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**Review Essay: Haynes, Alan. *Invisible Power: The Elizabethan Secret Services, 1570-1603***

F. Jeffrey Platt  
*Northern Arizona University*

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the great humanist had serious reservations concerning idolizing kings but remained appalled at the thought of popular rule. In Erasmus's scheme of things, a limited monarchy checked by the aristocracy most likely would preserve order and peace. Hardin also demonstrates that Erasmus was bitterly opposed to warfare, regarding it as 'antithetical to the spirit of Christianity' (p 71). He concludes this chapter with the observation that Shakespeare offers 'a clear-cut case of direct contact with Erasmus's political thought; but Spenser and Milton certainly knew him [Erasmus], and must have sympathized with his program for the reform of rule through the assertion of Christian liberty' (p 90). Hardin's thoughtful and revealing discussion of *Paradise Regained* in chapter 5 illustrates the political elements in the poem, demonstrating how Milton redefines *conquest* (pp 191-201). The importance of this section in the book cannot be overstated.

In the chapter entitled 'Spenser's Anatomy of Tyranny', Hardin wants to revise 'the general acceptance of Spenser as courtly flatterer and enthusiast for empire in the modern sense' (p 119) but fortunately stops short of arguing that Spenser shared Erasmus's hatred of war. That Mercilla represents a criticism of the excessive mercy the historical Elizabeth showed to Irish rebels is probable (p 121), but Spenser, who espoused the liberal Protestant politics of Sidney, Walsingham, Leicester, and Essex, would hardly have idealized Mercilla's rusty sword.

The principle difficulty, however with the Spenser chapter arises from an uncritical treatment of the texts of *A View of the Present State of Ireland* and 'A Brief Note of Ireland' (pp 93-5). Hardin quotes an agreement error from Spenser's *View*, 'to see her majestie so abused by some whom they [*sic*] put in speciall truste of those greate affairs' and then comments, 'a revealing slip, "they" for "she": it means either to identify the queen with her privy council, or to indicate her position as a corporate entity, a creation of the law' (p 93). Since Spenser's *View* was not printed until thirty-five years after his death, this kind of intentionality on Spenser's part cannot be assumed. The editors of *The Spenser Variorum* do not even claim to have collated all of the manuscripts that were extant when their text was prepared, and additional manuscripts have since been identified in Peter Beal's *Index of English Literary Manuscripts* (1980). In addition, Spenser's authorship of 'A Brief Note of Ireland' is by no mean certain. In *The Spenser Encyclopedia* (1990) Ciaran Brady accepts Spenser's authorship of only the third of the three parts of 'A Brief Note of Ireland', rejecting the second part containing a letter to queen Elizabeth upon which Hardin bases his arguments.

Hardin's book is ambitious and challenges us to rethink our easy assumptions regarding the treatment of monarchy in Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton. This work will be very influential and merits the wide readership it will attract.

Jean R. Brink  
Arizona State University

Alan Haynes's *Invisible Power*, an important step forward in the study of the Elizabethan 'secret services', provides historians with the first coherent overview of the workings of Elizabethan espionage in discovering and defusing those major conspiracies aimed at reestablishing Catholicism and overthrowing Elizabeth and her chief ministers. Focusing on the triumvirate of Burghley, Walsingham, and Leicester, Haynes compares and contrasts the scope and effectiveness of their individual espionage organizations and concludes Walsingham was the greatest of the three spy masters. His secretaryship alone is known to have employed from 100 to 500 domestic and foreign correspondents. Add the large numbers of informants found in Burghley's, Leicester's, Robert Cecil's, and Essex's employ, and one begins to appreciate the scope of the Privy Council's efforts to protect the Elizabethan settlement.

Together these men sized up the unfinished nature of that settlement, the queen's unmarried status, and her lack of a clear successor, concluding that a first-rate intelligence network was not only the most certain but also the safest and most economical defense weapon for protecting their vulnerable queen. Wedding state and ruler as one and the same, the Privy Council concluded that any threat to the body of the queen was a threat to the nation as a whole.

The book begins with William Cecil's successful foiling of Dr John Stoy's dreams of royal murder and an invasion of England and ends with the fall of Essex. Taking exception to some of Conyers Read and Penry Williams's more recent conclusions that the Elizabethan Privy Councilors failed to create anything resembling a 'sophisticated' spy system, Haynes concludes that Elizabeth's espionage underlay much that was central to the policy formulations of the queen and her ministers.

Haynes cites additional reasons for this expansion of espionage, including the efforts to fill the gaps created by a contracting diplomatic service that left England with few resident ambassadors and a royal parsimony that saw spies as 'the cheapest, handiest substitute for resident diplomats' (p 157).

Haynes's reliance on eighty-nine secondary sources, while referencing only three original and ten calendared manuscripts, leaves one wondering what a careful and systematic study of all the original manuscript sources would have revealed. Many paragraphs that are filled with important conclusions fail to footnote any of the sources consulted. Nevertheless, this book lays a significant foundation for that brave soul who will someday spend half a lifetime shuffling through the early modern manuscript collections of the British Isles and western Europe in order to provide a more definitive account of Elizabethan espionage. Haynes is to be thanked for preparing this well-summarized handbook on the long-neglected Elizabethan secret services which he concludes made England 'a sour authoritarianism' rather than a 'truly secret state' (p 156).

F. Jeffrey Platt  
Northern Arizona University