

**THE LETTERS OF PAUL DE FOIX,
FRENCH AMBASSADOR AT THE
COURT OF ELIZABETH I, 1562–1566**

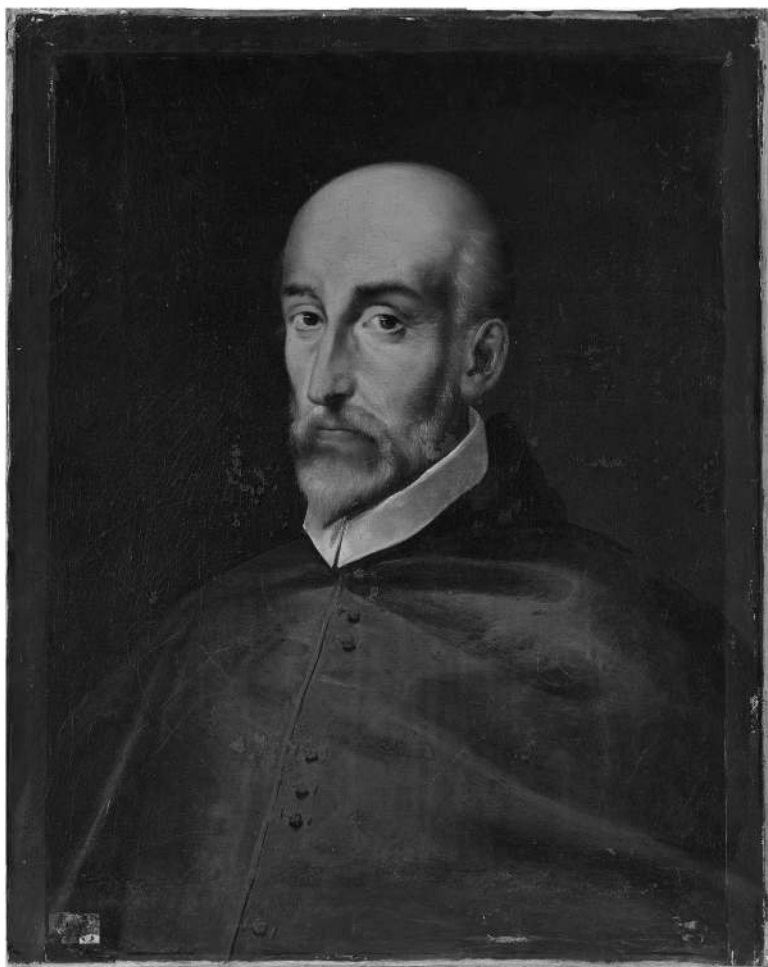
Cambridge University Press & Assessment

978-1-108-49549-3 — The Letters of Paul de Foix, French Ambassador at the Court of Elizabeth I

Edited by David Potter

Frontmatter

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Paul de Foix. Musée du château de Versailles MV 3266, copy made for Cardinal de Richelieu of an original c.1580, in colour online.

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PREFACE

This book is the second instalment of a project, begun in 2013–2014, to publish the correspondence of the French ambassadors in the early Elizabethan period, between the relatively well-documented eras of the embassies of François and Gilles de Noailles in the 1550s and that of Bertrand de Salignac de La Mothe Fénelon in the 1570s. This was part of the preliminary work for a sequel volume to my *Francis I and Henry VIII: The Final Conflict*, published in 2011.

Research began with a detailed examination of Paul de Foix's letters now in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, prompted by the need to give a research paper on him at the University of Kent in June 2016. More than anything else, though, it goes back to my early days as a research student in Cambridge when, in the summer of 1971, I visited the beguiling fifteenth-century chateau of Villebon, on the borders of Perche and the *pays Chartrain*, and was allowed by its then owner, M. Pierre Pénin de La Raudière, to study the L'Aubespine papers in the *chartrier* of the chateau, kept in a coffer of the tower room off the superb long gallery. Villebon belonged to the Estouteville family in the sixteenth century and then passed, via the duc de Sully, to the comtes de L'Aubespine in the seventeenth.

M. de La Raudière, an elderly and scholarly man who, sadly, died three years later, had reassembled many of the papers that had been sold in 1903 and, indeed, they proved to be a remarkable source: in effect the papers of one of the great French secretaries of the state of the sixteenth century, Claude de L'Aubespine as well as those of his brother Sébastien, bishop of Limoges, ambassador and trusted servant of Catherine de Medici.

Some of these I published, with the help of photographs taken by the late Jean-Daniel Pariset, in a Camden Miscellany volume (Fourth Series, Volume 29). I subsequently realized that that archive had been initially dispersed in the 1830s, a period in which the *chartriers* of many aristocratic families were coming onto the market. In fact, Paul de Foix's letters in the Bibliothèque nationale stemmed from this sale and Louis Paris in 1841 had published a thick volume of papers on the reign of Francis II, based on his exploration of the same archive. However, much remained and the further sale of

1903 was continued in 1992 with that of masses of the remaining ‘autograph’ letters, thankfully photographed before dispersal, with copies now kept at the Archives nationales. Some of this material has also proved invaluable for my current project on the letters mis-sive of Francis I. Part of the passion behind the present volume was fuelled by the thrill of the chase in pursuing items of the correspondence of de Foix which had ‘escaped’ into other collections during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Light continues to be thrown on the character of Paul de Foix himself in the course of other research I am doing. In a fascinating document which throws light on Paul de Foix’s religious reputation, I recently came across the remarkable assertion by Giulio Alvarotti, the ambassador of Ferrara at the court of France, in a despatch of 17 May 1562, on de Foix’s conduct in England: ‘dicono non veder mai messa, et vivere quivi piu alla Hugnotta, che noi alla Catholica’. Alvarotti’s informant added in June that de Foix had said publicly in England that the Queen Mother was a Huguenot (‘che la Regina nostra si hugnotta’) and had written behalf of the prince of Condé to the German princes for help (Archivio di Stato, Modena, Estero, Francia, busta 37, fo. 29, 41v).

My thanks are due to Andrew Spicer for steering this book through the Royal Historical Society Publications Committee and to Miranda Bethell for her meticulous work in copy-editing.

LIST OF FIGURES

Frontispiece. Paul de Foix. Musée du château de Versailles MV 3266, copy made for Cardinal de Richelieu of an original *c.*1580. By permission of Réunion des Musées Nationaux

Figure 1. Cipher of Paul de Foix as ambassador in England 1562–1566, reconstructed from BnF fr. 6612, 6613 15971

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AD	Archives départementales
ADE	<i>Archivo Documental Español: Negociaciones con Francia (1562)</i> (Madrid, 1951)
AE	Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, La Courneuve, France
AN	Archives nationales de France
APC	<i>Acts of the Privy Council of England</i> , ed. J.R. Dasent. 32 vols (London: HMSO, 1890–1907)
BL	British Library, manuscript collection
BnF	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Cabinet des manuscrits
Cabié	E. Cabié, <i>Ambassade en Espagne de Jean Ebrard, seigneur de Saint-Sulpice</i> (Albi, 1903)
Cotton	Cotton manuscripts, BL
<i>Cal. Hatfield</i>	<i>Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G. ... preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire</i> 24 vols (London: HMSO, 1883–1976)
<i>Cal. Spain</i>	<i>Calendar of Letters, Despatches and State papers ... Relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain</i> , ed. G. Bergenroth, G. Mattingly, P. de Gayangos, R. Tyler, London, 13 vols, 1862–1954
<i>Cal. Spain (Simancas)</i>	<i>Calendar of Letters and State Papers relating to English Affairs Preserved Principally in the Archives of Simancas</i> , ed. M.A.S. Hume, 4 vols (London, 1892–1899)
Clair.	MS Clairambault, Bibliothèque nationale
CSPF	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, of the Reign of Elizabeth</i> , 23 vols (London, 1863–1950)
CSP Scotland	<i>Calendar of State Papers Relating to Scotland and Mary Queen of Scots</i> , ed. J. Bain, 9 vols (London, 1898–1915)

<i>CSP Venice</i>	<i>Calendar of State papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice</i> , ed. R. Brown and G. Cavenish Bentinck (London: HMSO, 1890) Vol. VII
Cotgrave	Randle Cotgrave, <i>A dictionarie of the French and English tongues</i> (London, 1611)
fr.	Manuscrits français (BnF)
Haynes	Samuel Haynes, <i>A Collection of State papers ... Left by William Cecill Lord Burghley</i> (London, 1740)
<i>LCM</i>	<i>Lettres de Catherine de Médicis</i> , ed. H. de la Ferrière, 11 vols (Paris: Collection de documents inédits, 1880–1943)
<i>La Mothe</i>	<i>Correspondance diplomatique de Bertrand de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon</i> , ed. C. Purton Cooper, 7 vols (London and Paris, 1838–)
na	nouvelles acquisitions
Paris, <i>Négociations</i>	L. Paris, <i>Négociations, lettres et pièces diverses relatives au règne de François II, tirées du portefeuille de Sébastien de l'Aubespine, évêque de Limoges</i> (Paris, Collection de documents inédits, 1841).
Reboul	<i>Catalogue de vieux livres et de nombreux manuscrits et autographes sur l'histoire religieuse, l'histoire de France etc. provenant de la bibliothèque de feu M. Reboul</i> (Paris: Techener, 1843)
<i>Relations politiques</i>	<i>Relations politiques des Pays-Bas et de l'Angleterre sous le règne de Philippe II</i> , ed. J.M.B.C. Baron Kervyn de Lettenhove, 11 vols (Brussels, 1882–1900)
SP	State Papers
Techener	<i>Catalogue analytique de manuscrits et documents originaux en grande partie, autographes et inédits relatifs à l'histoire de France et d'Angleterre retrouvée dans un vieux château de province</i> (Paris: chez Techener, 1835)
Teulet	A. Teulet, <i>Relations diplomatiques de la France et l'Espagne avec l'Ecosse au XVI^e siècle</i> , 5 vols (Paris, 1862)
TNA	The National Archives, Kew, London