

(4) Period 1585-1589

Time	Event	Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford	William Shakespeare of Stratford
1585	<p>March 3: Execution of the conspirator William Parry</p> <p>May: Queen Elizabeth, for a long time reluctant to war with Spain, sends an expeditionary force under the command of Sir John Norris to the Low Countries.</p> <p>August 17: After a siege of 13 months the city of Antwerp surrenders to Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma, successor of Don John of Austria as governor of the Low Countries.</p> <p>August: Oxford is entrusted with the generalship of the horse (cavalry). On August 27 he lands at Flushing.</p> <p>September 16: Queen Elizabeth decides to come to the aid of the Low Countries. English troops are sent under the command of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. (1)</p> <p>October: For some unknown reason Oxford resigns from his command of the cavalry and returns to England.</p> <p>December: The Earl of Leicester lands in the Low Countries.</p>	<p>First half-year: Oxford becomes a fellow (“partner”) of a society for the discovery of the North West Passage. Other partners are Adrian Gilbert, John Dee and Walter Raleigh. John Davis, one of the most famous English explorers, sets out on another expedition for the discovery of the North West Passage.</p> <p>August: see column to the left.</p>	February 2: His twins, Hamnet and Judith, are born.
1586	January 25: The queen is infuriated at the Earl of Leicester for accepting the title of Governor-General of the Netherlands offered him by the States General of the United Provinces	Publication of William Webbe’s <i>Discourse of English Poetry</i> . Webbe writes: “ I may not omit the deserved commendations of many honourable and noble Lords in her Majesty’s Court, which in the rare devises of Poetry have been and yet are most excellent skilful, among whom the right honourable Earl of Oxford may challenge to himself the title of the most excellent among the rest.”	

	<p>June 28: Leicester has Baron Hemar executed for losing the town of Grave to the Spaniards. This extreme cruelty and other events lead to a deterioration of the earl's authority among the Dutch. By and by Leicester's position is severely criticized.</p> <p>August: Conspiracy for liberating Mary Stuart and putting her on the English throne, known as Babington plot, after Anthony Babington, one of the conspirators. Shortly afterwards Mary Stuart is put on trial for High Treason.</p> <p>October 17: After being wounded at Zutphen, Sir Philip Sidney dies at Arnhem.</p> <p>December: Sir William Stanley surrenders the fortified town of Deventer to the Duke of Parma, Rowland Yorke the town of Zutphen. Both Stanley and Yorke join their enemies, the Spaniards.</p>	<p>Angel Day publishes <i>The English Secretary</i>, dedicated to Oxford.</p> <p>June 21: Letter from Burghley to Walsingham: "I pray you send me word if you had any commodity to speak with her Majesty to speak for my Lord of Oxford and what hope there is, and if you have any to let Robert Cecil understand it to relieve his sister, who is more troubled for her husband's lack than he himself.</p> <p>June 25: Oxford's letter to Burghley about a forthcoming favour by the Queen, a suit in which Walsingham has supported him. (2)</p> <p>June 26: Oxford is granted a fixed yearly amount of £ 1,000 by the queen.</p> <p>June 30: Some of Oxford's followers are imprisoned at Dunkirk (now in North France, then in the Low Countries under Spanish rule).</p>	
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1587	<p>February 18: Mary Stuart beheaded at Fotheringhay Castle.</p> <p>December: Leicester is called back from the Low Countries.</p>	<p>May 26: Birth of his third daughter Susan.</p> <p>Sells two estates, acquires one.</p>	
1588	<p>May 12: The Day of the Barricades in Paris. Henri III is compelled to flee from Paris to Blois. The Duke of Guise controls the capital; he is appointed lieutenant-general of France</p> <p>July-August: Defeat of the Spanish Armada.</p> <p>August: From his deathbed Richard Tarleton (buried on September 3), leading actor of the Queen's Men, writes to Sir Francis Walsingham, asking him to protect his youngest son Philip against the machinations of one Mr. Adams, "fuller of law than of virtue".</p> <p>September 4: Death of the Earl of Leicester.</p> <p>November: The first of the Martin Marprelate tracts is issued. The Martin Marprelate tracts attack the Anglican church, especially John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, in a popular satirical vein.</p> <p>December 23: The Duke of Guise is murdered at Blois by King Henri III's bodyguard.</p>	<p>July: Death of Anne, Countess of Oxford.</p> <p>Anthony Munday dedicates to him the romance <i>Palmerin d'Oliva, part I</i>.</p> <p>December: Sells his luxurious house named Fisher's Folly.</p>	

1589	<p>January 5:</p> <p>Catherine de' Medici dies at Blois.</p> <p>August 1: King Henri III of France is mortally wounded by the blackfriar (Dominican) Jacques Clément. On his deathbed he appoints Henri, king of Navarra, as his successor.</p>	<p>Anonymous publication of George Puttenham's <i>The Arte of Englishe Poesie</i> in which the Earl of Oxford is said to be the foremost court poet.</p> <p>Publication of Robert Greene's <i>Menaphon</i>.</p>	<p>William Shackespere is named in legal proceedings for the recovery of the mortgaged property of his mother in Wilmcote.</p>
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- (1) As security the Dutch have to put two cautionary towns under English government: Flushing (Vlissingen) and Brill. Sir Philip Sidney is appointed governor of Flushing, Sir Thomas Cecil, Lord Burghley's eldest son from his first wife Mary Cheke, governor of Brill. This marks the formal beginning of the war with Spain.
- (2) It is not known wherein Walsingham's support for Oxford's "suit" consisted. But it is interesting that in a booklet called *England's Mourning Garment* written by Henry Chettle in 1603 in commemoration of the deceased queen (Elizabeth I died on March 24, 1603) we find the following passage in relation to the war with Spain: "And albeit I know some (too humorously affected to the Roman government) make question in this place, whether her highness first brake not the truce with the *King of Spain*: to that I could answere ... that her highness suffered many wrongs before she left off the league." To which his fellow-shepherd Thenot replies: "O, saith *Thenot*, in some of those wrongs resolve us, and think it no unfitting thing, for thou that hast heard the songs of that warlike Poet *Philesides*, good *Melœbee*, and smooth tongued *Melicert*, tell us what thou hast observed in their saws, seene in thy own experience, and heard of undoubted truths touching those accidents: for that they add, I doubt not, to the glory of our *Eliza*." Colin (Clout) was Edmund Spenser's pastoral name. Spenser died early in 1599, so that Chettle can take this name over. Philesides is one of the pastoral names of Sir Philip Sidney; both Thomas Watson and Edmund Spenser had addressed Sir Francis Walsingham (died in 1590) as Meliboeus. Melicertus has not been identified. He is clearly a high-ranking person and at the same time a rhetorically gifted man ("smooth-tongued") who was involved in the preparations to the war with Spain. As seen above, the Earl of Oxford was involved in these preparations Towards the end of *England's Mourning Garment* Chettle addresses several living poets, reproaching them not to have published an elegy on the dead queen. Shakespeare is addressed by Chettle ... as Melicertus!!