

---

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 6 July 1574 from Francois de Halewyn (c.1525-1585), Sieur de Sweveghem, who was in the service of Philip II, to Jean de Boisshot (1520-1580). Oxford had left England without licence on 1 July 1574, prompting the speculation by de Sweveghem in the letter below.

For de Sweveghem, see 'The Elizabethan Court Day By Day' (1574), p. 5, available online:

*By 10 February 1574, trade commissioners from Flanders had arrived, Jean de Boisshot, Advocate-Fiscal of Brabant, who remained in England until October after the signing of the Treaty of Bristol, and François de Halewyn, Sieur de Sweveghem, who remained until November. Sweveghem had been in England on the same mission in 1571-1572. By February 10 they had asked for audience, and had several audiences before July. When the Queen was at Bristol, the Treaty was signed on August 21.*

For this and related documents, see also:

<http://www.anonymous-shakespeare.com/cms/index.301.0.1.html>

The French transcript below is taken from Lettenhove, Baron Kervyn de, ed., *Relations Politiques des Pays-Bas et de l'Angleterre, sous le Regne de Philippe II*, (Brussels: F. Hayez, 1888), Vol. VII, pp. 204-5 at:

<https://archive.org/details/relationpolitiqu07nethuoft/page/204/mode/2up>

Lettenhove cites as his source *Archives du Royaume à Bruxelles, Nég. d'Angleterre, t. V, fol. 92*.

This court is shaken and filled with apprehension because the Earl of Oxford, son-in-law of Lord Burghley, hereditary Lord Great Chamberlain, and the second Earl in the realm, has, with Lord Edward [Seymour], the Earl of Hertford's brother, passed the seas into Flanders in disguise.

For fear that this is for another purpose than to see Italy and other Christian countries, as he has long said he desires to do, it is rumoured that on this occasion all ships (as people say), are being put on alert. Suspicion is increased because some gentlemen, familiars and favorers of the said Earl, have sailed from Bristol to Spain with fifteen chests of his goods and money.

Others are of opinion that they are arming for fear of France, so much so that yesterday letters of marque were granted against the French, and others against Portugal.

The rebels here who solicit on behalf of the Prince of Orange and others favouring his

Transcript and translation copyright ©2020 Nina Green All Rights Reserved.

<http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/>

party were greatly astonished when, by the gentleman and by the patent granted to me, de Sweveghem, they found themselves assured of the agreement for ports for our Spanish army, having been firmly persuaded till now that we would not be able to obtain it, so that the principal among them cannot hide [their astonishment], marvelling and complaining that the King, our master, has so many friends in play here who increase the Queen's impression of the strong confidence and assurance that she can place in his Majesty.

It is thought that a gentleman friend of the said Earl of Oxford will be sent with a patent from the Queen addressed to all princes and potentates to treat him favourably and assist him in passing thorough their countries, so that he is thereby retained in his office and diverted from any sinister scheme, and will perhaps not devote himself to some service by which she could be harmed(?) -- by which it seems (speaking under correction), in case he should present his service to the King, our master -- that it would greatly increase the confidence of the Queen if, before accepting his service, his Majesty or your Excellency would give her convenient warning beforehand, we being advised that such and similar actions would greatly serve to maintain the warm friendship of the Queen in that regard.

Ceste Court est toute esbranslée et plaine d'appréhensions pour ce que le Conte de Oxfort, gendre de Milord Bourghley, chambellan héritable et second conte du royaulme, est, avec Milord Eduard, frère du Conte de Herford, en habit desguisé passé la mer en Flandres. De paour que ce ne fut pour aultre fin que pour veoir l'Italie et aultres provinces de la chrestienté, comme il a de long temps dict avoir envye de faire, l'on discourt que pour ceste occasion l'on arme de rechief (selon que se dict) tous les batteaulx. Leur suspicion s'augmente par ce que aucuns gentilshommes familiers et favorys dudict seigneur Conte se sont embarqués à Bristol avec quinze coffres de ses hardes et deniers pour Espagne. Combien que aultres sont d'opinion que l'on arme pour doubte de France en tant que hier furent accordées lettres de marcque contre les François, et aultres contre Portugal.

Les rebelles sollicitans icy les affaires du Prince d'Orenge et aultres favorisans son party se sont fort estonnés, quand, par le gentilhomme et par la patente accordée à moy de Sweveghem, ils se trouvent assurés de l'accord des ports pour nostre armée d'Espagne, s'estans fermement persuadés jusques à maintenant que ne le sçaurions obtenir, ce que les principaulx d'entre eulx ne peuvent dissimuler, s'esmerveillans et plaindans de ce que le Roy nostre maistre a icy tant des amys en jeu, lesquels augmentent à la Royne l'impression de la bonne confidence et assurance qu'elle doit prendre de Sa Majesté.

Il s'entend que l'on dépesche ung gentilhomme amy dudict Conte d'Oxfort avec une patente de la Royne, s'adressant à tous princes et potentats, pour le caresser et assister en passant par leur pays, pour tel qu'il est, pour par ce moyen le retenir en office et divertir d'aucune machination sinistre, et peult-estre pour ne s'adonner à quelque service, duquel elle pourroit estre marrye : par où samble (parlant à correction), en cas qu'il présentast sondict service au Roy, nostre maistre, qu'il augmenteroit grandement la confidence de la

---

Royne, si Sa Majesté ou Vostre Excellence fust servie de luy en donner préallablement l'advertissement convenable, nous estant advis que tels et semblables accomplissemens serviront grandement à entretenir la dévotion de la Royne en ceste conjuncture.

De Londres, le VI de juillet 1574