INTRODUCTION

This publication stems from a broad project to explore the activities of the French ambassadors in England during the 1560s, a period when French sources of English affairs have been relatively neglected, between the exceptionally well-preserved archives of the Noailles brothers in the 1550s and La Mothe Fénélon in the 1570s. Having published what remains of the despatches of the chevalier de Seure as ambassador to England in 1560–1561, I turned to the question of his successor, Paul de Foix, and quickly became convinced that he was one of the most interesting figures to represent his country in England during the sixteenth century. De Lamar Jensen described him as ‘that indomitable dynamo of energy and talent’. A highly respected scholar and religious liberal, he entered modern popular consciousness when played improbably as a typical swaggering French sword nobleman by the footballer turned actor Éric Cantona in Shekhar Kapur’s 1998 film Elizabeth. The portrait which is the frontispiece of this book underlines the difference.

Paul de Foix occupied the post of French ambassador in England during a period of upheaval and transition in both countries, from early 1562 until the spring of 1566, a period which saw civil war in France, a war between England and France, intense insecurity in England over the succession, a protracted period of rapprochement involving bizarre marriage negotiations between Elizabeth and the court of France and, finally, deep preoccupation both in England and France with manoeuvres in Scotland around the future of Mary Stuart. De Foix’s correspondence is preserved only in fragmentary form and yet, as it survives, provides important insights into the politics and culture of both countries. I have attempted to assemble all the surviving material on de Foix’s embassy and the special missions sent to England in his time from the dossiers of the

3 Most recent explorations which consider Paul de Foix’s despatches include Estelle Paranque, Elizabeth I of England through Valois Eyes, 1558–1588 (Basingstoke, 2019), ch. 2, and Susan Doran, Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I (London and New York, 1996), ch. 4.
French secretaries of state charged with English affairs, and as much of his correspondence in other sources as possible.

The Early Life of Paul de Foix

Many ambassadors in the sixteenth century had no obvious ‘diplomatic’ training and some had unexpected backgrounds. Paul de Foix, like a number of other French envoys in this period, would not have been an obvious choice for a major diplomatic post when he was given his first ambassadorial job at the end of 1561. I have shown that his predecessor, the chevalier de Seure, had led a highly colourful and turbulent life until his appointment in England, taking part in French naval operations in Scotland and the Mediterranean, the siege of Tripoli, missions to the Sultan, and a spectacularly negative embassy to Portugal before becoming a trusted agent of Catherine de Medici.\(^4\) De Foix is equally unusual. In some ways a classic nobleman of the sword, yet at the same time he was a profoundly scholarly man trained in the law and the classics and ambiguous in his social position. It is true that he had the trust of the Queen Mother; on the other hand he was ‘tainted’ with heresy.

What little that is known about the background and training of Paul de Foix stems from two or three sources: the funeral oration in Latin by his friend Marc Antoine Muret, published in 1584,\(^5\) and the autobiography of his friend, J.A. de Thou, who was taught law by Cujas, Foix’s teacher, and knew him in Italy from 1573 onwards.\(^6\) These were to some extent panegyrics and, though useful, must be treated with some caution. Added to these are the enquiries made in 1574 in order to justify his appointment as ambassador in Rome against the opposition of Gregory XIII.\(^7\) De Foix’s family was unquestionably from the higher provincial nobility of the southwest, though the widely held assumption that he was a ‘cousin’ of Jeanne d’Albret, queen of Navarre, stretches the point; they shared little more than a distant cousinage related to the house of Foix.

\(^4\) Doran, Monarchy and Matrimony, 3–13.
The notion of his high origins is current by 1562 and was consolidated in the funeral oration by Muret in 1584, in which his lineage is described as ‘pour l’ancienneté de l’origine, soit pour l’avantage qui se tire des actions glorieuses’, incidentally allied not only to kings of France and Navarre but of Hungary and the Habsburgs. Montaigne, in his letter of 1571 addresses him in these terms: ‘au reng de la premiere maison de Guyenne recue de vos ancestres avez adjousté du vostre le premier reng encore en toute façon de suffisance’. His father’s comté, originally vicomté, of Carmain lay south-east of Toulouse towards Castelnaudary and included a score of major fiefs, passing in the seventeenth century to Adrien de Monluc. Paul’s father, Jean de Foix, comte de Carmain, was actually legitimized at the age of 30, long after the marriage of his parents. He was an homme d’armes of the Lautrec company and gentilhomme de la maison of Henri d’Albret, king of Navarre. That certainly placed him in the orbit of the Foix-Albret dynasty. He also received the favour of Francis I in a lawsuit at the Parlement of Toulouse and, during service in the Picardy campaign of 1537 it was evoked to the Grand Conseil by the king ‘en faveur des bons et agreeables services qu’il m’a cy devant faictz au faict de mes guerres et faict chacun jour en l’armee ou je suis presentement’. In fact, Carmain was descended from a younger brother of Jean, comte de Foix (the ancestors of the kings of Navarre) born in the late fourteenth century and the name de Foix was adopted even though the descent passed in the female line. He seems to have been a turbulent character.

Paul, the third son of the family, was born in 1528. De Thou wrote that ‘il demeura jeune avec peu de bien pour un homme de sa naissance, ce bien fort embarassé de procez’. Muret, his contemporary and also a teacher of Montaigne, says he knew him in youth, young manhood and age. Muret, a brilliant scholar arrested several times for sodomy and heresy in the 1550s, extols his friend’s good looks and fine body. The original manuscript on which this story of Muret’s arrest is based actually goes further in accusing him not only of relations with the young scholar Fremiot ‘qui facile patiebatur muliebria’ but of ‘Lucianisme’ — a well known scholarly term from

8 Muret, who was from Limoges, served the king of Navarre in 1560 as orator before the Pope.
9 Lettres de messire Paul de Foix, intro, sig. e.
10 Vers francçois de feu Estienne De la Boëtie (1571), epistre.
12 Francis I to Chancellor du Bourg, 4 May 1537, AN, J965/6/24, orig.
14 J.-A. de Thou, Mémoires de la vie de Jacques-Auguste de Thou (Rotterdam, 1740), 14.
the 1540s that implied atheism or at least the satire of both Catholic and Protestant theology and indeed implies a censure of de Foix’s friend Rabelais. De Thou also praised Foix’s fine physique and ‘un son de voix agréable; mais grave, sans bassesse & sans flatterie’. All accounts describe him as a brilliant scholar. He studied humanities first at Paris, perhaps in the mid 1540s and had been taught Hebrew by Vatable and Greek by Toussaint. He then studied law at the local university of Toulouse under Cujas but this must have been from 1547–1548 when Cujas began to teach there. The traditional story of his appointment as conseiller of the Parlement in 1546 is improbable. After Toulouse, he moved again to Paris and the court. He was said, on no reliable evidence, to be aumônier to Catherine de Medici in 1552 though the evidence that he was ‘nourri’ in her household is secure. He then became conseiller-clerc (clerical counselor) in the Parlement of Paris in 1555 and then maître des requêtes. At that stage he was not in full holy orders, though, as he might have had to revert to lay status had his elder brother failed to produce heirs. An enquiry of 1574 suggests that Catherine called him to court to help in the administration of her private affairs and a report of nuncio Dandino in 1579 said his relations with her went back thirty years. He seems to have had a special regard for Catherine’s daughter Élisabeth, later queen of Spain, and was also close to Marguerite de France duchess of Savoy. Muret dwells on his acquisition of all the skills and knowledge needed for an ambassador in the 1550s but also that he sought no such post until ‘il n’eut premierement demeuré quelque temps dans la cour de Parlement, à fin que la connaisance des grandes affaires que s’y traitent ordinairement affermist et consolidast les bons fondemens’. De Thou dwells on his links with

16 De Thou, Mémoires, 15.
19 His name does not appear on the list in BnF fr.7856, pp. 1148–1150, though he is commonly described as such, e.g. Didier, ‘Paul de Foix et Grégoire XIII’, 98; Loris Petris, La Plume et la tribune: Michel de l’Hospital et ses discours (1559–1562), suivi de l’édition du ‘De initiatione Sermo’ (1559) et des ‘Discours de Michel de L’Hospital’ (1560–1562), Travaux d’humanisme et Renaissance (Geneva, 2002), 489.
20 See Letters Nos 1 and 80 (numbers of letters in this volume are given in bold).
23 See No. 80; De Thou, Mémoires, 17.
24 Lettres de messire Paul de Foix, i vi–i ijr.
Aristotelian scholars – Nyphus and later Pomponazzi – in this period and also his regard for the Venetian Daniele Barbaro. Indeed, de Thou later wrote that de Foix had not thought about taking the post of an ambassador until 1561. By that year, he was referred to as papal protonotary; this papal sinecure, widely conceded, is likely to have been acquired before his reputation was called into question in 1559, perhaps in the mid 1550s.

As for de Foix’s religious beliefs, we must underline the very significant upheavals that he underwent between 1559 and 1562. The Mercuriales of the Parlement of Paris between April and June 1559 were called to flush out heresy in the ranks of the conseillers. There is no doubt, even though evidence is largely based on favourable witnesses called at Rome in 1574, that he then advanced the proposition that mandatory death sentences for heresy (as specified in the 1557 Edict of Compiègne) were contrary to equity. He argued that a distinction should be made between levels of seriousness, especially between the cases of those who differed simply over the form of the sacraments rather than its essence. The consequence for him, though not as drastic as for Anne du Bourg, was extremely serious: arrest and imprisonment in the Bastille until early 1560 and a condemnation on 8 January 1560 which demanded his full recantation and suspension from office for one year. Only with the death of Francis II in December 1560 was he able to begin the process for rehabilitation. The year 1561 saw further changes in his fortunes: acquittal in February 1561, resumption of office, and work as an advisor to the Queen Mother.

In 1560–1561, there was talk that de Foix was indeed a religious reformer, reflected in his inclusion in the standard biographical dictionary, *La France Protestante* (V, 125) where he is described as ‘Nicodémite’ who never made open profession of his faith and returned to Catholicism loaded with preferment at court. Nicholas Throckmorton, mentioning his possible appointment as ambassador as early as March 1561, noted ‘that he was in trouble for religion at the tyme of du Bourgz prosecution’. Thomas Randolph observing him in Scotland in December 1561, noted that his behaviour ‘well

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26 References to de Foix as protonotary: Throckmorton to Elizabeth, 14 November 1561, CSPF IV, no. 659; Somers to Throckmorton, 23 November 1561, ibid. no. 678; La Quadra to Chantonnay, 23 November 1561, ADE, III, 143.

27 Throckmorton to Elizabeth I, 18 March 1561, TNA, SP 70/24, fos 47ff.
agrethe unto all those that professeth the Chryste, for whose causse your honour knoweth the what he hath endure.' 28 In March 1562, Coligny, in trying to convince Throckmorton that not all was lost for the cause at court, insisted that de Foix ‘is a verie honest man, and well geven tadvaunce religion: and is suche a one as the Quene mother dothe lyke verie well and repose greate truste in’. 29 In all these observations, we have to take account of de Foix’s suppleness in telling his interlocutors what they might wish to hear.

De Foix voiced his ideas on religious concord in his contribution to the assembly of the wider royal council called to discuss a new edict of religion in June–July 1561. The text makes a clear argument both against full toleration and repression, calling instead for a national council. 30 These ideas were developed by him after the Colloquy of Poissy, later in 1561, in a memorandum written for Catherine de Medici. 31 Sylvie Daubresse has suggested that the context was rather the Assembly of Saint-Germain in January 1562, in which case he must have been writing it around the time of his mission to Scotland. 32 The argument is both pragmatic and principled. The Church’s attitude to toleration has changed according to its degree of dominance at any one time. In practice, religious repression is impossible: ‘De les bannir et exterminer, pour le grand et excessif nombre, est tres difficile, et peut estre impossible.’ 33 Religious liberty has intrinsic merit and it is unthinkable for a Church which has no moral authority to compel obedience. He preferred to use the term ‘liberté de religion’ rather than ‘tolérance’ but aimed for concord. This was a view reflected by others who we can broadly label non-Calvinist reformists in the 1560s such as François Baudouin. It was a view he was to continue to voice in the royal council during the 1570s, as for instance at Lyons in 1575 when he advised Henri III to ensure peace with the Protestants. 34

De Foix’s interaction with the strange underworld of religious unorthodoxy is illustrated by his connections in London with the Dutch theologian Justus Velsius, the essence of whose ideas

28 Randolph to Cecil, 10 December 1561, TNA, SP 52/6, fo. 180.
29 Throckmorton to Elizabeth I, 8 March 1562, TNA, SP 70/35, fo. 79r.
31 BnF fr.4746, fos 24–33.
concentrated on spiritual regeneration and who probably rejected both justification by faith and predestination. Velsius saw himself as a visionary, much influenced by the writings of the pseudo-Dionysius. Velsius in his 1563 *Lectio in Hierarchiam* was highly complimentary about de Foix, saying that he was charged to do as Paul the apostle and found the same in Paul de Foix: ‘Paul Fuxeo referat, et ipsum vas electionis ex Deo constituens’. It seems probable that Karel Utenhove was instrumental in this contact, as a member of de Foix’s staff and the nephew of one of the leaders of the Flemish church embroiled with Velsius. Nicolas des Gallars, minister of the French church in London, actually wrote to Calvin that de Foix considered Velsius to be learned in the commentary of Dionysius. Yet, when it came to the exorcism – if that was what it was – of one of de Foix’s servants, Cosmus, in March 1563, the situation became highly embarrassing to the French ambassador. Velsius claimed in a cheeky letter to Elizabeth that his advice to the man to fast for five days while reading Dionysius the Areopagite showed his capacity as a visionary: ‘vocationem meum confirmant’. Bishop Grindal noted in the margin of Velsius’s letter to de Foix that the patient had been consigned to Bedlam. De Foix had attempted to debate with Velsius, observed by the Flemish envoy d’Assonleville, who hinted to him that his willingness to tolerate such heretics was dangerous. Nor was he loath to press the cases of French religious exiles in London when they came into conflict with the law. De Foix plainly had a certain reputation among the foreign Protestants in London, though this did not prevent him from producing witnesses, for the enquiries of 1574 at Rome into his orthodoxy, that he had made his private chapel a refuge for Catholics in England. So when, in December 1564, Karel Utenhove approached the French church in Threadneedle Street with a suggestion that both foreign churches should petition de Foix before his departure to make them a gift to be used for poor


38 *No. 18*.

39 Didier, ‘Paul de Foix et Grégoire XIII’, *passim*.
members, it was declared that ‘il est enemy de Dieu et de l’eglise et qu’il regnie Dieu et se donne au diable quant il joue’.  

De Foix’s appointment to London may perhaps be understood in the context of the eirenic stance plainly expressed to the Queen Mother at the end of 1561. His first known diplomatic appointment was as special envoy to Scotland in November 1561, travelling via Elizabeth’s court with a message for her and then on by land to Edinburgh by the start of December and returning to France by early January 1562. Foix told Nicholas Throckmorton then that ‘he liked so well in his talke to me the forme of Religion used in your realme’ and showed him a book (possibly the Prayer Book or Thirty-Nine Articles) translated into French which he had brought to show the Queen Mother, Navarre and the Chancellor, ‘wishing that this realme might be reduced by ordre and authoritie to use the same formuler of religion’. The moderate reformer François Baudouin accompanied de Foix in the meeting with Utenhove, in which de Foix invited Utenhove to join him in his embassy, and stayed in Paris during de Foix’s mission hoping to negotiate with the king of Navarre. Baudouin wrote to his like-minded moderate colleague Georg Cassander of ‘Fuxius noster’ in December 1561 that he was crucial to this negotiation. Baudouin had also rapidly written an ‘Apologie of the said ordre of Religion in Englande, which rough hewen as it is’ he wished to be sent to Cecil. What happened to this is unclear. Shortly after his return, Throckmorton reported of de Foix that ‘He used also good words of the Quene of Scotland but did not so moche allowe of the realme nor the people [preferring the establishment in England].’ Thomas Randolph observed him in the days following his arrival in Edinburgh in a despatch which reflects remarkably on the visible demeanour of princes as the key to their inner thoughts:

We talked again of religion. I was not uncourteous as to tell hym that he had byne at the Masse, thoughe for hys reputation yt had byne worthe hym a thowsande crownes not to have byne. He repented hym self afterwarde, beinge

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42 Throckmorton to Elizabeth I, 8 January 1562, TNA, SP 70/34, fo. 30v.

43 Ibid. SP 70/34. fos 30v–31r (26v–37r).
admonished by some frende, and came not unto the Diredge nor Masse upon Frydaye and Saterdaye laste, to the great myslkyngne of the Queen.\footnote{Randolph to Cecil, 7 December 1561, J. Bain et al., \textit{Calendar of State Papers Relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots}, 12 vols (Edinburgh and Glasgow, 1898–1952), 573 (BL Calig B X, fos 201v–203r).}

De Foix’s ambiguous attitude towards Queen Mary was thus established from the start. His religious ambiguity is revealed in March–April 1565, when he was proposed by Catherine de Medici as archbishop of Bourges. The health of the holders of all positions in the French church was a subject of constant speculation on the part of clients and patrons. In this case, the current prelate, Jacques Leroy, was ill. Catherine moved quickly to get de Foix appointed. This elicited from him one of the more peculiar thank-you letters to the king which began conventionally enough with protestations of the unworthiness of his services. But he then went to protest that:

Bien confesseray je, sire, et sans hypocrisie que ce nom d’archevesque m’a donne quelque horreur, considerant que c’est ung nom de charge qui desire tres-grande doiture, exemplaire probité de vie et soing vigile et diligence tres-grande que le nom mesme d’evesque tesmoigne; et congnoissant le default qui est en moy de toutes ces choses, j’ay eu comme je diz craintce du seul nom.\footnote{No. 102 (1 April 1565).}

Leroy seems to have pulled through on this occasion and de Foix missed out when he died in 1572, whether from his extravagant protestations of unworthiness is not clear, and had to wait until the eve of his death for a promotion to Toulouse that had been planned as early as 1574 but was opposed by the Pope until 1582. His main church preferments before this were minor: prieur of Lihons in Picardy\footnote{Presence at the redaction of customs for Péronne, Charles Bourdot de Richebourg, \textit{Nouveau coutumier général} (Paris, 1724), II, 645 – unlisted among the prieurs of Lihons between Philippe de la Chambre et Nicolas Pellevé.} and abbé commendataire of the Benedictine house of Aurillac in 1570, pretty systematically destroyed by Protestants in 1569. According to an English observer of the French scene in the 1580s, he was an instrument for diverting those of the Religion: a creature of the Queen Mother’s, professing to love the public peace and an enemy of the cardinal of Lorraine, who had ensured he could never be made a cardinal.\footnote{D. Potter, \textit{Foreign Intelligence and Information in Elizabethan England: Two English Treatises on the State of France, 1579–84} (Cambridge Society, 5th ser., 25 (Cambridge, 2004), 42.}
De Foix was first mentioned as a successor to de Seure in March 1561, relatively soon after his exoneration.\textsuperscript{48} His first foreign mission, as has been seen, was to Scotland, reported in the middle of November of that year and generally thought to be concerned with the sending of the Savoyard envoy, Moretta, to Scotland. Throckmorton and the Spanish ambassador in England, Álvaro de la Quadra, bishop of Aquila, both thought he had been instructed to find out what Moretta’s mission was about. La Quadra added that he had also received instructions from the king of Navarre and that Coligny’s agent in planning American voyages, Laudonnière, was in London at the same time.\textsuperscript{49} Throckmorton thought that Navarre and his friends were hoping that Elizabeth would make some special gesture of friendship towards de Foix as to one who had suffered for this religion.\textsuperscript{50} He got to London on 17 November and to Moretta the next day. He had audience with Elizabeth, his first encounter with her, on the 19th and had left for Edinburgh by the 23rd.\textsuperscript{51} Randolph’s report of his conversation with de Foix has already been mentioned; Mary was very animated in her discussions with him and the question of the duke of Nemours was at least brought up. The duke had recently been implicated in a plot to take the duke of Orléans, Catherine’s second son, into the territory of Savoy. This had made a stir at the French court at the time and opinion was jittery. Any missions from Savoy to Scotland were bound to be regarded with caution in France. In general, the purpose of this mission remains shrouded in mystery in the absence of direct evidence. The usually suspicious La Quadra was convinced that de Foix had taken letters to Mary from the king and queen of Navarre and already suspected Navarre of negotiating with Elizabeth in his own interests; he even suggested that de Foix had been talking to Knox and the Scottish heretics in Navarre’s name about ‘algun modo de aliança y buena intelligenza’.\textsuperscript{52} On balance, it seems that de Foix did not make a favourable impression on

\textsuperscript{48} Throckmorton to Elizabeth I, 18 March 1561, CSPF, IV, no. 49.
\textsuperscript{49} Throckmorton to Elizabeth I, 14 November 1561, CSPF IV, no. 659; La Quadra to Chantonnay, 23 November 1561, ADE, III, 143.
\textsuperscript{50} Throckmorton to Cecil, 26 November 1561, CSPF, IV, no. 684.
\textsuperscript{51} Somers to Throckmorton, 23 November 1561, CSPF, IV, no. 678.
\textsuperscript{52} La Quadra to Margaret of Parma, 27 December 1561, 3 January 1562, Relations politiques des Pays-Bas et de l’Angleterre sous le règne de Philippe II, ed. J.M.B.C. Baron Kervyn de Lettenhove, 11 vols (Brussels, 1882–1900), II, 654, 658.
Mary. Thomas Randolph, the English envoy in Scotland thought Mary considered that de Seure ‘was not to be evile affectioned unto her frendes and there fors nothinge the better pleased that he shall receave a successor Monsr de Fois, as yt ys here spoken’. Foix was back in France by 8 January.

Throckmorton wrote warmly of him on his return to France and of his high prospects:

The said de Foix, being in a tyme of so good amytie aswell addressed to your majeste with speciall instructions as unto the Quene of Scottande to whom (it is sayd here) his legation was not so pleasant as little offensive to you majeste. Under your Majestes correction (as with reverence I speake it) the tyme, his parentage, the good partes in the man and the greate towardnes and high waye that he is in, to be advanced and to come in credyte in that state, did deserve that some amiable consideracion for such ordynarie courtoises might be had of hym and so may your Majeste repayre it as shall stande with your pleasure.

De Foix’s appointment as resident ambassador in England was confirmed by 24 January and he was paid from 1 February. Throckmorton wrote a letter of recommendation for him on 7 February:

He semith to me to be verie willing to well inclynid to do all good offices to entretayn good amytie betwixt your majestie and the kinge his master. And of his good disposicion I thought it my dutie to advertise your majestie, I do aswell perceive by hym as otherwise.

The reasons for ambassadorial appointments are seldom spelled out in this period but we can assume that his manner and intellectual grasp counted. His friend Ronsard put it succinctly in his Elégie à Monsieur de Foix of 1565:

Puis, te haussant per merites honnnestes,  
De conseiller fus maistre des requestes,  
Puis envoyé en ambassade, afin  
Que ton esprit promt & gaillard & fin

53 Mary’s own report on this encounter is contained in her letter to the duke of Guise in early January, BL Egerton, 1819, fo. 28 (printed J.H. Pollen, Papal Negotiations with Mary, Queen of Scots during her Reign in Scotland (Edinburgh, 1901), 439).
54 Randolph, 2 January 1562, TNA, SP 57/2, fo. 2.
55 Throckmorton to Elizabeth I, 8 January 1562 TNA, SP 70/34, fos 30v–31r.
56 Throckmorton to Cecil and Elizabeth, 24 January 1562, CSPF, IV, nos 883, 884; BnF Clair. 232, p. 2698.
57 Throckmorton to Elizabeth, 7 February 1562, TNA, SP 70/35, fo. 16.
Ne se rouillast sans manier affaires,
Qui sont aux Rois grandement necessaires.

And further on:

Car ton esprit, courtizan & subtil,
Acord, prudent, & gaillard & gentil

La Quadra reported on his arrival in England that, in order to win sympathy his first public declaration was that ‘por el Evangelio avia estado muy cerca de ser quemado’ (for the Gospel he had been in danger of being burned). 58 La Quadra’s successor Guzman in 1566 was not sure he was a good Catholic but thought him ‘clever and serviceable’ and likely to be employed again. 60 Throckmorton thought that if de Foix showed that he was up to the job on his mission to Scotland, he would be appointed de Seure’s successor in England and advised special messages to be entrusted to him on his return to France. 61 The fact that he had been expeditious and efficient is clear. The trust of Catherine de Medici was crucial, of course, and we must remember that his appointment was made at the high point of her toleration policy, the Edict of January, so shortly to be overturned. There was some talk after the seizure of power in March by the Triumvirate that his appointment would be cancelled. In April 1562, Throckmorton reported a view that a special ambassador (Roussy – a Guise partisan) was being sent to England partly because de Foix ‘is suspected unto them and holden to well affected to the admiral and the Protestantes’. 62 La Quadra made the same observation in June when du Plessis was sent from France. 63 De Foix may have momentarily let his guard down in telling La Quadra in July 1562 that he regretted that the Guises had bought Spanish troops into France. 64 Margaret of Parma’s agent

58 Pierre de Ronsard, Oeuvres complètes, ed. Laumonier, XIII, 156.
59 La Quadra to Granvelle, 28 February 1561, Relations politiques, II, 670. De Foix had arrived in London the previous week.
61 Throckmorton to Cecil, 26 November 1561, TNA, SP 70/32 fo. 58.
62 Throckmorton to Elizabeth I, 24 April 1562, TNA, SP 70/36, fos 106v–107r.
63 La Quadra to Philip II, 20 June 1562, CSP Simancas, I, no. 169 (Coleccion de documentos ineditos, 87, 416).
64 La Quadra, 17 July 1562, CSP Simancas, I, no. 177. The wording is ambiguous, however. Relations politiques, III, 75–76: ‘el mismo Embaxador … mostrandose doler mucho de que los de Guisa fuesen causa que se metiessen soldados estrangeros en el reyno’.
d’Assonleville said that he was a great favourite of Coligny’s, whom he regarded as one of the virtuous lords in France.  

Nevertheless this recall did not happen. The underlying reason we can simply deduce: the onset of open civil war required the maintenance of peace with England and de Foix was uniquely placed among Catherine’s circle to foster this, given his known stance on religious concord and the favourable impression he had given in attitude to the church in England. Nor was this remotely a time for adventurism in the excessive promotion of Mary’s interests. In his audience with Elizabeth in July 1562, de Foix forcefully put the French case against English interference in internal French affairs without the stridency which may have led to an immediate break. This would have suited Catherine de Medici’s policies. Contemporaries noted Catherine’s tendency to employ Protestant sympathizers in her dealings with Protestant princes. Nicholas Throckmorton certainly thought at first that Elizabeth should use de Foix as a channel of encouragement for the Queen Mother in her dealings with the Catholic princes (now joined by Navarre) and in the question of reform in general.

De Thou later recalled that de Foix never let a day pass, once his ambassadorial duties were finished for the day, without spending the evening in study. His mind was so engaged that he could transcribe everything said in an audience word for word afterwards. Indeed, one of the features of his surviving papers is the series of remarkably detailed and lengthy ‘discours’ in which he deployed a detailed narrative of his contacts with Elizabeth and her ministers. This was a talent for an almost theatrical narrative which he shared with an earlier English ambassador in France, William Paget. Not all of de Foix’s Discours have survived but there is enough to support de Thou’s view.

### Running an Embassy

Where did Paul de Foix live in London? The question is not easy to answer. French ambassadors had been given Bridewell in the 1530s, Charterhouse in the 1550s and from February 1560 Saint Paul’s deanery as their residence. This custom was not reciprocated in France, where the English ambassador had to find and pay for his

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65 D’Assonleville to Granvelle, 17 April 1562, Relations politiques, III, 336.  
66 Chantonnay to Philip II, Chartres, 27 August 1562: ‘en toutes les occasions que se sont adonnées d’employer gens ès affaires concernans la religion … ladicte Royne a tou- jours envoyé gens suspectz seulz’. (Mémoires de Condé, II, 64).  
67 Throckmorton’s letters of March–April 1562, e.g. 14 March (CSPF, IV, no. 177); 1 April (no. 973); 10 April (no. 998).  
68 De Thou, Mémoires, 14–15.
own lodgings. The French could be choosy; when Boisdauphin had been offered the house of the late Lady Yardford (widow of the Lord Mayor James Yardford) in 1551, it had been described as ‘one of the fairest in London’ but he was highly dissatisfied and asked for another house that would require the dislodging of certain noblemen. De Foix wrote very little about his own personal circumstances in London. We know that the Spanish ambassador in his time was lodged at Durham Place off the Strand. The only hint we have comes in 1565, when de Foix remarked that his own house was a little over two miles from there, which would suggest somewhere like the Charterhouse. De Foix’s correspondence with his colleague Saint-Sulpice also tells us something about the physical paraphernalia of the embassy.

De Foix had a reputation for assembling a familia of bright scholars for his embassies and did so in England, Venice and Rome in the 1560s and 1570s. In November 1561, he approached Karel Utenhove, a brilliant multi-lingual scholar who had in the summer of that year been dismissed as tutor to Jean Morel’s family, as he recorded himself, accused of being ‘doer of evil and corrupter of youth like Socrates’. In an undated letter which must have been written around November, he records that:

Baudouin came to see me with the King’s ambassador who is to be sent to England today to carry out some embassy or other (‘nescio cuius obeundae gratia ablegatur’) asking me whether I should like to accompany him and offering the most splendid and honourable terms. ‘Most willingly’ I said. I had dinner with him yesterday and we agreed to make due haste.

Throckmorton reported in the following February that Utenhove had indeed gone to England and Scotland and had received a gold chain from Mary worth £20. He then accompanied de Foix on his formal embassy in February 1562. Utenhove wrote enthusiastically in May 1562 of Elizabeth’s learning, in the course of a description of the Maunday Thursday ceremony.

69 See Potter, A Knight of Malta, 28–29.
70 CSPF Edward VI, no. 219.
71 No. 104.
72 Nos 89, 91.
74 Throckmorton to the Elizabeth I, 7 February 1562, TNA, SP 70/35, fo. 16.
75 1 May 1562 to Morel, Philip Ford, ‘Carolus Utenhovius (1536–1600): A Tale of Two Cities’, in Jeannine de Landsheer and Henk J. M. Nellen, eds, Between Scylla and Charybdis:
London. Karel’s role seems to have been to provide scholarly company for the ambassador and to present appropriate literary gifts to his hosts. On New Year’s day 1563 he presented some verse to the Queen via Cecil, unremarkable in its flattery but dangerously encouraging the Queen to marry and have children. Its main distinguishing feature was that it was written in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French and, astonishingly, English. So, too, he promoted a poem by his pupil Camille de Morel to the Queen on her visit to Cambridge in July 1564, at a time when he wrote to his old employer Morel:

It is incredible to relate the extent to which I had had honours heaped upon me since peace was concluded between these two countries – how courteously I have been welcomed by the Queen.

There was also talk in 1562 of his producing a Flemish translation of the New Testament. He dedicated his collection Xenia to the Queen in 1568. In October 1564, Utenhove wrote to his friend Turnèbe that de Foix was shortly to be sent to Spain to replace Saint-Sulpice. For obvious reasons (‘certis de causis’) he preferred not to accompany him there, though de Foix’s appointment remained pending and was finally cancelled in the early summer of 1565, Fourquevaux sent instead.

Utenhove seems to have left England for Germany in the summer of 1565.

Utenhove may be seen as an ornament to de Foix’s household but did not assist his patron in the day-to-day work, though he may have helped compose Latin orations. Practical work was reserved for the long-standing secretaries, most of all Florent Adam, who accompanied his master throughout the 1560s and 1570s and acted both as drafter and writer of the majority of his despatches and also as his trusted messenger for highly confidential matters. His hand is distinctive and can easily be identified in his papers. Others were Augustin Langlers or Langlois, secretary or valet de chambre and


76 TNA, SP 70/48, fo. 3 (CSPF, VI, no. 2).

77 La Quadra to Granvelle, 11 July 1562, Relations politiques, III, 73.

78 Ford, ‘Carolus Utenhovius’, 157; Guzman to Philip II, 13 August 1565, CSP Simancas, I, no. 317.

79 Charles Utenhove to Cecil, Cologne, 22 July 1565, TNA, SP 12/36 fo. 184 Relations politiques, IV, 225–228.

80 BnF Clair 232, p. 2469, comptes de l’Epargne, 1562: ‘A Florent Adam …’. His identity as the writer of most of de Foix’s despatches is confirmed by the signed memorandum, BnF fr.16080, fos 113–116, endorsed ‘Par son secretaire qui a apporté la depesche du xxvije janvier 1570’.
Antoine du Boys, another secretary (involved in the disturbance at Eton). Robert Polastron, from a family originating in Foix, was his maître d’hôtel. Adam and other servants were accorded passports in October 1563, presumably to carry messages and despatches during time of war. The Spanish ambassador, in describing de Foix’s recall in May 1566, observed that, like his successor’s secretary, Adam had been a ‘great heretic’, though his continued employment would suggest this was an exaggeration; presumably he shared his master’s reformist views. Adam took charge of complex reports which could not be trusted to despatches and carried long ‘discours’ personally. Highly confidential and important communications were handled by special messengers from the French court, the most important of whom in this period was Michel de Castelnau, sr de Mauvissière, later himself French ambassador in England.

How was de Foix paid? His salary was fixed at the rate of French ambassadors sent to major courts for the time, 1,800 livres tournois (lt.) (600 lt. p.m. or 30 lt. p.d.) In this he was comparable to the ambassadors to Spain and the Emperor, though paid less than envoys to the Council of Trent and Constantinople. What in practice did this mean, though? It seems improbable that ambassadors received sacks of gold coin directly from the treasury, so the most likely device was the employment of letters of credit between Paris and London. Nevertheless, like all ambassadors, he still found it difficult at times to extract his salary at source. In June 1562, he reported that the Trésorier de l’Epargne had refused to pay his quarter of May to July, presumably in view of severe shortage of cash. He was already thinking about his likely recall in August 1562, the first major crisis in Anglo-French relations, and asked to be paid for the last four months he was due (up to the end of August) in order to pay his creditors ‘et pouvoir sortir honnestement’. He did not receive this until after 25 August. In March 1565 his salary was unpaid for six months and he had received no payments for extraordinary expenses since the start of his embassy; he claimed to have run out of credit.

81 BnF Clair. 232, p. 2452.
82 CSPF, VI, no. 1278, 8 October 1563.
83 Guzman to Philip II, 25 May 1566, CSP Simancas, I, no. 358 (Coleccion de Documentos Ineditos, 89, 324): La Forêt’s secretary was ‘muy hereje, así lo era él del que se va’.
84 Payments were in a mixture of 400 écus d’or soleil (at 50s a piece, 1000 lt.), 200 Spanish crowns, éc. pistollets (at 48s a piece, 480 lt.), silver testons (300 lt.) and the rest, 20 lt., in small change (douzains). The pistollet was worth 47s 10d t. in 1560 but 48s t. in 1562 (BnF fr.18505, fo. 9).
85 No. 35.
86 13 June 1562; BnF Clair. 232, p. 2711.
87 No. 99.
Calculations of the real value of his salary are always difficult; one way is that, if we remember that the English gold angel (the commonest large English gold coin in 1560) passed in France for 3.18.0 lt. in April 1560, this would have meant the de Foix’s quarter salary of 1800 lt. was roughly equal to 450 angels or, at 10s sterling per angel, £225 sterling, thus £1,000 p.a. This placed the ambassador on the highest level of the gentry and the lowest level of the nobility in terms of income. English ambassadors in France were paid at the comparable rate of £1,100–£1,200 p.a. at this time but had to find their own accommodation. Expenses ate deeply into this income and, unsurprisingly, de Foix had to make use of credit, given all the extraordinary expenditure he needed to lay out. The prospect of having to accompany Elizabeth’s court on the proposed progress to York in the autumn of 1562 led him to demand extra subventions. Routine postal costs were to be defrayed from the salary but special messengers – increasingly used in times of crisis – were paid by the crown. Communication with home was always vital. Despatches were carried by Adam, Polastron, du Boys, Langlois and sometimes by French merchants in London such as Guillaume Le Roye. Otherwise, they were looked after by Lescot, a chevaucher d’écurie ‘ordonné à la suite du seigneur de Foix’. Though the logistical problems of correspondence were by no means as formidable as those faced by Spanish envoys, a return journey by special messenger would cost between 200 and 350 livres depending on the length of journey. The ambassador was under orders to write every week in 1562; he wrote five times between 5 May and 9 June without once having received any instructions from home. The reasons are almost

88 BnF fr.18505, fo. 3v: ‘C’est l’évaluation des monnoyes d’or et d’argent estrangères.’ Thus 1,800 lt. = roughly 450 English angels. With the angel valued at 10s sterling in 1560, this would make 1,800 lt. = £225 sterling per quarter.
89 L. Stone, Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558–1641 (Oxford, 1965), 760 and 762; the mean landed income of the nobility in 1559, £2,140.
91 The French courier service is discussed by E.J.B. Allen, Post and Courier Service in the Diplomacy of Early Modern Europe (The Hague, 1972), 74. This says relatively little on England, though draws on de Foix’s correspondence in Rome extensively.
92 e.g. to Florent Adam, 200 lt. ‘pour estre venu en diligence et chevaux de poste de Londres jusques au chasteau de Vincennes apportant lettres dud. sr de la part dud. sr de Foix, comprins son retour en pareille diligence avec responce’, quittance signed by Claude de L’Aubespine, 26 July 1562. For other couriers mentioned in de Foix’s later correspondence as ambassador at Venice and Rome, see BnF Clair. 232, pp. 2452, 2507, 2549, 2567, 2574, 2614, 2632, 2653, 2665.
93 BnF Clair. 232, p. 2574.
94 No. 10.
certainly the Regent’s distraction with Condé’s rebellion. The time taken for despatches to reach de Foix was relatively short when the court was in the Paris region or the Loire during 1562–1563 (a week to ten days) but much longer when the French court was on its lengthy tour around France in 1564 and 1565. De Foix’s despatch of 22 January 1565 was answered at Toulouse on 22 February and the latter received by de Foix in London at the end of March.\(^95\) A month’s delay would have been likely throughout the court’s perambulation through Languedoc and Guyenne in that year. Despatches were written partly in cipher, which did not change in the course of the embassy, though was significantly modified early in 1564.

Much of the routine business of a French ambassador concerned the extensive problems to be dealt with concerning French merchants in England; such was his normal job and many of de Foix’s despatches concern such cases. Princes routinely raised the problems of merchants arrested in foreign countries when they had difficulty in justifying their policies and Elizabeth was no less given to this device than others. So in 1562, after an edgy audience with de Foix on her attitude to Protestants in France, she raised the question of mistreatment on English merchants there.\(^96\) The 1560s saw more than the usual problems, however. First, trade was severely disrupted by the wars of 1562–1564 and the restitution of arrested shipping became a major headache from the spring of 1563 onwards.\(^97\) Then, the implementation of the peace left severe problems of piracy and reprisal to be solved.\(^98\) Most importantly, though, was the spill-over from the chronic problem of Anglo-Flemish trade embargoes, which were bound to affect French traders. The position of the French was that they wanted to trade freely with England under the terms of the Treaty of Troyes. At this stage, England was very far from being a country devoted to free trade and all sorts of obstacles were placed in the way of the free exchange of goods before an agreement could be reached in December 1564.

**Major Diplomatic Themes: England and the French Civil War**

As for the business which de Foix conducted and his reports home in his correspondence, some salient features may be pointed out. His

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95 No. 102.
96 No. 14.
97 Nos 57, 59.
98 See in particular No. 79 as an example.
routine cynicism emerges early in his encouragement of the idea of Swedish marriage with Mary Stuart as a means of keeping Elizabeth in check through the presence of a monarch whom she had affronted north of the border. More seriously his Instructions to Adam of 11 July 1562 outlined in brutal detail the principles of French policy towards England and Scotland: a meeting between the two queens and any co-operation with a view to Mary’s rights of succession in England was to be avoided as contrary to the cornerstone of French policy: ‘luy estant tres commode que les Angloys aient à leur dos ung enemy pour les empescher de rien aisement entreprendre en France’.  

De Foix was scrupulous – perhaps excessively – in sifting rumour from speculation, and cynical about the propensity for deception and secrecy in the political world. In comparison with other envoys in England at the time, for instance Mauvissière, he does not indulge in much colourful detail and description. He thought the brief of an ambassador was only to relay genuine information, not gossip. As a result, his scruples over rumour led him to treat rumours of Condé’s dealings with Elizabeth with care at first, unwilling as he was to accept that the prince could be betraying his loyalty to the king. This is not to say that he was naive. Rumour was of some use but only insofar as suspicion acted as a signpost in dangerous times. As he pointed out in May 1562, the difficulty was that the determination of the English to keep their intentions secret could only serve as a signal – ‘aiguillon’ – to be on guard. He was quite clear that Elizabeth was keen to aid the prince of Condé. By May 1562, he was exceptionally well informed on the movements of the admiralty officials and obviously had agents – ‘ceulx qui sont icy par vostre commandement’ – staking out the house of the treasurer of the navy. By July, his agents could report to him in detail of ships in the Thames, their masters and crews. Despite rumours, he was convinced that Elizabeth still planned no intervention in France because no preparations had been made and his knowledge of royal finances persuaded him that Elizabeth was both careful

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99 No. 21.
100 No. 7: ‘considerant combien il est malaisé de descouvrir les volontez et intentions et actions de personnes qui ne cherchent rien que cachetes et couvertures et emploient tout ce qu’ilz peuvent’.
101 No. 14: ‘Mais j’ay tousiours bien pensé que l’office d’un ambassadeur estoit de ne vous riens mander qui ne fust ou certain ou appuyé de tresbonnes et grandes coniectures.’ See also No. 11.
102 No. 7.
103 No. 11.
104 No. 7.
105 No. 7.
and short of money. Nevertheless, he thought she had maintained her credit on international markets by paying off debt and that she had accumulated war munitions. He was under no illusions about the determination of the English – ‘who learn from their fathers not to love the French’ (qui ont après de leurs peres de n’aymer guerres les Français) – to regain Calais. Indeed, he was convinced by mid June that, though there was no direct evidence of collaboration in France, Elizabeth could mount an expedition to some place on the French coast very quickly. Inside information about decisions of the council to mobilize naval forces in July he only obtained through ‘grand travail, pratique et despens.’ He took the sanguine view that Elizabeth needed France more than the other way round. This seemingly strange view was probably engendered by an understanding of the seriousness of Catholic discontent in England, a point he would return to in 1565 when discussing plans for the Queen’s marriage. By late July, and confronting Elizabeth directly, it became clear that she regarded the situation of Catholic military movements in Normandy as sufficient justification for helping the Protestants there. Her offers to ‘mediate’ between the parties in France, though they could not be directly rebuffed, clearly could not be accepted. Her protests about the mistreatment of English merchants and long (to de Foix exasperating) discourses on legitimate authority he saw as the prelude to a blunt threat to withdraw her ambassador from France on the grounds of his insecurity. This was the reason for the despatch of an old hand in Anglo-French relations, Vieilleville, to handle Elizabeth’s pretensions. August saw lengthy consultations between the Queen and her counsellors and the two French envoys on questions of such mediation. After two audiences involving both Vieilleville and de Foix, the former was finally forced to state quite clearly that mediation was unacceptable –‘il n’estoit raisonnable ny convenable à la grandeur du Roy qu’il receust aucun arbitraige entre luy et ses subiectz’ – even though Elizabeth tried to insist that conflict was between Condé and Guise, not between the king and his subjects. Taxed with her warlike preparations, she insisted that she was not a princess of such feeble temperament as to attack a child prince. A prince, she said, should speak his whole

106 No. 12.
107 No. 12.
108 No. 14.
110 No. 31. Vieilleville in August also underlined the ‘treslong discours’ to which Elizabeth was given when she desired to obfuscate an issue (No. 32).
mind but should not lie. Vieilleville, for his part, refuted her argument that she could not ignore the danger to her security posed by the violence in France by wryly pointing out that her subjects who opposed her ‘n’ont pas loisir de penser dehors’ and that England and France were separated by a ‘grand fossé’ and that France had no fleet capable of crossing it. The Queen made her final statement on the subject in a memorandum sent to Throckmorton. In it she summarized a view of the troubles in France that emphasized the rivalry between Condé and Guise and the ambitions of the latter as the source of all the trouble. This series of audiences illustrates neatly the function of such exchanges in private; they were meant to tease out what otherwise would be hidden motives and so involved skilful debating techniques. At all events, it looked increasingly as though de Foix would soon have to return and a state of war prevail, as he reported English military and naval preparations and the arrival in secret of Condé’s agents. De Foix seems convinced that the Queen had decided not to break openly but rather to send aid secretly to the Protestants while promising more substantial help should they come under pressure. By late August, de Foix’s spy network was working hard to map the movements of French Protestants based in England. The last surviving items from de Foix’s 1562 correspondence are his protest to the Privy Council of 10 November and the replies to them of 17 November.

As far as his own opinions on the civil wars in France were concerned, he pulled no punches in his letters to the Regent and, unlike most ambassadors at the time, was unsparing with his advice on how to conduct affairs. The outbreak of civil war he considered disastrous; the King, in making war on his subjects, was making war against himself, as he spelled out in his despatches of 13 and 21 June (Nos 12, 13), almost any terms were better than civil war. In this he was continuing the theme of the discourse on toleration of late 1561. He even produced the startling remark that ‘me pardonnera vostre magesté si je repete souvent que le Christ estoit tresaisé ou de permettre l’edict de Janvier avoir lieu ou de ruiner le Roy par ses divisions et luy couper tous les jours comme partie de ses

112 No. 33.
113 No. 36.
114 Nos 37, 38, 41.
115 Saint-Sulpice seems to have been equally forthright in his letters to Catherine de Medici from Spain.
116 Nos 12, 14.
membres’. His reaction to the false dawn of the Beaugency agreement was, to say the least, effusive.

The predicament of his own country is illustrated by his friendship with some of the leading literary figures of his time. De Foix was a friend of Montaigne and Ronsard. In 1565 Ronsard, expecting Utenhove to sing his praises in Greek or Latin verse (‘ta prudence et ta vie | seront chantez du docte Outenhove’), addressed an elegy to the ambassador wishing he (Ronsard) had been able to hibernate and so miss the three years of civil strife – ‘un si cruel naufrage | est arrivé au milieu de nostre aage’:

Que toy, qui fus en ambassade absent,
As enduré autant que le present,
Ayant souffert dedans ceste isle Angloise
Beaucoup de mal pour la guerre Francoise
Rigueurs, prisons: aussi esse de Foix,
Bien la raison qu’un parent de nos Rois,
Comme tu es, courre mesme fortune

He was a practised observer of demeanour, especially of the Queen, though arguably less impressed by her physical charms than was his colleague Mauvissière on the occasion of the gift of camels and fashion dolls in 1565. He reacted to physical changes of expression in the Queen on the assumption, presumably, that outward signs – ‘qu’elle monstra par gestes, contenance, changement de couleur et visaise’ – were a sign of inner thoughts, though he never assumed that there was a direct correlation. Indeed, he tended to assume that that there was always likely to be a hidden inner dimension. Of her famous procrastination, he observed that ‘la Royne d’Angleterre ne se resoult jamays que quand elle se trouve sur le poinct de perdre ce qui luy est presenté’ and that she ‘de sa

117 No. 28.
118 Pierre de Ronsard, Oeuvres complètes ed. P. Laumonier, XIII (Paris, 1948), 150. ‘Elegie à Monsieur de Foyx ambassadeur du Roy en Angleterre’. Jean Morel, Utenhove’s employer, was also a patron of Ronsard and the Montaigne connection is evidenced from Montaigne’s letter to de Foix as preface to his edition of the poems of their mutual friend Étienne de La Boétie, Vers françois de feu Estienne De la Boëtie Conseiller du Roy en sa Cour de Parlement à Bordeaux (A Paris: Par Frederic Morel Imprimeur du Roy, 1572) and Michel de Montaigne, Essais, ed. J.-V. Leclerc, IV (Paris, 1844), 77; 314–318, Lettre VII.
119 No. 107. For Mauvissière’s praises of Elizabeth, see Mémoires de Messire Michel de Castelnau, Seigneur de Mauvissière, ed. Jean Le Laboureur, 3 vols (Brussels, 1731), I, Book III, ch.1.
120 No. 4.
nature est longue à ce resouldre et tardifve en toutes ces deliberations’.

From the start of his mission, he discussed with the Queen the interplay between religion and civil conflict; in one of his first surviving despatches, he noted Elizabeth’s opinions on the role of religion in such conflicts and her disconcerting emphasis on the disastrous consequences of Northumberland’s bid for power in 1553, all the more surprising as a view of Robert Dudley’s father. In his audience in July 1562 he listened to a long discourse by the Queen defending her attitude to civil conflict in France and observing that: ‘elle ne commectroit jamais ceste faulte, de couvrir ses affections du manteau de religion, au grand scandalle de sa creance, et de la profession qu’elle faict de la craincte de Dieu, disant que de ce elle en avoit rendu assez bon tesmoignaige en la guerre d’Escosse’.

In the subsequent audience her long discourse on her reasons for interest in French affairs he described as ‘plusieurs longs discours et à mon advis premeditez auparavant’, larded with protestations of her commitment to her subjects’ safety and the diligence that she employed to compensate for the weakness of her sex. She was to return to the theme in the summer of 1562 in arguing that the French troubles stemmed from a political failure to settle the disputes between Condé and Guise.

An Ambassador in Time of War

In the summer of 1562, war looked imminent and the recall of ambassadors was discussed. The French crown demanded the extradition of a list of ‘traitors’ under the terms of the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis. The conclusion of the treaty between Elizabeth and Condé developed instead into a lengthy stand-off – a sort of phoney war – in which English troops entered France but not formally as enemies of the king of France. Though war was not declared until July 1563, it is pretty clear the de Foix and his staff regarded the start of hostilities as the English expedition to Le Havre. De Foix denounced English plans to send troops to

121 Nos 103, 109.
122 No. 2.
123 No. 31.
124 No. 31.
125 No. 36.
126 Charles IX to Elizabeth I, 2 October 1562, TNA, SP 70/42, fo. 45.
127 In a list of complaints of September 1564, de Foix refers to ‘le premier septembre 1562 et la guerre encommencee’, No. 76.
Normandy in October but, under instruction, insisted that France ‘a intention de garder et conserver la paix’.\textsuperscript{128} It suited both sides to keep open a channel of communication and, as a result, de Foix stayed in post, not the least of his tasks being a series of ever more preposterous confrontations with the English Privy Council (the Queen herself was dangerously ill with smallpox) in September 1562. Elizabeth had published a declaration in which she accepted the French Protestant argument that the young Charles IX and his mother were not free, that power was being illegally exercised by the Guise faction and that she had the duty both to intervene on behalf of those threatened with persecution and also in defence of the king himself. De Foix was deputed to refute all these arguments and went to Hampton Court on 19 October to deliver a long and detailed exposé of his case: Charles IX held full powers, deputed to his mother and the king of Navarre, was supported by all the princes of the blood except one; Condé’s rebellion was not motivated by religion but rather by ambition and no prince had the right to intervene in the affairs of another. If this were accepted, no prince would be secure. If the Queen’s intent was to ensure the return of Calais in due course, then she had broken the treaty and would make such a return less likely.\textsuperscript{129} He attended the Lord Mayor’s banquet at Guildhall on 25 October, after which a delegation of the Privy Council came to reject his arguments (though refusing to hand him their statement in written form, claiming that it was against the English custom). A further protest by de Foix followed on 10 November. De Foix must have by now become inured to English arguments. That war was not formally declared at this stage must have resulted from the fact that neither side found it expedient to go that far; the French monarchy had its hands full with civil war and it suited English interests to keep the intervention in Normandy limited for the time being. Unfortunately, it is after November 1562 that his correspondence with France fades out and we have to rely on other sources. We know that de Foix was able to send despatches via Flanders. Throckmorton in France got wind of this and thought they should be intercepted.\textsuperscript{130} One such despatch in January 1564 from the Queen Mother to him was intercepted and two detailed despatches survive in French archives.

\textsuperscript{128} No. 46.
\textsuperscript{129} No. 47.
\textsuperscript{130} ‘yet shall not be amisse also that yow do advertise … how the French ambassador doth find meanes contynally from tyme to tyme to make his dispatches hither by the way of Flaunders, which me thinks being well laid for might be either empeached or intercepted’, TNA, SP 70/67, fo. 182v, to Smith, 2 December 1563. By February 1564, Throckmorton was passing on de Foix’s packets to L’Aubespine, CSPF VII, no. 146.
from the court to de Foix in the May of 1563, which indicate the continuation of detailed correspondence at least until the outbreak of war.\textsuperscript{131} Plainly, despite undeclared or declared war, both courts thought it useful to retain channels of communication.

War was finally declared by both sides after the English evacuation of Le Havre. Yet de Foix continued in his post. In May 1563, Catherine thought that ‘je ne pense pas que l’on vous vouslissit faire outrage’ in the event of war\textsuperscript{132} and it is the case that de Foix was treated somewhat more gently than the English envoy in France, Throckmorton. After the formal declaration of war between England and France in the summer of 1563, de Foix was confined under rather easy-going conditions at Eton college, partly in retaliation for the arrest of Throckmorton. At the end of December 1563 a violent confrontation broke out there involving de Foix and his entourage. The rules of the house stipulated that the Provost, William Day, should have the gates closed at night but on this occasion de Foix’s visitor, the special envoy Mauvissière,\textsuperscript{133} wished to leave at 8.30 and the ambassador sent to ask the Provost to open the gates. Day said he could not do so and there followed what Cecil called ‘multiplication of languages on both sides’. Mauvissière chose to go to the back gate and climb over to his own lodging but others, not prepared for such an undignified egress, went back to the Provost with de Foix’s servants and ‘brok open this doore upon him perforce with a forme and the ambassador with a sword in his hand, though not drawen out of the scabberd, was the first that entered and du Boys his secretary with an other sword, and toke the provost violently out of his chamber, having but one scholler in his company, and toke the keyes and opened the gates at their pleasure’. Next day, another row broke out outside Cecil’s chamber at Windsor Castle with both sides protesting and de Foix, ‘netted’ at not being given an audience.\textsuperscript{134}

In the procès-verbal of the events drawn up in French but probably meant as a statement of the College’s position, we learn that Karel Utenhove was one of those involved and that the ambassador himself had been recorded as saying: ‘Nos non sumus obstricti

\textsuperscript{131} Nos 65, 58, 59.

\textsuperscript{132} No. 59.

\textsuperscript{133} Mauvissière does not refer to his presence in England in late 1563/early 1564 in his Mémoires, ed. J. Le Laboureur, Vol. I (Paris, 1639). No doubt he was on a special mission carrying despatches, see TNA, SP 70/66 fo. 84; TNA, SP 70/66, fo. 269. He left shortly after 18 December and was back from England on 9 January.

\textsuperscript{134} Cecil to Smith, 1 January ‘1563’, BL Lansdowne 102, fo. 52.
vestries legibus’ – in other words, claiming diplomatic immunity.\footnote{TNA, SP 70/66, fo. 219.} Since the confrontation, the French had been accused of throwing stones at the scholars as they went out into the fields, and of stealing lead from the roof to make hackbut bullets. The Provost drew up an indictment of the behaviour of the French entourage: the ambassador’s sommelier was accused of raping a young woman who brought the food, they were accused of bringing loose women into the college, of behaving disgustingly – ‘et autrement qui ne se doibt dyre’ – in the privies reserved for the masters and, when excluded, breaking the locks open, pissing against the door of one of the masters, corrupting youth by giving them money to bring ‘femmes dissolues’ into the college, using the kitchen under the masters’ chamber to thrust up spits between the floorboards and fire pistols through them. The list goes on and on.\footnote{Procès-verbal of 30 December 1563, TNA, SP 70/66, fo. 219.}

Plainly, the ambassador’s entourage was trying and even Cecil, who put up with quite a lot from de Foix, was ready to argue that ‘the embassadour shalbe be removed thence to be tought to provide his lodging with money as you do there’.\footnote{BL, Lansdowne 102, fo. 52.} What this reveals is the extraordinary situation that the French ambassador in time of war (and this is virtually unprecedented) was scarcely under arrest but simply being provided with lodging by the crown as had always been the case.

Even if Eton was perhaps meant to be a place where the ambassador could be kept under observation, it was extremely unusual for a French ambassador to remain in England during time of war, the two envoys nearly always returning home simultaneously and under supervision. That de Foix stayed on in England is first to be explained by the strict arrest of Throckmorton – at one time he was kept in a tower of the castle of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, accused in France of masterminding the seizure of Le Havre during the first war of religion – and second by the undoubted convenience that was seen in retaining an open channel of communications during a war that neither side particularly wanted. De Foix was to play a major role in the negotiation of a new treaty.

The Queen’s Marriage

The second part of de Foix’s embassy became dominated by the question of the Queen’s marriage, the succession and Mary,
Queen of Scots. All were interrelated but in some ways it is de Foix’s role in the marriage question which is most surprising. From the start, he had been concerned about the Queen’s marriage. In 1561–1562 the project of a Swedish match was still on the agenda and de Foix noted in March 1562 that Elizabeth was able to keep Eric XIV’s envoys waiting in order to avoid their travelling to Scotland; convincing them that the Queen was angry with Lord Robert, her improbable candidate for Mary’s hand at that stage, was part of the stratagem. In fact, de Foix thought a marriage between Mary and the Swedish king would very much serve French interests in averting one which would have placed Mary in a more advantageous position in the English succession.\footnote{No. 2.} With the restoration of peace in the summer of 1564, the possibility of a real Anglo-French rapprochement emerged in parallel with deteriorating Anglo-Spanish relations and fears of a Franco-Spanish rapprochement. Elizabeth I had reason to fear the latter, while the insecurity over the succession forced her to confront the unpalatable problem of marriage. Late in 1564 the possibility of a marriage to the Archduke Charles was re-emerging; this would have brought security from Spain, though with significant dangers to the precarious religious settlement in England.\footnote{The best study of the marriage negotiations can be found in Doran, Monarchy and Matrimony, which argues that the French marriage were kept alive by the need to obtain better terms from the Habsburgs as well as to avoid Franco-Habsburg rapprochement at the looming Bayonne meeting. What de Foix’s correspondence reveals is the degree of effort put into the negotiations by the French. On the imperatives behind Franco-Spanish negotiations, see Bertrand Haan, L’Amitié entre princes: Une alliance franco-espagnole au temps des guerres de Religion (1560–1570) (Paris, 2011), 91–123.} It was a development which Catherine de Medici wished to avert at all costs even though she had the option of a closer alliance with Spain backed by Charles IX’s marriage to a Habsburg princess. As we have seen, she had no reason to welcome the succession of Mary Stuart in England as this would have consolidated a potentially hostile power in a united British Isles. For all these reasons, the proposition of an apparently improbable marriage between Elizabeth and the young Charles IX seemed to answer these problems. For Catherine it offered the prospect of a grand French-dominated polity if successful and at least a means of delay in the Anglo-Habsburg marriage talks. For Elizabeth, it allowed her a degree of manoeuvre in her negotiations with the Archduke. Such are the deductions historians can draw, though it should be stressed that direct evidence for them is meagre. What we can assert is that between the summers of 1564 and 1565 Paul de Foix was heavily engaged in negotiating
Elizabeth’s marriage to his master. De Foix told the Queen in March 1565 that Catherine now considered him the «seul moienneur de se negoce» and, indeed his record of talks with Elizabeth in the early months of 1565 is one of the most detailed insights into the rhetoric of royal marriage negotiations in the century, as well of the sheer grind of verbal fencing in almost daily audiences. It has been usual to dismiss this as a smoke-screen or diversion, though such a conclusion is not possible to draw from de Foix’s correspondence. Indeed, in some ways is contradicted by it. The relentless energy he poured into pursuing Elizabeth’s agreement to the marriage indicates a high degree of commitment. It is certainly the case that, even at the time, it was understood that the practical obstacles to such an alliance were formidable. Nevertheless, these seem to have been set aside by Catherine and her agents.

The first mention of de Foix’s role in the negotiations for this marriage comes in a report to Charles IX and his mother that he wrote in December 1564. In this he notes that the Queen had several times mentioned the idea of a marriage to Charles IX since the return of Lord Hunsdon from his ceremonial embassy to France in May 1564. Surprisingly, he mentions his initial scepticism in view of the changeability of women and the Queen’s penchant for Leicester. Nevertheless, negotiating could do no harm, he thought (‘si les choses venoient à fin il s’en ensuivroit tresgrand bien et où il y auroit empeschement il n’en peut venir aucun dommaige’). The matter could be expedited during an embassy to present Leicester with the order of Saint-Michel, preferably by a figure known to favour religious reform. Such a personal union would add the wealth and naval power of England to that of France. Continuity in the case of Elizabeth’s early death would be assured by the marriage of Mary Stuart to the duc d’Orléans. While Philip II had not been able to profit from his alliance with Mary Tudor partly because of Protestant hostility to him, Charles IX would have all three kingdoms and benefit from the moderation he had shown to Protestants in France. Opposition would be muted since so many of the nobility had been executed and the rest intimidated under Henry VIII. Finally, de Foix was sceptical that the Queen was irrevocably attached to Leicester, having offered him as a husband to the queen of Scotland. As an exercise in strategy, this report was masterful. It lacked only the one crucial element: a realistic estimate of Elizabeth’s and Mary’s intentions. It does however serve to underline

140 No. 101, meeting of 24 March.
141 No. 91. The date of this can be established from No. 156, which mentions an earlier despatch of de Foix on the subject dated 11 December.
the fact that French strategy was a response to Elizabeth’s démarches and that it looked at first like a practical possibility.

Catherine responded rapidly in January 1565 by praising Elizabeth’s virtues and rejoicing ‘si ung de mes enfans d’une bien aymee seur m’en avoir fait une treschere fille, au grand honneur, bien et grandeur de noz estatz’. 142 Around the same time, Mme de Crussol (Louise de Clermont Tallard) wrote privately to Elizabeth on behalf of her mistress the Queen Mother, recalling the good effect of Hunsdon’s embassy the previous year and the coming embassy to England of Mauvissière. Catherine, she said ‘vous ayme et estime comme le plus parfaicte seur et amye qu’elle ayt au monde et qu ies-time aultant les dons de grace et bonnes perféctions que Dieu a mis en vous’. 143 De Foix spoke to the Queen in private on 11 February and passed on an edited version of Catherine’s positive response. 144 His description of her answer is revealing both of Elizabeth’s acting powers and of his wish to convey a positive picture: ‘Et ce pendant qu’il le lisoyt, lad. dame changea plusieurs foiz de couleur et conte-nance, comme personne esprinse de joye meslee avec une honneste vergongne.’ She quoted to him what she claimed was an English proverb: ‘quant à l’improuviste il advient quelque grand heur, l’on raiieunist de deux ans’ (‘a sudden piece of good fortune take two years off you’). The sting came in the tale: she was, she said, too old for the young French king and he would leave her just as her sister had been left by Philip. Nevertheless, de Foix was insistent in pointing out the advantages of the union: their children would succeed to both kingdoms (whereas Mary’s children could not have succeeded to Spain). Elizabeth then bewilderingly swung to the other direction: her subjects would accept whatever marriage she chose and a marriage within England was, for her, out of the question, even with Leicester. She even dangled the prospect of the French king’s marriage to Mary Stuart, to be told that was out of the question. Both agreed that secrecy was crucial (the Queen spoke of the ‘infinité de diables’ in courts who were observing her actions). De Foix saw her again in her chamber on 13 February, to be told that, since the proposal had been put to her she felt it was more like a dream than reality. Having spoken to her council, she raised the three main obstacles that were to bedevil the long

142 No. 95.
144 No. 98. M.A.S. Hume in his old study of The Courtships of Queen Elizabeth (London, 1896) gave a narrative of this audience based on his reading of the ‘dépêches de Monsieur de Foix’ in the BN.
negotiations: the difference in age, the impossibility of leaving government of the kingdom to any relative during her absence and the need to obtain the consent of Parliament. De Foix simply observed that differences in age were common in marriages between princes, that the French king could reside in England and dryly observed that, at their last meeting, she had said that her marriage was a matter of her will alone. An explosion of rage (she ‘devint fort rouge et comme personne fachee’) about the detention of English prisoners in the galleys was followed by a gentle denial that she was refusing the offer and her calling for a chair for the ambassador to sit and receive thanks for his good reports of her.145  

The Spanish ambassador reported the gist of the discussions on 15 March 1565:

it is stated that negotiations are on foot about the king of France, which the Queen herself told me, and it may be true now because the French, having got wind of the Archduke’s affair, may wish to divert it by bringing their own king forward. It may be also that, however great the disparity of years, they may be willing to overlook it in order to join this country to theirs, seeing also that the king has a brother.146

This confrontation serves neatly to encapsulate the difficulties that de Foix had in negotiating with Elizabeth and also the problems that continued to bedevil the long negotiations about the marriage which were to stretch out frustratingly until the autumn of 1565. The Queen repeatedly promised an answer to urgent French requests for a decision and repeatedly escaped from giving one. For both sides, of course, it served a useful purpose to prolong the agony. While it seems that de Foix genuinely thought there was a real possibility of success, this reflects a certain set of assumptions among diplomats of the period that apparently insuperable problems in dynastic marriages could always be overruled. Nor should it be forgotten that, despite the obvious practical obstacles, the long drawn-out negotiations, offered an opportunity for Elizabeth to act and dazzle.

Mary, Queen of Scots

De Foix’s first diplomatic experience had been his mission to Scotland late in 1561. It seems from various sources that he did

145 No. 98, audience of 13 February.  
146 CSP Simancas, I, no. 288.
not form an entirely positive impression of the Scottish queen.\textsuperscript{147} Indeed, his first surviving letter, to the Queen of Scots herself, notes ‘quelque souspeçon que la Royne mere du Roy monseigneur m’a dict que vous avez eue de moy estant en vostre roialme’. As we have seen, de Foix was preoccupied throughout the spring and summer of 1562 with the possibility of a face-to-face meeting between the two queens and spoke frequently with Mary’s envoy Maitland of Lethington. He reported on Elizabeth’s desire for a meeting, resisted by her advisers and underlined the disadvantages to France of a reconciliation between the two cousins.\textsuperscript{148} In his historical survey of Anglo-French-Scottish relations, he insisted on the role of Scotland as a bridle for England and on the danger of an Anglo-Scottish reconciliation. He also argued that the succession claims of Mary were a means for Elizabeth to control her and thus to blunt the opposition of her Catholic subjects. Of course, he wrongly concluded that Elizabeth would be forced by precedent to declare a successor. He also feared a marriage between Mary and the prince of Spain, which would have brought the entire British Isles into the Spanish orbit.\textsuperscript{149} At all events, by August the crisis in France had evidently put off the meeting in the north, much to de Foix’s relief.\textsuperscript{150} By the beginning of 1565, the question of Mary’s marriage had become urgent and de Foix – responsible for keeping the French court up to date with news from Scotland – was reporting the fortunes of Elizabeth’s offer of Leicester to the Scottish queen.\textsuperscript{151} At the same time, he began to report the success of the earl of Lennox – allowed to return to Scotland by Elizabeth to reclaim his property – in ingratiating himself with Mary and of talk at the Scottish court that Mary would marry. For the first time he mentioned Darnley. As de Foix well understood, the whole question of the Scottish queen’s marriage was linked to her position as potential successor to the English throne. In April 1565, he reported the news from Randel, English agent in Scotland, that there were ‘les grandz signes et demonstrat’ions’ that Mary intended to marry Darnley and that Elizabeth, at first angry, had been persuaded by Cecil that this was not such a bad idea.\textsuperscript{152} Very quickly however, Elizabeth returned to her negative view, despite Lethington’s being sent to ask her consent. She deeply suspected that fact that the Lennox family were

\textsuperscript{147} See above, p. 000.
\textsuperscript{148} Nos 12 and 21.
\textsuperscript{149} No. 21.
\textsuperscript{150} No. 41.
\textsuperscript{151} No. 94.
\textsuperscript{152} No. 103.
Catholics and that ‘ne faict lad. Royne d’Angleterre doubte que la Royne d’Escosse ne tende à ce mariage affin de luy servir de moyen de parvenir à ce royaume, ne vouant qu’elle en puisse recepvoir aultre commodité’. The Queen was enraged by the countess of Lennox, still under her control, and would have sent her to the Tower but for the ‘conseil de quelques ungs qui veullent que cest affaire soit conduict avec plus grande moderation’. More sparring with the Queen took place during an audience de Foix had in May when she told him ‘qu’elle n’eust jamais pensé qu’elle eust eu le coeur si bas de se marier avec le filz du comte de Lenos’ to which de Foix responded, not unreasonably, that Elizabeth had been offered the hand of the greatest prince in Christendom but had still not made up her mind. The marriage in July 1565 was followed rapidly by the outbreak of a rebellion led by Moray, Glencairn, and Argyll that led to what was called the ‘Chaseabout raid’ and the momentary flight of Moray to England. Elizabeth professed to have no interest in the rebellion, though, as she told de Foix, she was sure Mary was preparing a war against her. De Foix continued to correspond with Mary sporadically. In the meantime, Mary’s relations with her husband deteriorated. One of de Foix’s last reports on Scottish affairs was on the alarming news of Darnley’s murder of David Rizzio in March 1566. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that de Foix, whatever instructions he received, was at least lukewarm towards the cause of Mary Stuart and never showed any sentimental feelings about her.

Later Life

After the relief he surely felt at his departure after four years in England, de Foix still had a long diplomatic career ahead of him, his activities clearly fostered by the Queen Mother, much as were those of his predecessor, the chevalier de Seure, and later by Henri III. On his return to France, he was named to the conseil privé but then served as ambassador in Venice, 1567–1570. Once back in France, he continued a fairly regular correspondence with William Cecil, was still regarded as an expert on English affairs

153 No. 104.
154 No. 109.
155 No. 146.
156 No. 163.
157 His surviving despatches to the French court during this embassy are in BnF fr.16080, March 1569–September 1570 and BnF fr 16081.
and regularly met Francis Walsingham and Thomas Smith to discuss proposals for the Queen’s marriage to Henri d’Anjou. Refusing the offer of the office of garde des sceaux in place of the Chancellor in 1571, he made two visits to England, the first to negotiate on the marriage of Anjou and the conditions of Mary’s detention in August–September 1571, telling Cobham at Canterbury on his return journey that ‘he was right sorye that he scholde retourne with small hoppe or none of this cause’. De Foix was one of the negotiators of the Treaty of Blois with England on 19 April 1572 and this was followed by a second mission to England in the early summer of 1572, with François de Montmorency in conjunction with La Mothe Fénelon, to discuss the implementation of the Treaty, particularly concerning Mary, Queen of Scots. How he fared during the upheavals of August–September 1572 is not clear. Sadly, a detailed report on the dispositions of the French king’s councillors of 1573 simply noted of him that ‘ys so well knowne unto yow … that I shall need to say nothing of him’. Catherine wished him to serve as ambassador in Rome. However, Pius V remained suspicious of his heretical leanings. Though he represented the King’s brother, the duke of Anjou and king of Poland, in Italy from October 1573 and probably also worked to promote Catherine’s succession dispute with the Grand Duke of Tuscany, he was unable to obtain recognition at Rome. He spent the years from 1577 engaged in pacification missions for the crown in the south of France after the sixth War of Religion and it was not until 1581 that Gregory XIII finally accepted him as French ambassador and allowed his promotion, long promised, as archbishop of Toulouse. The chief place in his working life and perhaps his affections was taken from 1572 by the Gascon scholar Arnaud d’Ossat, whom he met at de Foix’s abbey of Aurillac, recommended by the austere cleric Jean de la Barrière. A mutual love of the classics and philosophy drew them together and thereafter d’Ossat served in his household as secretary and confidant. De Foix died in Rome and was buried there on 12 May 1584. A generation later, his letters to Henri III in this embassy were finally

158 See CSPF, IX, nos 1632, 1732; BL Harl 260, fo. 86.
159 Letters of credence 1 August 1571, CSPF, IX, nos 1898, 1899; TNA, SP 12/81, fo. 18. Cobham to Burghley, 5 September 1571.
160 Summary of the negotiations with the English privy councillors, June 1572, BnF fr.17973 and later copy, fr.15888, fos 315–322.
161 TNA, SP 70/129A, fo. 147.
162 His original despatches in this period are in BnF fr.16044.
published, prefaced by Muret’s funeral oration,\textsuperscript{164} much as had been the letters of d’Ossat, now a cardinal, in the year before. Indeed later editors took the view that it was d’Ossat who had penned de Foix’s despatches. It seems that it was at this time that Cardinal de Richelieu commissioned the copy of the portrait which has survived.

The Sources

Something needs to be said about the difficulties of reconstructing the correspondence of Paul de Foix. As I have already pointed out, the correspondence of French ambassadors in England between the era of the Noailles brothers and La Mothe Fénélon (1550–1570) is relatively little understood. This largely results from the way in which French state archives were preserved for the sixteenth century. In the main, political correspondence was retained in the papers of the royal secretaries (from 1547 secrétaires d’état) who managed them. From 1547, foreign correspondence was shared between the four secrétaires d’état. From that time, the files of French secretaries of state, with letters received and minutes of royal instructions, survive more extensively, as in the cases of Robertet de Fresne or Jean du Thier. In the latter case, the selective publication of this archive by Guillaume Ribier in 1666 made some of the contents available before they were transferred to Russia in the 1790s. However, the papers of secretaries who dealt with English affairs in this period, Jacques Bourdin and Claude de L’Aubespine, have fared badly. Those of Bourdin were, except for a few volumes, destroyed in the burning of the Tuileries in 1871. Though a few of his files had been detached before this and are now in the Bibliothèque nationale, they contain no external correspondence. Those of L’Aubespine survived largely intact (combined with those of his influential brother Sébastien, abbé de Bassefontaine and bishop of Limoges) into the nineteenth century at the château of Villebon (Eure-et-Loir), which was acquired from the descendants of Sully by the comtes de l’Aubespine in the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{165} Since then, however, they have suffered from repeated sales and dispersals. This began in the 1830s and continued in 1904 (though in that case many items were re-acquired by M. Pierre de la Raudière). As recently as 1992, a vast sale of items took place of outstanding autographs from the L’Aubespine papers, though the

\textsuperscript{164} Les Lettres de messire Paul de Foix, archevesque de Tolose, & ambassadeur pour le roi auprès du pape Grégoire XIII, écrites au roi Henry III (Paris: Charles Chappelain, 1628).

\textsuperscript{165} Philippe Des Forts, Le Château de Villebon (Paris, 1914).
minutes of royal despatches and those of Sébastien de L'Aubespine were not included in this and items concerning de Foix may still survive in these private archives.\footnote{I visited these archives in 1973 and was allowed by M. Pierre de La Raudière to make many copies from his archives. The minutes of Claude de L'Aubespine for 1550 I subsequently published as ‘Documents Concerning the negotiation of the Anglo-French Treaty of March 1550’, *Camden Miscellany*, 4th ser., 29 (1994), 58–180.} The years of the Restoration saw a growing vitality in the French market for autograph manuscripts. The original despatches of Paul de Foix that were sold from the L'Aubespine archive in 1835 can be identified by the sale catalogues published by Techener.\footnote{Catalogue de manuscrits et documents originaux en grand e partie, autographes et inédits relatifs à l'histoire de France et d'Angleterre retrouvés dans un vieux château de province … dont la vente aura lieu le 9 juin 1835 et jours suivans … par le ministère de Me Commandeur (Paris: Techener, 1835). Items no. 155 (de Foix's minute of a letter to Mary Stuart 1562), 244 (de Foix’s correspondence of 1562); 245bis (affaires d’Angleterre); 254 (affaires d’Angleterre, 1563); 260 (affaires diverses, including a letter of de Foix, 1565); 263 (affaires d’Angleterre and despatches of de Foix in 1565, Mary Stuart to de Foix).} A large number of the documents from this sale were included in Louis Paris’s collection of documents on the reign of Francis II published in 1841.\footnote{L. Paris, Négociations lettres et pièces diverses relatives au règne de François II tirées du portefeuille de Sébastien de L'Aubespine (Paris, 1841).} The core of Paul de Foix’s surviving despatches from England in 1562 and 1565 found their way as part of the largest segment of the 1835 sale into the fonds français of the Bibliothèque nationale in two volumes (fr. 6612–13) originally catalogued as ‘Supplément français …’ Many are in cipher, of which there are at least two forms and the volumes are heavily interpaginated with blank pages and with pasted notes from the sale catalogue.\footnote{BnF fr. 6612, 6613. 6612 contains the documents from no. 244 of the 1835 sale prefaced by some documents from earlier sale items from the late 1550s and early 1560s.} These form part of a larger series of volumes from the L'Aubespine papers now catalogued as BnF fr.6604–6621. Yet these do not include all the items concerning England sold in 1835, which included despatches concerning both Paul de Foix and the special envoy Mauvissière. Many items from the 1835 sale were sold again in 1843 as is shown by the catalogue of the vast Reboul collection in1843.\footnote{Catalogue de vieux livres et de nombreux manuscrits et autographes … de la bibliothèque de feu M. Reboul dont la vente se fera le lundi 11 décembre 1843 … par le ministère de Me Lemorand de Villeneuve (Paris, 1843). Items 1401–1443 of this sale overlap with the items 46–48 and others of the 1835 sale, and consist of very similar material (i.e. letters that would have been received by Claude de L'Aubespine), but in most cases represent a further tranche of the archive. Item 244 of 1835 (de Foix’s protest on 10 November 1562) is the same as item 1501 of Reboul.} Many others were acquired by Leber and are now in the Bibliothèque municipal of Rouen. Others were acquired by Joseph Barrois and passed through the Ashburnham
collection to the Pierpoint Morgan Library (Nos 1, 87, 103, 104; Elizabeth’s declaration against the King of France, Pierpoint Morgan RE). Others are to be found, for instance, in other BnF volumes and in the Coppet collection, now at the Archives Nationales (Nos 98, 107, 108, 137, 140). Yet another quite significant segment was acquired by the British Library and is now in the Egerton Collection 742 (Nos 32, 39, 88; App. nos 1, 2, 3, 4; and Claude de L’Aubespine’s draft of the Treaty of Troyes, Egerton 742, fos 26–31) – these all have the same pasted sale notes as those in BN fr. 6112–6613.

Otherwise, historians have had to rely heavily on the registers of copies made by ambassadors themselves, as in the cases of Castillon (1537–1538), Marillac (1539–1542), Odet de Selve (1546–1549). In rare cases (for instance of the Noailles brothers) the archive of an ambassador has survived and in this case was made more widely known by the abbé Vertot’s publication in the seventeenth century. For Jean Chemault in 1550–1552, much of his received correspondence survived until it was destroyed by fire in the nineteenth century, though not before selective publication. For the periods in which de L’Aubespine’s papers do not cover English affairs, we thus have to rely on copies made in the sixteenth century of parts of Paul de Foix’s own registers. That he kept a register of his despatches is entirely normal for his time. The copies are taken from what is noted as ‘un registre … des depesches faites du 23 janvier 1565 jusques au 20 may 1566’ and also from copies made of despatches from 1562. We know, for instance that de Foix’s report in early September about the embarkation of Warwick’s expeditionary force to Le Havre was transmitted to the royal representative in Picardy but the despatch has not survived.

Other isolated despatches seem to have survived as a result of ending up in the files of Robertet de Fresne, a secretary of State who would not normally have dealt with them (e.g. No. 24). It is significant that the surviving documents do not cover the crucial years 1563–1564. It could be argued that de Foix was unable to send reports home.

171 BnF, fr. 15888, fo. 264r.
172 Cardinal Charles de Bourbon to M. de Gonnor, Abbeville, 13 September 1562, BnF CC Colbert, 24, fo. 173: ‘n’estoyt certain advis qui nous a fait la nuict passee un courrier venant de la part de l’ambassadeur du Roy en Angleterre, qui assure le Millor Grec [Lord Grey de Wilton] est embarque de vendredy avec mil hommes pour secourir ceux du Havre de Grace, et que dans troys jours s’embarqoyt le frere du Millor Robert avec six mil et plusieurs gentilshommes francoys ; qu’il avoyt assemblé alentour de Londre charroy pour mener vivres et munitions, qu’il avoyt veu tyrer grande quantité de pouldre de lad. Tour dud. Londres, qu’il estoyt passe tant beuiz, bieres et autres vivres, qui n’est pas signe la Royne d’Angleterre se veule contenter de l’aize en laquelle elle est’.
during the war of 1563–1564 but, as I have shown above, this was not the case and a great deal can be gleaned about his regular correspondence in that period. We can only speculate, then, about the reasons for their absence. The explanation is twofold. While under surveillance in 1563–1564, de Foix probably thought it best not to keep a register or may even have had to destroy it. The other is that, in the same period, Claude de L’Aubespine was not filing correspondence with England. In the years 1563–1564 it was probably Bourdin who was also responsible. For instance, it is clear that the reason why no despatches survive from de Foix before May 1562 is that Claude de L’Aubespine was seriously engaged elsewhere, notably in the negotiations of the Regent with the prince of Condé at Orléans. Yet we also know that in certain periods during those years 1563–1564, L’Aubespine did countersign royal letters to England. At all events, it remains clear that the reason for the preservation of the bulk of de Foix’s correspondence is the partial survival of the L’Aubespine archive.

Editorial Procedure

The main body of texts include all the surviving despatches to and from de Foix and the special envoys sent to England in the period such as Vieilleville, Mauvissière and Rambouillet, as well as de Foix’s exchanges with other French ambassadors in Spain, Saint-Sulpice and Fourquevaux. The Appendix lists all other known papers relating to de Foix’s English embassy in the L’Aubespine archive. Where Alexandre Teulet published extracts from de Foix’s despatches, these have been indicated. The despatches of 1562 are partly in cipher (shown in italic), the key of which has been reconstituted (see Figure 1). The dashes in italic text (e.g. in No. 37) represent the number of symbols that are uncertain, as a result of periodic modification of the code. Passages in the autograph hand of de Foix are indicated and all autograph signatures are shown in capitals. Also included are the few surviving despatches to de Foix from Catherine de Medici and Charles IX, published by Le Ferrière but with gaps where he was unable to read the cipher passages. Missing text and conjectural readings are contained within square brackets, sometimes with an explanatory footnote. The texts are edited in the normal way for French manuscripts of this period,

173 Nicola Sutherland underlines the interchange between the departments of L’Aubespine and Bourdin, *French Secretaries of State in the Age of Catherine de Medici* (London, 1962), 32.
that is with original spelling but modern punctuation and apostrophes, accentuation only to elucidate meaning (for example to differentiate a from à, ou from où etc.); capitalization is standardized. Otherwise, u and v are differentiated. Accents are seldom used in manuscript French (as opposed to printed books) in the period, though more frequently in the later part of the sixteenth century. Paragraphing has been modernized. A solidus (forward slash) indicates a page break in the MS. The indication of sources notes where the documents stems originally from the L’Aubespine archive by the note ‘Villebon’ and when initially sold, e.g. ‘Techener’.

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