

TNA: PRO SP 63/92/9*Grey to the Privy Council, 7 May 1582*

This short and perfunctory letter illustrates the traffic in prisoners and letters between England and Ireland. The post from England to Ireland came through Bristol and Chester, the latter via Holyhead, for Dublin (On the post to Ireland, see Feldman 1975: 4; and Beale 1998: 181-83). The 'packet' received by Grey had travelled immediately and fast (see below), faster than the prisoner described in the letter.

The address and the text of this letter, including the subscription, are both in Spenser's characteristic secretary hand; Grey has added his signature. The endorsement is in two distinct hands, the first a mixed hand and the second a cramped secretary; this suggests that these two parts of the endorsement were added to the letter at different times – probably upon receipt by the Privy Council clerks, and later during filing in the State Paper Office. An addressee note at the left foot of the recto of the letter (reading 'Lords of the Councill') is in an italic hand, probably Spenser's.

Address and Endorsement

To the right Honorable my very good
Lords and otheres of her
Highnes privy Councill.

Lords
7 May 1582
The Lord Deputye.
Iames Fitzedmond{s}

Text

Yt may please your Lordships I haue in the last Packett received from your Lordships certain Depositions & Examinations touching one Iames fitz Edmondnes taken at Chester, but the Partie him self is not here as yett arrived. But so soone as he Cometh, I will according to your Lordships direccion proceede to his examination and due triall in the which yf any thing shall further fall out, I will accordingly certefy your Lordships. And in the meane season I Committ your Lordships to Almighty god. Dublin, the vijth of May. 1582. /

Your good Lordships assured to Commaund,

Arthur Grey

Annotations

Packett] See glossary. The word would come to be taken metonymically for the post-boat, but as *OED* records ('Packet', *n.* 2), this was a later development.

Depositions] Statements of record toward an investigation or trial.

James fitz Edmond] Nothing further is known of Fitzedmunds; no record of a subsequent examination has survived.

Chester] Town in the north-west of England on the River Dee, now silted up and unnavigable, but in the sixteenth century a major port for ships travelling between England and Ireland.

yf any . . . certefy your Lordships] If any other substantial information should come to light, I will inform you.