

TNA: PRO SP 63/88/12*Grey to Burghley, 12 January 1581/2*

The subtleties of patronage and political access define the content and tone of this letter. Having been informed from Westminster of Raleigh's letter to the Queen concerning the Munster service, Grey here takes pains to assure his reputation with Burghley, and to head off what he sees as ill-informed and immature meddling by an inexperienced captain. At the other end of the letter, in a postscript, Grey reports to Burghley on Zouche's apprehension and killing of the leading rebel in Munster, Sir John of Desmond; as a work of one of Burghley's kinsmen, Zouche's good service will elevate Burghley's standing with the Queen, as well as Grey's with Burghley. Grey's complaint of Bland's bad dealing with the victuals was certainly in good faith; as Sir Warham Sentleger reported on 12 April 1582, plague and famine were rife in Cork, with as many as 62 dead on a single day (SP 63/91/23/1). The text of the letter, address, and subscription are in Spenser's characteristic secretary hand; the signature and postscript are in Grey's italic hand. The endorsement, probably added during the filing of the letter in London, is in a distinct hand.

Address and Endorsements

To the right Honorable my very good
 Lord the Lord Burghley
 Lord High Threasurer
 of England yeue
 this

12. Ianuary 1581.
 Lord Deputie of Ireland to my Lord

Mr Rawlies vnskilfulnes in setting
 downe a plott to lesser hir
 Maiesties expences.

Blandes slacknes in sending of
 victels into Munster.

Iohn of Desmondes death.

Text

My very good Lord having lately received aduertizement of a Plott deliuered by Captein Rawley vnto her Maiesty for the lessening of her charges here in the Province of Mounster & disposing of the Garrizons according to the same, the matter at the first

indeed offering a very plausible shewe of thurte and Commoditie, might easily occasion her Maiestie to thinck, that I haue not so carefully as behued looked into the state of that cause & the search of her Maiesties proffitt. Wherefore having with some of the best advised of the Councell here entred into consideracion thereof, & perceiving many inconveniences with some impossibilities in the accomplishment thereof, we have (as by our generall lettre to her Maiestie herewith sent you may perceiue) layd downe owre iudgementes & opinions thereof: which when yt shall come vnto your Lordships deeper consultacion, I doubt not, but you will soone discerne a differens betwene the iudgementes of those, which with grownded experience & approved reason looke into the condicion of thinges, and those which vpon no grownd but seeming fancies & affecting credit with benefitt frame Plottes vpon impossibilities for otheres to execute. And so trusting that your Lordship with the rest will esteeme of both, for the rest* I will referre you to those reasons, which we haue in our said lettre layd before her Maiestie.

Furthermore, I haue to complayne vnto your Lordship (whose onely redresse I looke for in these matteres) of the great sclacknes & default of Bland, in sending ouer of the supplies of victelles into Mounster, whereof the proporcions are comenly so sclender, (as I am informed from the Surveyour of the vicetelles there) as that all those garrizons thereby are very miserably distressed, & almost vtterly starved to the very great hindaunce of the service. And yett I doubt not but he informeth your Lordship farre otherwise: and therefore I earnestly pray your Lordship too looke into the speedy redresse thereof.

Lastely whereas my Lord Chauncellour & your Lordship haue written vnto me touching my payment of the Subsidie I haue accordingly taken order for th'answering thereof. And so for the present committing your Lordship to the goodnes of th'Almighty, I hartely take leave Dublin. the xijth of Ianuarie 1581

Your good Lordships assured to commaund

Arthur Grey

It hath pleased God too guyue Ihon Zowtche the kyllyng of Ihon of Desmond that Artche rebell & traytor, I hard of it iij dayes past but this nyght I receaued the certayne confirmation therof, & with hym hath taken an oother notorius knaue called Iames Fittz Ihon of Strangalie: the newes I trust wyll not dislyke yowr Lordship as well in the pryuate beehallf of yowr powre kinsmans good hap as of the common good, neyther wyll yowr Lordship, I hoape spare, too aduaunce the due commendation of the endeouore too her Maiestie.

Textual Notes

* **rest]** The letter 't' has been deleted between 'e' and 's' in this word.

Annotations

a Plott deliuered by Captein Rawley] The proposals apparently do not survive. Raleigh had clear ideas about the need for force in the subordination of Munster, and in one letter to Walsingham (SP 63/80/82) spoke approvingly of his half-brother Sir Humphrey Gilbert's brutal pacification of the province; like Grey, he was impatient with the Earl of Ormond's conciliatory policies (see 63/80/82 and 63/83/16/1). Grey's disapproval of Raleigh was as much for his person as his policy (see SP 63/92/10); this disapproval may have been the result of Raleigh's liaison at about this time with the daughter of Justice James Goold, which produced a bastard daughter (see *ODNB*).

our generall ... herewith sent] Grey may be referring to SP 63/88/13, a copy of Grey and Council to the Queen of the same date, which sets out plans for the Munster service.

frame Plottes vpon impossibilities] This phrase, which has echoes of Sidney's account of poetry in the *Defence of Poesy* (composed at about this time), as well as look forward to Spenser's own plot for reformation in *View*, seems an oddly Spenserian turn, especially among the frequent alliterations and balanced syntax of this passage – unlike Grey's usual style. This passage provides suggestive evidence that Spenser played more than a scribe's part in the drafting of some of Grey's correspondence.

Bland] John Bland, the Chester-based Deputy Victualler to English forces in Ireland; see biographies.

my payment of the Subsidie] 'An Acte for the grant of one Subsidie, and two Fifteenes, and Tenthes, by the Temporalitie' had been passed by Parliament in the preceding year (23 Eliz. cap. 15).

Ihon Zowtche] Zouche was governor of Munster; see biographies.

the kylyng . . . of Desmond] See also SP 63/88/15 below. The capture or killing of John of Desmond had been a priority of the Munster service since the general revolt in Munster in 1579; a £500 reward was on offer, and the Queen herself acknowledged Zouche's good service in the feat (63/88/42).

James Fittz Ihon of Strangalie] Nephew to the Earl of Desmond.

yowr powre kinsmans good hap] John Zouche's relation to Burghley is obscure.