
SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 17 January 1599 from Thomas Gurlyn to Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, concerning a suit to the Queen.

For a letter and schedule dated 11 January 1597 from Oxford to Sir Robert Cecil concerning a petition by Thomas Gurley to the Privy Council against Oxford's wife, Elizabeth (nee Trentham), Countess of Oxford, see CP 37/66 and CP 37/67.

For Gurlyn's letter to Sir Robert Cecil dated 30 January 1597 see CP 173/27. For a letter from King James to Sir Robert Cecil dated 12 April 1611 concerning Gurlyn's prosecution of recusants, see CP 129/54.

The bearer of the Queen's message to Gurlyn, Richard Carmarden (d.1603), was the son of Thomas Carmarden and Dorothy Alexander, the daughter of Paul Alexander, and held the office of Surveyor of Customs for the City of London. It appears Gurlyn was also involved in some capacity with the Customs office; see CP 195-76. It is therefore possible that the 'Mr Smith' whom the Earl of Essex wished to have joined in Gurlyn's suit was Sir Thomas Smythe (c.1558–1625), who succeeded his father, Thomas Smythe (1522–1591), as Customer of the City of London.

It is also possible that 'Mr Smith' was Essex's former chief secretary, Sir Thomas Smith (c.1556–1609), although this seems less likely since by September 1595 Essex had secured him a position as Clerk of the Privy Council.

Gurlyn's letter is said to bear a seal.

Right Honourable, my most humble duty in any wise not omitted etc., so it is that 4 months past your Lordship pleased to permit me into your honourable presence and to require me that Mr Smith might join with me in my suit which her Majesty most graciously intended towards me, not only in lieu of more than £3000 lost in her Highness' service, but also for many my dutiful deserts, yet by so much as I love and honour your Lordship above the rest of the nobility, by so much I was the readier to grant unto your Lordship's request, having your honourable promise that by your Lordship's means unto her Majesty the same should be effected unto us both;

But forasmuch as her Majesty sent me word of late by Mr Carmarden that I should have my suit, and also for that I cannot understand that your Lordship hath moved her Majesty therein, with divers other respects and especially for that my ability cannot longer endure, I am humbly to entreat your Lordship to give your honourable performance or else to permit me with your Lordship's good favour to take some other course for my better contentment, wishing rather to enjoy the moiety with assurance of your Lordship's good conceit on me than the whole with any doubt of your Lordship's deske(?) [=dislike(?)], beseeching your Lordship's pardon for my overmuch boldness with your honourable acceptance I most humbly take my leave this 17th of January 1598(?) [=1599].

Your Lordship's in all humbleness of duty ever to be commanded,

Thomas Gurlyn

Endorsed: To the right honourable the Earl of Essex, Earl Marshal of England

Endorsed: Thomas Gurlyn, 1598