

England's 1560 Intervention in Scotland, "Openly and Presently"

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A little more than a year since acceding to the English throne in November 1558, Elizabeth I had laid the groundwork for defense against a potential French invasion through Scotland. France was augmenting its forces against Protestant/nationalist rebels in Scotland, to support its puppet regent there, the Catholic Mary of Guise (dowager queen mother of young Mary Stuart, queen of Scots, who was married to French king Francis II). The leaders of the Protestant nobles—the Lords of the Congregation—unilaterally “suspended” the regent’s authority in October of 1559, but she refused to yield. Elizabeth fortified England’s northern border, and covertly fanned the religious rebellion in Scotland to undermine French control. By mid-December, she decided that overt military intervention would be required to ensure that the hostile French regency would be permanently supplanted by a friendly Scottish regime.¹ This essay examines the execution and implications of Elizabeth’s

¹ For an account of events leading up to this point, see the author’s preceding article, “Elizabeth I and England’s Forward Defense in the North.”

command decision to intervene in Scotland's religious and civil strife.

After lengthy deliberation and initial wavering, on Christmas Eve, 1559, Queen Elizabeth's Privy Council relayed its nearly unanimous support for her plan to actively engage on the side of Scotland's Protestant nobles, risking war with France. It was the course that had been advocated by her state secretary, Sir William Cecil, over the strong objections of his brother-in-law and fellow council member, Chancellor Nicholas Bacon. The latter, however, ultimately assented.²

There were three possible outcomes to the struggle over Scotland. The first was that France would succeed in reinforcing its troops in Scotland, deploy an army there and not only subdue the rebels but go on to conquer England, too. Such an outcome would give France the dominant position in Northwest Europe and with control of both sides of the Channel doom Spanish control of the Netherlands. Thus, the significance of the struggle was far greater than one over religious preference in Scotland; it held potentially negative strategic implications for England, Spain, and the Netherlands.

² The term "openly and presently" was Bacon's characterization of Cecil's position. See "Speech of Chancellor Bacon Upon Affording Aid to Scotland," December 15, 1559, in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, 1559-1560, ed. Joseph Stevenson (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1865), no. 440, n1, British History Online, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk>. [Hereafter referred to as *CSPF: Elizabeth*.] For Cecil's position, see "A Short Discussion of the Weighty Matter of Scotland," August 31, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 1, 1558-1559, ed. J. Stevenson (London: HM Stationary Office, 1863), no. 1300.

The second possible outcome was that England would prevail, drive the French out of Scotland, and unify Scotland and England under one monarchy, Great Britain. Such an outcome, which Cecil and the majority of the Lords of the Congregation preferred, would see England dominate the west side of the channel and France the east. England would emerge as a large and powerful state and present a threat to both France and Spain, although not necessarily to the Netherlands. The danger in this outcome was that a unified Great Britain might appeal to Protestants all over Europe, exert increased control over channel/North shipping, and push France and Spain together to deal with the common Protestant heresy.

The third possible scenario was that England would intervene, aid the Scots in driving out the French, but then support the establishment of an independent Scotland “protected” by England but with ties to France through Mary Queen of Scots. Such an outcome would present less of a threat to France and Spain, except that Protestantism, albeit in different forms, would be firmly established in England and Scotland. If the two realms remained separate, England would present less of a threat to European maritime trade and transport or Spanish control of the Netherlands.

Elizabeth had signaled her preference for the third option from early in the summer of 1559 when she had first communicated with the Lords and proposed a governing council established by the Scottish Parliament. The explicit plan she authorized Cecil to discuss with Scottish envoys William Maitland and James Hamilton, Duke of Châtellerauld, was an independent Scotland free of French domination, but under English protection. The Lords preferred union, the “joyful conjunction,”

a Great Britain, with which Cecil concurred. But Elizabeth overruled Cecil and decreed a middle course, at least as a first step.³ The course of the conflict would determine what further steps could be taken and would depend in great part upon the reactions of France, Spain, and the Scots.

The Duke of Guise, Regent Mary's brother and a powerful advisor to King Francis II, tried to preempt Elizabeth in December 1559 with a major reinforcement of French soldiers in Scotland. That endeavor failed when their ships were wrecked in a storm. This gave Elizabeth her opportunity to turn the tables on the French and advance toward her preferred outcome. The first step was the most important, which was to deploy her navy to hold the ring and deter the French from sending additional men and materiel. If successful, she could then isolate the battlefield and aid the rebel Scots in their efforts to defeat the French. If they should falter, then she would order her army into Scotland to tip the balance in favor of the Lords. For the moment, she would continue to provide money, munitions, and even some advisers, but the army would be held in abeyance at the border.

On December 27, three days after receiving the Privy Council report, Elizabeth dispatched thirty-nine-year-old Admiral William Winter with fourteen ships—twelve men o' war and two supply ships— to take control of the strategic estuary of the Forth River. Known as the Firth of Forth, it separated the Scottish counties of Fife on the north bank and Lothian on the south. Winter was ready, having been preparing his ships since early November when the queen sent him to the shipyard in Gillingham, near the mouth of the River Medway in southeastern

³ "The Lords of the Congregation to Cecil," July 19, 1559, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 1, no. 1028.

England. Aboard the command ship, *Lyon*, he set out but immediately encountered strong north-by-northwesterly winds that slowed his pace to a crawl. It took him eight days to reach Harwich, fifty miles up the coast. Out of Harwich on January 5, 1560, he was caught in a fierce storm that snapped the masts of several ships and forced him back toward Harwich where he laid up at Orwell's Haven for a week for repairs and respite.⁴

Leaving Orwell's Haven on January 11, Winter caught a favorable south wind and in five days covered the three hundred miles to Newcastle (Tynemouth) where he encountered another fierce storm off Flamborough Head that scattered his ships. He was forced to leave three, the *Swallow*, *Falcon*, and *Jerfalcon*, at Tynemouth for repairs. He also lost all his towed small craft, jolly boats or longboats, which made it difficult to transfer people and goods from ship to shore. Reaching Berwick-upon-Tweed on January 20, he met with Elizabeth's representatives Sir Ralph Sadler and Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, but could not embark the 500 arquebusiers they had prepared for him "for want of boats."⁵

Proceeding, he put in at Coldingham Bay, forty miles from Leith; moored his supply ships, *Bull* and *Saker*; and sent his captain's log off to London that same day of January 20.⁶ The next day he entered the Firth of Forth with eight men o' war and headed straight for Inchkeith, the French-controlled island

⁴ "Journal of Admiral Winter," January 20, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 601.

⁵ "Croftes to the Earl of Arran and the Lord James," January 21, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 614.

⁶ "Admiral Winter to the Duke of Norfolk, Sadler and Croftes," January 20, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 600.

fortress that lay in the middle of the estuary. Admiral Winter knew the Firth. He had served in Henry VIII's 280-ship expedition there in 1544 and participated in the thirty-ship naval bombardment in the Duke of Somerset's victory over the Scots at Pinkie Cleugh, on the southern bank of the Firth, in 1547.

Winter's presence disrupted the regent's plans. When he first entered the Firth, the French mistakenly thought the flotilla was the long-awaited reinforcement from France. But when they realized that the vessels were English, the French shore batteries at Leith, Inchkeith, and Burntisland fired on the ships, which gave Winter all the justification he needed to act. By naval bombardment, Winter cut French communications between Leith and the coastal town of Dunbar to the east. They seized two French men o' war and a barge loaded with weapons, including artillery, and victuals. Commanding the Firth, Winter was able, especially during daylight hours, to prevent French transport along the coast or by ferry across the estuary. Their only recourse was small craft operations at night, which enabled them to provide some supplies for the embattled men and women in their bastions and to send messengers across the North Sea from Dunbar to Calais. In effect, Winter was able to deter any French entry into, out of, and across the Firth of Forth for the duration of the conflict. Inchkeith was surrounded, and its 140 men isolated.

Winter's actions were decisive, but he, too, had been blessed by Mother Nature. The very same storm that had hindered his advance up the English coast had severely battered the French fleet of seventeen ships attempting to sail from Calais to Scotland. Under the command of René of Guise, Marquis d'Elbeuf, the twenty-four-year-old brother of the Duke of Guise, the ships encountered the storm mid-voyage and were swept

back upon the coast of Holland in yet a second “great shipwreck.” First reports had four ships lost with eight hundred men and eighty horses drowned, but later reports raised the number to six or seven ships with 2,000 men lost on the Danish coast, as well. No more than 300 stragglers reached Scottish shores. The Duke of Guise had no choice but to advise the commander of French forces, Henri Cleutin (known as Monsieur d’Oysel), that he could expect no reinforcements for six months and that he must “hold out . . . as best he might,” until help could come.⁷ (In light of subsequent French efforts to send supplies over the following weeks, this report must have been disinformation.)

The duke’s message reached d’Oysel just as Winter was arriving in the Firth. D’Oysel’s men were heading for St. Andrews on the coast of Fife, there to establish an alternative port for the receipt of reinforcements. If successful, the French could have avoided the Firth of Forth entirely and funneled men and munitions securely into Fife from the North Sea. But with no reinforcements forthcoming and with Winter in the Firth, d’Oysel had to abandon that plan and retreat to Leith. Testifying to the importance of the St. Andrew’s project, the regent had sent the bulk of her force—over two thousand men—to carry out the mission, leaving only four or five hundred to defend Leith. As Winter’s presence prevented their return via ferry across the Firth, and speed was vital, they left behind their ordnance,

⁷ “Challoner to Cecil,” January 13, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, 575 and “Killigrew and Jones to the Council,” January 18, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 590; and *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 3, 1560-1561, Joseph Stevenson, ed. (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1865), Preface, para 14.

destroyed their supplies, and rushed overland to Stirling and thence to their Leith stronghold.⁸

The English and their Scottish allies recognized an ideal opportunity to whittle down, if not destroy the French forces as they tried to make their way overland back to Leith. The Earl of Arran and Lord James Stewart, leaders of the main Scottish rebel contingent, were harassing French forces in Fife as they went but were not powerful enough to stop them. Norfolk wanted Winter to take the 500 arquebusiers he assumed he had received (not realizing that Winter had not been able to board them) and drop them off with Arran and Lord James to bolster their firepower.⁹ Winter, too, saw the opportunity, saying that they should fight the retreating French at Stirling Bridge. “They cannot pass any other way,” because he controlled the ferries. “This opportunity,” he said, should be taken, for if the Frenchmen recover Leith again they have there great store of victual.”¹⁰

Arran and Lord James offered two other options: the English army could enter Scotland and intercept the French en route to Leith, or they themselves could attack Leith before they got there. In a message to English agents Ralph Sadler and James Croft, they wrote:

If the English army might have prevented them, or yet may, the matter is ended; but if that be not possible, the

⁸ J.B. Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth, 1558-1603* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), 38 and “The Duke of Norfolk and his Council to the Lords of the Privy Council,” January 28, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 666.

⁹ “The Duke of Norfolk’s Instructions to Winter,” January 22, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 623.

¹⁰ “Admiral Winter to the Duke of Norfolk,” January 25, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 645.

writers ask them to fix a day on which they may meet, that the enemy get no leisure to strengthen themselves. They have determined to assail [Leith] themselves on Sunday or Monday next, by sea, for they are informed that there are not above 400 men therein for the present.”¹¹

Thus, both English and Scots argued for attacking the French force as it retreated from St. Andrews overland before it reached Leith where they would be impregnable and had sufficient supplies to be able to hold out indefinitely. Norfolk sought to strengthen the forces of Arran and Lord James with the five hundred arquebusiers that he supposed were on board Winter’s ships (but were not), Winter himself proposed attacking the French at Stirling bridge, and Arran and Lord James sought to join with English forces from Berwick to attack the French in Lothian before they reached Leith; or, failing that, to attack Leith themselves before the French forces got there.

In the end, Queen Elizabeth could not act fast enough to prevent the French squadron from reaching Leith and entrenching themselves therein, which proved exasperating to the Scots. The simple fact was that she had not yet lined up her ducks, although they were forming. Winter’s arrival in the Firth had persuaded several previously neutral Scottish nobles to come down from the fence and join the Lords of the Congregation, but there were still many who held back. For example, they had long sought the “Humes and Carres of the

¹¹ “The Earl of Arran and Lord James to Sadler and Croftes,” January 26, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 651.

Marches and Tevidale . . . to take part with them in their common cause.”

These men hitherto have been content to sit still as neutrals; but now, upon a show of the English ships in the Firth and the repair of their footmen to the frontiers, they seem to seek for some appointment and conference [with us].¹²

English ambassador Nicholas Throckmorton, having returned to his post in Paris, also tried to prod Elizabeth into action. He reported that the French would be sending one of their cleverest negotiators, a Monsieur de Seure (Michel de Sévre), to the queen to offer a peace deal. If she would withdraw her land and sea forces from Scotland the French would also withdraw, leaving only four hundred men at Leith. Throckmorton advised against accepting this deal as it was designed solely to gain the French time to marshal another force for Scotland and remove English power without firing a shot.

Instead, he proposed, she should “beat the iron while it is hot,” that is, to strike while she had the opportunity, for to accept the proffered bargain would simply allow the French to become a major threat to England in the near future. Besides, he said, warning of coming turmoil in France, “the factions in religion are springing up everywhere.”¹³ This last was good news. From the beginning of her reign, Queen Elizabeth had followed

¹² “Norfolk to Cecil, January 26, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 650. The clan Hume (Home) is from the area known as The Merse, on the eastern section of Scotland’s border with England, not far from Berwick-upon-Tweed. The clan Carres (Kerr) is from Teviotdale in the border area called the Southern Uplands.

¹³ “Throckmorton to the Council,” February 4, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 685.

“the enemy of my enemy is my friend” strategy, as well as attempting to sow dissension within the camps of her enemies.

She was not unique in this; all rulers pursued similar strategies. The French, for example, supported the Turks against the Spanish and the Catholics in England against the Protestants. Elizabeth supported the Germans against the French and the Protestants against the Catholics in France. In France, Elizabeth sought to play on the growing dissension between the houses of Bourbon and Valois, which meant supporting the Protestant Huguenot cause against the policies of the Guise-Medici alliance. Via Throckmorton, she had opened secret communications with Henry of Bourbon, the king of Navarre, and his brother Louis, the Prince of Condé, encouraging their opposition to the Guises. Indeed, Throckmorton (representing the queen’s position) supposedly gave them to understand that “when the moment for action arrived,” they would receive “substantial assistance from England,” although that assistance was undefined.¹⁴

In early 1560 Elizabeth sent Richard Tremayne on another secret mission, to assist the Huguenots in their plans for an insurrection in Normandy. (Tremayne had been involved in the covert operation to manage the Earl of Arran’s escape from France in 1559). Her objective was to precipitate a crisis in France that would preoccupy and immobilize the French court when she sent her army into Scotland. “Stimulated into action by the countenance of England,” the Huguenot plotters under the

¹⁴ *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 3, Preface, para. 36. For a contrary view, see N. M. Sutherland, “Queen Elizabeth and the Conspiracy of Amboise, March 1560,” *English Historical Review* 81, no. 320 (July 1966): 474-89. Sutherland is skeptical that Elizabeth was complicit in the French Protestant plot against the Guises.

operational leadership of Jean (Godfroy) de Barry, seigneur de la Renaudie, assembled in Nantes on February 1. Their plan was to capture the king in a coup d'état in early March while the French court was residing in Blois to hear citizen petitions. Their goal was to execute the Guises, install Prince Condé as head of a provisional government and establish Protestantism in France.¹⁵

The involvement of hundreds of Protestants from Orleans, Tours, and Lyon made it inevitable that their plans would leak. Indeed, the Guises obtained intelligence about the plot from various sources, including in Spain and Germany, and a Parisian lawyer who had housed Renaudie and some of his fellow conspirators.¹⁶ Although shaken, the Guises—the duke and his brother, the cardinal of Lorraine—decided to set a trap for the coup plotters. Their first step was to transfer the king and his court from Blois to the better-protected Château d'Amboise a few miles away. The change in venue forced the conspirators to postpone their attack until mid-March, but the king's forces quietly began to pick up some groups on the road and others as they moved toward Amboise.¹⁷

On March 17, some 150 conspirators attempted to storm the château, but were easily repulsed by Guise's waiting forces.¹⁸

¹⁵ *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 3, Preface, para. 37-38; and James Westfall Thompson, *The Wars of Religion in France, 1559-1576* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1909), 31.

¹⁶ Pierre Miquel, *Les Guerres de Religion* (Paris : Fayard, 1980), 212.

¹⁷ Thompson, *Wars of Religion in France*, 33-34.

¹⁸ Henry Martyn Baird, *History of the Rise of the Huguenots of France*, vol. 1 (New York: Scribner's, 1879), 387, and *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 3, Preface, para. 40, both citing Throckmorton. Stuart Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers: The Guise Family and the Making of Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 117, says there were 200 attackers.

Although unnerving in and of itself, the tumult went beyond Amboise. Captured insurgents confessed that large caches of weapons had been stored in all the neighboring towns.¹⁹ The Guises authorized arrests throughout the country surrounding Amboise, and many were sent for execution to Blois, Tours, Orleans and elsewhere to set an example for the people there.²⁰ Between 1,200 and 1,500 were caught and killed. Some were hanged, others drowned, still others tortured and beheaded. Renaudie died in a skirmish with royalist troops, and his corpse was hung on a gibbet in front of the court gate.²¹ The bloodbath at Amboise sparked the wars of religion in France that persisted until the end of the century, but it had the immediate effect of throwing the Guises, the king, and his supporters into disarray.

Building the Assault Force

The outcome at Amboise takes us slightly ahead of the story. Elizabeth's plan was to coordinate the entry of English forces into Scotland with the attempted coup, anticipating that it would disrupt French response capability for a time. Her forces would thus enter Scotland before French reinforcements would arrive. (She would not learn until March 4 that the French had called off another sailing by d'Elbeuf.)²² Indeed, in early February, word came that once again the French were planning a surprise. A new flotilla was about to set sail for Scotland. Francis Edwards reported that contrary to the notion that the French would be forced to wait until spring before they would be able to

¹⁹ Thompson, *Wars of Religion in France*, 36-37.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 38, incl. n2.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 37, and 38n1, and Miquel, *Les Guerres de Religion*, 213.

²² "Edwards to Cecil," March 4, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 810.

send reinforcements to Scotland, they would be sailing as soon as the following week, weather permitting.

According to Edwards, English merchants claimed that at Dieppe there were “ten ships ready to sail . . . to Scotland.” His French informants, on the other hand, said there were not more than seven or eight ships, with no more than one thousand soldiers, which was still a formidable force. A French friend of his thought that the Marquis d’Elbeuf would not go to Scotland with less than forty ships “for fear of the Queen’s ships in the Firth.” He reported that “there is great preparation made along the coast.” It was said in Dieppe that the Marquis “will depart on Tuesday,” February 13, but his “friend thinks he will not go til the last of this month, when he will have about forty sail made ready.”²³ The intelligence appeared to indicate that the French were trying to slip reinforcements into Scotland before English forces would arrive.

Thus, assuming an early March date for the planned Huguenot assault at Blois and an imminent French sail, Elizabeth pushed for signing of the mutual defense treaty with the Scots that had been drafted the previous November.²⁴ The Duke of Norfolk acquiesced but pointed out the difficulties of military intervention. “Foul ways between Berwick and Leith” at this time of the year would make it difficult to transport the gun carriages. He also thought that it would be difficult to get the carriages and draught horses to Berwick in time to join the main force. He advised that it would be better to send the guns from Berwick by

²³ “Fr. Edwards to Cecil,” February 8, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 707.

²⁴ The Treaty of Berwick signed February 27, 1560.

sea.²⁵ After calculating his requirements, he sent another message saying that he would need three hundred draught horses with harnesses and gear to transport the gun carriages. They would have to come from the south of England because none were available in the north.²⁶

In contact with the Lords, Norfolk was apprised of the possibility that the French might attempt to send reinforcements via the West Sea to Dumbarton where they had allies.²⁷ Norfolk undoubtedly alerted Cecil to this possibility, but his focus remained on the Firth. He noted that the French were reinforcing their position at Dunbar which lay athwart the road between Berwick and Leith. He also reported that he was having difficulty obtaining the necessary draught horses; his new requirement was now 250 instead of 300. Their plan was to send the artillery by sea from Berwick to Acheson's Haven outside Musselburgh where they would join forces with the Scots. Reportedly, the ground between Acheson's Haven and Leith was firm and they could transport the guns easily.²⁸

The queen ordered Winter to assist. He sent several ships to transport the gun carriages from Berwick to Acheson's Haven. Winter's main effort would center on providing the necessary logistics support for the troops on land. He also sent a ship to

²⁵ "Norfolk and his Council to Cecil," February 8, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 703.

²⁶ "Norfolk and his Council to Cecil," February 15, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 727.

²⁷ "The Earl of Arran to the Duke of Norfolk," February 23, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 760.

²⁸ "Norfolk and his Council to the Privy Council," February 26, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 774.

transport six prominent Scottish Lords to Berwick to sign the treaty. Lord James Stewart, Patrick Ruthven, John Maxwell, William Maitland, John Wishart, and Henry Balnaves arrived at Berwick on February 26 and signed the accord the next day in the name of James Hamilton, Duke of Châtellerauld, head of the Lords of the Congregation. Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, signed for the English side. The pact authorized English intervention in Scotland but also called upon the Scots to defend England and Ireland in case of French invasion.²⁹

The treaty stated that Queen Elizabeth, understanding that the French “intend to conquer the realm of Scotland . . . shall accept the said realm, the apparent heir to the Crown, the nobility and subjects thereof, for the protection of their old freedoms and liberties from conquest or oppression. It went on to state that “for that purpose with all speed she shall send into Scotland sufficient aid of men to join with the Scots . . . to expel the present power of France . . . and continue until they are utterly expelled therefrom.” The “only” Scottish tie to the crown of France would be “by marriage of the Queen [Mary Stuart] to the French King.”

If France invaded England, the Scots would furnish “at least” three thousand troops. In addition, the Earl of Argyle would assist England in subduing the north parts of Ireland. Finally, the Scots would send “certain pledges” (hostages) to reside in England “during the marriage of the Queen of Scots to the French King, and one year longer.”

The treaty gave Elizabeth the legal right to send English forces into Scotland “with all speed,” but she now held off.

²⁹ “Articles Agreed Upon at Berwick,” February 27, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 781.

Francis Edwards' report on March 4, in which he passed on the French decision to call off d'Elbeuf's reinforcement voyage, also prompted Elizabeth to change her plans. A few days earlier, Norfolk had sent her a message saying that he needed ten more days to get ready. The draught horses and oxen were slow coming from southern England, more ships were on the way from Newcastle and Hull, and the bulk of the artillery had yet to arrive. He was also levying some two thousand men to hold in reserve at Berwick to counter the French in Dunbar.³⁰

Although the Lords had signed the treaty, they had not yet ratified it and discussions with them had made it clear that they could not provide the five thousand men they said they could. They were also vague about the number of workmen they could provide to dig trenches and build fortifications. They could carry out small-scale guerrilla raids but as they had no artillery could not defeat the French in their strongholds. The English would have to take on that task. Finally, there was the issue of money for the men, which was also slow in arriving. Without it, even the few Scots who were committed would be reluctant to stay.³¹

Elizabeth decided to use a diplomatic maneuver to buy time to line up all her ducks. Most were in place, but key parts of the assault force were still in transit. Her theater commander, the Duke of Norfolk, and battlefield commanders, Admiral Winter and Baron William Grey, were all in position. Sir Ralph Sadler was liaison to both the Scots and the regent and Norfolk had

³⁰ "Norfolk and his Council to the Privy Council," February 26, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 774.

³¹ "Norfolk and his Council to the Lords of the Privy Council," February 29, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 798.

dispatched James Croft from Berwick to be aide to Grey. The chain of command thus traced from the queen and Cecil to Norfolk at Berwick, and then on to Grey, Winter, and Sadler in the field.

Troop strength had reached over seven thousand men deployed in and around Berwick, but vital artillery and siege guns were yet to arrive as well as the horses, oxen, harnesses, and gear to transport them. In what was a remarkable feat, Elizabeth was taking up merchant ships, arming them and pressing them into service. By the time English forces entered Scotland at the end of the month she would have twenty-nine ships over the 120-ton class patrolling the Firth and North Sea and more than a hundred smaller craft for coastal guard and transport duty.

On March 6, two days after receiving Edwards' report, Elizabeth issued England's "demands" from France. England desired good relations, but the French King and Queen must "utterly cease" usage of the style and arms of England. If France could "assure" restitution to the Scots "of the liberty of their country, to be governed without force of arms, according to the ancient laws and liberties of the realm, by the natural born people of the land," the "Queen of England will then withdraw her forces." War preparations on both sides would have to stop. English vessels would transport all French forces in Scotland back to France. Withdrawal would begin on March 24, and all would be out by April 2.³²

The French immediately adopted a conciliatory pose and dispatched a member of their privy council, one Bishop of Valence (Jean de Monluc), to London, for they, too, saw delay to

³² "England's Demands from France," March 6, 1560, Number 821, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 821.

their advantage. The French court and the regent believed that delay would lead to a withering of the Scottish rebel forces, as their men would “steal off homeward” and the Lords would begin quarreling among themselves.³³ Thus, Valence’s mission was not to reach a settlement but to string out the negotiations and buy as much time as possible, which the English recognized. Thus, in discussions with the Queen and Cecil, the Bishop thought that the issue of the coat of arms was solvable but wondered whether the French could retain four or five ensigns at Leith, Dunbar, and Inchkeith.³⁴ There was never any possibility of such a compromise, although some in the Privy Council thought Elizabeth was vacillating. She was buying time, too.

Throckmorton, after conveying Queen Elizabeth’s demands to King Francis, opined that “notwithstanding their show of amity, the French go on with their preparations by sea and land.” He reported on their efforts to hire German mercenaries but did not think that they could mount another expedition until May, some two months off. He also noted French efforts to gain support of Spanish king Philip II, which, he advised, should be countered by a strong demarche to Seville.

Elizabeth, of course, was well informed about French difficulties in mounting another flotilla. What interested her most, however, was Throckmorton’s report that the Guises had “discovered a conspiracy wrought against themselves.” In his view, the “court is in great trouble and know not which side to turn.” The matter, he said, “is presently hot and like enough to

³³ *Calendar of State Papers Foreign: Elizabeth*, vol. 3, Preface, para. 15.

³⁴ An “ensign” was a French infantry unit usually comprising 230-300 men. See George Gush, “Renaissance Armies: The French,” online at *myArmory.com*, http://myarmory.com/feature_armies_french.html

become hotter, and if ever time offered to what the English have need to do, it is now." He concluded as he had previously, "chafe the iron while it is hot."³⁵

Elizabeth's new concern was not the French but the Spanish. On the same day that she had proclaimed her "demands" of the French, a message had arrived from King Philip. In response to French insistence that he provide help to a fellow Catholic power, he said he would be sending one of his trusted advisers, Seigneur de Glajon, to London to "show her his mind."³⁶ Notice of Glajon's mission meant that Elizabeth would have less time to prepare her forces than she had hoped. She would have to send English forces into Scotland before Glajon arrived, present King Philip II with a *fait accompli* and deny him any leverage on the issue. It also meant that she would have to send English forces into Scotland before they were fully prepared.

A message from Throckmorton on March 21 offered further confirmation that the attempted coup at Amboise had paralyzed the French. He reported that the Guises "live in great fear and know not whom to trust." He described in some detail the Huguenot attack on Amboise with 150 horsemen on March 17 and the savage countermeasures taken by the Guises in putting them down. He also noted that there were pockets of opposition in Brittany, Normandy, and Tours. "It was said," he reported, that "there were great numbers ready to assemble in four quarters of the realm, which were in small companies, by

³⁵ "Throckmorton to Cecil," March 7 & 8, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 837.

³⁶ "Phillip II to the Queen," March 6, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 816.

means whereof sometimes more and sometimes less were taken by the King's scouts."³⁷

Elizabeth's preparations were nearly complete. On March 24, she distributed "The Queen's Proclamation Concerning Peace," in hundreds of copies across France. She faulted the Guises for their "unjust enterprise" in Scotland and expressed her continued peaceful intention toward the rulers and people of France. As a result of the "insolent attempts" of the Guises, the queen was "forced to put in order certain forces by sea and land for the safeguard of England." The proclamation was both notice of the imminent entry of English forces into Scotland and its justification.³⁸ The French king was bound to reply.

Into Scotland

A week later, after the Lords of the Congregation had confirmed the Treaty of Berwick and sent half a dozen pledged men to reside in England as guarantees, English forces under Lord Grey set out from Berwick.³⁹ Six thousand foot soldiers and twelve hundred cavalry, minus their heavy ordnance, crossed over into Scotland. Recall, Elizabeth intended to deploy her

³⁷ Throckmorton to the Council," March 21, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 881 and n1.

³⁸ "The Queen's Proclamation Concerning Peace," March 24, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, no. 894.

³⁹ "Confirmation of the Treaty of Berwick," March 29, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 922. The pledges were the Duke of Châtelleraut's fourth son, Claude, age 14; the Earl of Menteith's son, George, age 5; Lord Ruthven's son, Alexander, age 14; the Earl of Glencairn's adult son, James; Lord James Stewart's brother, Robert; and the Earl of Argyle's cousin, Alexander Campbell.

troops into Scotland before King Philip's emissary arrived in London.

Although the force that entered Scotland has been referred to as the "English army," that is something of a misnomer.⁴⁰ Neither the English nor the Scottish armed forces at that time could be compared to the state armed and trained professional standing army of France. Both English and Scots levied men from the shires (counties), the number depending on the population of each shire, which also outfitted them, but they were in no sense professional soldiers.

In the Scottish case, the levy was for twenty days' service, after which time additional wages had to be paid. The major difference between the English and Scots was that the English crown provided wages, heavy cannon, and ships, while the Scots were deficient in all of these. Most importantly, England provided extensive logistical support by land and sea, which neither the Scots nor the French could do. Indeed, logistics, Elizabeth's ability to sustain her forces while preventing the French from doing the same, would be the key to the outcome.

It is also recounted that the English "army" left Berwick "well armed and fully provided with all the stores necessary for a long campaign."⁴¹ But that, too, is misleading. The English force entered Scotland without all its troops, its heavy ordnance, gun carriages, or the horses and oxen to draw them. Their plan was to join with the Lords' forces at Acheson's Haven outside Musselburgh where the heavy ordnance would be sent by sea. As the English troops marched past Dunbar, a French force sallied forth to slow them as they passed by, but quickly retreated to

⁴⁰ See, for example, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 3, Preface, para. 15.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

their stronghold after a brief skirmish. Thereafter, English forces traversed the twenty-four miles to Acheson's Haven unhindered, arriving on April 2.

Over the next few days, the Lords of the Congregation, including several new late comers, joined with Grey for a conference at Pinkie House to plan their attack. The Scots arrived with the promised five thousand men, but three thousand of them had served most of their twenty-day service commitment and would be leaving in a week. The English would have to pay the wages of the two thousand who remained and any others who agreed to stay on. The English would also have to pay the wages of the workmen, called "pioneers," to dig trenches and build fortifications for the siege, and supply their own miners to tunnel underneath the citadels' walls. The Scots provided three-to-four hundred pioneers, far fewer than expected (and no miners).⁴² The English would bear the brunt of the assault in men, money, and equipment, but that was to be expected.

On the question of campaign strategy, Grey reported to Norfolk that according to the Scots, the regent had recently moved to Edinburgh Castle, which, recall, John Erskine had declared neutral territory. (The regent had resided at Holyrood House since November, but when the English forces entered Scotland, she demanded and received Erskine's permission to move to the castle.) Given the "large circuit" of manpower needed to surround Leith and the lack of ordnance, Grey proposed that they "besiege Edinburgh Castle first, believing it less difficult to win, and the Dowager being there." The castle, built high on a bluff, overlooked the entire battleground encompassing Leith. The Lords, he said, agreed with this strategy.

⁴² Ibid.

Besides, he reported, the Scots did not “think it meet that they be put to any assault” on Leith, especially as the heavy cannon had yet to arrive.⁴³

Norfolk immediately messaged Cecil, who consulted Elizabeth. Norfolk disagreed with Grey and thought an attack on Edinburgh Castle “inexpedient” and an “extremity.” Worse, he thought, it might “make Lord Erskine an utter enemy (who may be a friend or at least a neutral) as well as to withdraw the hearts of the Scottish nation from them, when they see [us] leave the pursuit of the French in Leith and assail the Scots in Edinburgh Castle.”⁴⁴

Elizabeth took Norfolk’s advice but not for the reasons she stated to him. In her reply, she ordered Norfolk “not to intermeddle with the siege of Edinburgh Castle.” Her preference was to avoid giving offense to the Scots and maintain “a reverence for the Queen’s person.”⁴⁵ In fact, there were more important reasons for not attacking the castle at this point. First, with the royal navy in control of the Firth and English forces on the ground, the regent’s forces at Leith, Dunbar, and Inchkeith were surrounded with little to no aid able to get through to them. Her eventual defeat was inevitable. So, Elizabeth offered the regent a graceful way out instead of an ignominious defeat.

Second, Grey was just beginning to set up camp around Leith and to construct the fortifications and trenches for the eventual assault on it, and his expected forces had not yet all arrived. Two thousand soldiers were en route from Berwick and

⁴³ “Grey to Norfolk,” April 4, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 944.

⁴⁴ “Norfolk and his Council to Cecil,” April 6, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 956.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*n2, “The Queen to the Duke of Norfolk.”

the Scots were arriving piecemeal. He was also still attempting to hire enough pioneers for digging the trenches and building the forts to protect the cannon. Finally, "held back by contrary winds," the ships bringing the heavy cannon to Leith had not all arrived.⁴⁶ As of April 9, only one battery with a dozen cannon had been delivered, with fifty more in transit. An immediate attack on the castle designed to seize the regent contradicted the planned approach; nor was it feasible.

Therefore, Elizabeth decided to adopt what she termed a "treaty and siege" strategy, engaging in "negotiations" while completing preparations for the assault.⁴⁷ The very juxtaposition of "treaty and siege" should have indicated her true intent, but, instead, it alarmed just about everyone involved, who thought she might be considering a settlement short of supplanting the French with a friendly Scottish government. At this news, Grey responded that "he knows not which way to turn."⁴⁸ Norfolk reported that the Scots "doubt whether [the regent] means to come to any end or good conclusion."⁴⁹ Throckmorton declared "it were better to declare war at once . . . than to make war as no war and peace as no peace."⁵⁰ The queen hastily sent emissaries out to them to "explain" her meaning but rumors of her vacillation abounded.

⁴⁶ "Memoranda concerning the Scottish Expedition," from Cecil, April 5, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 949.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ "Grey to Norfolk," April 5, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 948.

⁴⁹ "Norfolk and his Council to Cecil," April 6, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, no. 960.

⁵⁰ "Throckmorton to Cecil," April 6, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 954.

There were sound arguments for both courses of action. Acting immediately would enable Grey to mount a joint operation with the full Scottish force of five thousand men, which would demonstrate Anglo-Scottish unity and in no sense “draw the hearts of the Scottish nation.” With Regent Mary in Queen Elizabeth’s hands, the conflict would either be over, or at least turn the tables on the French. Instead of defending Leith against an English attack, they would need to charge out of their fortified bastion across open ground to rescue the regent at the castle.

As to pursuing a policy of restraint in hopes of gaining Erskine as “a friend or at least a neutral,” Erskine’s record of speaking all things to all people was well known, thus gaining him even as a neutral was unlikely. His protection of the regent in Edinburgh Castle hardly seemed “neutral.” Forcing him to choose may be the proper course. Finally, seizing the castle would prevent the regent from sending intelligence about English plans and positions to her forces in Leith.

On the other hand, in addition to the fact that her forces were not yet ready, Elizabeth’s decision to forego an immediate attack on the castle may have been influenced by the arrival of King Philip’s negotiator, Seigneur de Glajon, on April 5. Meeting the Queen on the 7th, Glajon proposed that both sides withdraw, and the Spanish troops then in the Netherlands be sent to maintain the peace while King Philip mediated a settlement. Elizabeth was not about to accept a situation in which Spanish troops replaced French troops, which would be an admission of weakness. She countered that her troops were already in Scotland, and it was therefore “too late to talk of any

compromise with the French." She would deal with them only "with the sword in her right hand."⁵¹

The French ambassador Michel de Seure, and the Bishop of Valence, on the other hand, were active in responding to Elizabeth's March 24 Proclamation for Peace and engaged in a "war of missives" to refute her arguments. Their protestations, however, amounted to elaborate denials that obviously were designed to protract negotiations without resolving issues. Theirs was a delaying game.

Elizabeth was prepared to offer her own settlement, which she believed would satisfy Philip, the Scottish reformers, Queen Mary, and perhaps even the French. She put forward her plan for the withdrawal of French forces from Scotland and the establishment of a fully independent Scottish council to govern Scotland for as long as Mary remained in France. She intimated a willingness to permit a few French soldiers to remain. She had sent her interlocutor, Ralph Sadler, to the regent to present this plan. Its essence, as far as Philip was concerned, however, was that she would not seek to join England and Scotland under a unified monarchy. This also kept open the remote possibility that King Francis could someday recover position in Scotland.

In sending Glajon, a member of the Duchess of Parma's privy council, King Philip was signaling to Elizabeth that the interests of the Netherlands would be at least as important a consideration as Spain's. And in the Netherlands, Anglo-Dutch trade was a high priority. A French victory in Scotland, not to mention England, would be as disastrous for the Netherlands as for Spain, as the Duchess had pointed out. Despite promoting the

⁵¹ *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 3, Preface, para. 9.

Spanish mediation concept, Glajon privately counseled Cecil that Elizabeth should proceed without concern for interference from Philip. By April 10, in other words, Elizabeth knew that he would not support the French in Scotland.⁵²

Privately, Philip was willing to accept an outcome that served his interests without having to fight for them. An English success that drove the French out of Scotland but stopped short of unifying Scotland with England was his optimum solution under the circumstances, the issue of Protestantism notwithstanding. Antwerp's financial and economic preeminence would be preserved. Although the French were demanding that Philip assist them in Scotland, they were hypocritically supporting the Turks and Algerians against Spain in the Mediterranean, which Philip knew.⁵³

In truth, at this moment, Philip's main concern was precisely in the western Mediterranean, which undoubtedly influenced his decision over Scotland. Turkish forces in cooperation with Muslim pirates had been marauding the Mediterranean coasts of Spain and the islands of Palma, Corsica, Sardinia, and others with impunity for several years. To combat them, Philip had put together a naval armada with Pope Paul IV and his Italian allies designed to re-establish control over the area.⁵⁴

On February 10, 1560, a combined fleet of ninety or more ships and between ten and twelve thousand men under the

⁵² Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 167.

⁵³ "Throckmorton to the Queen," April 6, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 952.

⁵⁴ Wikipedia, "Philip II of Spain."

command of Gian Andrea Doria set out from Malta to seize Tripoli, a key port that would enable defense of the western Mediterranean. A fierce storm crippled the expedition, forcing the commander to change plans. On March 7 he anchored his fleet 150 miles west at Djerba, an island off the coast of Tunisia, which he captured.⁵⁵ The Christian forces were in the process of constructing fortifications on the island to defend against the expected Turkish counterattack when the issue of what to do about Scotland arose.

Philip had a great deal at stake in the expedition and sought to reinforce Djerba with Spanish troops garrisoned in the Netherlands.⁵⁶ The French propaganda line had been that he would send them to Scotland. Philip's preoccupation with the coming battle accounts for his acquiescence to Elizabeth's position. As it happened, the Turks delivered a disastrous defeat to his armada within a few weeks on the eleventh of May. The Christian alliance's losses would amount to about half of their warships and at least nine thousand men. The Ottoman victory

⁵⁵ Wikipedia, "The Battle of Djerba," and Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, vol. 2 (London: Collins, 1973), 976-978.

⁵⁶ Philip had stationed two tercios of Spanish veterans (infantry units of about 150 men each) in the Netherlands as a "rapid reaction force", according to Geoffrey Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 117. Tercios are explained by George Gush, "Renaissance Armies: The Spanish," online at myArmoury.com, http://myarmoury.com/feature_armies_spanish.html. "Throckmorton to the Queen," April 25, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 1066 reported that Philip was sending his Netherlands troops directly to Spain "for the war at Tripoli."

at Djerba marked the high point of Turkish power in the western Mediterranean until their defeat at Lepanto in 1571.⁵⁷ Until then, the Turkish problem would continue to demand Philip's attention.

The Siege of Leith

In early April, just as Grey was arriving at the agreed assembly point to join up with the Scots at Restalrig a mile south and east of Leith, M. d'Oysel, the French commander in Leith, sent a strike force of some two hundred soldiers to attack the English encampment before they could set up defensive positions. His strategy was to attack and disrupt English attempts to build their fortifications and trenches around Leith. This first of what would become a series of spoiling engagements and almost daily skirmishes was described by one of Grey's messengers, as "one of the hottest he ever saw." First reports had 100 casualties on each side; Norfolk put the estimate at between 140 and 160 killed and wounded on each side, but Grey later raised the French total to 250 soldiers "slain and hurt."⁵⁸

After the battle at Restalrig, Grey and the Earl of Arran set up their joint headquarters on a hill overlooking the battle area about half a mile behind the siege line but on a direct axis between Leith and Edinburgh Castle. Grey's plan was to set up three fortified artillery batteries connected by trenches in a semicircle within a mile of Leith. On the west wing was Byers'

⁵⁷ Wikipedia, "The Battle of Djerba," and Braudel, *Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, vol. 2, 980.

⁵⁸ *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, "Grey and others to Norfolk," April 6, 1560, no. 955; "Norfolk to Cecil," April 18, 1560, no. 1026; and "Grey to Norfolk," April 20, 1560, no. 1048.

Mount; in the center was Somerset Mount, and on the east wing was Mount Pelham, positions all named after their commanding officers. Eventually, these main batteries with additional guns studded in the trenches between them would give the English forces sixty-two guns against the estimated forty-two inside Leith fortress. Such was the general plan but preparing these positions would take time and the French would continuously send forces out to disrupt English position-building.

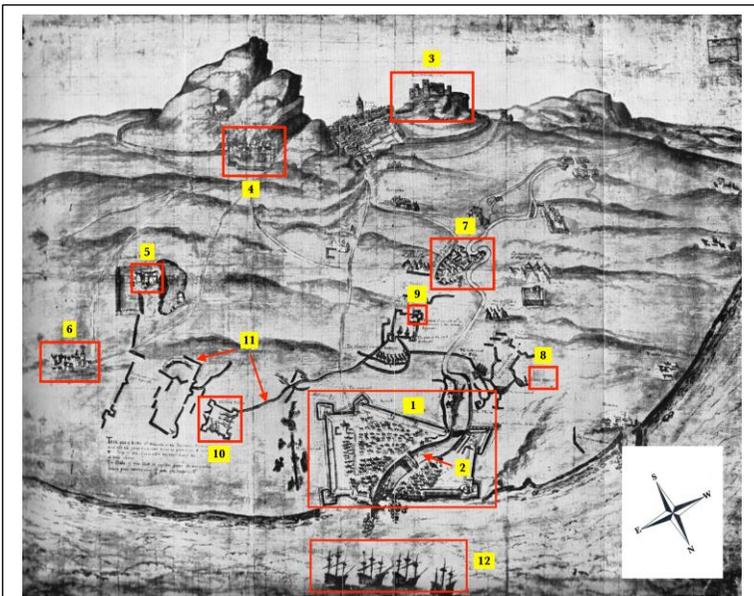


Image adapted from the annotated "Siege of Leith map, 1560,"
Wikimedia Commons.

1. Leith with French fortifications
2. The Water of Leith
3. Edinburgh Castle
4. Holyrood House
5. Restalrig Castle
6. Town of Restalrig
7. HQ of Grey and Arran
8. Byer's Mount
9. Somerset Mount
10. Mount Pelham
11. Trenches
12. Blocking English warships

The first battery arrived on April 9 and, Grey reported, they were shortly going to “plant” it. However, he said, “unless the next battery is better appointed with soldiers and pioneers than the first, they will not be able to win Leith by battery and assault.”⁵⁹ The Scottish leader, William Maitland, who was with Grey at their headquarters, observed that “the second battery is not yet come,” and said that “men of experience” here “begin to think the numbers of men to be [too] few to assay it by battery.” They judge that to conduct a successful assault “would require 20,000 men, and fear that the Queen will wax weary of the expense of a camp volant” by which he meant a long siege.⁶⁰ Grey would never be able to marshal half that number when the assault was finally attempted.

Maitland also weighed in against the Queen Elizabeth’s treaty and siege strategy. In a message to Ralph Sadler, the queen’s interlocutor with the regent, Maitland set forth the Scots’ bottom line. “Unless the whole Frenchmen be removed and the government left in the hands of the born men of the land,” he said, neither England nor Scotland will “be in safety.” In his view, “the Queen has proceeded too far now to leave off” and he warned that “negotiations” with the regent have discouraged “a great number of noblemen who were well appointed and determined to join.”⁶¹

Norfolk was in general agreement with Maitland and Grey. In his message to the Privy Council of April 10, he restated the Scots’ position. They rejected the idea of negotiations,

⁵⁹ “Grey and others to Norfolk,” April 9, 1560, Number 968, *CSPF*.

⁶⁰ “W. Maitland to the Duke of Norfolk,” April 9, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 969.

⁶¹ “W. Maitland to Sadler,” April 9, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 970.

demanded that the regent be deposed, the French driven out, and the Scots govern. He reiterated Maitland's view that they would need many more soldiers and pioneers to assault Leith. The 2,000 soldiers that were to have been in Berwick two weeks earlier had only arrived a day ago, and he was sending them forward the next day. Grey would then have 8,000 soldiers and 700 pioneers, plus a cavalry of 1,200, "yet the circuit of Leith is so great . . . that that number is not sufficient." Still, he insisted, they would have to carry on; if the conflict could not be ended by treaty, they would have to win it, otherwise the Scottish Lords would fall prey to the French or else join with them as enemies of England.⁶²

An intercepted message from King Francis II to the regent Mary convinced Elizabeth that it was time to get on with the assault. The king attempted to reassure the regent that help was on the way, including the hoped-for arrival of his emissary, the Bishop of Valence. What he said, however, revealed the opposite. He advised her to assume a defensive position, while "awaiting the succor which he will send. . . . The said succor will arrive during June, or the middle of July at latest. It will consist of vessels from the King of Spain, together with a good body of his subjects." In the meantime, he was sending funds and "twenty barrels of powder." Finally, he said he was transferring to her "a general power . . . which the Regent may use as she shall see good for the Kingdom of Scotland."⁶³

⁶² "Norfolk and his Council to the Lords of the [Privy] Council," April 10, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 979.

⁶³ "Instructions from Francis II to the Queen Regent of Scotland," April 11, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 987.

The truth in this message lay in its interstices. The king assured the regent that help was on the way, but reinforcements would not arrive for two or three months. Furthermore, in a glaring admission, the “succor,” when it came, would not be from France, but from Spain! In the meantime, she should assume a defensive position and wait it out. He was sending some money and powder but in such minuscule amounts as to be derisory, assuming he could get them to her. Finally, he was extending to her plenipotentiary power to decide what was best. The long and short of this message was that the French king could do nothing, was depending upon the king of Spain for assistance, and he would not object if she surrendered, for the “good of the Kingdom of Scotland.”

Putting together the information gleaned from her discussions with Glajon and the intercepted message from the French king, Elizabeth concluded that neither Spain nor France would interfere with her campaign in Scotland. Moreover, it was clear that Francis, behind whom stood the Duke of Guise, was deceiving the regent about Spanish assistance, which would not be forthcoming. He was, in fact, encouraging her to fight to the last, based on his reassurance that King Philip would come to the rescue.

After hashing out the information with Cecil and perhaps one or two others, Elizabeth sent a message to Norfolk on April 14, authorizing him to press on with the siege. She would support fully the Scots’ demands for the ouster of the regent and the removal of the French and she would compel the regent to surrender on her terms:

As she would not have the Scots mistrust her she desires that the siege should be more earnestly prosecuted, and

the treaty [of Cateau-Cambrésis] less regarded; and the Scots should be informed that she will augment her force by sea and land, lest the French conceive slackness in them, and although this be the outward show she would not that any reasonable offer of the French for accord should be neglected; and, indeed, the more hardly handled the French be in the siege, the better it shall be [for a treaty].⁶⁴

As soon as Norfolk received this message, he sent the go-ahead to Grey at Leith and the bombardment commenced. Norfolk reported back to Cecil the next day that coast watchers saw 27 or 28 English ships pass Berwick. "They hope it is the ordnance."⁶⁵ Grey had begun the bombardment from his one artillery battery at Mount Pelham. D'Oysel responded quickly, sending a large force of 1,200 men accompanied by 60 horse to attack it. They killed some 200 English but suffered 150 losses themselves (though claiming virtually none). Additionally, in overrunning the camp, they managed to spike several of Grey's cannons.⁶⁶

The French were a well-trained and well-armed force, but were being given the false hope of rescue, if they could hold out until "the beginning of June."⁶⁷ As noted above, King Francis had said to the regent that help would not arrive until sometime

⁶⁴ "The Queen to the Duke of Norfolk," April 14, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 1005n7.

⁶⁵ "Norfolk to Cecil," April 15, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 1005.

⁶⁶ Gladys Dickinson, ed., "Journal of the Siege of Leith, 1560," in *Two Missions of Jacques de la Brosse*, (Edinburgh: Scottish Historical Society, 1942), 117-119.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 131.

“during June, or the middle of July,” a difference of over a month. In fact, King Francis would be unable to send any reinforcements at all, partly due to the continuing turmoil in France itself. The French were encouraging their force at Leith to fight on in hopes of waiting out the English and obtaining a settlement that would enable them to retain a foothold in Scotland. The French were clearly in a war of attrition, which they could not win. It was only a matter of time before enough English weapons and men arrived to wear down the bastion at Leith. Their only hope was to drag out negotiations long enough to outfit another expedition.

Grey, responding to Norfolk’s queries about the situation, said, “Leith is difficult to approach, but if there was power to make three camps [batteries] the enterprise were feasible. If there were two; sufficient to maintain two batteries, there were good hope; but having but one, the matter seems not feasible.” He estimated the numbers of men needed for two new batteries were “at least 3,000 with 1,000 pioneers.”⁶⁸

On April 19, Norfolk responded to two follow-up letters he had just received from the queen and Cecil, dated April 16. They were, he said, “the best welcome that came since his arrival here. They now know that the Queen will go through with it, either by fair means or foul.” He reiterated that Grey and the Scots “are agreed . . . that if the Queen would that Edinburgh Castle might be taken, it would advance the expedition of the taking of [Leith], for they think the Dowager does more harm than 500 Frenchmen. She sends [messages] continually up and down, which cannot be remedied without a siege.” Norfolk

⁶⁸ “The Siege of Leith,” April 17, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 1015.

complained about Grey's reticence to take the initiative but hoped that "Cecil's letters will remedy this long slackness."⁶⁹

It transpired that the regent was sending intelligence to her men at Leith using various persons, including a "little French boy," as couriers. Upon approaching the fortress, the French boy would shoot an arrow over the wall with her message attached.⁷⁰ From her vantage point atop the castle's towers, the regent could survey the entire battlefield and identify the weak points in the British positions. The regent's messages to her men enabled them to send forces out to engage in "skirmishes almost every day" to delay and spoil the English construction of trenches and emplacement of artillery. The regent's information also enabled the French to train their guns on English fortifications and rake their trenches with deadly accuracy.⁷¹

Norfolk also wanted a response from Cecil about Winter's proposal to take Inchkeith. The admiral believed that the defenders there were running out of ammunition and victuals and the island could be taken easily. Finally, Norfolk observed that the Bishop of Valence had reached Berwick and would be journeying into Scotland the next day to confer with the regent in an attempt to obtain a settlement. "He desires to talk with the Dowager but one hour, and then he promises to return to the Lords of the Congregation."⁷²

Elizabeth had decided to give negotiations one last try, believing she held a position of strength. Her view was reinforced

⁶⁹ "Norfolk to Cecil," April 19, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 1032.

⁷⁰ Dickinson, "Journal of the Siege of Leith," 159, 161.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 54-55.

⁷² "Norfolk to Grey," April 19, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol 2, no. 1033.

by a message from Thomas Gresham, her financial wizard in Antwerp. Gresham reported that the queen “need not fear either Philip or the French king. He perceives King Philip is clean out of money, armour, munition, and credit.” He also advised her that although saltpeter and other materials for munitions were still available in Antwerp markets, “there is no powder to be got here.” The queen should construct four or six powder mills in England to compensate for the lack of supplies on the continent.⁷³

In London, on the day that Valence left for Berwick, April 20, Elizabeth put her foot down, in writing. She issued the following response to the endless protestations made by the French ambassador, M. de Seure. It was designed to bring the war of missives to an end and send the ball back into the French court. After a lengthy recitation of the history of French prevarication and treaty violations justifying English actions in Scotland, she said, “if the French King will appoint commissioners to meet her commissioners [she] will agree to an abstinence of arms,” that is, a ceasefire; and if the French King would agree to put her right and title to her kingdom “out of dispute,” she would agree to refer their “grievances” to King Philip for arbitration.⁷⁴ Elizabeth had opened the door to a settlement; it was up to the French to walk through it.

Valence arrived at Berwick on April 20 and entered Scotland the next day. After several days of non-productive talks with representatives of the Lords, he conferred with the regent, and on the 25th, presented her terms as follows: The Lords must

⁷³ “Gresham to Cecil,” April 19, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 1036.

⁷⁴ “Answers to the French Ambassador’s Protestations,” April 20, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 1040.

return to obedience of their sovereigns (King Francis and Queen Mary) and the regent; they must obey all the laws and customs of the realm as in the past; they would have to break with England, and the English army would have to leave Scotland. In return, she might consider dismantling the fortification of Leith, provided the town's nobles agreed; and Dumbarton Castle would be handed over to Scotsmen for safekeeping pending parliamentary approval of permanent Scottish ownership.⁷⁵ The Lords rejected the proposal, holding to their demands that the regent must be dethroned, and Scotland be ruled by Scots. The fortress at Leith must be demolished and all French troops withdrawn to France, except for a few to remain at Dunbar, Inchkeith, and Blackness.⁷⁶

Elizabeth, meanwhile, sent the following message to Norfolk for transmission to Grey authorizing full-scale action but curiously delegating responsibility to her field commanders. The message, dated April 23 in the record, marked a major change in policy, and deserves quotation at length:

By his letters of the 19th hereof, she perceives that it is agreed by the Lords of Scotland and her Ministers, that if she would be content, the Castle of Edinburgh might be taken and the taking of Leith advanced, which enterprise may be done in four days; to which proposal and the

⁷⁵ *Calendar of State Papers Relating to Scotland and Mary Queen of Scots, 1547-1603*, vol. 1, ed. Joseph Bain (Edinburgh: General Register House, 1898), 382-383. [Hereafter referred to as *CSP: Scotland*.]

⁷⁶ For a first-hand account of the negotiation, see "Maitland to Cecil," April 26, 1560, Number 1076, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no 1076 and the same message in *CSP: Scotland*, vol. 1, no. 750, pp. 381-383, which includes the appended April 25 proposal from the regent.

surprise of Inchkeith (which by Winter's report seems to be in a hard case for want of victual), he desires speedy answer. He will understand, that *by advice of the Council*, she thinks that the matter of Edinburgh Castle shall be circumspectly considered; and that nothing necessary be omitted that may tend to the accomplishing of her purpose. The Queen will be contented—*if it shall appear to Grey and the Council with him* that the accomplishment of her purpose against Leith cannot be otherwise with expedition obtained, neither by treaty and accord, nor by force—that then *they shall use their discretion* to attempt Edinburgh, as shall seem most necessary for the service. Before force be showed against the Castle, they shall make some honourable offers to the Dowager, which, if she will not accept, then they may proceed to the enterprise as the case requires, and that with honourable considerations towards her person. As for Inchkeith, it seems their lack of victual is such that it cannot long endure, being well kept from replenishing their store; but therein *the Queen remits the matter to the discretion of Grey and the Council with him, and the Admiral*; so as the prosecution of Leith be not neglected.⁷⁷

The Queen had reversed her earlier decision against “intermeddling” against the castle. She was now prepared to seize the regent but left it up to her commanders to determine how to proceed. Curiously, although the message was addressed

⁷⁷ “The Queen to Norfolk,” April 23, 1560, appended as n7 in “Norfolk to Grey,” April 19, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 1032 (emphasis supplied). The logic of the message and its content indicate that it may have been sent *after* the regent’s unacceptable response of April 25.

to Norfolk, she mentioned only Grey, his council, and Winter as the men who would decide. Their decisions and course of action would depend on the regent's reply to "honourable offers."

The regent's answer of April 25 ended all pretense of a negotiation. She would not agree to relinquish her authority. She would consider the demolition of Leith, she said, upon "the advice of the noblemen in the said town." (When consulted, her field commanders opposed demolition and insisted they could hold out against attack.)⁷⁸ The Regent had effectively dismissed any possibility of compromise. The outcome would be decided on the battlefield.

Repulse at Leith: A French Pyrrhic Victory

On the same day that the dowager regent was rejecting any settlement, Throckmorton had sent intelligence to Elizabeth that the Duke of Guise was plotting to assassinate her. The Guises, he reported, were planning to "poison her by means of an Italian named Stephano, a burly man with a black beard, about forty-five years of age; he has gone hence to Germany and thence into England to offer his services to the Queen as an engineer." This matter, he cautioned needlessly, "must be handled with good secrecy," but "being forewarned . . . she need not fear."⁷⁹ It was the first of many unsuccessful attempts to kill the queen, who was now determined to persevere. Throckmorton also confirmed that King Philip was taking his troops from the Netherlands and sending them direct to Spain

⁷⁸ Dickinson, "The Journal of the Siege of Leith," 131.

⁷⁹ "Throckmorton to the Queen," April 25, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 1066.

for redeployment to Tripoli. There was, in short, no reason for concern that he would assist the French and deploy them to Scotland.⁸⁰

The queen's message stunned Norfolk, who had opposed attacking the castle and seizing the regent, and in early April the queen had agreed. Now, she had reversed her decision, authorizing such an attack, along with the taking of Inchkeith. Grey and the Scots, on the other hand, had argued for taking the castle from the beginning. Norfolk, it seems, now schemed to promote his preferred course of action, the assault on Leith, not the castle. Therefore, he delayed forwarding the Queen's message to Grey and replied to Cecil, emphasizing Leith's weakness, and disparaging his field commanders for their slackness.⁸¹

Pressing the case for an assault on Leith, he reckoned that "of itself, [Leith] is no ways strong, nor yet will they find in it half the 4,000 that have been by these fearful men so often named." Furthermore, "a great many of their best captains are slain or hurt." Then, he pointed his finger at Grey, "who shows himself forward enough, but all is not in him that has been thought." Again, referring elliptically to Grey and also to Croft, whom Norfolk had sent earlier from Berwick to be Grey's aide, he said "there be two in the field, the one so far to seek, the other so desperate as nothing proceeds."⁸²

Coming to his point, Norfolk argued that "the only way for Cecil to further this matter, is by forbidding of the treaty and

⁸⁰ "Throckmorton to Cecil, April 25, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 1068.

⁸¹ "Norfolk to Cecil," April 26, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, no. 1075.

⁸² *Ibid.*

commanding the battery with the assault [on Leith].” Leith was ready for the taking. “There is no defence to the water side ward, but bords with sand cast against it; and no either part of the town much stronger, except it be towards the north-west part, where they have made a citadel.” Grey and Croft had “diverse times” claimed that the Scots “had not their full number,” but, he insisted, they had “stood the trial . . . and missed not one man.”⁸³

This view of the fortifications at Leith was contrary to the facts. Norfolk had not visited the front himself and what knowledge he had gleaned about conditions there he obtained from messages from commanders and the observations of his messengers. In truth, Elizabeth had not left much to his discretion. The decision-making process had flowed through and around him at Berwick, as the Queen and Cecil sent messages to him for forwarding to the commanders in the field and vice versa. His role was to act as manager of the message center and logistics coordinator, organizing supplies for forces in the field.

But now, the twenty-two-year-old duke was inserting himself into a central role, opposing the decision of the queen and denigrating the views of his considerably more experienced and senior on-scene commanders. (Grey was fifty-two, Sadler fifty-three, and Croft, forty-two.) In a stream of messages to Cecil of April 27, 28, and 29, he reiterated his view that “they shall quickly make an end of Leith” for “it is a shame to lie so long at a sand wall” and “he cannot find . . . that there is any sure way but

⁸³ Ibid.

by the winning of Leith,” and “if things had been handled with . . . celerity before,” Leith would not be a problem now.⁸⁴

Meanwhile, both sides were advancing their trench networks toward each other, traverse by traverse. The English sought to extend their trenches further around the left and right wings of their fortified lines toward the Firth, where they believed defenses were weakest, while the French were digging theirs outside their ramparts to block them. The result was an intensification of trench warfare characterized by intense hand-to-hand combat and point-blank exchange of gunfire. The fighting was almost entirely between Englishmen and Frenchmen, as Grey lamented that he had “no hope to get any Scots for love or money.”⁸⁵ Making matters worse, there had been a “great rain, which filled the trenches with water, making the ground like a marsh.”⁸⁶

This news came in a message to Norfolk from Grey, Sadler, and Croft on April 30. The unusual joint format was crafted to show unity among the battlefield commanders as they leveled a sharp indictment against Norfolk. They were outraged by his ploy of delaying the forwarding of the queen’s orders to them. Grey said, “if he had had the like commission as now he has to assay Edinburgh Castle it had been well achieved long ere this.” Grey was saying that if he had received the queen’s authorization when she issued it several days earlier, the castle would already be in their hands. As a result of Norfolk’s delaying

⁸⁴ *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, “Norfolk to Cecil,” April 27, 1560, no.1078; “Norfolk and Leek to Cecil,” April 28, 1560, no. 1085; and “Norfolk to Cecil,” April 29, 1560, no. 1091.

⁸⁵ “Grey to Norfolk,” April 28, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 1088.

⁸⁶ “Grey, Sadler, and Croftes to Norfolk,” April 30, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 1099.

tactic “they are now in such forwardness [against Leith] . . . they cannot attempt any other enterprise until it is ended.” They would “in two or three days be ready for the assault. Therefore they think it not meet to meddle with Edinburgh Castle, or Inchkeith, till this be accomplished.”⁸⁷ The course was set for Leith.

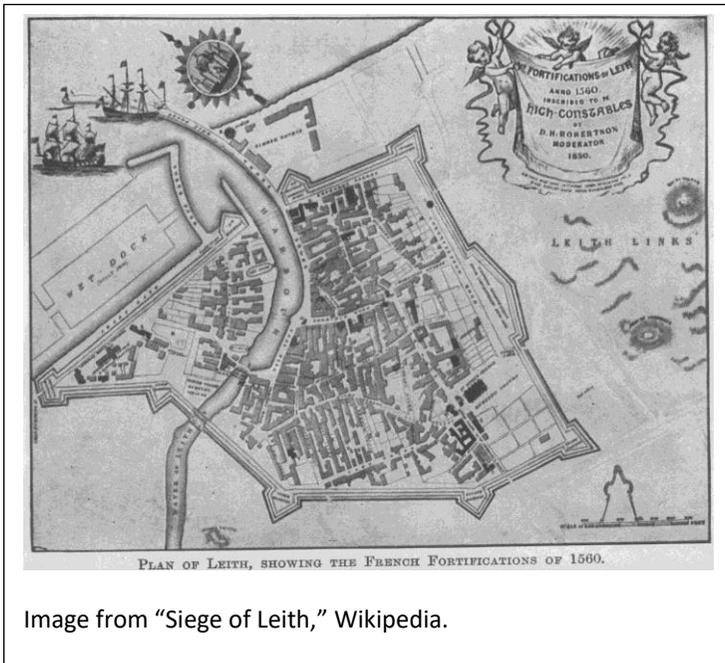


Image from “Siege of Leith,” Wikipedia.

A large fire broke out in the southwest part of Leith on the 30th. It was estimated that it had already “burnt a third of the town.” Some thought English artillery fire had ignited it and others that the French had started it, intending to “abandon the

⁸⁷ Ibid.

town altogether.”⁸⁸ (It turned out to be an accident.) Norfolk thought it the moment to “hasten the enterprise,” but Grey reported that “their trenches were so drowned with rain, which made the earth so deep and dirty that it would not sustain the weight of the [gun] pieces.” Nevertheless, in deference to Norfolk, he issued the order for the assault on Leith to be launched on May 7.⁸⁹

With all cannon in place, starting on May 3 Grey ordered an increase in shelling so the gunners could zero in on their targets. Their objectives were mainly to knock out the French flanking artillery positions atop the ramparts of Leith and to make breaches in the walls west and northwest of the town. After a day of pounding, however, Grey reported that “the French reinforced and filled the places battered with so much great travail that they seem rather to have put themselves in more strength than before. No assaultable breach has yet been made.”⁹⁰

Grey was concerned that “their power is far too weak; if they give the assault and have the repulse, they will not be able to give the second.”⁹¹ Croft, too, after inspecting the damage, advised a delay of the assault until a larger breach had been made in the walls.⁹² Norfolk would have no delay. He had manipulated the target list, focusing their efforts on Leith, and postponing the attack on the castle and Inchkeith. In what was a

⁸⁸ “Grey to Norfolk,” April 30, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 2, no. 1100.

⁸⁹ “Grey and others to Norfolk,” May 1, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 3, no. 3.

⁹⁰ “Grey and others to Norfolk,” May 4, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 3, no. 28.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Patrick D. Wright, *Sir James Croft, 1518-1590* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1969), 70.

grievous tactical error, by exempting the castle from attack, he left in place the regent's intelligence capability. Not only was she able to alert her forces to the weak points in the English positions, later it would be learned that someone in the English-Scottish camp had passed on to her the English plan for the attack on Leith.

Unfortunately, the English only discovered how valuable her information was two weeks after the assault on Leith had failed. Throckmorton reported that English intelligence had belatedly intercepted and deciphered messages the regent had been sending to her forces in Leith. She had received Grey's plan of attack the day he had issued it. The regent had "knowledge of all that is done and determined both in the councils of Lord Grey and the Scots, as appears by her warning given of the manner, hour, and place of the assault." He noted that the regent, "having such intelligence, what a great impeachment it is to the English enterprises that she is suffered to be in the castle of Edinburgh so near her friends."⁹³

Leaving the castle untouched had been a terrible mistake. The disastrous assault on Leith, May 7, failed not only because English and Scots forces were too weak, as Grey noted, but also because the French had advance notice of when the attack would come and what were its targets. With such knowledge the French defenders at Leith were able to concentrate their scarce resources at the points of the assault and defeat it. Knowing the time of the assault enabled the French to engineer an opportune diversion of the river that flowed through the town (the Waters of Leith) to fill up the moat

⁹³ "Throckmorton to Cecil," May 22, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 3, no. 116.

surrounding it.⁹⁴ The earth abutting the fortress's walls became a quagmire.

The attack was doomed from the start. When English soldiers stormed the fortifications at Leith at dawn, they found that, as Grey and Croft had warned, there were no breaches in the walls to gain entry. When they attempted to scale the walls, their ladders sank into the bog and left the ladders several feet short of the top. As the flanking turrets remained intact, French forces had English troops at the base of the walls in a crossfire like ducks in a pond as even townspeople were able to hurl rocks and boiling water down upon the hapless men. It was all over in two hours, but the consequences would reverberate for months.

English Victory, Recriminations, and Disappointments

The French had repulsed the assault, but their defeat was inevitable. The English and Scottish forces had suffered heavier losses in men and materiel than the French, but their losses were replaceable; French losses were not. Unless rescued by diplomacy, the options for the French forces at Leith were either to surrender or die of starvation. In the heat of the moment, before this reality sank in, the finger-pointing began. Before all the dead and wounded had been counted, Grey sent his after-action report. Acknowledging defeat, with a thousand "hurt and slain," he blamed the failure of the assault on the "disorder and cowardice of their men." A second assault was out of the question, but he believed they "can keep the field" with sufficient reinforcements. These, however, must be "English, as there is no

⁹⁴ Wright, *Sir James Croft*, 70.

trust to be given to the Scots.” In closing, he facetiously asked “to have the duke’s direction.”⁹⁵

Grey sent a second report later the same day. He thought their circumstances “worse . . . than they supposed” and sent his messenger, Francis Killinghale to Norfolk to explain the “case” more fully. He asked “that he may be directed to the Court to declare the whole to the Queen and Council.”⁹⁶ Killinghale carried with him a fourteen-point report with details of casualties, remaining resources, and problems they faced. If there was to be a second assault, “there must be at least 12,000 [men], and their need requires 20,000.” What alarmed Norfolk most, however, was the statement that “Lord Grey would never have attempted [the assault] if he had not been forced thereto by [Norfolk’s] letters.”⁹⁷

Lord Grey had blamed Norfolk for urging the assault before they were ready, and the duke felt compelled to refute the accusation. Holding back Killinghale at Berwick for a day, he prepared his rebuttal. First, he sent a message to Cecil denying any role in hastening the assault on Leith and pointing the finger instead at Grey for the failure.⁹⁸ His message would arrive first. Then, next day, he sent his own messenger, Nicholas L’Estrange, with Killinghale to London. L’Estrange held in his pouch Norfolk’s own ten-point rebuttal, so that Cecil would be able to read the

⁹⁵ “Grey and Others to Norfolk,” May 7, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 3, no. 44.

⁹⁶ “Grey and Others to Norfolk,” May 7, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 3, no. 45.

⁹⁷ “Articles for Killinghale,” May 8, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 3, no. 57.

⁹⁸ “Norfolk to Cecil,” May 8, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 3, no. 59.

two accounts side by side.⁹⁹ Meanwhile, Grey, learning that Killinghale had been delayed, decided to go around Norfolk and send messages directly to the Queen and to Cecil, explaining the “repulse,” asking for reinforcements, but not blaming the duke.¹⁰⁰

The finger-pointing exchange had all the makings of a major scandal, until cooler heads prevailed. The Lord Admiral Edward Clinton, 1st Earl of Lincoln, put the entire episode into acceptable perspective. In a personal message to Cecil on May 12, Clinton characterized the assault as “honor to the defenders, and more to the assailants.” The queen must see it through to the end. Both sides lost men in the battle, but “each man lost on their side is more to their weakening and peril than the loss of ten to the English.”¹⁰¹

According to Clinton, “it cannot be thought that their victuals will serve them above one month.” If the French sought to aid their men, “English ships would join those in the Firth before the French could.” In the meantime, he suggested, a thousand-man reinforcement “will bring an end of their resistance” and he urged that the Duke of Norfolk be sent to assume command of the forces at Leith, as his “presence in the field would greatly encourage the English and Scots.” Grey would be made governor of Berwick, completing the switch and ending their difficulty. Norfolk’s presence at Leith would help smooth over whatever difficulties Grey had had with the Scots.

⁹⁹ “Articles for Sir Nicholas L’Estrange,” May 8, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 3, no 62.

¹⁰⁰ *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 3, “Grey to the Queen,” May 8, 1560, no. 55; and “Grey to Cecil,” May 8, 1560, no. 56.

¹⁰¹ “Lord Clinton to Cecil,” May 12, 1560, *CSPF: Elizabeth*, vol. 3, no. 85.

Thereafter, the endgame proceeded along two tracks. Queen Elizabeth strengthened the blockade of Leith, while her soldiers attempted to dig underneath the walls to gain access to the fortress. She also threatened to attack Edinburgh Castle, Dunbar, Eyemouth, and Inchkeith. Finally, the queen redeployed the royal navy back to Portsmouth where it was poised to intercept any French attempt to reinforce their men in Scotland. On the other hand, she offered a negotiated settlement to King Francis, who accepted. The French had no alternatives between ignominious defeat and a political settlement that offered the glimmer of a face-saving outcome. They chose the latter course, seeking to buy time by dragging out the talks.

No sooner had the treaty negotiations begun, however, than French hopes were dashed by the death of the regent, Mary Guise, on June 11 after a month-long illness. Her death was disheartening to French commissioners, the Bishop of Valence and Sieur de Randan, who were now empowered to decide on terms. Elizabeth's foreign secretary, William Cecil, and the Privy Council's foreign affairs expert, Nicholas Wotton, negotiated for the English side. After much haggling and compromise, the Treaty of Edinburgh was signed on July 6, 1560, marking a major triumph for Elizabeth.¹⁰² The accord turned what in effect was a French province into an English ally and established security in the north, despite the border brigands (reivers) who would remain a persistent irritant throughout Elizabeth's reign, but she chose to ignore it. Scotland would remain politically and religiously

¹⁰² Text of the treaty is in Samuel Haynes ed., *State Papers of William Cecil* (London: William Bowers, 1740), 354-357. For a usefully annotated version, see "The Treaty of Edinburgh," *Life in Elizabethan England* (online), <http://elizabethan.org/compendium/82.html>.

volatile and the French and Spanish would periodically attempt to instigate factional strife, but the Anglo-Scottish relationship would endure intact.

The treaty recognized Elizabeth as the rightful ruler of England and the French agreed to desist from using her arms and style. It established an independent Scottish government with a governing council of twelve, of which seven would be named by Queen Mary and five by the three Scottish estates (clergy, nobles, burghers), maintaining a formal, if tenuous French tie. French negotiators could not agree to include any mention of a treaty relationship between Scotland and England and so it was not mentioned, but the reality of the alliance was apparent. Nor was there any mention of religion in the treaty. The Scottish Parliament, meeting in August, would nullify the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church and recognize the Protestant faith. John Knox and five fellow ministers would prepare the legislation.

The treaty provided for the eradication of the French presence in Scotland and the formal ascendancy of England. By early August, in a graphic demonstration of English power, Elizabeth ordered a small flotilla of merchant ships to transport 4,195 French men, women, and children back to France. Of this number 2,300 were soldiers. One hundred and twenty soldiers were left in Scotland, sixty at Inchkeith island, where they were totally isolated, and sixty at Dunbar, but the demolition of the fortresses of Leith, Dunbar, and Eyemouth began immediately. English forces withdrew from Scotland, too, but five thousand troops were deployed in and around Berwick-upon-Tweed as insurance.

If Elizabeth got most of what she wanted out of this expensive but strategically decisive intervention in Scotland, several got less. While both English and Scots welcomed the expulsion of the French and the establishment of an independent Scottish government, there were those who sought the establishment of a unified monarchy. These included Cecil, on the English side; and James Hamilton, Duke of Châtellerauld; his son, the third Earl of Arran; and William Maitland, on the Scottish side. They all argued for the establishment of a unified monarchy sealed by the marriage of Elizabeth to Arran, who had a claim to the Scottish throne. Indeed, the earl was the unnamed person in Cecil's nearly constant prodding of the queen to marry at this time.

Elizabeth demurred; the idea of marriage to Arran had always been a political device to justify her involvement in his escape from France the previous year and to encourage Scottish support. As with her other proposed marriages, the queen would not consider subordinating herself to a king, whether European, English, or Scottish. Besides, there was another silent party whose considerations loomed large over the English-Scottish arrangement and that was King Philip II of Spain.

Elizabeth had signaled her preferred outcome of an independent Scotland with no unified monarchy to Philip early on and she stuck to it now. The queen, Cecil, and Sir Robert Dudley, the queen's close confidant, likely conveyed that message to him through the Spanish ambassador, Álvaro de la Quadra.¹⁰³ She understood, perhaps more than her other

¹⁰³ Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth*, 43-44, in the context of discussions about the strange death of Amy Robsart, Robert Dudley's wife, saw Dudley as "an assiduous cultivator of the Spanish ambassador." He

advisers, that the establishment of a unified monarchy would not only present a threat to Spain and the Spanish position in the Netherlands but might also prod the two Catholic powers into an alliance against her. Elizabeth was not yet prepared to meet such a challenge. As it turned out, the union of England and Scotland would not occur for another hundred forty-seven years, in 1707.

notes that Cecil also “approached the Spaniard,” and the queen herself spoke to him “in confidence” about the matter. In my view, which cannot be proven, all three used the opportunity to convey the queen’s decision about Scotland to Philip through the ambassador.