
SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 20 July 1575 written by William Lewin (d.1598) to Lord Burghley. Oxford and Lewin had left Paris together on 17 March, bound for Germany, but had parted company after Oxford's visit to Johannes Sturm (1507-1589) in Strasbourg. As the letter below indicates, Lewin was currently staying with Sturmius in Strasbourg, but was unaware of Oxford's whereabouts. For a fuller discussion, see TNA SP 70/134, ff. 186-7.

The translation below was prepared by Dr. Dana Sutton.

In your kindness you do me a welcome service, right honorable lord, in writing me this letter, as I am bound to think. I should gladly do the same for your lordship, but I would certainly do so more gladly if I could contribute something beyond the mere act of writing. Yet, since I have no facts to add, I should prefer to keep my silence, lest I seem to be failing in my duty.

In my previous letter I wrote that, should I learn anything I thought you would wish to learn, I would inform your lordship. I should do so, if I had discovered anything more than I informed you previously, that I thought worth telling you. But I do not think I know anything of which your lordship is unaware. And if I do, I imagine that it would have been related to you by other men's letters and reports. And yet I do not wish to write nothing at all, should I chance to hear something which your lordship would wish to hear, nor yet, should I write, to consume more words in telling you what you have already heard. On June 4 I wrote from Strasbourg to a certain merchant at Venice that your letter had been sent, asking that he convey it to my lord and write to me about what he was doing concerning it. Now, a few days after June 5, it has been reported to Sulcher by that same merchant that he has sent your letter to my lord at Padua. I desired a fuller reply. But from this report I think it can be gathered that my lord was at Padua at the time and that your letter has been given him. For thus Sulcher had instructed: if my lord was at Venice, to give him the letter personally, or, were he elsewhere in Italy, to attend to its transmission with diligence. This is why he wrote that it had been sent to my lord at Padua: he did this on his own initiative, because he understood he was at Padua at the time, and I hope he was diligent in doing this, since it was requested that he act with all diligence.

A few days ago I received a not dissimilar report from an Italian: he understood that at the beginning of this month of June a certain English nobleman was at Venice, and that he had taken into his company some young man who had been at Venice with that right

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decorous youth Philip Sidney. Although he called him by a different name, I imagined that this nobleman was my lord and that that young man whom he took into his company was Ralph Hopton, a former servant of my lord. Yet I would prefer not to have believed this without further details, as long as I could hope to discover more. But I perceived that this city is distant from the commerce of the Venetians, so that everything comes to us rather slowly, and also that my lord had either altered or abandoned his plan in such a way that he wrote nothing about it to myself. Indeed, I should be satisfied with whatever is granted me, but I desire to have reported to me all the things that are being done as accurately as possible, rather than merely what is being done. Although I earnestly exerted myself that your lordship learn from me, as if from an intermediary, those things which would be pleasant for you to hear and could be written by me with honesty, nothing can be offered, since this depends on the will of other men. I dare not write to Venice more frequently, and I am afraid that I be held suspect for my diligence rather than being accused of negligence. And yet what I have written you has been rhetorical and literary. I should give it substance and content, if what he said pleased him at the time he was leaving here had pleased him in his absence, for he said that he would write to me for the sake of practicing his style. This was my sole intention, to inspire his mind with a desire for literary studies, to steer his thoughts away from other subjects and towards that one. I was of the opinion that, when he had been a few months at Venice, he could be brought back to Germany out of longing for Dominus Sturm, by whom he originally seemed to be wonderfully delighted. But if what I hear mentioned in certain men's conversation is true, that my lord's delay has been extended, even if I should imagine that he will not linger long at Venice, since he will tire even of Italian things, I think he will choose to continue in his journey rather than turning back, since for those wearied of things, nothing seems preferable to seeing that which they have not yet seen.

And so, after waiting some days during which he can issue me instructions, if he wants, I have made up my mind to return to my own nation, if not instructed otherwise, since I understand that this is allowed by your lordship, and I am called back by the great longing of my people. I believe that I am going to hear any day now, if he wishes something. Nevertheless, I prefer to stay longer awaiting this very thing, rather than make a hasty departure, if I can obtain from Sulcher (who intends to depart for England, and whom I wish to have as a companion because of the many difficulties of the journey) that he will wait for me until the month of September. I will do my part, both in Germany and in England, to fulfil all my obligations to yourself and to my lord, and I pray that our ever-living God gladden you concerning all your hoped-for wishes and joys concerning

him, and to make you, his father-in-law (or rather his father), most blessed in all other respects, and that he realize how blessed he is in his affairs, and that he might gloriously increase the joy both of yourselves and of your ladies with the joy of new offspring, and grant him all else happily and prosperously. And wholeheartedly I pray and beg all these things from God Almighty, who, I pray, keep your lordship safe and sound as long as possible, for the benefit of our commonwealth. Given at Strasbourg, July 20. Most bound to your lordship,

William Lewin

(As I am sending this letter to you, Dominus Sturm is not at home.)

Endorsed: (1) To the right honourable Lord Burghley, Lord High Treasurer of England and my most honoured Lord; (2) 20 Iulij 1575, Mr Lewin to my Lord from Strasbourg.

f. 238r

1 Gratum tibi esse officium hoc literarum Honoratissime Domine:

2 humanitas tua, vt putem, facit. Id autem etsi libenter erga

3 Dominationem tuam praestem: tamen praestarem certe multo libentius:

4 si praeter hoc ipsum quicq{u}a{m} afferrem. Sed cum res ipsas, quas

5 adderem, non haberem: continere me malui: nisi id ipsum, quod

6 deberem, viderer detraxisse.

7 Scripsi superioribus l{ite}ris: me, siquid aliquando scirem: quod scire

8 te velle existimarem: Dominationem tuam certiore facturum.

9 Ego autem, etsi plura, quam ipse antea: et quae scribi a me putem

10 oportere: tamen neq{ue} scire me quicq{u}a{m}, quod Dominationem tuam

11 nescire, arbitror: et siquid scio, id ipsum ad te maturius alior{um}

12 L{ite}ris et nuncijs perferri existimo. Sed neq{ue} tamen scribere

13 nihil volui, siquid forte audio, quod Dominatio tua velit audire:

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14 neq{ue} pluribus volui, si quae scribam, iam antea audieris.
15 Pridie Idus Iunij Argentorato missas e{ss}e L{ite}ras tuas ad mercatorem
16 quendam venetum scripsi: vt eas ipse et traderet Domino meo: et
17 quid de ijs ageretur, ad nos rescriberet. Iam pauco post elapsos
18 Idus Iulij, ab eodem mercatore significatum est Sulchero: se l{ite}ras
19 tuas Patavium ad Dominum meum misisse. Cupiebam quidem
20 responsum vberius. Sed ex eo intelligi illud posse existimo: et
21 Patavij tum fuisse Dominum meum: et l{ite}ras tuas traditas esse.
22 Sic eni{m} ad eum Sulcherus: venetijs si Dominus esset, vt ipse
23 traderet: si alibi in Italia, ad eum vt diligenter curaret p{er}feredas.
24 Quod igitur Patavium ad Dominum se misisse scribat: id et suo iudicio
25 fecit, quod Patavij tum esse intellexeret: et diligenter spero fecisse,
26 cum ab eo peteretur, vt diligentissime faceret.
27 Ab Italo non in dissimilem sententiam ante paucos dies accepi:
28 intellexisse se nobilem quendam Anglum initio huius mensis Quintilis
29 venetijs fuisse: eumq{ue} adolescentem quendam ad se admisisse, qui cum
30 ornatissimo Iuvene Philippo Sidnaeo venetijs fuerit. Ego tum
31 nobilem illum, quamvis is alio nomine eum appellaret, Dominum
32 meum esse existimabam: illum autem Iuvenem, quem ad se admiserat,
33 Radulphum hoptonu{m} esse, qui aliquando D{omi}no meo famulabatur.
34 Volui quidem certiora, et plura: et haec ipsa noluissem sine pluribus,
35 si plura me posse sperassem. Sed cum vrbem istam video a com{m}ercio
36 venetorum sepositam e{ss}e quo tardius ad nos o{mn}ia perferuntur: tum aut

37 consiliu{m} mutasse, aut propositum deseruisse Dominu{m} meu{m}, ita vt ad me

f. 238v

1 nihil scribatur. Mihi quidem satis esse debet, quicquid conceditur: cupioq{ue}

2 magis, vt quam rectissime o{mn}ia agantur: qua{m} quid agatur, ad me perferri.

3 Quanq{u}a{m} studiose operam dedi, vt ex me quasi intermedio sciret Dominatio tua,

4 quae et tibi in audiendo incunda essent: et a me honeste p{er}scribi possent,

5 sed praestari nihil potest, quod positu{m} est in alior{um} voluntate.//

6 Scribere saepius venetias, vix Audeo: metuoq{ue}, ne diligentia potius no{m}i{n}e suspectus

7 videar: quam negligentia accuser./ et tame{n} quae a me scripta sunt, quasi

8 palestrice de re l{ite}raria sunt scripta: quibus materiem et argumentum darem:

9 si quod discedens sibi placere dicebat, id absenti placuisset: exercendi stili causa

10 ad me scribere./ Illud autem mihi solum propositum fuit, vt l{ite}rar{um} studio

11 recolendar{um} animu{m} eius incenderem: et ab alijs cogitationibus averterem, ad

12 hancq{ue} converterem./ Qua r{ati}one fieri posse existimabam, vt postq{u}a{m} aliquot

13 menses venetijs fuisset, D{omini} Sturmij desiderio, quo p{ri}mum videbatur mirifice

14 delectari, in germaniam reduceretur. Sed si veru{m} sit, quod quorundam

15 sermonibus celebrari intellego: Domino meo moram prorogatam esse: etsi

16 non diu venetijs com{m}oratur{um} putem, cum fastidiu{m} eum etiam reru{m} capiet

17 italicar{um}: progredi tamen potius arbitror, qua{m} regredi velle: cu{m} ex ijs,

18 quae viderit nihil soleat tam iucundu{m} videri: qua{m} quod non viderit, optan-

19 dum videatur.

20 Quamobrem cum aliquot dies expectavero, quibus mihi mandare possit, siquid forte
21 velit: statui, nisi quid aliud mihi ab eo mandatu{m} fuerit, in patriam reverti:
22 quando et id mihi per Dominationem tuam integru{m} esse intelligo: magnoq{ue}
23 meorum desiderio revocor. Arbitror propediem me auditur{um}, siquid velit:
24 et tamen id ipsum vt expectem, manere diutius, qua{m} festinantius discedere
25 malo: se a sulchero, quem in Angliam profecturum propter multas
26 Itineris difficultates comitem cupio, potero impetrare, vt ad mensem
27 Septembrem me expectet./ Ego cu{m} in germania, tu{m} in Anglia etiam,
28 faciam illud, quod meu{m} est: vt tibi Dominoq{ue} meo o{mn}ia mea officia,
studia,
29 observantias deferam: precaborq{ue}, ab immortali Deo, vt te o{mn}ib{us} de eo
exoptatis
30 votis atq{ue} gaudijs exhilaret: illu{d} teipso socero, vel patre potius, foelicissime,
31 vt et reliquis rebus o{mn}ib{us} foelicem reddat: et qua{m} suis rebus foelix sit, vt
32 intellegat. vtriq{ue} autem cu{m} v{est}rum, tu{m} Dominar{um}: novae sobolis
gaudiu{m}
33 vt gloriose largiatur: et reliqua o{mn}ia fausta prosperaq{ue} concedat. atq{ue}
34 haec o{mn}ia ex animo a praepotenti Deo su{m}me precor et flagito, qui
35 Dominatione{m} tuam quam diutissime reip{ublica}. incolume{n} tueatur. Dat{um}
36 Argentoratj 20 Iulij./ Tua Dominationi devinctissim{us}

Guilielmus Luinus

Dominus Sturmus domi non fuit, cu{m} has l{itte}ras darem ad
Dominatione{m} tuam.

Endorsed: (1) Honoratissimo Domino, Domino Burghleio, summo Angliae Thesaurario, et Domino meo colendissimo; (2) 20 Iulij 1575, Mr Lewin to my Lord from Strasbourg.