

SUMMARY: The document below is a summary of an anonymous communication written in Italian dated 17 September 1574 mentioning that Lord Edward Seymour (1548-1574), who had left England with Oxford in July, was going to Spain.

On 1 July 1574 Oxford had secretly left England without licence, reportedly travelling to Calais in the company of Lord Edward Seymour, and from thence to Flanders, and 'carrying a great sum of money with him'. The Queen ordered Oxford to return 'under very heavy penalties', and he was back in England by 28 July. By 21 August Oxford had won back the Queen's favour because of his loyalty to her when approached by her exiled rebel subjects in Flanders, and had secured from her a promise to grant him licence to travel.

It is not known whether Lord Edward Seymour did in fact travel to Spain. He wrote to his brother from Paris on 18 September 1574 (see BL MS Add. 32091, f. 277), and is said to have died in Rome later that year (see Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool University Press, 2003), pp. 111, 459).

Rumours which were circulating at the time confused Lord Edward Seymour with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Southampton. Edward Woodshaw erroneously reported from Antwerp on 3 September 1574 that Southampton had fled to Spain, although in fact Southampton had never left England:

*There was a great triumph among the northern rebels who are here, and our Catholics at Louvain, when they heard of the Earl of Oxford's coming over; it was said that he was flying, and that the Earl of Southampton had fled to Spain.*

See *CSPD Addenda* 1566-79, p. 469. Woodshaw may have been an unreliable source. See Peck, Dwight C., ed., *Leicester's Commonwealth*, (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985), p. 165 at <http://www.dpeck.info/write/leic-comm3b.htm>:

*19. In Jan. 1575 Thomas Moffett arrived in Antwerp with a plan, not to kill, but to abduct Westmoreland away to England (as Dr. Story had been in 1570) and with letters (supposedly instructions) bearing Leicester's seal. The English ambassador to France, Dr. Wilson (then in Antwerp), referred him to Edward Woodshaw, a Catholic refugee who was an informant for Lord Burghley. On 26 Jan., before proceeding with the plan, Woodshaw wrote to Burghley asking his and Leicester's direct sanction, as he had doubts about Moffett. On 19 Feb. he wrote again to accuse Moffett of treachery: He said that Moffett had told Westmoreland of the plan and that together they had devised a counterplan to deceive Leicester of the thousand pounds promised for the abduction, and he asked that Leicester have Moffett sent for home and kept a close prisoner. Burghley passed Woodshaw's news on to Leicester, who replied on 27 Feb. that "Moffett is playing the varlet" and that he would try to have him brought back to England (all from H.M.C. Salisbury MSS., 2: 86-93). Whether such a plan originated with Leicester or with the exiles, to discredit the Earl or to trap Woodshaw, is open to question. On 16 Oct. 1594, Sir Edward and Lady Stafford were seeking to gain favorable treatment for "old Captain*

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*Moffett" in Newgate prison, apparently successfully (cited in Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica, n.s. 3 [1880], p. 369, with inaccurate reference).*

For other documents mentioning Oxford's departure from England without licence and his restoration to the Queen's favour, see TNA SP 12/45, p. 59; TNA SP 12/45, p. 60; TNA SP 15/26/1, f. 73; and the will of Edmund Yorke, TNA PROB 11/89/243.

For the letter below see No. 350 in *Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 2, 1572-1578*, ed. J M Rigg (London, 1926), *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/vatican/vol2> [accessed 9 June 2020].

Vatican Archives  
Nuntio d' Inghilterra  
vol. i.  
ff. 389–90

350. News Letter.

There goes to Spain Lord Edward Seler [Seymour], third son of the Duke of Solerset [Somerset], who took the chief part in establishing the heretical religion in England, being Protector of the Realm and of King Edward, as all the world knows, and was the cause of so much evil. And to this day his sons have followed in their father's footsteps, and are mainly supported and encouraged by Secretary Secil [Cecil], who was their father's servant and by him advanced to the service of King Edward because there was none so adroit as he in promoting his innovations and pretensions as he has done and still does with results so disastrous to all Christendom, endeavouring by means of a new religion and new titles to abrogate the right to the Crown of England and give it to the house of the Duke of Solerset [Somerset] with which he also seeks to ally himself. And now the said Lord Edward Seler [Seymour] pretends to be a Catholic and gives out that he desires to serve under Don John of Austria, and nevertheless will not allow that the Queen of Scotland has any right to the Crown of England. Some say that Secretary Secil [Cecil] is minded to do something for him, and to try if the Catholic King will give ear to a proposal for the marriage of one of the Infantas with the son of his brother, the Earl of Arford [Hertford], and that Secil [Cecil] has just of late begun to countenance the Catholics and show them favour, speaking them fair from time to time, and expressing a wish that they might live on their estates and in their houses with liberty of religion and conscience, but whether this proceed from fear or something worse, God knows.

It is understood that before many days are past Henry Coban [Cobham] will be again at that Court [of Spain]. Some of our Catholics are also going to Spain to crave support because they see that no provision is here made save for those that have first negotiated it in Spain, notwithstanding that they have spent much time here about the business, and by advice from Spain have done their best to avoid the journey, it being said that it is his

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Catholic Majesty's will that none should go thither to be there provided for, and that his Majesty had given order that so it should be. Among these are some that have secretly quitted England, and also some that have served the Prince of Orange.

17 September, 1574

Flanders

Decipher

[Italian]