IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 187

IRISH HISTORICAL STUDIES

Vol. XXXVIII No. 150 November 2012

The Ormond–St Leger feud, 1544–6

Criticism of the lord deputy of Ireland, Sir Anthony St Leger, became vocal during 1544, especially among supporters of James Butler, ninth earl of Ormond, who felt that he was being excluded from a more prominent role in government.[1] To head off this grumbling, St Leger returned to England in the spring for an audience with Henry VIII that resulted in his re-appointment in July with the king's blessing. On 18 May he was installed as a knight of the Garter and his stipend increased by £200 the following summer.[2] Once back in Ireland St Leger (a gentleman of the privy chamber) cleverly maintained royal favour through well-thought gifts, like the two goshawks and 'caste' of falcons 'of the best ayre of this Lande' he sent the king in the summer of 1545. Most importantly, he kept Henry, the English privy council, and principal courtiers informed of his point of view through carefully crafted letters and frequent messengers, dominating communications between the two kingdoms. His tone was always well-judged: 'this your Realme remayneth[e] in goode stay thank[e]s be to god and your highnes'.[3] In comparison with his predecessor Lord Leonard Grey, St Leger proved too difficult to topple when he finally fell out with Ormond in autumn 1545, over how the Pale should be defended and expanded, and over the direction of government reform. Further, his policies since his first appointment in 1540, particularly surrender and regrant, had been remarkably successful in bringing security to the Pale and forging (albeit briefly) a new relationship between the Gaelic Irish chieftains and the crown.[4] He could not, though, have forgotten Grey's fate: isolated from the king's good graces, and then destroyed in 1540–41 by a cabal, with St Leger's own connivance.[5] Ormond and he struggled for power in 1545–6, the aftermath of their conflict shaping politics

[1] The sources (T.N.A., SP 60/11, 60/12, and 61/1) are relatively accessible and full for the period, and many are transcribed in *S.P. Hen. VIII*.

[2] *L. & P. Hen. VIII, Jan.–July 1544*, 1035 (30-32); *Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, 112–13; estimate of St Leger's receipts, before July 1545 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/54, ff 128–29v); Alan Bryson, 'St Leger, Sir Anthony (1496?–1559)', in *Oxford DNB*.

[3] St Leger to Henry VIII, 3 Aug. 1545 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/14, ff 33–34v); cf. St Leger to Wriothesley, 26 Feb. 1545 (SP 60/12/1, ff 1–2v); to the English privy council, 14 Apr. (SP 60/12/6, ff 17–18v); to Paget, 3 Aug. (SP 60/12/16, ff 38–39v); to Paget, 10 Jan. 1546 (SP 60/12/28, ff 66–67v).

[4] Bryson, 'St Leger, Sir Anthony', *Oxford DNB*; Christopher Maginn, *'Civilizing' Gaelic Leinster: the extension of Tudor rule in the O'Byrne and O'Toole lordships* (Dublin, 2004), pp 63–98; idem, '"Surrender and regrant" in the historiography of sixteenth-century Ireland' in *Sixteenth Century Jn.*, xxxviii (2007), pp 955–74.

[5] David Edwards, *The Ormond lordship in County Kilkenny, 1515–1642* (Dublin, 2003), pp 168–73; Ciaran Brady, *The chief governors: the rise and fall of reform government in Tudor Ireland, 1536–1588* (Cambridge, 1994), pp 13–25.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 188

until the end of St Leger's career in 1556. How and why the feud happened is the subject of this article.

Historians have seen the 'contention[e]' between Ormond and St Leger as typifying Anglo–Irish relations, especially following Kildare's Rebellion (1534–5) and the partial-destruction of the Geraldine affinity.[6] In the 1530s direct rule superseded aristocratic delegation (which had seen successive earls of Kildare acting as vice-regent since 1471), and the Tudor government was 'forced to make policy'.[7] Now English lord deputies competed with the principal Irish magnates over how to defend the Pale and how to deal with the chieftains, and over office. As a result each party would accuse the other of corruption and disloyalty. From his appointment as lord deputy in 1530, Sir William Skeffington had had to tread carefully, serving the king without alienating Gerald Fitzgerald, ninth earl of Kildare, and his peers. Relations with Kildare were initially good but soured quickly, with both men appealing directly to Henry and levelling charges against each other. Bystanders like the lord treasurer John Rawson, the chief justice of the king's bench Patrick Bermingham, and Cuconnaught Maguire of Fermanagh took advantage of the deteriorating situation by voicing support for one side or the other. By 1534 open rebellion had broken out. Grey contended with similar problems as lord deputy between 1536 and 1540, despite Kildare's fall, particularly in his energetic efforts to curtail and then court the septs bordering on the Pale, including the earl's principal Gaelic Irish client Brian O'Connor of Offaly, and thereby to guarantee security, much as Kildare had done. By 1538 he found himself prey to accusations made by Ormond, now the strongest magnate, and disgruntled Irish privy councillors like the lord chancellor John Alen and the chief justice of the king's bench Sir Gerald Aylmer, who felt excluded from his government.[8] They said he was 'the Erle of Kildare newly borne againe, not oonly of distruying of thoos that alway have servid the Kinges Majestie, but also in mayntenyng the hole secte, band, and aliaunce of the said Erle'.[9] Grey managed to exculpate himself on this occasion, and Ormond and he were forced to reconcile their differences; but in 1540–1 he was brought down on

[6] Alen and Aylmer to Henry, 27 Feb. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/34, f. 80). The most detailed examinations of the feud are by Ciaran Brady and David Edwards: Brady, *Chief governors*, pp 41–3, 61; David Edwards, 'Malice aforethought? The death of the ninth earl of Ormond, 1546' in *Butler Soc. Jn.*, iii (1987), pp 30–41; idem, 'Further comments on the strange death of the ninth earl of Ormond' in *Butler Soc. Jn.*, iv (1997), pp 58–64. Cf. Brendan Bradshaw, *The Irish constitutional revolution of the sixteenth century* (Cambridge, 1979), pp 256–60; Fiona Fitzsimons, 'The lordship of O'Connor Faly, 1520–1570' in William Nolan and Timothy P. O'Neill (eds), *Offaly: history and society* (Dublin, 1998), pp 207–42.

[7] Brady, *Chief governors*, p. 55.

[8] Steven G. Ellis, 'The Kildare Rebellion and the early Henrician reformation' in *Historical Jn.*, xix (1976), pp 807–30; idem, 'Thomas Cromwell and Ireland, 1532–1540' in *Historical Jn.*, xxiii (1980), pp 497–519; idem, *Ireland in the age of the Tudors, 1447–1603: English expansion and the end of Gaelic rule* (London, 1998), pp 119–43, 148–9; Brady, *Chief governors*, pp 13–25; Fitzsimons, 'O'Connor Faly', pp 207–22; Vincent P. Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order: the O'More lordship of Laois, 1536-1603' in Pádraig G. Lane and William Nolan (eds), *Laois: history and society* (Dublin, 1999), pp 213–19; Mary Ann Lyons, 'Skeffington, Sir William (*d*. 1535)' and Mary Ann Lyons, 'Grey, Leonard, Viscount Graney' (*c*.1490–1541)', in *Oxford DNB*.

[9] *S.P. Hen. VIII*, iii, 32–5.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 189

similar charges in the wake of Thomas Cromwell's fall, partly because St Leger threw his weight behind the drive to remove Grey. St Leger reaped what he sowed, though, facing the same vice-regent/magnate competition as his predecessors.

Recent historiography also links court faction to office in Ireland: for example, St Leger is seen as the client of the Catholic Howard family, and his successor, Sir Edward Bellingham, as connected to the Protestant Edward Seymour, first duke of Somerset.[10] The Edwardian reformation is thought to further complicate the politics of both realms as men in government were accorded distinct (potentially antagonistic) confessional identities.[11] By concentrating here on the origins of the feud and its course, however, we see that Ormond and St Leger (and their peers) reacted to local events and appealed to the king and English privy council for support. That is, faction moulded politics during the final years of Henry's reign and at the accession of Edward VI, but it originated in Ireland, not at court. Through close reading of the evidence an unusually detailed picture of how the politics of the two realms interacted emerges, one that differs from current historiography.

This, in turn, enhances our understanding of Ireland in the 1530s and 1540s, crucial decades in reshaping the nature of the Tudor state there with direct rule in its infancy and when a return to aristocratic delegation seemed both desirable and probable. Brendan Bradshaw has located a period of 'consensus' early in St Leger's deputyship and seen the failure of the lord deputy's conciliatory agenda (for which the dispute with Ormond was instrumental) as having led to his removal from office in spring 1548, increased garrisoning, and the initial stages of English colonization and conquest.[12] Was Ormond's rejection of St Leger's government a lost opportunity, as Bradshaw suggests, making the continuation of direct rule inevitable, or was it a return to the norm of Irish politics, vice-regent/magnate conflict, as Steven Ellis contends?[13] The feud, a now obscure but

[10] Ciaran Brady, David Edwards, Steven Ellis, and Brendan Bradshaw think in terms of faction in studying relationships between the court and Ireland. For example, Ellis describes Kildare 'mobiliz[ing] the support of an influential court faction to recover the deputyship' in 1532, while Bradshaw writes of a 'Butler–Cromwell nexus' in the 1530s 'to counteract the Fitzgerald–Boleyn–Howard one' and ties Cromwell's fall and that of Grey in summer 1540. See Bradshaw, *Irish constitutional revolution*, pp 87–98, 184–5, 195, 258–60; Ellis, 'Cromwell', pp 497–519; idem, *Ireland in the age of the Tudors*, *passim;* Brady, *Chief governors*, *passim*; Edwards, 'Malice aforethought?', p. 31; idem, 'Further comments', p. 60; idem, 'Butler, James, ninth earl of Ormond and second earl of Ossory (*b*. in or after 1496, *d*. 1546)', in *Oxford DNB*.

[11] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor church militant: Edward VI and the Protestant reformation* (London, 1999); Brendan Bradshaw, 'The Edwardian reformation in Ireland, 1547–53' in *Archiv. Hib*., xxxiv (1977), pp 83–99. Religious changes in mid-Tudor England did not drive Catholics or Protestants out of court or local government, while the pervasiveness of faction has been overstated: Andrew Johnston, 'William Paget and the late-Henrician polity' (Ph.D. thesis, University of St Andrews, 2003); Alan Bryson, 'Edward VI's "speciall men": crown and locality in mid Tudor England' in *Historical Research*, lxxxii (2009), pp 229–51.

[12] Bradshaw, *Irish constitutional revolution*, pp 189–275; cf. Dean G. White, 'The reign of Edward VI in Ireland: some political, social, and economic aspects' in *I.H.S*., xiv (1965), pp 197–211; Carey, 'O'More lordship', pp 218–21.

[13] Ellis, 'Kildare Rebellion', pp 807–30; idem, 'Cromwell', pp 497–519.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 190

significant dispute, is complicated and has never been explained fully, prompting this examination of the circumstances in which it arose.[14]

I

St Leger was first named lord deputy on 7 July 1540. He understood that Ireland 'is moche easlyer wone then kept' so proceeded cautiously.[15] Therefore, he concentrated on re-asserting royal authority within the Pale and on its borders and curried support from the English-Irish élite through persuasion and reward, establishing a mutually beneficial relationship with them in order to give him some independence from magnates like Ormond. Another reason for this was to address his own lack of patrimony in Ireland. As government income was small, St Leger's military aims were also quite limited, which suited his conciliatory methods and fulfilled his promise to Henry to do things cheaply. Firstly, he embarked on hostings against certain targeted border chieftains, beginning with Cahir MacArt MacMurrough Kavanagh of County Carlow and Rory Caoch MacConnell and Patrick O'More of Leix, whom he brought into submission in the early autumn. In return for co-operation, particularly by desisting from raiding the Pale, he offered them the king's peace and assurance of land tenure.[16] St Leger took the same approach towards magnates. In January 1541 he achieved one of his greatest political coups when James fitz John Fitzgerald, thirteenth earl of Desmond, yielded to him at Cahir in County Tipperary.[17]

St Leger wanted to extend this policy across the country eventually, believing (and telling Henry) that it would bring security and stability, while making government financially self-sufficient as a result. He proposed new terms of land tenure based on English copyholds and leaseholds and inheritance by tail male, rather than Gaelic partible inheritance. Those chieftains who submitted were usually bound by indenture to recognise Henry as liege lord, attend parliament, and resist papal authority. In return, they received charters to lands after careful negotiations that attempted to settle disputes with kin groups by means of arbitration. This new policy (known today as surrender and regrant) would pave the way, St Leger said, for the wider adoption of common law over Brehon law, first in Leinster and Munster and then throughout the island.[18] He enacted his programme in the parliament held in Dublin in the summer and autumn of 1541, supported by Ormond. It culminated in Henry's acceptance in April 1542 of the kingship of Ireland by parliamentary statute, on the grounds that it would make

[14] The themes discussed here are developed further in research on the reign of Edward VI (Alan Bryson, 'Sir Anthony St Leger and the outbreak of the Midland Rebellion, 1547–8' in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* (forthcoming)). Both articles arose from revisiting Dean White's 1965 article (White, 'Edward VI', pp 197–211) and addressing questions raised more recently by Christopher Maginn, 'A window on mid-Tudor Ireland: the "Matters" against Lord Deputy St. Leger, 1547–8' in *Historical Research*, lxxviii (2005), pp 465–82.

[15] St Leger to Cromwell, 2 Jan. 1538 (T.N.A., SP 60/6/1, f. 1v).

[16] *S.P. Hen. VIII*, iii, 235-40; Bryson, 'St Leger, Sir Anthony', *Oxford DNB*.

[17] Anthony M. McCormack, *The earldom of Desmond, 1463–1583: the decline and crisis of a feudal lordship* (Dublin, 2005), pp 69–71, 74–87.

[18] Ellis, *Ireland in the age of the Tudors*, pp 150–3, 157–9; Maginn, '"Surrender and regrant"', pp 955–74; Bryson, 'St Leger, Sir Anthony', *Oxford DNB*.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 191

his Gaelic Irish 'subjects' more obedient by recognising and formalising their relationship with him. St Leger was now able to put together individual agreements with chieftains on the king's behalf rather than his own, making it harder for his critics to challenge him. While surrender and regrant was not unproblematic, even from the start, and he could not keep expenditure down, St Leger's administration looked successful and the garrison was reduced to 500 men in 1542, keeping Henry happy for the moment.[19]

The initially good relationship between Ormond and St Leger became strained as early as summer 1541. Robert Cowley, Ormond's client and master of the rolls, acted as his mouthpiece when he accused St Leger of corruption, fraud, and reviving the Geraldines in order to 'say and doo whatever he wold … without feare of any answer'. A lone voice, Cowley was dismissed from office the following spring and replaced by Sir Thomas Cusack.[20] In 1542 the lord deputy grew concerned about the earl's influence in southern Leinster, which might disrupt the surrender and regrant submission of the senior O'Byrne sept there. The following summer the gentry of Counties Kilkenny and Tipperary wrote to the king in support of Ormond after 'certayne of yo[u]r Maiesties Comyssion[er]s' carried out enquiries there into coign and livery (the free billeting of his retainers on the countryside) and other exactions.[21] These gentry willingly provided 200 men towards the earl's well-equipped retinue during the 1544 Boulogne campaign, when he raised twice the number asked for and substantially more than any other magnate or chieftain. They comported themselves well in France, conferring honour on him and reinforcing his lordship (his local and military power).[22] Despite all this, St Leger and he actually remained on relatively civil terms until autumn 1545, when Ormond became suspicious. He thought his new commission to lead 2,000 gallowglass and kerne in support of Henry's Scottish expedition was really a ploy to remove him from Ireland permanently. In early September the king commanded that the men 'be chosen out of the most wilde and savage sorte of them there, whose absence shuld rather do good then hurt'. Ormond may not have been told of the plan to use them as cannon fodder, which could only strike at his own military power, as he had provided 1,000 of the number himself, and which smacked of royal ingratitude.[23]

[19] Bryson, 'St Leger, Sir Anthony', *Oxford DNB*.

[20] Robert Cowley to Henry, 26 Aug. 1541 (T.N.A., SP 60/10/28, f. 106); *S.P. Hen. VIII*, iii, 366-70, 372-4; cf. Brady, *Chief governors*, p. 41; Edwards, *Ormond*, pp 40–1, 165, 168–70; Terry Clavin and Anthony M. McCormack, 'Cowley, Robert', in *DIB*.

[21] The gentry of Counties Kilkenny and Tipperary to Henry, 26 June 1543 (N.L.I., Ormond MS D 2410); Maginn, *'Civilizing' Gaelic Leinster*, pp 82–3. David Edwards describes how 'the deputy and his officers rode south to Kilkenny hoping to collect information about the earl's misgovernment of his territories', but his source makes no mention of this event. St Leger did visit the town on another occasion, to 'my lord of Ormondes displesur', but for a completely different purpose: Edwards, *Ormond*, pp 169–72; Alen and Brabazon's 'Matters' against St Leger, [Dec.?] 1547 (T.N.A., SP 61/2/53, f. 126); Maginn, '"Matters"', p. 480.

[22] Dean G. White, 'Henry VIII's Irish kerne in France and Scotland, 1544–1545' in *Irish Sword*, iii (1957–8), pp 213–25; Edwards, *Ormond*, pp 171–2.

[23] The English privy council to St Leger, 5 Sept. 1545 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/21, ff 50–50v); cf. to the Irish privy council, 5 Sept. (SP 60/12/20, ff 48–49v); St Leger to the English privy council, 10 Oct. (SP 60/12/22, ff 51–52v); the Irish privy council to Henry, 19 Nov. (SP 60/12/25, ff 58–59v).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 192

The incident that began the feud itself appears quite prosaic, though: a year earlier, in autumn 1544, St Leger spoke out against Ormond obtaining Kilkea Castle in County Kildare from Henry in exchange for castles and lands in southern County Kilkenny. The Irish government wanted these in order to guarantee communications with the south-west via the only viable land route (the Barrow valley), to hem in the Kavanaghs (some of whom where resisting surrender and regrant), and for the 'Reformacion[e]' of southern Leinster. Exercising greater influence in this region was a priority, it 'being in that parte of Leynster w[hi]ch the king[e]s Ma[ies]tie wolde so gladly haue reformed and is the place moost necessarie to be reformed of all this Realme'. It would also free up soldiers from the Dublin and Wexford marches for service elsewhere.[24] Kilkea, once at the heart of the military power of the earls of Kildare, was reckoned by St Leger to be 'the properest house and the goodliest Lordship the king hath in all this Realme'—and Ormond must have known this when he asked for it. Now St Leger reported that Ormond dragged his feet over the exchange because relinquishing some of his castles in County Kilkenny (particularly ones guarding 'straight[e]s' and 'passages') would diminish his own capacity to manage access to the south-west, and his authority.[25]

St Leger was also motivated by a desire to reduce Ormond's Irish estate, giving him lands in England instead, because the 'Lande and Rule he hath here ... [is] en[n]ough'. He found the earl's liberty of Tipperary problematic, complained it was anachronistic in an age when imperial monarchy sought control of feudal privileges and local franchises, and suggested that it was also illegal. As a result, he directed no government processes to the sheriff and escheator there (men named by Ormond); 'and so the thing runnes in confucion.' A similar situation existed in County Waterford, he said.[26]

In late February 1545 St Leger wrote to lord chancellor Thomas Wriothesley, informing him of Ormond's intransigence and the growing animosity between them. He wanted to curb his influence, saying the earl 'hath the great parte of all these that dayly frequent the Counsaill here of this Lande[s] birth of his fee[,] ye I wolde to god he had no mo', and claimed that whenever an issue arose that Ormond believed touched on his own private affairs, all the English-Irish privy councillors – with the exception of Cusack – backed him, even when he opposed the king.[27] Ormond was playing a dangerous game, if he was suborning his colleagues. Although there appears to be no evidence of his feeing them, he had granted property to the second justice of the king's bench, Thomas Howth, chief justice of the common pleas Sir Thomas Luttrell, and master of the ordnance

[24] St Leger to Wriothesley, 26 Feb. 1545 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/1, ff 1–2); cf. Alen's 'Note of the state of Irlande' (SP 60/11/53, ff 155v-156, 158v); Ellis, 'Cromwell', pp 513–14; Mihail D. Evans, 'Kavanagh, Cahir Mac Art, baron of Ballyann (*d*. 1554?)', in *Oxford DNB*. Ormond was courting the Kavanaghs at this time: Maginn, *'Civilizing' Gaelic Leinster*, p. 82.

[25] St Leger to Wriothesley, 26 Feb. 1545 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/1, ff 1–2v); cf. Ellis, *Ireland in the age of the Tudors*, p. 106.

[26] St Leger to Wriothesley, 26 Feb. 1545 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/1, ff 1v–2v); cf. Ormond to the English privy council, 18 Jan. 1544 (SP 60/11/33, ff 109–10v); St Leger to the English privy council, 14 Apr. 1545 (SP 60/12/6, ff 17–17v); John A. Guy, 'Tudor monarchy and its critiques' in Guy, *The Tudor monarchy* (London, 1997), pp 78–109.

[27] St Leger to Wriothesley, 26 Feb. 1545 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/1, ff 1–2v).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 193

John Travers.[28] In any case, the property exchange with the king was abandoned. The plan for the exertion of royal authority in southern County Kilkenny and against the Kavanaghs was also dropped, and the army stationed around Dublin instead, for fear of French invasion.[29]

In his letter to Wriothesley, St Leger enclosed two letters sent to him by Barnaby Fitzpatrick, first Lord Upper Ossory, an early convert to surrender and regrant, which reinforced his insinuations against Ormond. These claimed that in October and November 1544 Ormond had met Desmond and Murrough O'Brien, first earl of Thomond, to plot rebellion, all three men accompanied by large retinues, that he was also in contact with his 'sworn' kinsmen Teig O'Carroll of Ely in Offaly and Rory O'More, and that trouble would result from this. It was alleged that Ormond sought 'secret leagues' with his neighbours, using his half-brother Edmund Butler, archbishop of Cashel, as go-between.[30] These stories are dubious. During the 1540s and 1550s rumours of Desmond's treachery surfaced from time to time, but it was in his best interest to remain loyal to the crown, and Ormond was his principal rival, not ally.[31] Upper Ossory was no doubt motivated by his long-standing antagonism towards the Butler family, and he succeeded in raising more doubts in St Leger's mind about Ormond.

Having sounded out Wriothesley first, St Leger criticised Ormond to the English privy council in mid-April 1545. Though the earl was Henry's 'true and faithfull subiect yet I ame well assuered that he wolde haue noman[n] to Rewle in the Parties wheare he is but hym self and accum[m]ulate all the howle rewle'.[32] This was the problem in a nutshell, as it had been between Skeffington and Kildare in the early 1530s and between Grey and Ormond at the close of the decade: vice-regent/magnate competition. Ormond felt threatened by St Leger for any perceived encroachment on his lordship (his land as well as his local and military power), whether in County Kilkenny, the liberty of Tipperary or elsewhere. St Leger reiterated the same points he had made to Wriothesley. He noted that Ormond, when last at court, had offered to carry out 'the Reformac[i]on' of southern Leinster himself, 'Vp[p]on the which he still harpeth', and that he had impeded St Leger's own efforts there; he added that since becoming lord deputy Ireland was stable and royal authority secure.[33] He was not uniformly hostile towards Ormond, however. 'And for that it shall appeare that I speke ^not^ thies thing[e]s of malice', he enclosed letters to the privy council from other men in Ireland praising the earl; while in February and

[28] *Calendar of Ormond deeds*, ed. Edmund Curtis (6 vols, I.M.C., Dublin, 1932–43), iv, 311, 319, 343, 349; Edwards, 'Malice aforethought?', pp 30, 32–3.

[29] [St Leger to the English privy council] (T.N.A., SP 60/12/46, f. 106).

[30] Upper Ossory to St Leger, 1 and 11 Nov. 1544 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/1 (ii), f. 3v; SP 60/12/1 (iii), ff 4–4v).

[31] McCormack, *Desmond*, pp 69–87.

[32] St Leger to the English privy council, 14 Apr. 1545 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/6, f. 17).

[33] Ibid., ff 17–18; St Leger to Wriothesley, 26 Feb. 1545 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/1, ff 1–2); cf. Ellis, 'Cromwell', pp 498–507. St Leger had dissuaded Henry from accepting Ormond's offer in 1543 to campaign against the Kavanagh, O'Byrne, and O'Toole septs, fearing the earl would use it as an opportunity to seize strongholds in southern Leinster for himself. Ormond employed Thomas Howard, third duke of Norfolk, to mediate on this occasion: St Leger to the English privy council, 15 May 1543 (T.N.A., SP 60/11/9, ff 31–32v).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 194

April recommending that Ormond's arrears on the prisage of wines be remitted and that he be nominated to the Order of the Garter.[34] St Leger would 'rather to holde my peace then to be a barker ageyn [against] so noble a man whome I take god to iudge I haue alwais loued'.[35] Remarkably, he petitioned for a return to aristocratic delegation and said that Ormond was the best man for the job. This might reduce royal subventions to Ireland because Ormond could rely on his own lordship, and also assure the earl's loyalty by restoring the English-Irish to 'so high hono[u]r from the w[hi]ch thei were before secluded'. Limiting the term of office should diminish the likelihood that something similar to the Kildare ascendancy would emerge, St Leger thought. At the same time he petitioned for his recall, but with honour; which may explain his contradictory attitude towards Ormond.[36] In August he repeated this request to the principal secretary, Sir William Paget, saying that 'the king[e]s Ma[ies]tie may save xml [10,000] mark[e]s by yere and haue the lande kept in the staye it is.' 'I suppose the ouerture pleased not orels I shulde haue had some answere thereof/ which maketh me half a fearde to move it eftsones but onely to youe whome I re[c]ken to be myn especiall freend.'[37] St Leger's relationship with Ormond and with Ireland was more complicated than might be expected.

The situation deteriorated sharply in autumn 1545. In David Edwards's account St Leger set up Ormond, anticipating that, with his role in the imminent Scottish expedition, the earl would become one of Henry's principal commanders. St Leger had his client William Cantwell act as *agent provocateur* by forging a letter (known as the Gowran letter) addressed to Ormond and declaring that St Leger was plotting against him. 'Leaving [it] to be discovered in the chamber of Gowran Castle, and another similar note at New Ross', Edwards says, 'Cantwell succeeded in escalating the tension between Kilkenny and Dublin'.[38] In fact, closer examination does not bear this interpretation out. Cantwell's role is more ambivalent, and he may have genuinely supported Ormond, only switching his loyalty to St Leger when faced with disgrace, imprisonment, and worse. He was the son and heir of James Cantwell, a gentleman and lawyer of Ballintogher and Kilboy in County Tipperary, whose family was in Butler service.[39] However, while studying at Oxford University he was dispossessed of land in County Kilkenny by Ormond and Milo Baron, bishop of Ossory. St Leger lobbied successfully in summer 1545 for its recovery, pointing out that if redress was not given 'veray fiawe of the Irishry will put thaire childern to lerne the Englishe tonge or to be brought vpp in like Nurture as the saied William [Cantwell] was'. The lord deputy also asked for him to be taken into royal service.[40]

[34] Ormond to the English privy council, 18 Jan. 1544 (T.N.A., SP 60/11/33, ff 109–10v); St Leger to Wriothesley, 26 Feb. 1545 (SP 60/12/1, ff 1v–2v); to the English privy council, 14 Apr. (SP 60/12/6, ff 17–18v).

[35] St Leger to the English privy council, 14 Apr. 1545 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/6, f. 17).

[36] St Leger to the English privy council, 14 Apr. 1545 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/6, ff 17v–18); cf. Alen's 'Note' (SP 60/11/53, f. 157v).

[37] St Leger to Paget, 3 Aug. 1545 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/16, ff 38–39v).

[38] Edwards, *Ormond*, pp 172–3.

[39] *Ormond deeds*, ed. Curtis, iv, 255; Edwards, *Ormond*, p. 41.

[40] The Irish privy council to the English privy council, 4 July 1545 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/12, ff 29-30v); cf. *Acts of the privy council, 1542–7*, 225–6.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 195

Ormond claimed that the Gowran letter was pressed into his hand (he did not see by whom) on 28 October 1545 as he passed through a crowd while leaving Gowran Castle in County Kilkenny on his way to embark for Scotland.[41] In the letter it was remarked that 'there is a comen saing that ye shalbe sent into Scotlande to be cast away[.] my lorde deputies s[er]u[a]nt[e]s say openly that they woll kepe their Cristmas in yo[u]r strongest houses'. Ormond was to be sent to the Tower of London, it went on, because St Leger regarded him as an impediment to reform. 'All Irlande doo knowe that the deputie is the moste dissembler and moste craftiest man that eu[e]r came a mong[e]s theme', who bribed and embezzled, lied about the state of the realm to the king, and blamed others for the disorder there. In fact, together with his brother Robert St Leger, the letter asserted, he was the root cause of the country's ills through his alliances with the Gaelic Irish, who were 'combynding togither' everywhere to carry out 'in the englishe pale … contynuall nightly bodrag and robery and stealing/ and in eu[e]ry other quart[e]r ... great war'. This misgovernment centred on County Carlow, where Robert St Leger had carved out a niche for himself as a powerful landowner.[42]

Ormond claimed that he showed the Gowran letter to the Irish privy council, who promised to let him forward it to the king. On 15 November, two days before embarking for Scotland, he sent a copy to John, Lord Russell, presumably to shore up his support at court. He told Russell of his fears that rumours would poison Henry's mind against him and petitioned for a royal audience, perhaps mindful of Kildare's fate, summoned to England in 1534, imprisoned, and charged with treason. Ormond also offered an alternative to this: namely that a trusted and impartial noble, prelate or courtier be sent over to Ireland to arbitrate. Among others, he suggested Thomas Howard, third duke of Norfolk, Edward Seymour, earl of Hertford, John Dudley, Viscount Lisle, Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, and Russell himself. This list is the best indication we have of the men Ormond trusted, showing that he was as much in step with where power lay in England as was St Leger.[43] He added a codicil to his will on the same day.[44] Ormond also turned to Hertford, complaining to him about Robert St Leger. Early in 1547 Ormond's wife would remind Hertford of 'thanncient famyliar acquayntance [that] was betwene your grace and my said housband w[i]th thentier faythfull harte and mynd he always fixed in yo[u]r noble grace, so as at his deceasse he co[m]mytted his sonne and heier ... to yo[u]r tuyc[i]on and p[ro]tection aldernext vnto his highnes'.[45] These men acted as Ormond's good lord: in late December 1545 he was invited to court to make his case in person; and Anthony St Leger was told to send a proxy to represent his side.[46]

[41] Ormond to Russell, 15 Nov. 1545 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/24, ff 55–55v); anonymous to Ormond, [Oct.?] (SP 60/12/24 (i), ff 56–57v).

[42] Anonymous to Ormond, [Oct.?] 1545 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/24 (i), ff 56–57v).

[43] Ormond to Russell, 15 Nov. 1545 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/24, ff 55–55v); cf. the Irish privy council to Henry, 19 Nov. (SP 60/12/25, ff 58–59v).

[44] Ormond's codicil, 15 Nov. 1545 (N.L.I., Ormond MS D 2465–71); *Ormond deeds*, ed. Curtis, iv, 352.

[45] Walter Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/52, ff 122–23v); the countess of Ormond to Somerset, 6 Mar. 1547 (SP 61/1/1, f. 1).

[46] *Acts of the privy council, 1542–7*, 300–3.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 196

Meanwhile Ormond served under Matthew Stewart, thirteenth earl of Lennox, who commanded the expedition to Scotland in alliance with Dòmhnall Dubh MacDonald, last claimant of the lordship of the Isles, and his 8,000 highlanders. Their short-term objective was to take Dumbarton Castle on the Firth of Clyde for Henry VIII, but this proved impossible because of delays in setting out, which led to mass desertions among Dòmhnall Dubh's men and loss of naval superiority in the Irish Sea and North Channel. Despite these setbacks, the Irish privy council managed to put together a fairly well equipped army. Once underway in mid-November, however, the commanders expected their intended landfall to be held against them, while they had insufficient numbers to force their way ashore. Therefore, they appear to have contented themselves with coastal raiding instead, achieving the king's more limited aim of 'annoyaunce of the Scottes'.[47]

In December, on his return from Scotland with mixed success, Ormond upped the stakes by writing to Wriothesley and others to voice his complaints against Anthony and Robert St Leger and described 'the state of this the king[e]s maiesties pore realme'. In doing so, he triggered open hostilities.[48] Until now this letter has been known only through Ormond's partial description of its contents in another letter sent in late February 1546. In fact a copy of the December letter survives in the Bodleian Library's Carte collection, enclosed with one to William Paulet, Lord St John, dated 14 December 1545.[49] In it Ormond said that he had tried to work with St Leger but found his 'hate toward[e]s me encreased[,] w[h]ich hath bene in suche cou[e]rt sorte'. He alleged that even though the lord deputy had sworn before the Irish privy council that he had never spoken or written against Ormond, he had actually used whatever means were possible to put him out of favour with Henry. Ormond, for his part, protested his loyalty, and accused the St Leger brothers of committing 'moste fals and detestable treasons'. The letter said that such allegations had broad support in Ireland and, in the light of the widespread attacks on the lord deputy over the next few years, the evidence suggests that this is plausible. St Leger was accused of creating a party, the classic sixteenth-century description of factionalism.[50] Ormond was also aggrieved by the lack of aid from St Leger for the Scottish expedition, charging him with incompetence and treachery. 'I and dyuers othe[r] is sympelmen of this lande [and] were disceyved in my said Lorde deputie whome we toke at the begynnynge to be a good man'. Fear that he would take the blame for the meagre

[47] The Irish privy council to the English privy council, 13 Aug. 1545 (SP 60/12/19, ff 46–47v); *Acts of the privy council, 1542–7*, 240; *S.P. Hen. VIII*, iii, 529–38, 541–4; v, 507; Marcus Merriman, *The Rough Wooings: Mary, queen of Scots, 1542–1551* (East Linton, 2000), pp 150–52, 158–9, 214–15; Matthew R. W. Munro and Jean Munro, 'MacDonald family (*c*. 1300–*c*.1500)', and 'MacDonald, Donald Dubh (*d*. 1545)', in *Oxford DNB*.

[48] Ormond to the English privy council, 20 Feb. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/30, ff 72–73v); cf. Alen and Aylmer to Henry, 27 Feb. (SP 60/12/34, ff 80-81v); Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] (SP 60/12/53, ff 124–7v).

[49] Ormond to St John, 14 Dec. 1545 (Bodl., MS Carte 30, ff 12–15); Ormond to Wriothesley [Dec.], (Bodl., MS Carte 30, ff 13–14v).

[50] Ormond to Wriothesley, [Dec. 1545] (Bodl., MS Carte 30, ff 13–14v); cf. Simon Adams, 'Faction, clientage and party: English politics, 1550–1603' in *History Today*, xxxii (1982), pp 33–9; Maginn, '"Matters"', pp 465–82.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 197

results in Scotland, as much as the drip-drip of St Leger's criticisms, provoked his December letters.[51]

Copies of Ormond's letters were intercepted by Robert St Leger just before Christmas, bringing matters out into the open. As a result he was summoned before the Irish privy council and told (he claimed) to keep quiet about his accusations, which he refused to do. He expected his enemies to 'certifie feyned false mattier against me'.[52] Early in January 1546, the privy council intervened, informing their English colleagues of 'certayne variannces and contentions' between Ormond and St Leger and of their efforts to reconcile them. The two men were asked not to pursue their conflict further at court.[53] Five days later, however, St Leger, fearing that Ormond would outmanoeuvre him now, turned to 'my great freend' Paget, saying 'by false and moost craftie meanes some here go abowte ... to bringe me owt of all favours or estimacion[e] w[i]th my Souereign[e] Lorde[,] w[hi]ch were ^worse^ to me then death'. He pressed for matters with Ormond to be decided in England, reiterating to Paget that Ireland was at peace under his deputyship, and added that Robert St Leger also wanted the fight taken to court, where he promised to answer any charges.[54] Thus the 'war of words' between Ormond and St Leger began, with accusation and counter-accusation levelled in letter after letter.[55]

Ormond was again before the Irish privy council at some point between early January and late February 1546, speaking out openly against St Leger and claiming he 'hindered' him to the king. Ormond felt provoked when he received copies of 'certen[e] l[ett]res', 'supposed to come' from the English government, attacking his conduct – letters he believed St Leger instigated. Also, Cantwell 'reporte[d]' the lord deputy's ill-will towards him. The two parties had 'entered in so depe a malice the oon to the other: that we per[c]eave at lenght it woll growe to a grete inconvenience, if the matter be not brevelier ordered by your maiestie'. Indeed people feared open fighting should the Butler and St Leger affinities meet, even perhaps in the streets of Dublin. The Irish privy council said that, throughout February, they had tried in vain to end the feud. Now they asked for matters to be resolved in England (as Ormond had done a few months earlier) and advised that 'some noble grave man: which for no respecte woll leane to any ther contemplation, [be sent over] to examyne bothe ther procedinges in your maiesties affaires'.[56] David Edwards interprets their

[51] Ormond to Wriothesley, [Dec. 1545] (Bodl., MS Carte 30, ff 14–14v); cf. Ormond to the English privy council, 20 Feb. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/30, ff 72–73v); Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] (SP 60/12/53, f. 125v). St Leger had in fact made every effort to supply the expedition, hampered by lack of notice and contradictory orders. One of his sons (probably Warham St Leger) even participated.

[52] Ormond to the English privy council, 20 Feb. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/30, ff 72–73v); cf. Alen and Aylmer to Henry, 27 Feb. 1546 (SP 60/12/34, ff 80–81v).

[53] The Irish privy council to the English privy council, 5 Jan. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/26, ff 62–63v).

[54] St Leger to Paget, 10 Jan. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/28, ff 66–67v); the Irish privy council to the English privy council, 26 Feb. (SP 60/12/33, ff 78–79v); cf. St Leger to Paget, 3 Aug. 1545 (SP 60/12/16, ff 38–39v).

[55] Edwards, 'Malice aforethought?', p. 30.

[56] The Irish privy council to the English privy council, 26 Feb. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/32–33, ff 76–79v); Alen and Aylmer to Henry, 27 Feb. (SP 60/12/34, ff 80–81v); Browne to Henry, 28 Feb. (SP 60/12/35, ff 82–83v).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 198

interventions as evidence of privy council hostility towards St Leger and support for Ormond. While Alen and Aylmer certainly criticised the lord deputy, they were actually fairly even-handed, although faction was implicitly a major problem.[57] Alen, Aylmer, and George Browne, archbishop of Dublin, believed that Ormond and St Leger must be reconciled for the sake of stability and peace, and this could only be achieved if both men presented their case to Henry in person, because 'which so ever of them remayne here [in Ireland] may ondoe thother in his absence giltles'; that is, faction originated from there, not England. Alen and Aylmer concurred with Ormond about what should be investigated since St Leger's appointment in 1540: the general state of the realm; revenue and Pale security; how effective law and government were; the behaviour of recently ennobled chieftains. Importantly, they asked 'whether [southern] Leynster: which is the key and stay of all the rest ... be reformed or not'.[58] The Gabhal Raghnaill O'Byrne sept was already restive there, partly because Ormond competed with them over land.[59] It would be from this quarter that major rebellion originated in spring 1547.

Pale politics had become factional, with men siding either with the lord deputy or the earl. For example, Browne offered a different perspective on Ormond's attendance of that January/February council meeting and on his behaviour in general since returning from Scotland. He reported that the earl had arrived in Dublin with 'suche a company of Galloglas', demanding that his colleagues keep the true state of the realm from Henry. Such truculence 'cam[e] of a stowte stomake', Browne said, and he blamed Ormond (and 'some that be mere Englisshe') for the feud and for the excessive coign and livery within his lordship, which created much of the disorder on the Pale's southern borders (including with the Gabhal Raghnaill). He 'is more like a prince then a subiect[,] more like a Gouerno[u]r then an obedient s[e]ru[a]nt/ What toye he hath in his hedd I knowe not[.] I pray god it may torne to yo[u]r Ma[ies]ties hono[u]r.' Browne suggested Ormond's motivation was anti-English feeling, a tendency he reckoned was also evident among the earl's supporters on the Irish privy council. By contrast, he believed St Leger had worked well with his colleagues and Ireland was more peaceful under him 'then it hath byn[e] in many yeres beforr'. These achievements, he argued, would be undermined by Ormond's overweening competitiveness. However, Browne had an axe to grind, having serious property disputes with the earl in Counties Dublin and Kildare. While professing 'what shall I wryte but trueth', he was attempting a political hatchet job here.[60]

The crown took the decision by mid-February to resolve the dispute at court. As St Leger put it, the aim was to 'make myn accusers appeare before youe as

[57] Edwards, 'Malice aforethought?', pp 33–7.

[58] Alen and Aylmer to Henry, 27 Feb. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/34, ff 80–81v); Alen's 'Note' (SP 60/11/53, f. 158v); cf. Ormond to the English privy council, 20 Feb. 1546 (SP 60/12/30, ff 72–73v). Aylmer (like Alen) defended conciliar government, as he saw it, particularly after Grey forged alliances with the Geraldines between 1536 and 1540, but he retained his independence from Ormond and others: Brady, *Chief governors*, pp 18, 20–24.

[59] Maginn, *'Civilizing' Gaelic Leinster*, pp 82–9.

[60] Browne perhaps thought Alen was behind the feud: Browne to Henry, 28 Feb. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/35, ff 82–83v).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 199

thei be[,] who longe haue had vayled faces'.[61] Ormond most likely left for England in March, having made his last will on 10 March.[62] Before departing, St Leger gathered the nobility at Dublin on St Patrick's Day in a demonstration of his successful government, 'by whose aduises I trust to leve this Lande in honest stay'. The vice-treasurer Sir William Brabazon was named in his absence as lord justice, and Cusack became keeper of the great seal in place of Alen. They were obvious choices, on the grounds of their ability, shared outlook, and support for St Leger, albeit Brabazon's attitude towards the Gaelic Irish was more aggressive and the reasoning behind his malfeasance less politically savvy than the lord deputy's. St Leger was particularly close to Cusack.[63]

The Dublin meeting was a clever show of strength as well, although not the 'packed' privy council that David Edwards describes.[64] Twenty-four privy councillors and nobles were present and signed a letter to Henry expressing support for St Leger. They praised him for bringing greater peace to the Pale and claimed that, while still warring constantly and not observing the common law, many Gaelic Irish now recognised their obedience to the king.[65] Some of the most important chieftains, including Conn Bacach O'Neill, first earl of Tyrone, Thomond, Lord Upper Ossory, and Brian O'Connor, were also present at Dublin. They, too, wrote to the king, commending St Leger's 'unutterable eloquence and almost divine prudence ... , who being honest demonstrates the equal and good reason and affability exhibited to everyone', and implying that only a man with similar qualities was up to the job.[66] Cusack reinforced the point: 'those which woulde not be brought vndre ^~~vndr~~ s[u]biecc[i]on^ w[i]th x thousannde men cometh to Dublin w[i]th a lettre'. The chieftains admired and trusted St Leger, he explained, for his 'trouth and gentylnes'. 'They founde him so good and iust in his proceding[e]s[,] who never toke of them nothing but woulde yeve apparaile and plate to them and to his power woulde not suffre wrong to be donn to them[,] wherby they feales^t^ both welth and quietnes.' St Leger's enemies, Cusack said, should declare themselves openly so that they could be challenged openly.[67]

[61] Ormond to the English privy council, 20 Feb. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/30, ff 72–73v); St Leger to Paget, 11 Mar. (SP 60/12/36, ff 84–84v); *Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII–Eliz.*, 125; cf. Cusack to Paget, 28 Mar. 1546 (SP 60/12/41, ff 95–96v).

[62] Ormond's last will and codicil, 10 Mar. and 18 Oct. 1546 (N.L.I., Ormond MS D 2465–71, 2484); *Ormond deeds*, ed. Curtis, iv, 352.

[63] St Leger to Paget, 11 Mar. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/36, ff 84–84v); *Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII–Eliz.*, 125–6; Brady, *Chief governors*, pp 9, 21–2, 31–41, 48, 61, 81–3, 105–6, 108–11, 214. St Leger, for example, leased ex-religious property to his allies, colleagues, nobility, and gentry, reinforcing the community of interest among them all and enhancing support for crown policy and himself as a result: Brady, *Chief governors*, pp 37–41, 43–4, 66–7.

[64] Edwards, 'Malice aforethought?', p. 35.

[65] The Irish privy council and nobility to Henry, 20 Mar. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/38, ff 91–92v).

[66] Gaelic Irish chieftains to Henry, 23 Mar. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/40, ff 94–94v); Cusack to Paget, 28 Mar. (SP 60/12/41, ff 95–96v).

[67] Cusack to Paget, 28 Mar. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/41, f. 95).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 200

II

Cusack's wish was granted. The English privy council ordered an investigation into St Leger's regime, prompting Alen to speak out publicly against him in May.[68] Among other things, they wanted to know: if conditions there had improved since his arrival in 1540, if he used soldiers to settle personal scores (including murder), what rewards he took, how effective law and government were, whether the Gaelic Irish were more obedient? The questions echoed the criticisms raised by Ormond, Alen, and Aylmer. The privy council also asked whether Alen played off Ormond and St Leger and, perhaps most intriguing of all, 'by whose p[ro]curement or counsell the Kauenaughes be now Ioyned togethers in one amitie which were at variannce when the Lorde deputye departed' for England in March. (It is worth recalling that St Leger's attempts to deal with Kavanagh hostility to surrender and regrant in 1544–5 were a factor to remember in his current trouble with Ormond.)[69]

Alen responded bluntly to the English government's enquiries, perhaps because he thought St Leger was losing the king's confidence or out of desperation following his own summons to England. (Failure to persuade Henry that one was in the right could prove fatal, meaning there was everything for Alen to play for.) Alen's motivation was more complicated than malice, however: taking advantage of the feud but apparently without allying himself openly with Ormond, he argued that St Leger was unsuccessful in office and implied that he had sidelined the Irish privy council. He claimed that the king's writ ran only in the Pale, and even there it was restricted mainly to its heartland in the maghery. Surrender and regrant was unworkable because the Gaelic Irish 'obey not wrytt ne lawe'. They observed English custom only infrequently: for example, Tyrone 'oones in a yere perchaunce … commeth to Dublin[,] sometyme sent for twyce or thries or he woll come, and that by gret sollicitation ... , when he come thyther he wearyth a gowne of sylke, leavinge it eyther there or at Droghda [in County Louth] tyll he come agayne.' 'At home at no tyme that ever I harde he vseth any Inglysh apparell.' According to Alen, rather than making them like the English, St Leger's conciliatory methods, above all surrender and regrant, only strengthened the political and military power of the chieftains.[70] For example, in

[68] Alen's 'Note' (T.N.A., SP 60/11/53, ff 154–9v); Alen's 'Certen notes of the state of Irelande' (SP 60/12/42, ff 97–97v); the English privy council to certain Irish privy councillors, 5 May 1546 (SP 60/12/43, ff 98–99v; SP 60/12/43 (i), ff 100–100v); *Acts of the privy council, 1542–7*, 402–5.

[69] The English privy council to certain Irish privy councillors, 5 May 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/43 (i), ff 100–100v).

[70] Alen's 'Note' (T.N.A., SP 60/11/53, ff 154–55); Alen's 'Certen notes' (SP 60/12/42, ff 97–97v); N.L.I., Ormond MS D 2410; *Acts of the privy council, 1542–7*, 402–5; Maginn, '"Matters"', p. 475; cf. Ellis, 'Cromwell', pp 509–10; Mary Ann Lyons, *Church and society in County Kildare,* c. *1470–1547* (Dublin, 2000), pp 15–17. Browne made the same gibe about wearing Gaelic Irish dress against Ormond: Browne to Henry, 28 Feb. 1546 (SP 60/12/35, f. 82). Alen had been outspoken since the 1530s, in defending conciliar government (and his own interests) and checking the independent power of lord deputies, allying himself with the Butler family against Grey between 1536 and 1541 and critiquing St Leger's successor Sir Edward Bellingham in 1548–9, for example: Brady, *Chief governors*, pp 9, 18–25, 42–3, 50–51, 61, 65–7, 249–50.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 201

1544 or 1545 Brian O'Connor backed Patrick O'More against his brother Rory (who was imprisoned by St Leger at the time), seizing lands within the latter's lordship and building a castle and bridge there. The dispute between the brothers was caused partly by the government's recognition of Rory as captain of Leix. In 1545 Brian took Clanmaliere in Leix and Offaly from the O'Dempsey sept, again building a castle and bridge. These potentially allowed him to threaten western County Kildare and the Barrow valley.[71] Brabazon, for one, was wary of Brian's growing strength, using Rory to campaign against him during St Leger's absence in England in 1544 until, on his return, the lord deputy put a stop to it.[72] Brian's actions more than anything weakened Pale security, Alen said, undermining the idea that southern Leinster could be garrisoned and 'controlled' easily if he was capable of raiding County Kildare with impunity from the west. It also undermined the traditional strategy of keeping the midland and southern Leinster septs divided and weak, in check 'aslonge as they see a sworde to stryke agayne'. While some said that these chieftains would remain obedient because of their personal relationship with the lord deputy, Alen doubted it, and believed that St Leger secretly did so too. An Englishman who had served in Ireland for eighteen years, Alen had an outsider's binary perspective on society there, refusing to see how intermingled its ethnic groups were. The large number of gallowglass and kerne recruited into the army at this time could only be, for him, 'inducers of Irysh maners' into the Pale. He wanted clear ethnic separation to restore English culture, with the royal castles acting as self-supporting enclaves of soldiers beyond the Pale. He also opposed a return to aristocratic delegation.[73]

A second document produced by Alen drove his points home more succinctly. 'It is a strange thinge to me to consider how the kynge is begiled', he stated, and he accused St Leger of corruption and partiality, alleging that he embezzled crown revenue and annual subventions of £5,000 'to maynteyne his astate, and to wynne nothinge to the kynge'. St Leger's only purpose was 'to consume all, and wede oute [Henry's] experte servauntes, and to haue none ther, but ~~as~~ such as wolbe obsequius onely to hym in all his doinges/ whych is the next way to kepe the kynge from knowledge.' Henry was 'rex nomine tantum'.[74]

St Leger produced a detailed rebuttal to Alen's charges, including the telling claim that Alen had not provided even one horseman for the army despite enjoying an income of IR£400. He enumerated the reduced military strength of the Gaelic Irish on the Pale borders: for example, the supposedly mighty Kavanagh sept, which once could raise 160 to 180 cavalry, now barely mustered forty. It was true that the Gaelic Irish 'knowe neyther lawe nor lettre', but they kept better rule in their lordships than at any time within memory, he

[71] Brian and Patrick were brothers-in-law: Rory O'More to Henry and the English privy council, June 1544 (T.N.A., SP 60/11/49, ff 145–46v); Alen's 'Note' (SP 60/11/53, ff 155v–156); Carey, 'O'More lordship', pp 217–18; Maginn, '"Matters"', p. 474.

[72] Rory O'More to Henry and the English privy council, June 1544 (T.N.A., SP 60/11/49, ff 145–46v).

[73] Alen's 'Note' (T.N.A., SP 60/11/53, ff 156–58v); Alen's 'Certen notes' (SP 60/12/42, ff 97–97v); the Irish privy council to the English privy council, 25 May 1546 (SP 60/12/45, ff 103–4v); Alen's answers to St Leger's charges (SP 60/12/47, ff 109–13v); cf. Lyons, *County Kildare*, pp 15–52.

[74] Alen's 'Certen notes' (T.N.A., SP 60/12/42, ff 97–97v).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 202

said.[75] A sheriff was named every year for the O'Byrnes; and in 1545–6 Brian O'Toole held the office in County Dublin, 'and executed the same right well according to suche knowledge as he had'. St Leger accused Alen of impeding him time and time again. Alen 'letted' government efforts to increase revenue and 'staied' the victualling of soldiers that were to be sent to police southern Leinster, while 'sitting at home hymself and comptrolling me and others that toke paine'. He also undermined attempts to conciliate the Gaelic Irish through good lordship and the exercise of impartial justice, and St Leger painted a picture of him as a man who had reneged on his earlier support for surrender and regrant.[76] St Leger claimed that the king received rent and denied cronyism or malfeasance (charges that would come back to haunt him in 1556), saying he expended £333 6*s*. 8*d*. yearly of his own money in order to meet crown costs. Alen 'wolde fayne I had fewer mene abowte me that others maight Rewell the king[e]s deputie & not the king[e]s deputie them'. (This was one of the main tensions between Ormond and St Leger also.) 'Suer I ame I haue weded none owte nor yet gone abowte to wede anny but [Alen,] whom I haue knowen[e] thies viij or ix yeres to be not onelie a weder but a distroyer of experte and honest s[e]ru[a]nt[e]s to the king[e]s ma[ies]tie.' If Alen or Ormond got their way, Henry would be 'nether Rex in dede nor yet in nomine.' St Leger ended, 'let me be no more this fatigated w[i]th writing of annsweres', asking to be discharged from office if cleared, to serve Henry anywhere else—'tho the same were in Turkay[,] I will not refuce. ytt'. 'Ryd me from this hell wherein I haue remayned this vj yeares.'[77]

Brabazon later claimed that during these exchanges with Alen in spring and summer 1546 St Leger mobilised support behind the scenes, employing among others his close ally John Goldsmith, clerk of the Irish privy council, for the purpose. Goldsmith allegedly sent letters 'to other to a[n]nymate them to write against' the lord chancellor. He had certainly played such a role in spring 1545, when he was St Leger's mouthpiece in the opening salvo against Ormond. Now he browbeat his colleagues into backing St Leger, telling them that Alen would be sent to the Tower and executed.[78]

Alen responded to St Leger's rebuttal with a close-written defence running to six pages. This deserves further study for its account of his eighteen-year career in Ireland and commentary on the various lord deputies he served, beginning in 1528 with Ormond's father Piers Butler, then first earl of Ossory. However, the salient points here address St Leger directly, whom Alen first met when the latter arrived as a commissioner from England in 1537. Alen implied that St Leger turned Grey against him, but claimed to have borne no hard feelings about it.

[75] [St Leger to the English privy council] (T.N.A., SP 60/12/46, ff 105–8); cf. the English privy council to certain Irish privy councillors, 5 May 1546 (SP 60/12/43, ff 98–99v; SP 60/12/43 (i), ff 100–100v).

[76] [St Leger to the English privy council] (T.N.A., SP 60/12/46, ff 105v–107v); cf. Ellis, *Ireland in the age of the Tudors*, pp 177–8; Maginn, *'Civilizing' Gaelic Leinster*, p. 86, n. 43.

[77] [St Leger to the English privy council] (T.N.A., SP 60/12/46, ff 107–8); Brady, *Chief governors*, pp 66–8.

[78] Alen and Brabazon's 'Matters' (T.N.A., SP 61/2/53, f. 124v); Maginn, '"Matters"', p. 477; St Leger to Wriothesley, 26 Feb. 1545 (SP 60/12/1, f. 1v); to the English privy council, 14 Apr. (SP 60/12/6, f. 17v); Ormond to the English privy council, 20 Feb. 1546 (SP 60/12/30, ff 72–73v); cf. Brady, *Chief governors*, pp 31–2.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 203

'Now as to [St Leger], excepte there was somoch dissimulation vsed, as cannot be thought in a man of his vocation, he toke me for his frende': and 'I haue not bene a complayner against his Lordship'.[79] Alen denied stirring up the Kavanagh sept, impeding efforts to victual soldiers, or lining his own pockets, and said he recognised Ormond's rights within his liberty of Tipperary only as far as was legal, rejecting suggestions that he was no longer acting impartially as lord chancellor. Other tensions bubbled to the surface too, including a 'variaunce betwyxt the Chief iustice [Aylmer] and me' and another with Browne. His quarrel with Browne is obscure but he said the archbishop spoke 'very onreverently and straungelie' to him, provoking the retort that 'soch demeano[u]r wold haue becom[m]en him well when he was a frier'.[80] This is plausible. Early in Mary I's reign John Bale depicted Browne as an imposing and ignorant drunkard, 'that greate Epicure'.[81] By informing the English privy council of Alen's differences with Aylmer and Browne, St Leger portrayed him as a maverick.

III

Although not apparent immediately, Alen had plotted against St Leger since late 1545, which could explain his recall the following spring. At first he employed a stalking horse, getting the principal solicitor Walter Cowley to 'devise ... a booke w[i]th articles'. This, Cowley's 'lewde ... boke', attacked St Leger and defended Ormond.[82] Alen amended it with further articles by himself and others (including, allegedly, Aylmer and Browne), claiming that the lord deputy was involved in political murders and similar outrages within the Pale, among them rape.[83] Several of these additions were repeated in his own charges of May 1546—although he denied having seen the 'lewde boke'. St Leger did not believe him and pointed out how Cowley, Ormond, and he had made the same accusations against him.[84] The 'lewde boke' was intended specifically to

[79] Alen's answers (T.N.A., SP 60/12/47, ff 109v–110); Bryson, 'St Leger, Sir Anthony', in *Oxford DNB*.

[80] Alen's answers (T.N.A., SP 60/12/47, ff 109–13v).

[81] John Bale, *The vocacyon of Iohan Bale to the bishoprick of Ossorie* (*STC* 1307, [Wesel?], 1553/4), sigs. C2v–C3v, D8–D8v; Maginn, '"Matters"', p. 480; cf. Brendan Bradshaw, 'George Browne, first reformation archbishop of Dublin, 1536–54' in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, xxi (1970), p. 310.

[82] The expression 'lewde boke' is Alen's and Cowley's: Alen's answers (T.N.A., SP 60/12/47, f. 110); Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (SP 60/12/50–51, ff 120–21v); cf. Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] (SP 60/12/53, ff 124, 126). Cowley was Robert Cowley's eldest son and Ormond's kinsman, a Butler servant since the 1530s, and clerk of the crown. Between 1536 and 1540 he lobbied for Grey's removal from office: Edwards, 'Malice aforethought?', pp 33–4, 36; Terry Clavin, 'Cowley, Walter', in *DIB*.

[83] The English privy council to certain Irish privy councillors, 5 May 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/43 (i), f. 100v); Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] (SP 60/12/50–51, ff 120–21v; SP 60/12/52, ff 122–22v; SP 60/12/53, f. 124).

[84] Alen's 'Note' (T.N.A., SP 60/11/53, ff 154–9v); Alen's 'Certen notes' (SP 60/12/42, ff 97–97v); [St Leger to the English privy council] (SP 60/12/46, ff 107v–108); Alen's answers (SP 60/12/47, ff 109–13v); Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (SP 60/12/52, ff 122–22v).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 204

circumvent the lord deputy's good court connections by putting his opponents' position across provocatively, presumably directly to the king and/or the English privy council. However, it backfired because Henry still had confidence in St Leger, landing Cowley in the Tower on 28 April 1546.[85]

The depositions and petitions Cowley made from the Tower between his arrest in April and the Garter feast on 6 June provide the fullest account we have of the political breakdown of 1545–6. Although these documents are complicated and as partisan as any other, they contain new details and clarify some earlier ambiguities.[86] Alen and Brabazon claimed subsequently that St Leger suborned Cowley at this time to act against Ormond: 'what wurdes and p[er]suac[i]ons vsed my lord D[eputy] with Walter Cowley in the tower [in 1546] <Walter Cowley>'.[87] Cowley is inconsistent, however, alleging in 1546 during his imprisonment that he had had misgivings about his 'lewde boke' and about Alen from the outset; he certainly blamed Cantwell and Alen for everything. 'A yong mooste vnhappy ma[n]', he regretted 'ta[n]gl[ing] in the brablinge of thos causes', particularly as St Leger had shown him favour.[88]

In his depositions Cowley said that Ormond had reacted the way he had only because he thought St Leger was poisoning the king against him. We see how such alleged plotting polarised opinion, lending the earl sympathy and support. And it was against this background that Cowley implied his actions should be judged.[89] Instigated by Cantwell, Cowley had become hostile to St Leger around Michaelmas 1545, prompted partly by fear for his own safety, partly by loyalty to Ormond, whom he thought to be the best guardian of the Pale against the Gaelic Irish.[90] Cantwell left for England shortly afterwards. There he met the earl's servant John Conway and informed him 'that his m[aste]r had nede to make ffreend[e]s in england for ther were great maters a fframing against hym'.[91] On their return to Ireland both men repeated this claim to Ormond on a number of occasions and Cantwell told him he was being pressured by St Leger into

[85] To confuse matters further, another 'book' by Cowley fell into St Leger's hands at this time. Neither this nor his 'lewde boke' is extant: Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/52, ff 122–23v); *Acts of the privy council, 1542–7*, 396–7.

[86] Cowley said that his depositions and petitions 'cu[m]ith to yo[u]r hono[u]rable hand[e]s' 'amidd[e]s yo[u]r noble Ioyfull ffeaste'. This surely refers to the Garter feast in June, not the Limehouse one in October: Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/49–53, ff 118–27v); *L. & P. Hen. VIII, Jan.–Aug. 1546*, 736, 920–4; *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1509–73*, pp 75–6.

[87] Alen and Brabazon's 'Matters' (T.N.A., SP 61/2/53, f. 126v); Maginn, '"Matters"', pp 470, 482.

[88] Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/49, ff 118–18v; SP 60/12/50–51, ff 120–21v).

[89] Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/49–51, ff 118–21v; SP 60/12/53, ff 124–7v); Alen and Aylmer to Henry, 27 Feb. (SP 60/12/34, ff 80–81v). Cowley claimed not to be motivated by revenge for his father's dismissal and exile in England in 1542, saying that St Leger was not to blame, who 'yet gentilly ... wrote ~~for his~~ for his licence to pass <u>home at my</u> desire': SP 60/12/53, f. 124v.

[90] Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/49, ff 118–18v; SP 60/12/50–51, ff 120–21v; SP 60/12/53, ff 124–24v, 126).

[91] Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/50–51, ff 120–21v); cf. Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] (SP 60/12/52, ff 122–23v).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 205

betraying him—'to trap the said erll giltles'.[92] Cowley observed how Cantwell 'spake certain word[e]s couertly to my lord ... at the end of the hall in Maynoth [in County Kildare] wherof his lordship conceued cause of suspicion that worke was made against him'.[93] In retrospect Cowley felt that Cantwell had initiated the whole crisis during the autumn, planting the seeds in his own and Ormond's minds that St Leger sought the earl's destruction, and splitting the Irish privy council as a result.[94]

Rumours grew within Ormond's household after his return from Scotland in December, according to Cowley. His servant Shane MacGeoghegan reported a conversation between St Leger and Brian O'Connor in which the lord deputy said: 'that hault prowde gentilma[n] therll of Ormond accusith me for thy sake but if thow ~~wilt~~ will repair into England thow shalt see part of ther ffatt neck[e]s strikin of'.[95] Did he really say this, 'w[i]th many ~~other~~ other like word[e]s', or was it gossip? In about December 1547 Alen and Brabazon affirmed that he *had* and that Aylmer and the dean of St Patrick's cathedral, Edward Basnet, could confirm it. However, in his 1546 depositions Cowley was adamant that Brian was merely stirring up trouble, the chieftain claiming his interpreter translated St Leger's words thus. Cowley went on, 'as I thinke in my co[n]cience[,] my lorde deputie was falsly belied therin'.[96] More gossip circulated in Dublin during 1545–6: Katherine Coke, a gentlewoman in St Leger's household, said he hated Ormond. Was she privy to discussions between St Leger and his wife, Agnes?[97] Another letter similar in content to the 'Gowran letter' surfaced, with copies of it circulating at New Ross in County Wexford and as far afield as Chester. This one was disseminated by Piers and Walter Dormer of Kilkenny, but Cowley denied having any hand in it, while they claimed only to have found it.[98]

These incidents only heightened Ormond's anxiety, causing him to write (Cowley said) two letters: one attacking St Leger, the other requesting permission to visit England. The letters (which were probably those to Russell and Wriothesley discussed above) were passed on to Alen, who forwarded the first one to court.[99] Cowley here backs Ormond's account of events, and shows that the lord chancellor worked more closely, but most likely still not openly,

[92] If Cowley's depositions are accurate, St Leger got wind of Cantwell's activities late in the year and tried to turn him against Ormond then: Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/49, ff 118–18v; SP 60/12/50–51, ff 120–21v).

[93] Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/53, ff 125v–126).

[94] Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/49, ff 118–18v; SP 60/12/50–51, ff 120–21v; SP 60/12/53, ff 125v–126).

[95] Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/53, ff 126–26v).

[96] Ibid., f. 126v; Maginn, '"Matters"', pp 470, 477.

[97] Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/53, f. 125v).

[98] This letter is no longer extant. There is no evidence (despite David Edwards's claims) that Cantwell wrote it: Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/50–51, f. 120; SP 60/12/53, f. 125); Edwards, *Ormond*, pp 172–3.

[99] Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/49, ff 118–18v).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 206

with the earl from this time.[100] He alleged that, after some of Ormond's complaints were intercepted at Christmas 1545, which led to his summons to Dublin and started the feud, Alen intervened further on the earl's behalf and was behind the more extreme accusations made against the lord deputy. Alen persuaded Ormond 'that he shold delay' attending the Irish privy council until 'suche time as the bock[e]s shold bee sent ou[e]r in haste' to England. This means that the 'lewde boke' was written in direct response to Ormond's summons to Dublin. Around Christmas Alen offered to lend Cowley IR£20 to act as his messenger to court (presumably in this behalf).[101]

Cowley's most remarkable claim was that Ormond devised the 'Gowran letter' himself, something overlooked by historians. 'The said erll was putt in vnderstanding that the kinges highness was informid that ther required a pollecie to bring by some occacion [him] over into England'. Such a 'pollecie' would be concocted by his enemies as a pretext to his fall, much as people thought had happened to Kildare in 1533–4. If, however, he alleged his life was in danger, he could write for licence to come to court and forestall those enemies.[102] Cowley was questioned by the English government about this claim over a number of days and he admitted further that Ormond and he had made up the 'Gowran letter' (and the 'New Ross letter' and others too, presumably) 'to saue [Cantwell] harmles' from being singled out as the original accuser, 'to the intent that the mate[r]s therin might b[r]inge my lord deputies p[ro]ceding[e]s in debate'.[103] Therefore, both St Leger and Ormond wanted matters settled at court.[104]

IV

Ormond and St Leger 'were sundrie times examined, and their accusations ripelie debated' before the English privy council.[105] St Leger's contacts and powers of persuasion did not fail him during their first encounter at Greenwich Palace on 28 April 1546. It was decided that Cowley (who was also present) 'could avouche nothing but uppon the mouth of others' and, as a result, he was dismissed from office and sent to the Tower, while Ormond was bound in a recognizance.[106] In late May Alen obtained a letter of support from the Irish government, led by Brabazon, Browne, Aylmer, and Cusack. However, they would not back him in a fight with St Leger, instead advocating reconciliation

[100] Ormond to the English privy council, 20 Feb. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/30, ff 72–73v).

[101] Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/49, f. 118v; SP 60/12/52–53, ff 122–22v, 124–7v).

[102] Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/52, f. 123); cf. Ellis, 'Cromwell', pp 498–507.

[103] Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/53, f. 124).

[104] St Leger to Paget, 3 Aug. 1545 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/16, ff 38–39v); to Paget, 10 Jan. 1546 (SP 60/12/28, ff 66–67v); the Irish privy council to the English privy council, 26 Feb. (SP 60/12/33, ff 78–79v).

[105] Raphael Holinshed and Richard Stanihurst, *The Second volume of Chronicles*, eds Abraham Fleming and Richard Hooker (*STC* 13569, London, 1587), p. 104; *Acts of the privy council, 1542–7*, 396–7.

[106] *Acts of the privy council, 1542–7*, 396–7; Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/50–51, ff 121–21v).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 207

between the two.[107] On 17 August the lord deputy and he 'were herde face to face before the Counseill [at Hampton Court], their objections one against the other in writing redde'. After considering the responses to their earlier set of questions, the privy council decided that Alen had maliciously 'sett' Ormond against St Leger 'to the subversion of the quiete state of that Realme' and taken bribes 'to the defraudacion of justice'. He was dismissed and sent to the Fleet Prison.[108] Richard Stanihurst put it succinctly in his *Chronicle*: Alen 'was found to[o] limpe in this controuersie, by plaieng (as it was supposed) more craftily than wiselie, with both hands, in that he seemed to be rather a fosterer of their malice, than an appeaser of their quarels'.[109] Ormond and St Leger were reconciled:

> In fine, the councell equallie to both parts in their complaints affected, and weighing withall rather the due desert of both their loiall seruices, than the vaine presumption of their mutual accusations, wrapped vp their quarels & made them both freends with such indifferencie, as neither part should be either with anie conquest exalted, or with anie foile debased.[110]

Alen and Brabazon were closer to events and probably closer to the truth, when they said that Ormond 'recanted, and kneling vpon his knees weping, asked my L[ord] D[eputy] forgiueness: Otheruise had goone to the tower'.[111]

V

In the end the dispute had to be resolved, and there could only really be one choice: back St Leger. He had brought relative peace and stability to Ireland, with no major rebellions since the 1530s, and gallowglass and kerne even served in Henry's French and Scottish campaigns in 1544 and 1545.[112] In September 1546 the king passed judgment, and here we see Henry at his most proactive and positive. Ormond's grip on several Butler cadet branches should be loosened, with control of the cantred of Clonmel in County Tipperary restored to Thomas Butler, first Lord Cahir, and Edmund Butler, first Lord Dunboyne, while an investigation was ordered into his rights within the liberty of Tipperary itself. He was to exchange Arklow in southern Leinster, Coolestown in Offaly, Leighlinbridge and Rathvilly, both in County Carlow, and Durbard's Island in County Wexford for lands in England, settling the disagreement that perhaps started the feud by handing over some key Butler properties to the king. This cleared the way for garrisoning in southern Leinster and the midlands and the opening of more secure communications with the

[107] The Irish privy council to the English privy council, 25 May 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/45, ff 103–104v).

[108] *Acts of the privy council, 1542–7*, 516–18, 522–4; cf. Irish privy council minutes, 24 Sept. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/48, ff 114–14v).

[109] Holinshed, *Chronicles*, p. 105.

[110] Ibid., pp 104–105.

[111] Alen and Brabazon's 'Matters' (T.N.A., SP 61/2/53, f. 125); Maginn, '"Matters"', p. 477.

[112] Edward Walshe, *The office and duety in fightyng for our countrey* (*STC* 25000, London, 1545); White, 'Henry VIII's Irish kerne', pp 213–25.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 208

south-west. He was also to restore certain crown lands. Henry was even-handed: a quorum of Irish privy councillors was created to attend on St Leger at all times in case business arose needing immediate attention. This reform originated with his colleagues (having been first suggested by Alen), and it can be viewed either as an attempt by them to curb his excesses in office or, as it was claimed to be, to make government more responsive.[113] Butler power was not curtailed greatly. It was agreed that a council should be established in Munster and the archbishop of Cashel was put forward as its first lord president, although the king gave the final decision on this to St Leger. Had the initiative been carried out, the lord deputy may have chosen his ally Desmond, if Anthony McCormack is correct in thinking the latter was the driving force behind it. Ormond's rights to the prisage of wines were confirmed, as was his patent 'to enioye such Irish mens Lands as he can get' (something that explains his continuing eagerness for 'the Reformac[i]on' of southern Leinster).[114] The latter decision could, however, stir up further trouble with the Kavanagh and Gabhal Raghnaill septs, potential targets of Butler aggrandizement. Henry had another motive for treating Ormond mildly: back in February 1546 plans were being made to recruit more gallowglass and kerne in case of renewed fighting in France and/or Scotland. Ormond would certainly play a central role in this. Although the campaigning season was drawing to a close by September, the probability of war in 1547 could not be far from the king's mind.[115]

Cowley rather feebly stated that the outcome of the feud was to '^yoyne^ togither the witt[e]s of diu[e]rs that wer seu[e]r[e]d[,] as thing[e]s shall therby so p[ro]sp[er] as it neu[e]r sh[o]ld oonles that this vnhap had chaunsed'.[116] Whatever his optimism, events intervened. At a banquet held in his honour at Limehouse in London on 17 October 1546, Ormond and thirty-five servants contracted food poisoning. His 'vntimelie decease' eleven days later at Ely Place gave 'little comfort to his aduersaries'.[117] On 7 November St Leger was re-appointed lord deputy with a 100-mark increase in his stipend and an English replacement was sought for Alen. But Counties Kilkenny and Tipperary and the lands covering the route to the south-west now lacked strong leadership and government efforts to occupy the Ormond lordship proved unsatisfactory.[118] Almost immediately Brabazon took an army there, probably to restore order, but at some point in late 1546 or 1547 the Irish privy council decided that 'the rule of the Counties of Kilkenie & Tipp[er]ary are committed to the gou[ern]m[en]te of' Joan Butler, countess of Ormond, her brothers-in-law Sir Richard Butler and

[113] Irish privy council minutes, 24 Sept. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/48, ff 114v–115v, 116); cf. Alen's 'Note' (SP 60/11/53, f. 158v); Ellis, 'Cromwell', pp 509–10.

[114] In fact, it was Alen who originally suggested creating this council as a means of dividing Ormond, Desmond, and Thomond: Irish privy council minutes, 24 Sept. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/48, ff 114v, 115v); Alen's 'Note' (SP 60/11/53, f. 158v); McCormack, *Desmond*, pp 82–7.

[115] The Irish privy council to the English privy council, 25 Feb. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/31, ff 74–74v; SP 60/12/31 (i), ff 75–75v).

[116] Cowley to the English privy council, [Apr.xJune] 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/50–51, f. 121; SP 60/12/53, f. 125v).

[117] Holinshed, *Chronicles*, pp 105–06.

[118] Irish privy council minutes, 24 Sept. 1546 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/48, ff 114–17v); *L. & P. Hen. VIII, Sept. 1546–Jan. 1547*, 476 (38); *Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII–Eliz.*, 132.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 209

the archbishop of Cashel, and others. It was clear that only the Butler family had sufficient authority within their lordship, and any effort to boost crown influence among the independent septs in southern Leinster would be best achieved in partnership with them.[119] Indeed, the 'sudden power vacuum' caused by Ormond's death, leaving a minor as his successor, may have contributed to rebellion in 1547.[120]

VI

The 'contention[e]' between Ormond and St Leger is very complicated and what exactly happened will continue to be debated. Its wider causes were St Leger's efforts to limit Butler power, in order to prevent something akin to another Kildare ascendancy, and Ormond's response to what he regarded as hostile actions against him and a rival's self-aggrandizement. Ormond's behaviour here is consistent with that during the 1530s and early 1540s, to support government drives against the Gaelic Irish when it suited him but resist any efforts to impose its authority within his own lordship.[121] It was mainly a fight about power rather than policy, although it fits into the broader dialectic over whether Ireland should be ruled through aristocratic delegation or an English vice-regent. However, it was not caused by court faction: St Leger 'durst lardgely answere for [Ormond's] ernest trueth to the King[e]s Ma[ies]tie[.] But suerly [Henry] wolde be glad no man[n] had so great a rule as [Ormond] in this Lande'.[122] The feud should probably also be interpreted against the background of the king's rapidly-deteriorating health, even if no party to it would come out and say that this was a factor (and neither do our sources). Henry was periodically debilitated by leg ulcers and fever during the later 1530s and 1540s and these bouts became more frequent from 1544. He was very ill in February–March 1546, when the dispute was at its height, and again in September, when he arbitrated between the lord deputy and the earl.[123] The political uncertainty that this terminal decline caused must have made men jumpy in both realms.

While Ormond and St Leger worked together during the early 1540s Ireland was stable and well governed. The breakdown in their relationship (perhaps inevitable because of these tensions between crown and private authority) created factional conflict in Ireland which could only be resolved by the king. The result was unsatisfactory for both men, leading to Ormond's temporary disgrace, and hobbling St Leger, contributing significantly to his removal from office in 1548. The principal reason for St Leger's dismissal then, however, was his inability to deal with the midland rebellion in 1547–8, not Henry's death or court faction. The feud also killed off any possibility of a return to

[119] Sir William Usher, 'The redd Counsell booke', 1542/3–52 (B.L., Additional MS 4792, ff 121–21v); cf. Edmund Butler to Somerset, 25 Feb. 1548 (T.N.A., SP 61/1/11, ff 29–30v); Edwards, *Ormond*, pp 59–61, 97, 178–80.

[120] Brady, *Chief governors*, pp 56–7.

[121] Ellis, 'Cromwell', pp 512–4; McCormack, *Desmond*, pp 76–7.

[122] St Leger to the English privy council, 14 Apr. 1545 (T.N.A., SP 60/12/6, f. 17v).

[123] John J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (London, 1968), pp 484–8.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press

IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:30 Page 210

aristocratic delegation: consensus government disintegrated over the next few years under the weight of rebellion, the Protestant reformation, garrisoning, and colonization.[124]

ALAN BRYSON
Humanities Research Institute, University of Sheffield

[124] A version of this article was presented at the Durham University Early Modern Group Seminar and the Warwick University 'Rethinking politics in sixteenth-century England' Conference (15–17 Apr. 2009), and a research trip to Ireland was funded by the British Academy. I am grateful to Mike Braddick, Tom Charlton, Jessica Edmondes, Caoilfhionn Gallagher, John Guy, Ed MacKenzie, Chris Maginn, Steve May, Natalie Mears, Tony Moore, Rory Rapple, Fred Schurink, Claire Taylor, and David Trim, and to the anonymous referees at *I.H.S.*

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400001085 Published online by Cambridge University Press