

**Elizabeth the Resilient:
Providential favour and Protestant polemic in early modern England**

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The life of Elizabeth I of England is well known, and key events in her reign have been long mythologised and celebrated. Her resilience in the face of potentially traumatic events turned her into a potent national symbol of Protestantism that endured after her death. She survived multiple assassination attempts, recovered from several near-fatal illnesses, and became a focal point of national celebrations in the aftermath of the failed invasion of the Spanish Armada. Elizabeth herself, however, was rarely involved in foiling assassination attempts, nor did she play an active part in the preparations against the Armada. What mattered, however, was that her preservation from these traumatic events was seen as proof of Elizabeth's providential favour, which in turn helped create what we know today as the 'Elizabeth myth'. This paper considers three moments of crisis for Elizabeth—the interrogation as part of her assumed complicity in the Wyatt Rebellion under Mary I; the foiled Babington Plot, and the associated treachery of Mary, Queen of Scots; and the attempted invasion of the Spanish Armada—focusing on their use in royal and polemical propaganda in both the latter period of Elizabeth's reign and into the Stuart period. This paper thus argues that Elizabeth was a beacon of continuity for the Stuart monarchs, and in time, the English celebrated the last Tudor monarch's recovery and preservation from these moments of national impact as a way of counselling and critiquing their new Stuart kings.