

TNA: PRO SP 63/83/43*Grey to Walsingham, 9 June 1581*

Grey had been advertised over the course of winter and spring 1581 of the increasing disorder of the Byrnes and Cavenaghs, in the counties south of Dublin; he set out on a journey against them in the middle of May, in an attempt to assert the Pale's authority in territories formerly kept in awe by the (now imprisoned) earl of Kildare. From Wexford he dispatched this typically harried and slightly outraged letter, protesting against the Queen's policy on the proclamation of pardon and reporting his position on Turlough Luineach O'Neill. The letter is interesting for its careful negotiation of the distinction between Grey's public responsibilities and his private cares and duties, especially as expressed here in his friendship for Sir Francis Walsingham. Spenser's presence with Grey on this journey to Wexford may be tied to his acquisition of the twenty-one-year lease of the house of friars, manor, lands and a weir in Enniscorthy, issued on 15 July 1581. The text of the letter, including the subscription, signature, and several passages in cipher, is in Grey's usual italic hand. The address is in Spenser's characteristic secretary, and the endorsement – presumably added during the process of filing the letter in Westminster, in a later italic.

Address and Endorsement

To the right
 Honorable my
 very good frend
 Sir Fraunces
 Walsingham
 Knight Chief
 Secretary to
 her Maiestie ./

1581

June .9.

From the Lord Deputye.

Text

Sir, the xxvijth of the last I receaued a packett from yow beeyng in Camp then in the Birnes countrie, which causethe that sooner I could neyther awnsswer them, nor as yet execute the direction for the proclamations: well I see that lyke or dislyke of gououernment heere is alltoogeather* settled vppon encrease or decrease of the chardge, no honor, no saftie of the State, no obedience too Prince or God, no pollicie & quyet of the Common Wealthe at all respected or regarded; in conscience too Godward & dutie too my Prince that it greeues mee not I maye not surely denye, thowghe in myne owane

pryuate beehallf* too thynck God moste good vntoo mee that* this contrarie course too myne aduyce & dezyre is taken greate cause I conceaue. I wyll God wylllyng with best endeouore followe what is directed mee, & esspecyally yowr owane moast frendly aduyce, too patche vp thynges as I maye, since I maye not as I woold. I acknowledge sir yowr greate trauayle & endeouore for too haue had the best waye taken wherin thowghe I know the cause itsellf was yowr principall inducement, yet hauyng* fownde my priuate in credit & good euer cared for & fauoured by yow I can not but moast thanckfully take yowr moast frendly or rather* brootherly cariadge toowardes mee euer since my beetakyng too this place, wherin so long as hoape remayned too doo God, prince & cuntrie seruice, toyle & care were the both lyghter burdens vntoo mee, but those endes now dispayred of all encouragement is depryued, beesydes tootche of conscience that this course must bring too see & suffre all insolencie & wickednes: I vrdge not this that I would requyre any further labour too allter the direction now sent, it is far from my meanyng, onely & lastly, I trust in God, tendes it too craue yowr woonted earnest trauayle too gett mee ryd* of* the office, good Sir fauoure mee in this sute, the which, beefore God I protest, with more earnestnes & dezyre too obtayne I make, & with opinion of more bonde vntoo yow for I woold receaue, then any that euer yet I had vntoo yow; press it* therfore I beeseetche yow.

I haue signified too my Lord of Ormond her Maiesties pleazure for hys dischargd as yow directed mee; The care of that prouince now, waying the loase condition that itsellf & oothers now stande in & no gouernor too remayne in it doothe not a lyttle trooble mee, & sure presently order & direction from the table there must* coome or els it is lyke in a moonethe too growe too that that perchaunce in a yeare wyll not bee recoouered, & vnder correction, greate ouersyght it was withowte an oothers placyng too displace hym & so I euer aduyced. For the tyme how there in I meane to deale, as of this my Ioorney hythertoo, & oother thynges concernyng this state at sum lengthe I haue written too my Lords in generall, crauyng awnsswer therof with sum conuenient speede, & prezent dispatche of Mr Fenton & amongst the rest lett not yowr resolutions for Tyrlogh Lennough bee forgotten, ootherwyze if too mee it bee referred, truly I hoald it best, as this purpose hoaldes, to grawnte hym all, for ootherwyze the offre of pardon wyll bee as mootche of hym regarded, as one from the Pope of mee. I vnderstande by mr Fenton that the certificate of the check* yow woold not haue emparked beecause of the smallnes therof, I can not tell sir what it maye seeme or what ••* is expected, but I am sure that as strayght oreders for true dealyng in it & oftener viewes, where they myght bee, haue been taken then euer toofore were, & if former checkes for x yeeares space bee compared with this scarce of one since my tyme, I durst wager that the one shall matche the x., & if yet it content not, for my lyeff I knowe not how too healp it. As tootchyng my opinion for renewyng of the inhabitantes charter of Dublin, I can not saye any thyng too it hauyng neuer as yet seene the same, & therfore must requyre too bee borne with tyll my retourne thyther.

Thus hauyng enformed yow* of all that at this tyme is needefull I wyll take leaue beeseetchyng the Allmyghtie God too bee with yow contynually & sende yow all happynes in this & the lyeff too coomme. / Waxford the 9th of Iune Anno 1581.

Yowrs most assuredly euer,

Arthur Grey

112* I thynck eare long* wyll repayre ouer. hee seemes too dislyke wythe this coorce of pardons greatly & proteste{t}he that hee was neuer acquainted wythe the adui{c}e. hee gueeues* owte* speatchies that 10* dealest not the firmeliest wythe hym.

For that no poste lyethe the waye that these arre too pass I thowght conuenient too beetake the packett too a* specyall messenger, the rather too that hee was of hys owane buzynes to repayre ouer / , I sett downe the for feae of blame for the chardge. /

Textual Notes

after alltoogeahter] Two-letters deletion, possibly 'es'.

after beehallf] 'it' deleted.

* *after mee that]* Single-letter illegible deletion.

* *after yet hauyng]* 'euer' deleted.

* *rather]* 'ly' deleted at the end of this word.

* *after mee ryd]* 'fro^m' deleted.

* *after mee ryd . . . of]* 'fr' deleted.

* *it]* Inserted above the line.

* *after there must]* 'p'sently' deleted.

* *after the check]* 'it' deleted.

* *after or what]* 'it' deleted.

* *yow]* Inserted above the line.

* **112]** The Earl of Ormond. This paragraph ('112 I thynck'....wythe hym') is largely in cipher.

* *after eare long]* Four characters appear in an unknown cipher. These unfamiliar symbols (as in the two following cases, below) may simply be fillers, included to put an unwelcome eye off the track.

* *after gueeues]* Four characters in an unknown (perhaps dummy) cipher appear here.

* *after owte]* Three characters in an unknown (perhaps dummy) cipher appear here.

* **10]** The identity of '10' remains uncertain; it is possibly the Queen herself.

* **a]** Inserted above the line.

Annotations

the Birnes countrie] Wicklow, the seat of the Irish family of the Byrnes. Grey undertook a journey south from Dublin in mid-May, primarily against the Cavanaghs of County Carlow (Catherloughe), reaching Wexford at the beginning of June. Wallop had reported the Cavanaghs in rebellion, in a letter to Walsingham of 1 March (SP 63/81/2), in which he had also spoken of a dissension between Thomas Maisteron, Seneschal of Wexford, and Anthony Colclogh, of Tintern, Wexford. Grey's journey seems

to have been directed at both problems: he wrote to George Carew on 28 April licensing him to open negotiations with the Cavanaghs in advance of the journey (LPL Carew MS 488), and Wallop reported to Walsingham on 8 June that Maisteron had been discharged from office (SP 63/83/41). Grey provides an account of his expedition in his letter to the Privy Council of 10 June (again, from Wexford), SP 63/83/45.

the proclamations] Walsingham's order for the promulgation of a general pardon, often alluded to in the letters of the previous months, reached Grey on 26 May; because he was on campaign, he did not 'execute' the proclamation of pardon until returning to Dublin, possibly not until the end of June.

the chardge] The expense of the Irish service.

thowghe in myne owane . . . I conceaue] Grey takes solace from the fact that, this course of proceeding being so antipathetic to his own policies, he will undoubtedly now be recalled from service.

this course ... insolencie & wickednes] As often, Grey insists that the extension of a general pardon throughout Ireland will only embolden the rebellious Irish and Old English, who hitherto under his rule had begun to quail.

fauoure mee in this sute] I.e. to be recalled

press it] Take it up with the Queen

my Lord of Ormond] Thomas Butler, Earl of Ormond; see biographies.

her Maiesties pleazure . . . directed mee] In a letter of February 1581, the Queen had ordered Grey to deprive Ormond of his office, citing his ineffectuality despite huge resources (see the extant draft letter, SP 63/80/87).

that prouince] Munster, of which the Lord Presidency of which Ormond had just been deprived.

I haue . . . in generall] See SP 63/83/45, a letter of the following day.

Mr Fenton] Geoffrey Fenton; see biographies.

yowr resolutions for Tyrlogh Lennough] The Privy Council had sent Grey directions on dealing with Turlough Luineach O'Neill in a letter of 19 April (see draft, SP 63/82/41), but the circumstances in the North had been changing rapidly, not least because of the promised seasonal influx of Scots mercenaries (which often created summer chaos). Edward Waterhouse reported to Walsingham on 10 June (SP 63/83/51) that Grey intended to confront O'Neill in person and with force.

certificate of the check] The Privy Council had written to Grey requesting a certificate of the check (an account of all servants and dependents in royal pay in Ireland) in the middle of April (for the draft letter, see SP 63/82/41). Treasurer Wallop forwarded a 'certificate of the checks set upon the captains of the army from 1 April 1580, to 31 March 1581' on 13 May (see SP 63/12/12/1); this seems to be the matter of Walsingham's complaint and Grey's defence; though see also the 'total of the certificate of the Clerk of the Check', SP 63/80/25/1 (24 January 1581).

former checkes . . . space] The certificates of the check over the preceding ten years.

the inhabitantes . . . Dublin] The Irish Council heard and approved the petitions of the citizens of Dublin by 18 July, when Grey signified as much to Walsingham (see SP 63/84/26); the Privy Council instructed the Attorney General to prepare the charter for the new Corporation of Dublin on 13 August (SP 63/85/16).

this coorce of pardons] Again, referring to the proclamation of general pardon. Sir Henry Wallop reported to Walsingham on the following day that the Earl of Ormond was indignant at being deprived of his charge in Munster; Grey's sensitive handling of the matter here – reporting Ormond's obedience in the main body of the letter, but his disgruntlement at a related matter in the postscript – may reflect his anxiety about Ormond's privileged connections, as rehearsed in other letters.

a specyall messenger] Unidentified.

I sett downe . . . chardge. /] This phrase seems to have been written carelessly, probably in haste. Grey probably intended 'feare' for 'feae', and perhaps 'this' for 'the'. Grey's apology for his apology seems to mean: 'I have explained my use of a special messenger, which is costly, because I suspect I will be blamed for the extra expense.'