

SUMMARY: In the letter below dated 6 March 1582 written to King Philip II, the Spanish ambassador in London, Don Bernardino de Mendoza (d.1604), expressly identifies Oxford's first cousin, Lord Henry Howard (1540-1614), as a spy for Spain, and advises the King to grant Howard a substantial pension, to be paid quarterly, in order to secure his services and prevent the Howards from turning to France. Mendoza expresses the view that Lord Henry Howard plays a pivotal role among English Catholics as he is in 'close connection with all the Catholic gentlemen of the kingdom', and that it is necessary for the King to keep a 'hold on the house of Howard' because of its numerous followers and kinsmen in the north of England. Mendoza refers to Lord Henry Howard's influence over his young nephews, Philip Howard (1557-1595), 13th Earl of Arundel, and his two brothers, Thomas (1561-1626) and William (1563-1640), all of whom had been married by their father, Thomas Howard (1538-1572), 4th Duke of Norfolk, to daughters of Lord Dacre, according to Mendoza so that Norfolk would have the north of England 'at his devotion'. Mendoza's clear message is that with Norfolk now executed, all depends on King Philip keeping a hold on the house of Howard through Lord Henry Howard, who has been a willing secret agent for the Spanish since he fled to Mendoza's house on the night of 25 December 1580. Mendoza states that Leicester and his brother-in-law, Henry Hastings (d.1595), 3rd Earl of Huntingdon, are 'afraid' of Lord Henry Howard because they know that the Howards hold Leicester responsible for the execution of Lord Henry Howard's brother, Thomas Duke of Norfolk. Through adherence to Catholicism and the cause of Mary, Queen of Scots, Mendoza says the Howards 'hope for vengeance' against Leicester and Huntingdon.

Mendoza makes two very telling points in this paragraph:

[Howard] assures me that, seeing the many enemies he has in England, he is greatly desirous of rendering service to your Majesty, in order that, if he is unfortunate enough to be obliged to leave this country before he sees the Queen of Scotland in the position he desires, your Majesty may receive him, and I have continued to hold out hopes of this to him. Leicester and Walsingham, finding that they have been unable, by false accusations, to discredit him with the Queen and banish him from Court, have now proposed that he will be a fitting person to be sent to Germany on the Queen's business, for the purpose of separating him from his nephews.

It is thus clear that Lord Henry Howard's primary reason for spying for Spain was his fear that his 'many enemies' might force him to leave the country, and his hope that he would be received in Spain if that happened. It is also clear that Lord Henry Howard had conveyed to Mendoza that it was Leicester and Walsingham, not Oxford, who had attempted to discredit Howard with the Queen by means of 'false accusations'. It had obviously taken Howard some time to come to this conclusion, but it seems evident that Howard had finally realized that it was Leicester, not Oxford, was really behind the events which had caused him (Howard) to flee to Mendoza's house on the night of 25 December 1580. For the roles played by Charles Arundel and Lord Henry Howard in events involving Oxford in 1580/1 see TNA SP 15/27A/46, ff. 81-2 and other documents

on this website, in particular the letters of the Spanish ambassador to England, Don Bernardino de Mendoza (d.1604).

On 25 July 1582, Mendoza wrote to King Philip confirming the amount of the pension he had granted to his 'second confidant', Lord Henry Howard (see Leg. 836, f. 168):

I have continued, pending your Majesty's reply, to entertain my second confidant with hopes and fair words. The Queen has again pressed him to make ready to go to the German Diet and it has been necessary for me to pledge him, as your Majesty commands me to do in case of need. I have therefore given him 500 crowns, promising him a pension of 1,000 crowns a year, and have induced him in this way to continue in your Majesty's service, and not to go to the Diet.

From the entry for Lord Henry Howard in *The Dictionary of National Biography*:

By the 1580s he was in secret correspondence with the Queen of Scots (who did not trust him with anything of importance) while between 1582 and 1584 the Spanish ambassador Mendoza paid him a substantial pension for regular information from Elizabeth's court.

Concerning the date of this letter, it should be noted that on 24 February 1582 a bull of Pope Gregory XIII had ordered the use of a reformed calendar which cut ten days out of the year 1582, so that 15 October followed immediately upon 4 October (see *Handbook of Dates*, p.10). However since no change was to occur until October 1582, England and Spain were still using the same calendar on 6 March 1582 when Mendoza wrote this letter.

The excerpt below in Spanish of the part of Mendoza's letter which deals with Lord Henry Howard is taken from *Coleccion de Documentos Ineditos para la Historia de España por El Marques de la Fuensanta del Valle, D. José Sancho Rayon y D. Francisco de Zabalburu*, Tomo XCII (Madrid: M. Ginesta Hermanos, Impresores de la Real Casa, 1888, reprinted Kraus Reprint Ltd., Vadux, 1966), pp. 306-10. A translation of the entire letter follows, taken from Hume, Martin, ed., *Calendar of Letters and State Papers Relating to English Affairs*, Vol. II, 1568-1579, pp. 313-16.

Asimismo es necesario tener V. M. prendada á la casa de Habart por ser la más rica de séquito y deudos en la parte del Norte (que es la que ha de estar asegurada), cuya cabeza es el Príncipe de Haran, del hijo del Duque de Norfolt y dos hermanos suyos, estando los tres casados con tres hermanas, hijas de un caballero muy principal de la misma parte con quien su padre los quiso encorchetar y mucho ántes que tuviese edad ninguno dellos para casarse, por asegurar con esto enteramente su casa y descendencia, el país del Norte á su devocion. Estos tres hermanos son muy mozos, pero tienen un tio, persona de valor y mucho espíritu, que es el que escribí á V. M. á los 25 de Diciembre, y como tal es todo el gobierno de los sobrinos, y que de ordinario les pone delante la causa para restituir sentirse de la muerte de su padre y seguir el partido de la Reina de Escocia, por cuyo

medio sólo pueden esperar venganzas, de lo cual, temiéndose el principe de Artinhton y Lecester, han procurado y procuran desviar al tio de los sobrinos con oficios que hacen con la Reina, creyendo que sin él no ternán valor para hacerse cabeza en ocasion que se ofrezca. Juntamente tiene este caballero estrecha comunicacion con todos los señores católicos deste Reino, los cuales le estiman y acarician mucho por el séquito que con su sobrino se ha de tener y buenas partes, y esto me ha hecho á mi continuar con estrechez su comunicacion, pero no para más de que me advirtiese él cuanto pasara en la Córte, en que ha servido y sirve á V. M. con tanta inteligencia y cuidado quanto podrá decir, siendo cosas vivas las que me ha avisado y avisa, no perdiendo un punto porque todas las semanas me escribe dos veces quanto pasa en todós los negocios, así en las materias de Francia, Flándes y Escocia, como de las de Don Antonio, y en ocurriendo alguna importante me da cuenta dél al momento y de quanto pasa de puertas adentro de la Reina, para lo cual tiene grandísima comodidad. Hallo por las razones dichas que convernía que V. M. le prendase desde luégo, previniendo que no tome el partido de franceses, y esto con hacerlé V. M. merced de darle posesion, conforme á la calidad de su persona, y que yo se la pagase por cuarteles, con lo cual se hacen dos efectos, lo uno tener ganada la casa de Habart, que es de tanto momento, y lo otro asegurar su correspondencia por ser de suerte que cuando fuera hombre de prendas que yo le pudiera acometer á darle dinero sin órden de V. M., por lo que importa á su servicio, le habia de dar muy muchos ducados cada año en recompensa de los avisos que me da, de los cuales me habian de ser fuerza andar comprando de otros cuando los pudiera saber, con peso de oro, y haber de ser diferentes personas, estando la suya en estado que en el hacer V. M. esta merced no puede (segun en disposicion se hallan los negocios de Escocia), aventurarse cuando mucho más de lo que se le diere en dos ó tres años, que será poco á poco y no más cantidad en todos tres si es con nombre de pension, de la que se le habia de dar en una dádiva sola, habiéndole V. M. de hacer merced, que es forzosa, por tenerle obligado y asegurado que los Habartes no vuelvan los ojos á Francia con ninguna cuenta.

Y si bien yo no he entendido otra cosa dél sino decirme que por los muchos enemigos que tiene en Inglaterra desea hacer servicio á V.M., porque si su desdicha le forzase á salir de aquí antes de ver á la de Escocia en el estado que desea, V.M. le conozca, y así particulares della y de su hijo, como por los del servicio de V.M., le he ido conservando con esperanzas: entiendo que visto el de Lecester y Walsingam que no le han podido desacreditar con la Reina con malas informaciones que han hecho, y apartarle de la Córte, han propuesto que será persona conveniente para enviarla en Alemania con negocios de la Reina, enajenándole por el medio de los sobrinos, lo cual es ocasion de suplicar humildemente à V.M. que cuando sea de su servicio algo de lo que digo á V.M. se me avise con brevedad la pension que V.M. es servido darle, porque con esto yo le obligaré á que no parta en Alemania ni salga de ninguna manera deste Reino, y que dure su comunicacion, sin la cual afirmadamente puedo asegurar á V.M. que quedara aquí cualquier Ministro suyo muy á oscuras si le falta, porque ninguna de las que pueda tener sera del momento que ésta allegádose asimismo á esto que por otro medio no se pueden tener obligados los Habartes, y que es bien que lo estén y con tiempo por el estado en que se halla lo de Escocia, á donde yo envié anoche un clérigo con el despacho de la Reina de Escocia para el Duque de Lenos.

Yo há tres días que tengo hecho este despacho, aguardando el pasaporte por merecer que vaya con correo expreso en diligencia á V.M., sin fiarle de persona que no sea propia; y así envío una en diligencia á Juan Baptista de Tassis y escribo despache con la misma á V.M. por la vía que fuere más segura. Nuestro Señor, etc. De Lóndres, etc.

I send enclosed a copy of the letter the Queen of Scotland has written to me, in reply to that in which I conveyed to her the resolution of the Scotch gentlemen. She requests me to communicate it to your Majesty, and for her part she is evidently doing her best to bring about the conversion of her son and the country. She points out, with much prudence and good sense, the undesirability of the Scots gentlemen even giving a sign of their intentions until everything is settled, and the forces that are to come to their aid ready for the work, in order that they may be able rapidly to be brought against those which this Queen may employ.

I have replied as best I can, attributing to her management the favourable position in which Scots affairs now are, and encouraging her, as I always have done, in so holy and Christian a task, upon which depend all things which tend to her own happiness. With regard to what she says about ordering the Scotsmen now in Flanders to retire therefrom, saying that this will be very advantageous, when opportunity occurs, of paying them salaries in their own country, and placing them in charge of some of the castles and strong places, I point out that there is a danger in this, that the moment this Queen got the advantage of us these men would immediately change sides, as they have for so many years served the rebel States and Orange, and necessarily must be strongly attached to the cause of heresy wherever they are, since they have been ready to risk their lives for it. Although the chiefs may be trustworthy, yet, if the soldiers are faithless, nothing can prevent them from surrendering fortresses to whom they like. I have dwelt somewhat strongly upon this point to her, as it is most necessary that she should not count too much upon these soldiers for the reasons mentioned, as the Scots are naturally a faithless people, and it is very desirable for your Majesty's interests, with a view to French affairs, that the Scots forces should not be stronger than the foreign soldiers sent thither on your Majesty's behalf, and that upon these latter she must mainly depend. This is also necessary in the interests of the safety of the foreigners themselves, who would otherwise be at the mercy of the Scots.

I also ask her whether she wishes me to communicate with her ambassador the bishop of Glasgow if he arrives in Scotland, which she seem[s] to hint at in her letter, as, in such case, I must arrange my correspondence with him before he leaves France. I also represented to her the difficulty which now exists in sending letters from here to Scotland in consequence of the vigilance on the borders, which will be certainly increased the moment her ambassador arrives in Scotland, as this Queen is extremely suspicious of matters there. She is determined to stop communications, not only from me, of whom but small suspicion exists, but from all Catholics here, and letters will therefore have to go by France, which is a great round. I think I have convinced her now that the priests that go should be Englishmen and not Scots.

The Queen says that she should not be doing her duty to your Majesty unless she pointed out that, in the event of the Scots having aid at their back and this Queen attempting action against them, which might cause the English Catholics to rise, it would be necessary to have the latter part of the business arranged for beforehand, but in such a way that they (the English Catholics) should not understand what is intended, and should be told nothing until everything was ripe and the matter ready to burst forth, as otherwise the whole plan might be frustrated.

As I have already said, I am obliged now to manage the entire business, as the rest of the men concerned are in prison and cannot proceed with it. In general terms they know that it is going on well, and by this and other means I am trying to keep the Catholics here in a good humour, preparing all things for their friendly communication with your Majesty's minister when the proper time arrives.

It is also highly necessary for your Majesty to gain over the house of Howard, which is the richest in kinsmen and followers in the north of England, the part of the country most necessary to ensure. The head of the house is the Earl of Arundel, son of the Duke of Norfolk, and he has two brothers, the three being married to three sisters, daughters of a great gentleman in the north, with whom their father linked them long before they were of an age to marry, in order to secure the devotion of the whole north country to his house.

These three boys are very young still, but they have an uncle, a person of great valour and spirit, of whom I wrote to your Majesty on the 25th of December [1581]. He completely rules his nephews, and constantly keeps before them the need for resenting the death of their father, and following the party of the Queen of Scots, by whose means alone can they hope for vengeance. Leicester and Huntingdon, fearing this, have tried very hard to separate the uncle and nephews, and have pressed the Queen with this end, in the belief that, without their uncle, the lads will not be strong enough to take action when an opportunity occurs. This gentleman is in close connection with all the Catholic gentlemen in the kingdom, by whom he is greatly esteemed for the influence he has through his nephew, as well as for his own good parts. For this reason I have kept up a close intimacy with him, but still more in order to obtain from him news of everything that passes at court. In this way he serves your Majesty with greater intelligence and care than I can well say, his information being prompt and valuable, not a point ever being missed, as he writes to me twice every week minute details of all that passes touching France, Flanders, Scotland and Don Antonio. He also lets me know everything that happens inside the palace, which he is well able to do.

I am of opinion that it will be highly desirable for your Majesty to secure him at once, in order that he may not be persuaded to take the French side. The way will be for your Majesty to give him a pension commensurate to his rank, which should be paid quarterly. Two ends will be gained by this. First, we shall have won over the important house of Howard, and secondly, we shall have secured his personal co-operation. This is so valuable that, if he were a person to whom I could offer money without your Majesty's orders, I should give him many ducats every year in return for the information with which he furnishes me, and which I should have to purchase from others for more than its

weight in gold, even if I could get it at all. The greatest risk we run, in the present state of Scotch affairs, is to have to pay him the pension at most for two or three years in periodical payments, and if it be treated as a pension the whole sum will not be a larger one than we should have to give such a man as this in one amount if we had to make him a present, which we shall be obliged to do in order to prevent the Howards, at any cost, from turning towards France. He assures me that, seeing the many enemies he has in England, he is greatly desirous of rendering service to your Majesty, in order that, if he is unfortunate enough to be obliged to leave this country before he sees the Queen of Scotland in the position he desires, your Majesty may receive him, and I have continued to hold out hopes of this to him. Leicester and Walsingham, finding that they have been unable, by false accusations, to discredit him with the Queen and banish him from Court, have now proposed that he will be a fitting person to be sent to Germany on the Queen's business, for the purpose of separating him from his nephews. I therefore humbly beg your Majesty, if you approve of what I say, to let me know at once what amount of pension you will grant him, as I may make this a means of preventing him from going to Germany or leaving the country. I can assure your Majesty that, without his communications, any Minister of yours here will be kept quite in the dark, as no one else will be able to do as this man does, besides which we shall not be sure of holding the Howards, as we ought to be, in view of Scotch affairs.

I sent last night a clergyman to the Duke of Lennox with the Queen of Scotland's despatch. London, 3rd March 1582.

Postscript. I have had this letter written for three days, awaiting the passport for the special courier by whom I send it, as I dare not trust it to any one else. I am writing to Tassis, begging him to send it on by safe hands from Paris. London, 6th March 1582.