AWESOME stories

NEGOTIATIONS FAIL



0. NEGOTIATIONS FAIL - Story Preface

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As the Spanish Armada made its way to the English Channel, during the summer of 1588, it was first sighted from Lizard Point (in Cornwall). This image depicts a view from Lizard Point. Photo by Guest9999; online via Wikimedia Commons. License: CC BY-SA 3.0

As military men readied the Armada in Lisbon, diplomats negotiated elsewhere. We can track some of their progress (or lack thereof) through a history of the Queen's reign (written by William Camden with the assistance of Elizabeth's chief advisor, William Cecil) and a letter which Dr. Valentine Dale (a British diplomat) sent to Sir Francis Walsingham (the Queen's secretary).

In Flanders to negotiate with Alexander Farnese (the Duke of Parma), Dr. Dale was not easily intimidated. It is said that when Parma once suggested they negotiate in French (because Elizabeth called herself Queen of France), Dale replied they should speak Hebrew (since Philip II claimed to be King of Jerusalem).

Frank discussions, however, did not avert the Armada's departure from Lisbon.

On the 25th of July, while the Spanish fleet was sailing toward the coast of Britain, diplomats were still trying to avoid war. Dale sent a progress letter to Walsingham. He wasn't hopeful that issues could be worked out.

Camden's history reports that negotiations finally broke down when the Armada was in sight of England's shores:

> *With such answers as these* [i.e., part of the ongoing discussions] *they dallyed* [dallied] *with the English till the Spanish fleete* [fleet]*was come to the coast of England and the thundering of the ordinance was heard from the sea ... Thus came this treaty to nothing, undertaken by the Queene (as the wiser sort have judged) to divert the Spanish fleete, and continued by the Spanyard* [Spaniard] *to the end to surprise England unawares and unprovided.*

> *So as they seemed on both sides to sew the foxes skinne* [skin] *to the Lions.* (Camden, *Annales Rerum Angliae et Hiberniae Regnante Elizabetha, 1588*, Section 14)

When Spanish ships were first sighted by people in southwestern England, beacon lights helped to quickly spread the word. The country's young men, at their own expense, voluntarily joined the defense:

> *... the Spanish fleete sailed forward, the English fleete following it close at the heeles* [heels]. *But so farre* [far] *was it from terrifying the sea-coast with the name of Invincible, or with the terrible spectacle, that the youth of England with a certain incredible alacrity (leaving their parents, wives, children, cousins, and friends, out of their entyre* [entire] *love to their Country) hires shippes* [ships] *from all partes at their owne private charges, and joyned* [joined] *with the fleet in great number ...*
> (Camden, *Annales Rerum Angliae et Hiberniae Regnante Elizabetha, 1588*, Section 24)

Walter Raleigh, one of the Queen's favorites, was among the young men called to protect their country. With his cousin, Sir Richard Grenville, he personally inspected all the coastal fortifications in the West Country of Devon and Cornwall.

He was in Portland when the Armada was first sighted.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/NEGOTIATIONS-FAIL-Elizabeth-I-The-Golden-Age

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/NEGOTIATIONS-FAIL-Elizabeth-I-The-Golden-Age

Media Stream



William Camden
Image online, courtesy the National Portrait Gallery website.
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Spanish Armada - Dr. Valentine Dale Writes to Francis Walsingham

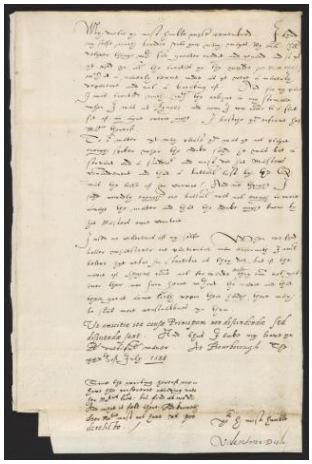
Dr. Valentine Dale, a British diplomat during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, was attempting to negotiate with the Duke of Parma (Alexander Farnese) just before the Spanish and British fleets engaged during the time of the Spanish Armada.

Dale was a diplomat not easily intimidated or bothered by the threats or bluster of others. He reported developments to Sir Francis Walsingham (the Queen's secretary) on the 25th of July, 1588.

According to the Library of Congress, this letter was previously unpublished. It is depicted here, with the text prepared by the Library:
THE DALE LETTER

My duetie yn most humble wyse remembred.

I fynd myselfe much bounden unto you many ways: My LL[ords] shall delyver things w[i]th far greater credit and regard, and so ys yt used yn al the treaties yn the worlde per viam recess [us] w[hi]ch is a manerly terme made as yt were a manerlyn departure and not a breaking of[f]. And for my part I was troubled much w[i]th the colique in my stomacke when I was at Bruges and now I am come to a flat fit of an ague everie night. I beseche you enforme her Ma[jes]tie thereof.



To o[u]r mater: yt may please you, was yt not playne enough spoken when the Duke sayd he was but a servant and a souldio[u]r and must doe his Masters comandement and that a battail lost by the Q[ueen] was the losse of her crowne? And me thought I sayd roundly enough one battail was not enough to carie awaye the mater and that the Duke might know by his Masters owne countrie.

I used no collections of myselfe. When we fynd better whatsoever one particular man enformeth I wil beleve hyt rebus sic stantibus as they doe, but if the navie of Spayne come not forwarde and they can not get over their men from hence w[i]thout the navie, and that their great armie lieth uppon their landes, there may be some more reasonablenes yn them.

Ut amicitiae ita causae Principum non discindendae sed dissuendae sunt. And thus I take my leave yn al duetiful maner. At Bourborough the xxvth of July 1588.

Yo[u]r h[onour's] most humble [servant]
[signed] Valentine Dale.

(Postscript:)

Since the writing hereof we have had conference according unto her Ma[jes]ties l[ette]res: but find as we did. And what is felt there God knoweth--Her Ma[jes]tie must not have vs pro derelicto.
In short ... the negotiations had broken down and a major series of battles, between Spain and England, were about to begin.

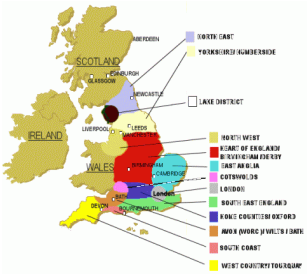
Click on the image for a better view.
The Library of Congress tells us more about the Dale letter (and who had possession of it):

The unpublished letter is from the collection of Robert Beale (1541-1601), Clerk of the Privy Council, and brother-in-law of Walsingham. Most of Beale's great collection of Elizabethan state papers is in the British Museum, but some of his papers turned up in the collection of William Upcott (d. 1845); at the Upcott sale (1846) they were acquired by Sir Thomas Phillipps. The present letter is part of Phillipps no. 12115 in his catalogue.
View this asset at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Spanish-Armada-Dr.-Valentine-Dale-Writes-to-Francis-Walsingham



Alexander Farnese - The Duke of Parma

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.
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Location of Devon on Map

Image online, courtesy the milesfaster.co.uk website.
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Location of Cornwall on Map

Image online, courtesy the conferences-uk.org website.
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Map Pinpointing Portland

Image online, courtesy the Joint Nature Conservation Committee website.
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