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Women and the Reformation in Tudor Ireland

by HENRY A. JEFFERIES
Ulster University
E-mail: henryjefferies@icloud.com

This paper addresses a major historical lacuna by highlighting some of the ways through which women helped to shape Irish responses to the English Reformation in Ireland. It reveals that women were often key to a web of contacts linking English resistance to the Tudors' reformations to Irish resistance. It affirms that women played a significant role in the Reformation in Tudor Ireland, not least of all in its ultimate failure. Because virtually no Irish women became Protestants in the sixteenth century, though a small number of Irish men was converted, no self-perpetuating indigenous community of Irish Protestants was generated.

Women have been conspicuous in Irish Reformation studies by their absence.[1] A number of circumstances has conspired to cause that to be the case. In part, it reflects a dearth of evidence

CRP = *The correspondence of Reginald Pole,* I**:** *1518–1546*, ed. Thomas F. Mayer, Aldershot 2002; *CSP, Spain* = *Calendar of state papers, Spain*, v/1, ed. Pascual de Gayangos, London 1886; *IHS* = *Irish Historical Studies*; *JCKAS* = *Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society*; *L&P* = *Letters and papers, foreign and domestic, of the reign of Henry VIII*, vii, ed. James Gairdner, London 1883; viii, ed. James Gairdner, London 1885; xv, ed. James Gairdner and R. H. Brodie, London 1896; *ODNB* = *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; SP = State papers; TNA = The National Archives; *TRHS* = *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*

[1] Brendan Bradshaw, 'Sword, word and strategy in the Reformation in Ireland', *HJ* xxi (1978), 475–502; Nicholas Canny, 'Why the Reformation failed in Ireland: *une question mal posée*?', this Journal xxx (1979), 423–50; Ciaran Brady, 'Conservative subversives: the community of the Pale and the Dublin administration, 1556–86', in P. J. Corish (ed.), *Radicals, rebels and establishments*, Belfast 1985, 11–32; Steven Ellis, 'Economic problems of the Church: why the Reformation failed in Ireland', this Journal xli (1991), 257–69; Henry A. Jefferies, *Priests and prelates of Armagh in the age of reformations, 1518–1558*, Dublin 1997; Mary Ann Lyons, *Church and society in County Kildare, c. 1480–1547*, Dublin 2000; Brendan Scott, *Religion and Reformation in the Tudor diocese of Meath*, Dublin 2006; James Murray, *Enforcing the English Reformation in Ireland: clerical reactions and political conflict in the diocese of Dublin, 1534–1590*, Cambridge 2009; Henry A. Jefferies, *The Irish Church and the Tudor reformations*,

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about religion relating specifically to women in Ireland in the sixteenth century, an extreme example of a general European phenomenon.[2] In part, it reflects the legacy of a wider lack of engagement with women's history in Ireland until recently.[3] Most of all, though, it reflects the nature of the conventional paradigm in vogue for the interpretation of the Reformation in Ireland since 1979, one based on an *a priori* decision to interpret it 'with the religion left out'.[4] Instead of religion, emphasis was placed on disputes about taxation in the 1580s or more general alienation in the 1590s.[5] That had the effect of directing attention towards the political domain, which was predominantly the preserve of a privileged patriarchy in the sixteenth century, and away from the study of responses to the Reformation at individual, familial or community levels, at which women would comprise half of the research population. This article is intended as an attempt to address this historical *lacuna* by highlighting some of the ways through which women responded to the English Reformation in Ireland. It reveals that women were often key to webs of contacts linking English resistance to the Tudors' reformations to Irish resistance. This article proposes that women played a key role in the survival of Catholicism in Tudor Ireland, a proposal that tallies with studies of the role of women in the recusant community in England.[6]

Dublin 2010. The exception to this pattern is Colm Lennon, *The lords of Dublin in the age of Reformation*, Dublin 1989. On the other hand, the role of Irish women in the Counter-Reformation has attracted attention from Patrick Corish, 'Women and religious practice', in Margaret MacCurtain and Mary O'Dowd (eds), *Women in early modern Ireland*, Dublin 1991, 212–20, and Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, 'Theory in the absence of fact: Irish women and the Catholic reformation', in Christine Meek and Christine Lawless (eds), *Studies on medieval and early modern women: pawns or players*, Dublin 2003, 141–54.

[2] Merry Wiesner, 'Women's response to the Reformation', in R. Po-Chia Hsia (ed.), *The German people and the Reformation*, Ithaca, NY–London 1988, 149; Ó hAnnracháin, 'Theory in the absence of fact', 141. See, however, Susan Broomhall, *Women and religion in sixteenth-century France*, London–New York 2006, passim.

[3] In the introduction to their seminal book on *Women in early modern Ireland*, MacCurtain and O'Dowd observe (p.1) that '[t]he historiography of women's history in Ireland is largely a story of neglect'. For recent progress see the Irish chapters in Christine Meek, *Women in Renaissance and early modern Europe*, Dublin 2000; Meek and Lawless, *Studies on medieval and early modern women: pawns*; Christine Meek and Christine Lawless (eds), *Studies on medieval and early modern women: victims or viragos*, Dublin 2005; and Gillian Kenny, *Anglo-Irish and Gaelic women in Ireland, c. 1170–1540*, Dublin 2007.

[4] Nicholas Canny, 'Revisiting the past: reflections on "Why the Reformation failed in Ireland: *une question mal posée*?"', in Mark Empey, Alan Ford and Miriam Moffitt (eds), *The Church of Ireland and its past*, Dublin 2017, 241.

[5] Brady, 'Conservative subversives'; Canny, 'Why the Reformation failed'.

[6] A. G. Dickens, 'The extent and character of recusancy in Yorkshire', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* xxxvii/145 (1948), 39–40; John Bossy, *The English Catholic community, 1570–1850*, London 1975, 150–68; J. C. H. Aveling, 'Catholic households in Yorkshire, 1580–1603', *Northern History* xvi (1980), 88; Marie B. Rowlands, 'Recusant

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I

Symptomatic of the marginalisation of women in Irish Reformation studies is the treatment of the role of Dame Janet Eustace in the Kildare rebellion of 1534/5, a revolt that engulfed much of Ireland and threatened to topple Henry VIII from his throne with imperial support on religious grounds. The earliest historical account of the rebellion was written by Edmund Campion in *A historie of Ireland written in the yeare 1571*, within living memory of its occurrence.[7] That English scholar has been judged 'remarkable as an historian for the scholarly precision with which he specifies even the provenance of his sources'.[8] He acknowledged that his book was written with the assistance of James Stanihurst, the recorder of Dublin, who furnished him with materials for the book 'both by word and written monuments, and by the benefit of his own library'.[9] Stanihurst had first-hand experience of the rebellion, having been held hostage by the rebels as a young man. His particular interest in the episode may account for the level of detail about the rebellion, much of it verifiable from contemporary sources, that was recounted not only in Campion's *Historie* but also in the expanded account by his son Richard Stanihurst, Campion's friend from when both young men had been at Oxford University.[10]

Campion's *Historie* states that the Kildare rebellion began with Henry VIII's vice-deputy in Ireland, Lord Thomas FitzGerald, heir to the 9th earl of Kildare, giving up the sword of state and declaring that

> I am none of Henryes deputy, I am his foe, I have more mind to … meete him in the field than to serve him in office. If all the hearts of England and Ireland that have cause thereto, would joyne in this quarrel (as I trust they will) then should he be a by-word (as I trust he shall) for his heresie, lechery and tyranny, wherein the age to come may skore him among the auncient princes of most abhominable and hatefull memories.[11]

women, 1560–1640', in Mary Prior (ed.), *Women in English society, 1500–1800*, London–New York 1985, 153–77, and *English Catholics of parish and town, 1558–1778*, London 1999, 139–42; Alexandra Walsham, *Church papists: Catholicism, conformity and confessional polemic in early modern England*, repr. Woodbridge 1999, 78–83.

[7] Edmund Campion, *A historie of Ireland written in the yeare 1571*, Dublin 1809, ed. Gerard Kilroy in *Edmund Campion: a scholarly life*, Abingdon–New York 2017 edn, 65–81.

[8] Kilroy, *Campion*, 74.

[9] 'To the loving reader' in Campion, *Historie*; Kilroy, *Campion*, 72–3.

[10] Richard Stanihurst, 'The description and chronicles of Yreland, from the first originall, until the yeare 1547', in Raphael Holinshed, *The chronicles of England, Scotlande and Irelande*, London 1577; Colm Lennon, *Richard Stanihurst: the Dubliner, 1547–1618*, Dublin 1981, 106–16; Kilroy, *Campion*, 77–9.

[11] Campion, *Historie*, 175–6. Campion's manner of reconstructing speeches has been judged to be 'very close to that of the great Greek historian, Thucydides': Kilroy, *Campion*, 74.

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Campion referred to 'many other slanderous and foule termes' with which FitzGerald abused Henry and Anne Boleyn, the new queen, in highly personal terms. These may have been circulated in written form because, according to a contemporary report by Eustace Chapuys, the imperial ambassador to the court of Henry VIII, the king was grievously upset on reading them.[12] The personal abuse directed against the king from the opening of the rebellion shows that it was never intended to be a simple 'gesture of protest'.[13] The very earliest surviving report about the rebellion from Ireland informed Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII chief minister, that the rebels condemned the king as 'accursed' for forsaking the Catholic Church, and they declared that they would serve the pope against him.[14] In an interesting adoption of Henry VIII's practice of levying oaths in England the rebels levied oaths to the pope, the Holy Roman emperor and to FitzGerald himself.[15]

Campion made no reference to Dame Eustace's role in the rebellion. Yet John Alen, one of the most senior and percipient English officials in Ireland at the time, in a letter to Cromwell, wrote that Dame Janet Eustace was 'by all probable conjecture, … the chief councillor and stirrer of this inordinate rebellion'.[16] Alen had already informed Cromwell through his servant, Edward Beck, that Janet was 'the great causer' of the rebellion and that her eldest son, James Delahide, was 'the greatest traitor next to Thomas [FitzGerald]'.[17] A landowner from Meath deposed that both Janet and James had instigated the rebellion.[18] Richard Stanihurst, using his father's archive to expand on Campion's *Historie*, recorded that Lord Leonard Grey, Henry VIII's deputy in Ireland, was convinced that Janet's son, James, was 'the onely bruer of all this rebellion … set on by his parents, and namely by his mother'.[19] During the rebellion Janet provided logistical support for the rebel garrison at Maynooth Castle, the Kildares' *caput*, and when the rebellion was on the verge of collapse she gave succour to FitzGerald in a castle belonging to her husband, Sir Walter Delahide of Moyglare.[20]

After Janet and her husband were apprehended by English soldiers in the later stages of the rebellion they were incarcerated in Dublin Castle.[21] The king's deputy tried to entice her 'by fayre means' to implicate

[12] Campion, *Historie*, 176; *CSP, Spain*, v/1, no. 87.

[13] The interpretation of the rebellion as a gesture was first presented in Brendan Bradshaw, 'Cromwellian reform and the origins of the Kildare rebellion', *TRHS* xxvii (1977), 69–93. For an alternative interpretation see Henry A. Jefferies, 'The Kildare revolt: accident or design?', *JCKAS* xix (2004–5), 447–59.

[14] *L&P* vii. 915.

[15] Jonathan Michael Gray, *Oaths and the English Reformation*, Cambridge 2016 edn, 55–68; *CSP, Spain*, v/1, no. 84; *L&P* vii. 1095.

[16] *L&P* viii. 226.

[17] *L&P* viii. 193.

[18] *L&P* viii. 82.

[19] Stanihurst, *Historie*, 99; Kilroy, *Campion*, 77–9.

[20] *L&P* viii. 82, 226.

[21] *L&P* viii. 193, 226.

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her husband in the rebellion, and when that did not work she was 'menaced to be put to death, or to be rackt and so with extremitie to be compelled'.[22] But she did not capitulate and he was subsequently freed and allowed a life interest in some of his lands.[23] Janet, however, died 'with these continual stormes heartbroken' after twelve months of imprisonment and 'duress'. Her body was taken to the Franciscan friary in Dublin, but the king's deputy is reported to have prevented her body from being buried, declaring that 'the carkasse of one who was the mother of so arrant an archtraytor ought rather to be cast out on a dunghill to be carion for ravens and dogs to gnaw upon than to be layd in any Christian grave'.[24] Her body was, in fact, licensed for burial after four or five days 'in this plight' at the request of Lady Gennet Goulding, the wife of Sir John White, one of the leading loyalists in Dublin, but the animus directed towards her is obvious.

Dame Janet Eustace was an unlikely rebel leader. Her father, Roland Eustace, Baron Portlester, was one of the leading lords of the English Pale around Dublin, and one of her sisters, Alison Eustace, was the first wife of the 9th earl of Kildare.[25] Her husband, Sir Walter Delahide, was a leading member of the Pale gentry, and the steward and receiver-general of the earl of Kildare.[26] She had been the foster-mother of Lord Thomas FitzGerald, the rebel leader, as well as his aunt.[27] The importance of fosterage among the élites in Ireland cannot be over-stated for it established strong political as well as personal bonds.[28] The fact that Thomas's mother died when he was a child must have made his relationship with his foster-mother all the stronger and her influence over him all the greater.

Like all Tudor rebellions, the Kildare revolt was not monocausal.[29] None the less, it would be perverse to deny that Janet's participation in a rebellion in which religion was so central an aspect was inspired by her hostility to Henry VIII's Reformation. Nothing else would plausibly explain why a lady of her background would risk the lives of her three sons, one of whom was the rector of Kilberry in Meath diocese, her husband's life and her own on such a very high-stakes undertaking as a rebellion

[22] Stanihurst, *Historie*, 99.

[23] Steven Ellis, 'Bastard feudalism and the Kildare rebellion, 1534–35: the character of rebel support', in William Nolan and Thomas McGrath (eds), *Kildare: history and society*, Dublin 2006, 217.

[24] Stanihurst, *Historie*, 99.

[25] Lyons, *Church and society*, 154–6.

[26] Ellis, 'Bastard feudalism', 215.

[27] *L&P* viii. 226.

[28] Fiona Fitzsimons, 'Fosterage and gossiprid in late medieval Ireland: some new evidence', in P. J. Duffy, D. Edwards and E. FitzPatrick (eds), *Gaelic Ireland:* c. *1250–*c. *1650: land, lordship and settlement*, Dublin 2001, 78–121.

[29] Anthony Fletcher and Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor rebellions*, Harlow 2004 edn, passim; Steven Ellis, 'The Kildare rebellion and the early Henrician Reformation', *HJ* xiv (1976), 497–519.

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against the crown.[30] There is a report that her daughter was imprisoned alongside her in Dublin Castle,[31] but the younger woman in question may have been Rose Eustace, a lady-in-waiting to the countess of Kildare, who was probably a niece of Janet.[32]

If Dame Eustace's role in the Kildare rebellion has been understated by historians, a woman whose role has been entirely overlooked is the rebel leader's wife, Frances Fortescue. Frances's father, Sir Adrian Fortescue, held land in Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire.[33] He was detained for a number of months during the Kildare rebellion, presumably on suspicion of being party to it.[34] Frances remained with her husband throughout the rebellion until its virtual collapse in May 1535, at which point FitzGerald sent her away, with public condemnations of her for her English birth to mask his intentions.[35] She was suspected of having endorsed her husband's rebellion and was taken to England, along with sixteen or twenty Irish hobbies.[36] She was eventually placed in the custody of her brother-in-law, Lord Wentworth, in Suffolk, much to his displeasure. Ominously, Wentworth received instructions from Cromwell in February 1540 to send 'the lady Garrard' (Lady FitzGerald) to him 'in honest and secret sort'.[37] As it happens, she was gravely ill, too weak to stand let alone ride a horse, and she died a couple of weeks later.[38] Why Cromwell should want her sent to him in 'secret sort' is nowhere recorded. However, it may be significant that Frances's father had been attainted along with Cardinal Reginald Pole, the cardinal's mother Margaret, countess of Salisbury, his brother Henry, Lord Montagu, and a very long list of other Catholic dissidents by an act of parliament in May 1539, and was executed for treason shortly afterwards.[39] The precise grounds for Adrian's attainder are unclear; he was accused of having 'refused his duty of allegiance', possibly during the Kildare rebellion or the Pilgrimage of Grace, or perhaps in the 'White Rose' conspiracies linked to the Poles.[40] He was clearly a man of strong Catholic convictions.

Frances's brother Anthony Fortescue subsequently married Katherine Pole, a daughter of Sir Geoffrey Pole, the cardinal's surviving brother, and he joined with her brothers Arthur and Edmund Pole in a conspiracy to establish Mary, Queen of Scots, on the English throne in

[30] *L&P* vii. 1382. [31] *L&P* viii. 193. [32] *L&P* viii. 226.
[33] Richard Rex, 'Sir Adrian Fortescue (*c.*1481–1539)', *ODNB* online, <https//doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/9936>. [34] Ibid.
[35] *L&P* viii. 726, 1019; Jefferies, 'Kildare revolt', 455.
[36] *L&P* viii. 716; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cromwell: a life*, London 2018, 405–7. I am very indebted to Professor MacCulloch for tracing Frances's fate after the rebellion and for all his sage comments on an earlier draft of this paper.
[37] *L&P* xv. 225. [38] *L&P* xv. 286.
[39] Rex, 'Fortescue'; Thomas F. Mayer, *Reginald Pole: prince and prophet*, Cambridge 2007 edn, 77–8. [40] MacCulloch, *Cromwell*, 487, 490, 495, 497, 509, 513.

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1561.[41] Geoffrey Pole himself had been the most earnest advocate for an imperial invasion of England during the Kildare rebellion.[42] He had probably been in the service of Princess Mary, like so many of the other English Catholic conspirators in contact with Chapuys, the imperial ambassador, at the time of the rebellion.[43] His mother, the countess of Salisbury, had been Mary's godmother and governess.[44] Frances's support for her husband's rebellion in 1534/5 is all the more intelligible in the light of her family's Catholic loyalties. Religious dissent was often a powerful solvent of political loyalty in the early modern era. Her premature death probably saved her from being executed like her father.[45]

Thomas FitzGerald's stepmother, Countess Elizabeth Grey, a sister of Thomas Grey, 2nd marquess of Dorset, was a kinswoman of Reginald Pole. She had been one of Princess Mary's maids of honour.[46] She was one of Queen Catherine's attendants at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520, where she would have encountered Sir Adrian Fortescue who also attended the queen on the same occasion.[47] That helps to explain how her step-son, Thomas FitzGerald, and Adrian's daughter Frances subsequently met and married. Thomas, Baron Darcy of Templehurst, a peer with estates in Yorkshire, was scheduled to attend Henry VIII at the Field of the Cloth of Gold and he also had official functions pertaining to Princess Mary.[48] Those two facts make it very likely that he was known to Elizabeth Grey and Adrian Fortescue. His cousin John, Lord Hussey, an old royal servant with estates in Lincolnshire, was Princess Mary's chamberlain while Hussey's second wife, Anne, was one of Mary's attendants until she was removed from that office and lodged in the Tower of London for several months for calling Mary a 'princess' during the Kildare rebellion, in defiance of the Act of Succession.[49] Both Darcy and Hussey were associated with Countess Elizabeth's brother, the 2nd marquess of

[41] William Wizeman, 'Sir Anthony Fortescue (*c.*1535–*c.*1611)', *ODNB* online, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/9937>.

[42] Thomas F. Mayer, 'Sir Geoffrey Pole (d.1558)', *ODNB* online, <https:doi.org/10/1093/ref:odnb/22447>; G. W. Bernard, *The king's Reformation: Henry VIII and the remaking of the English Church*, New Haven–London 2007, 78–9.

[43] Mayer, 'Geoffrey Pole'.

[44] *CRP* i, no. 258; Linda Porter, *Mary Tudor: the first queen*, Hachette Digital, 2010 edn, 21, 24, 131–2.

[45] Personal correspondence with Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch.

[46] Steven Ellis, 'Elizabeth FitzGerald [*née* Grey], countess of Kildare (*fl.* 1514–48)', *ODNB* online, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/69231>.

[47] Ibid; Rex, 'Adrian Fortescue'.

[48] R. W. Hoyle, 'Thomas Darcy, Baron Darcy of Darcy (*c.* 1467–1537)', *ODNB* online, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/7148>; Bernard, *The king's Reformation*, 202–5.

[49] R. W. Hoyle, 'John Hussey, Baron Hussey (1465/6–1537)', *ODNB* online, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref.odnb/14266>; Porter, *Mary Tudor*, 100.

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Dorset.[50] During the rebellion both Darcy and Hussey assured Chapuys that if the Emperor Charles V declared war on Henry VIII there would be an 'insurrection by the [English] people who would be joined immediately by the nobility and clergy'.[51] Darcy made repeated efforts over a number of months to persuade the emperor to invade England, and he contemplated seeing the emperor in person to convince him to do so.[52] In fact, the failure of the emperor to intervene in England or Ireland scuppered Darcy's and Hussey's hopes of reversing Henry VIII's religious revolution during the Kildare rebellion, but both men were subsequently implicated in the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536. They were executed for treason in June 1537, not long after the execution of Thomas FitzGerald, 10th earl of Kildare, and his uncles.[53]

While Countess Elizabeth was not personally implicated in the Kildare rebellion, one of her ladies-in-waiting, Rose Eustace, was incarcerated in Dublin Castle along with Dame Janet Eustace, who may have been her aunt.[54] In their library at Maynooth Castle the countess and her husband owned printed copies of Henry VIII's *Answre to lutter* and 'Sir Thomas Moore is book agaynis the new opinions agayns pilgremages', as well as More's *Utopia*, in addition to work by Thomas Aquinas, *De diuersitate avium*, and a great many other religious books, none of them Evangelical.[55] There is no record of what Countess Elizabeth thought of the Kildare rebellion. One can only speculate as to whether or not she was aware of her husband's contingency plans for a rebellion prior to his departure to England in March 1534 in response to a summons to the royal court[56] – but it is very hard to believe that she had no idea of what her husband was thinking at the time. Stanihurst assured his readers that the countess and her husband had an extraordinarily close relationship:

> This noble man was so well affected to his wife, the Lady Gray, that he woulde not at any tyme buy a sute of apparel for himself but he woulde sute her with the same stuffe. Which gentlenesse she recompenced with equall kindenesse. For after that he deceased in the Tower she did not only ever after live as a chast and honourable vidue, but also nightly before shee went to bed she would resort to his picture, and there with a solemn congee, she woulde bid hir lord goodnight. Whereby may bee gathered with howe great love shee affected his person, that had in such price his bare picture.[57]

[50] MacCulloch, *Cromwell*, 56.
[51] John Guy, *Tudor England*, Oxford–New York 1988, 151–2.
[52] Bernard, *The king's Reformation*, 203–5.
[53] Hoyle, 'Darcy'; 'Hussey'; and *The Pilgrimage of Grace and the politics of the 1530s*, Oxford 2001, 406–7; Bernard, *The king's Reformation*, 401, 403.
[54] *L&P* viii. 226.
[55] Aisling Byrne, 'The earls of Kildare and their books at the end of the Middle Ages', *The Library* xiv/2 (2013), 144, 150.
[56] *CSP, Spain*, v/1, no. 45; *L&P* vii. 530, 614.
[57] Stanihurst, *Historie*, 105.

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This charming vignette about his parents may have been recounted to Stanihurst by Gerald FitzGerald, 11th earl of Kildare, while he employed the scholar as the tutor to his children.[58] His parents had certainly been in love, and had married without the consent of Elizabeth's father and without her dowry.[59] It may be that in the 1530s Cromwell's close relationship with Elizabeth's family, in particular her late brother, the 2nd marquess of Dorset, and his widow, Margaret, helped to shield her from any consequences for her husband's treason.[60] On the other hand, her younger brother, Lord Leonard Grey, was executed in 1541 for, *inter alia*, helping Elizabeth's son to escape to Cardinal Pole's protection.[61]

While she was in the service of Catherine of Aragon and Princess Mary Countess Elizabeth would have been familiar with William Peto, the confessor to the queen and princess.[62] Peto was the provincial of England's Observant Franciscans and an outspoken critic of Henry's marital adventures: he warned the king to his face in a sermon delivered in the Franciscan friary at Greenwich in Easter 1532 not to follow in the steps of the biblical King Ahab, or risk excommunication. After a spell in prison he and a fellow Franciscan Observant, Henry Elston, the warden of the Greenwich friars, were sent into exile. They took refuge in the emperor's heartland in the Netherlands where they orchestrated a campaign against the king's second marriage and the attendant religious revolution.[63] With the execution of two of their *confrères*, Hugh Rich and Richard Riseby, and four other priests along with the 'maid of Kent' in April 1534, Peto and Elston moved from protest to treason.[64] Francis Faber, Peto's successor as provincial, travelled to Dublin immediately prior to the Kildare rebellion after promising Chapuys, the imperial ambassador, that he would 'brew up there all he could for the preservation of the holy see'.[65]

Chapuys had been appointed as his ambassador by Charles V in 1529 at Catherine of Aragon's request to support her while Henry VIII plotted to get rid of her.[66] He came to feel 'genuine affection' for Catherine and

[58] Lennon, *Stanihurst*, 24–5; Vincent P. Carey, *Surviving the Tudors: the 'wizard' earl of Kildare and English rule in Ireland*, Dublin 2002, 172.

[59] Barbara J. Harris, *English aristocratic women, 1450–1550: marriage and family, property and careers*, Oxford 2002, 59, 64.

[60] MacCulloch, *Cromwell*, 48–9.

[61] *L&P* xv. 775; Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 84–5; Stanihurst, *Historie*, 108–9; MacCulloch, *Cromwell*, 522–3.

[62] Mayer, 'William Peto [Peyto] (*c.* 1485–1558)', *ODNB* online, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref.odnb/22043>.

[63] Bernard, *The king's Reformation*, 20, 77, 153–4.

[64] Ibid. 87; Ethan H. Shagan, 'Print, orality and communications in the Maid of Kent affair', this JOURNAL lii (2001), 21–33.

[65] Peter Marshall, *Heretics and believers: a history of the English Reformation*, New Haven–London 2017, 213.

[66] Garrett Mattingly, *Catherine of Aragon*, London 1963 edn, 215–19; Porter, *Mary Tudor*, 83–4.

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especially for her daughter, Mary, and became a very strong advocate for their interests.[67] He was 'at the centre of a widespread network of conspiracy for counter-revolution'.[68] He tried hard to persuade the emperor to intervene in England or Ireland and he encouraged hopes of Spanish intervention against Henry VIII.[69] The emperor's council discussed the Irish rebels' proposal that with his support they would hold Ireland on behalf of Queen Catherine and Princess Mary.[70] No record exists of what Faber said in Ireland after being in contact with Chapuys, but Elston boasted that a Spanish army was being assembled to invade England during the Kildare rebellion.[71] The Irish rebels boasted of the imminent arrival of 12,000 Spanish soldiers to support them in their crusade against Henry.[72] It is not unreasonable to speculate that Faber may have given FitzGerald the impression that many in England would rise against the king if a Spanish force arrived. In September 1533 Bishop John Fisher of Rochester had already urged the emperor to send an invasionary force to England to spark off a popular rebellion to topple Henry VIII.[73] According to Chapuys innumerable people from many ranks of English society were 'deafening' him with similar calls. It is likely that FitzGerald, through his wife and/or step-mother, was aware of such sentiments.

In the speech attributed to FitzGerald at the start of the rebellion he expressed the hope that the people of England 'would joyne in this quarrel (as I trust they will)'.[74] There was good reason to suspect that the English might indeed rebel if the emperor took the initiative.[75] To strengthen their appeal to English religious conservatives the Irish rebels chose as their chief ideologue Dr John Travers, an English priest who had only recently resigned as an Oxford don in reaction to religious developments at home and had taken up the position of dean in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.[76] Travers wrote a book in favour of the papacy against Henry VIII's pretensions. He supported the Kildare rebellion enthusiastically, and was subsequently executed for his role in it at Oxmantown, outside of Dublin.[77] Also prominent in the rebellion, and privy to it before

[67] Mattingly, *Catherine of Aragon*, 260–1, 308–10; Porter, *Mary Tudor*, 83–7ff.
[68] Mattingly, *Catherine of Aragon*, 283.
[69] Ibid. 283–91; Bernard, *The king's Reformation*, 79.
[70] David Loades, *Mary Tudor*, Stroud 2011, 45.
[71] Bernard, *The king's Reformation*, 154.
[72] *CSP, Spain*, v/1, no. 70.
[73] J. J. Scarisbrick, 'Fisher, Henry VIII and the Reformation crisis', in Brendan Bradshaw and Eamon Duffy (eds), *Humanism, reform and the Reformation: the career of Bishop John Fisher*, Cambridge 1989, 156–7.
[74] Campion, *Historie*, 175–6.
[75] Mattingly, *Catherine of Aragon*, 283–91.
[76] A. B. Emden, *A biographical register of the university of Oxford, A.D. 1501–1540*, Oxford 1974, 575; R. D. Edwards, 'Venerable John Travers and the rebellion of Silken Thomas', *Studies* xxiii (1934), 687–99.
[77] Stanihurst, *Historie*, 99; Emden, *Biographical register*, 575; Edwards, 'Venerable John Travers', 687–99; MacCulloch, *Cromwell*, 256.

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its outbreak was another English cleric, George Cromer, archbishop of Armagh and primate of all Ireland.[78] Cromer had been one of Henry VIII's chaplains while the king was composing the anti-Lutheran *Assertio*, and he was promoted to Armagh at the same time as Pope Leo X granted Henry the title of 'Defender of the Faith' in acknowledgement of the *Assertio*.[79] Cromer's archdeacon, Cormac Roth, was one of FitzGerald's chief councillors.[80] Another chief councillor was FitzGerald's chaplain, Archdeacon Cathal McReynolds, who travelled to Rome and persuaded the pope to give his blessing to the rebellion.[81] Hence, religion was central to the Kildare rebellion and in that context, and against the background of contemporary developments in England,[82] the involvement of Dame Janet Eustace in the rebellion, to a very significant if now indefinable level, is readily explicable as a reflection of her opposition to Henry VIII's increasingly radical religious policies and a desire to defend Catholicism at the risk of her life – and yet her leading role was ignored by the first historian of the revolt, and has been largely ignored ever since. The role of Frances Fortescue has been ignored also, even though she personifies the links between English resistance to the Reformation and Irish resistance, and she came very close to losing her life for defying the dictates of Henry VIII.

With the execution of Thomas FitzGerald and his five uncles in the aftermath of the Pilgrimage of Grace, the 9th earl's surviving male heir, his eleven-year-old son Gerald by his second wife, Countess Elizabeth Grey, was in grave danger.[83] The boy was rescued from royal retribution by his mother acting with Eleanor FitzGerald, the 9th earl's sister, probably with the collusion of the boy's uncle, Lord Leonard Grey, the king's deputy in Ireland.[84] Countess Eleanor helped Gerald and his chaplain/tutor, Thomas Leverous, to escape to France, from whence they travelled to the Netherlands and on to Rome where Gerald entered the service of

[78] Stanihurst, *Historie*, 91.

[79] Henry A. Jefferies, 'Dr George Cromer, archbishop of Armagh (1521–1543), and Henry VIII's Reformation', in A. J. Hughes and William Nolan (eds), *Armagh: history and society*, Dublin 2001, 218.

[80] Jefferies, *Priests and prelates*, 136–8.

[81] Campion, *Historie*, 176; Stanihurst, *Historie*, 100. Micheál Ó Siochrú, 'Foreign involvement in the revolt of Silken Thomas, 1534–5', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* xcviC (1996), 58; Conleth Manning, 'The grave-slab of Charles Reynolds in Rome', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* cxl (2010), 22–7.

[82] Geoffrey Elton, *Police and policy: the enforcement of the Reformation in the age of Thomas Cromwell*, Cambridge 1972; Christopher Haigh, *English reformations: religion, politics and society under the Tudors*, Oxford 1993, 105–51; Shagan, 'Print, orality and communications', 21–33; Marshall, *Heretics and believers*, 163–243.

[83] Muríosa Prendergast, 'The Geraldine League: the attempted restoration of the house of Kildare or a study in political opportunism', *JCKAS* xix (2004–5), 463.

[84] Stanihurst, *Historie*, 108; Ellis, 'Elizabeth FitzGerald'.

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Cardinal Pole, his kinsman, while Pole had Leverous admitted to the English College in Rome.[85] Deputy Grey was attainted in 1541 for aiding Gerald's escape and for corresponding with Cardinal Pole.[86] He was subsequently executed. Whether Grey would have taken such risks on his own volition must be doubted: it seems more likely that he was acting at his sister's request. Meanwhile Countess Eleanor joined Dame Eustace's rebel son James Delahide in promoting the Geraldine League, a confederation of Irish lords avowedly committed to defending the Catholic Church in Ireland and restoring the house of Kildare.[87]

Countess Elizabeth Grey successfully deployed her aristocratic relationships and court connections to have her son, Gerald FitzGerald, reconciled with the English crown in 1548, after Henry VIII had died.[88] Barbara Harris has shown that while such success was not unique among English aristocratic women it required very considerable levels of skill and determination.[89] Gerald was restored as the 11th earl of Kildare by Mary I in May 1554.[90] His former tutor, Leverous, was appointed bishop of Kildare: one of three Irish Catholic exiles associated with Cardinal Pole who were promoted to the Irish bench of bishops under Mary.[91] Leverous was deprived in January 1560 for refusing to acknowledge Elizabeth as supreme governor of the Church of Ireland.[92] It is recorded that he justified his refusal on the basis that the Bible forbade women from exercising authority in the Church. He was not alone in having such qualms, but it is impossible to define how significant Elizabeth's gender was in shaping Irish responses to her religious settlement.[93]

The 11th earl of Kildare married Mabel Browne, a kinswoman of Cardinal Pole, in May 1554.[94] She was a gentlewoman of Mary I's privy chamber and, in a striking sign of royal favour, was permitted to marry

[85] Stanihurst, *Historie*, 102–4; *CRP*, no. 191.
[86] Stanihurst, *Historie*, 108–9; MacCulloch, *Cromwell*, 522–3; Carey, *'Wizard' earl*, 48.
[87] Prendergast, 'The Geraldine league', 460–73.
[88] Ellis, 'Elizabeth FitzGerald'.
[89] Harris, *English aristocratic women*, 140–3, and 'Defining themselves: English aristocratic women, 1450–1550', *Journal of British Studies* xlix (2010), 734–52.
[90] Carey, *'Wizard' earl*, 57.
[91] Henry A. Jefferies, 'The Marian restoration in Ireland', *British Catholic History* xxxiii (2016), 16–20.
[92] Idem, 'The Irish parliament of 1560: the Anglican reforms authorised', *IHS* xxvi (1988), 138, 141.
[93] Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, 151. Ambivalence about having a female monarch is reflected in the 7th baron of Howth's book which he compiled in the 1570s: Valerie McGowan-Doyle, *The book of Howth: Elizabethan conquest and the Old English*, Cork 2011, 83–5, 104.
[94] Michael C. Questier, *Catholicism, and community in early modern England: politics, aristocratic patronage and religion, c. 1550-1640*, Cambridge 2006, 78.

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the Irish peer in the Chapel Royal.[95] Mabel's father had taken as his second wife Elizabeth, a sister of the 9th earl of Kildare. Her brother Anthony Browne, 1st Viscount Montague, had assumed that particular title to highlight his associations with the Poles martyred by Henry VIII.[96] Montague would later distinguish himself as the only temporal peer who consistently opposed the ecclesiastical bills in the English parliament of 1559, and stood out again as an opponent of anti-Catholic legislation in 1563 and subsequently.[97] He was the most prominent Catholic in Elizabethan Sussex, though he conformed outwardly.[98] In 1569 he was deeply implicated in the Northern rebellion of 1569 along with his son-in-law, the 2nd earl of Southampton, but he managed to escape any consequences for his actions.[99]

Countess Mabel too was a zealous recusant in Elizabeth's reign and she too was implicated in a rebellion inspired by her Catholic convictions. Mabel had a half-brother, Charles Browne, a priest, who was part of the papal and Spanish military expedition sent to Ireland ahead of the rebellion in 1579 under the leadership of Dr Nicholas Sander, the prominent English Catholic apologist, as well as James Fitzmaurice FitzGerald, who had previously led a rebellion in defence of Catholicism in southern Ireland around the time of the Northern rebellion in England in 1569.[100] Mabel's private chaplain, Fr Nicholas Eustace, was one of the key clerical conspirators in the papal-sponsored rebellion, alongside Fr Compton, who tutored her youngest son, and Fr Robert Rochford, an Irish Jesuit, all of whom were based in Rathangan Castle, the primary residence of Mabel and her husband.[101] From that castle they visited various gentlemen's houses where, at mass, they had them swear either to join in the rebellion or at least not to oppose it.[102] Rochford carried letters from

[95] David Finnegan, 'Gerald Fitzgerald, 11th earl of Kildare', *ODNB* online, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref.odnb/9557>; Carey, *'Wizard' earl*, 58; Questier, *Catholicism, 68*, 92–3.

[96] Questier, *Catholicism*, 113,

[97] John Neale, *Elizabeth I and her parliaments*, London 1953, 120; Roger B. Manning, *Religion and society in Elizabethan Sussex*, Leicester 1969, 34–5; J. G. Elzinga, 'Anthony Browne, 1st Viscount Montagu (1528–92)', *ODNB* online, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref.odnb/3667>; Questier, *Catholicism*, 117–18, 136–9.

[98] Manning, *Religion and society*, 40–1, 44n, 54n, 154, 228–9; Questier, *Catholicism*, 83.

[99] G. P. V. Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the earl of Southampton*, Cambridge, MA 1968, 8; Elzinga, 'Anthony Browne'; Questier, *Catholicism*, 144–6.

[100] Sir W. St Leger to Burghley, 24 Sept. 1580, TNA, SP 63/76/56; Thomas M. McCoog, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland and England, 1541–1588: 'our way of proceeding?'*, Leiden–New York–Köln 1996, 108–31; Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 215; Elzinga, 'Anthony Browne'; Kilroy, *Campion*, 144–85.

[101] Sir Henry Wallop to Sir Francis Walsingham, 18 Feb. 1581, SP 63/80/1; Wallop to Walsingham, SP 63/80/11; Chancellor Gerrard to Walsingham, 18 Feb. 1581, SP 63/80/61; Carey, *'Wizard' earl*, 207; Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 215.

[102] Gerrard to Walsingham, 18 Feb. 1581, SP 63/80/61; Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 215.

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Sander and Fitzmaurice to Kildare and to James Eustace, 3rd Viscount Baltinglass, the zealous young Catholic peer who became the 'front man' of the rebellion in eastern Ireland, and he urged them both to rebel.[103]

The weight of the evidence implicating Kildare in the rebellion, its varied sources and consistency, is sufficiently persuasive to warrant the conclusion that the earl and his wife were deeply involved in the whole affair.[104] Mabel, spurred on by her half-brother and private chaplain, may have played an important role in persuading Kildare to rebel as he hesitated to act before a significant army of Spaniards landed in Ireland, which was entirely understandable in view of his half-brother's experiences in 1534/5.[105] In the event, the expected level of Spanish support did not materialise and the Irish rebellion was eventually defeated in 1583. Mabel's brother was incarcerated, along with a number of other leading recusants in England, for a time during the rebellion in the early 1580s.[106] Kildare was imprisoned in the Tower of London for several years and, while in time he was released, he was obliged to stay in London until he died.[107] Mabel, perhaps because of her gender and/or her brother's influence at court, escaped very lightly for her role in her husband's rebellion. She probably managed her husband's estates in his absence until her son, Henry, became the 12th earl of Kildare in 1585. Thereafter she lived quietly in Ireland until her death in August 1610.[108]

This discussion of women associated with the earls of Kildare during the Reformation reveals a prominence of women in influencing developments that is not generally reflected in Irish Reformation studies. It is no coincidence that most of the evidence that has come down to us relates to aristocratic women as they exercised greater agency in public life than any other class of women in sixteenth-century Europe and consequently their actions were far more likely to be documented than those of their more humble *consoeurs*.[109] The fact that they were involved directly or indirectly in a

[103] Examination of Christopher Barnewall, 12 Aug. 1583, SP 63/104/38.

[104] Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 214–16. Vincent Carey, though anxious to exonerate the earl of any responsibility, admitted that 'on the face of it the evidence against the earl was pretty convincing': *'Wizard' earl*, 206.

[105] Christopher Barnewall's confession, 28 Aug. 1583, SP 63/104/38.

[106] Manning, *Religion and society*, 154; Questier, *Catholicism*, 155–6.

[107] Carey, *'Wizard' earl*.

[108] K. J. Kesselring, *The Northern rebellion, of 1569: faith, politics and protest in Elizabethan England*, Basingstoke 2010, 140.

[109] Weisner, 'Women's response to the Reformation', 168, and 'Nuns, wives and mothers and the Reformation in Germany', in Sherrin Marshall (ed.), *Women in Reformation and Counter-Reformation Europe: private and public worlds*, Bloomington–Indianapolis 1989, 21–3; David P. Daniel, 'Piety, politics and perversion: noblewomen in Reformation Hungary', in Marshall, *Women in Reformation and Counter-Reformation Europe*, 68–85. See also Natalie Zemon Davis, 'City women and religious change', in her *Society and culture in early modern France*, Stanford, CA 1975 edn, 65–96.

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rebellion drew an exceptional level of public attention to each of them, while the fact that most of them were English increased the chance that some records of them survived. Even so, the surviving evidence is generally scant, circumstantial and often oblique. It suffices to offer tantalising hints that the role of women was more significant than has been realised, though it is usually insufficient to define their influence with much precision. Dame Janet Eustace's documented participation in the Kildare rebellion, and the treatment subsequently meted out to her, show that her role was exceptionally significant. It is interesting that none of the English ladies associated with the Kildares participated directly in a rebellion as Eustace did, but one cannot deduce from that fact alone that English women were less prone to rebel on religious grounds than were women in Ireland. There may simply have been less opportunity for them to do so.

The role of Mabel Browne, countess of Kildare, in encouraging her husband to rebel is directly analogous to that of two other English aristocratic women, Anne Somerset, countess of Northumberland, a kinswoman of Mabel's, and Jane Howard, countess of Westmoreland. According to the earl of Northumberland the latter had encouraged her husband and others to rebel in 1569 by castigating them for hesitating, by exclaiming with bitter tears and weeping that 'we and our country were shamed forever, that now in the end we should seek holes to creep into'.[110] Mabel's kinswoman, Anne, went into exile with her husband after the rebellion ended, despite being heavily pregnant, but Jane denied her role in the rebellion and managed to have herself exonerated.[111] Doubtless the fact that none of the women took up arms in a rebellion saved their necks.

The evidence relating to the English ladies associated with the Kildares suggests that they were often key to the web of contacts linking English resistance to the Tudors' reformations to Irish resistance, which in turn highlights the importance of appreciating the wider English context for studies of the English Reformation in Ireland. And it reveals a striking common denominator of many of the English opponents of the Reformation who can be linked with Ireland: their service to Catherine of Aragon and/or her daughter Mary. That association linked the 10th earl of Kildare, through his step-mother and his wife, to the most zealous English Catholic advocates of an imperial invasion of Henry VIII's dominions. It may have given him an exaggerated impression of the prospects

[110] Rachel R. Reid, 'The rebellion of the earls, 1569', *TRHS* xx (1906), 196; Kesselring, *The Northern rebellion*, 46; Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 216. This analogy was pointed out to me by Peter Marshall.

[111] Retha M. Warnicke, *Women of the English Renaissance and reformation*, Westport, CN–London 1983, 165–6. Northumberland was subsequently sent back to England and was executed. His wife settled in the Spanish Netherlands, where she received a pension from Philip II, and dedicated her energies to campaigning for a Catholic restoration in Britain.

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for a wider uprising in England against Henry VIII.[112] It also shows that Catholic opposition to the Reformation in Ireland was not simply a reactionary reflex from ignorant or isolated individuals in a colonial backwater: it was informed by women and men who were at the heart of the debate about the English Reformation.

II

The most remarkable fact about the Reformation in Ireland is the scale of its failure. It is the classic exception to the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*. Contemporaries, both Catholic and Protestant, English and Irish, estimated the number of Irish Protestants as being no more than forty to 120 individuals across the entire kingdom towards the end of the sixteenth century.[113] In Dublin, a city of about 10,000 inhabitants, there were only twenty Irish-born householders who attended Protestant services in 1600, of whom only four would receive communion.[114] In Cork, a city of almost 3,000 inhabitants, there were only five individuals who attended Protestant services in 1595.[115] In Galway, a city of similar size, only a handful of men, 'none of their chiefest', attended Protestant church services in 1590.[116] Perhaps the most striking indicator of the sheer scale of the failure of the Reformation in Ireland is that to date only two Irish women have been identified from the entire sixteenth century with indisputably Protestant convictions: Archbishop James Ussher's two blind aunts who could 'repeat by heart a large portion of the Bible' and taught him to read.[117] Their feat of memory is parellelled by Joan Waste, a blind woman of Derby, who was martyred under Mary I.[118]

[112] Mattingly, *Catherine of Aragon*, 283–91; Bernard argued that popular sympathy in England for Catherine of Aragon was not matched by any political commitment to challenge the king: *The king's Reformation*, 199–213. No doubt, the sympathy felt towards Catherine and Mary was qualified by the fact that the English generally shared Henry VIII's desire for a male heir to the throne.

[113] Henry A. Jefferies, 'Why the Reformation failed in Ireland', *IHS* xl (2016), 168.

[114] *Calendar of state papers, Ireland, 1600–1*, ccvii/6, ed. Ernest George Atkinson, London 1905, no. 126.

[115] Henry A. Jefferies, 'Tudor reformations in Cork', in Salvador Ryan and Clodagh Tait (eds), *Religion and politics in urban Ireland,* c. *1500*–c. *1750*, Dublin 2016, 65–6.

[116] Nicholas Canny, 'Galway: from the Reformation to the penal laws', in Diarmuid Ó Cearbhaill (ed.), *Galway: town and gown, 1484–1984*, Dublin 1984, 8.

[117] Charles Richard Elrington, *The life of the Most Rev. James Ussher, DD*, Dublin–London 1848, 1–2. A handful of other women who had Protestant fathers and husbands were probably Protestant too: Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, 137–8.

[118] Cynthia Wittman Zollinger, '"The booke, the leafe, yea and the very sentence": sixteenth century literacy in text and context', in Christopher Highley and John N. King (eds), *John Foxe and his world,* Aldershot 2017, 105–6.

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Although the Reformation was almost universally rejected in Ireland, there were gendered differences in men's and women's experiences of the Reformation in the English Pale around Dublin and in the outlying boroughs where the Tudors tried to impose religious changes. Those places were dominated by Anglophone elites whose identity was English, who were loyal to the English crown and subject to the English common law. In the later Middle Ages the expression of female piety in those places was very much analogous with that in England.[119] A unique series of late fifteenth-century wills from rural testators in County Dublin shows that women shared a conventional and conservative Catholicism with their menfolk, but it also allows one to identify some gendered differences in the patterns of their *post-mortem* bequests.[120] Compared with men, women were less likely to request burial inside a church, less likely to bequeath money for trentals, to employ priests to celebrate additional masses after their funerals or to leave bequests for lights to be maintained before statues, and they were far less likely than men to make gifts to their parish church or to parish clergymen, or to religious communities.[121] As in England, women in County Dublin were more likely to focus their bequests on church interiors whereas men showed more concern with structural building work.[122] As for bequests which were unique to women: three women in the County Dublin series made gifts of copes and robes for statues in their parish churches, a practice associated with women outside of Ireland also;[123] one woman bequeathed gifts for the mothers of two priests;[124] while the only person who chose to be buried in a convent and bequeathed anything to nuns was a woman.[125] No woman

[119] Katharine Simms, 'Women in Gaelic society during the age of transition', in MacCurtain and O'Dowd, *Women in early modern Ireland*, 32–42; Elizabeth McKenna, 'The gift of a lady: women as patrons of the arts in medieval Ireland', in Meek, *Women in renaissance and early modern Europe*, 84–94; Mary O'Dowd, *A history of women in Ireland: 1500–1800*, Harlow 2005, 153–66; Kenny, *Anglo-Irish and Gaelic women*; and most important, Dianne Hall, *Women and the Church in medieval Ireland, c.1140–1540*, Dublin 2003. For comparison see Barbara Harris, *English aristocratic women's religious patronage, 1450–1550: the fabric of piety*, Amsterdam 2018.

[120] *Register of wills and inventories of the diocese of Dublin, 1457–83*, ed. H. F. Berry, Dublin 1898; Henry A. Jefferies, 'Men, women, the late medieval Church and religion: evidence from wills from County Dublin', *Archivium Hibernicum* lxix (2016), 339–49; Eamon Duffy, *The stripping of the altars: traditional religion in England, 1400–1580*, New Haven–London 1992, 354–67.

[121] Jefferies, 'Men, women and religion', 348.

[122] Christine Peters, *Patterns of piety: women, gender and religion in late medieval and Reformation England*, Cambridge 2008 edn, 51–5.

[123] Jefferies, 'Men, women and religion', 344, 348–9; Patricia Crawford, *Women and religion in England, 1500–1720*, London–New York 1996 edn, 24.

[124] *Register of wills*, 51–5, 55–6, 104–5.

[125] Inside a church: ibid. 1–2, 3–4, 11–13, 45–7, 55–6, 75–6, 102–3, 104–5, 133–6, 142–4, 155–6. In the cemetery: ibid. 5–6, 47–8, 51–5, 63–4, 125–7, 159–62.

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represented in the County Dublin series of wills was a member of a religious confraternity, though 15 per cent of the male testators were.[126]

Though their bequests were noticeably more modest compared with those of men it would seem unwise to assume on that basis that women in the English Pale were less religiously-inclined than men, or that their attachment to the institutional Church was less. The most plausible explanation for most of the differences discerned is that women's inferior economic position curtailed the material expression of female religious piety.[127] Significantly, the wills of wealthier women tended to be comparable with those of men. Overall, the slender evidence that survives from before the Reformation offers no grounds on its own for assuming that women in the most anglicised part of Ireland were any more or less prone to reject Reformation theology than men were.

Adam Loftus, the Elizabethan archbishop of Dublin, explained to the queen that the Irish generally, unless compelled by 'the sword', would not attend a Protestant service.[128] Sporadic efforts to compel attendance under duress proved to be counter-productive. Fynes Morison, a very well-informed English commentator, wrote that the operation of the Ecclesiastical Commission 'wrought in their hearts a hatred of the government and in time a detestation of our [Protestant] religion. … [It was] more easy to bring a bear to the stake [for bear-baiting] than any one of them to our churches'.[129] None the less, in 1580 Lord Justice Pelham, while admitting that the people of Ireland were overwhelmingly Catholics, acknowledged that a 'few … holds in all appearance of conformity with us'.[130] He correlated the apparent conformity of the 'few' not with Protestant convictions but with office-holding, 'their love to her majesty' or an English education.

Office-holders were under particular pressure to conform. Colm Lennon identified a number of Irish officials in the central administration in Dublin who conformed outwardly in the early years of the Elizabethan Reformation, but had a Catholic chapel built into their private residences.[131] Fynes Moryson complained that the Irish members of the

[126] Ibid. 13–15, 58–60, 118–20, 120–2, 136–8. For confraternities in Ireland see Colm Lennon, 'The confraternities and cultural duality in Ireland, 1450–1550', in Christopher Black and Pamela Gravestock (eds), *Early modern confraternities in Europe and the Americas*, Aldershot 2006, 35–52, and Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 61–4. Wealthy women formed a significant minority of the members of the Guild of Christ Church, Dublin, but only a minority: Kenny, *Anglo-Irish and Gaelic women*, 93.

[127] Jefferies, 'Men, women and religion', 349. [128] SP 63/156/37.

[129] *The Irish sections of Fynes Moryson's unpublished Itinerary*, ed. Graham Kew, Dublin 1998, 92. [130] Lord Justice Pelham to Walsingham, 29 July 1580, SP 63/74/75.

[131] Colm Lennon, 'Mass in the manor house: the Counter-Reformation in Dublin, 1560–1630', in James Kelly and Daire Keogh (eds), *History of the Catholic diocese of Dublin*, Dublin 2000, 117.

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Council of Ireland and the judiciary were almost invariably Catholics and that even if some of them, 'upon hypocritical dispensation' from the Catholic Church, went to Protestant church services, 'commonly their parents, children, kinsmen and servants were open and obstinate Papists in profession'.[132]

Civic office-holders sometimes attended Elizabethan church services *ex officio* during their term of office in order to safeguard the privileges enshrined in their city's charter, but 'the year following they refuse it'.[133] In a letter of February 1590 William Fitzwilliam, the viceroy, and Adam Loftus, the Elizabethan archbishop of Dublin, reported that in Ireland's capital city, 'The mayor, perhaps for duty, and some few with him for fashion's sake, will come to the ordinary Sunday sermon but none other man or woman.'[134] In fact, the absence of women at Protestant church services was general. In Waterford, Ireland's second largest city, women took the initiative in boycotting the Protestant services, 'and that being unpunished their men left it, and they being unpunished the mayors, sovereigns and portreeves for the most part have left it'.[135] 'None of the women do come either to [Protestant] service or sermon.'[136] Nicholas Walsh, the Elizabethan bishop of Ossory, complained in 1577 that in Kilkenny the 'chiefest men of the town (as for the most part they are bent to Popery) refuse obstinately to come to church, and … they could by no means be brought to hear the [Protestant] divine service there with their wives and families'.[137] John Thornburgh, the Elizabethan bishop of Limerick, tried in vain in 1594 to insist that the mayor and aldermen of Limerick force their wives to accompany them to hear his sermons.[138] In other words, women were even less likely than their menfolk to attend Protestant services, let alone become Protestants. They chose to stay away.

In 1574 David Wolfe, an Irish Jesuit, reported that all of the inhabitants of Drogheda and Cork and 'almost all' of the inhabitants of Dublin ('especially the natives of the city') were Catholics.[139] He noted only one 'heretic' among the lords and gentlemen of the northern half of the Pale.[140]. On the other hand, he reported that in Limerick there were 'seven or eight young men who embrace the Lutheran leprosy rather to please the Lady

[132] *Fynes Moryson's Itinerary*, 43. [133] Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 255.
[134] Lord Deputy FitzWilliam and Chancellor Loftus to Burghley and Walsingham, 26 Feb. 1590, SP 63/150/74.
[135] Sir John Dowdall to Burghley, 9 Mar. 1596, SP 63/187/19.
[136] W. M. Brady, *State papers concerning the Irish Church*, London 1868, no. xxv.
[137] William G. Neely, *Kilkenny: an urban history, 1391–1843*, Belfast 1989, 44.
[138] Petition of John Thornburgh, bishop of Limerick, SP 63/177/55.
[139] Myles Ronan, *The Reformation in Ireland under Elizabeth*, London 1930, 476, 480, 483.
[140] Ibid. 477. Nicholas Canny admitted that 'few if any' were converted in the Pale in Elizabeth's reign: 'Why the Reformation failed', 432.

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Elizabeth than for any other cause'.[141] Wolfe knew Limerick very well, having been the dean of its cathedral before he joined the Society of Jesus in reaction to the introduction of the Edwardian Reformation to the city. He was based there since his appointment as the papal commissary in Ireland in 1560.[142] Wolfe reported that all of the citizens of Waterford were Catholics, 'with the exception of four or five young men'.[143] In Galway, 'All the inhabitants are Catholics, except fifteen young men who to please the Lady Elizabeth embrace that Lutheran novelty.'[144] It is interesting that the individuals who were susceptible to Protestantism in Elizabeth's reign tended to be young men of English identity in urban contexts – which mirrors Bishop John Bale's experiences in Kilkenny in Edward's reign.[145] Wolfe's report confirms Pelham's statement that 'love to her majesty' predisposed some of the 'few' men who conformed to do so. However, Catholicism acted as a solvent on some women's political loyalties: Moryson complained that the wives of citizens in Waterford and Cork, 'that could speak English as well as wee', 'bitterly chided' their husbands for conversing with English officials and soldiers.[146]

Regarding female education, we know of only one school for young women in colonial Ireland before the Reformation, that in the convent of Grace Dieu, County Dublin, where 'the womankind of the whole Englishry of the land, for the most part' were 'brought up in virtue, learning, the English tongue and behaviour'.[147] However, as Katharine Simms observed, the 'scantily recorded nunneries of Ireland produced no exponents of Latin scholarship', let alone humanism,[148] and none of their students is known to have embraced the Reformation. The convent at Grace Dieu was rescued from the Henrician dissolution of the religious houses by Patrick Barnewall, the king's serjeant-at-law in Ireland, who established a trust to preserve it.[149] It survived in modified form for four more decades.[150] The fact that Barnewall preserved Grace Dieu as a convent of nuns, and not simply as a school, shows that his concern was as much about ensuring the provision of a Catholic education for the young ladies of colonial Ireland as it was about maintaining English civility. Grace Dieu probably played an important role in inculcating Catholic

[141] Ronan, *Reformation in Ireland*, 483.
[142] Thomas J. Morrisey, 'David Wolfe (1528–78/9)', *ODNB* online, <https://doi.org/ref.odnb/29832>.
[143] Ronan, *Reformation in Ireland*, 482.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Steven Ellis, 'John Bale, bishop of Ossory, 1552–3', *Journal of the Butler Society* iii (1984), 288.
[146] *Fynes Moryson's Itinerary*, 50–1.
[147] Jefferies, *Priests and prelates*, 39; Simms, 'Women in Gaelic society', 32.
[148] Simms, 'Women in Gaelic society', 32.
[149] Jefferies, *Priests and prelates*, 138.
[150] Bronagh McShane, 'Negotiating religious change and conflict: female religious communities in early modern Ireland, *c.* 1530–*c.* 1641', *British Catholic History* xxxiii (2017), 365–9.

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beliefs and sentiment among young Anglophone women in colonial Ireland over four crucial decades from 1537. The last member of Grace Dieu, Margery Barnewall, was incarcerated by the Irish Ecclesiastical High Commission in 1577 as part of a general clampdown on recusancy across Ireland at the time, but with the help of her parents and friends she was able to escape into exile and maintain her religious life until her death in Rome *post*-1583.[151] By then there were schools with Catholic teachers established in 'every town … and each school overseen by a Jesuit'.[152] The latter observation ought to be understood as an indication that Jesuits exercised oversight over the schools but did not necessarily teach in them.[153] However, there is no evidence about the provision made specifically for the education of girls.

Women were often the most enthusiastic supporters of the Counter-Reformation clergy in Ireland: Moryson observed that 'Jesuites and Roman priests swarmed in all places, filling the houses of lords, gentlemen and especially cittissens and domineering in them, as they might well doe, for howsoever the men grewe weary of them, they had the women on theire sydes.'[154] Women played a key role in the Catholic resurgence of the second half of Elizabeth's reign by providing shelter and protection for priests, and by establishing places for the celebration of mass thereafter. Lennon observed that 'these actions reflect the more militant type of Catholicism which appealed to some women in Dublin at a time when, in general, men had to be more circumspect in their public religious practice'.[155] The prominence of Margaret Ball (*née* Birmingham) in Dublin's Catholic community was such that she was able to have a bishop, some Jesuits and other Catholic priests try to win her Protestant son, Walter, back to Rome. When she was first imprisoned for her Catholic activism her release was secured by a number of aristocrats. However, after her son Walter became the mayor of Dublin in 1580 he had his frail old mother re-arrested and condemned to die in prison because of her notorious recusancy.[156] It was reported that the mayor of Galway in June 1601, himself characterised as 'a Protestant in show', was married to a women who was the 'chief' of the recusants in the city.[157] Irish women could

[151] Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, 156.
[152] Dowdall to Burghley, 9 Mar. 1596, SP 63/187/19.
[153] Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 256–8.
[154] *Fynes Moryson's Itinerary*, 94.
[155] Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, 214.
[156] John Howlin, 'Perbreve compendium', in *Spicilegium Ossoriense: being a collection of original letters and papers illustrative of the history of the Irish Church from the Reformation to the year 1800*, ed. Patrick F. Moran, Dublin 1874, i. 106–9. Margaret was immortalised in a martyrology soon afterwards, while her son Walter was demonised for persecuting his elderly mother to death: Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, 156–7.
[157] Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 263.

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and did make independent choices about their own preferences for Catholicism and act accordingly. Their recusancy was not always the result of male collusion.

Lennon highlighted the establishment of an uncloistered female apostolate in Limerick in the 1560s by a woman named Helen Stackpole, from one of the city's leading patrician families.[158] It had an Irish name – Mena Bochta (*Mná bochta* or 'poor women') – and focused on the 'street women' of Limerick. There was a Jesuit ministry in the city at that time and a connection has been postulated.[159] Certainly, charity became a key focus for female piety in the Counter-Reformation, and early modern women were aware that 'poverty was predominantly a female problem'.[160] Sandra Cavallo observed that early modern women supported less fortunate women from an awareness of female vulnerability in terms of finances, honour and poverty.[161]

An interesting feature of the wills drawn up by the female testators from County Dublin before the Reformation, and in striking contrast with those of women in England, is the absence of bequests for the poor.[162] The surviving wills from women in Elizabethan Cork contain no bequests for the poor either.[163] That anomaly may reflect the nature of Ireland's colonial society; one may speculate that some people among the colonial community were loath to make gifts to the poor because the latter were drawn disproportionately from the indigenous population.[164] By contrast, Gaelic Irish women were often praised for their hospitality to the poor and the learned, reflecting, perhaps, a different ethos to that prevalent in colonial Ireland, though to some degree it might reflect the fact that much of the evidence about élite women in Gaelic society comes from *post-mortem* eulogies, a genre that has not survived for women in Irish colonial society.[165] None the less, it looks as though the Mena Bochta was an isolated initiative by a local woman inspired by Jesuit missionaries in Limerick, mirroring patterns of female charitable piety that was very

[158] Colm Lennon, 'The urban patriciates of early modern Ireland: a case-study of Limerick' (O'Donnell lecture), Dublin 1999, 16.

[159] McShane, 'Negotiating religious change and conflict', 370–1.

[160] Simone Laqua-O'Donnell, *Women and the Counter-Reformation in early modern Münster*, Oxford 2014, 72ff. See also Barbara B. Diefendorf, *From penitence to charity: pious women and the Catholic Reformation in Paris*, Oxford 2002, 203–46.

[161] Sandra Cavallo, *Charity and power in early modern Italy: benefactors and their motives in Turin, 1541–1789*, Cambridge 1995, 158.

[162] Jefferies, 'Men, women and religion', 362–4. English women were routinely charitable to the poor before the Reformation: Crawford, *Women and religion*, 23–4; Peters, *Patterns of piety*, 53–9.

[163] *Gentlemen's Magazine*, July 1861, 34, 35; Sept. 1861, 261.

[164] See, for example, the will of Dean Alen of Dublin: William Monck Mason, *The history and antiquities of the collegiate church and cathedral of St Patrick near Dublin*, Dublin 1820, appendix xii, pp xiv–xv.

[165] Corish, 'Women and religious practice', 214.

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common elsewhere in Catholic Europe, rather than being part of a local tradition of female piety in colonial Ireland.[166] The Mena Bochta bears all the hallmarks of the contemporary French Ursulines: an informal group of lay women engaged in charitable work in association with Jesuits.[167]

Because, with rare exceptions, women's influence was exercised primarily in domestic settings it usually went unrecorded. Yet Irish wives were notoriously keen to win Protestant husbands (back) to Rome. A report from the early seventeenth century states that wives 'would neither eat nor lie with their husbands' if they were excommunicated for attending a Protestant service.[168] Fynes Moryson wrote of Protestant Irishmen on their deathbeds being starved and pinched by their Catholic wives and children in order to 'force them to turn Papist again'.[169] Anthony Trollope, a prescient English observer of Irish affairs, noted at the time that even Englishmen who were married to Irish women were not to be trusted – and the suspicions roused by the conduct of at least two English captains, William Warren and John Lee, lent some substance to his concerns.[170]

Even some of the Irish bishops in Elizabeth's Church of Ireland were not immune to the influence of their Catholic wives. For example, Áine O'Meara, the wife of Meiler Magrath, the Elizabethan archbishop of Cashel (1571–1622), bore him five sons and four daughters, all of whom were reared as Catholics and, indeed, it was reported at the time that she, her children, servants, chaplains and her other dependants were 'the greatest Papists under the heavens'.[171] She was frequently accused of harbouring Catholic priests in one of her husband's episcopal manor houses and a castle. Again, the wife of Roland Lynch, the Elizabethan bishop of Kilmacduagh (1587–1622) and Clonfert (1602–22), was a Catholic, reared their children as Catholics and ensured that their household servants were Catholics.[172] Lynch's Catholic wife joined with the chapter of Clonfert cathedral, all of whom were Catholics also, to persuade

[166] For examples of traditional female piety expressed through charity see Hall, *Women and the Church*, 189–90. For the charitable work of female religious communities see p. 175–6. See also McShane, 'Negotiating religious change', 370–1.

[167] I wish to thank Diarmaid MacCulloch for that insightful observation.

[168] Raymond Gillespie, *Devoted people: belief and religion in early modern Ireland*, Manchester 1997, 30. Robert Persons SJ wrote in 1580 of English wives threatening to leave their husbands if they attended Protestant services: Warnicke, *Women*, 170.

[169] *Fynes Moryson's Itinerary*, 92.

[170] Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 263.

[171] Patrick J. Ryan, *Archbishop Meiler Magrath: the enigma of Cashel*, Roscrea 2014, 106–8. O'Meara was criticised along with her husband in a biting satire by Eoghan Ó Dubhthaigh, a Franciscan friar, but seems not to have suffered the same opprobrium as other clerical wives: pp. 79–80, 106.

[172] Thomas Connors, 'Religion and the laity in early modern Galway', in Gerard Moran and Raymond Gillespie (eds), *Galway: history and society*, Dublin 1996, 133.

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her husband to alienate the see lands so that no English clergymen would wish to succeed him as the Protestant bishop of the diocese. Again, the wife of William Casey, the Elizabethan bishop of Limerick (1571–91), had herself reconciled to Rome by a papal legate while her husband was still alive.[173] Having such wives is likely to have undermined the Irish Protestant bishops' credibility as Protestant evangelists. These tantalising examples may help to explain what had happened to the young men inspired by Bishop Bale in Kilkenny back in 1553, or the young Protestant men in some Irish cities in 1574: their wives may have won them back to Rome and, at the least, made sure that their children were Catholics. The predilection of Irish women for ensuring that their children were reared as Catholics helps to explain why the number of Irish Protestants estimated by contemporaries towards the end of the sixteenth century was so incredibly small. Without Irish Protestant women no self-perpetuating community of indigenous Protestants was generated by the Reformation in Ireland. Irish Protestant men were often obliged to find English spouses and thus became absorbed into the growing community of New English Protestants in the country.[174]

Coincidentally James Ussher's two blind aunts never married or had children.[175] After the death of his father Ussher's mother, Margaret Stanihurst, the daughter of James Stanihurst, the former recorder of Dublin, and sister of the historian Richard Stanihurst, had herself formally reconciled to the Catholic Church.[176] Ussher himself married the daughter of an English immigrant, a woman with an impeccable Protestant pedigree named Phoebe Challoner.[177] In fact, the Protestant Church of Ireland became the Church of English, and later British, immigrants in Ireland. It secured many of the physical endowments and financial prerogatives of the late medieval Irish Church, but not its congregations. Ussher later claimed in his *Discourse* that the Church of Ireland was the true Irish Church, not because it was the Church of the people of Ireland in the seventeenth century as it clearly was not, but on the basis that its doctrines were consonant with those anciently professed by the Irish: the origins of the hoary myth that St Patrick was a Protestant.[178]

[173] Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 249.
[174] Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, 137–8.
[175] Elrington, *James Ussher*, 1–2.
[176] Ibid. 1, 5. Suzannah Lipscomb found that such reversions were common in Reformation Languedoc with widows citing the threat of being beaten, or actual beatings, to excuse their apostasy: *The voices of Nîmes: women, sex and marriage in Reformation Languedoc*, Oxford 2019, 108–12.
[177] Elrington, *James Ussher*, 38.
[178] Alan Ford, 'Shaping history: James Ussher and the Church of Ireland', and Miriam Moffitt, 'W. A. Phillips, *History of the Church of Ireland* (1933–4): a missed opportunity', in Empey, Ford and Moffitt, *Church of Ireland*, 21–6, 182–3.

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III

The role of women in the survival of a Catholic community in England has long been recognised.[179] The key role of women in the survival of Catholicism as the religion of the overwhelming majority of the Irish in the early modern era ought now to be acknowledged also. John Bossy once characterised English Catholicism after the Reformation as 'matriarchal' because of the disproportionate number of women identified as recusants in England, and because of their prominence in England's recusant community.[180] That characterisation has been qualified by Alexandra Walsham who argued that 'female recusancy seems … often a natural division of labour in the management of dissent'. The 'qualified conformity of the *paterfamilias* … [for] protecting the family's resources and reputation could both enable and necessitate his wife's assumption of a more energetic role in safeguarding its [Catholic] spiritual integrity'.[181] The evidence of Irish officials occasionally attending a Protestant service, but not their wives, conforms to Walsham's 'division of labour' thesis, but does not preclude Bossy's thesis that women were more inclined than men towards Catholicism and 'played an abnormally important part' in its survival in Elizabeth's reign and after.[182]

One may speculate that some women in Ireland remained Catholics because the virtual deification of the mother of Jesus in medieval Catholicism, and the host of female saints promoted by the Catholic Church, provided a female focus for faith that was denied by Protestantism.[183] Perhaps too they appreciated Catholicism's promises of supernatural support, for infertility or childbirth for example.[184] Lyndal Roper observed that 'Catholicism nurtured a peculiarly feminine style of devotion'.[185] That may be reflected in a vivid pen picture of the public manifestations of Catholicism in Waterford in 1580 by Marmaduke Middleton, the Elizabethan bishop of Waterford and Lismore: 'Public

[179] Dickens, 'Recusancy in Yorkshire', 39–40; Bossy, *English Catholic community*, 150–68; Aveling, 'Catholic households in Yorkshire', 88; Rowlands, 'Recusant women', 153–77, and *English Catholics*, 139–42; Walsham, *Church papists*, 78–83.

[180] Bossy, *English Catholic community*, 157–8.

[181] Walsham, *Church papists*, 80–1.

[182] Bossy, *English Catholic community*, 157–8.

[183] Davis, *Society and culture*, 88; Eamon Duffy, 'Holy maydens, holy wyfes: the cult of women saints in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century England', in W. J. Sheils and Diana Webb (eds), *Women in the Church* (Studies in Church History xxvii, 1990), 175–96.

[184] Ó hAnnracháin, 'Theory in the absence of fact', 142; Davis, *Society and culture*, 88; Duffy, 'Holy maydens', 196.

[185] Lyndal Roper, *The holy household: women and morals in Reformation Augsburg*, Oxford 1991 edn, 262. See too Diana M. Webb, 'Woman and home: the domestic setting of late medieval spirituality', in Sheils and Webb, *Women in the Church*, 159–73.

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wearing of beads and praying upon the same. Worshipping of images, and setting them openly in their street doors with ornaments, and deckings. Ringing of bells and praying for the dead, and dressing their graves diverse times in the year with flower pots and wax candles.'[186] By contrast, there is no evidence that Protestant doctrines resonated with women in Ireland, or of any of the other considerations which attracted women elsewhere to the Reformation.[187]

Nevertheless, what made the role of women decisive for the survival of Catholicism in Ireland was its shift in focus from the parish churches to domestic households after it was proscribed in 1560. That brought it very much into the domain of married women.[188] By contrast with England, the Elizabethan church services were generally boycotted from the beginning: in 1565 it was reported that 'very few' in the Pale had ever attended a Protestant service but instead attended mass 'continually'.[189] Women, through their support of recusant priests, helped to maintain the provision of Catholic services and stymie the progress of the Reformation in Ireland from the start of Elizabeth's reign, whereas in England recusant households emerged too late to prevent the overwhelming majority of the English from becoming Protestants.[190]

Diane Willen has commented on the 'remarkable' influence of English recusant women on their children.[191] The same was true in Ireland. Nor was the activism of Irish women confined to their households: they played a key role in exerting social pressures on kin and friends to remain Catholic.[192] Anyone who conformed to the queen's religion was 'most hated and molested'; their kin and friends 'would ever after hate there persons and avoyed theire company'.[193] The Anglophone women who 'bitterly chided' their husbands for conversing with English officials and soldiers were simply maintaining the ostracism employed against all Protestants.[194] Such actions tally with Suzannah Lipscombe's findings that women in contemporary Languedoc 'policed' social behaviour in their communities.[195] Yet whereas in Languedoc there was an expectation that a woman's faith would be dictated by her husband,[196] in Ireland the evidence suggests that women were more likely to make decisions about

[186] Brady, *State papers*, no. xxv; Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 194–5.
[187] Davis, *Society and culture*, 96; Menna Prestwich, *International Calvinism, 1541–1715*, Oxford 1985, 96; Lipscombe, *Voices of Nîmes*, 107–18.
[188] Lennon, 'Mass in the manor house', 112–26; Diane Willen, 'Women and religion in early modern England', in Marshall, *Women*, 150–8.
[189] SP 63/10/42; Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 134, 140–1; Scott, *Religion and Reformation in Meath*, 56–7.
[190] Warnicke, *Women*, 170–1.
[191] Willen, 'Women and religion', 154–5.
[192] *Fynes Morison's Itinerary*, 92.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid. 150–1.
[195] Lipscombe, *Voices of Nîmes*, 179.
[196] Ibid. 108.

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religion for themselves and their families. That shows that the reality of gender relationships did not always coincide with the dictates of a seemingly misogynist deity, even in the age of reformations.[197]

[197] The fact that Catholic and magisterial Protestant reformers agreed that the role of women ought to conform to the prescriptions of the Judeo-Christian Bible, a collection of religious texts composed between 1,400 to 2,000 years earlier, was bound to have reactionary implications for gender roles. Joan Kelly argued that the contemporary humanist focus on classical culture, 'with all its patriarchal and misogynous bias', tended in the same direction: *Women, history and theory: the essays of Joan Kelly*, Chicago–London 1984, 35–6.

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