

TNA: PRO SP 63/81/36/1*Earl of Ormond to Grey, 13 March 1580/1*

Thomas Butler, Earl of Ormond, had been appointed Lord General in Munster in October 1579, charged with suppressing the revolt of the Earl of Desmond. Ormond's allegedly slow prosecution of the service in Munster drew attacks from most of the New English soldiers serving in the area, including Raleigh (see SP 63/80/82) and Captain Thomas Lee, whose tract on the Irish service, the *Discovery and Recovery of Ireland* (c. 1599), identified Ormond as a kind of traitor to English interest there; the Queen cut off Ormond's funding in the early part of 1581 (SP 63/80/87), but he continued to send reports of his service such as this for some time. For a review of his service from this period, see the 'observations' on his government, SP 63/90/67; and Ormond's note of over 5,000 traitors slain during his service in Munster, SP 63/86/3/1. For Ormond's reaction to his discharge, see SP 63/83/45 (*infra*).

The text of this copied letter is in Spenser's regular secretary hand. Spenser has also certified the letter at the foot of the page with his usual 'Copia Vera' and signature. The letter's single endorsement is apparently a composite: the first two lines ('Copia of my L. of Ormond's lettres') are in Spenser's usual mixed hand, while the final lines ('to the Lord Deputie' and the date) are in a later mixed hand.

Endorsement

Copia of my Lord of
Ormond's lettre•*
to the Lord Deputie
.13. March. 1580

Text

My very good Lord I have thought good to lett your Lordship vnderstand that since the dispatch of my servaunt Iohn Daniell with my lettres to you Barry Roe brother to Davie Barry playd the gentleman with me in taking away some of my horses that were at Sesse in his Countrey (which I have recovered from him). vpon this I marched with such forces as I had with me to Carbry towards his countrey and missing him self have warded his castles for her Maiestie and after returned to Corke bringing with mee Sir Owen Macharty with all the chiefest freeholderes of his countrey to putt in assurance for their loialtie and to doe service against the Rebelles, the rather for that his Nephew fynin Machartie was held to bee a doubtfull man, I sent also for all the Galloglas beyond the leape in Carbrie and vpon their coming to me have taken their othe for their duetifull behaveour and meane to employ them in her maiesties service. This day by thadvise of

the councell of this province of Mounster yt hath bene thought good and concluded that David Barrie should be sent for to bee talked with, and to vnderstand the cause of the breaking of his castles and the gathering of such forces as he had about him, Who was content to come to me here, having Sir George Bowchier, the Sherief Sir Cormock, and Richard Shee for the assuraunce of his safe retourne at his pleasure and being in that maner brought in, he seemed to make his quarrell for that he said Commissions were procured by Sir Warham and Capten Rawley for the apprehending & killing of him self and warding of his fatheres houses, as formerly I have written to your Lordship by my man Daniell, and for that being refused proteccion by me he had no assuraunce of his life since the tyme of Sir William Pelhams gouvernement, who gave him proteccion with promis of pardon and in respect of the premisses stood at his keeping. Considering the weaken{es}* of the bandes that are here to serve vnder mee and that I have determined to bend my forces in one way intending to meet with the principall Traitoures shortly god willing I have given him my word and assuraunce not to harme him nor his till your Lordships pleasure bee knowen farther touching him, with condicion that he shall keepe her Maiesties peace, and that vpon ij or iij daies warning given him by your Lordship or my self, his assuraunce to bee voide, And being requested by mee to serve her maiestie against the Rebelles during his being vpon my word, would not promis the same, seing he would not purchase him self enemies, before his pardon were graunted him; which being graunted he said he would putt in pledges for his loialtie and doe the best service he could. I pray your Lordship lett me vnderstand your pleasure herein with speed / This day I received advertizement that the traitour Sir Iohn of Desmond and the Brownes of the county of limerick came to take the pray of the towne of kilmallock and having taken some cattell, a fewe horsemen with some footemen of the garrison there pursued them, reskued the pray and presently slewe Thomas Browne, with one or ij other Horsemen, wounded Vlick Browne very sore, who is said to bee dead since and took iiij horses from them. So having no farther matter to wryte for this tyme I committ your Lordship to the guyding of Almighty god. Corke xiiij^o March 1580

Your good Lordships as assured to commaund
as any may bee, /
Thomas Ormonde ossory

Copia Vera
Edmund Spenser

Textual Notes

* **Endorsement letter**] 's' deleted at the end of this word. The scribe who added the last two lines of this endorsement seems to have corrected Spenser's note, deleting the original 's'. If there were originally two Ormond letters contained in this enclosure, the second was apparently lost or removed at a very early stage in the archiving of this document.

* **weaken{es}**] Damage to the manuscript here has cropped the final letters of this word; the word itself is clear enough from context, and the spelling adapted from instances in others of Spenser's letters.

Annotations

1580] I.e. 1581, new-style.

John Daniell] A John Daniell is mentioned as one of Grey's servants in a summary book of Grey's grants from 1582 (SP 63/88/40/3); if this was the same man, it may suggest that he was an Irish man making his way up, via Ormond's service, in the New English administration. In 1581 he wrote to Walsingham supplying intelligence of James Eustace, and offering to infiltrate the Old English traitors then in exile in Spain; the insider status implied by this offer may support the idea that this was the same man.

Barry Roe brother to Davie] David Barry, viscount Barrymore from April 1581, was a powerful Irish lord in Munster, in rebellion with the Earl of Desmond during Grey's deputyship; Barry Roe, his brother, enjoyed Grey's protection after killing the rebel George Champern.

playd the gentleman] Been a gentleman (although this phrase is not mentioned in *OED*); Ormond is of course being sarcastic.

at Sesse] For **cess**, see glossary. Horses 'at cess' were thus government animals whose maintenance had been imposed upon local people as part of their contribution in kind to military taxation.

warded his castles] Garrisoned his (empty) castles.

Sir Owen Macharty] Or McCarthy; also known as McCarthy Reagh, of Carbery. Stood out in rebellion with the Earl of Desmond briefly in 1581, but (as is here related) was brought in by the Earl of Ormond and afterwards remained loyal. He petitioned the queen for relief from government severity in 1583, mentioning two sons then at Oxford (SP 63/105/2/1).

chiefest freeholderes] The most substantial men of the country.

assuraunce for their loialtie] Irish landowners of doubtful loyalty were required to put in pledges for their loyalty, which would be forfeit upon their 'coming out' in rebellion. These pledges might be sons or other kin.

seruice] Military service.

fynin Machartie] Or McCarthy. Also known as Florence McCarthy; see biographies. He may have joined Desmond's rebellion at the end of 1579 (see SP 63/70/42).

doubtfull] To be feared.

Galloglas] See glossary.

beyond the leape in Carbrie] Leap is a small village southwest of Cork, near Carbery.

breaking of his castles] In February 1581 Raleigh reported to Walsingham that David Barry had burned all his own castles before going into rebellion. Cf. Turlough Luineach's action, mentioned in SP 63/85/5 above, carried out to prevent Grey's assault upon him: 'he merueiled why I should make such præparation as he heard of to take his Castelles, which to præuent he signified that he had broken & in maner razed, as indeed he had'.

Sir George Bowchier] Or Bouchier; see biographies.

Sherief Sir Cormock] Sir Cormac McTeige McCarthy, Lord of Muskerry and Sheriff of Corke, reputed the best-disposed Irish lord in Munster.

Richard Shee] Shee, of Kilkenny, was accused of harbouring Catholics (SP 63/74/69) and of various treasons and felonies (SP 63/115/9-10); he was pardoned at least once (SP 63/107/79-80).

Commissions] Formal licences from the Lord Deputy.

Sir Warham] Sir Warham Sentleger; see biographies.

Captain Rawley] Sir Walter Raleigh; see biographies.

as formerly ... man Daniell] This letter appears to be lost.

proteccion] A formal guarantee of safety from the military government; see glossary.

the tyme of Sir William Pelhams gouvernement] Pelham served as Lord Chief Justice of Ireland between October 1579 and September 1580.

in respect ... his keeping] Permitted him to retain his castle provided that he kept it garrisoned.

pledges for his loialtie] It was common practice in Ireland at the time for Irish lords to surrender hostages for their good behaviour.

Sir Iohn ... county of limerick] For John of Desmond, see biographies; the Browne family of Limerick, with their adherents, stood out in rebellion against the Queen until at least June 1583; see Ormond's letter to the Queen, SP 63/102/86.

take the pray ... of Kilmallock] To 'take the prey' of a town was to sack, loot, and in some cases burn it.

Thomas Browne...Vlick Browne] Two of the leading men of the Browne sept; little is known of them.

Copia vera] 'A true copy': one of the standard forms of secretarial certification added to copied documents.