Transcript

Editorial comments:
BL MS Cotton Galba C VII f. 205r - 207v. William Herle to the Earl of Leicester. Fol. 205r has the signature 'Gg'.

Address leaf:
[fol. 207v]
[Superscription:] To the R honorable my verey good Lord, the Erlle of Lecester &c. give these wth speede / att the Cowrtt

Letter text:
[fol. 205r] Belgia 1582 20 march S . R.

Uppon sondaye the xviij^th^ of this monethe, the prince of Orenge having harde Asswell the minister of Turney preche in the castell churche appendent to the princes howsse, he tooke home to dynner among others, Monsieur Dellavall, & Pruneawx, where passyng the time wth sondrie discowrses, & with intentyon to have supped att the generall banckett, that monsieur had prepared att St Michelles, to the States generall, & to that magistrates & Coronelles of Andwarpe in comemoratyon of the same his byrthe daye./

The dynner ended, the prince passyng owt of the greatt chamber, with the Cowntt of Hollock, & the sayd Dellavall, & followed by the Trowpe, he tooke occasion uppon Lavalles speeche (who comended the Tapistrye of the chamber) to saye sondrie things abowtt the same, & in beholldyng the Tapistrye as he went, was redye to have entred the seconde chamber, havyng his eyes still fixed upwardes, when sodaynlie a person of small stature, & lesse representacyon (of the Ayge of 3. or 24. yeares, yll clad, & of face pale, drawyng to a blacke melancholyck colowr, shaven savyng the upper lyppe, whens a thyn blacke here begane to yssew) presented him self as thowgh he had som reqweste to exhibyte, & ones beyng putt backe by a halbarder, still persisted & sodaynlye discharged a pistoll (that he helld unsene) att the prince, which by reson of overchargyng reculed in ^his^ hande, & made the peece & pellett to mownt upwardes from his Levell, takyng the prince betwene the eare & the end of the jawe of the right syde, passyng clene throw the lefte cheeke, without offence to the Arterye, the jawe, tong or toothe (as yet hitherunto is sayd) savyng that a lyttell ytt grated upon on toothe (a provyden[s] of god most admirable) wheratt the prince nether stagryng, nor astonyed, behelld the fellowe, till he amased with his owne facte, & bownd as ytt were to the place by a devyne power, lett his Dagg fall to have made awaye, wheratt one Bonnyvett stabbed him into the brest, & then was he presentlye murthered ^slayne^ in grett furie by the companye, muche against the princes will, who cryed still to save hym butt in vayne. for he had in lesse than a moment 33. mortall wowndes gyven hym./

The perturbatyon that followed wthin the princes howsse, was so grett & dolorows, as scarce can be expressed. The poore princesse overcom with vehement passyon dyd swownd contynuallie: The chilldren confownded with teres & cryes, trobled all the place, & the rest of the frindes & famlye present were utterlye perplexed, as thowgh they had not onlie sene the prince allredye
dead, but theme selvses exposed to the sworde of the enmye./

Butt in the mene tyme, the prince was had to his bed, & dressed by a singuler surgyon of this
towne called Skon Thomas, who dowtting that the bullet had byn poysioned (as ytt was not) did
temper his medecyen to resiste the same./

Next they sent in poste to Herentalles for the onlie surgyon of this contrey, called Hans of
Herentalles brother to that Dyryck that served somtymes Sir Thomas Gressham & next her
majestie./

And herewith Monsieur was advertised by the yonger Erlle of Egmont (as faste as he cowd come
from the princes lodgyng) of the strange & fereffull accident that was hapned, which dyd
wonderfullie appall & terreffye Monsieur, for the sondrye events that deppended therof & for the
compassyon that he had bothe of him self, & the prince, in this sodayne actyon, & lastlie overcom
with affectyon, resollevd into teres, not hable to be appeysed in hallf an howre, sobbyng & uttrying
that he had loste his father, his cheeffe hope, & assurance, & the worthiest [fol. 205v] personaign [...
] wisdom & perfectyon that ever was, inveyghyng therwith against the Tyrannye & vilenes of
the K. of Spayne./

During this while, the Towne was in an uprore & confusyon, promyseng no better than a
miserable & blooddye end therof, the alarme was soulded everie where, & sodaynye the gates
shutt, the walles & Bullwarckes occupyed wth armed men, the markett places taken The Cor de
gardes sett in everie strete, & all others comanded to kepe theyr howses. The people cryeng out for
their prince, their father & only succor & right hand whom they named to be murtherd by the
frenche, & that he was, allredye ded, wissheng that england had never conducted suche gestes,
who had not bin receved here, but in the assurans that they conseved of the Q. of englanedes good
mynde, confyrmed by the cowntenance of suche honorable personaiges as accompanied Monsieur
& the rest hither./

Butt the reporte of the princes dethe still incresyng by messengers that were yll informed, the
people were converted into playne furie & precipitacyon threttnyng then Monsieur, the frenche, &
the papistes (who had the same daye byn att theyr fyrst masse) that not on of theme sholld be lefte
alyve, Ronyng hereupon by vyolent trowpes, to the palyce & to the castell, to do som executyon,
whom followed upon the spurre, the cornett of horsse, that is of the towne Burgers, & trulye, yf
this desperate attempt had bin defferred till night, the same had bin easelye executed att the
Banckett, & Monsieur with his trayne noted for that, & consequentlye murtherd, besyde a moste
cruell massacre that had ensewed, whersoever the Raige & conceytt sholld have directed those
handes that had byn ones embrewed in blood.

The frenche for fere retyred to the safest partes of their lodgyngs, & Monsieur sent, for the
generall norris, butt the messengers cowd not passe the stretes, Monsieur wissheng manye tymes
wth grett affyans that (La Noblesse Anglouse) were by hym./

The Coronelles of the towne upon the fyrst brute of the princes dethe, repayred to the castell with
exceding diligens, gyveng order to the captaynes to chayne the stretes, & to drawe their forces to
their known wquarters, & that all the Gylldes & Fraternityes sholld be armed & in redynes to be
employed./
Att the castell they were assured by Monsieur St Aldegond, that the prince was alyve, & that there was hope of recoverye, & that the person pretending this fowll murther, was a spanyarde, & no frenche man, shewyng theme writengs & charmes found abowt hym in the spanyshe tong, & therfore that the captaynes & people shold be advertised hereof, to staye disorders, & especiallie to have a care for the garding of Monsieurs person, & defrending that no insolencye sholld be used to the frenche, nor to ane, which charge with very good order & gravitie was observed, & the people that were in furie & marching, retorned to kepe warde in theyr own stretes, placyn certayne of their principall bandes abowt St Michelles, to assiste aney necessitye that Monsieur might have, wherupon to wyne benevolens, Monsieur refusing the garde of his Swyttzers, desyred that som of the gylldes might be sent, to whom he wold comytt hym self, & the palayce, which was estemed a confydens, & plesed the Coronelles well. Butt to saye trulye the apprehensyon is grett that is of ether syde & manye difydences have byn discoverd by this.

The Coronelles then & other principall personaiges, were admitted into the princes chamber, to whom he made a very lovyng & pythye oratyon, shewyng that this subornatyon against his lyfe, proceded not from Monsieur, nor from ane frenche deveyse, but directly from his capitall enmye the K. of Spayne, comending Monsieur for the ecxellencye of his nature, for the affectyon he bare unto the state of these Contreyes, & for his habilitye & wisdom to be the onlye prince that cowd & wold conserve theme, exhortyng theme reciprocklye to love, embrace & serve him in all dutie & loyalltye, as they tendered their securyte, wellfare & estimatyon. To whom he sayd appertayned the government of these contreyes, as to their naturall soveraigne by their own electyon, & to whom he wold assure agayne theyr faythe & allegyance, as a thing most sincere & perfect, & incase that I (sayth he) do dye of this hurte (as men be mortall that be most sownd, muche more I that am this inffyrme) I charge yow in the zele that I have ever borne yow, to be observers of my advise for your own good. comending to your love and protectyon, & to the states generall of this land, my wiffe & chillderne as swete pledges of my harte, & servyces ever don & still desyrowes to be done unto yow. /

Which speeche of his was receved with tendernes towards his person, & inclynatyon in shewe to obeye hym throwlye. yet the states generall will not procede to deleyberate of anye matter towchyng Monsieur, & the proportions made by him, till the sayd prince of Orenge, be restored to som better disposityon & integritye, the jorney also intended to Gawnt by the sayd Monsieur beyng differred till then. Imedyatelic after the hurte of the prince they dispatched messengers to Bruxelles to warne theme of this accydent, & to stande upon their garde, for that the towne is grett, & mixed wth manye factyons, & not perfected in fortecicatyon by a grett dele to that which may be reqwyred ether for defence, or was projected for strengthe./

The lyke advertisment they have sent sythens to all theyr townes & garrysons ells where, asswell in flanders & Brabant as in the remoter parts. kepyng all the passayges by water & land garded, & the gates of this Towne contynallye shutt, even from admytteng of daylie provisions theryn. to the end that the enmye may nether have yntelligens from hens by practys within doores, nor prevayll of any advantayge abrode. by surprise or lacke of order./

Now to retorne to this fellow agayne that was slayne upon his wicked enterprise, ytt was fownde that by overcharyng of his pistoll the stocke was broken in his hande, & had sent the brawne of the same from the thomb downe warde, with a grett & terryble gashe theryn. In his pockett was a
naked dagger, which he had never the assurance to use after. / Abowtt him were had ij dryed todes, & som powder [fol. 206v] judged in the beginnyng to have byn poysyon. A Bulle of the popes promiseng pardon for all fawttts bothe don & ^to^ be don whatsoever. A charmee wherbye he was perswaded to have byn invisible after the facte. A shyrte of superustyton sett wth crosses and characters hallowed att our Ladye of Charters to kepe hym from dethe, wownde & ymprisonment. A wryteng expressyng his enterprise to be don agaynste certayne sedycyows flemishe heretyckes, fyrst for the glorye of god, next to revenge his kyng, thyrldle to delyver certayne godlye men owt of prison, fowrthlye for the honor of his natyon, lastlye for his own ymortalitye (ytt was not trew that he had any lre abowtt hym of the Spanish: Ambassadors resyndeng att Parys, but he had ij Bylles of exchange, the one of ijm [crowns] & the other of 86s addressed to on Casper Aniastro a merchant of this towne. / 

When his bodie & these things had bin well perused, they erected hym in the same apparell in the cheeffe markett place upon a skaffolld to be vyewed & decyphred, where he was incontynently knowen of a number to be a Byscayn [sen] & borne in Bruges, servant & booke keper to Casper Aniastro a Biscayn inhabyteng here. Wherby in serchyng presentleye of Aniastros howsse, they fowndne hym removed the wensday before owt of the towne & his goods made awaye which gave occasion to sease the persons of suche as were lefte behynde among whom the Cassyer beyng princypall, he declared who made the pistoll, & tolld of a preest that had confessed hym the fryday beffore & that the same daye had seyd masse in their howsse & who were presente theratt. 

The smythe that made the pistoll discharged him sellf indifferentlye, shewyng that he had tawght hym to shoote theryn, as a person unsuspected pretending a vyage into england, & had cawsed him to exercise the sayd pistoll 3. severall tymes, But at the third tyme the stocke of the pistoll brake abowtt the breeche which was naylled up agayne by the sayd smythe, & then charged a freshe by hym the sonday mornyng butt to what use he knew not, yet assuryng that there was no poysyon theryn. 

Towching the preest, he att last was dryven to open that he had byn Confessor to this lewd person, & had absollved hym for the facte that he sholld do, & therupon sayd masse unto hym upon the sondaye. 

The Cassyer desyres to be permytted to dye an ordynarye deth, & not by Torture & quartering, & then wyll he disscover the truthe & grownd in partycularityes, whens this fowll practys ys derived & who be Actors theryn. 

Aniastro cam to Bruges on Thursday mornyng, & from thens ryd to Donkyrck, som affyrmeng that he is in England, which is to be loked to, & som others that he is stayed att Calyce by his Credytors. 

After that the dead corse had bin shewed the Sondaye on the markett, he was the daye followyng behedded as a traytor, hys privie parts cut of, embowelled & qwartered. 

On sondaye abowt 5. of the clocke, Monsieur went to visyte the Prynce, be[ ... ] whom was verey sweete yntertaynment, muche to the comfort & assurance of Monsieur to ^se^ the corayge & resolutyon of the sayd prince, & the principles that he instructed hym yn, by whose advise he dispatched that night on messing[er] to her majestie, & another to his brother, to signefye unto
theme the truthe of the accidents hapned. /  

Tomorow shalbe a generall faste & prayers for the health of the sayd prince./

Towching the state of the prins person, this is to be considered, both of the person & the hurt.
First that he is of yeres given to surfetts, & had att that dynner comytted som extraordinarye 
excesse. Further that he is one whose hed & spirytes do labor contynuallye and was never hurt 
before./

The hurt is in suche a place, as wilbe harde to kyll the fyre, and therfore to dyvert ynfflamatyons, 
they have lett him blood twyse since the hurt. They have dressed hym also twyce yesterdaye, & 
do fynde that the swelling decreseth (at lest wise they saye so) & that att the latter dressyng som 
whyte matter appered. he is forbidden to speke but he hathe wrytten synce above 3. shetes of paper 
with his owne hand of som specyall matter & dothe now admytt verey few to se hym./ Votallis 
Monsieurs doctor hathe the cheeffe charge of hym for phisyck, being estemed singuler in the 
woundes that do com by fyre or by bullett, wherof he hathe wrytten a treattys, & to him is joynd 
Monsieurs surgyon, & on Gasper a surgyon of this towne, with the other surgyons beffore 
recyted./

Ytt is thought impossyble butt that the Arterye is touched with the bullet, or with the accydent 
of the fyre, which yf ytt be, ytt is then a cure uncurable. he can verey hardylye swallow, & till the 
x^th^daye be past nothing can be assured, for his life depends of the accidents that will appere yn 
the mene tyme ether by fever or ympostumatyon./ Which humble discowrse I do beseeke your L. 
in all speade, to ymparte with her majestie & with my L. Thresuror, & Master Secretorye, beyng 
throwlye ynfformed of that I wryte, & therfore have sent this my servant to your L. of purpose, 
prayeng yow for the ymportance of the cawse, & the occasyons that do daylye breke furthe, to 
retorne me present answere. wherwith I humblye fynyshe, assuryng your L. that I will do her 
majestie when I have harde from yow, servyce of ymportance, as ytt ymportes her indeede to have 
a trustye dylygent, & suffycyent person here att this ynstant the 20. of marche from Andwarpe. 
1581 your L. most humblye W. Herlleli.