

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 8 September 1576 from William Lewin (d.1598) to the scholar Johannes Sturm (1507-1589). From motives of religious zeal Sturmius had, circa 1562, lent money personally to the Protestants in France to supply the needs of the Prince of Conde and Admiral Coligny. He had also taken up money at interest from merchants in Strasbourg for the same purpose, and was now being pressed for repayment. As the letter below indicates, he was hoping for assistance from Queen Elizabeth in being relieved of this debt, and John Whitgift (1530/31?-1604), Archbishop of Canterbury, had made efforts to have the new ambassador to Paris, Sir Amias Paulet (c.1532-1588), take up the matter with the French. It would appear from a letter from Walsingham to Sturmius dated 27 October 1576, that Lewin had been chosen by the Queen to act as an intermediary between the English court and Sturmius (see Hastings, p. 285).

In 1575 Oxford and Lewin had visited Sturmius together at Strasbourg (see TNA SP 70/134, ff. 186-7 and TNA SP 70/134, ff. 238-9), and as indicated in the letter below, Oxford held 'his friend Sturmius' in high regard, and had promised to do what he could to assist him, even to the extent of enlisting Leicester's crucial support.

The transcript below is taken from Robinson, Hastings, *The Zurich Letters, A.D. 1558-1602*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ser., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1845), pp. 281-4, available online. According to Hastings, the original letter is in the Strasbourg Library.

I wrote you word a few days since, most accomplished Sturmius, with what design and by what motives I was especially induced, after that Lanscade's letter had been sent to me by you, to carry to court, together with that letter, those others written to the Queen and the Lord Treasurer and Walsingham; also, how gratifying they both were to both those noblemen, and for what reasons I thought that the third letter addressed to the Queen had not been delivered to her.

I wrote at the same time, and that at some length, respecting your pecuniary and French affairs, especially about our primate, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is indeed most anxious for your welfare and interests, and also the method he devised both of relieving you from this debt and restoring you to your former tranquility and ease, whereby you may pass the remainder of your life with the gentle muses.

From that time you must know that the Lord Archbishop has used his utmost exertions in your behalf, that he has pleaded your cause with prudence, diligence and friendly regard, for besides having again and again commended yourself and your affairs to Sir Amias Paulet, a most noble-minded and valiant man to whom a new embassy to France is entrusted, he also treated thenceforward separately, first with the Lord Treasurer and afterwards with Sir Francis Walsingham, that they might render this same Paulet for many reasons more interested in yourself and your fortunes, and the sum of this recommendation was that those two noblemen who possess the greatest influence and

authority among us should request and entreat Paulet to arrange your French business with the Duke d'Alencon and the Prince of Conde, either in the Queen's name, or at least publicly in that of our nobles, which they both of them, moved in part by his authority and partly too by the circumstances of your case, positively promised to do, and I have no doubt myself, nor, my Sturmius, would I have you to doubt, that they have already done as they were requested to do. Paulet, having taken leave of the Queen six days since, is preparing for his journey to France, and will very shortly set out. He is a man of great talents, and of a powerful and lofty mind.

I perceive that you inquire respecting the Earl of Oxford, whether he also did not recommend your case to Paulet. But you must know that I diligently interested myself with the Earl, who replied that he would not only recommend his friend Sturmius to Paulet, but would also request the Earl of Leicester to recommend him in every possible way. He added also that, unless you are relieved from France, he will take care that assistance shall be obtained for you in England; lastly, that he had a most high opinion of you, and had made most honourable mention of you, which things afforded me the greatest pleasure when I heard them, and certainly ought to delight you on being informed of them. But do you, as an old man, both make much of our Archbishop, who is also advanced in years and who is so firm and steadfast in friendship, and do not disparage this young Earl who has so favourable an opinion of you; from both I dare hope everything, while from the one I dare promise everything.

But now, my Sturmius, you will perhaps expect me to state what I advise or recommend to yourself. First of all, you should write as soon as possible to Sir Amias Paulet, knight, and who will be our ambassador in France before this letter reaches you. You may state what you have heard from me from England, especially respecting the goodwill and interest on your behalf manifested by the Lord Archbishop, and you may, if you please, add that of the Lord Treasurer and Sir Francis Walsingham. I hope also that the Earls of Leicester and Oxford will commend you to Paulet, but this is not yet ascertained by me. I heard from the Earl of Oxford that they would do so, but do not yet understand that they have done it.

Perhaps also it might be desirable that if you have any faithful and trustworthy friend in France, you would send him to Paulet with your letter, that he may sometimes put him in mind of you, and write you word back from France what is doing and what is to be done on your part, but if you have not at this time such a friend in France nor can procure one to go thither at his own expense, I dare not recommend you to send anyone at yours, for it is not, perhaps, the part of a prudent man who is already in debt to involve himself yet more deeply. I hope that your letters, if you frequently send them to Paulet, as both giving an account of the affairs of Germany, and also full of your zeal and service, will prove sufficiently diligent remembrancers to him, who is naturally a worthy man and is much beholden to the noblemen who have recommended you to him, and will certainly endeavor to show himself grateful to them, and kind and liberal to yourself. This one thing must not be omitted, namely that you inform Paulet, as soon as possible, of the amount that is owing to you, both in respect to the money you borrowed and in respect to the interest which you paid the merchants on that account. I drew up from your letters a

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short statement of the whole debt you have incurred, and stated all the circumstances which might interest our nobles in your behalf, but the Lord Archbishop, with the greatest discretion, erased whatever might offend the French in case they should see it. One copy of this was delivered to the Lord Treasurer, another to Sir Francis Walsingham, and I doubt not but that Paulet has seen both. The Lord Archbishop retains the third for the purpose of making other noblemen acquainted with your case, and that you may perceive yourself how the matter has been stated by me, and make any addition that may be requisite, I send you a fourth copy of this statement, and that just as it was interlined and corrected by the Archbishop.

I will omit nothing that I may think conducive to your interests, and if anything occurs to you, take care to let me know. There is one thing that I am thinking of, and this is to induce one of Paulet's domestics who has some respectable situation in his household to interest himself in your affairs and remind his master of you when occasion arises, and lastly to write me word when there is anything further to be done here.

My father and master, I will neglect no duty of a dear brother, since indeed you regard me in that light. My ability is but little, but I devote myself to you as far as I am able. Bernus will pay your autumnal pension at this Frankfurt fair. Santrinus, an English merchant whom I have made use of before, also promised to do this a fortnight since, respecting which I also wrote to you in my last letter. Farewell. September 8.

Yours,

Lewin.

The Archbishop requested me to salute you in this letter in his name. I am still suffering from weakness in my eyes, which makes me use the handwriting of another. Once more farewell.