

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 16 August 1597 from Henry Herbert (c.1538-1601), 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Pembroke, to Lord Burghley concerning a proposed match between Oxford's daughter, Bridget Vere (1584-1631), and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl's eldest son and heir, William Herbert (1580-1630), later 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Pembroke.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl mentions that he has received letters 'reporting my son's liking of your daughter' from his wife, Mary (nee Sidney) Herbert (1561-1621), Countess of Pembroke, brought to him by 'Massinger'. According to the *ODNB*, this was Arthur Massinger (c.1550-1603), the father of the playwright, Philip Massinger:

*Philip Massinger (1583–1640), playwright, was born in November 1583, probably in Salisbury, and baptized at St Thomas's, Salisbury, on 24 November 1583. He was the son of Arthur Massinger (c.1550–1603), fellow of Merton College, Oxford, MP, general agent for the earls of Pembroke, and examiner to the council in the marches of Wales, and of Anne Crompton (d. in or after 1614), whose father was a merchant of Stafford and London.*

For the letter from the Countess, see TNA SP 12/264/85.

For a letter dated 3 September 1597 from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl setting out the terms of the proposed marriage, see TNA SP 12/264/106.

Oxford expressed his favourable view of the match in a letter to Lord Burghley dated 8 September 1597. See TNA SP 12/264/111, f. 151.

The extant letters indicate that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Pembroke and the Countess initiated the negotiations, and that their son, William Herbert, was agreeable to the marriage. It appears Lord Burghley entertained doubts because of Bridget Vere's youth. In any event, the marriage did not take place, and shortly after 28 April 1599, Bridget Vere married Francis Norris (1579-1622), 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Berkshire. See TNA SP 12/270/91, f. 159 and TNA SP 12/270/101, f. 176.

The transcript below is taken from Young, Frances Berkeley, *Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke*, (London: David Nutt, 1912), pp. 64-6 at:

<https://archive.org/details/marysidneycounte00younuoft/page/64/mode/2up>

For the letter below, see also:

'Queen Elizabeth - Volume 264: August 1597', in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, 1595-97*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London, 1869), pp. 484-496. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/domestic/edw-eliz/1595-7/pp484-496> [accessed 25 May 2020].

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My good Lord, Massinger is now returned by me with my wife's letters reporting my son's liking of your daughter [=granddaughter]. I do assure your Lordship I am not a little glad of that which I hear, and therefore now, as heretofore, I refer the proceeding herein to your Lordship. What you shall conceive best, that shall I best like of. Massinger hath already acquainted you with my meaning in some things, and of anything else your Lordship shall desire to be further informed, upon hearing thereof from your Lordship, I will speedily advertise you. In the meantime I wish to your Lordship as to myself, and rest,

Your Lordship's faithfully assured,  
Pembroke.

Fullerston [=Fullerton?], 16 Augusti 1597

Endorsed: (1) To the right honourable my good Lord, the Lord Burghley, Lord High Treasurer of England etc.; (2) (in Lord Burghley's hand) 16 August 1597, Earl of Pembroke by Massinger.