

TNA: PRO SP 63/86/53*Grey to Walsingham, 6 November 1581*

This letter, a standard report on affairs public and private, has a couple of distinctive features. Grey places the conduct of Irish affairs within the wider framework of European politics: Walsingham's embassy to the Duke of Anjou and to Henri III had been designed to secure Henri's support for his brother's Netherlands campaign against the Spanish there – but at the perilous price (in Grey's eyes) of the Queen's marriage. Walsingham certainly saw a close connection between Spanish aggression in the Low Countries and the possibility (even, the recent reality) of Spanish invasion of Ireland, and French power in Scotland – perceived to be a staging post for a Catholic campaign for Ireland – was a constant threat in these years before the execution of Mary Queen of Scots (widow of François II). It is in this letter, too, that Grey reveals the naivety with which he was manipulated by the cousins Lucas and Robert Dillon, who used the Nugent rebellion in 1581, and the opportunity it afforded to denounce and eject Nicholas Nugent, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas (Ireland), to consolidate their hold on the Irish judiciary (see SP 63/91/22, *infra*). Finally, the personal appeal of the final section of the letter, in which Grey challenges Walsingham to fulfil the promises of support staked on their friendship, underscore the degree to which so much of the high politics of this period (like the Dillon-Nugent farce) was based on personal relationships.

The letter is written in Grey's characteristic cursive italic hand, and both subscribed and signed by Grey. The address is written in Spenser's characteristic secretary hand, and the later endorsement in a distinct italic. An addressee note in Grey's hand (reading 'Mr Secretary') appears on the verso of the letter, adjacent to the address and, ultimately, the endorsement.

Address and Endorsement

To the right honorable
my especiall good frend
Sir Fraunces Walsingham
{Knig}ht Chief Secretary
{to} her Maiesty./

6 Nouember 1581
From the lord Deputye.

Text

Sir, God bee thancked for yowr saffe returne, truly it was now* more dowghted & sorrowed by yowr freendes heere then in any Ioorney that euer yow made. I perceau by yowr letters the good lyking that owre auditors booke browght yee there for owre

husbandrie heere; well, as for the dowghtes & fawltes therin fownde I wyll referr too the awnsswer of the memorialls which shall not bee long too & then I dowght not but the labour there shall sheowe a greater buzines too fynde faultes, then good iudgement too collect iust matter: In the meane tyme yet, my Lord of Leaster hauyng by this priuat* letters vowtechesaued too gather the chieff poyntes of that bookes dislykes, I could not but particularly seeke too awnsswer & satisfie hym therin which yowrsellf too bee acquaynted with I haue dezyred; yow twoo beeyng they that I chiefflie requyre too bee heald in good opinion with & that I onely wyll seeke patronage of in all good & honest causies. Yowr reazoons for not impugnyng the cassing of forcies heere, yowr place wayed, I can not but greatly allowe; yet dutie of my place tyed mee, I tooke it, in consscience too delyuer* the thought & in manner sight of the peryll therof beefore I executed that direction, not vzing yet any perswasion too the contrarie: By the letters therfore of this packett too my Lords there, & too her Maiesties sellf, the Copie wherof heerencloazed* I send (crauyng the same to bee emparsed to 30*.) yow shall vnderstande the estate & cours of thynges heere,* with the purpose & effect of my late iorney intoo Munster.

Yow wryte of a matche toowardes beetwyxt 79* & scot* if it so fall owte lett 60* looke alyttle better too* her* seate in* 70* or ells shee* maye hap too lyze the saddle.

Towttchyng 80* I knowe not what too saye butt euerie waye eyther in league or allyance* I see so iust feare of peryll as, Deus auertat, I doo onely praye.

Wee arre heere now entryng into tryall of sutche of owre pryzoners heere as wee fynde too haue moast matter agaynst, wheruntoo,* beesydes cause of iustice,* & example wee arre the rather stirred by the gallantrie of the faouurares of thiese rebellius sturres, whow murmur* & haue caused too bee guyuen owte that her Maiestie hathe guyuen direction noane of them too bee tootched for feare of making new sturres & encreazing warre which shee wyll no lenger prosecute, yet heerof woold I saye nothyng too my Lords nor her Maiestie, least it woold haue been taken a perswazion in mee too hoald on chardgies & allter theyr present purposies: Neuertheless if lawe cast them heere I wyll God wyll make small staye in guyuyng them theyr dezerts for yowr aduycies thence. I praye yow, sir, lett Sir Lucas Dillon & owre chieff Iustice Dillon bee commended earnestly by yow too her Maiestie; theyr seruice certaynely greatly dezerues it boathe in discoouerie of the practizies & apprehending the parties withowte sparyng any how euer neere them in frendshyp, kinred or alliance too theyr owane greate hatred & hazard, procure them therfore sum toaken from her hyghnes that shee knowes it & acceptes of it./

Now Sir for myne owane pryuate, first & chieffliet I commend vnto yow my callyng hoame which beesydes the that yowrsellf* most truly & freendly haue conceaued, waye I beeseetche yow the indisposition of bodie that is coommen on mee by the stoane wherewith I haue been extremely handled & fynde mysellf greatly subiect vnto it, good sir press therfore this my sute, for thowghe all oother thynges were awnsswerable, my bodie not seruyng I can by no meanes dischargde the place. The next is that yow wyll procure mee a sufficient warrant for my due entertaynement that I maye knowe my estate

which since my coomyng yet by want therof I could not doo: my Coouenant was this, my dyatt according to the new establisshement, 50. horss. & 100. footmen in paye; and guyue mee all this & wyll I bee, I feare a thowsande pownde loozer: I haue noane to appeale to but yowrsellf; my hastie dispatche yow knowe, & pardon mee to challenge yowr promis, that for all my wrytinges & warrantes I shulld leaue the care to yow; haue consideration of mee I praye yow,* healp mee onely too my due, I wyll God wylling,* neuer trooble her Maiestie with any oother sute of benefitt: Lastly Sir I am too acknowledge & render infinite thanckes for yowr greate care & trauayle in* prouyding so well for my niece, god make her lykewyze too her dutie myndefull of this fatherly parte as I trust hee wyll: I haue ij or iij hundrethe powndes of the chyldernes porcion mooney in my handes, if at this tyme it bee too bee requyred guyue mee knowledge,* I praye yow, &* within one hallf yere it shall bee readie: I woold bee glad allso too knowe the daye of the mariadge, but gladder* of the newes that I myght bee at it: And thus with my hartiest prayer too the allmyghtie euer too keepe, direct & bless yow in all thynges I take leaue & looue yow deerely. Dublin the vjth of Nouember 1581.

Yowrs most assuredly,

Arthur Grey

Textual Notes

* **was now]** 'neuer' deleted *after was*, and 'now' inserted above the line.

* **priuat]** Inserted above the line.

* *after delyuer]* Single-letter deletion, possibly 's'.

* **heerencloazed]** An oblique pointer in the left margin draws attention to this underscored word.

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

* *after thynges heere]* '&' deleted.

* **79]** Unknown cipher.

* **scot]** In cipher, transliterated above the line.

* **60]** The Queen.

* *after better too]* 'her' deleted.

* **her]** Inserted above the line, in cipher, transliterated above the insertion.

* **in]** In cipher.

* **70]** Ireland.

* **shee]** In cipher, transliterated above the line.

* **80]** Possibly Henri III of France.

* **league or allyance]** In cipher, partially transliterated above the line.

* *after whereuntoo,]* 'wee' deleted.

* *after iustice,]* 'wee arr' deleted.

* **whow murmur]** 'haue caus' deleted *after whow*, and 'murmur' inserted above the line.

* *after yowrsellf]* '&' deleted.

* *after praye yow,]* '&' deleted.

* *after wyll yng,]* 'tr' deleted.

**after trauayle in]* 'procu' deleted.

†

* *after knowledge,]* '&' deleted.

†

* *after yow, &]* 'vp' deleted (?).

†

* *after gladder]* 'y' deleted.

Annotation

yowr saffe returne] Walsingham was in France between 22 July and 21 September, negotiating with Henri III over the French match, and support for the Duke of Anjou in his campaign against the Spanish in the Netherlands.

owre auditors booke] This may refer to auditor Jenyson's book of charges for Ireland submitted on 31 March 1581 (SP 63/81/52), though Jenyson was apparently preparing a major statement of accounts closer to this date (see SP 63/83/19, 63/84/39, 63/84/26), which has apparently been lost; see also SP 63/85/68, a summary estimate of the charge for Ireland brought through to September 1581, and 63/85/69, an estimate of Her Majesty's debts in Ireland. On 1 October the Privy Council sent Grey and the Irish Council a memorial to be answered on the Irish charge, a minute and draft of which survive (see SP 63/86/22 and 63/86/22/1); Grey, prepared by Leicester, was ready with a reply as early as 30 September, but it was not formally submitted until 11 December (see SP 63/87/38, with enclosures). In any case, Grey's note of the 'good lyking' that Jenyson's report had found in Westminster is playfully sarcastic: the Queen and Privy Council (and particularly Burghley) were growing intemperately frustrated with the level of expenditure in Ireland.

husbandrie] Economy.

awnssewer of the memorialls] Sent on 11 December 1581 (see note, above).

yow twoo ... honest causies] An unusually explicit expression of Grey's dependence upon Walsingham's patronage in having his causes pressed upon the Privy Council. It is less usual to see, as here, an acknowledgement of his dependence upon Leicester.

cassing of forcies] Disbanding of soldiers.

the Copie wherof hee reencloazed I send] See the enclosure to the present letter (SP 63/86/53/1), Grey's copy of his letter to Elizabeth of the same day (SP 63/86/50).

mathe ... scot] If '79' is a cipher for Mary Queen of Scots, this obscure comment could possibly refer to her scheme for the 'association', or the joint rule (with her son James, 'Scot') that she proposed for Scotland after October 1581.

lyze the saddle] Lose her saddle, be thrown from her horse; that is, lose her position.

Deus auertat] 'May God prevent it' (Lat.).

the gallantrie ... rebellius sturres] There is probably a large degree of sarcasm here, but Grey may also mean that the rebels' bravado, encouraged by their belief that they will not be prosecuted, leaves him all the more determined to see justice upheld.

her Maiestie ... lenger prosecute] As ever, Grey is keen to draw attention to the supposed ill effects of the general pardon he had opposed. Grey's implication is that the Queen has emboldened the traitors to think themselves safe, because she has clearly opted, in the general pardon, for a conciliatory approach.

if lawe cast them heere] Another equestrian metaphor: 'if we should manage to make any charges stick'.

owre chieff Iustice Dillon] Sir Robert Dillon, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas (Ireland) since June 1581; see biographies.

in discoouerie ... withowte sparyng any] Grey's comment on Dillon's readiness to act dutifully against his own 'frendshyp' is ironic; it is clear from the historical record that Dillon manipulated Grey's credulity to have his old rival, Chief Justice Nicholas Nugent, accused of treason and executed so that he could have Nugent's office.

myne owane pryuate] My private affairs.

my callyng hoame] Another of Grey's characteristic demands for revocation.

thowghe ... awnsswerable] Even if in other ways I were fit for this post, and it fit for me.

sufficient warrant ... due entertaynement] Grey seeks Walsingham's support for crown reimbursement of private funds spent during his tenure of the Lord Deputyship.

my dyatt ... new establisshement] Grey's allowance from the Privy Council was set in the summer of 1580 at a newly-agreed rate, more accurately reflecting the expenses of the post. A **dyatt**, or diet, is an allowance for expenses (*OED*, 'Diet', *n.*¹, 6).

in prouyding ... my niece] Grey is probably referring to the daughter of his sister, Honora, who had married Henry Denny, son and heir of Sir Anthony Denny. Whatever marriage negotiations to which Walsingham had been contributing later fell through (see SP 63/88/10).

chylldernes porcioon money] As head of his family, Grey was expected to contribute to the dowry of his sister's children.