or 'Augspurg'. In later Reformation Germany, the two major branches of the Lutheran Church were those claiming to be the true or strict followers of Luther, 'Gnesio-Lutherans', and those adhering to a flexible path of religio-political realism *à la* Philip Melanchthon, 'Philippists'.[17] Elizabethan leadership understood these divisions and sought to reconcile their differences along with the development during the 1560s and 1570s of a third branch, the 'Reformed'. Centred at Heidelberg, the Reformed Church of the Palatinate created its own catechism and model of austerity, and certainly nodded in the direction of Calvin's Geneva, but it remained within the legal confines of the Confession of Augsburg (and therefore the Peace of Augsburg recognizing Lutheranism as a permitted religion in the Empire). Some may assert the Palatinate was the prime example of a Calvinist territory just as they apply 'Calvinist' to the Netherlands, but the term is less applicable to the situation during the sixteenth century than the seventeenth.[18] Though affinities existed between Heidelberg and Geneva or Zürich, the Palatinate of the 1560s to 1590s was still within *Augustana* and recognized as such by Elizabeth and her counsellors. As will be seen, English intelligence was surprisingly regular and accurate when evaluating the territories and personalities of greater Germania.

Assessing the Holy Roman Empire

In 1667 Samuel von Pufendorf called Germany 'an irregular body and like some mis-shapen monster' relative to other European states. As he saw it, the Empire was a confederate system of sovereign states with one superior prince, had both strengths and weaknesses, and constituted a confusing amalgam of territories and administrative systems. More recently a variety of descriptions has emerged, but as Wilson points out, the Empire was sometimes a monarchy while at others a federation or hierarchy, and these ideas were not mutually exclusive.[19] Regardless of its constitutional development, Germany's key institutions, territories and figureheads are clear. With remarkable accuracy, Elizabethan foreign policy leaders knew how the Empire worked (and how it did not) and kept up with changing situations due to intelligence from ambassadors and resident agents.

To remain informed, the Elizabethan regime almost always had representatives at Imperial meetings, *Reichstage*, and often had agents at lesser conferences like the *Kurfürstentag*, *Fürstentag*, *Kreisetag* and *Deputationstag*.[20] From these meetings the English learned the shifting balances between the Emperor and Princes, and among the Princes themselves. Over the course of the sixteenth century, regional Princes acted with an increasing degree of political and religious autonomy, and accordingly Elizabeth's policy balanced its priorities between honouring the dignity of the Habsburg Emperors and addressing the practicalities of the Princes. Their relative autonomy stemmed from the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, when the principle of *cuius regio eius religio* ensured each ruler could decide religious policy in his territories.[21] The Princes' ability to determine the confession of each region, sometimes without restraint from the Emperor,[22] led to a complicated political and religious geography that could change from one generation to the next. Remaining current on such developments could be a difficult task, but the English diplomatic corps kept its leadership informed.

One particularly illuminating analysis suffices to show the regime's deep knowledge of the Empire. During Henry Killigrew's mission to Germany in 1569 to garner aid for Huguenots and forge a Protestant league, an unnamed attendant assembled an impressive description of the state of Germany. His report included assessments of the political and religious situations in the Palatinate, Saxony and elsewhere. Although the author did not travel to all the Circles (*Kreise*, or administrative subunits) of the Empire, he amassed information that could act as a handbook for later English legations.[23] More suggestive is the report's detail on leaders in each area and their contribution (in foot and horse) for all necessary affairs. The account amounted to a 'Who's Who' for sixteenth-century Germany. The evaluation of Imperial territories was highly relevant to English interests because of the potential support they might lend to Protestants elsewhere, but the finer focus of the English regime was usually on particular territories like Saxony, the Palatinate, Hesse and Holstein (of which the King of Denmark was Duke). Elizabeth sometimes looked to additional lands like Württemberg, Zweibrücken and Brunswick when friendly Princes like Dukes Christopher, Wolfgang and Julius were in power, but generational shifts in these less powerful places often meant a reliance on those in Saxony and the Palatinate.[24]

Saxony was perennially important to Elizabethan diplomacy in Germany. Because of its natural resources and trade, the Saxon economy was consistently strong and provided the Elector with tax revenues envied by other Princes and scorned by his subjects. Indeed, as noted in 1569 by Killigrew's attendant, Elector Augustus was '[o]f all the princes in Germany ... the richest and of the greatest power both of men & money', but he was 'hated of his nobilitie and gentlemen' for his commercial practices and continual acquisition of lands from Johann Friedrich II, Duke of Saxony and rival claimant to the Electorship. So

hated was Augustus that five years earlier Secretary Cecil learned he had been attacked by his own keeper of the forests (though the circumstances remain unclear).[25] Despite a tetchy relationship with his subjects, the Elector of Saxony exercised powerful influence over other Protestant Princes, particularly the Elector of Brandenburg, and was accordingly a key figure to involve in an alliance against Catholic aggression.[26]

The Palatinate was equally if not more important to English efforts. The most dominant German Princes in close proximity to conflicts in France and the Netherlands, Palatine powers were crucial allies of Elizabeth for nearly the entire reign. Elector Friedrich III was a confessional stalwart for the Protestant cause, and it should be stressed that although the reformation of his lands tilted toward Swiss interpretations of theology and ritual, it could still be understood to adhere in a broad sense to the Confession of Augsburg. Electoral Heidelberg could accordingly act as a mediator between Saxony and Switzerland, or as Zuck puts it, '[t]he Heidelberg approach sought to maintain continuity between the heart of Lutheranism and the heart of Calvinism'.[27]

Protestant rulers in Hesse, Denmark and elsewhere were similarly important to Elizabeth's German policy. Accordingly, the English regime remained well informed on political and religious developments in these lands. Also significant, however, were reports sent back to London regarding Catholic powers in the Empire. Indeed, the Queen, Cecil and others learned of the personalities among Catholics like the Duke of Bavaria, Albert V, and the Holy Roman Emperors Ferdinand I, Maximilian II and Rudolf II.[28] Duke Albert's involvement in Catholic conspiracies against Protestantism was clear to Cecil, who noted in the mid-1560s that a league between the Pope, Emperor, Duke of Bavaria and others aimed to depose the Protestant Electors Friedrich and Augustus, and in their places put Archdukes Ferdinand and Charles. Cecil gathered the inventor of the league was the Cardinal of Lorraine and Albert was appointed commander of Catholic forces to overtake Protestant lands.[29] Albert's successor, Wilhelm V, was similarly esteemed to be the most significant Catholic Prince apart from the Emperor, and his role in the Cologne War of the 1580s showed the English he was 'the greatest prince in all Germany of that faccion'.[30] The tense anxiety of the period drove Catholics into thinking Protestants were the ones confederating to advance their own agendas. It was certainly true that Bavaria was in correspondence with a wide circle of international Catholics, so Protestant conspiracy theorists were partially right, but in some measure these contacts were anticipatory of possible threat and, therefore, expressions of cyclical nervousness common to both sides.[31]

Because of these complex overlapping territories and rivalries, foreign powers had to account for political and religious differences across the Empire. These distinctions, especially between the Rhenish Palatinate and Saxony, were some-

times so great that no power, not even the Emperor, could bring them together on all points. English policy, rather than blindly approach the Protestant Princes as a single or uniform group, recognized the variances and adjusted accordingly. Kouri claims Elizabeth's rather incoherent policy was oversimplified and had little understanding of the Princes' religious positions, but the assertion is confounded by evidence showing, in fact, there was no shortage of information on the Princes and their counsellors.[32] When her German policy was put into effect, English representatives appreciated the theological viewpoints from place to place. Furthermore, even if a tendency to address German Protestants as a single group did exist, that body was understood to be anti-Catholic at its core but with a measure of variation similar to the spectrum of opinion between conservative Protestants and zealous Puritans in England.[33] When Elizabeth sent her agents into the field, they had up-to-date intelligence on the most approachable German Protestant powers and consulted with her best friends, who then widened the cause among their compatriots. As will be seen, this became the standard practice for Elizabethan diplomacy to Germany. Within these territories, the Queen's allies worked with English diplomats who sent back dispatches including itemized lists and character evaluations of additional Princes and their counsellors.[34]

In part, Pufendorf was right. The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation was neither a straightforward monarchy as in England nor a republic as in Venice. Rather, it was a loose confederation of territories stretching from Italy to Denmark and from Bohemia to Burgundy. Throughout these lands powerful families competed for political dominance and religious autonomy. In addition to territorial and dynastic contingencies, the age of confessionalization added a new ideological component that crossed traditional boundaries. No longer could onlookers view German regional conflicts in complete isolation; no longer did English policy treat the Empire as a single body. To every Imperial Diet or other major meeting of the Protestant Princes, Elizabeth and her Council either sent her own representatives or called upon resident agents to relay news and confer with allies.[35] Thus, for all the complexity, Elizabethan leadership had a solid and evolving base of intelligence. Then and now, compiling this information – from official embassies, private correspondence and printed material – was surely a momentous task and showed the Empire was an intricate entity, but (*pace* Pufendorf) it was no monster.

In foreign policy studies of Elizabethan England most attention is afforded to the usual suspects in France, Spain and the Netherlands. The edition of two treatises on the state of France during the 1580s is evidence of the success of English intelligence in this regard.[36] Sixteenth-century knowledge of foreign affairs was of course not as standardized as modern information gathering, but the Elizabethan regime started out with a good deal of experienced statesmen in 1558 and continued to learn the contours of German religio-politics as they evolved.

Moreover, chief formulators of policy knew their political equivalents in foreign Courts and corresponded accordingly. Representatives like Robert Beale held important contacts all over the Empire, and the surviving records show their activity and effect. Over the course of the reign, an ever-increasing amount of detail on the Empire began to flow into English printed publications. Indeed, by 1600 facts formerly reserved for the Queen and Council in 1560 entered the public domain so more might know the state of Germany.[37]

As it happened, affairs in Germany would get still more complicated in the coming years, such that none might keep up. In 1615, shortly before the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War, Maurice, Landgrave of Hesse, wrote:

> I am very much afraid that the states of the Empire, quarrelling fiercely among themselves, may start a fatal conflagration embracing not only themselves ... but also all those countries that are in one way or another connected with Germany. All this will undoubtedly produce the most dangerous consequences, bringing about the total collapse and unavoidable alteration in the present state of Germany. And it may also perhaps affect some other states.[38]

A similar statement had been expressed decades before. Just five years into Elizabeth's reign, English observation of the deteriorating situation in the north-west of the Empire called to mind an old analogy that applied as much to the unity of the German Princes as to the solidarity of the Protestant International:

> [I]f the Imperiall Princes will iustly consider ... the example of that wise man whoe being sicke a little before his death commaunded all his sonnes into his presence, and had prepared a bundle of weake stickes. ffirst deliuered to the eldest sonne to take the bundle, who willed him to breake, which hee prooued [tried] to doe but he was not able; Then he commaunded the second sonne to take the bundle, who likewise prooued and was not able; and soe all the rest of his sonnes one after another, and none of them of himselfe was able to breake this bundle. Then the ffather did cause the bandes of this bundle to be broken and deliuered to euery one of his sonnes a sticke, and bade them prooue if they could breake them, which before his face euery one broke his sticke, of it selfe being weake, was not soe strong as the bundle bound togeather.[39]

This was a wise tale to consider not just in 1564. The notion of binding together to withstand the enemy would be at the heart of Elizabeth's efforts to build an Anglo-German confederation for decades to come.