

TNA: PRO SP 63/82/48*Grey to Walsingham, 24 April 1581*

This letter, following close on the heels of the Queen's resolution for a general pardon for nearly all of the Irish rebels (see SP 63/82/42 and 63/82/43), reveals Grey at his most caustic and disappointed: frustrated by a lack of support for his hard-handed policies and his militant protestantism, the Lord Deputy rails against his court enemies – Burghley and the Countess of Lincoln above all – in very thinly-veiled terms. The text of the letter is written throughout in Grey's usual italic hand, with his autograph signature. Spenser has added the address in his usual flowing secretary hand. The endorsement, in a later hand, was probably added during the filing of the letter in London. The mixed hand of the marginal annotations is probably Walsingham's. The addressee note added to the right foot of the last recto of the letter (reading 'mr Secretary') is in Grey's distinctive hand, and was added to remind Spenser, upon dispatching the letter, to whom it should be addressed – hardly unimportant, given the incendiary nature of Grey's sarcastic complaint.

Address and Endorsement

To the Honorable
my very Loving
frend Sir Fraunces
Walsingham Knight
Chief Secretary
to her Maiesty /

1581.
Aprill. 24.
From the Lord Deputye.

Text

Sir, the xvjth & xvijth of this moonethe I receaued from yow two packetts the one by Moumperson a seruant of myne owane whow in deede seemed* too make but slowe haste, the oother by the* poste which made as greate speede & came vnto mee beefore that* of the far elder date: The contents of them, with the aduertisments now from the Northe agayne haue caused not onely these my letters too her Maiestie, my Lords, yowrsellf, & oothers, but allso the sending of this bearrar for the more perfitt enfoormyng, earnest solliciting, & speedie dispatche of the cause. I haue sett downe as playnely as I maye with reuerence, the peryll & dishonor that is lyke too coome of it if it bee not gon thowroghe with; & certaynely Sir if shee eyther wyll not, or bee not able too beare the chardge of it, I see so farre into the condition & disposition* of the peeple that shee wyll not long beare rule heere; That shee maye see

if hir maiestie will not beare the charges of a suffecient force to bridle the rebels she is not lyke to rule long

there.

A great part of the charge will be borne by the rebels lands.

the pardon will doe more hurt then good.

sendeth a plotte for the defraying of some part of the charge.

to moue hir maiestie for his reuocation if sufficient assistance be denyed him

The remouing of 112.

how a good parte of her chardgies wyll bee requyted, I haue by the bearar sent her a valew of those landes which wyll fall vntoo her & the same rather vnder then ouer estimated; neyther arre these in my conscience the hallf of them that wyll coome into the same predicament, in case her Maiestie hoald owte: but if the proclamatation, & general pardon yow wryte of coome ouer,* & now therbie bring them in blood whowse harttes the swoorde hathe in manner burst, as if it bee followed, in God I rest assured, wyll very shortly appeere, fare well all, & lett her hyghnes accounte of no oother amendes then that allreadie shee hathe & doothe feele;* vnless shee take one waye, wherby in deede her chardgies maye bee saued hencefourthe, & a good rent perchaunce too bee* rayzed beesydes, for so long as it wyll last; 76.* I woold haue enlaraged & Leinster comitted too his gouernment with a good rent imposed,* in lyke sorte 120* too 112,* Vllster, too 4.* & Connaghe too 40.* & all Inglishe men called awaye,* this were a moast certayne waye too putt them owte of dowght that 60* meanes no inuasion, whereas yowr proclamations, theyr consciencies condemnyng themsellues,* wyll eyther breede dowght in them, or els bee as greatly esteemed of them as former* experience hathe fownde, wherof I* haue putt her hyghnes allso in mynde: & in good earnest Sir,* I meruayle mootche that yow arre caried in it so farre as too thynck it canne doo no hurt: wyll it not thynck* yow encourage & harten a* rebell too haue pardon offered where noane was sowght, can that doo no harme, wyll it not bee a good reazon for the chieffes too perswade by that her Maiestie is wearie of the warre, wyll that doo no harme, wyll it not discouradge & putt in feare the true & good subiect that boathe in action vppon them,* & in beewrayeng theyr offencies haue harmed them, can that doo no harme, wyll it not thynck yow stoppe oothers mouthes that arre in openyng too discoouer the rest, & can this doo no harme, iudge now yowrsellf, beesydes the dishonor it woold turne 60. too, in case it shulld fall owte as lightly regarded, as* oother beefore haue doonne./ The bearar lykewyze shall enfourme her Hyghnes of the plott that is entended presently too bee putt in vre vppon coomyng ouer of the supplie for the defrayeng of her Hyghnes sum chardge in paye of bandes, & in greate coomforte, I am too bryng it eare a yeare more* goe abowte* too a good recknyng if greate ones cross it not mootche, or that 60 with sudden pintchyng mar not all: which, if bee fownde vncurabe, I praye yow vppon all professed freendshyp, earnestly too further my dezyre concurring with yowr owane wysshe, that I bee called hoame. The remoouyng of 112 that yow wysshe mee too press, I doo as mootche as I maye in, that respected that I can not bee careless of;* it goes neere mee on eyther syde, ease mee therefore I

praye & lett not the whoale burden swaye on mee: but yet I see not why 30.* & yowr self* shulld conceaue that 112 shulld harme more* beeing yn* 65* then 70.* in* 65 onely woordes can harme & yet not so but that awnsswers of greater reazon & more creditt arre there readie too fruntt hym:,* & heere* deedes hurt, beesydes perswasion with the greate credit that presence* daylie increaseth, & therin beesydes reazon, experto crede Roberto; & in shortt the wownde of that parte wyll neuer bee perfectly cloazed, tyll the prowde flesshe bee withdrawen, deale in it therfore as yow shall thynck good; but if neyther this nor encrease of force wyll bee harckned too, remember the foote of my song, awaye with mee for Gods sake in tyme that trust of yowr frendshyp beecooome not my ouerthrowe. Beecause* her Maiestie, I vnderstoode, thynckes very small seruice doonne heere for her greate chardge, I haue by* this brynger sent a collection of sutche seruicies as since* my chardge hathe been doonne, wherby I trust shall appeere that the bandes haue neyther been idle, nor theyr traually vainely employed, & surely sir thynges arre throwghe Gods good blessing browght now too that issewe that were it not for 40 bearing one waye, & 112. forbearing an oother, 65 shulld rest no quyeter then 70 shulld beecooome; but that the fawlt manifestly seene maye not bee harckned too,* mootche less redressed is certaynely this, that the wrong eend is beegoonne at, rebellioon & oother disobediencies too the Prince warde arre chieffly regarded & reformation sowght of, but Gods cause is made a seconde or nothyng at all, & bee yowr sellf the wittness, for the manie challendgies & instructioons that I haue receaued for the will & politick gouernment & care taking too the husbandrie of worldly treasure, where is there one article that concernes the looking too Gods due seruice, seeyng of hys churtche fed with true food, & repressyng of superstition & idolatrie, wherwith the groues of Canaan were surely no* more filled nor infected then this lamentable Ilande is, naye rather haue I not been watcheworded that I shulld not bee too eeyfull therin, & I confess my sinne, I haue followed man too mootche in it, &* this the cause that neyther the chyeff can harcken too that that concernes boathe honor &* saftie most, nor yow that perswade the truthe bee beeleeued, nor I that dezyre the ryght can bee satisfied, but Balls prophetts & councelors shall preuayle: I see it is so, I see it is iust, I see it past healp, I rest dispayred, healp mee awaye agayne for Gods sake. /

sendeth a collection of such seruices as haue been don since his coming thither.

The cause why the reformation intended taketh no better effect is because outward obedience only is sough* and relligion left alone.

By one of yowr letters it seemes enfooomed yow that I had* lett the countrolershyp of the impostes too oother & depnyued Brisckett, truly sir, neyther lett nor guyuen haue I it too any then too hymself & therfore the information* was hastier then trew: & amongst oother good opinions I hope yow carie of mee

lett this bee
settled, that Arthur
Grey, wyll neuer
by anye office,
lease or warde in
this lande bee euer
the woorth of* a
pennie the better;
her maiesties paye
& ryght of the
office for* howse
fynding shall
onely bee my
share, for any
oother benefitt or
takyng, all
chardgies I defie
& pardoon refuse,
how euer deerely
it cost mee, as I

fynde it doothe,* / & onely God I hoape on, for the world, I
feare wyll fayle mee. /

How 76. syster dealethe* with mee by ootherwyze I allso partly
heare, well, I had rather it were her* wrong then my dezertt, &
dowght not but in end faythe shall decypher fynes. So
for this tyme wyll I leaue trooblyng yow any further, repoasing
the rest of the bearares sufficiencie whowme too creditt,
countenance & procure speedie dispatche I earnestly praye
yow. / * God increase all his vertewes in yow, keepe & direct
yow euer. / Dublin this xxiiijth of Aprill Anno 1581. /

Euer vnfaynedly
yowres,

Arthur Grey

It greueth mee* too see good sir Nycholas Mallbie so
thancklessly vzed, & breedes no less coomforte in oothers of
lyke rewarde: greate wrong hee hathe for if any hathe deserued
well in this lande hee surely it is. /

Textual Notes

* *after deede seemed*] 'but' deleted.

† *after oother by the*] Two-character deletion, possibly 'pe'.

†
* *after beefore that*] 'f' deleted.

†
* **condition & disposition**] These words were probably underlined by the same reader responsible for the marginal annotations.

†
* *after coome ouer,*] 'fare' deleted.

†
* *after feele;*] 'sauyng' deleted.

†
* **bee**] Inserted above the line.

†
* **76.]** The Earl of Kildare.

†
* *after imposed,*] Single-character illegible deletion.

†
* **120]** Possibly a cipher for Munster.

†
* **112]** The Earl of Ormond.

†
* **4.]** Unknown cipher.

†
* **40]** Unknown cipher.

†
* **awaye,**] Inserted above the line.

†
* **60]** The queen.

†
* **themsellues,**] Inserted above the line.

†
* *after former*] 'ep' deleted.

†
* *after wherof I*] 'hu' deleted.

†
* **Sir,**] Inserted above the line.

†
* **no hurt . . . not thynck**] 'can it doo no harme' deleted *after no hurt:*, and 'wyll it not thynck' inserted above the line.

†
* **a]** Inserted above the line.

†
* **them,**] Inserted above the line.

†
* *after regarded, as*] Single-character deletion, possibly 'p'.

†

* **more]** Inserted above the line.

†

* **after goe abowte]** 'too bryng it' deleted.

†

* **careless of]** 'in' deleted *after* **careless**, and 'of' inserted above the line, with a caret mark.

†

* **sough]** Not only has Grey omitted the terminal 't' here, but the word includes an extra pen stroke, which we have ignored.

†

* **30.]** The Earl of Leicester.

†

* **yowr self]** In cipher, transliterated above the line.

†

* **after harme more]** Single-character deletion.

†

* **beeing yn]** In cipher.

†

* **65]** Unknown cipher, possibly Ireland.

†

* **70]** Unknown cipher, possibly England.

†

* **in]** In cipher.

†

* **hym]** In cipher.

†

* **heere]** In cipher.

†

* **credit that presence]** In cipher.

†

* **ouerthrowe. Because]** 'that' deleted *after* **ouerthrowe**, and 'Because' inserted above the line.

†

* **after haue by]** Four letters, possibly 'thys', deleted.

†

* **since]** Illegible single-character deletion between the letters 'n' and 'c'.

†

* **too]** Inserted above the line.

†

* **no]** Inserted above the line.

†

* **after in it, &]** 'not' deleted.

†

* **after honor &]** Single-character deletion, possibly 's'.

†

* **after I had]** 'too' deleted.

†

* **after information]** Single-character deletion, possibly 'n'.

†

* **of]** Inserted above the line.

†
* **after office for]** Illegible two-letter deletion.

†
* **doothe]** The last three letters of this word, 'the', inserted above the line.

†
* **syster dealethe]** In cipher.

†
* **her]** In cipher.

†
* **yow. /]** Inserted above the line.

†
* **mee]** Inserted above the line.

Annotations

Moumperson a seruant of myne owane] Richard Mompesson is named in SP 63/88/40/3 (a list of the Lord Deputy's grants of lands and other benefits to his followers) as one of Grey's gentlemen ushers; Grey would write to Walsingham on 18 July 1581 in behalf of Mompesson, who had suffered a loss of the promise of financial gain upon the escape of his Spanish prisoner (presumably another benefit bestowed by his master); see SP 63/84/28, a document in Spenser's own hand.

aduertisments now from the Northe agayne] It is not clear whether or not Grey is here referring to some specific news; he must have been receiving regular reports of the disposition of Turlough Luineach O'Neill during these months, and would in the next few days learn from Sir Nicholas Bagenal of a serious seasonal influx of Scots galloglass (SP 63/82/52).

this bearar] Unidentified.

the cause] I.e. the new 'aduertisments...from the Northe'.

her chardgies] Elizabeth's expenses in the war.

sent her a valew of those landes] See the enclosure to his letter to Elizabeth of the following day, SP 63/82/54/2, where he values the known traitors' lands at £5,030; the copy now catalogued as 63/82/49 may have been prepared for Walsingham.

the same predicament] I.e. those lands that will be escheated by as-yet undetected traitors.

in case her Maiestie hoald owte] In case the Queen should remain firm, without issuing a general pardon.

the proclamation . . . yow wryte of] For extant drafts of the proclamation see SP 63/82/42 and /43, both annotated by Burghley. Grey complained of the pardon to Walsingham on 14 May (see SP 63/83/16), and to the Privy Council on 10 June (SP 63/83/45), by which time it must have been promulgated.

bring them in blood . . . burst] Give them courage whom a strict military policy has subdued.

76. I woold . . . in mynde] Grey's transparent sarcasm here exposes his fundamental incomprehension of Elizabeth's mistrust of her own governours: as he writes, her pardon merely

served to suggest her own guilt for his policies ('consciences condemnyng themsellues'). It seems obvious from his wording here that Walsingham must have argued, in a now lost letter, that Elizabeth pursued the pardon to make it clear to her Irish subjects that she meant no large-scale campaign in or 'invasion' of Ireland.

the chieffes] A chief (*taoiseach*) was the head of an Irish sept, or family.

stoppe oothers mouthes . . . the rest] Serve to gag them that were about to come forward (out of fear) to expose further conspiracies and treasons.

in vre] I.e. in use.

the supplie . . . of bandes] Grey had inherited from previous governours some serious deficits, including the pay of some English soldiers in Ireland. Auditor Thomas Jenyson reported to Burghley on 14 May that he was still paying off the debts of Sir Edward Fyton, but had paid all the Leinster captains through the end of March (SP 63/83/19); on 20 July he reported to Walsingham that he had finished Fyton's account (SP 63/84/39), but on the other hand Treasurer Sir Henry Wallop wrote to Walsingham on 15 May that he had disbursed all of that month's treasure without having discharged a full debt to any single man (SP 63/83/23). Grey seems here to be referring to a new scheme by which he would cashier some forces and schedule money for the rest, in order to bring the situation into control.

eare] Ere, i.e. 'before'

with sudden pintchyng] Elizabeth and her Privy Council were notorious – at least in the eyes of the Dublin administration – for their capricious fits of economy.

that respected . . . eyther syde] Grey reminds Walsingham that, while he suffers from Ormond's abuse of his office in Ireland, he fears to push for his removal because of Ormond's close relation to the Queen.

with the greate . . . encrease the] Grey insists that Ormond is more of a danger in Ireland than in England, for in Ireland his presence acts as a great spur to his credit with the local lords and gentry.

experto crede Roberto] Lat. 'Trust in the experienced Robert' (i.e. Dudley, Earl of Leicester). Grey suggests that Leicester has had some experience of Ormond that will make it obvious why he should be removed.

foote of my song] 'My refrain'.

collection . . . been doonne] See SP 63/82/54/1, Grey's first enclosure to the Queen of 26 April.

repressyng of superstition & idolatrie] Like Spenser in *A view*, Grey sees the real threat to true religion in Ireland to come not exclusively from Roman religion, but from ignorance and paganism.

watchwoorded] Warned.

Balls prophetts & councelors] This passage alludes repeatedly to 1 Kings 18, in which the prophet Elijah overcomes the prophets and counselors of the pagan idol Baal, and in persuading king Ahab returns Israel to the worship of God. Grey seems to be imagining himself as a latter-day Elijah, but one doomed not to success but failure.

countrolershyp of the impostes] A valuable monopolistic commodity eventually granted to Bryskett by letters patent from the Queen; in return for his labour in governing the collection of imposts (mercantile taxes), the holder was allowed to retain a percentage of the crown revenues. Bryskett complained to Walsingham about Grey's dealing with the controllership in a letter of 2 March 1581 (SP 63/81/5); he finally lost the commodity in 1583, when the Lords Justice Wallop and Loftus let individual imposts out to farm; see SP 63/99/67 for Bryskett's complaint to Walsingham.

Brisckett] Lodowick Bryskett; see biographies.

ryght . . . for howse fynding] Grey seems to be referring to what he undoubtedly considered the most inalienable perquisite of his position as Lord Deputy, the ability to reward good service by the disposal of lands and manors that came into his hands.

How 76. . . . with mee] Elizabeth Fiennes de Clinton (née Fitzgerald), Surrey's Geraldine, the widow of Sir Anthony Browne and, after her second husband's creation as Earl of Lincoln in 1572, Countess of Lincoln; see biographies.

faythe shall decypher fynes] Grey holds out a vain hope that constancy and truth will prevail over courtly subtlety (finesse); the spelling of 'fynes' is clearly a joke on the Countess of Lincoln's married name.