

## Letter to the King of France (1616?)

Nicolas Brulart de Sillery

### Transcript

British Library, Additional MS 22591, ff. 29r–29v

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To the kings Maiestie of France

Louing Sir I willinglye resigne into yo[u]r handes the Charge, with w[hi]ch yo[u]r were pleased to honor mee, and w[i]th the same countena[u]nce/ I {haue} receaued it, w[i]thout seeking for it, I leave it w[i]thout greiving for it, the Lawes had sufficentlye taught mee to obeye yo[u]r ma[jes]ty, soe that I needed not to haue bine sent for, by A Captaine of the Guard and xxty Archers: First Violence should onelye be vsed against those that resist, and not against thos[e] that knowe howe to obeye, and that haue ever esteemed this honor A heauye burthen/ rather then A dignitie/ w[hi]ch yet I had receaued for the good of yo[u]r service / because everye able man, owes his cares and yeeres to [th]e publike good/ and because it had bene A shame for mee to dye w[i]th [th]e Steyne in my hand/ and being able to hinder (at least to delaye) the Shipwracke that threatnes vs/ God graunt I be the greatest looser in this disfavour, and that you & yo[u]r State be the least touched in it, this accident hath not take[n] me on the Soddaine/ having ever well foreseee, that as I followed as much as I could, the integritie of Mou[n]sier Villeroye, & [th]e Preside[n]t Jainnin. Soe I oughte to expect like fortune to theirs, yo[u]r Com[m]an[d]m[en]t in this/ agreed w[i]th the Choise my selfe had made/ if I had beene at full libertie/ for I loue a great deale better to be A companion in their disgrace/ if I ought soe to stile my selfe thus being disburnded of Affaires, then to be ymployed in managing of the Estate w[i]th them that there remaine/ since in tyme I might haue take[n] an ill Eye, by the Companye of such people/ to whom I noe whatt envye the e[n]crease of Authoritie/ w[hi]ch is given them at my Cost/ for I haue not vsed to giue accompt of my Act[i]ons everye Morning by Stealth/ neither will I be pr[e]scribed, what I ought to doe/ if the States good/ and reason doe not cou[n]sell mee to it; This is much more hono[r]able for mee/ then to haue betrayed yo[u]r Ma[jes]tye in sealing A discharge to an Accompt for 80000l in the {greastise} pouertie of the treasurie/ and [tha]t to further the good of A man/ [tha]t blushes not (besydes this) to demaund the Dutches of Canzon by way of mortgage, w[hi]ch is the Porc[i]on of the Kings Sonnes, and to pr[e]tend to the office of Co[n]stable w[hi]ch the late Kings will expresselye was should be supp[re]sed after the deathe of the late Lord Mount Morvery/ Thinke not Sir/ [tha]t in not giving my Consent to this/ I desire to oppose my selfe against your Authoritie/ I knowe well/ [tha]t that hath noe bonds/ but thos[e] of yo[u]r will/ but yett are you bound to rule yo[u]r selfe according to reason, and to follow the Counsell of those/ w[hi]ch haue entred into [th]e managing of yo[u]r State, by the Choise w[hi]ch the late king had made of them/ as being more able to giue it yo<sup>u</sup> then certaine newe com[m]ers downe out of [th]e dreggs of businesses/ & of [th]e people/ this exchange is made fro[m] vs to the[m], the tricke of [th]e Woules w[i]th [th]e Sheepe when they ta-~~gap: illegible~~ ke their doggs from them/ doth not yo[u]r Ma[jes]ty p[er]ceave them it/ or dare you not redresse it, for Feare of dissobedience/ Sir you owe obedyence by nature to thos[e][tha]t preache it to you/ but they themselves owe it, to you by devine and humaine right/ and thoughe you should yeild them lesse they haue given you to manye Examples soe to doe/ Reme[m]b[er] if it please you/ [tha]t you are past 15: yeeres Old/ and Kings are at Age

at 14:/ Isaack followed his Father Abraham to be sacrificed/ because he was not old enough and knewe not anye thinge, I beleeeve if he had beene A man growne and had forseene the daunger, he would not him selfe haue carryed the Sticks vpon his Shoulders, he was the apparance of the sacrifice I praye God in these actions to keepe you, fro[m] the Effecte/ For when I see men move the Authoritie of the Courte, when they will that men sett to sale/ and dispose of the Offices of the Courte, w[i]thout beinge once hindred by anye: The Princes of the bloud hauing bene some y[m]pr[i]soned, and the other Princes having retyred themselves/ for the secu[r]ity of theire p[er]sons/ when I see that amongst the greate ones they that are made hir Som[m]er Shaddow of better fortune/ are same to lend

their

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theire handes to bringe themselves into bondage: That they that haue attained some settlednes in this alterac[i]on: mayntayne it onely, for feare of returning to the miserye of their former Condit[i]on, Besydes it seemes allsoe that the people and the Princes p[ar]take of this Change, after the Example of the greater, and seeing the helpe of the Lawe is vnprofitable everythinge out of order/ by canvasing/ by violence, and by corrupc[i]on/ the Lawe it selfe hath put in A newe ~~{gap: illegible}~~ face/ aswell as the affaires of the kingdome; there remaines nothing of the old Cou[r]t but the walles, and even the vse of them haue bene changed, For they were wonte to serue for the safegard of Princes/ and now they serue fore their Prison/ and for yo[ur]s/ it maye be (if it be lawfull to saye soe) for it is not w[i]thout Some end, that when you goe abroade/ you have A Companie of light horse to attend you/ chosen by A suspected hande, that is yo[u]r Gaurd after the fashion of Bastile/ This distrust cou[n]sels you well enoughe what you ought doe to doe/ you need noe oth[er] advise, I am hyst at/ I am scofte at/ and my discou[r]se/ and soe was Cassander vsed when shee told the destructio[n] of Troye. S[i]r I haue nothing left to serue you with/ w[hi]ch if I were soe happye as to drawe you out of the Error/ in w[hi]ch you are settled/ I would blesse 10000: tymes my disgrace for hauing emboldned me to speake freelye in A tyme wherein even wordes are punished/ The falsenes of the Alcaron/ is onely authorised/ by [tha]t it is forbidden vnder the paine of deathe/ to speake of it/ The yncroachm[en]t w[hi]ch is made vpo[n] yo[u]r Maj[es]t[ie]s authoritie takes footing only by the dau[n]ger there is/ in telling of it, you maye freelye co[n]sider/ yf it please you that those w[hi]ch vsurpe power ou[er] you/ are of A Cou[n]trye where eu[er]y body would raig[n]e, there it is, that there is not A Cittie ov[er] the oth[er] syde of the Alpes that hath not her republique, or her petty King/ & if yo[u]r maj[es]ty had but a little tasted the historye of yo[u]r owne Kingdome/ you would haue learned [tha]t [th]e most bloody Tragedys that ever were seene in France/ haue come from that Syde the last vpo[n] occasion of A little Booke/ w[hi]ch I published touching constancye and co[m]forte in publike calamityes/ I fear much [tha]t to my disigne this is A worke for yo[u]r Raigne/ yf [th]e goodnes of God take not pittye on vs Thinke not Sir; that the greiffe to see my selfe removed from the State affaires/ breedes soe bould A discourse, as I felt my greife for it/ ti~~-{gap: illegible}~~s but as newe marryed wives weepe to leave the Subiection of her Father, to enter into the quallitye of marriage, It is true/ [tha]t owing you my service/ I should w[i]th more co[n]tentm[en]t haue ymployed it, in yo[u]r Cou[n]sels of States, then in yo[u]r Parlyam[en]t/ where the matt[er]s are of lesse importance, For I suppose/ that if the Carpenter w[hi]ch made the Frame of the Admirall/ wherein Don Iohn de Austria/ comau[n]ded at the Battaile of Lepanta/ had knowne he would serue in soe ymporta[n]t an Occasion/ wherein

depended the safetie of the rest of Europe. he would haue taking more pleasure in the making her/ then <sup>if</sup> he had made A Vessell dishonoured onely for trafique; Notw[i]thstandinge Since yo[u]r Ma[jes]ty com[m]andes mee to retire my selfe, in A good houre be it the lesser Starrs beare A Parte in the p[er]fection of the vniu[er]se thoughe they contribute lesse to it, then the Sun and Moone: In w[ha]t Condit[i]on soe Ever I liue/ I will ever bring all I shalbe able to the good of yo[u]r service/ and if there be anye of those, [tha]t are neere you, that lament my absence, for my owne sake I would willingly saye to them/ weepe for your Selves/ Children of Ierusalem, that for want of Courage see yo[u]r m[aste]r to be betrayed/ & not for me that haue noe other fault, then [tha]t I am an honest man: S[i]r I take leave therefore of you/ praying God to take pittye of yo[u]r estate, and care of yo[u]r breedinge/

### Other manuscript witnesses

- British Library, Additional MS 29587, ff. 47r–48r
- British Library, Additional MS 44848, ff. 253r–256r
- British Library, Harley MS 1877, ff. 67x–68r
- British Library, Harley MS 3638, ff. 138r–139v
- British Library, Stowe MS 180, f. 36x
- Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 781, ff. 63–66
- Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 82, ff. 338v–341v
- Cambridge University Library, MS Ee.5.23, pp468–470
- Hatfield House, CP 98, ff. 96r–97r
- Houghton Library, fMS Eng 1266.2, ff. 110r–111r
- Kent Archives, U269/O293, item 8
- London Society of Antiquaries, MS 291, ff. 46r–48v
- Queen's College, MS 32, ff. 20v–21v
- Senate House, University of London, MS 300, ff. 32x–33x

### Seventeenth-century print exemplars

- *Scrinia Sacra* (1654) [Wing S2110], pp. 193–196

### Modern print exemplars

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<https://mpese.ac.uk/t/BrulartLetterFrance1616.html>