

TNA: PRO SP 63/84/26*Grey to Walsingham, 18 July 1581*

This strange and pleading letter should be paired with SP 63/85/13, Grey's report to the Privy Council of 12 August, concerning his journey into Ulster against Turlough Luineach O'Neill. The present letter – apparently the last he wrote before the journey – makes a point of insisting on three things above all: the miserable condition of the Irish service, the uprightness of the Dublin government, and the lack of direction from Westminster concerning negotiations with Turlough. In short, the letter seems designed as a proleptic apology for what Grey was about to do: make head into Ulster on his own authority, to conclude terms with Turlough without the Queen's warrant. The dispatch of Hoorde to Walsingham, in this context, performed a symbolic function, reminding Walsingham of the personal costs of the Irish service (Hoorde's band had been destroyed in Wexford by sickness) and of the patronage relationships upon which Grey would depend, if his journey against Turlough proved to anger the Queen. The text of this letter, including the subscription and postscript, is written in Grey's characteristic italic hand. The signature is Grey's own. The address is written in Spenser's characteristic secretary hand, and the endorsement, probably added upon receipt of the letter in London, is written in a distinct mixed hand. The 'addressee note' (reading 'Mr Secretary') is in Grey's usual hand, and appears against the top edge of the verso of the letter.

Address and Endorsements

To the Honorable
my especiall good
frend Sir Fraunces
Walsingham Knight
Chief Secretary
to her Maiestie./

.18. Iuly. 1581
From the Lord Deputie
of Ireland.

Text

Sir this beare Captayne Howrde myght not pass withowte sum my salutyng of yow: I haue now aduertysed my Lords there of the accidents that since my last haue happened heere: which* I knowe wyll styll bee thought as nothyng neyther for any greate thyng doo I certyfie it, onely this with the rest maye* well wittness that wee arre styll dooyng, which in deede is all that of owre sellues maye bee perfourmed or in ryght of yow can bee expected, the success well or yll, greate or small beeyng onely Gods; & if for that which onely rests in hym, wee yet* shall rest dislyked & condemned, owre healp onely is pacience too attend boathe hys good pleasure, & beare yowr displeasure so mootche the better that owre conssciencies doo cleere vs of the dezert. But how lyttle so euer owre seruyce hathe heetherto been, or at the least seemed, I dare assure yow, it wyll bee less if thus hardly* yee deale with vs for mooney,* earnestly therefore I beeseetche yow too lett her Maiestie & the rest of my Lords bee enformed of it, that* boathe treazure & vittayle maye* with all speede bee supplied ootherwyze that neyther too doo seruyce nor yet too hoald the garrizones wee haue planted

shall wee* bee able; which hauyng aduertized & beeyng there neglected & so the eeuyl happenyng, lett mee I beeseetche bee cleered.

Gods hand is styll heauely vppon vs with sicknes, the most parte of owre men newly supplied fallyng dayly sick in theyr garrisoons Captayne Scopam this nyght dyed.

I woold too God, Sir yow had but the true feelyng of the miserable condition that I heere stande in, the decayeng of the Coompanies by sicknes on the one syde, the Continuall haytyng & crying owte for mooney & vittayle on the oother syde, with the generall lamentable estate of the cuntrie the people staruyng as they goe for want of sustenance, & too make vp all the hard disposition there too doo any thynge for the healpes heerof & small thanckes for my trauayle, in hell on earthe yow could not but thynck mee too lyue, & loouyng mee, as I knowe yow doo, no reazon woold carie yow but too procure my release.

It is now x dayes since owre happie generall pardoone was proclaymed, & yet no one offer from any of the Mountayne rebels, afewoe* freeholders vnable too guyue any assurance for* theyr loalties excepted, which flattly sheowes too bee a pollecie, theyr coomyng in tendyng onely to the gathering in of theyr haruiest, which doonne they* wyll beecome as they were, with* sutche relieff too the rest as afloate the cause wyll goe agayne: this is manyfestly seene, yet arre they not refused, least then the faouurares of this good coursse woold aleage that the cause of the small effect (if so it prooue) of the politick aduyce. More at thys tyme I haue not too trowble yow with; but too commend this Ientleman too yowr former good care &* faouere, which, I fynde hath* not, nor wyll bee amyss employed: So too owre good God I beetake yow, whow euer bee with yow, & ryd mee from this graceless office, which as hys greatiest earthely blyss I woold accounte. Dublin this xvijth of Iuly. Anno 1581.

Yowrs most assured euer/

Arthur Grey

This dispatche was so sudden as I could not for my lyeff make any more letters: lett my good Lord of Leaster therfore accept too bee a partener heerof at this tyme with my most Zelus dutie, & hoald mee excused for not wryghtyng too hymself, constraynt causyng the defawlte. I heare my Lord of Bedford & my Lady arre gon Westwarde./

I haue sent yow heerwith the* petitions of this towne considered by vs according too yowr* direction, by the postilles wheron yow maye knowe owre opinions./

Her Maiesties pleazure tootchyng Tirlagh Lenoghes petitions is forgotten yet too bee sent mee; in the last letter from my Lords there it was mencioned but noane came: I shall therfore if wee meete now goe by ayme; but the best is that so a peace bee made I shall not neede (as* I thync{ke}) too* feare what I grawnte; yet I praye yow procure mee a direction in it with all possyble speede./

Textual Notes

- * *after heere: whiche]* One word, possibly 'thowghe', deleted.
- * *after rest maye]* 'maye' deleted.
- * *after wee yet]* Two or three letters have been deleted.
- * *after hardly]* 'wee' deleted.
- * *after mooney,]* Two or three letters deleted.
- * *after it, that]* 'if' deleted.
- * **maye]** Inserted above the line; the caret mark deletes an indecipherable character or pen-stroke.
- * **wee]** Inserted above the line.
- * **afewoe]** The sense here is as obvious as the spelling is unusual.
- * *after assurance for]* 'y^{er}' deleted.
- * *after doonne they]* 'we' deleted.
- * *after were, with]* One or two indecipherable letters deleted.
- * *after care &]* One or two indecipherable letters deleted.
- * **I fynde hathe]** 'is' deleted *after fynde*, and 'hathe' inserted above the line.
- * *after heerwith the]* One letter, possibly 'a', deleted.
- * *after too yowr]* Two letters, possibly 'to', deleted.
- * **neede (as]** Two or three letters – probably the beginning of 'too' – deleted *after neede* (, and 'as' inserted above the line. The parenthesis mark is very close to the word 'neede', and so may have been added at the same time as the deletion.
- * **too]** Inserted above the line.

Annotations

Captayne Howrde] Grey had stationed Thomas Hoorde in Wexford in December 1580, in a bid to pacify the Cavanaghs; Hoorde's band, decimated by sickness, had been cashed upon Grey's May journey to Wexford, at Hoorde's own request (see SP 63/83/45 above).

pass] Cross over into England from Ireland.

wee arre styll dooyng ... onely Gods] A typically Greyan Calvinist sentiment.

in ryght of yow can bee expected] That you can (have right to) expect.

if thus ... for mooney] Like most Lord Deputies before and after him, Grey struggled with a lack of funding for his military and administrative activities. While the letters that occasioned this reply are lost, it is clear from much of the correspondence during this period, going in both directions, that Westminster was as anxious to resist spending as Dublin was eager to increase it; see, e.g., SP 63/86/22.

treazure & vittayle] Money and provisions.

planted] Disposed, in forts around the Pale and elsewhere.

haytyng] Obscure.

It is now ... was proclaymed] Grey received direction for the proclamation of the pardon toward the end of May; because of his journey to Wexford against the Cavanaghs, he was not able to proclaim it until 8 July. His repeated criticism of the pardon gives his description of it as **happie** a measure of irony.

freehollers] Landed yeoman or farmers.

vnable ... assurance] Rebels seeking pardon were expected to commit some form of pledge or hostage into the hands of the governor or Deputy for the safe keeping of their loyalty.

pollecie] Stratagem.

with sutche ... goe agayne] The taking in of their harvest will allow these farmers to lay up provisions to support further insurrection.

least then ... politick aduyce] Grey is complaining that he cannot refuse professions of loyalty from hypocritical landowners who seek only to take in their harvest and then 'come out' into rebellion again, because he fears the criticism that such a course would provoke from those who – against his counsel – sponsored the general pardon.

This dispatche was so sudden] Weather and tidal conditions could sometimes force a sudden departure of the post-ship.

Lord of Leaster] Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, then in London; see biographies.

the petitions ... yowr direction] See the enclosure, SP 63/84/26/1. Walsingham had written to Grey in early June requesting his opinion on the petition of the Dublin citizens to incorporate the city; Grey responded from Wexford on 9 June (see SP 63/83/43) that he had not yet seen the paper.

postilles] Grey's own annotations.

Tirlagh Lenoghes petitions] The Queen's reply to Turlough Luineach's petitions did not, Grey later claimed (see SP 63/85/13), reach him until after he returned from his sudden journey later in the month to confront Turlough Luineach at the Blackwater; this gave him the opportunity to negotiate with Turlough on his own authority.

goe by ayme] Act to achieve the desired outcome, without limiting his negotiating conditions.

that so a peace ... I grawnte] Grey's pessimism about Turlough Luineach O'Neill's ability to keep the peace is so strong that he does not fear overstepping his mandate in the forthcoming negotiations; no matter what he promises, he implies, O'Neill's inevitable violation of the agreement will mean he will not be forced to deliver.