

Rhea Hebert

January 1, 2010

Bodley's Decision to Retire and the Politics of England in the 1590s

In the Introduction to the 1926 printed edition of Thomas Bodley's letters to Thomas James, G. W. Wheeler asserts that "[Bodley's career] is too well known to need to be recapitulated in a brief summary of the events with which they deal" (ix).¹ However, Wheeler goes on to state that "[b]elonging as the Letters do entirely to his later years...they treat of the affairs of the Library to the almost complete exclusion of other matters" (ix). Unfortunately, the details of these 'other matters' are rather lacking. This paper attempts to examine some of the earlier life of Thomas Bodley, particularly his movements in the 1590s prior to his retirement to Oxford. Before founding the Bodleian Bodley was a member of Queen Elizabeth's foreign service, reporting to Francis Walsingham and others from France, the German states, and the Low Countries. It appears that Bodley was considered for the position of Secretary of State; when this position did not go to Bodley, he seems to have withdrawn from public service. Questions remain, however: did Bodley truly expect to become Secretary? Was his involvement with William and Robert Cecil beneficial or detrimental to this object? Perhaps both at different times? Did his involvement with Robert Devereaux or Francis Bacon affect his chances of becoming Secretary? Was the climate of 'faction' in the 1590s Court a contributing factor to Bodley's complete retirement? While I cannot hope to answer all (or perhaps any) of these questions, this paper will examine what evidence remains in order to construct a more nuanced understanding of 'Bodley before the Bodleian.'²

¹ . G. W. Wheeler, ed. *Letters of Sir Thomas Bodley to Thomas James, First Keeper of the Bodleian Library*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926.

² . I take this line from the title of a lecture by W. H. Clennell, afterwards published in the *Bodleian Library Record*. I am indebted to Mr. Clennell for his encouragement on this topic and for the copy of his article.

Before delving farther into this paper's primary topic, I will give a brief summary of the major players and the climate of Court (and wider) culture in England in the late 1580s and 1590s, when Bodley was active as an ambassador. Perhaps the most important figures surrounding Bodley during his service were William Cecil, later Baron Burghley, Francis Walsingham, Robert Cecil, son to William, and Robert Devereaux, the second Earl of Essex. These four men were, respectively, Lord High Treasurer (1572-1598), Principal Secretary, Principal Secretary, and Privy Council member. All four were members of the Privy Council, but Essex held no other high office, but was a military commander and popular figure. Francis Walsingham died in 1590, leaving the post of Secretary of State vacant. I will focus on this vacancy as a significant position for Bodley and one for which he was nominated. A fifth personage, who did not survive into the 1590s, should be mentioned. Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, was a favorite of the Queen and a Privy Council member. He died in 1588. According to John Guy the deaths of Leicester and Walsingham "altered the balance of opinion and politics in the Privy Council" (2).³ Guy goes on to suggest that Elizabeth's "'second reign,'" (4) beginning around 1586, was characterized by her "declin[ing] to fill vacancies in the Privy Council" (4); this was also the case for state offices such as the Secretariat. As the position of Secretary of State was left vacant into the 1590s, it became a point of honor for competing courtiers who hoped to display their influence by having their nominee appointed. Bodley was such a nominee, at times supported by both Essex and the Cecils. Another point of this paper, however, is to examine the rivalries between Essex and the Cecils in order to clarify the possible effects such double patronage might have had on Bodley, both politically, and personally.

³ . Guy, John, ed. *The reign of Elizabeth I: Court and culture in the last decade*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

The climate of the 1590s has recently come under scrutiny from scholars who are skeptical about the status quo arguments made by earlier historians. John Guy's edited volume on the last decade of Elizabeth's reign includes articles on patronage, the realities of faction (often taken as granted), war weariness, aging councilors, and literary production. The volume attempts to address univocal assumptions about either a 'Golden Age' or a state of complete collapse under pressure from factions. Instead, the contributors are interested in the nuances of change that mark the 1590s as different from the earlier policies and activities of the Queen and her Council. Paul Hammer also points to the 1590s as a time of near-"disastrous consequences" (2) because of the "convictions" (2)⁴ of men like Essex. Hammer's focus is the wars of Elizabeth, but he echoes other recent scholars in singling out the 1590s as a particularly fraught time for England, both internally and externally (especially in Ireland). Hammer's earlier work on the Earl of Essex is prefaced by the author's remarks that early in his graduate work he hoped to avoid the "dark and labyrinthine" (xi)⁵ 1590s. Hammer's work on Essex is a starting point for this work: an attempt to untangle (however little) the knot of contradiction between ideas of cooperation between rivals and open factionalism. Both ideas have appeared in Elizabethan scholarship, with cooperation being privileged recently. However, Hammer suggests that "the most conspicuous new element in the politics of the 1590s was the emergence of a controversial royal favourite, the earl of Essex," (*Polarisation* 3) but he also points out that typical portraits of Essex are "awkward" (*Polarisation* 5) and due for a reevaluation. Hammer also points to

⁴ . Hammer, Paul E. J. *Elizabeth's Wars: War, Government and Society in Tudor England, 1544-1604*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

⁵ . Hammer, Paul E. J. *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, 1585-1597*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Wallace MacCaffrey's work *War and Politics 1588-1603*⁶ as one of the only full-length discussions of the later reign. This work is divided by geography, with a section devoted to the States General (Netherlands) which is pertinent to this paper especially, since Bodley was employed as an ambassador to the States General in the late 1580s and much of the 1590s. Finally, moving away from domestic or internal politics (even when 'about' foreign matters) R. B. Wernham (1980)⁷ and Susan Doran (2000)⁸ examine foreign policy under Elizabeth in pamphlet-length (75-100 pages) treatments. Bodley's career is impacted by both of these foci—as a diplomat, he was frequently overseas. Continued advancement, however, would have placed him back in England at Court. It is thus necessary to attempt to determine where in these studies his case falls. In each of these works, Bodley, when mentioned, is rarely given more than a passing note. Unfortunately, there seems to be consensus that he was merely a victim (or always outside of) the Essex-Cecil frictions. I find this off-hand treatment facile and hope to find more evidence for Bodley's retirement than this.

While England enjoyed relative stability in this period (though prosperity would be an overstatement in light of poor harvests, an unsettled succession, and trade difficulties) other European nations were not as settled. The Netherlands (where Bodley served as ambassador) was continuing to prosecute wars with Spain; the Spanish empire encompassed the Low Countries until their revolt. Despite current popular depictions of a neutered Spain following the failure of the 1588 armada, Spain was still a distinct threat to the English and remained a focus of foreign policy until the end of Elizabeth's reign. The traditional English rivalry with France was relatively calm, but trade disputes were not uncommon. Finally, the unsettled succession of

⁶ . MacCaffrey, Wallace T. *Elizabeth I: War and Politics, 1588-1603*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992.

⁷ . Wernham, R. B. *The Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy 1558-1603*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980.

⁸ . Doran, Susan. *Elizabeth I and Foreign Policy 1558-1603*. Lancaster Pamphlets. London: Routledge, 2000.

England was keenly watched by other European monarchs. The assumption that Elizabeth would die sooner rather than later led to anxiety within England, but also required that European leaders be ready with any claimants they wished to support. In 1590 Elizabeth was 57 and was entering the 33rd year of her reign. She would reign for another 13 years but refused during that time to name a successor or allow the succession to be debated by Parliament.

Bodley as Diplomat

It is clear from both primary and secondary sources that Bodley was a well-respected diplomat with the education⁹ necessary to support the diverse requirements of ambassadors at this time. According to Robert Lacey Bodley was “a worthy man” (168)¹⁰; this assessment is echoed by Alan Haynes, who writes that Bodley was “a candidate of high quality” (43)¹¹. In his own time Bodley was also seen as fit for high office: both the Cecils and the Earl of Essex promoted him for Secretary of State. In 1598 and later, after effectively leaving public service, Bodley was still requested as an ambassador to France (1598 and 1601) and the United Provinces (Netherlands) (1602).¹² As early as 1588, while still an ambassador in France, Queen Elizabeth was confident enough in Bodley’s abilities to send him unaccompanied with a letter for the French king. In this letter she assures the king that Bodley is “confidant et sage et secret.”¹³

However, even with this trust of the monarch and high officials, Bodley’s work in the Netherlands especially was “novel and difficult” (MacCaffrey 251). The English were assisting the Dutch with their military efforts against Spain (and at times France) but did not want to

⁹ . See W. H. Clennell “Bodley before the Bodleian” for a more detailed account of Bodley’s education at Oxford and later scholarship, especially in languages.

¹⁰ . Lacey, Robert. *Robert Earl of Essex*. New York: Atheneum, 1971.

¹¹ . Haynes, Alan. *Robert Cecil Early of Salisbury, 1563-1612: Servant of Two Sovereigns*. London: Peter Owens, 1989.

¹² . W. H. Clennell also states that Bodley was supported by Robert Cecil in 1604 for Secretary of State—I have not found another mention of this particular office being offered.

¹³ . Calendar of State Papers, foreign series, 1586-1588, p. 611 May 11, 1588 “The Queen to the French King” (in French).

become too entangled or lose authority as the Dutch strengthened their own position.¹⁴ There are some indications that Bodley preferred to be recalled and return to England. In 1595 his assistant Gilpin replaced him as “an ordinary ambassador,” (MacCaffrey 271) rather than an English representative in the States General.¹⁵ In July of that same year Bodley wrote to Lord Burghley (William Cecil) to petition for “leisure to recover [his] own” substance (estates and income) or to be “discharged altogether, which I chiefly desire”¹⁶ from foreign assignments. Bodley’s petition does not necessarily indicate a desire to leave public service, but rather to be closer to home in order to more carefully manage his affairs. While his career abroad continued until 1597, the climate at Court was such that returning home earlier may not have offered a much smoother career than one abroad.

Factions and the post of Secretary of State

In 1590 Francis Walsingham, Secretary of State, died, leaving the post vacant. This was a (perhaps *the* most) powerful official position and there was much contention as to the filling of it. According to Conyers Read “[w]e may perhaps presume that [Burghley] expected Elizabeth to proceed at once to the appointment of Walsingham’s successor” (464)¹⁷. Unfortunately for those courtiers and councilors involved, Elizabeth did not quickly choose a new Secretary. While some of the burden of the office fell onto Lord Burghley, who had been Secretary earlier in the reign, and while many suspected that his son, Robert Cecil would be appointed, the post continued vacant for six years. In the meantime, according to P. M. Handover Cecil “might not

¹⁴ . Wallace MacCaffrey describes the changing situation in the Netherlands in *Elizabeth I: War and Politics, 1588-1603*. See especially chapters 13 and 14.

¹⁵ . Although generally positive about Bodley, MacCaffrey does mention here that Bodley was “more rigid” (271) than Gilpin, but does not give an explanation as to this characterization.

¹⁶ . Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1595-1597, p. 71 July 11 1595 “Thos. Bodley to Lord Burghley”

¹⁷ . Read, Conyers. *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960.

have the title of Principal Secretary, [but] he was doing the work” (126)¹⁸. As this situation continued the official appointment of a Secretary “remained a fundamental focus of rivalry between Essex and the Cecils” (Hammer *Polarisation* 352). As Hammer makes clear, however, the sometimes overwhelming picture of Essex and the Cecils as leaders of opposed Court factions (fighting over the Secretariat in this case) is something of a *trompe l’oeil*:

[T]he identification of factions with clientage obscures, rather than illuminates, the nature of politics in the 1590s. Furthermore, the association of faction with the common workings of the patronage system threatens to distort our understanding of patronage itself. ‘Faction,’ like ‘puritan,’ was a distinctly pejorative term in the late sixteenth century. It was something which one accused one’s bitter adversaries of embracing. Elizabethans talked and wrote incessantly about the vital importance of obtaining patronage, and about the practical means of doing so. From this constant outpouring, it is clear that they meant something by ‘faction’ which was quite different from any normal expression of the client-patron relationship. *Polarisation* 68

Thus, the idea that Bodley was simply caught in the swirl of Court factions is somewhat difficult to take at face value. If Hammer’s assessment is accurate, then Bodley’s stated desire, in his Autobiography, to avoid becoming a “partaker in any publique faction” (49)¹⁹ suggests that Bodley was not necessarily acknowledging that factions existed but that he, as a person seeking patronage, could be the catalyst for tensions that would allow factions to arise. There is the

¹⁸ . Handover, P. M. *The Second Cecil: The Rise to Power 1563-1604 of Sir Robert Cecil, later first Earl of Salisbury*. Great Britain: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1959.

¹⁹ . This quote, and all subsequent quotes of Bodley’s autobiography are from *The Autobiography of Sir Thomas Bodley* edited by William Clennell. Clennell, William, ed. *The Autobiography of Sir Thomas Bodley*. Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2006.

suggestion here that factions are, like patronage, a bottom up enterprise. They are not formed by leaders but spring up when those seeking patrons cling to one patron to the exclusion of another and seek to sabotage the patronage of others. In order to avoid the charge of faction, Bodley may have decided to “strategically retire,”²⁰ as Katherine Duncan-Jones suggests. However, given that one of the major figures in the fight over the Secretariat was the Earl of Essex, it may have been more than political acumen that led Bodley to “retire me from the Court” (Bodley 49).

Politics of Survival

While many scholars mention Bodley when discussing the careers of Robert Cecil and Robert Devereux (the Earl of Essex), most have only an off-hand assessment of Bodley to offer.²¹ Reading Bodley’s autobiography and contemporary documents and after investigating the climate in England following the Essex revolt, it is surprising that no historians suggest that there might be a reason even greater than politics in play in Bodley’s decision to ‘retire.’ As Clennell points out in his introduction to the autobiography, Bodley is writing a “self-justification” (23) that was “clearly intended to justify Bodley’s life in the eyes of posterity” (27). Clennell also points out that the pertinent passage here (Bodley’s brief narrative on his decision to retire) is “concerned to redeem the author’s honour” (20). Clennell, quoting Wooden, seems to accept that Bodley was genuinely politically spent and desired to go “back to the university” (23). In light of other evidence, I suggest that Bodley may have had such a desire, but that the desire was not immune to concerns over personal safety and even survival.

Also in his introduction to Bodley, Clennell states that “[t]here is no mention of the *Life* until shortly after his [Bodley’s] death” (26). Clennell is here interested in the intended audience

²⁰ . Quoted in Clennell “Bodley before the Bodleian” (380).

²¹ . At least one recent biography of William Cecil, however, spends no time on the contentious maneuverings for the post—Stephen Alford treats the Secretaryship as merely an apprenticeship for Robert Cecil and thus implies that there was no question that Robert Cecil would eventually gain the office.

for the *Life*, but it is unclear to me what he means by “no mention.” The Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, mentions an “[e]xtract from the life of Sir Thos. Bodley, written with his own hand, comprising the period from his birth in 1544 to 1597. [2 ½ pages, damaged. Copy.]” (569). The year is given as 1597?. This precedes Clennell’s dating by 16 years²²; there is no indication given of the contents of this “life,” so it may be that Clennell is merely highlighting that response to the *Life* is unknown until after Bodley’s death. I find it significant, however, that a copy of an earlier life was available to members of the Court even before the end of Elizabeth’s reign. If Clennell’s contextualization of the writing of the *Life* is true, that Bodley was writing *ex post facto* to “reclaim his reputation for honour in public life” (11), what are we to make of a much earlier mention of a life being available? Clennell rightly points out that much of Bodley’s focus seems to be on 1596, but he seems too easily to accept that factionalism was responsible for the different careers that failed during this time and those that did not. I am suggesting that 1609 would be an odd year, even in light of the death of a close friend, for Bodley to begin writing such a justification. Instead, it makes sense that the events of 1596 may have spurred Bodley to begin any rehabilitation deemed expedient. Without access to this life mentioned in the CSPD I can only speculate about alternative motivations, but I will draw on some interesting coincidences to suggest that Bodley may have begun shoring up his reputation even before he completely retired from public life.

Outside of Court offices, politics and war were exerting great pressure on the courtiers and councilors in the mid-1590s. Hammer suggests that “during 1596 and 1597 [Essex’s] querulous tone increasingly began to submerge his positive attributes” (*Polarisation* 403). As a major locus of political power Essex’s “tone” was able to influence policy, not always in positive

²² . This precedes Clennell’s dating of a record by 16 years and his date for writing by 12 years. Clennell gives the date of writing as 1609 (9 and 12).

ways. Many historians attribute (directly or indirectly) Bodley's failure to be named Secretary of State to Essex's overly-insistent tone with the Queen and other councilors, especially the Cecils.²³ Already in 1596/7 Essex was displaying erratic behaviors that "threw considerable doubt on [his] mental stability" (Lacey 200).²⁴ In the ensuing years of the 1590s Essex continued to be erratic in his behavior and to meet opposition from the Queen on various enterprises—she was displeased with his prosecution of affairs in Ireland and Essex was frequently banned from Court.²⁵ By 1601 Essex was no longer in disgrace; he was in open rebellion. His "rush job" (Lacey 286) of a rebellion failed to win the support of the people of London and as the Privy Council sent troops to meet Essex and his men "[t]he total lack of forethought and planning of the whole enterprise was becoming desperately obvious" (Lacey 291). Once Essex accepted that his rebellion had failed and that he would be arrested, he "set about preparing for arrest, emptying his private drawers and chests and burning all the documents relating to the conspiracy. Destroying the evidence would to some extent protect his friends" (295). It is these friends that interest me here. Essex was arrested, tried, convicted, and executed for treason. In the course of examining various men allied with Essex, the Council examined Henry Cuffe.

Cuffe's examination is intriguing because it mentions Bodley. In his confession, Cuffe includes the men intended for offices under the reforms Essex hoped to effect. Included in this list is a mention that "after Sir Robert Cecill should be removed [as Secretary], Sir Henry Nevill

²³ . For examples of this interpretation and nuances, see: Algernon Cecil, P. M. Handover, Conyers Read, Alan Raynes, and Paul E. J. Hammer *Polarisation*.

²⁴ . It is worth noting here that Lacey posits syphilis as a possible reason for the Earl's decline; however, this assertion must be met with a certain amount of skepticism, since Lacey goes on to suggest (without references) that "Henry VIII probably died of syphilis...and his daughter Elizabeth may well have suffered from an inherited strain of the disease" (201). Without reference to contemporary sources or other historians, we must take this with a large grain of salt. In the case of Essex, Lacey mentions that his source for speculation is the contemporary rumors, recorded by Roderigo Lopez, physician to the Queen who also treated Essex.

²⁵ . See Lacey and Hammer.

or Mr. Bodley should be secretarie, but Mr. Bodley was not holden so fit” (90)²⁶. Lacey reads these lines to suggest that “even Essex’s supporters acknowledged that he [Bodley] was not up to the efforts and initiative such an office demanded (168).” This seems to read a great deal into the text that is not present. However, even more telling is the list of other men mentioned by Cuffe: Sir Henry Neville, Sir William Russell, Sir Charles Danvers, and the Earl of Southampton. Of these, two were convicted of treason and one executed. The Earl of Southampton was condemned to death but this sentence was commuted and on the accession of James VI of Scotland as James I of England, the Earl was released. Danvers was not so lucky: he died a traitor’s death, involving hanging, disemboweling, etc. Sir Henry Neville took pains to extricate himself from the taint of treason: “[Neville] thinks the actions of the Earl traitorous and cannot justify them... [t]he declaration of Sir Hen. Neville, of 2 March, is in substance true.”²⁷ He also reported further plotting after Essex’s arrest to the Privy Council.²⁸ Thus he was aware enough of his danger in associating with the Earl and took measures to shield himself from the consequences of being implicated in the rebellion.²⁹

It is tempting to suggest that Thomas Bodley was equally (if not more) aware of the danger posed by a too-close connection with Essex. If, as seems likely, Bodley began to write his autobiography in 1597, it is possible to speculate that he was not only attempting to justify his career abroad, but also attempting to safeguard his position in England. Not only rhetorically, but also through actions, Bodley made it clear that he was emphatically not

²⁶ . Bruce, John, ed. *Correspondence of King James VI. Of Scotland with Sir Robert Cecil and others in England, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth; with an appendix containing papers illustrative of transactions between King James and Robert Earl of Essex. Principally published for the first time from manuscripts of the most Hon. The Marquis of Salisbury, K. G. preserved at Hatfield.* Camden Society, 1860.

²⁷ . CSPD 1601-1603 p. 2.

²⁸ . See Lacey 298 for details on the plotting of Captain Thomas Lee and Neville’s response.

²⁹ . Handover suggests, though, that this mention by Cuffe was enough to “cut short” “Neville’s promising diplomatic career” (232).

interested in allying himself with Essex. In making this point, he extricated himself from the entire Court structure. This may well have been nothing more than succumbing to the lure of scholastic retirement. It may just as easily have been a response to the vicissitudes of Court life.

It is important to remember that Bodley spent many years abroad in warring regions. The Netherlands were in active revolt against Spain and there was certainly more danger there than in London. While there is no evidence that Bodley was in personal danger, he certainly would have seen the effects of war on those around him. At various times, though not involved in military ventures, Bodley was charged with securing supplies for troops and for relaying messages that involved the movement and placement of troops. In transmitting these orders, Bodley was in contact with the military commanders in the Netherlands campaigns and may have seen troops leaving the relative safety of the Hague (and other political centers) and then returning. Certainly this closeness to war and political upheaval could have mirrored earlier experiences. Bodley's family was in exile during the reign of Mary I and would have been in imminent danger had they remained in England. In the autobiography Bodley states that his father was "cruelly threatened, and so narrowly observed" (37) in England that his only recourse was to remove to Germany. Certainly Bodley seems to have been cognizant of the real dangers inherent in religious and political difference.

Conclusion

Once Bodley returned to England from the Netherlands in 1597 he seems to have begun to lay the groundwork for his retirement. At this point he certainly wrote some part of an autobiographical account of himself. If this account centered on his most recent years of service, it may have been intended initially as a way of maintaining his reputation at Court. His main points of emphasis in the *Life* are his loyalty (evidenced by his intention to continue to

“conceale” (41) the purpose of his mission to the French King in 1588) and his honor. Of course, by 1609 he also could write with hindsight about the dangers of remaining at Court, but I am supposing that he was not unaware of these dangers as early as his 1597 writing. Writing an apology of this kind, as Francis Bacon later did³⁰, could keep him eligible for offices while also maintaining his intention to refrain from inciting or benefitting from factions. If this was Bodley’s intention, he succeeded, being offered offices after 1597 by both Elizabeth and James. What is telling to me is not that he retired but that he seems to have navigated the 1590s in such a way as to be offered offices after he left Court and after Essex fell from favor. By the time Clennell has fixed the writing of the *Life* (1609) the political climate of England had changed yet again. James I was on the throne and had done much to rehabilitate the Earl of Essex and his followers. Bodley had the opportunity to return to public service but he declined. In 1597 he could not have written about these opportunities in any autobiographies. By 1609 he had the luxury of hindsight allowing him to assert both that he was “addicted to employ [him] selfe, and all [his] cares, in the publique service of the State” (40) and yet (honorably) decided to “take [his] full farewell of State employments” (49).

It is tempting to engage in comparisons between Bodley and his contemporaries (or rivals, as some historians have it), especially the Cecils. The Cecils are certainly seen as servants of the State, however much they may also have profited personally from their numerous positions. Their dogged devotion to governmental affairs is often considered evidence of the new kind of statesman: the bureaucratic rather than noble civil servant. Certainly I am not qualified to disagree with such an assessment. However, the rise of the civil servant and bureaucracy often reads like an overly-determined natural evolution of government. What

³⁰. This was published after the Earl’s death; available through Early English Books Online (EEBO) with the earliest copy dated 1604.

Bodley's career highlights is the still-current (in the late 16th and early 17th centuries) parallel ways in which men could serve the state (or commonwealth). Military service, Parliament, Privy Council (including offices such as Secretary of State), the clergy, and the universities (as deans, patrons, etc.) were all well-respected ways of offering service to the Crown. From the vantage point of the 20th or 21st century, it is easy to see Bodley as a "casualty,"³¹ whose "crippled career"³² and treatment at Court caused his "disenchant[ment]"³³ and eventual flight from public office. I am inclined to view him somewhat differently. There is little evidence remaining to support Clennell's claim that Bodley actively sought the Secretaryship—although one imagines that had he been appointed, he would have served. As a public servant, Bodley seems to me not so to have retired as to redirected his energies in a politically savvy and safer way after witnessing the "polarisation" (Hammer Polarisation) of politics in the later 1590s. His own involvement with the contention over the secretariat would have been only one of many examples of the dangers growing at Court. Whether or not he realized (and responded to) the dangers posed by Essex, he certainly seems prescient in his timing. I suggest that his retirement was more than strategic; it was a carefully timed self-preserving move that removed him from danger while never fully curtailing opportunities to re-enter public service at Court.

³¹ . Hammer *Polarisation* 352.

³² . Hammer *Polarisation* 398.

³³ . Haynes 43.