

SUMMARY: The letter below was written on 19 November 1577 by the English ambassador in France, Sir Amias Paulet (c.1532-1588) to Sir Francis Walsingham. Paulet was appointed ambassador in September 1576, and served for three years. His letter books survive from May 1577 to August 1578 (see Bodl. Oxf., letter-books, MS Rawl. A. 331, Add. MSS c81-2). In an earlier letter of 10 July 1577, Paulet had advised Walsingham that 'the two young Veres', accompanied by Denny and Walter Williams, had arrived in Poitiers, and were 'resolved to follow the Duke of Guise into Champagne'. The Duke of Guise was Henri de Lorraine (1550-1588), Duke of Guise, who in 1576 had formed the Catholic League. The 'two young Veres' have been identified by Bossy as Sir Francis Vere (1560/1-1609) and his younger brother, Robert Vere, two of the sons of Oxford's youngest uncle, Geoffrey de Vere (see Bossy, John, 'English Catholics and the French marriage, 1577-81', *Recusant History*, 5:1 (1959), pp. 2-16). However *The Dictionary of National Biography* suggests that 'the two young Veres' were Francis, then about seventeen, and his older brother, John Vere (d.1624) of Kirby Hall. For the will of John Vere of Kirby Hall, see TNA PROB 11/143, ff. 510-15. For a letter written by Sir Francis Vere on 17 November 1605 mentioning his time in France in 1577, see Cecil Papers, 113/16. In the letter below, Paulet states that Denny and Williams were now serving under Don John of Austria (1547-1578) at Namur in Belgium, but he makes no mention of 'the two young Veres'. At the time of the writing of this letter to Walsingham, Paulet was in Paris, and mentions the arrival there of the Catholic exile Thomas Copley (1532-1584), who, according to *The Dictionary of National Biography*, was related to Walsingham, as well as to Lord Burghley and the Queen. The copy of the letter below is taken from Ogle, Octavius, ed., *Copy-book of Sir Amias Poulet's letters written during his embassy to France (A.D. 1577)* (London: J.B. Nichols, 1866) pp. 198-9.

To Mr Walsingham

It may please your Honour to be advertised that Mareschal Montmorency hath been expected here these five or six days, but he is not yet come. Men talk diversly of Damville, who remaineth at Pezonas [=Pezenas] in Languedoc, and some doubt what will become of him.

It is much feared lest there will be some mutiny in this town [=Paris], whereof there hath been some beginning already, the people being much discontented for many causes, but especially about the intended fall of money, wherein if present order be not given, it is most certain that some inconvenience will follow.

Chomerault is dispatched from the King [=Henri III of France] to the King of Navarre, and another is gone to him from the Queen of Navarre. You must allow them a month or two to talk of the matter. Some bad matter is in brewing, and some mischief is likely to fall out shortly among themselves.

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It is said that the Elector Palatine hath chased 140 ministers out of his dominions.

I was in good forwardness to have discovered a matter of good importance, and I was entered thus far that three traitorous plots have been set down against her Majesty and her state, whereof one only hath been discovered, and the other two remaining uneffectuated, I cannot impute the let thereof to any other thing than to the hope conceived of the stay of these ships of both sides might breed war between these two realms. I trust to hear further.

Mr Copley came to this town 14 days past and more, and shortly after repaired to my lodging, where he discoursed unto me some things that had passed between Mr Wilson and him, and pretended to bear a true and a faithful heart to her Majesty and his country, although he could not dissemble his singular affection to Don John [=of Austria]. After long conference between us, he seemed to depart from me very well content, and to take all that I had said unto him in thankful part, promising to see me again, but I hear no more of him, and do understand that he is daily conversant with De Vaux, ambassador here for Don John. There is a bad nest of fellows in this town, and there are daily meetings and consultations between them.

Denny and Williams are recommended to Don John by the Duke of Guise, and serve in the Castle of Namur, where are also Wiseman, Blomfield, and divers other Englishmen. Mr Englefield is at Luxembourg. There are daily skirmishes between those of Namur and the camp of the Estates, which is within one mile of Namur. It is believed here that new companies of Spaniards and Italians, to the number of 4000, are landed not far from Genes, and shall come unto the Low Countries. And thus, etc.