

TNA: PRO SP 63/88/2*Grey to the Privy Council, 3 January 1581/2*

This letter conveys Grey's growing sense of financial desperation in the wake of the general discharge. It is likely that he had recently received two letters from England dated 29 October 1581 (of which the drafts only now survive): one from the Queen, informing him that the 'debtes and expenses sent from our Auditor of that realme [. . .] are growen farre greater then we looked for', and that in her view 'the seruice don there doth no way Countervayle or aunswere the charges' (SP 63/86/43). The other letter (63/86/42) came from the Privy Council, who had written that 'wee haue most earnestlie entreated her maiestie that a newe supplie of treisure might be sent ouer'. Elizabeth had granted a warrant for £20,000, they write, but under strict conditions: 'her Maiesties expresse Commaundment is that of the said some of xx^{m li} xv^{m li} therof be onelie and none otherwise imployed but in and towards the full paie and discharge of so manie Bandes of footemen and horsemen and of such pentioners and other ministers as according to our former lettres your Lordship shall theare find'. No part of the £15,000, they write, should without the Queen's special permission be used for any other purpose except payments to discharged bands. The Privy Council's aim was to rid itself of the ongoing financial obligation to soliders currently in pay; the longer Grey forbore discharging them, the more the wages would accrue.

Two problems immediately arose. The Privy Council had selected for its general discharge the leanest, cruellest season of the year, and the discharged soldiers – unable to purchase or get licence for their passage home – began to die in the streets. Grey and Wallop wrote repeatedly into England throughtout the winter begging for funds to relieve them, and Grey openly defied the Queen's express order to discharge a further 700 soldiers in Munster, delaying it until March, because of John Zouche's reports of the universal famine there (see SP 63/89/9, 63/89/11, and 63/89/17). Auditor Jenyson related to Burghley in late February (63/89/38) that discharged soldiers were begging in the streets of Dublin, and attempting to trade their clothes and weapons for food. The apparent insolvency of the Dublin administration – and, much more, its failure to care honourably for its own – had immediate repercussions: as John Zouche reported to Walsingham in late March (SP 63/90/28), several of his chief allies among the Irish, who had undertaken to do good service against the rebels, at the discharge in Munster went over to the Earl of Desmond.

If the order for a general discharge, with the financial conditions attached to it, led to misery for the cashiered soldiers, it created even greater problems for the ongoing service, and the desperate situation of those soldiers still in pay. The basic perennial problem was one of credit. It immediately became apparent to Grey, and to his Treasurer Henry Wallop, that the sum of £5,000 remaining from the discharge would cover almost none of their other debts; and bad debts, in turn, made it impossible to get further credit. Wallop was compelled, as soon as the money arrived, to use a substantial part of the £5,000 remainder to pay off urgent obligations, leaving almost nothing, and throughout November 1581 he sent a series of letters to Burghley, advertising him in pitiful tones that, having been deprived of funds with which to procure basic necessities, he was having to request that victuals be sent from England at much greater expense. In this letter, Grey presents his case for converting some of the reserved £15,000, intended for the discharge, to other more urgent needs; he also

takes this opportunity to beg the Privy Council to intercede with Elizabeth, and explain that his disobedience of her restraint should not be interpreted as contempt or neglect. The way this letter and its associated documents present Grey and his ministers caught between obedience, ethical duty, financial constraint, credit, and their mandate to justice and reformation administrative, social, and political, casts an uncompromisingly bleak light on the relationship between friendship (service, credit, faith, trust) and justice (distribution, equity, reform) in *The Faerie Queene* IV and V.

The address and the text of the letter are in Spenser's familiar secretary hand. The signature is in Grey's usual italic hand. The endorsement, in a later hand, was probably added when the letter was filed in London.

Address and Endorsement

To the right Honorable
my very good Lords &
otheres of her Highnes
privie Councill. /

Lords
3 January 1581
From the Lord Deputye

Entred

Text

May yt please your Lordships; In a late lettre written from your Lordships I am expressly required (as by direction from her Maiestie that of the threasure then assigned for this land 15000^{li} should bee converted onely to pay bandes & other companies discharged & to bee cased & not to other vses without apparaunt necessitie, & the residue being but 5000^{li} to bee imprested to the Souldieres contynuinge still in service and to answere all other growing charges; For my part conferring now with the Councill vpon th'arrivall of the threasure which way her Maiesties said direccion might bee performed and this poore miserable Army somewhatt comforted And fynding by informacion of the Threasurer, how farre his word & creditt is engaged for great Summes, to bee repayed vpon tharrivall of this threasure, of the which the most were borrowed in ready money vpon vrgent necessity of the service, & the rest rysing for provisions bought with the dewes to some poore Townes, that to their vtter vndoing (without payment) haue borne the fynding of the Soldier (in which number especially Maryburgh & Philipstowne may bee reckoned) I see not (without borrowing somewhat of the said direccion* how th'one of these ij extremities might bee avoyded, either the Souldieres to bee lefte to a hazard of mutinie & disorder (which hethervnto hath bene with great difficultie prevented) or elles the Threasureres word & creditt to bee broken, which sure cannot but bring many inconveniences to the service, which is seeldome without necessitie of borrowing, besides his particulare discomfort.

Therefore yf for the preventing of these evilles, & not to make desperate the hope of the Souldieres, that haue so long expected I bee driven to apply to theis vses some 3000^{li} of the said Sum restreyned, yt may please* your Lordships in acquainting her Maiestie with our extremities to bee a meane that her Highnes interprete me not to doe any thing therein in contempt or neglect of her Maiesties will & Commaundement, but as compelled by the very force & nature of the present necessities here. for truly vpon casting downe the money for the present pay, and dividing the same into shares and portions, wee fynde that impresting one monethes pay to the garrizons in Leynster & Vlster, with my self & the other Chief Officeres, without relieving the other remote partes the whole remayne of the said 5000^{li} will not suffice the said Allottement, and yett the Souldier neither clothed, nor his creditt answered, which bee ij Aduersities so great and daungerous, as how farre they may tempt and provoke men so long discontented, I leave to your Lordships to discern & iudg, being for myne owne part so ouerpestured with the claymoures of the Army, (which I cannott but confesse to bee iust) & followed still with other Crosses, which I see this gouernement cannott eschew that I must more & more importune your Lordships to move her Maiestie for my revocacion, and to make choyce of some other whome her Highnes thincketh better hable to menage and weeld so great a burden and Crosse. And so I Committ your Lordships to the goodnes of th' Almighty. At Dublin, the third of Ianuary. 1581./

Your Lordships assured to Commaund,

Arthur Grey

Textual Notes

* **direccion]** Spenser seems not to have closed this parenthesis because the word 'direccion' abuts the end of its line, providing punctuation enough.

* **please]** Inserted above the line.

Annotations

a late lettre] By SP 63/88/1, a letter probably drafted after private negotiations between Grey and Walsingham, the Privy Council granted the Lord Deputy a limited freedom to dispose of the £15,000 pounds: 'We haue thoughte good to let your Lordship vnderstand that in case there shall any parte of the said somme of fifyen thowsand poundes be left vppon the discharging of the soudiors, you maye emplye the same together with the other fyue thowsand in growing chardges as you shall see cause'. Since Grey is writing here as if the restriction were still in place, the letter he invokes here is probably an earlier one from the Privy Council, perhaps even the fair copy of SP 63/86/42 (see headnote).

bandes & other companies discharged] Over three thousand soldiers, comprising bands of footmen and horsemen under captains stationed across Ireland, had been discharged from service between November 1581 and January 1581/2 (SP 63/88/40/1 provides a complete list of the bands discharged). The general discharge came in the wake of rising discontent in Westminster about the costs of the Irish service (and particularly under the Earl of Ormond in Munster), and after considerable correspondence between Burghley and Auditor Thomas Jenyson on that subject.

cassed] Disbanded, discharged.

imprest] Loaned, paid in advance.

And fynding ... great Summes] The **Treasurer**, Sir Henry Wallop, had made frequent pleas to Burghley about the money he had been forced to borrow to furnish the army with basic supplies: 'so much mony is due vppon my billes for ready mony borrowed and Corne bought' (SP 63/87/21, 9 December). In order to maintain his reputation for a reasonable financial probity and trustworthiness ('word and credit'), Wallop was forced to deduct some of the money due to the soldier and apply it to his creditors. As he had commented a few weeks earlier in another letter, he considered 'yt very requysyte for the servyce that my poore Credytt should be kept' (SP 63/87/62). On the complicated culture of credit and exchange in early modern England, see Muldrew (1998).

ready money] Money available for immediate use. On this issue, Grey's language exactly mirrors Wallop's in his letters to Burghley, suggesting that Grey, Wallop, Waterhous and others were drafting their communications after consultation, and attempting to present a united front.

rysyng for] Arising from.

bought with the dewes] With the payments due to certain towns. Some Irish towns supported their garrisons at great charge, the cost of which was ultimately borne by the Dublin administration; Grey reveals here that money intended for remunerating these towns had been diverted to the purchase of further provisions.

the fynding of the Soldier] The supply of the garrisons.

Maryburgh & Philipstowne] Towns in the central Irish counties of Leix and Offaly, now called Portlaoise and Daingean. On the towns' foundation as part of the plantation of Leix and Offaly, see Dunlop (1891). For an argument that links their development in the mid-sixteenth century to Spenser's own ideas about the civil importance of stronghold towns, see Woolway Grenfell (1998).

without borrowing ... said direccion] 'Without relaxing slightly the terms of the Privy Council's prescription (for disbursement of the treasure)'. Grey's wordplay often conveys this sense of cynical world-weariness: Ireland is, he implies, a land of such borrowings, for which the Privy Council must forgive him.

to a hazard of mutinie] The other letters on this subject do not raise the possibility of mutiny, but they do make it clear that the soldiers are in a desperate condition. Wallop and Waterhouse had written to Burghley on 9 December that the lack of money was in danger of causing famine (SP 63/87/20); Wallop adds to Burghley, in another letter of that date, that 'the nakednes of the poore souldiare is so great, as here it is, a thinge lamentable to beholde' (SP 63/87/21).

restreyned] For restricted use. The word is used twice in SP 63/88/1, a draft of a letter which refers back to the letters of 29 October, in which, the Privy Council write, 'youe [i.e. Grey] are restreyned', and then this word is crossed out and replaced with 'dyrected', 'to employ fiften thowsand therof about the discharging of the souldiors onelye, and not in any other chardges without especiall direction ether from her maiesty or from vs in that behalf'. The letter refers to this later as 'the said restraint'.

casting downe the money] The *OED* does not seem to record this usage, which may be Grey's own metaphor; the sense is surely of laying or placing the money down on the table, to divide into shares and pressing payments.

wee fynde ... said Allottement] Cf. Wallop to Burghley, 28 December: 'the remaines of the 5000^{li} woulde not make an imprest for one moneth to the garrysons in Leinster and Vlster' (SP 63/87/62). This coincidence of expression reinforces the impression that, at the very least, these letters arose from close discussion between Wallop and Grey. On **impresting**, see note above.

the Souldier neither clothed] On the soldiers' 'nakednes', see note above.

his credit answered] His debts (at least partially) discharged – thus restoring his credit, and enabling him to borrow further for his maintenance.

ouerpestered] Over-pestered, i.e. too much called upon.

claymures] Clamours.

other Crosses] Vexations or troubles. In the sentence which follows, **that** is to be glossed as 'as a consequence of which'.

revocacion] A now-familiar request on Grey's part to be recalled to England. It seems that Wallop himself was asking to be called back at this time of crisis and debt; he wrote to Walsingham on 10 December 1581 that 'my L. Tresorer [i.e. Burghley] delyth hardly with me, and my revocatyon which I hartely desyre my accompte endyd' (SP 63/87/34).

menage] Manage. Despite this hendiadys ('menage and weeld'), it seems clear from what follows ('burden and Crosse') that Grey sees the position as needing to be borne, rather than exploited.

third of January. 1581.] 1582, new style.