INTRODUCTION

The Henry Cromwell correspondence

This edition of the Henry Cromwell correspondence is drawn from the collection of letters and a small number of associated papers now found in the British Library Lansdowne Manuscripts, volumes 821–823. With the exception of a stray letter of the mid-eighteenth century – which has no connection with Henry Cromwell or, indeed, with the rest of this collection, but which is now bound at the end of the third volume – the collection comprises 536 items dated or datable to the mid- and later 1650s, and linked to Henry Cromwell, younger son of Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell, and to his government of Ireland. The overwhelming majority of these items are original in-letters, sent to Henry Cromwell during his period as chief administrator of Ireland, between summer 1655 and spring 1659, and addressed to him in Dublin or elsewhere in Ireland. The collection also contains a clutch of draft out-letters, mostly by Henry Cromwell and intended for Lord Broghill, together with a small number of letters addressed to other recipients in Ireland and a handful of miscellaneous items (including a trio of army addresses and the key to a code) that found their way into the hands of Henry Cromwell (or his secretary).

As it stands, the material in these three volumes clearly does not represent all the correspondence and other semi-official or non-official letters and papers sent to or received and retained by Henry Cromwell during his period in Ireland. Many letters in this collection criticize the shortcomings of the postal service between London and Dublin and refer to other letters sent to or from Henry Cromwell that had gone astray, that had failed to reach their intended recipients, and that are not found here.[1] Similarly, many letters in this collection make reference to other letters and papers originally enclosed and sent with them, but which are not found within the collection and are apparently no longer extant.[2] In a handful of cases, the writer requested Henry Cromwell to destroy the letter after reading it – 'I pray you burne it',

[1] See, for example, nos 8, 12, 53, 71, 125, and 270.

[2] See nos 9, 19, 26, 28, 39, 41, 96, 151, 174, 176, 187, 213, 214, 269, 282, 304, 309, 313, 329, 367, 377, 396, 404, 423, 432, 443, 465, 480, 486, 493, and 506.

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wrote one[3] – and, although in these cases the injunction was clearly ignored and the letters have survived, it is possible that other, more sensitive material was withheld and destroyed.

The uneven chronological coverage found in these volumes also suggests that the collection is incomplete. For example, the collection contains just fifteen items spanning the months September 1656 to January 1657 inclusive and, apart from a single letter and enclosure of 25 November, there is nothing extant from 28 October 1656 to 3 January 1657, a gap of nearly ten weeks. Again, the collection contains no letters between 8 January and 22 February 1658, a gap of over six weeks. Accordingly, and in stark contrast to the generally very full and informative coverage of parliamentary developments during the spring and summer of 1657 and during Richard Cromwell's parliament of 1659, we have disappointingly little here about the opening months of the first session of the second Protectorate parliament or about its brief and divisive second session. It is most unlikely that Henry Cromwell did not, in fact, receive letters recounting parliamentary and other developments over these periods; instead, these ominous gaps again suggest that the surviving collection is incomplete.

Furthermore, a batch of broadly similar papers, comprising over forty original in-letters addressed to Henry Cromwell in Ireland, seems to have become detached from the main collection quite early in its subsequent history and, although these letters do survive, they are now held separately by the British Library, at Additional Manuscripts 43724. This detached batch of letters was known to and used by Thomas Birch when he compiled his *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Esquire*, published in 1742, and was noted by Birch as being at that time in the possession of the first Earl of Shelburne. They then passed from Shelburne to his descendants, the Marquesses of Lansdowne, and the majority of these letters were presented to the British Museum by the 6th Marquess in the mid-1930s. A note relaying the descent of these papers, now included both in Additional Manuscripts 43724 and in the main catalogue of the collection, throws light on the likely descent of the bulk of the Henry Cromwell papers now found in the Lansdowne Collection.

The early history of the documents now at Lansdowne Manuscripts volumes 821–823 was probably identical to that of the letters now at Additional Manuscripts 43724, not least shown by the fact that many letters in both collections carry contemporary endorsements in a single hand and a consistent style. All these papers were almost certainly originally collected, held, and retained by the philosopher, physician,

[3] No. 15.

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and administrator Sir William Petty. In September 1652, Petty was appointed physician to the English army in Ireland and he quickly enhanced his position and expanded his role there: in December 1654 he obtained a commission from the English parliament to undertake a major resurvey of confiscated land in Ireland. He gained further favour, high office, and extensive Irish land under Henry Cromwell's administration from the autumn of 1655 onwards, becoming not only a clerk to the Irish council but also a friend and confidant of Henry Cromwell and, it appears, his personal secretary.[4] In mid-June 1659, with the Protectorate collapsing and his own time in, and government of, Ireland about to come to an end, Henry Cromwell sent Petty 'as one whom I can best trust' on a highly sensitive mission to England to consult with his 'Dear Brother' – his brother-in-law Charles Fleetwood, who had been instrumental in ending the effective government of Richard Cromwell and, with it, the whole Protectorate – then describing Petty as 'one, that hath been faithfull and affectionate unto me, and, I may say, unto yourselfe also'.[5] Petty's close links to Henry Cromwell continued well after the Restoration: in 1663, Henry granted him a power of attorney[6] and after Henry's death Petty wrote to his widow to praise 'His dear friend who is now with God'.[7]

Thus it is all but certain that both this collection and the related papers now at Additional Manuscripts 43724 were held by Sir William Petty as Henry Cromwell's secretary, were retained by him both after the fall of the Protectoral regime in Ireland and after Henry Cromwell's death, and were then passed down through the Petty family for several generations. After Sir William Petty's death in December 1687, and in consideration of his services to the state, in December 1688 his widow, Elizabeth, was given a barony for life as Baroness Shelburne, while his eldest surviving son and heir, Charles, was created Baron Shelburne of County Wexford in the Irish peerage. Charles died childless in April 1696 but three years later his younger brother – that is, Sir William Petty's youngest son, Henry – was himself created Baron Shelburne, and in 1719 his title was raised to that of Earl of Shelburne. In preparing his 1742 edition of Thurloe's state papers, Thomas Birch consulted and used the batch of forty or so letters to Henry Cromwell that were then in the possession of Henry, first Earl of Shelburne, though Birch was either unaware of, or decided not to draw upon, the much bigger collection of Henry Cromwell correspondence that was presumably also then in the Earl's hands.

[4] T. Barnard, 'Petty, Sir William', in *ODNB*.
[5] *TSP*, VII, pp. 684–685.
[6] British Library, Additional Manuscript 72850, fo. 116.
[7] Quoted by R.W. Ramsey in *Henry Cromwell* (London, 1933), p. 372.

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Henry, first Earl of Shelburne died without a surviving son in 1751, whereupon his estates and considerable fortune – and presumably also the Henry Cromwell material – passed to a son of his sister, Anne, and her husband Thomas Fitz-Maurice, first Earl of Kerry. This son, John Fitz-Maurice, immediately adopted the surname Petty and was raised to the Irish peerage; he was created Earl of Shelburne in 1753 and was raised to the British peerage as Lord Wycombe in 1760. Upon his death in the following year, his eldest son, William, succeeded to his Irish and British titles and in 1784, a year after resigning as Prime Minister, William was created first Marquess of Lansdowne, in Somerset. It was to his son and heir, John Henry, second Marquess of Lansdowne, that many of Sir William Petty's papers descended, and it was from him in 1807 that the British Museum obtained the Henry Cromwell material now held by the British Library and arranged at Lansdowne Manuscripts 821–823.[8]

The contents of this collection have been organized in several different ways over the years, including at one stage alphabetically by the surname of the writer. Thus the letters now bear a variety of folio numbers entered in ink as well as pencil, and a few of the letters (those which came first under each letter of the alphabet when arranged thus) also carry that letter of the alphabet at the top. The current arrangement within three bound volumes dates from the most recent full reorganization of the collection, undertaken early in the twentieth century, when an attempt was made to put the letters in a strict chronological order, with undated letters placed towards the end of the third volume. Since then, however, errors have become apparent, either because dates were misread or because the original or endorsed dates have been shown to be wrong, and the volumes now contain occasional modern paper slips noting where some of these letters have been misplaced. Moreover, some of the undated letters placed at the end of the collection can, in fact, be accurately and reliably dated through their contents. For this new edition, the correspondence has been placed in chronological order, including those letters which, though undated, can reliably be assigned by their contents to a particular month; a dozen letters that cannot reliably be given a fairly narrow date range have been arranged by alphabetical order of the writer's surname towards the end of this edition.[9]

The collection is generally in a good and clean condition, with evidence of modern conservation to some letters. Occasionally, the paper has been damaged, with some loss of text – sheets have become

[8] G.E. Cokayne (ed.), *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland and Ireland*, 8 vols (London, 1887–1898), 'Lansdowne', 'Shelburne', and 'Wycombe'.

[9] Nos 521–532.

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worn or torn and paper has been lost around the edges, and a few letters contain small holes, often where the wax used to seal the letter had seeped through and the main page was damaged with a small area of paper carrying text being torn away on opening. Some letters retain their original wax seal, though in many cases this is now absent. All the letters were written in English, with a peppering of Latin phrases, but around twenty letters were in part entered in code or cipher. In some cases, this code has been partly or wholly deciphered in a contemporary hand, apparently by the recipient, on the original letter, though in many cases the letters carry no signs of decoding. As no keys to any of the codes employed in this collection appear to survive – the draft code contained in the collection and noted as the final item in this edition is not the key to any of the codes actually used here – modern historians are reduced to making educated guesses in attempting to decipher these sections of the letters.

For the most part, the texts of the letters are clear and legible and, with the exception of the draft letters (principally those from Henry Cromwell to Lord Broghill), they contain remarkably few amendments and alterations. A small number of letters do create some problems of legibility and interpretation, either because they appear to have been written very quickly and carelessly, with characters and words poorly formed, because they were quite heavily amended, or because over the centuries they have become foxed: indeed, one letter is now so badly foxed that its legibility is seriously compromised.[10] Some letters comprise either a single folio or several folios, but the majority are made up of two folios, with the main text of the letter on the recto of the first folio, sometimes carried over onto the verso of that folio, while the verso of the second folio carries the address and any endorsements, frequently including a record of the writer's name and the letter's date, together in some cases with a short note of the main business of the letter. These endorsements appear to be contemporary but they rarely add anything to the information carried in the letters themselves; accordingly, in this edition the information in the endorsement is noted (generally in a footnote) only where it corrects or amplifies the text of the letter.

A collection of correspondence compiled over almost four years inevitably contains a wide variety of material, covers a range of topics, and is of variable quality and importance, with some quite minor items, such as the letters of recommendation that were frequently addressed to Henry Cromwell in Ireland. However, the bulk of this collection is important and valuable, and the information it reveals can be grouped under two principal but overlapping headings: Irish and

[10] No. 456.

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English. Letters relating to Irish topics, whether written from Ireland itself or from England, deal with the government and administration of the province; finance; military and security matters; the problems of the English army stationed there; the attempts to find suitable people to fill secular and religious offices in Ireland; the claims, counter-claims, and disputes arising from the Irish land settlement; and a range of more personal issues. The much more extensive, and in some ways more important, English correspondence is dominated by the accounts of Henry Cromwell's friends, agents, and semi-professional reporters relating, interpreting, and analysing political and, to a lesser extent, military developments in London, again supplemented by rather more personal and private letters, illuminating the thoughts and actions of individual politicians and revealing something of the inner workings of central government. There are, in addition, some letters concerned primarily with the personal affairs of the Cromwell family, of Henry Cromwell himself, and of his in-laws, the Russell family. Overall, the collection throws new light both on the difficulties of running Ireland during the Protectorate and on the sometimes fraught relationship between the central government in London and the provincial or devolved government in Dublin, while the letters dominated by English news provide a view of the Protectoral regime over the period 1655–1659 that can be matched by few other single collections, published or unpublished. They give a clear and quite detailed picture of the governments of Oliver and Richard Cromwell as Protectors and shed new light on particular issues, including parliamentary business and management, the kingship controversy of 1657, and the collapse of the Protectorate in the spring of 1659, as well as on the wider questions of the power of, and relationship between, the Protector, his Protectoral Council, and the parliaments of the period, especially the first session of the second Protectorate parliament of 1656–1658 and Richard Cromwell's parliament of the opening months of 1659.

This collection of the Henry Cromwell correspondence has been well known for many years and has been drawn upon by a range of historians. For example, it was used in the early and mid-twentieth century by C.H. Firth and G. Davies in their narratives of the years 1656–1660;[11] by Firth, Davies, and others in more detailed articles on specific issues, such as the kingship controversy, the fall of Richard Cromwell, and the role of the army;[12] and by R.W. Ramsey during

[11] C.H. Firth, *The Last Years of the Protectorate, 1656–58*, 2 vols (London, 1909); G. Davies, *The Restoration of Charles II, 1658–60* (San Marino, CA, 1955).

[12] C.H. Firth, 'Cromwell and the crown', *English Historical Review*, 17 (1901), pp. 429–442 and 18 (1902), pp. 52–80; G. Davies, 'The army and the downfall of Richard Cromwell',

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the 1930s in his rather simplistic biographical studies of both Henry and Richard Cromwell.[13] In the process, some of the letters in the collection were transcribed and reproduced in whole or in part, especially by Firth in the second part of his two-part article on 'Cromwell and the crown', by Ramsey in his biographies of Henry and Richard Cromwell, and by R.C.H. Catterall in his study of Richard Cromwell's fall. More recently, Clyve Jones has reprinted the two letters by Oliver Cromwell found within the collection[14] and Toby Barnard has published the majority of the badly foxed letter giving a detailed account of the 1659 election in Cork and Youghal.[15] Both Barnard and Patrick Little have made extensive use of the collection in their work on Ireland in the 1650s, especially Barnard in his monograph on Cromwellian Ireland and Little in his biographical study of Lord Broghill, both of which contain many short quotations from letters within this collection.[16] Most of the letters, however, have never appeared in print, and Firth's strong recommendation in the preface to his first volume of *The Last Years of the Protectorate* – that the Henry Cromwell correspondence, 'primarily valuable for the history of Irish administration, but [. . .with] much information of importance about political events in England', 'should be printed by one of the societies for publishing historical documents'[17] – has hitherto remained unfulfilled.

In bringing to fruition Firth's recommendation, this new edition has drawn and built upon the pioneering work of Clyve Jones, who during the 1960s undertook extensive research on the collection and who in 1969 was awarded a Master of Letters degree by the University of Lancaster for his thesis, 'The correspondence of Henry Cromwell, 1655–1659, and other papers, from the British Museum Lansdowne Mss. 821–823'. This thesis, which comprised an annotated edition of the correspondence and included full transcripts of the great majority of the letters, remains unpublished. Although Dr Jones initially planned to prepare a scholarly edition for publication, his research, writing, and editing took him in a slightly different direction and to

Huntington Library Bulletin, 7 (1935), pp. 131–167; R.C.H. Catterall, 'Two letters of Richard Cromwell, 1659', *American Historical Review*, 8 (1902–1903), pp. 86–89.

[13] R.W. Ramsey, *Henry Cromwell* (London, 1933); R.W. Ramsey, *Richard Cromwell, Protector of England* (London, 1935). Some of the letters have also been used in J.A. Butler, *A Biography of Richard Cromwell, 1626–1712, The Second Protector* (Lampeter, 1994).

[14] C. Jones, 'Two unpublished letters of Oliver Cromwell', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 46 (1973), pp. 216–218.

[15] T. Barnard, 'Lord Broghill, Vincent Gookin and the Cork elections of 1659', *English Historical Review*, 88 (1973), pp. 352–365.

[16] T. Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland*, paperback edition with new foreword (Oxford, 2000); P. Little, *Lord Broghill and the Cromwellian Union with Ireland and Scotland* (Woodbridge, 2004).

[17] Firth, *Last Years*, I, ix, xi.

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a slightly later period of English and British history, and he firmly abandoned plans to pursue publication. The present editor took up the project with the knowledge, approval, and warm endorsement of Dr Jones, who has continued to provide invaluable support throughout its lengthy gestation.

The letters and papers in this collection give superb insights into the administration of Cromwellian Ireland between 1655 and 1659, into the central government of Lord Protectors Oliver and Richard Cromwell from 1655 until the collapse of the Protectorate, and into the relationship between Henry Cromwell's Irish administration and his father's, and then his brother's, London-based Protectoral government. However, as a clearly incomplete set of in-letters, they also present a slanted and imperfect image, of necessity rather one-sided, and they need to be read alongside other surviving material in order to provide a fuller and more rounded picture. For example, this collection gives us tantalizing insights into Henry Cromwell, via the many replies to his letters from his regular, mainly London-based, correspondents; via the responses to his own requests and instructions, praise, and rebukes; and via the often detailed and revealing reports of his reputation in England, of his friends' standing with the Protector and other senior political and military figures in London, and of the way in which his handling of Ireland and his Irish policies were being viewed across the Irish Sea. But Henry Cromwell's own voice is heard here only occasionally or indirectly through the reportage of others, and he speaks to us directly only through a dozen or so drafts of his letters to Broghill; here Henry tends to be hovering in the wings rather than taking centre stage. To supplement and flesh out the image of Henry Cromwell in Ireland, and of so many other issues raised in these letters, the collection should be read alongside other important sources, most notably the letters and papers of the Secretary of State, John Thurloe, and the associated material that Thomas Birch gathered and reproduced in his *Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Esquire*. This huge, seven-volume collection contains many more in-letters to Henry Cromwell in Ireland, notably the regular correspondence maintained by Thurloe himself, as well as scores of letters written by Henry Cromwell during his period in Ireland, addressed to Thurloe, to his predecessor in Ireland, Charles Fleetwood, to his father and brother as Protectors, and to other London-based politicians and agents. In many cases, this material provides the other side of the correspondence featured in this collection and it is here that we find letters from Henry Cromwell and others that either triggered or responded to the letters now in the Lansdowne Collection. Birch's volumes also contain official and semi-official material related to Henry Cromwell's government of

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Ireland – reports to and from the Irish council, financial accounts, and so forth – which is all the more valuable as so much of the official documentation relating to the government of Ireland during the 1650s perished when the Four Courts building housing the Public Record Office of Ireland was largely destroyed by fire in June 1922. However, generous selections of this material feature in two published collections produced before 1922, namely the relevant volume of the *Calendar of State Papers, Ireland* and R. Dunlop's *Ireland under the Commonwealth*.[18] This material can be supplemented by some extant batches of official central and local governmental records of Ireland in the 1650s, now found in central and provincial repositories in Ireland. Together, this range of surviving personal, private, semi-official, and official material provides the context for, and enables a fuller understanding and interpretation of, this collection of the Henry Cromwell correspondence.

Henry Cromwell and his governance of Ireland

The arrival of twenty-seven-year-old Henry Cromwell in Ireland in the summer of 1655, not only as commander of the English army there but also as chief administrator of that country, represented something of a gamble and certainly proved a turning point both in the handling of Ireland by the English regimes of the 1650s and in the policies imposed there by the English government in Dublin. This collection effectively opens in mid-summer 1655, by which time Henry Cromwell's appointment had been confirmed and he was preparing to relocate his family from London and Cambridgeshire to Dublin. It closes in the spring of 1659, with the collapse of the Protectoral regimes in London and Dublin, and with Henry Cromwell's time in Ireland rapidly drawing to a close. Thus the collection very neatly spans the four-year period that Henry Cromwell spent in Ireland – he landed near Dublin on 9 July 1655 and took ship from Ireland, never to return, on 27 June 1659. Although he maintained a keen and informed interest in political and personal developments in London, threatened several times in 1656–1657 to resign his offices in Ireland and return to the mainland, and by 1658 was hankering for permission to pay a brief or extended visit to England – all issues referred to or reflected in letters in this collection – in fact, Henry Cromwell remained in Ireland throughout these four years and never once left its shores.

[18] R.P. Mahaffy (ed.), *Calendar of the State Papers Relating to Ireland: of the reign of Charles I, 3, 1647–60 and addenda 1625–60* (London, 1903); R. Dunlop (ed.), *Ireland under the Commonwealth*, 2 vols but with continuous pagination (Manchester, 1913).

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Henry Cromwell was born in January 1628, the fifth of nine children and the fourth of five sons of Oliver Cromwell, at that time a minor landowner in and around Huntingdon, soon to represent the town in the third parliament of Charles I, but shortly thereafter to sell up and leave Huntingdon under a cloud.[19] We know almost nothing about Henry's childhood and adolescence, although it is likely that he was brought up in the family home in Huntingdon until 1631, in St Ives from 1631 until 1636, and then in Ely from 1636, and that, like his elder brothers, he spent some time away from home attending Felsted school in Essex. There is no evidence that he ever entered university; instead, by his late teens he was serving as a junior officer in the parliamentary army. He was almost certainly in Thomas Harrison's New Model Army horse regiment that campaigned in northern England in 1648 and he presumably saw action with his regiment at the battle of Preston of August 1648. Later the following year, he was promoted to colonel and given command of a newly created horse regiment sent to Ireland to reinforce the English campaign of reconquest there, led by Oliver Cromwell. Henry crossed from Pembrokeshire to Youghal in February 1650 and then campaigned with other forces and commanders, including the prominent Irish Protestant leader Lord Broghill, in Munster. He remained in Ireland on active military service after his father's return to the mainland in the summer of 1650 and campaigned under his father's successors, initially Henry Ireton until his death at Limerick in November 1651 (Henry Cromwell was reportedly present at the siege of Limerick and was with Ireton when he died) and then Charles Fleetwood. Ireton and Fleetwood were also both allied to him by marriage, successively marrying his sister Bridget Cromwell.

Henry Cromwell appears to have returned to England sometime late in 1652 or early in 1653, for on 10 May 1653, at Kensington, he married Elizabeth Russell, eldest daughter of Francis Russell of Chippenham in Cambridgeshire, a friend and former military comrade of Oliver Cromwell, who had campaigned with him in East Anglia during the civil war of 1642–1646. Henry spent much of the next two years with his wife and in-laws at Chippenham and his first child, a daughter Elizabeth, was born there in September 1654. Around the same time as his marriage, in the spring of 1653, he was named one of six representatives of Ireland in the Nominated Assembly and he played an active role in that body. Assigned lodgings nearby in Whitehall, in November he was elected to the Assembly's short-lived Council of State and was then assiduous in attending

[19] The best concise biography of Henry Cromwell, drawn on here, is P. Gaunt, 'Cromwell, Henry', in *ODNB*.

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Council meetings, being identified by a contemporary commentator as one of the moderate members of the Assembly, 'for the Godly Learned Ministry and Universities', though he had no recorded role in the Assembly's sudden resignation in December. The change of regime and his father's elevation to head of state as Lord Protector on 16 December 1653 did not formally alter his position and he did not immediately gain any new military or political offices in the Protectorate. However, in practice, as the younger son – by the 1650s, three of Oliver Cromwell's sons had died and only Henry and his elder brother Richard remained – of the new, albeit non-hereditary, head of state, Henry's role did change.

From early 1654, Henry accompanied his father on some state occasions, commentators and the weekly newspapers began reporting his actions, and in the summer of 1654 he was returned as MP for the University of Cambridge to the first Protectorate parliament. Again, he seems to have been quite active in that body, regularly nominated to committees and serving as teller in three formal divisions. More importantly, in the spring of 1654 he was employed by his father on a mission back to Ireland to investigate the political and religious allegiances of the English army there, and of the military and administrative officials then running Irish affairs. Travelling via North Wales, he spent a little under three weeks in Ireland in March 1654, meeting Fleetwood and other military commanders (including Edmund Ludlow), a selection of Dublin civic dignitaries, and various legal officers. He offered a forthright summary of his findings to Secretary Thurloe, reporting that the army and most of its officers were loyal to the new Protectoral regime, but picking out Ludlow for stinging criticism and his fellow-commissioner John Jones for more tempered criticism for respectively very active and overt and more subdued and semi-covert opposition to the Protectorate. He felt that, on the grounds of its inactivity, inefficiency, and a self-interest bordering on corruption, the Irish administration should be overhauled; and he reported that its head, Fleetwood, was 'too deeply ingaged in a partial affection to the persons of the anabaptists, to answer your end; though I doe believe it rather to proceed from tendernes then love to their principles'. He concluded that Fleetwood would welcome an opportunity to hand over command and leave Ireland, at least for a time, as 'his desire [was] rather to returne, than to continue' there, and he suggested that the Protector's brother-in-law and senior army officer John Desborough be sent to Ireland both to replace Ludlow and to serve as 'deputie' for the recalled Fleetwood.[20]

[20] *TSP*, II, p. 149.

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Indeed, over the following months Protector and Council did review and reshape the English government of Ireland. By 1654, the twin policies of active military reconquest and the brutal dispossession and transplantation of Irish Catholics were in essence as complete as they would be, and the English handling of Ireland could shift from naked military control to a degree of more regular civil and civilian style of management, albeit one still supported by a large and continuing military presence. Accordingly, punitive policies might give way to greater moderation, to a more relaxed and constructive handling, if not of the Irish Catholics, at least of the Protestant population, and to a reconstruction of political, administrative, judicial, and religious forms in Ireland, moving them away from the overtly militaristic and improvisational lines of the war years and towards something more traditional, stable, and durable, which might win broader support in Ireland and thus strengthen the Protectoral regime there.

Such goals may have figured in the reorganization of the Irish administration instituted by the Protector and his Protectoral Council in August 1654, which ended the power of a group of parliamentary commissioners. These were a mixture of English military figures and civilian politicians, originally appointed by the Rump in 1650, though the composition of the group had changed in the interim. Only Ludlow, who had resigned earlier in 1654, had had experience of Ireland prior to his appointment, by dint of his military service there. In their place, Protector and Council established an Irish council, whose instructions ranged more widely than those re-issued to the parliamentary commissioners in August 1652,[21] including, for example, new provisions for settling taxation and fiscal affairs in Ireland, and for managing and letting Irish land still held by the state. Like their predecessors the parliamentary commissioners, the six founder-members of the Irish council had few existing links with Ireland – only Miles Corbet, the sole parliamentary commissioner to transfer to the new council, had substantial Irish experience, though a second councillor, Robert Goodwin, had had business dealings with Ireland. More importantly, however, only two of the new councillors, Matthew Tomlinson and Robert Hammond, had had significant army careers and could be considered military figures. Corbet and Goodwin were politicians and had been quite prominent in the Long Parliament; the other two new councillors, Richard Pepys and William Steele, had legal rather than military or political backgrounds. Moreover, Hammond was dead by the end of 1654 and, after a long delay, he was effectively replaced in 1656 by William Bury, a politician and financial expert, further weakening the military representation on the Irish

[21] Dunlop, pp. 263–268 and 437–443.

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council and giving that body an even stronger civilian complexion. Thus the establishment of the new Irish council, its instructions and powers, and its membership might all be taken as signs that, in the summer of 1654, Protector and Protectoral Council were looking to change the way in which Ireland was handled and administered.

However, at the same time, in August 1654, Protector and Council, far from recalling Charles Fleetwood from Ireland as recommended by Henry Cromwell, instead confirmed, continued, and enhanced his role as head of the Irish administration. Fleetwood had risen to prominence in the early and mid-1640s as a military figure, as colonel of a cavalry regiment in the Eastern Association Army and then the New Model Army, as an MP from 1646, and in the army politics of spring and summer 1647. He took a curiously low-key role in developments over the next few years – he seems to have played little or no part in the second civil war, took no role in the regicide, and was not part of the Cromwellian campaign in Ireland in 1649–1650 – but he returned to the fore in Cromwell's Scottish campaign of 1650–1651 as lieutenant-general of the horse, prominent at the battles of Dunbar and Worcester. In July 1652, he was appointed by the Rump and commissioned by Oliver Cromwell as commander-in-chief of the English army in Ireland, replacing the dead Ireton, and he crossed to Ireland in September. Over the following two years he was the effective head of the English administration in Ireland, exercising not only military command but also, in co-ordination with the parliamentary commissioners, administrative and political leadership.[22]

Fleetwood's record in Ireland in 1652–1654 reflected both his military pedigree and his endorsement of the generally hostile policies towards the majority Irish population that were adopted by the Rump. Accordingly, he supported and attempted to execute the policy of mass transplantation of Irish Catholic landowners and to redistribute confiscated Irish land to the state's mainly English civilian and military creditors. He supported, or at least acquiesced in the face of, complaints emanating from the English army in Ireland on a range of topics, including military grievances such as arrears of pay and the tardiness of allocating soldiers Irish land. Moreover, despite Oliver Cromwell's warning to him in 1652 to 'take heed also of your natural inclination to compliance',[23] he adopted a very lax and acquiescent approach to signs of broader military discontent and to growing religious and political unrest within the army. He did little to counter either religious radicalism and the spread of fervent Baptism

[22] The best concise biography of Charles Fleetwood, drawn on here, is T. Barnard, 'Fleetwood, Charles', in *ODNB*.

[23] Abbott, II, p. 602.

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within the army or the growth of military disaffection in the wake of the political and constitutional changes in England during 1653, so that, by 1654, there was evidence that a number of senior field officers, garrison commanders, and military governors in Ireland were distancing themselves from the new Protectoral regime, using radical religion to reinforce and partly to disguise their republican disaffection. Fleetwood's passive and 'delphic'[24] handling of these issues, his inaction in the face of spreading and potentially subversive and disruptive opinion within the English army in Ireland, caused alarm both in Ireland and in London. It was almost certainly concern over Fleetwood's handling of these issues that led the new Protector to dispatch his younger son to Ireland in March 1654 and Henry Cromwell's resulting report pulled few punches in its assessment of Fleetwood's shortcomings. In the light of Fleetwood's military background and his mixed record in Ireland, of the potential for the new Protectoral regime to change its approach to and policies for Ireland, and of signs that the appointment of an Irish council with a less military appearance may have been leading in that direction, the confirmation of Fleetwood's Irish command in August 1654 and the decision by the Protector and Protectoral Council to appoint him lord deputy of Ireland for a term of three years to 1 September 1657 seemed to run counter to any such intention and to those other initiatives. The surviving sources do not make clear or explicit why Fleetwood was not merely confirmed in command of Ireland but also appointed lord deputy at this stage. His closeness to Oliver Cromwell – Fleetwood had become his son-in-law in 1652 – as well as the genuine affection in which he was held by many in Ireland, particularly amongst the English army and the radical sects there, may have induced Protector and Protectoral Council to stick by him in the summer of 1654.

However, Fleetwood's continuing command in Ireland, now as lord deputy although in co-ordination with a new Irish council, came into question almost immediately, with a proposal that Henry Cromwell be sent to Ireland to play a senior military and political role there. In August 1654, the Protectoral Council had recommended to the Protector that his younger son be appointed commander of the English army in Ireland and be added to the new Irish council and, later in the autumn, with the Protector apparently hesitating, a clutch of senior 'Irish gentlemen', including Lord Broghill, attended the Council in London to urge and support Henry's appointment. At length, in late December 1654, the Protector appointed his younger son major-general of the army in Ireland and formally added him to the Irish

[24] The word is Barnard's: 'Fleetwood, Charles' in *ODNB*.

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council.[25] There then followed another significant delay before Henry crossed to Ireland to take up his new posts in July 1655.

Fleetwood's position within this new arrangement remained unclear for a time and some of his own letters during the first half of 1655 suggest that he then believed he would continue in Ireland, presumably working with Henry Cromwell – whose arrival in Ireland he urged, writing 'he will find welcome here; the sooner he comes the better'[26] – but actively retaining the senior position within the Irish administration. However, by late spring rumours were circulating that Fleetwood was to be recalled to England and that Henry would, in fact, supersede him in Dublin, for on 22 June the Protector wrote an emollient letter to his son-in-law, vigorously denying that he was about to be recalled and Henry Cromwell appointed lord deputy in his stead, though also reporting that if Fleetwood had 'a mind to come over' to London he would be welcomed.[27] In practice, by mid-summer the assumption on both sides seems to have been that Henry Cromwell would physically replace his brother-in-law as not only military commander but also chief administrator in and of Ireland, for Henry sought and received assurances in London that he would have power to appoint to 'places and offices' in Ireland, while Fleetwood embarked upon an extensive final tour of inspection around Ireland and began making preparations to return to England with his family.[28] By early August, Fleetwood reported that he had received 'his highnes positive commands to returne into England'[29] and, after a month or so working alongside Henry Cromwell in Dublin, Fleetwood and his family left Ireland, never to return, in early September. Several of the opening letters in this collection relate to the logistics of Henry's journey to Ireland and of Fleetwood's return to England and to London.[30] Equally, some letters of summer 1655, originally addressed to Fleetwood in Dublin, either missed him and were opened by Henry Cromwell or were left by Fleetwood for his brother-in-law's use and so have ended up in this collection.[31]

From Fleetwood's departure in September 1655 until the autumn of 1657, Henry Cromwell's official role and title in Ireland were somewhat ambiguous and his position often rather uncomfortable. Fleetwood remained lord deputy of Ireland until his commission

[25] M.A.E. Green (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1654* (London, 1880), pp. 321, 328, 382; Dunlop, pp. 468–469.
[26] *TSP*, III, p. 363.
[27] Abbott, III, p. 756.
[28] *TSP*, III, pp. 440, 558, 566, 632, 690.
[29] *TSP*, III, p. 697.
[30] See items 4, 6, 8, 9, and 10.
[31] See items 2, 4, and 6.

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expired in September 1657, though he was now an absentee and spent the period in London, where he was a senior army officer and politician, taking his seat on the Protectoral Council. Henry had command of the English army in Ireland and was, in practice, chief administrator of Ireland, although on paper he was starved of political power and his authority was limited to membership of the Irish council. The position, described by the foremost historian of Cromwellian Ireland as one of the Protector's 'least satisfactory compromises',[32] caused enormous problems. Henry was denied full power to develop and implement his own policies in Ireland, and instead was repeatedly compelled to consult, defer to, and win the support or the sometimes grudging acquiescence of the absentee lord deputy, Fleetwood, who had wide political and military influence within Protectoral central government in London and who was generally deferred to on Irish business within the Protectoral Council.

In light of this, Henry Cromwell's already tense relationship with his brother-in-law quickly deteriorated over the period 1655–1657, for Fleetwood's views on Irish policies were often very different from those of his young brother-in-law, just as Fleetwood maintained good relations with radical military, political, and religious figures who quickly came to oppose Henry's approach in Ireland and whom Henry equally quickly marked down as opponents and enemies. Fleetwood could and often did serve, wittingly or unwittingly, both as a hindrance to Henry's Irish policies and as a rallying point for his critics and opponents on both sides of the Irish Sea. Many letters in this collection attest to the tense and worsening relationship between the two men, which clearly almost reached breaking point at times, as well as to clear political differences; to starkly differing opinions about particular military, political, and religious figures and policies; and to the ways in which friends, allies, and agents of the two men were also drawn into something of a power struggle fought out between Fleetwood in London and Henry Cromwell in Dublin. The latter became deeply suspicious of Fleetwood's actions and many letters both in this collection and in *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe* make, repeat, or respond to allegations that Fleetwood and his cronies in London were deliberately thwarting, delaying, detaining, undermining, or slandering agents sent to London by Henry to promote his Irish policies with the Protector, Protectoral Council, or parliament there. As relations deteriorated, Henry and Fleetwood were kept informed of, or became parties to, bickering, allegations, and counter-allegations; disputes about letters that had allegedly been written and were being circulated; and accusations

[32] Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland*, p. 20.

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concerning groundless and scurrilous rumours being concocted or spread by one side to blacken the other. Even allowing for a degree of exaggeration and for the rather prickly, thin-skinned, and over-sensitive nature of the two main protagonists, things clearly became very fraught and unpleasant at times.

Throughout his four years in Ireland, Henry Cromwell was based in Dublin for most of the year, often residing at Cork House in the city, but also using the state rooms at Dublin Castle and, particularly during the summer months, spending time with his family at Phoenix House on the outskirts of the city. Each year, he left his family at Dublin and undertook a late summer and early autumn tour of inspection around Ireland, visiting key towns, garrisons, and strongholds, and also some of the land and property that he acquired by purchase or allocation during his years in Ireland, including the great Portumna estate in Galway, in which he took a keen interest.

For most of the year, Henry Cromwell governed from Dublin, meeting regularly and working in co-ordination with the Irish council established in August 1654 and inherited from Fleetwood. Surviving conciliar records are very thin and it is now impossible to reconstruct much of the day-to-day operation of the central executive or to paint a full and detailed picture of the relationship between, and relative roles and powers of, Henry Cromwell and the Irish council. Some surviving sources, including some letters in this collection, suggest that, from September 1655 onwards, Henry was the dominant figure in Dublin, actively heading the Irish administration, and supported and empowered by his position as commander of the army in Ireland and by his relationship with Protectoral central government in London in general and with his father in particular. However, there are clear indications both in this collection and in correspondence in *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe* that Henry Cromwell was at times hemmed in by the Irish council, was perhaps no more than *primus inter pares* within that body, and that both the small size of the existing council and the opposition he was encountering within it to some of his policies represented serious limitations to his freedom of action, even before the role of the absentee lord deputy was taken into account. Hence Henry's repeated requests, not that he be given more power – he firmly distanced himself from the occasional requests by others that he be made lord deputy or allocated greater powers – or that the basic structure of the Dublin government be changed, but that additional and supportive councillors should be appointed to enlarge the Irish council and, by implication, to ensure a clear majority for his favoured policies in that body. However, despite repeated assurances that additional councillors were being sought across the Irish Sea, very few changes were made over this period. William Steele, originally

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appointed in 1654, and William Bury, appointed in 1656 to replace the long-dead Robert Hammond, crossed from England to Dublin in the summer of 1656 to join the Irish council, though the former proved as much a hindrance as a help in advancing Henry's favoured policies.

During his first months in Ireland, Henry Cromwell pushed ahead with a range of policies, some new, others continuing Fleetwood's approach. For example, he largely continued and enforced the tail end of the policy of transplanting Irish Catholics, ensuring, for instance, that they were removed from the important town and stronghold of Galway and other walled towns, although there are also signs that he wished to moderate some elements of the anti-Catholic policies. When, in 1657, parliament introduced a new oath of abjuration, requiring Catholics to deny papal power, transubstantiation, and the validity of the Roman church, Henry Cromwell regretted the move, commenting, 'I wish this extrame course had not been so suddenly taken, comeing like a thunder-clapp uppon them'. Thurloe replied that only fresh parliamentary legislation could change the legal position, though he recommended that 'prudent manadgment of it upon the place will be the best way'.[33] However, Henry generally maintained the existing hostile line towards the majority Irish Catholic population, viewing them as enemies of the Protectoral regime and potential allies of the Spanish, mounting occasional military and police operations against Catholic areas, and lobbying for a more effective naval guard around the Irish coast. His rather callous attitude towards the native Irish Catholics is revealed by one of his first initiatives in Ireland, in the autumn of 1655, when he sought to gather together 'a supply of younge Irish girles' to be sent forcibly to stock the new English possession of Jamaica, defending the scheme on the grounds that 'although we must use force in takeinge them up, yet it beinge so much for their owne goode, and likely to be of soe great advantage to the publique'. He soon proposed that between 1,500 and 2,000 young Irish Catholic boys, aged between twelve and fourteen, be rounded up and sent with them to Jamaica, as 'it may be a meanes to make them English-men, I meane rather, Christianes'. He then struck upon the idea of holding together around 1,500 men out of the 5,000 or so being disbanded from the English army in Ireland – Fleetwood had begun the disbandment just before he left, but much of the detailed work fell to Henry Cromwell as his first task in Ireland – and either encouraging or compelling them to go to Jamaica to help colonize that island.[34] The entire scheme, encompassing both Irish

[33] *TSP*, VI, p. 527, and VII, p. 4.
[34] *TSP*, IV, pp. 23–24, 40, 74, 75, 198.

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Catholic girls and boys and disbanded English troops, received some rather guarded and lukewarm support from Secretary Thurloe, but was soon allowed to run into the sand. As with so many of Henry Cromwell's proposals for Ireland, the Protectoral regime in London lacked the will or resources to back them up and to bring them to fruition.

At the outset, Henry Cromwell's mission in Ireland was described by his chaplain, Thomas Harrison, thus:

> to put honour upon the publique worship of God, and life into His people, and a checke upon some irregular spirits, whome I rather desire to serve in love and pitty, then to censure [. . . .] The nation lyes like clay upon the wheele, ready to receive what forme authority shall please to give it.[35]

Within the opening months, Henry Cromwell proposed and lobbied for a range of policies, most of them designed to bring greater stability and prosperity to Ireland, to restore elements of traditional life, and thus, he hoped, to win the active support of the Protestants in Ireland for his father's Protectoral regime. Most of these initiatives needed the support of the Protectoral central government and of the lord deputy in London. The regular correspondence between Henry Cromwell and London, between Dublin and the various agents and missions dispatched to London in order to advance Irish policies (much of it found in this collection), is full of business of this kind. Almost from the outset, Henry was requesting more money from London for Ireland and more good people to be sent across, not just as councillors but also as administrators, judges, and ministers in Ireland; these were to become common refrains throughout his years in Ireland. During the autumn of 1655, Henry also sought approval to dispense some of the native Irish population from transplantation, to establish a new militia in Ireland, to set up a naval victualling office in Dublin, and to create a new mint in Ireland so that the existing poor and debased coinage circulating in Ireland, 'which like a cancer hath eaten out the good', could be replaced.[36] During the opening months of 1656, Henry sent several agents on missions to London, bearing detailed instructions that covered these and a range of other requests and policies to be pursued with the Protector, the Protectoral Council, and the lord deputy.[37]

However, the first major initiative – and battle – upon which Henry Cromwell embarked in Ireland was to break the power of religious radicalism in general, and of 'Anabaptism' in particular,

[35] *TSP*, III, p. 715.
[36] *TSP*, IV, pp. 40, 73–74, 198, 307–308.
[37] Dunlop, pp. 560–561 and 612–613.

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within the English army in Ireland. Both Henry Cromwell and the correspondents in this collection tended to use the term 'Anabaptism' rather loosely, to cover not only Baptism itself – a faith which had undoubtedly gained a stronghold within the English army in Ireland and in some English communities under Fleetwood – but also other forms of allegedly subversive religious radicalism allied to it. Henry Cromwell believed that Baptism and its allied faiths served as a cover for, as well as themselves encouraged, both insubordination within the army and political disaffection towards the Protectoral regime. While stressing that he had no particular quarrel with Baptism or any other faith per se, and that he was willing to offer Baptists 'equally liberty both in their spirituall and civill concernments with any others',[38] he was determined to end the favoured position that Baptism had gained during Fleetwood's years in charge and to break the hold that it had acquired amongst garrison commanders, town governors, and senior officers as well as amongst the rank and file. The result was a dour campaign fought out not only in Ireland itself but also within governmental circles in London, as Henry Cromwell sought to break the power of the Baptists and their associates, and as leading military and civilian Baptists and their allies sought in turn to thwart him in Ireland and to agitate against him in London, attempting, with some success, to draw Fleetwood and, through him, the Protector into the fray.

Just as Henry Cromwell noted the undue power of the Baptists in Ireland and their undue influence with Fleetwood during his brief visit of March 1654, so the Baptists marked him down as a potential enemy from that time. Contemporaries recorded that the Baptists did not welcome Henry Cromwell in the spring of 1654, that they absented themselves from the formal proclamation of the Protectoral government in Dublin that coincided with his visit, and that 'their invectives and derisory expressions were many and frequent'.[39] In one of his earliest surviving letters from Ireland upon returning as chief administrator in 1655, Henry Cromwell reported that 'all is verry quiett and peaceable, and men nowe doe begin to thinke it is but reasonable, that their shoulde be ane equallitie helde out to all such as have bin fellowe-labourers together, and continue sober and honest', but at the same time he noted that 'there are some amonge us doe think, that they are not well used, if a good place slippe by them'.[40]

Over the following year or more, Henry Cromwell worked steadily to remove Baptists and their allies from several key military and

[38] *TSP*, IV, p. 433.
[39] *TSP*, II, pp. 162–164.
[40] *TSP*, III, p. 699.

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provincial offices and to appoint non-Baptists in their stead, thus whittling down Baptist and radical religious influence in military circles and largely excluding radical Baptists and their allies from any direct position or voice within the central administration in Dublin. Some Baptist ministers lost their official, government salaries and were moved from prominent and influential to more obscure areas and parishes. At the same time, through debate and discussion and by adopting a cautious and equitable line, he sought to win over some of the moderate Baptists and to isolate their more extreme colleagues, whose radical faith shaded into military insubordination and political dissent. In January 1656, he assured Thurloe that the Baptists would continue to have 'Liberty and countenance', but 'to rule me, or to rule with me, I should not approve of [. . .] I doe not thinke that God has given them a spirritt of government; neither is it safe they should have much power in their handes'.[41]

Under steady pressure, and despite counter-attacks and agitation in both Ireland and London (much of which is recounted or alluded to in this collection), Baptism slowly lost its favoured position in Ireland, and its potential role as a front and cover for disaffection was reduced, while prominent Baptists and their allies were progressively isolated, neutered, dismissed, or won over. By the time Henry Cromwell returned to Dublin following his 1656 summer tour of the provinces, he felt that the battle had been won:

> I have since my returne bin more courted by the Anabaptists then formerly. Mr Patient and some others, whoe had not bin with me of a longe time before came to visit me, and expressed much to their satisfaction with my management of things here, and that their people had much liberty as they could desire, and much to the same purpose. What this means I must of a sudden imagine. I shall, as formerly, carry it with all moderation towards them.[42]

The victory was complete when, in the closing weeks of 1656, four of the senior officers of the army in Ireland who had adopted the Baptist faith or were allied to the 'Anabaptist' agitation and who had taken the lead in opposing Henry Cromwell, visited him and insisted on resigning their commissions.[43] Other Baptists either fell silent or began courting and supporting Henry Cromwell on his terms. On 17 December, he wrote triumphantly to Thurloe:

> The Anabaptists and others, whose way and principles were inconsistent with settlement and our interest, do find themselves disabled from doing much harm. My inclination now is, having brought them to good terms, not to crush

[41] *TSP*, IV, p. 433.
[42] *TSP*, I, p. 731.
[43] Henry's long and detailed account of the event is at *TSP*, V, pp. 670–671.

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> them quite, lest through despair they attempt things dangerous [. . . .] Besides, it is against my conscience to bear hard upon any, merely upon the account of a different judgment, or to do any thing, that might make them think so.[44]

Although Henry Cromwell's battle with the Baptists and their allies had been won, it had come at a high personal and political price. As this correspondence reveals, his relationship with Fleetwood worsened markedly during 1655–1656; he often felt unsure whether the Protectoral central government, his father included, was really supporting him; he was intensely suspicious of what was going on in London; and he sometimes came close to despair or was put on the defensive by the actions of others. For example, he was perturbed when several of his leading opponents agitated in London for Fleetwood's return to Ireland or gained direct access to his father, and he reacted badly when one of them, John Hewson, received a letter from the Protector, which might be interpreted as giving some support to his position and as failing to endorse Henry's stance. As an ally put it in December 1655, 'They say, it is evident by that from his highnesse, that my lord was sent over to be commanded, not to command; to serve, and not to rule'.[45] Equally, Henry was wrong-footed when his own friends and allies petitioned for his appointment as lord deputy of Ireland in place of Fleetwood, correctly seeing that it would not be supported by the Protector but would in some ways both strengthen Fleetwood's position and further sour his relationship with his brother-in-law.

The battle with the Baptists bit deeper still. Even as he succeeded Fleetwood in the summer of 1655, there were signs of personal unease: Fleetwood noted that his young brother-in-law 'may have sometimes some melancholy thoughts, yet I hope he will find it much better then he may at present expect'; while Henry Cromwell admitted upon Fleetwood's departure that no man 'was more troubled to parte with him then myselfe' and that 'I shall have little comforte to stay behind, further then to answer duty'.[46] By early October he was writing to his father, 'Your highness cannot but be sensible, that by reason of my youthe and inabilitie, that my tryalls and temptations are too greate for me, as well as my employment'.[47] Late in 1655, he admitted that, upon his arrival in the summer, he had on one occasion shown 'too much of my owne spiritt (which through grace I am sencible of as my burden)', and was now making a conscious effort to take 'an even

[44] *TSP*, V, p. 710.
[45] *TSP*, IV, p. 349.
[46] *TSP*, III, pp. 697, 728–729, and IV, pp. 23–24.
[47] *TSP*, IV, p. 74.

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hande even to those, that have done me all this evill'.[48] Around the same time he reported that his Baptist opponents were 'starke madd [. . . .] They have not had any provocation from me, neither in word or action. I have with all dilegence watched over my owne spirit'.[49] But his youth and inexperience, and the short temper that he knew he possessed worried others, including his father, whose letters of 1655–1656 sought to reassure and support, but also to guide and warn his son, advising him not to be 'over-jealous, lest your apprehensions of others cause you to offend', nor to be 'too hard' on his opponents.[50] In the opening months of his son's government of Ireland, at the height of the contest with the Baptists, it seems that the Protector also sought confidential reports upon Henry's performance in Ireland. Thus, in a letter to Thurloe of October 1655, Thomas Harrison implied that he was providing confidential reports on Henry Cromwell – 'Sir, I assure you, that my lord never saw a line that I writ to you or to his highnesse. I am not unaquainted with the snares and temptations, whereby my lord hath been formerly indangered, and whereof I suppose his highnes may be still fearfull and jealous'.[51] Similarly, it later emerged that Thomas Cooper had been appointed to Ireland by the Protector at the end of 1655 in part to report back on Henry Cromwell's performance – the following year the Protector 'confessed hee sent colonel Cooper over to spy; that Cooper wrote to his Highness that your lordship's actions were prudent and warrantable, and gave not the least grounds for what had bin suggested against you'.[52]

Had Henry Cromwell been aware of this at the time, it would probably have increased his uncertainty still more. Often unsure of his position, feeling that his father and the London government were not properly supporting him but were listening to his Baptist opponents, and sometimes believing his cause to be lost, on occasion he gave way to despair. In December 1655, with reports circulating that Hewson and his allies had been given a friendly reception by the Protector and claims that Oliver Cromwell was not fully supporting his son's stance, Henry, who was at a low ebb because of a sharp and persistent cold, began wailing about 'howe evilly I am requited for my kindness', how he had 'noethinge to quiett my spiritt, but through grace the integritie of my owne harte in my actions' and about how the Protector could 'doe with me as he please, send me into a Welch cottage, if it be

[48] *TSP*, IV, p. 349.
[49] *TSP*, IV, pp. 254–255.
[50] Abbott, IV, p. 146.
[51] *TSP*, IV, pp. 90–91.
[52] No. 139.

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for his service'.[53] In response to this and similar sentiments, both the Protector and Secretary Thurloe sought to smooth ruffled feathers, offering support and reassurance. Thurloe advised him that 'Hard sayinges, yea reproaches, and worse, is the portion of the best men in these uncerteyne and giddy tymes, and you must not thinke to goe shott free'.[54]

Six months later, in the summer of 1656, Henry Cromwell went further and wrote several letters to his father and to Thurloe seeking to resign his offices in Ireland and to retire to the mainland:

> Truly sir, accordinge to the apprehension I have of the present state of thinges, I cannot judge it good either for the publique or myselfe to be longer here. I knowe not howe thinges are managed, but sure I am, my enemyes [. . .] insult; my friends droope, myself thereby rendered contemptible, and altogether uncapable of doeing further service.[55]

Again, letters admonishing – Thurloe cautioned, 'Everybody can keepe his place, when all men applaude hym, speake well of hym; but not to faint in a day of adversity is the matter'[56] – as well as reassuring and promising greater support, some of them to be found in this collection, persuaded Henry Cromwell to stay and continue his work in Ireland, and the crisis passed. However, his own uncertainties persisted for, in December 1656, even at the time of his clear triumph over the Baptists and their allies, he was writing to Thurloe that 'I knowe I am a poore creature, attended with many frailtys and weaknesses, and have need to wait uppon God for renewed strength; and truly my late desires of retirement have proceeded frome the apprehension I have hade of my owne unfittness for soe great and difficult a worke'.[57]

By the opening months of 1656, Henry was becoming aware of the emergence and spread of Quakerism, not among the native population, but principally among some elements of the English army, including garrisons and military governors, especially at Cork and Kinsale and more generally in the province of Munster. He feared that Quakerism could become the new Baptism, a cover for military insubordination and political disaffection, as well as a possible vehicle for social upheaval. As early as 6 February, Henry Cromwell was claiming that 'Our most considerable enemy nowe in our view are the quakers', adding that 'I thinke their principles and practises are not verry consistent with civil government, much lesse with the discipline

[53] *TSP*, IV, pp. 327–328.
[54] *TSP*, IV, p. 373.
[55] *TSP*, V, p. 177.
[56] *TSP*, V, pp. 196–197.
[57] *TSP*, V, pp. 729–730.

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of an army' and that 'Their counterfeited simplicitie renders them to me the more dangerous'.[58] Accordingly, he acted quickly and firmly to clamp down on that faith, moving or threatening to dismiss military governors and senior officers, and swiftly cashiering junior officers and rank and file soldiers who were found to have converted to Quakerism. Once the Quaker threat was broken and subsided, and possibly as Henry Cromwell came to view Quakerism as no real threat to his political or military control, he gradually relaxed his approach to the remaining civilian Quakers in Ireland.

Although much of Henry's time was taken up by Irish business in 1655–1656 (getting a grip on his new brief; curbing the Baptists and reining in the 'Anabaptist' elements in the army; dispatching to London and liaising with Sir John Reynolds, Thomas Harrison, Anthony Morgan, and other agents there who were pursuing Irish business with the Protectoral central government; and so forth), he retained a wider interest in the domestic and foreign affairs of the Protectoral regime. Letters in this collection show how he was kept abreast of the establishment and running of the new tier of semi-militarized regional government in England and Wales headed by the major-generals, and of the discussions that resulted in the decision to call the second Protectorate parliament, as well as of the rather mixed fortunes of the amphibious expedition sent to the Caribbean. He was also involved in finding troops from the English army in Ireland to be dispatched as reinforcements to Jamaica, an issue which, as several letters in this collection reveal, turned out to be unexpectedly fraught and protracted. Above all, although parliamentary developments during the opening months of the second Protectorate parliament are poorly charted in this collection, Henry Cromwell received a succession of detailed letters about the events of the latter half of that session. Indeed, this collection serves as one of the principal sources for the parliamentary and wider political and military developments surrounding the introduction, revision, and adoption of the new written constitution in general and the kingship question in particular during the period of February to June 1657.

Henry Cromwell's own responses to these developments emerge, albeit sometimes rather cloudily, via the drafts of letters that he wrote or intended to write to Broghill over this period, which are found in this collection,[59] though we have to turn to other sources for fuller and clearer indications of Henry's stance. Although one report claimed that, in December 1654, in his only recorded speech in the first Protectorate parliament, Henry Cromwell had supported a proposal

[58] TSP, IV, p. 508.
[59] Nos 209, 210, 233, 234, 244, 245, and 246.

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that his father become king,[60] a series of detailed letters that he wrote to his father and to Thurloe between early March and early June 1657, and which survive in other collections, indicate that, by this stage, he was adopting a far more cautious line towards kingship. He both appreciated the work of the parliamentary majority in bringing forward the new constitutional proposals, many of which he praised as excellent and improvements upon the existing constitution, and at the same time condemned those army officers and others who were agitating against kingship. Nonetheless, he clearly had some reservations about the new title and argued that the supporters of the constitution were making a serious error in focusing so much upon the title and the kingship issue, and in trying to tie all the constitutional proposals to this point. He cautioned that 'to contend over earnestly for a name' ('titles and names are of little moment', he advised his father on 22 April) might imperil the entire edifice and 'for my owne parte, I cannot apprehend the necessity of it'; he wrote further, 'I could never be yet convinced, that all those excellent proposalls of the parliament are soe inseparably affix'd to the name of king, that all should stand or fall together'. In early June, once news of the Protector's firm and final refusal of the crown had reached Dublin, Henry Cromwell seemed not greatly perturbed, writing that as 'providence hath disposed matters thus, lett us be contented, and thankfull to God', commenting that 'I like graduall proceedings best, and this the better, because it seemes such' and concluding that, if for the moment the government had to continue to rest on the old written constitution, he would be content 'that the finishing our settlement bee also deferred till a competint tryall hath beene made of the present way'.[61] Thus, for Henry Cromwell, his father's rejection of the crown in the spring of 1657 was not the hammer blow that it appears to have been for some of the other correspondents in this collection.

A trio of issues more directly relevant to Ireland and Irish business came together to worry and dismay Henry Cromwell during the summer and autumn of 1657, all of them reported or assessed in letters in this collection. The first centred on the reorganization of the military forces in Ireland, an area in which he had already suffered one rebuff. From his opening months in Ireland, he had nurtured plans to establish a militia there and by autumn 1656 he was actively promoting the idea, laying detailed plans and arguing that 'I knowe nothinge of more advantage to the securitie of his highness and the publique interest of this nation, then the effectuall setlinge thereof'.[62]

[60] *Clarke Papers*, III, p. 16.
[61] *TSP*, VI, pp. 93–94, 182–183, 222–223, 330.
[62] *TSP*, V, pp. 493–494.

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However, in late October Thurloe reported back that, although the Protector had given the proposal considerable thought and felt that it had some advantages, he believed that it also carried dangers and that on financial and security grounds a militia should not be established, at least for the moment – 'his highnes commaunded [. . .] that you will still have it in your consideration, and beare it in hand, but not to take any finall resolution, or actually to erect it, untill he shall have had a further prospect thereof'.[63] Henry Cromwell was clearly disappointed and continued to press the advantages of a militia force in Ireland, but there was an air of resignation in his comment, 'I doe somewhat wonder this business finds any hesitation [. . .] but I see good and necessarie things fare the worse comeing from my hande'.[64] He tried once more to revive the plan in a letter to his father of March 1657, again stressing the virtues of a militia, but again he received no support or encouragement.[65]

Instead, during the summer and autumn of 1657, a different and unwelcome type of military reorganization was forced upon Henry Cromwell. In an effort to cut costs and curb the military budget, the Protector and Protectoral Council instituted another round of disbandments to reduce the size of the standing army in England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. Henry argued strongly and repeatedly that the best way to reduce the army in Ireland was to maintain the existing number of ordinary soldiers but to reorganize the regimental structure and end the regimental organization for garrison troops and thus enable a significant reduction in the number of officers employed. The 'new modell would give opportunitie to weed out so many of those officers, who are either intollerably factious or turbulent, or are manifestly slacke in their duties', so both cutting costs and improving discipline, Henry argued.[66] Moreover, the officers were 'sufficiently tyed by their lands, to attend the defence and preservation of them and themselves', so that even once disbanded they would remain on hand and effectively act as a reserve, whereas ordinary troops once disbanded would probably leave Ireland and could not be recalled in times of danger or emergency.[67] Thus he strongly resisted and resented the plan (which he attributed to Fleetwood and which, despite all his arguments and the promises of consultation that he received, was eventually imposed upon him) to retain the existing regimental structure and with it the establishment and pay of the officers but

[63] *TSP*, V, p. 504.
[64] *TSP*, V, p. 586.
[65] *TSP*, VI, p. 142.
[66] *TSP*, VI, pp. 404–405.
[67] *TSP*, VI, pp. 505–506.

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instead to reduce the number of ordinary soldiers per troop, company, and regiment. The arguments dragged on through the autumn and, as late as the first week of December 1657, Henry Cromwell was still resisting the 'absurd and dangerous way' disbandment was being forced upon him, pointing increasingly bitterly to earlier assurances that 'nothing should be done without my concurrence';[68] but at length he had to obey the firm and direct orders received from the Protectoral Council.

The second issue, linked to military reduction, was the weak financial state of the Protectoral regime as a whole and thus the dire financial position into which Henry Cromwell found himself slipping in Ireland. As a cost-cutting measure on the mainland, in the summer of 1657 the subsidy that Ireland received out of the central Protectoral treasury was more than halved from £17,000 to just £7,000 or at best £8,000 per month. Henry despaired, arguing that such a reduction was based on wildly exaggerated estimates of the sums which could be raised in Ireland and that to run the country he needed to receive at least £11,000 per month from England. But his pleas fell on deaf ears, with both Fleetwood and Thurloe assuring him that the deficits accumulating in England precluded any reversal or amelioration of the cuts made to the subsidies sent to Ireland. Despite attempts in Dublin and London to find ways to squeeze more money out of Ireland – investigating whether it was possible to make more from Irish customs, either directly or by farming them out, as well as from rents on Irish land – by the end of the autumn Henry Cromwell was dispatching very gloomy letters to London. He reported that debts were mounting, that the payment of the existing army in Ireland had slipped more than eight months into arrear, and that he must have more cash to pay off the troops who were to be disbanded, the financial position thus adding to his anger at how disbandment was being enforced:

> To speak the truth, I am very much afraid, that I have not been well dealt withall in this business; for besides that I am not thought competent for an affair of this nature, I am put upon an impossibility, viz to disband without money to pay off the arrears.[69]

Thirdly, in the late summer and autumn of 1657, the government of Ireland was again reorganized, involving further divisions, uncertainties, and delays. The power of the Irish council appointed on 17 August 1654 was due to expire in mid-August 1657 and, in fact, the councillors ceased their work slightly ahead of that deadline. The

[68] *TSP*, VI, pp. 648–651, 657–658, 660–662, 665–666.
[69] *TSP*, VI, p. 658.

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power of Lord Deputy Fleetwood, who had also been appointed in summer 1654, was due to expire on 1 September 1657. Over the previous two years, Fleetwood had implied several times that he expected to return to Ireland in due course, there had been repeated rumours along those lines, and his supporters and Henry Cromwell's opponents had frequently agitated for his return. As the expiry of his three-year term approached, rumours, speculation, and agitation mounted. In fact, 1 September came and went with no decision taken in London and the Irish administration was left in limbo. Henry Cromwell used 'the leisure of this interregnum' to undertake 'a more nice inspection and visitation of our forces in severall places about the countrey'.[70] However, his attempts to appear nonchalant were undermined not only by his long and detailed letter distancing himself from a petition urging his appointment as lord deputy but also by his fears that the delay had been caused by doubts in London that he was suitable for appointment as head of the Irish administration, leading to renewed offers to stand down – 'If waveing mee would make that settlement more cleare, it were better to take it'.[71]

After several more weeks of drift, uncertainty, and rumour, in mid–November, Henry Cromwell was appointed and commissioned lord deputy of Ireland and authorized to govern Ireland in conjunction with an Irish council, which was named, appointed, and empowered at the same time.[72] The new, five-member council comprised no new members and all but one of the outgoing councillors; for, to his own dismay and Henry Cromwell's puzzlement and anger,[73] Robert Goodwin, one of the councillors who had generally supported Henry within the council, was dropped at this stage. On the one hand, Henry now had enhanced and more assured power to govern Ireland and no longer had to defer to the absentee and often obstructionist Fleetwood, who retained no office in or formal connection with Ireland. On the other hand, he now lacked a clear majority within the Irish council, because on key issues such as his religious reforms he often had only two supporters – Pepys and Bury – with Steele, Corbet, and Tomlinson opposing his policies. Moreover, Fleetwood's influence in political and military circles remained, and, in practice, the Protector and Protectoral Council continued to defer to him on Irish business.

During his year as lord deputy, from autumn 1657 to autumn 1658, Henry Cromwell continued, and in some areas developed or accelerated, the policies he had laid out during his opening two years

[70] *TSP*, VI, pp. 481–482.
[71] *TSP*, VI, pp. 446–447, 481–482.
[72] Dunlop, pp. 672–673.
[73] *TSP*, VI, pp. 599, 647, 648, 650, 661, 683.

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in Ireland, most of them focused upon creating more moderate, stable, civilian, and traditional forms at the centre and in the provinces, and upon meeting the needs and aspirations of the 'old Protestants' in Ireland, whatever their former allegiances. Accordingly, in 1657–1658, Henry developed his existing policy of progressively restoring traditional forms of urban and rural administration, with the return of commissions of the peace working alongside the four central courts (so restoring much of the traditional judicial structure in Ireland), and with the issuing of new town charters to restore civilian urban government. There were rather fitful attempts to boost Irish trade and manufacturing, and particular efforts were made to improve some of the key Irish towns, many of them depopulated in the wake of the enforced removal of some or all of their Catholic inhabitants and in a state of physical, social, and economic decline. Many of these efforts focused upon Galway, singled out for state and private resettlement schemes aimed at restoring its commercial and mercantile sector. During a visit in early autumn 1656, Henry Cromwell saw the 'well-built and faire houses [. . .] verry much goeinge to decay for want of inhabitants', while noting the town's potential as a commercial and English colonial base and suggesting that 'if fully planted with English, [it would] have a very great influence for the awing the Irish in this province'.[74] In the end, the English government decided to pass large parts of the town to Gloucester, and later to Liverpool too, to settle the state's debts to those towns; this decision met with a mixed response in Ireland, with accurate predictions that few Gloucester or Liverpool merchants would actually relocate and that the scheme would do little to repopulate or revive the town.

Rather more successful was the awarding of property and trading rights in Wexford to the financier and entrepreneur Martin Noell in part settlement of his debt, for Noell did take an active interest in Wexford's established fisheries and worked to improve them. Elsewhere, the material and financial position of the Protestant church in Ireland was strengthened by the selective amalgamation of poor or thinly populated parishes to increase the salaries of incumbents. Efforts were made to improve education, with plans to establish and finance more primary schools and proposals to set up a second college at Dublin, although in practice few new schools were established over this period and Henry Cromwell's dreams of setting up a new college remained unfulfilled. On the other hand, he did succeed in purchasing and removing to Dublin the library of the late Archbishop Ussher; it later passed to Trinity College, Dublin, of which Henry served as chancellor during this period.

[74] *TSP*, V, p. 494.

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Most of these policies of reform are recounted or alluded to in this collection. The correspondence also reveals how, during his year as lord deputy, Henry Cromwell had to struggle with the worsening financial situation in Ireland, exacerbated by the reduction of the English subsidies in the summer of 1657. Hopes that the second session of the second Protectorate parliament would produce a more beneficial financial settlement for Ireland – or at least vote money to pay off some or all of the growing and accumulated debt – were dashed when that session proved short, divisive, and unproductive. In early March 1658, James Standish was therefore dispatched to London by Henry Cromwell with instructions to brief the Protector about the financial situation in Ireland, to stress to him that, despite rigorous economies recently made to the civil and military budgets in Ireland, there was a large accumulated debt and a continuing monthly shortfall, and to seek both a one-off payment of £96,000 to clear the debts and a more generous monthly subsidy from the Protectoral treasury.[75] Although Standish duly lobbied the Protectoral central government in London and was strongly supported by a succession of letters from Henry Cromwell during the spring – increasingly urgent in tone, stressing the dire need for more money in Ireland, and commenting at one stage that 'Hunger will break through stone-walls'[76] – the mission was a failure and Standish returned to Dublin more or less empty-handed, as the growing debts of the Protectoral regime as a whole prevented a more generous provision for Ireland. Instead, by mid-summer Henry Cromwell and Thurloe were both looking to the meeting of another Protectorate parliament as the best and only way to rebuild the finances on both sides of the Irish Sea. However, the serious illness and then death of Oliver Cromwell disrupted plans to summon another parliament for the late summer or autumn of 1658.

The other major policy area that was considered and developed during Henry Cromwell's year as lord deputy was the organization of the Protestant church in Ireland in general and the funding of ministers there in particular. In 1655–1656, in the course of his battle with the Baptists and their allies, Henry was forced into an alliance with a group of Independent ministers, many of them based in and around Dublin and led by Samuel Winter. However, once the power of the radical sects had been broken, he slowly moved away from the Independents and adopted a more conservative religious stance. Thus, although he was initially suspicious of the loyalty of the Ulster Scots, in time he built bridges with them and their church, going out of his

[75] Dunlop, pp. 676–678.
[76] *TSP*, VII, p. 72.

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way to conciliate the Presbyterians, allowing them to consolidate their hold over religious life in Ulster, appointing Presbyterians as salaried ministers elsewhere in Ireland (including in and around the capital), and employing a Presbyterian as one of his chaplains. Similarly, he came to support the work of an association of ministers based in and around Cork and led by Edward Worth, many of them former Anglicans and Episcopalians, though incorporating Presbyterians and adopting elements of the Presbyterian church structure. Indeed, he came to see in their regional structure and organization in southern Ireland a possible blue-print for a new national Protestant church throughout Ireland. At the same time, Henry came to see serious flaws in the system of church finance that he had inherited in Ireland: a hybrid scheme in which traditional tithes continued to be collected but with the proceeds going into the Irish treasury, out of which state salaries were paid to those ministers approved or appointed by the government. By 1657–1658 he was critical of this system on a number of grounds – because it was an uneasy mix, 'a mongrel way between salary and tythes' as he put it;[77] because it broke the direct link between congregation and minister at parish level; and because an overhaul of the accounting system in Ireland had revealed that the income from tithes and church lands was falling well short of the costs of the scheme and that ministers' salaries were therefore adding to the growing debts.

In light of this, Henry Cromwell decided to convene a meeting of selected ministers in Dublin in the spring of 1658, to discuss the organization of the church in Ireland and to resolve a rumbling debate about how ministers should be financed, which, he claimed, 'is grown to that scurvy pass' that something had to be done.[78] From 23 April until early May, between twenty and thirty invited ministers met in Dublin to debate the issues and to consider recommendations from Henry Cromwell that had, probably with difficulty and possibly only on Henry's casting vote, been endorsed by the Irish council. The convention strongly supported a proposal to apply throughout Ireland the type of church organization already practised by Worth's association in the south and the Scottish Presbyterians in Ulster, with tighter maintenance of and control over gospel ordinances and ministry, regular ordination, and a fixed, parish-based clergy supported by a return to traditional tithes. Although Worth was immediately dispatched to London to win the Protector's support for this scheme, and despite Henry Cromwell's attempts to claim overwhelming if not unanimous support for the plan,[79] it soon became

[77] *TSP*, VII, pp. 101–102.
[78] *TSP*, VII, pp. 21–22.
[79] *TSP*, VII, pp. 129–130, 145, 161–162.

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apparent that the firmer Independents, especially Winter and his allies, were bitterly opposed to large parts of the scheme. Accordingly, as letters in this correspondence reveal, both sides carried the fight to the mainland, lobbying and seeking the support of the different religious factions in England, and attempting to gain access to and thus win over senior Protectoral politicians, especially the Protector himself. In practice, no clear resolution was achieved and little of the new national church structure was accepted, established, and in place in Ireland by the time Henry fell from power. However, during his last year there he did push ahead with changes to the funding of ministers and, during 1658–1659, he restored many direct tithes in Ireland, thus significantly reducing the financial drain of state salaries to ministers.

During the summer of 1658, Henry Cromwell was kept well informed of the declining health of his father – it is noticeable that his provincial tour was shorter than usual and that he was back in the capital much earlier than in previous years – and news of his father's death reached him in Dublin on 10 September, whereupon he immediately had his elder brother Richard proclaimed Protector.[80] He acted quickly to seek and receive declarations of support for the new Protector from the army officers and other officials in Ireland; and Henry offered his own warm support, writing via Thurloe on 11 September and sending a long letter direct to Richard on 18 September.[81]

While thanking his brother for offering to continue and renew his Irish appointment, Henry took the opportunity to wail about past 'burthens' with which he had been loaded since his appointment as lord deputy, including the manner in which Goodwin had been 'put [. . .] disgracefully out of the councill only for being faithfull to me', the necessity of working with a council that acted against him and encouraged others to 'revile and clamour against me', and the 'preposterous and absurd' way in which he had been required to conduct the recent disbandment. While offering to serve the new Protector in any capacity, Henry again sought permission to give up his Irish command, not least, he claimed, because his health was poor and 'I am not able to live always in the fire'. At the very least, he angled for permission to return to the mainland for a time, to confer with his brother in person as well as to enjoy a 'change of air and some recess [. . .] necessary for my health'.[82] As before, Henry's ruffled feathers were smoothed, he remained in office and in Ireland, and, by late September, the new Protector had decided to raise his title to that

[80] *TSP*, VII, p. 383.
[81] *TSP*, VII, pp. 383 and 400–401.
[82] *TSP*, VII, pp. 400–401.

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of lord lieutenant, though the formal commission was not received in Dublin until the beginning of November – 'I had great strivings within my breast, before I could prevail with myself to accept and open the commission', Henry wrote to his brother on 3 November.[83] The membership of the Irish council was unchanged, but Henry's standing there declined further when one of his strongest supporters within the council, Richard Pepys, died at the beginning of January 1659.

On several occasions before his appointment as lord lieutenant, Henry Cromwell had sought permission to visit the mainland. In particular, at the beginning of 1658, as the second session of the second Protectorate parliament approached, he clearly hoped that his membership of the new nominated second chamber would require or permit his presence in London for a time, allowing him to speak directly to his father about the needs of Ireland. However, his hopes were dashed and his attempts to mobilize friends to lobby the Protector on his behalf proved fruitless, for his father made clear that he was not 'at all [. . .] disposed' to allow his son to come over 'tho for never so small a time'.[84] However, during the autumn and winter of 1658–1659, after his brother's accession and his own appointment as lord lieutenant, Henry Cromwell pushed much longer and much harder to be permitted to come over. His attempts both to win permission to visit England and to engage friends and allies to promote his case dominated many of Henry's own letters of this period, just as reactions to those requests and reports on whether they were likely to be granted appear in many of the letters sent back to him in Dublin, including several in this collection. In November, Henry was furious when he discovered that his commission as lord lieutenant omitted – Thurloe subsequently claimed by pure mistake and oversight – the usual clause allowing a lord lieutenant to appoint and leave behind a deputy and to visit the mainland whenever he deemed it necessary.[85] During the autumn and winter, Henry sought permission to return, in part on health grounds – apparently perfectly genuine, for his correspondence at this time is littered with references to his illnesses and to his generally poor health. But more than that, he wanted to speak with and offer direct support to his brother, and to be on hand in London to help him quell growing disquiet and opposition in military circles. However, once more his hopes were dashed and his requests were successfully resisted, not only by the group of senior army officers based in and around London who orchestrated military

[83] *TSP*, VII, p. 492.
[84] *TSP*, VI, pp. 788–789.
[85] *TSP*, VII, pp. 492 and 497.

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discontent and who eventually overthrew Richard, but also by allies of Henry and of the Protectoral regime who believed that he would be both safer in Ireland and better placed to support his brother from his Irish power base, should a crisis occur.

Thus Henry Cromwell remained in Ireland, watching from afar as his brother's Protectorate parliament met, and as opponents both inside and outside that parliament sought to weaken and undermine the Protectoral regime. He was kept very well informed of developments in London during the opening months of 1659, via the succession of letters that survive in this collection, and which recount in great detail events in parliament and in fair detail the growing discontent and dangers in army circles. Henry Cromwell's own views upon, and response to, these worrying developments are not so clear. While this collection gives insights into his views on the constitutional and kingship proposals of spring 1657, through the drafts of letters intended for Broghill, no such drafts survive from the period of Richard Cromwell's parliament, perhaps in part because Broghill's own political star had waned in the intervening two years and, although a member of the nominated other house, ill-health kept him away until the beginning of March.[86] Unfortunately, on this occasion the letters printed in *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe* do not really fill the gap or fully flesh out the other side of the story, for Henry Cromwell's surviving correspondence to Thurloe and others of this period is infrequent and rather brief and cautious in commenting upon domestic political developments. Perhaps he was deliberately being rather guarded in committing his views to paper, or perhaps ill health really was taking a heavy toll by this stage.

By early May 1659, news had reached Henry Cromwell in Ireland that Richard had been forced to dissolve parliament and that a military coup had effectively curtailed, if not ended, his brother's power. Henry remained in Dublin for several more weeks, playing a waiting game, seeking fuller and clearer news of developments in London, and cautiously exploring his options. In June, one royalist correspondent summed up the position quite fairly, noting that Henry Cromwell was 'proceeding on in his former course, as if his brother were still protector. He is neither so active as he might be, to play his own game, nor so plyable as they would have him here to comply with theires'.[87] Henry dispatched agents to London, as well as a rather bland, noncommittal letter to Fleetwood, promising 'endeavours for the peace of this nation', and a more pointed letter to his brother,

[86] Little, *Lord Broghill*, pp. 167–168.
[87] *TSP*, VII, pp. 686–687.

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seeking clear guidance from him as well as from God.[88] At length, once it was clear that there would be no real effort, either from the army in Scotland, or from the fleet, to save his brother's regime, and having received two letters from his brother, the final two datable items in this collection, bewailing his circumstances but failing to give clear directions,[89] Henry too decided to bow to events and to go quietly, rather than attempting to make a stand or to mount physical resistance in Ireland. Accordingly, on 15 June he signed a lengthy resignation letter, addressed to the speaker of the restored Rump, noting that, although he had heard 'nothing expressly' from his brother, he had received firm news that Richard was 'acquiescing' in the change of regime, and indicating that he too would stand aside rather than 'interrupt the peace of these nations'. In any case, he admitted that he had little 'affection' for the new regime and did not wish to continue in circumstances which were 'an indignity to those my neerest relations [. . . and] which inferres the diminution of my late father's honour and meritt', and so was 'ready to yeeld up my charge to any, whom you shall send to receive itt'.[90] After a further letter, confirming that he would obey the Rump's order to return to London and was handing over control to newly appointed parliamentary commissioners,[91] he left Ireland for good on 27 June. He arrived back in London on 2 July, tendered a final report on Ireland to the Rump's council, and then retired with his family to his in-laws' estate at Chippenham. At thirty-one, his political and military careers were over.

Henry Cromwell's record as chief administrator of Ireland was decidedly mixed. He helped shape a more moderate and less militarized approach to Ireland, marked by the return of many traditional forms of civilian rule there, and he reined in both the English army and radical dissent. His regime coincided with a period of order and stability and a modest economic recovery, and he worked with some success to restore elements of the former systems of justice and of urban and local government, and to consolidate the position of the Protestant church in Ireland. On the other hand, he failed to heal the divisions between the various Protestant groups or to establish a broadly supported new Protestant church settlement and, beyond occasional signs of unease and gestures to prominent individual Catholics, he did little to engage with or to ameliorate the position of the majority Catholic population of Ireland. Educational reforms

[88] *TSP*, VII, p. 674.
[89] Nos 519 and 520.
[90] *TSP*, VII, pp. 683–684.
[91] Published in *Mercurius Politicus*, 23–30 June, and quoted in Ramsey, *Henry Cromwell*, pp. 345–346.

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stalled and appeals to London for help to improve Irish trade, abolish trade barriers between Ireland and England, protect Irish coasts, or reform Irish coinage largely fell on deaf ears. He was stymied by financial limitations as well as by political opposition or inertia on both sides of the Irish Sea, typified by the failure to appoint additional and supporting councillors and thus to assure him a secure majority in the Irish council. He reversed the imbalances introduced during the governorship of his predecessor and, by showing greater sensitivity to the needs of the Protestants in Ireland, helped to consolidate their hold on power and perhaps to win wider support in Ireland for his own rule and for the Protectoral regime in general. However, when that regime and his control were put to the test in the spring of 1659, he proved unable or unwilling to draw on Irish resources to try to prop up the tottering Protectorate; his own rule in Ireland ended suddenly and with a whimper.

This collection also ends in spring 1659, with a closing handful of items either dated or datable to the first half of May, charting or reflecting upon the collapse of the Protectorate and its immediate aftermath. Overall, the correspondence contains a mass of letters dominated by business that, although never trivial, at least to those concerned in it, might fairly be described as part of the essential routine of administering Ireland at this time: the attempts to find suitable candidates to fill senior political, administrative, and judicial posts in Ireland and to strengthen the Protestant ministry there; the numerous requests and recommendations from or about individuals seeking lesser offices and places in Ireland; the claims and counter-claims arising from the redistribution of land and the allocation of Irish property in lieu of service and arrears; the security of Ireland, including the disposition of troops and the condition of strongholds there; together with letters of courtesy, flattery, and religious exhortation sent to Henry from both sides of the Irish Sea. But, beyond that, the collection provides very rich insights into the government of England and Ireland during the period, the policies and issues pursued by the London and Dublin regimes, and the divisions and factions that at times wracked both, and the sometimes harmonious but often tense interplay between the key personnel and policies that dominated the Protectoral administrations in London and Dublin.

The collection gives a strong impression of Henry Cromwell, albeit often indirectly and through the words and impressions of others: a young man who was decent, honest, and hardworking; who applied himself, learnt quickly, and was able swiftly and usually accurately to weigh up people and siutations; but who was also touchy, thin-skinned, and prey to worries, suspicions, and over-reactions – Firth described Henry's own letters from Ireland as a 'long series of complaints' and

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felt they showed him to be 'absurdly sensitive to criticism'.[92] We gain an even stronger impression here of Henry's predecessor, brother-in-law, and partner-in-recrimination, Charles Fleetwood, whose letters to Henry are loaded with snide comments and criticisms dressed up as friendly advice, with hurt denials and counter-complaints in the face of Henry's accusations, all blended with oozing protestations of affection and brotherly love, and pious religious exhortation. In some ways, Henry Cromwell and Charles Fleetwood were made for each other.

Although this collection gives some insights into Richard Cromwell both before and after he became Protector (the former from his own slightly wordy and sometimes rather oddly phrased letters to his brother, the latter from the very detailed correspondence on the political and military manoeuvrings during the course of his Protectorate parliament), they pale beside the fascinating images we have here of Oliver Cromwell. There are numerous accounts of meetings with the Protector, particularly in 1655–1657, of discussions with and speeches by him, of Cromwell walking with colleagues around his chamber or glimpsed talking with others in the garden, of Cromwell and his wife sitting up with their ailing daughter, and of the Lord Protector reflecting upon his younger son and his handling of Ireland with such intense affection that he was moved to tears and moved others about him to tears as well. In the opening months of 1657, Henry was both cautioned and reassured by his father-in-law in respect of his relationship with the Protector: 'His Highnes tells me that he heares but seldome from you. I thought good to let you understand so much. He hath, I doe perceive, a love for you, and mentions you with a kind of delight and satisfaction'.[93] Such reassurances sustained Henry Cromwell during his years in Ireland but could do little to reinforce his crumbling power in spring 1659.

After leaving Ireland, Henry Cromwell spent the remainder of his life in quiet retirement in Cambridgeshire. He was not seriously troubled either by the returning republican regime or by the restored Stuarts, though he took care in 1660–1661 to mobilize friends and to write to key figures, including a petition to the king, stressing his loyalty and obedience to Charles II and claiming that, while in Ireland, he had consistently sought to

> study to preserve the peace, plenty and splendour of that kingdom, did encourage a learned ministry, giving not only protection but maintenance to several Bishops there; placed worthy persons in the seats of judicature and

[92] C.H. Firth, 'Cromwell, Henry', in L. Stephen and S. Lee (eds), *Dictionary of National Biography*, 63 vols (Oxford, 1885–1900); Firth, *Last Years*, II, p. 128.
[93] No. 159.

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magistracy, and to his own great prejudice upon all occasions was favourable to your Majesty's professed friends.[94]

Henry was not excepted from the general pardon and, although he lost land in England and Ireland, he was able to retain some property in both countries. In the early 1660s, he acquired Spinney Abbey at Wicken in Cambridgeshire from the Russells, and he spent his final decade there, apparently maintaining a bare conformity with the established church, for a time retaining a chaplain who employed the prayer book 'as little as was possible' but ending his employment when the authorities became interested,[95] and visiting and caring for elderly and dying members of his family, including his mother and a paternal aunt. He drew up his will in 1673, a typically brisk, brief, and business-like document, with little about his faith or the future of his soul or mortal remains, and leaving everything to his 'deare and wel beloved wife' to share out between their surviving children as she saw fit.[96] He died, reportedly of the stone, on 23 March 1674, aged forty-six, and was buried two days later in Wicken church. His widow, who did not remarry and who died in April 1687, lies beside him beneath an inscribed marble slab.

[94] J. Waylen, *The House of Cromwell and the Story of Dunkirk* (London, 1897), pp. 25–26.
[95] M. Storey (ed.), *Two East Anglian Diaries, 1641–1729* (Woodbridge, 1994), pp. 97–103.
[96] National Archives, PROB 11/346, q. 123.

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