

**TNA: PRO SP 63/78/29**

*Grey to the Queen, 12 November 1580*

In November 1580, Spenser was present with Lord Grey at Smerwick, in Kerry, where a Papal force of several hundred men had landed and occupied the 'arch-rebel' James Fitzmaurice's old fortification on the Dingle coast. After a short siege, the fort surrendered, and six hundred soldiers were executed (along with an Irish priest, an Englishman, and a man by the name of Oliver Plunkett, who were tortured and killed). The event was an important success for Grey, who had only recently, and within weeks of landing in Ireland, been routed by Feagh McHugh O'Byrne at Glenmalure in Co. Wicklow. But although the victory won Grey praise in England, his critics at court claimed he had deceived and then betrayed the largely Spanish force, and sixteen years later Spenser still felt the need to defend his conduct in *A view of the present state of Ireland*. 'If it weare trewe,' says Eudoxus, 'as some reported, surelye it was a greate touche to him in Honour. ffor some saie that he promised them lief, others that at leaste he did put them in hope theareof.' Irenius, who describes himself as being 'my selfe [...] then as neare as anye', refutes this: Grey was 'far from either promisinge or puttinge [them] in hope', he claims, and although the Spanish soldiers 'Craved [...] mercye', it being 'not thoughte good to shewe them bothe for daunger of themselues if beinge saved, they shoulde afterwarde ioyne with the Irishe, and allso for terrour of the Irishe, who weare mucche embouldened by those forreigne succours, and allso put in hope of more er longe, theare was no other waie but to make that shorte ende of them which was made Therefore most vntrewlye and malitiouslye do these evill tonges backebite and slaunder the sacred ashes of that most iuste and honorable personage, whose leste vertue of manye moste excellent which abounded in his heroicke spirite they weare never able to aspire vnto' (*A view*, ll. 3352-3392). Spenser writes in *A view* that 'Complainte was made againste [Grey] that he was a blodye man'; according to Canino (1998), *A view* implies that events at Smerwick led to this judgement, but Eudoxus's imputation of dishonour is certainly absent from contemporary English accounts of the siege.

It is easy to see not only why Grey took the extreme course he did, but why he celebrated his 'service' with such signal satisfaction. The preceding events had been the subject of a copious and ominous correspondence. As early as May 1580, Nicholas Lumbarde was sending the 'lothsome newes' that the Pope had levied 6000 Italians at Santander to travel to Ireland, and that the King of Spain was to follow with 40,000 men (SP 63/73/27). Reports throughout the summer were made on Fitzmaurice's works at Smerwick, Edward Fenton, for example, remarking on its 'slightnes', 'much like vnto his rebellion, without matter to worke vpon or grounde to defende it selfe' (Edward Fenton to Walsingham, 11 July 1580, SP 63/74/21). But Spanish ships began to arrive in September (SP 63/76/31), and 500 Spanish troops were said to have arrived by the 18th, and to be rebuilding the fort, 'meaning to place a garryson there for the sure keping of their municion' (Andrew Martin to Warham Sentleger, 18 September 1580, SP 63/76/40). There was successive report of ever more Spanish ships arriving: some speaking of eight (SP 63/76/43; SP 63/76/53), others of as many as twenty-seven (SP 63/76/58). With Ulster still unstable, the Pale's Catholic gentry threatening open revolt, and Munster at full alarm, a combined Spanish and Papal invasion of Ireland might conceivably, upon overrunning English defences, have united the island as a base for subsequent action against England. To a

new Lord Deputy in late summer 1580, the reports from Dingle must have seemed horribly grave; such an emphatic victory, by contrast, quashed the hopes of Irish rebels for significant support from Catholic Europe. The utter failure of the Earl of Desmond's men to rescue the besieged fort was not soon forgotten, and when the Armada did return, in 1588, it touched Ireland only when the storm winds wrecked it there.

The text and address of the letter are in Spenser's formal italic hand. A copy of the letter was apparently sent as an enclosure to Francis Walsingham (see SP 63/78/30). Grey has added his own subscription and signature. As noted below, the letter has suffered substantial damage. The letter was also annotated at some point, with portions of the text underlined; these emphases were probably added after the letter was received in Westminster.

### Address and Endorsement

To her Maiesty yeue  
this. /

12 Nouember 1580.  
To hir Maiesty from the lord  
Gray.

Entred.

### Text

It may please your Maiesty the vij <sup>th</sup> of this date I planted Campe before the forte at Smerwick: three causes hindered greatly my marche: provision of victaile, rysing of waters, which very hardly & with no	smal{1}* daunger we passed, and lastly staying for the fleete, of which for many d{ayes} space wee could haue no voyce of, & without which the entreprize had bene {in}vayne, no possibilitie being to drawe any ordinaunce with vs, nether hau{ing} any shipping for such conveyance by sea; at the last worde came, that Captein Bingham in the Swiftesure was arriued, and had anchored besi{de} the Forte, I then moved campe and beeing come within viij mile of the forte, {I} tooke my Horssmen & rode to the Hauen to haue talke with the said Cap{tein} and learne what was become of the Admirall and the rest: I fownd{e} by him that storme had parted them, and that after he had neuer heard of them, but had well hoped to haue mett them there: entring then into advice for the environing of the place, before the rest came, we fown{d} our selues altogether vnhable, having nether Pioners tooles (a shipp of limb{...} therewith & victailes laden, not yett come about) nor his shipp altogether hable to supply the munition that the entreprize was lykely to require: soe better I helde yt, to forbeare approaching yt, not hauing to goe through with yt, then to make a brauery, & then enforced leaue yt, as I fownd yt. An{d}
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eight daies I so helde still my Campe in penurie of victells & great doubt of the becoming of our fleet and victells; such stormy & raging wether continually for this space had fallen with contrariety of windes; & nowe almost in despeire the ix Morning newes came vnto me first that thre{e} bandes which I had appointed to followe mee, were coming at hand, I was leaping to horss to meete them, when another Messenger in great has{te} brought worde that Sir William Winter with the shippes was at the Ven{...} & would next morning yf winde helde, bee at Smerwick. The next {day} therefore I roade thether, where I fownd him newly entered,\* & fow{nd} the cause of his stay to haue bene weather & vncerteyne intelligence of my beeing & the Enemies estate; conference then had & resolucion for the service, I retourned; & the next day brought forward my Campe & pit{ched} by the Dingle, caused there to stay for the taking in of certein victailes. The day following beeing the foresaid vij<sup>th</sup> I settled camp here, in which sp{...} taking Captein Bingham with mee I went to viewe the Forte & grownd for the carriage of my Trench & planting of Ordinaunce. To lett vs in this, and to draw oures within the play of their Counterscarfe and Courteyne, where theyr Musketiers lay, x or xij Shott were putt forth, who were answered\* by 50 or 60 loose shott that I had with mee, to enterteigne them the whilest; the leaders of these were Iohn Zouche & Captein Mackworth, who very gallantly carried themselues. In this skirmish 3 of theires were slayne, none of oures touched, sauing that Iohn Zouche had the graze of a bullet on the knee, but not to bee reckoned of. That doen that wee came for, I retyred: the same afternoone we landed our Artillerie & munition. In the Euening we fell too worke, caried our trench within xiiij skore of the Piece, & planted 2 Culuerings with which the next morning anone vpon day we saluted them, & they for an howre or 2 as freshly requited vs, till twoo of their best pieces at laste taken away, they had not on that side but Muskett & hackabuse-acroke too answer vs, which with good heat they plyed vs with. The day so spent, at night to spade wee fall agayne & by morning brought our trench within v score of theyr Dytche: this night they made 4 saylies to haue beaten our laborers from worke, & gaue vs their volleies very gallantly, but were as gallantly sett in agayne by Ned Denny and his company who had this night the watch: no sooner day peeped, but they played very hotly vpon vs, yett as god would, for a good tyme without hurt, till vnhappely good Iohn Cheeke too carelessly aduancing him selfe, to looke ouer the Trenche, stricken on the head tumbled downe at my feete, dead I tooke him & for so I caused him to bee carried away, yet yt pleased God to send him spright agayne & yet doth liue in speache & greatest memory, that euer was seene with such a wounde, & truly Madam so disposed to God, & made so diuine a Confession of his faith, as all Diuines in either of your Maiesties realmes\* could not haue passed, yf matched, yt; so wrought in him Gods spirite, playnely declaring him a Childe of his elected, to the no lesse comfort of his good and godly frendes, then great instruction & manifest motion of euery other hearer that stood by, of whome there was a good troupe.

Pardon mee I beseeche your Highnes in case my Digression bee tædious; the affection I beare the Gentleman causeth the fault, yf there bee anye. I therefore knitte yt vp thus: if god doe take him, as such is the likelyhode, your Maiestie looseth a seruant, whose matche for euery good vertue

9. accompanied with {the} most true, duetifull, & zealous hart to your selfe (as his prayers in this {...} case notably haue declared) in no great nomber wilbee fownd. Hee so had away, I stayed in the Trench, and fynding theyr shott mo{re zea}lously to beate at vs, & that oures did litle or nothing anyoe them, for {that} wee did not discern eether by spike hole or smoke on the rampier wher{e they} lay; I endeured as I might to watche their next volley, & happely did {...} yt to come from vnder a certeyn building of Timber, that at the point of the ca{mpe} was sett vp, propped outwardly like a houell, & inwardly slanting like {a} Pentisse. I went streight to the Barricadoase, I willed the Gonners to {...} their pieces at that place. Sir William Winter himself made that sho{t...} at 2 tyres our gentlemen were displaced & the Trenche at great good {...} and by that 2 other tyres were given, in great hast leapes one of the{...} to the toppe of their Vauntmure with an Ensigne of a sheete & craues a Parlea: hereof streight was word sent mee by Iohn Zouche, who then had the warde, I willed him & the TrenchMaster (one Captein Piers, a very sufficient & industrious man) to know what they would: yt was returned vnto mee, that theyr Coronell would send one out to mee, to treat with mee, in case his Messenger might safely goe & retourne; vpon aduice yt was graunted there was presently sent vnto mee one Alexandro their CampMaster: he tolde me that certeyn Spaniards & Italians were there arriued vpon fayre speaches & great promises, which altogether vayne & false they fownd; & {that} yt was no part of their entent to molest or take any gouernement from y{our} Maiesty for proof, that they were ready to depart as they cam, & deliuer in{to} my handes the Forte: myne answer was that for that I perceyved theyr people to stand of twoo nations Italian & Spanish I would give no a{nswer} vnlesse a Spaniard were likewise by: he presently went & returned {with} a Spanish Captein. I then tolde the Spaniard that I knew their nation {to} haue an absolute Prince, one that was in good league & amity with your M{aiesty} which made mee to merueyle that any of his people should bee fownd associates {with} them, that went about to maynteyne Rebelles against you & to disturb any your Highnes gouernements & taking yt that it could not bee his Pri{nces} will, I was to know by whome & for what cause they were sent his Replye was that the King had not sent them, but that one Iohn Martines de Ricaldi Gouenour for the King at Bilbo had willed him to levie a band & to repaire with yt to St Androes & there to bee directed by this theyr Coronell here, whome he followed as a blind man not knowing whether. The other avouched that they were all sent by the Pope for the defence of the Catholica fede. My answer was that I would not greatly haue merueyled yf men beeing commaunded by Naturall & absolute Princes did sometymes take in hand wrong actions; but that men & that of accoumpt, as some of them made showe of, should be carried into vniust desperate & wicked actions by one, that nether from God nor man could clayme any princely powre or empire, but indeed a detestable shaveling the right Antichriste & generall ambitious Tyrant ouer all right principalities, & patrone of the Diabolica fede, I could not but greatly reste in wonder; theyr fault therefore farre to bee aggrauated by the vilenesse of their Commaunder, & that at my handes no condition of composition they were to expecte, other then that simply they should render me the forte, & yield theyr selues to my will for lyfe or death: with this answer he departed; after

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which there was one or two courses two and fro more to haue gotten a
 certenty for some of their liues, but fynding that yt would not bee, the
 Coronell him self about Sunne setting came forth, & requested respitt with
 surceasse of armes till the nexte morning, & then he would giue a resolute
 answere; fynding that to bee but a gayne of tyme for them & losse of the
 same for my self, I definitely answered I would not graunt yt, & therefore
 presently either that he tooke my offer or elles retourne & I would fall to my
 busines. He then embraced my knees, simply putting him self to my mercy,
 onely he prayed that for that night hee might abyde in the Forte, and that in
 the morning all should be putt into my handes: I asked hostages for the
 performance; they were giuen. Morning come I presented my companies in
 battaile before the Forte: the Coronell comes forth with x or xij of his chiefe
 ientlemen, trayling theyr ensignes rolled vp, & presented them vnto mee
 with theyr liues & the Forte: I sent streight certein gentlemen in\* to see their
 weapons and armures layed downe & to gard the munition & victaile there
 lefte for spoile: Then putt I in certeyn bandes, who streight fell to execution.
 There were 600 slayne; munition & vitteile great store, though much wasted
 through the disorder of the Souldier, which in the furie could not bee helped.
 Those that I gaue lyfe vnto, I haue bestowed vpon the Capteines &
 gentlemen, whose seruice hath well deserued: for though your Maiesty may,
 & I doubt not shall haue g{reat} services donne, yet truly for toyle and
 misery susteyned in yt, through len{gth} and hardnesse of wayes, extremity
 of weather, coldnesse of season, conty{nuance of} watching, & penury of
 vittayle, hardly by other Souldiers will the like aga{ine} bee performed.
 Your Maiesty at this service had here but 800; they haue p{utt} out of a
 Forte well fortified, better victailed, excellently stored with armure {&}
 munition, 600 whereof 400 were as gallant & goodly personages, as of any
 {...} I euer beheld. So hath yt pleased the Lord of hostes to deliuer your
 enemies into {your} Highnes handes, & so too, as one onely excepted not
 one of yours is els lost or hu{rt} I had in this iorney a great iewell of Captein
Bingham, whose restlesse trau{uail} & grownded skill hath bene no small
cause of shortening the same. I mos{t} humbly therefore commend him to
your Highnes favour and good opinion; which ({with} credit I dare gage)
shall shewe deservedly to bee bestowed in euery empr{ise} The Coronell at
 his coming forth shewed to the gentlemen, that I had sent in before, a Coffe
 of his wherein he told them was all the threasure he had; yt was brought to
 mee vntouched; I caused yt by the same Gentlemen to be opened & tolde; yt
 came to 329<sup>li</sup> v<sup>s</sup> all in double ryalls of plate. I caused yt streight to bee
 distributed emongst the bandes that kept the stand in the\* fielde & warde in
 the Campe that day, & sondry priuate gentlemen, which I learned to haue
 sought for no spoile, I relieued therewith so farre as yt would goe: I trust
 your Maiesty will allowe of yt. Other particularities about this service to the
 Bearer hereof I referre; whose forwardnesse I could of right commend to
 your Highnes but that I fe{ar} you will take yt rather partialitie, then desert:
 but sure Madam affec{tion} shall neuer draw mee to deliuer vnto you in
 anyes behalf, what theyr w{orth} shall not beare; I humbly therefore
 beseeche your Highnes to affoord him your g{ood} countenance & fauour:
 for in this action he hath & will I doubt not more dese{...}\* If tydings of this
 event stay yt not, there is a great remaynder of this for{ein} force to bee yet
 looked

for. I haue owne service & compassion of the poore, ragged, & naked creatures to  
 thought affoord them a thorough pay; otherwise sure great lacke to your seruice yt  
 good will bring & as little gayne to your threasure by the delay.  
 therefore to  
 stay yet for a What is donne in the English pale I cannot heare. Connagh is greatly  
 {...} your troubled by that the Earle of Clanricardes sonnes. I meane therefore with  
 Maiesties Gods leaue to take the Prouince in my retourne & leaue with Sir Nicholas  
 admirall, & Malbey some of my force for the tymely quenching of these sparkes. Surely  
 then Madam I cannot fynd but a most hard & stiffenecked people of this Nation  
 dismissing and farre from the bent of loving obedience vnto you. I feare I shall doe your  
 him, to Highnes litle seruice emongst them; for certainly a harde & forcible hand, I  
 reteyne for too well fynd, must bring them to duety, which I confesse, falles not with my  
 this winter nature. Your Highnes must determyn absolutely with your owne forces to  
 C{aptein} defend & keepe in awe this land; expecte no country ayd, vnlesse you would  
 Bingham the giue raynes to Poperie, stelth, murdering, & all other insolency of lyfe. This  
 Viceadmirall wilbee heavy for your Highnes to doe, I know, in this sort that now yt goeth;  
 with the but in myne opinion the way might bee fownd, that would make yt light vnto  
 Achates & you. What part of Ireland is yt, that beareth not the charge of an idle  
 Merlian. For villanous kind of kerne iij tymes tolde aboute the number of your Soldiers? &  
 the defence the end they serue to, onely to bee instrumentes of revenges in private  
 of {...} quarrels, or els the force & strength of publique rebellions: now half the  
 partes by chardge that this scumme putteth the country vnto, and doth nothing for yt,  
 land, I leaue but maynteigne quarels, committ murders and stealthes, vphold Rebellions;  
 Iohn Zowtch would, I say, fynd a competent number of English Souldiers, that should  
 Coronell of roote out this detestable crewe, whereby the Country should be quieted,  
 4000 causes of quarels & wronges taken away, iustice & redresse onely at your  
 footmen & handes sought, factious & rebellious myndes should neuer trouble nor putt to  
 50 hors{s} chardg your Maiesty wanting ministers & adherentes to execute, and seeing  
 The trauailes still forces ready to prevent. Since thus the chardg of the Realme might bee  
 & toile of lessened, the quiete and good state greatly aduanced, your Maiesties  
 the Souldiers service and government furthered & made safer, why should yt not be putt  
 hath bene so in vre? I leaue yt to your Highnes consideration and good pleasure. Once  
 excessiue, as this I can say, since my coming into this Gouvernement could I not see any  
 they are man of those that in defence or offence of priuate quarell would haue fownd  
 cle{ane} out an hundreth swordes at his devotion, that euer yett without pay in this your  
 of clothes, service would affoord mee a man; and now in this action (to notch the willes  
 the country of the good people) they that before my coming had bene contynuall ayders  
 & season so of the Strangers with all necessaries, & to theyr workes had holp{...} them  
 coald, as not with an Hundreth churles (of which kind I now stood in great need) the same  
 possible in persons came now into mee, & submitted them selues, which I took  
 such plight imposing onely on them to putt mee in sufficient pledges and to furni{sh}  
 to  
 {con}tynew  
 e yt. I most  
humbly  
therefore  
beseech your  
Maiesty in  
consideratio  
n of your

me for were knowen; yf one way, a Rebell as before, yf the other, a Subiec{te} and  
 money with yet\* surely so\* but in showe, and the other in hart; for not one thing with  
 Beofes, and go{od} will, till to threaten I beganne, could I gett of them, nether yet {to}  
 to gette mee ouerthrow the Forte, can I emongst 3 or 4 of them gett half{e...} that the  
 an hundreth Enemy by one of them was serued with in the building {...}

Churles to

labor{.} I Thus too tœdiously perchaunce haue I helde your Maiesty with this  
 was driven discourse but hauing thought yt not vnecessary to acquaint your Maiesty  
 of from day with the duetifulnesse & good mynd, that I fynd the People to carry, did  
 to day, and embolden mee to yt. And so submitting all to Your Maiesties iudgment I take  
 in the end m{y} humble leave, beseeching the Almighty god to prolong your lyfe with  
 did fynde contynuall health, & to governe you with his spright for your owne avayle &  
 that this his glory, and mee euer to serve your Maiesty as I desyre. / In campe at  
 coming in Smer{wic}k the xij of November 1580.

was onely to

play on both

sydes, till

the euent of

this action

Yowr Hyghnes most & faythefull\*  
 subiect & seruaunt,

Arthur Grey

## Textual Notes

\* **no smal{l}**] The first, third, fifth, and seventh pages of the manuscript have suffered damage to the right side of the page, cutting off many letters, and sometimes words, in the margin. Where the nature of the missing letters (or in rare cases, words) has appeared likely enough, we have supplied them in the appropriate spellings; in more ambiguous cases, we have simply supplied a mark of omission: {...}.

\* **after entered,**] Illegible single-character deletion.

\* **after answered]** 'w<sup>t</sup>' deleted.

\* **realmes]** Inserted above the line.

\* **in]** Inserted above the line.

\* **the]** Inserted above the line.

\* **more dese{...}]** Inserted here below the line; there is no apparent deletion above, but the sense of the phrase seems to be 'for in this action he hath [well deserved] and will I doubt not more deserve'. Spenser may have tripped up, while copying, on the similarity of 'will' and 'well'.

\* **yet]** Inserted above the line.

\* **so]** Inserted above the line.

\* **most & faythefull]** Judging from other comparable parting salutations (see, for example, the conclusion of SP 63/82/54), Grey probably intended to write 'most humble & faythefull'.

## Annotations

**my marche]** Grey must have set off in October; a letter from Chancellor Gerrarde and the Irish Council to the Privy Council in England, dated 3 November, writes that they understand that Grey has written from Waterford of 'his purpose for attempting of the strangers in their newe fortification' (SP 63/78/4); the letter may have passed through Dublin on its way to England. Another letter from Gerrarde and the Irish Council to Burghley (SP 63/78/69) apologises for Grey's silence on his march, which they explain by the difficulty of dispatching messengers from close to Smerwick. This claim had also been made by Warham Sentleger to Burghley on 9 October: 'The weyes be so beset, as no messinger can passe betweene vs and them, but either they bee hang'd or kild, so as it is a great Chaunce when we can heare eny thing of Thenemyes dooinges' (SP 63/77/24).

**staying for the fleete]** Waiting for the arrival of the ships.

**Captein Bingham in the Swiftsure]** The Swiftsure, under the command of Richard Bingham, was among the English ships (alongside the Achates, Tiger, Isaac, Merlin, Aid, Revenge, and other victualling ships) that supported the siege from the bay. According to Glasgow (1966), it was one of the larger ships, and remained at anchor well out in the bay. Richard Bingham had been separated from Admiral Winter in a storm, and had been in the bay at Smerwick since 17 October (SP 63/77/51), exchanging shots with the Spaniards. He told Francis Walsingham on 18 October that he had information that the Papal soldiers were 'a thowsande poore symple Bysswynes verie ragged

and a great part of them boyes', that they had made rendezvous with Desmond, and that John of Desmond had come to the Dingle 'and [was] looked for heere at the fortresse' (SP 63/77/42). Bingham, perhaps unsurprisingly, was keen in these letters to speak highly of his own service and to emphasize Winter's absence: Grey was to speak later of Winter's 'greate dislyke' for the much younger captain, who had 'not alyttle sheowed hys skylle & diligence in this seruyce', and would say that Winter 'affectes greatly the glorie of this seruyce; & chyefly for that hee takes the assent too the parlea too bee hys onely aduyce' (Grey to Walsingham, 9 November 1580, SP 63/78/30).

**the Forte]** A contemporary Spanish plan of the fort, with a map of the surrounding area, is printed by Jones (1954-56).

**the Admirall and the rest]** Admiral Sir William Winter, in the *Revenge*, arrived on 9 November with the remaining ships (including the *Aid*, *Tiger*, *Achates* and *Merlin*). Some of his fleet (the *Lion*, the *Foresight* under Martin Frobisher, and the *Bull*) never arrived, apparently returning to the docks at Chatham after having been separated from the others in a storm. Winter seems to have been particularly involved in Irish military affairs and victualling from the mid 1560s. He was still in service against the Spanish Armada in 1588.

**ix Morning]** I.e. the morning of Grey's ninth day at camp, not the morning of 9 November.

**environing]** Surrounding, and (likely) besieging.

**Pioners tooles]** I.e. pioneers', or trench-digging tools.

**a shipp of limb{...}]** The word lost by this damage to the manuscript may be 'limber', the fore-part of a gun, including ammunition chests (*OED*, *n.*, 2).

**brauery]** Precipitous act of bravado.

**becoming]** Fate.

**bandes]** Troops of soldiers.

**the Ven{...}]** Presumably at Ventry, or Ventry Bay, on the southern side of the tip of the Dingle peninsula, at the mouth of Dingle Bay.

**intelligence of my beeing]** Information about my condition or whereabouts.

**the Dingle]** Probably Dingle Bay, to the south of the Dingle peninsula (on the north side of which was the fort at Smerwick).

**Carriage of my Trench]** I.e. the digging of the trench.

**lett]** Hinder.

**Counterscarfe and Courteyne]** The counterscarp is the frequently fortified external wall of a ditch (i.e. the wall closer to the attackers) used in fortification. The curtain is the main defensive wall of that fortification.

**were putt forth]** I.e. by the Papal forces.

**loose shott]** Scattered marksmen.

**John Zouche & Captein Mackworth]** John Zouche and Humphrey Mackworth; see biographies.

**within xiiij skore of the Piece]** A score may be twenty paces; Grey's trench is within approximately 280 paces (c. 250 metres) of the fortress (see *OED*, 'Piece', n. 11b).

**Culuerings]** Culverins, light cannons.

**Muskett & hackabuse-acroke]** A musket is a hand-held, long-barrelled gun, fired from the shoulder. A **hackabuse**, or arquebus, was an older long-barrelled gun: a **hackabuse-acroke** (arquebus à croc) was a heavier type of such a gun mounted upon a wagon.

**saylies]** Sallies.

**Ned Denny]** See biographies. It was apparently Denny who conveyed this letter to England (see the report of Chancellor Gerrard and the Council to England, SP 63/78/69).

**John Cheeke]** John Cheke was the second son of Sir John Cheke, humanist and educator. In his biography of the elder Cheke, John Strype describes him as 'a youth of great hopes, Comely and Learned, and of a Gentleman-like, and very obliging Deportment: Of whom also his Unkle, the Lord Treasurer Burghley, took particular care, making him one of his own Family. [...] Among his other Qualities he was Courageous and Brave, which Spirit carried him to the Wars in Ireland' (*Life of the Learned Sir John Cheke* (1705), p. 180). His death at Smerwick was lamented by Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who wrote sorrowfully of 'Mr John Cheke, a querry under my rule, a tall valiant gentleman he was' (see *ODNB*).

**spright]** Spirit, i.e. life.

**& yet ... wounde]** Cheke, in fact, died of his wound.

**either ... realmes]** I.e. England and Ireland.

**Childe of his elected]** The language here, and the reference to the working of the holy spirit, seems to remember Article 17 of *The Thirty-Nine Articles*: '...the godly consideration of Predestination, and our Election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal Salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God'. Cheke reveals himself by his declaration of his faith to be one of the elect, and Grey's narrative of his death prepares him to be something of a Protestant martyr.

**knitte ... vp]** Conclude.

**spike hole]** Small hole in the wall.

**rampier]** The ramparts, fortified walls.

**Pentisse]** Or penthouse, at that time meaning an outhouse or annexe built onto the outside of another building.

**Barricadoase]** Barricades, improvised fortifications, in this case protecting the English guns.

**at 2 tyres]** Damage to the manuscript makes the exact course of events unclear, but a **tyre**, or tire, is a volley of ordinance. The English battery forced the fort to surrender.

**Vauntmure]** A work raised in front of the wall.

**an Ensigne of a sheete]** A white flag, symbolizing surrender, made out of a sheet.

**Parlea]** Parley, discussion of terms. Grey wrote to Walsingham (SP 63/78/30) that discussions were held about this parley between himself, Winter, Bingham, and Geoffrey Fenton.

**TrenchMaster]** Officer in charge of the construction of trenches.

**Captein Piers]** Probably William Piers; see biographies.

**Coronell]** Colonel.

**treate]** Negotiate, discuss terms.

**in case]** As long as, on the condition that.

**Alexandro their CampMaster]** Alessandro Bertone, or Bartoni, of Faenza, named in SP 63/78/27 and 28. Though see Spenser, in *A view*: 'theire Secretarye Called as I remember *Signior Jeffrey*, an Italian beinge sente to treate with the Lo deputie for grace was flatlye refused and afterwarde their Coronell named *Don Sebastian*: came forthe to entreate that they mighte parte with their Armourrs like souldiours, at leaste with their lives accordinge to the Custome of warr and lawe of nacions (ll. 3362-3367). Spenser's memory may have been playing tricks with the name of the Italian colonel, Sabastian de San Josepi (or Sanioseffi), but Grey also acknowledges that there were 'one or two courses two and fro more' after his initial parley.

**certeyn Spaniards ... great promises]** The promises may have been Irish or Papal. The Spanish forces may have believed that they could rely on reinforcements from the Desmonds: 'if they founde them selves weake & vnhabable to heepe the fortes then th' Earle & Sir Iohn promised to be on the mountaines by with xvi<sup>c</sup> men & would [...] with theyre forces come downe & remove our siege but in conclusion there was a writte returned *Non fuerunt inuenti* [i.e. They were not found]' (William Smith to Burghley, 28 November 1580, SP 63/78/67). Grey also wrote to Walsingham, on the same date as the present letter, that he had discovered in the fort 'infinite letters & wrytinges with bulles as I take them & Commissions from the Pope': despite only having had time to skim through them, he tells Walsingham that they 'make 'promyss styll of greater forcies too arryue heere withall expedition' (SP 63/78/30). There is clearly an anxiety in this case that these **promises** were not vain, and that there would be a further Spanish landing in Ireland: the letter goes on to say that the examination of Oliver Plunkett suggested that there was a fleet of twenty-four ships at preparation at Coruna, and twelve at Santander.

**an absolute Prince]** King Philip II. An **absolute** monarch is a ruler free of constitutional restraint or restriction, and not subject to any other prince. It is tempting to think that Grey had read Jean Bodin's *Les six livres de la République* (Paris, 1576), which discourses at length on the criteria for absolutism.

**his Replye]** It was on this basis, that the Papal forces held no direct commission of war from the prince of their country, that Spenser, in *A view*, had Irenius justify Grey's refusal to grant mercy: 'they Coulede not ius[t]lye pleade either Custome of war or lawe of nacions, for that they weare not

anie lawfull enemyes, and if they weare [Grey] willed them to shewe by what Commission they Came thither into another Princes dominions to warr whether from the Pope or the kinge of Spaine or any other. The which when they saide they had not but weare onelye adventurours that Came to seke fortune abroade and serve in warrs amongst the Irishe whoe desired to entertaine them, yt was then toulde them that the Irishe themselues as the Earle and Iohn of desmoude with the rest weare no lawfull enemies but Rebels and Traytours and therefore they that Came to succour them no better then Roges and Runnagates speciallye Comminge with no license nor Comission from their owne kinge, so as it shoulde be dishonorable for him in the name of his Quene to Condiçion or make anye termes with suche Rascalls' (ll. 3368-3381).

**Bilbo]** Bilbao, on the north coast of Spain.

**repaire ... St Androes]** **St Androes** (I.e. St Andrews) is Santander, a city on the north coast of Spain. On 24 May 1580, it had been reported that 'doctor Saunders was in a town in the partes of Asturia in spaine called Sainte Anderouse with companye of 6000 Italianes ... which company were sent thether by the pope to com into yrlande' (Nicholas Lumbard to the Master of the Rolls, SP 63/73/27). Santander is in the modern district of Cantabria, not Asturias.

**Catholica fede]** Catholic faith (It.).

**Naturall & absolute Princes]** On **absolute** princes, see above. A **naturall** prince was to be distinguished from an elected prince (or, indeed, pope). In the period's popular political discourse of sovereignty, the two words were regularly collocated, for the simple reason that elective monarchies (following the work of Jean Bodin in the 1576 *Six livres de la République*) were considered to be inherently limited or contractual.

**shaveling]** A contemptuous term for a monk (with shaven head) or any other religious figure: here alongside other anti-Catholic slanders.

**ambitious Tyrant]** Early modern discussions of tyranny used the term to connote either unjust rule or usurpation, and often linked it to questions of the justness of tyrannicide. See Armstrong (1946) and, for the political contexts of the term, Skinner (1978). It is doubtful, however, whether Grey meant anything more than that the pope was evil.

**Diabolica fede]** Devil's faith (It.). The phrase may be Grey's coinage, even if the idea is commonplace.

**no condition of composition they were to expecte]** They could not expect to make conditions for a truce.

**one or two courses]** Return journeys in and out of the fortress.

**either ... my business]** Grey 'left them to their Choise to yealde and submitte themselves or noe' (*A view*, ll. 3381-3382).

**certein gentlemen]** According to Hooker, the English troops were led by Raleigh and Mackworth.

**armures]** Either armour or, more generally, military equipment.

**600 slayne]** This number is broadly consistent with figures given in other accounts of the massacre (O'Rahilly, p. 22). Some subsequent reports reduced the number (e.g. the Mayor of Cork reported to

the Mayor of Waterford that 400 had been 'putt to the sworde', SP 63/78/53/1). It is likely that these were simply mistakes; there seems little reason to question Grey's figure.

**bestowed vpon the Capteines and gentlemen]** Fifteen soldiers were ransomed (for their names, see O'Rahilly, p. 11).

**grownded skill]** Thorough proficiency.

**329 ... v<sup>s</sup>]** Grey quotes exactly the same sum of money in a letter to Walsingham of the same date: 'Three hundrethe twentie nyne powndes & syx shylynges came too my handes of theyr mooney' (SP 63/78/30).

**double ryalls of plate]** Or 'royalls', a name given to various English and European coins (see *OED*, 'Royal', *n.*, 2).

**a great remaynder]** A letter dated 15 November 1580, from Thomas Wadding, one of the Earl of Ormond's men, to the Mayor of Waterford suggests that fears that a contingent of the Papal army was still at large, and assisting Irish rebels, were widespread, but in his view unfounded: Desmond, Baltinglas and John of Desmond are, he writes, 'butt accompanied of Raskall [...] And of the forrein Ennemies butt fowr spaynards [...] to make men belev that they have a greate number of the strangers. Butt in troth they have no more' (SP 63/78/45/3).

**I haue thought good ... Achates & Merlian]** Damage to the manuscript at this point makes Grey's exact proposal uncertain, though the missing word is likely to have been 'while' or, more likely, 'time'. The Achates and Merlin, which would stay in Ireland throughout the winter under Bingham's command, were two of the smaller ships in the fleet employed at Smerwick (Glasgow, 163).

**affoord ... pay]** Such requests are of course commonplace in this correspondence, but this one is backed up in a postscript to Grey's letter to Walsingham of the same date: 'Further earnestly, I praye yow my sute too her Maiestie for a thowrorghe paye.' (SP 63/78/30). This is not the only time that Grey drew Walsingham's attention to points in his other correspondence, and asked for his help in expediting them.

**English pale]** On the Pale, see glossary.

**Connagh... sonnes]** Principally, in recent times, by Richard Yn Yeren Burke, whom Malby had forced to submission. See SP 63/81/39 below. Fighting among the Burkes had worsened with expectation of the death of John Burke, McWilliam Eigher (which actually took place on 24 November, just twelve days after the writing of this letter).

**stiffenecked]** Obstinate, stubborn.

**a harde ... to duety]** The conviction that the irrationality of Irish will, and the ingrained customs of the Irish people, would make voluntary reform impossible, is expressed in *A view*: according to Bradshaw (1978), it was the distinctive position of the Grey circle in Ireland. It is curious, then, that Grey acknowledges himself unfit for the policy.

**falles not with my nature]** *A view* makes this claim specifically with regard to Grey's actions at Smerwick: 'the necessitye of that presente state of thinges forced him to that violence and allmoste Changed his verye naturall disposicion' (ll. 3328-3330).

**country ayd]** Native support.

**kerne]** See glossary.

**revenges in private quarrells]** That the Irish were either too busy fighting among themselves to support the English, or that these private quarrels were connected to their rebellion, was a common cause of complaint for Grey. See SP 63/94/15 (*infra*).

**stealthes]** Stealthy acts of theft.

**putt in vre]** Put into practice.

**notch]** Weaken, impair, undermine; the metaphor is obscure.

**churles]** Fellows, men (though the term can have various pejorative meanings, ranging from 'commoner' to 'bumpkin' to 'villain', any or all of which Grey might be implying).

**Beofes]** Cattle, beef-cows.