

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 31 March 1576 written by Francis Peto to Lord Burghley, mentioning that he had hoped to show Oxford the genealogical chart he was preparing for the Queen when Oxford passed through Milan on his way back to England. However, according to Peto, Oxford traveled incognito on that part of the return journey ('if he had passed this way visible to any English eye, as he did not'). Peto also mentions that he had tried to enter Oxford's service when Oxford passed through Milan several months earlier on his way to Venice ('and to that end made offer of myself in his first coming thither'), but was not able to speak with Oxford ('but upon good respects, as they were termed, I was refused to be spoken with'). It appears that Francis Peto was a Catholic exile who had resided outside England for many years, and it was perhaps to avoid suspicion by the authorities at home that Oxford did not meet with Peto in Milan.

In the letter Peto mentions Anne, the daughter of Sir Nicholas Carew of Beddington, who had married Sir Nicholas Throckmorton (1515/16-1571) about 1549. Their daughter, Elizabeth Throckmorton (1565?-1647?), later married Sir Walter Raleigh (1554-1618). Their son, Sir Arthur Throckmorton (1557?-1626), was a friend of Oxford's. It may be that Peto was related to Anne (nee Carew) Throckmorton.

For Oxford's friendship with Sir Arthur Throckmorton (1557?-1626), see Rowse, A.L., *Raleigh and the Throckmortons*, (London: Macmillan, 1962), pp. 78, 99.

Right honourable, the courteous and most gentle letter which it pleased your Lordship of your great goodness to write me by Mr Atkins I have received, and in the same two special points of comfort, thone is to see your Lordship satisfied of mine innocency in the book, thother that my disgrace is not such in your honourable favour as I thought it was, of both which I wrote of late in the middest of February a long and large letter unto your Lordship which this bearer is instructed how there to recover(?) if it be not already come to your hands, so as of those matters I have not for the present what(?) to enlarge, saving only with all humbleness to beseech your Honour to continue your good opinion of me till I by some act or deed manifest shall deserve the contrary, and of my friendship with any man, dead or alive, thus always to conceive of me that no regard thereof whatsoever hath or can be able to remove me out of the steps of th' honesty in which for long space past I made a determination of all my life. The book truly to be in other language than English I never understood, though(?) now by your Lordship's letter malice in some minds once rooted hath no end, but the wisdom again(?) of virtuous courage is to digest the same, and light to set those humours, as already I find your Honour hath done.

Touching mine absence out of my country, I cannot but confess it to have been overlong. Marry, tied to such causes, if all circumstances may be duly considered, as I am more to be pitied than envied therefore, and even so I presume I am of all good natures and minds that are content without passion to judge of my case. Nevertheless my departure

undoubtedly was with the Queen's Majesty's good licence, and by passport signed with her hand, as the Lady Throckmorton, wife to Sir Nicholas, the procurer thereof, if she be demanded I know will witness, so as for that account I was not to be deprived of anything.

Howbeit mine intent is not therefore to stand here in pleading or pretending injury received in that my pension is stayed, but do remit both myself and the same to her Majesty's bounty and great mercy, for whose service, as a testimony of my goodwill and devotion unto her royal person and also unto my native country, I have spent some time about a piece of work whereof I perceive your Lordship hath had some inkling.

And now in that behalf to satisfy your Honour's desire, these grounds following be the two upon which standeth the whole building. The first, to make demonstration by way of perfect(?) genealogy of all the marriages and affinity of blood which from time to time have been atween the houses of England and Scotland. The second, in what wise the same houses have been and are allied with divers foreign families, the greatest of all Christendom, partly by receiving blood from them and partly by giving blood to them, which purpose to accomplish this manner of style and order I do keep:

[+I] set forth the trees of England and Scotland in great and perspicuous form, carrying in them the lineal descent of all their kings until this day from the time that they did both first enjoy the state of monarchy, I mean either of them be in the government only of one king, which is above 700 years past;

[+I] plant by them in rotes(?), some higher, some lower, as aptliest falleth out for the designment, all these houses or titles following: France, Castile, Aragon, Navarre, Naples, Portugal, Denmark, Catalonia, Austria, Baviera [=Bavaria?], Este of Brunswick, Milan Visconti, Luxembourg, Britagne, Lorraine, Guelders(?), Flanders, Henant [=Henault?], Holland, Anjou, Aquitaine, Burgundy, Bouillon(?), Champagny and Blais(?) etc., all of small and suitable form, which rising upward with the said two great trees do make atween themselves many interlacing of circles, and thereby begetting an affinity, do at length transport the same into the said perspicuous trees or into some branches of them, in which part, for that the family of England beareth the chiefest sway, it keepeth always the midst of all the [], whereas Scotland for his barrenness standeth but upon a side.

I meddle with no titles to come.

Branches also of collaterals or others I distend none further than as necessarily serveth to my purpose, though for all that I leave out none from which hath sprung issue that is or may be in consideration of the world, as the houses of Suffolk and Clarence in England, and of the Hamiltons and Stuarts Lennox in Scotland. Every man, so far as my knowledge serveth, carrieth the year he died in, thereby the better to discern of the concurrences of the times and also of the unlikelihood of errors, which I trust altogether to have avoided, or at least not committed them without written authority.

The work is already finished in white and black, and in such manner as possibly your Lordship, expert in the deciphering of such affairs, would require no more, but for that I do know that princes' eyes(?) be of another delicacy, and cannot well-nigh behold anything wherein shall consist any study or travail, I have for that cause thought it expedient, and also for the more beautifying of the present, to put upon every letter a separate and distinct clothing whereby always they may the better be known and discerned into what places somever they shall spread their branches. And besides, in every match that England or Scotland shall make with other family, to accompany the same with the scutcheon of those arms.

The plot is great, and therefore the painting, to be exactly set forth, will be of cost and great labour, and specially having to do with Italians of this science, which are fantastical and arrogant, by a little experience already made, far different from the mild, gentle and serviceable Flemings.

I cannot hitherto find out any man that will consent to work it in mine own lodging. And without mine own presence, namely for the arms and conserving the work clean, nothing, I know by past proof, shall be well done.

I will use all the means and convenient speed I can to put it into perfection, which exactly and conformable to my designment to bring to pass our heralds must of their favours do me this courtesy to help me with these arms following: that which King Egbert gave; which William Conqueror used after he [-he] had won the realm; to assign me the first king that bare the three lions or leopards, which I guess was he that matched with Aquitaine; to set me out in colours the arms of Clarence, Lancaster and York; Edward the Third's three children; th' Earls of Worcester, Richmond, Salisbury, Westmorland; Somerset that descended out of John of Gaunt; Warwick; Neville; Cumberland; Suffolk Brandon; Grey, Marquis Dorset; Courteney Exeter; Seymour Hertford; Derby; Huntingdon; Pole Montague; the old Hereford; Angus Douglas, and Stuart Lennox, wherein I beseech your Lordship to use unto them for me your favour.

My meaning was to have showed the designment to my Lord of Oxford if he had passed this way visible to any English eye(?), as he did not. I always desired to serve his Lordship, both for his own sake and for my country's sake, and to that end made offer of myself in his first coming hither, but upon good respects, as they were termed, I was refused to be spoken with. Nevertheless, now understanding your Lordship's desire, I would have used somewhat more importunacy and doubled my goodwill in that behalf, as always it shall be most ready to serve or pleasure in anything I can your good Lordship, to whose honourable favour ever(?) I commend me, and your Lordship's state and person to the tuition of Almighty God. From Milan this last of March 1576.

Your right honourable Lordship's ever to command,

Francis Payto

Endorsed: (1) To the right honourable my singular good Lord, the Lord Burghley, Lord Treasurer of England; (2) Ult{imo} M{ar}tii(?) 1576, Mr Francis Peito to my Lord from Milan.