

The Marian restoration in Ireland

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Mary's endeavours to restore Catholicism in England have attracted much scholarly attention and not a little controversy, primarily because of her bloody response to the scale and persistence of the Protestant challenge she faced there. Her endeavours in Ireland, by contrast, have been relatively overlooked. Yet the Marian restoration in Ireland ought to be recognised as an integral part of Mary's religious programme for her dominions. It offers interesting points of comparison for the implementation of the queen's programme in England, and it was significant in its own right, not as a decisive watershed but, as a time when religious controversies were crystallised and definite decisions were made that proved significant in the subsequent survival of Catholicism as the religion of the people of Ireland.

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Mary Tudor inherited two kingdoms in 1553 and set out to restore Catholicism in both. Inevitably, given the scale of the Protestant challenge she faced in England and her bloody response to it, her endeavours to restore Catholicism in England have attracted much scholarly interest and not a little controversy. Ireland, by contrast, has been relatively overlooked, partly because of a paucity of evidence but also because of the insularity of historians on either side of the Irish Sea. Yet the Catholic restoration in Ireland ought to be recognised as an integral part of Mary's religious programme for her dominions. It offers interesting points of comparison for the implementation of the queen's programme in England. It is the contention of this paper that it was significant in its own right, not as a decisive watershed but, as a time when religious controversies were crystallised and definite decisions were made that proved significant in the subsequent survival of Catholicism as the religion of the people of Ireland.

I

By the time of Mary's accession in 1553 most of the Irish Church had been subject to the Tudors' royal supremacy for a decade and a half. After the Irish parliament of 1536/7 endorsed his ecclesiastical revolution, Henry VIII succeeded in imposing his jurisdiction over the Church over much of eastern and southern Ireland to a degree

comparable with that in England.¹ The great majority of the bishops across the country subscribed to the royal supremacy.² The crown displaced the papacy in making appointments to benefices, issuing faculties, and as the final court of appeal in ecclesiastical causes.³ The values of benefices in areas under English jurisdiction were recorded in an Irish *Valor ecclesiasticus* and were taxed accordingly by the crown.⁴ The religious houses were dissolved across most of the country.⁵ The evidence indicates that, after a period of uncertainty in the mid-1530s, a great many of the élites in Ireland, senior clergymen, urban oligarchs and landowners of Gaelic Irish as well as English descent, were prepared to turn their backs on papal authority as long as they had continued access to Catholic sacraments and traditional religious practices were tolerated.⁶ When two Jesuits visited Ireland in 1542 they formed a very negative impression of the future prospects for the Catholic Church.⁷

Edward VI used the royal supremacy to decree that the *Book of Common Prayer* replace Catholic liturgies in Ireland in 1549. George Browne, archbishop of Dublin, drew up a 'book of reformation' along with a crown-sponsored Scottish Protestant named Walter Palatyne for use throughout Dublin's ecclesiastical province.⁸ The contents of the 'book of reformation' must remain a matter for speculation but, according to a letter from Edward Bellingham, the viceroy or deputy, it established 'godly and true order' in the Church 'grounded upon holy writ; the king's majesty's injunctions being consonant thereunto'.⁹ The fact that Browne subsequently criticised Archbishop Dowdall for the continued use of the Mass, holy water and candlemas candles in Armagh diocese shows that the assault on Catholic practices was very significant.¹⁰

It seems a safe assumption, though evidence is lacking, that the first *Book of Common Prayer* was widely used by clergymen in Anglophone parishes in the east and south, though such parishes were a small minority of the parishes of sixteenth-century Ireland. In June 1549

¹ Henry A. Jefferies, *The Irish Church and the Tudor Reformations* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), 75.

² *Ibid.*, 82–7.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Steven Ellis, 'Economic Problems of the Church: Why the Reformation Failed in Ireland', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 41 (1990): 257–69.

⁵ Brendan Bradshaw, *The Dissolution of the Religious Orders in Ireland under Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 66–205.

⁶ Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 86.

⁷ Aubrey Gwynn, *The Medieval Province of Armagh* (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1946), 248–53.

⁸ National Archives, State Papers, Ireland (hereafter cited as SP), 61/1/133: Bradshaw, 'The Edwardian Reformation in Ireland', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 26 (1976–7): 84.

⁹ E.P. Shirley, *Original letters and papers ... of the Church in Ireland under Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth* (London, 1851), no. x.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. xxiii.

Bellingham and the council of Ireland authorised the attorney-general and the king's surveyor to exercise 'ecclesiastical jurisdiction' wherever they travelled in the southern ecclesiastical province of Cashel for 'abolishing idolatry, papistry and the Mass sacrament and the like'.¹¹ It was written subsequently of Bellingham that, 'there was never [a] deputy in the realm that went the right way as he does both for the setting forth of God's word to his honour, and to the wealth of the king's highness' subjects'.¹² On the other hand, Bellingham's successor's, admittedly not entirely disinterested, assessment of 'the advancement of religion' was that, 'although it has been much talked of these two or three years past, yet it has been smally set forth in deed'.¹³

In July 1550, when Anthony St Leger was re-appointed as the viceroy, he was directed to 'set forth God's service ... as largely as he may ... in the English tongue in all places where the inhabitants, or a convenient number of them, understand the English tongue. And where the inhabitants understand not the English tongue, they cause the English to be translated truly into the Irish tongue ...'.¹⁴ Instead of an Irish translation, though, St Leger had a Latin translation of the *Prayer Book* made and sought royal approval for its use in January 1551.¹⁵ However, it did not find favour at Edward's court.¹⁶

In February 1551 St Leger informed Protector Somerset that the Lord Chancellor of Ireland and the Master of the Rolls had recently been to Limerick and Galway and 'had established the king's majesty's orders for religion in such sort as there is great assurance the same shall be duly observed'.¹⁷ To the dioceses of Limerick and Waterford & Lismore William Casey and Patrick Walsh, two local men who were willing to endorse the Edwardian Reformation, were appointed as bishops.¹⁸

St Leger's successor as viceroy, Edward Croft, stated that he imposed the Protestant service book in 'every place' he travelled.¹⁹ However, he complained in March 1552 that 'through the negligence of the bishops and other spiritual ministers ... the old ceremonies yet remain in

¹¹ SP 61/2/47, no. xiv; Bradshaw, 'Edwardian Reformation': 86.

¹² Myles V. Ronan, *The Reformation in Dublin, 1536–1558* (Dublin: Longmans, Green and Co., 1926), 356.

¹³ Shirley, *Original letters*, no. xix.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, no. xvi.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, no. xx.

¹⁶ Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 96.

¹⁷ Shirley, *Original letters*, no. xxi.

¹⁸ *Calender of the patent and close rolls of Ireland, Henry VIII*, ed. James Morrin (Dublin, 1861) (hereafter cited as *CPCR*), Elizabeth, i, 244 (91). Casey was condemned for his Protestant convictions by David Wolfe, SJ, who resigned as dean of Limerick at that time: T.J. Morrissey, 'Wolfe' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) (hereafter cited as *ODNB*). Patrick Walsh, dean of Waterford, was promoted as bishop of Waterford & Lismore on the recommendation of his chapter: *CPCR*, i, 244 (92, 93); Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 126.

¹⁹ SP 61/3/45.

many places'. None of the bishops, he wrote, had 'any good zeal'.²⁰ Croft's assessment was amply confirmed by the fiery English reformer John Bale, bishop of Ossory, whose *Vocacyon* preserves a unique insight into the progress of Edward VI's Reformation in Ireland.²¹

The remarkable feature of Bale's ministry in Kilkenny is the following he built up among young men in the town.²² On the occasion of an attempt on his life he was rescued by Robert Shea, the sovereign of Kilkenny (a man described by Bale as 'sober, wise and godly'²³), and a contingent of townsmen: 'the young men singing psalms and other godly songs all the way in rejoice of my deliverance'.²⁴ In another telling episode Bale recounts how, on the very day that Mary Tudor's accession as queen was proclaimed in Kilkenny, some young men of the town under his direction staged two plays at the market cross, with music and songs, a tragedy called 'God's promises' in the forenoon and a comedy called 'John the Baptist's preachings' in the afternoon, 'to the small contention of the priests and other Papists there'.²⁵

Bale's success in inspiring support in Kilkenny, especially among the young men of the town, shows what could be achieved by zealous Protestant preaching in an Anglophone community. Croft called for more 'learned men' from England to promote the reformation in Ireland – but that serves to underline the lack of indigenous advocates of the Reformation in Ireland.²⁶ Apart from Bale's short-lived ministry, in Edward's reign we are confronted with the spectacle of a Reformation virtually without reformers.

Nonetheless, though there is evidence of strong hostility towards religious change in Ireland, as reflected by the visceral reaction in Meath to Bishop Staples' first Protestant sermon, overt opposition to Edward VI's Reformation was muted and inchoate.²⁷ What was missing was Catholic leadership to mobilise resistance. I see tremendous significance in the fact that George Dowdall, archbishop of Armagh and primate of all Ireland, went into exile in 1551, declaring that he would 'never be bishop where the holy Mass (as he called it) was abolished'.²⁸ His flight reflects not only a failure in leadership, but was symptomatic of a wider crisis of confidence among

²⁰ SP 61/4/28.

²¹ John Bale, *The Vocacyon of John Bale, Bishop of Ossory, in Harleian Miscellany*, 6, ed. T. Park (London, 1813), passim. See also, Katherine Walsh, 'Deliberate Provocation or Reforming Zeal? John Bale as First Church of Ireland Bishop of Ossory (1552–3)' in Ciarán Brady, ed., *Worsted in the Game: Losers in Irish History* (Mullingar: The Lilliput Press, 1989), 49–55.

²² Ellis, 'John Bale, Bishop of Ossory, 1552–3', *Journal of the Butler Society* 2 (1984): 288.

²³ Bale, *Vocacyon*, 451.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 453.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 450.

²⁶ SP 61/4/28.

²⁷ Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 102–4.

²⁸ Shirley, *Original letters*, no. xxiii.

Catholics in Ireland in the face of crown-sponsored religious changes. Mary's restoration of Catholicism in Ireland may not have confronted the same challenges posed by people with Protestant convictions in England, but yet there was a real challenge: to restore Catholic convictions after years of disconcerting religious upheavals instigated by her father and, more radically, by her brother. There could be no simple return to the *status quo ante*. Far-reaching structural reforms were envisaged to strengthen the Catholic Church at a time of continuing religious controversy across Christendom.

II

Though Mary became the queen in August 1553 it was not until November of the following year that England was formally reconciled to the Catholic Church, partly because of the widespread antagonism among the English to the idea of a papal legate operating in their kingdom, and partly because of Cardinal Reginald Pole's excessive scrupulosity, for which he was criticized by Pope Julius III.²⁹ Ireland was not formally reconciled until June 1557. One could be forgiven for assuming that Ireland was a belated afterthought of the queen's, but that was not the case. On appointing St Leger as her first viceroy or deputy in Ireland in September 1553 Mary directed him, together with the council of Ireland, to restore the old religion as far as possible.³⁰ Since the Edwardian Reformation had been imposed in Ireland by virtue of the royal supremacy only, Mary used the same authority to undo it, and she did so without waiting for Cardinal Pole's approval.

Mary's proclamation of early September 1553 declaring royal toleration of the Mass cleared the way for a complete restoration of Catholic worship.³¹ Bishop Bale has left a very vivid account of the joy with which the clergy of Kilkenny availed of the proclamation to reinstall all of the traditional ecclesiastical paraphernalia in St Canice's Cathedral and restore the Catholic liturgy.³² It is highly probable that, in the absence of so determined a Protestant prelate as Bale, the restoration of the liturgy had already taken place spontaneously elsewhere in Ireland. Yet Cardinal Pole told Mary that the restoration of the Mass before the restoration of papal obedience constituted a damnable schismatic offence!³³ It was a characteristic declaration of

²⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 822.

³⁰ *CPCR*, i, Patent roll 1 Mary, no. 2.

³¹ J.F. Hughes and P.L. Larkin eds, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 390.

³² Bale, *Vocacyon*, 454.

³³ Thomas Mayer, *Reginald Pole: Prince and Prophet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 210; Mayer, *The Correspondence of Reginald Pole, 1500–1558* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002, *et seq.*), no. 765.

the cardinal's – legalistic but unrealistic. Mary could hardly have insisted on the continued use of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

The queen was anxious to promote Catholic prelates as the 'best remedy' for the religious travails besetting her kingdoms.³⁴ With advice from the deputy, lord chancellor and the council of Ireland she began to reconstitute the Irish episcopate within weeks of her accession.³⁵ Ossory received attention early on, possibly to neutralise Bishop Bale's influence there. The diocese was declared to be vacant on Bale's flight to mainland Europe and on 14 October 1553 John Thonery, BD, a native of Kilkenny, was promoted in his place.³⁶ Thonery had himself consecrated in the dissolved priory of Inistioge – a gesture clearly intended to symbolise his commitment to the old order.³⁷ Thonery later distinguished himself by opposing the Elizabethan Reformation, and he may be responsible to some degree for the fact that the citizens of Kilkenny were all recusants subsequently.

Also on 14 October 1553 Mary nominated Roland Baron Fitzgerald as archbishop of the vacant see of Cashel.³⁸ In her letter of nomination the queen referred to Fitzgerald's 'good learning and integrity of life', but he had not been her first choice: Richard Creagh of Limerick had earlier been approached but had declined the honour.³⁹ Creagh believed that his vocation was to be a teacher, and he wrote a catechism based on the decrees of the Council of Trent, but he was subsequently compelled by the pope to become the Catholic archbishop of Armagh in Elizabeth's reign.⁴⁰ He was destined to be one of the most outstanding Catholic dissidents of Elizabeth's reign.⁴¹ Mary directed that Thonery and Fitzgerald be consecrated and installed 'according to the order of our realm of Ireland heretofore accustomed' – which I presume to mean according to Catholic rites.⁴²

Mary restored to office George Dowdall, archbishop of Armagh, who had been deprived after he fled to mainland Europe in the summer of 1551, declaring that 'he would never be bishop where the holy Mass (as he called it) was abolished'.⁴³ Dowdall had taken refuge

³⁴ Ibid., no. 831.

³⁵ *CPCR*, i, Patent Roll 1 Mary, no. 77.

³⁶ Ibid., no. 79.

³⁷ Walter Harris ed., *The whole works of Sir James Ware concerning Ireland* (Dublin, 1764) (hereafter cited as Ware, 'Annals of Ireland'), vol. 1, 'Annals', s.a. 1553.

³⁸ *CPCR*, i, Patent Roll 1 Mary, no. 77.

³⁹ Ware, 'Annals of Ireland', s.a. 1553.

⁴⁰ Colm Lennon, *An Irish Prisoner of Conscience of the Tudor Era: Archbishop Richard Creagh of Armagh, 1523–86* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000).

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² *CPCR*, i, Patent roll Mary 1, no. 77.

⁴³ *CPCR*, i, 1 Mary, no. 4; Jefferies, *Priests and Prelates of Armagh in the Age of Reformation* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), 138–67; Jefferies, 'Primate George Dowdall and the Marian Restoration' in Seachas *Ard Mhacha* 17 (1998): 1–6.

in the monastery at Centre in the Netherlands.⁴⁴ He received a papal provision to Armagh in March 1553.⁴⁵ Mary restored him to his diocese in October 1553, and granted him the revenues of his former hospital at Ardee.⁴⁶ The title of 'primate of all-Ireland', which had been granted to Archbishop Browne of Dublin by Edward VI in 1551, was restored to the archbishop of Armagh on 12 March 1554.⁴⁷

Mary was anxious to remove Protestant bishops and other clergymen from office and to have Catholics appointed in their places.⁴⁸ She wrote to Pole to learn how she might promote Catholic clergy before 'Catholic and apostolic obedience' had been restored without infringing the pope's authority.⁴⁹ He, however, failed to respond. Mary proceeded nonetheless by securing an act of England's parliament to depose married clergymen and she established royal commissions in England and Wales to give effect to the act. Pole, however, would still not countenance the consecration of Catholic bishops before the formal reconciliation to Rome. It was the need to have Catholic bishops in Mary's second parliament that made him finally relent and grant temporary legatine provisions a fortnight before the parliament was due to meet on 2 April 1554.⁵⁰

In April 1554 Mary established a royal commission headed by Archbishop Dowdall and Dr William Walsh, similar to those already established in England and Wales, to remove bishops and other clergymen in Ireland who had presumed to marry during her half-brother's reign.⁵¹ It was a crude but effective means of weeding out priests and bishops who, she stated, had 'sown heresies and schisms away from the true Catholic faith'.⁵² The bishops of Dublin, Meath, Kildare, Leighlin and Limerick, together with a couple of lesser clergymen, were consequently deprived of their offices for being married.⁵³ Nonetheless, as in England, clerics who were prepared to put their wives away and do penance for their sin were generally allowed to seek benefices elsewhere. Thus Browne of Dublin ended his days as a canon of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.⁵⁴ Edward Staples,

⁴⁴ Ware, 'Annals of Ireland', s.a. 1558.

⁴⁵ W. Maziere Brady, *The episcopal succession in England, Scotland and Ireland, 1400–1875*, (Rome, 1876), 1, 218. It was Cardinal Reginald Pole's personal friend, Cardinal Morone, who promoted Dowdall's cause before the Roman curia.

⁴⁶ *CPCR*, i., 1 Mary, no. 4.

⁴⁷ *CPCR*, i, Patent Roll 1 Mary, nos 4, 65.

⁴⁸ *CRP*, no. 831.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 794.

⁵⁰ Mayer, *Prince and Prophet*, 214.

⁵¹ Ware, 'Annals of Ireland', s.a 1554; *CPCR*, i, 1 & 2 Mary & Philip, no. 59; TCD, MS F. I.18, f. 2; Jefferies, 'Primate George Dowdall', 10.

⁵² *CPCR*, i, Patent roll 1 & 2 Mary & Philip, no. 3.

⁵³ Ware, 'Annals of Ireland', s.a. 1554; *CPCR*, i, Patent roll 1 & 2 Mary & Philip, nos 3, 4, 5, 13, 14.

⁵⁴ Bradshaw, 'George Browne, First Reformation Archbishop of Dublin, 1536–1554' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 21 (1970): 323.

despite an understanding reached with Cardinal Pole, received no new office, perhaps because the new bishop of Meath had no regard for him, and he suffered impoverishment as a result. He subsequently complained about the abuse directed against him by Catholic clergymen, presumably for his role in the early Tudor reformations.⁵⁵

With the married bishops deprived William Walsh was nominated to the see of Meath on 18 October 1554.⁵⁶ He hesitated to accept it without a papal provision, but Pole granted him a legatine provision on condition that he secured a papal provision within a year.⁵⁷ Walsh was a Cistercian monk from County Meath who, following the dissolution of the monasteries, had gone to Italy and became one of Pole's chaplains.⁵⁸ He must have played an important role in shaping the cardinal's thoughts about the Irish Church. On the other hand, one gets the definite impression from Pole's correspondence that he gave very little thought to Ireland throughout his career.⁵⁹

On 18 February 1555 Mary directed the dean and chapter of Christ Church, Dublin, to elect Dr Hugh Curwen as the new archbishop of Dublin.⁶⁰ Significantly, Curwen was the only English-born man promoted to the Irish episcopal bench in Mary's reign. He may not have been appointed for his pastoral qualities, but for his usefulness as the chancellor of Ireland: Curwen had to supplicate for a dispensation for schism and heresy from Cardinal Pole but, significantly perhaps, he avoided swearing an oath to the pope!⁶¹ He proved to be a poor choice for Mary's religious programme for Curwen, 'a complier in all reigns', was to conform readily to the Elizabethan settlement.⁶² Yet, shortly after his arrival in Ireland in October 1555 Curwen convened a synod for the ecclesiastical province of Dublin 'in which there were many things instituted touching ecclesiastical rites'.⁶³

Mary nominated Thomas Leverous to the see of Kildare on 1 March 1555 and he received his papal provision on 30 August.⁶⁴

⁵⁵ Shirley, *Original letters*, no. xxxi.

⁵⁶ *CRP*, no. 962.

⁵⁷ *CPCR*, 1 & 2 Philip and Mary, i, no. 59; Brady, *Episcopal succession*, 1, 235. David Edwards reckoned that Walsh secured a papal provision, despite the doubts expressed on the matter: 'William Walsh', David Edwards, *ODNB*.

⁵⁸ 'William Walsh', David Edwards, *DNB*

⁵⁹ c.f., *CRP*, vols 1–3, passim.. Pole seems to have given little thought to the north of England either. He commented to Bishop Gardiner that 'almost all' the people in England lived in the ecclesiastical province of Canterbury (see *CRP*, no. 1054), and he may have forgotten to summon the northern convocation of the English Church to the legatine synod of London, see Mayer, *Prince and prophet*, 236. At the same time, he was aware that the people in the north of England and Cornwall were the most obedient Catholics in England, and the least heretical: *CRP*, no. 815.

⁶⁰ 'Curwen', Helen Coburn-Walshe, *ODNB*.

⁶¹ *CRP*, no. 1099.

⁶² Jefferies, 'The Irish Parliament of 1560: The Anglican Reforms Authorised' in *Irish Historical Studies*, 26 (1988): 137, 139–40.

⁶³ Ware, 'Annals', s.a. 1555.

⁶⁴ Brady, *Episcopal succession*, 1, 351.

Unlike Curwen, Leverous had been a stalwart of the Catholic Church during the early Tudor reformations. He spent years in exile after the failed Kildare rebellion of 1534/5, some of them in Cardinal Pole's household. He would distinguish himself by opposing Elizabeth's Reformation from the start.⁶⁵ Another Marian appointee to the Irish bench of bishops was Hugh Lacey, who was promoted to Limerick in 1556. Lacey sponsored the early work of Richard Creagh, one of the first Counter Reformation pedagogues in Ireland, and in Elizabeth's reign he played host over several years to David Wolfe, SJ, a former dean of Limerick who joined the Jesuits in response to the introduction of the Edwardian Reformation in his native city and became the papal commissary responsible for coordinating the Irish response to Elizabeth's Reformation across Ireland. While little is known of Lacey's ministry in Limerick it seems that Mary chose him well.⁶⁶

It can be seen that Mary played a decisive role in removing from office the bishops in Ireland who had deigned to marry, and were thus likely to have been Protestant or at least anti-papalist in sympathy, all but one of whom were English. With one exception she replaced them with Irish men, which may be an implicit acknowledgement that Irish clergymen were less inclined towards Protestantism than their English fellows. To the dioceses of the key religious battleground in the Pale around Dublin she promoted three outstanding Catholic exiles, Dowdall in Armagh, Walsh in Meath and Leverous in Kildare. She made Leverous the dean of the newly-restored St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin and made Dowdall a canon of the cathedral, thus providing those Catholic stalwarts with a platform for preaching in the heart of the Pale. Mary's restoration of Catholicism in Ireland was both urgent and focused.

III

Once England was formally reconciled Pole embarked on a period of intense labour to reconstruct the Church in Mary's dominions.⁶⁷ Bishops and priests who had gained office irregularly during the schism were told to supplicate for dispensations, and absolutions were offered to all who repented. From January 1555 to the end of June 1557 there were more than 1,500 acts recorded in Pole's legatine register.⁶⁸ 175 acts, or about 15% of the total, related to Ireland.⁶⁹ 78 of that number, or 45% of the Irish acts, concerned dispensations for marriage (often regularising dispensations gotten from the 'schismatic' court of faculties in Canterbury), compared with 30% for England. The concern with marriage reflects its importance for the

⁶⁵ Jefferies, 'Irish Parliament of 1560': 129, 137–8.

⁶⁶ Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 127–8, 135, 146, 151, 167, 183, 198.

⁶⁷ Mayer, *Prince and Prophet*, 225.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 254–68.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 268.

inheritance of property in areas under English jurisdiction, and the greater prevalence of marriage within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity in Ireland compared with England. Thomas Mayer, the editor of Pole's correspondence, observed that 'as in England, the total number of clerical acts [for Ireland] is tiny, numbering about 86'.⁷⁰ Of those, he calculated that only 23 related to the recent schism. Those statistics represented a remarkably small proportion of Ireland's clergy at the time.

Pole's register shows his concern to regularise the status of bishops in Ireland who were Catholic but had not been provided by the papacy. Hence he granted absolution in May 1555 to Roland Fitzgerald, Mary's appointee as archbishop of Cashel, for being illegitimate and for being consecrated by schismatic bishops.⁷¹ In May 1555 Patrick Walsh, Edwardian bishop of Waterford & Lismore, was absolved for becoming a bishop by schismatic authority.⁷² In June 1555 Alexander Devereux, Edwardian bishop of Ferns, was absolved for becoming a secular cleric after his monastery was dissolved by Henry VIII, for accepting promotion to the see of Ferns by schismatic authority, and for being consecrated with a non-Catholic rite.⁷³ On 3 October Christopher Bodkin was absolved for acknowledging the royal supremacy after his provision as bishop of Kilmacduagh, despite his 'constancy' in the Catholic faith.⁷⁴ Following an investigation conducted in Lambeth Palace in September 1555, Pole resolved the conflicting claims of Bodkin based on the royal supremacy, and Art O'Friel, citing a papal provision, to the archdiocese of Tuam.⁷⁵ Pole regularised the situation with a compromise: the *status quo* was acquiesced in for the moment with Bodkin remaining in place *de facto* with the right of succession to Archbishop O'Friel *de jure*.

A review of the acts shows the tiny scale of the legatine reconciliations among the lower clergy in Ireland. Pole delegated faculties to Archbishop Dowdall and the dean and chapter of Armagh to reconcile on 19 March 1555, and there are no (surviving) acts of reconciliation in Pole's register for the diocese of Armagh, but it is not clear whether he delegated his powers more widely because Archbishop Bodkin of Tuam is the only other Irish prelate who certainly received such faculties from the cardinal.⁷⁶ The supplicants in

⁷⁰ Ibid., 271.

⁷¹ *CRP*, no. 1208.

⁷² Ibid., nos 1229, 1230.

⁷³ Ibid., no. 1236.

⁷⁴ Ibid., no. 1390.

⁷⁵ Patrick F. Moran, *A history of the archbishops of Dublin since the Reformation*, vol. 1 (Dublin, 1864), 53–4.

⁷⁶ *CRP*, nos 1136, 1398. From the same time there are copies in Dowdall's register of dispensations granted by Pole to two couples in Armagh diocese who had secured faculties from Canterbury during the time of schism to allow them to marry despite the impediment of

Pole's register who were clergymen generally sought to regularise their status as priests or benefice holders, either because of illegitimacy or because they received benefices from a schismatic bishop. Only one sought absolution for having married during the schism.⁷⁷ Why so few supplicated for absolutions is impossible to determine. It suggests a certain lack of engagement with Pole's mission after nearly two decades of schism.

Mayer noticed a general pattern wherein former members of religious orders across England and Ireland were tardy in seeking absolutions from the papal legate.⁷⁸ Indeed, Mayer expressed surprise that so very few of the former religious sought them at all.⁷⁹ Perhaps they hesitated because Pole often stipulated that they must resume life in a religious community once the opportunity to do so materialised. Perhaps too they waited for their former monastery to be restored before jeopardising their current pensions or incomes.

As regards doctrinal deviancy in Ireland, there is very little evidence of it in Pole's legatine register. A layman from Dublin was the only supplicant for an absolution for heresy.⁸⁰ Only two clergymen sought absolution for receiving orders by 'another rite'; rare references to the use of the Edwardian ordinal.⁸¹ The dean of Limerick supplicated for absolution for having celebrated the Mass improperly, while the archdeacon of Limerick sought absolution for obeying schismatic laws while a Protestant bishop, William Casey, held the see – possible references to the use of Edwardian rites or rituals.⁸² Otherwise, one gets no sense of a great need in Ireland for a formal reconciliation of the lesser clergy, nor of any general anxiety to secure one.

Mayer calculated that about a quarter of the acts in Pole's legatine register have been lost. Nonetheless, the large number and high proportion of the surviving records provide a representative sample of Pole's work. They reveal that Cardinal Pole's legatine mission in Ireland was largely reactive, in the sense that he responded to individual supplications and did not initiate a proactive vetting programme for the Irish clergy. Its operation was neither comprehensive nor systematic. Whether the English cardinal considered that the lack of Protestant progress in Ireland meant that he could leave Irish affairs safely on the long finger is a moot point.

consanguinity: Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, MS DIO 4/2/12, 'Dowdall's register', 83–8 (74, 75).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 1314.

⁷⁸ Mayer, *Prince and Prophet*, 271. See his note to *CRP*, no. 1959.

⁷⁹ Mayer, *Prince and Prophet*, 261.

⁸⁰ *CRP*, no. 1445.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, nos 1374, 1311.

⁸² *Ibid.*, nos 1277, 1634.

IV

On 10 March 1555 Cardinal Pole wrote to Pope Julius III that Mary and Philip wished for papal confirmation of Ireland's status as a kingdom.⁸³ According to the direct testimony of one of Pole's most senior officers the request originated directly with the queen herself.⁸⁴ Julius's successor, Pope Paul IV, duly recognised Ireland as a kingdom in July of that year, thereby regularising its status following the act for the kingly title of 1541, and formally extended Pole's legatine authority to the 'new' kingdom.⁸⁵ In 1556 the English and Irish legations were re-united for administrative convenience.

When Mary appointed Lord Fitzwalter as her viceroy or deputy in Ireland on 17 April 1556 she instructed him to advance the Catholic religion and to help the bishops to root out heresy. He was directed to prepare for a parliament which would underpin the work of Catholic restoration in Ireland. He was directed too to afford every facility to the legatine commission through which Cardinal Pole intended to conduct a visitation of the Irish Church.⁸⁶ It is not possible to state what effects a legatine commission might have made to the Irish Church. Pole may not have been entirely sure himself: he informed Pope Paul IV, in a letter dated to the day after Fitzwalter's appointment as deputy, that he intended to do 'something' about Ireland, but gave no indication as to what he had in mind.⁸⁷ As it happened the cardinal's visitation of the Irish Church was not conducted before he was stripped of his legatine authority in April 1557.

Mary's Irish parliament met on 1 June 1557. Before the parliament was convened the deputy received through Cardinal Pole a bull from Pope Paul IV promising pardon and forgiveness to the clergy and laity in Ireland who had swerved from allegiance to the apostolic see and entered into schism. This bull, 'having been delivered by the lord deputy to the lord chancellor, Archbishop Curwen, was by him devoutly and reverently received and read upon his knees, in open parliament deliberately and distinctly, in a high voice. And the lords spiritual and temporal, and the commons, in the name of themselves particularly, and also of the whole body of the realm, hearing the same, embraced it right reverently and humbly kneeling upon their knees, being repentant; and yielding thanks, had the *Te Deum*

⁸³ *CRP*, no. 1109.

⁸⁴ *Calendar State Papers, Rome*, ii, 240–1.

⁸⁵ *CRP*, nos 1376, 1377, 1378; J. Hogan, 'Miscellanea Vaticano-Hibernica, 1520–1631' in *Archivum Hibernicum*, iv (1915), 217; R.D. Edwards, *Church and State in Tudor Ireland: a History of Penal Laws against Irish Catholics* (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1935), 164, quoting Quirini, *Epistolarum Reginaldi Poli*, vol. 5, 41.

⁸⁶ *SP* 62/1/22.

⁸⁷ *CRP*, no. 1544.

solemnly sung'. Thus declared the preamble of the act repealing all statutes and proclamations made against the papacy in Ireland since 1534 [c.8]. By this act the queen formally renounced her claim to the royal supremacy and all papal bulls and dispensations not prejudicial to the crown's authority in Ireland were allowed to be given effect.

The same act contained a provision guaranteeing the ownership of suppressed religious houses to their grantees, though it also contained an exhortation to such grantees to make restitution of former ecclesiastical properties for the sake of their souls. Already, from early in 1555, Mary had returned significant properties to the Church in both England and Ireland, including St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, on 25 March 1555.⁸⁸ However, Mary was not in a position to completely reverse her father's dissolution of the monasteries. Much depended on local initiatives. A petition to Mary and Pole by the Observant Franciscans of Kilcullen, County Kildare, asked that they write to the deputy and chancellor of Ireland 'firmly ordering them' to restore the friaries at Kilcullen, Enniscorthy, Trim and Multifarnham to the friars who had been obliged to live in the mountains since their suppression.⁸⁹ In the event, the friars recovered their house at Multifarnham and held on to it until the end of the sixteenth century under the patronage of Baron Delvin.⁹⁰ There may have been an intention to re-found the Cistercian monastery at Mellifont,⁹¹ and perhaps the Franciscan house at Trim before time ran out with Mary's death.⁹² In August 1558, while visiting the queen, Primate Dowdall secured her consent to restore his former hospital at Ardee 'for the better relief of poor and sick people'. The queen also directed her deputy to fund the erection of a new friary for the Carmelite community at Ardee, not knowing that time was not on her side.⁹³

The secular élites were not generally inclined to make significant restitution to the Church. James, earl of Desmond, stood apart from the others. He had purchased the Dominican friary in Limerick for £96 in order to save it from the crown and he restored it to the friars on Mary's accession to the throne.⁹⁴ In 1557 he supported the Dominican prior in Youghal in pleading, in vain, for the restoration of the dissolved Dominican friary in Cork.⁹⁵ One of the earl's chaplains, Robert Remon, petitioned the queen unsuccessfully for the restoration

⁸⁸ *CPCR*, i, 1 & 2 Philip & Mary, nos 33–8.

⁸⁹ *CRP*, no. 1020.

⁹⁰ Brendan Scott, *Religion and Reformation in the Tudor Diocese of Meath* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), 109.

⁹¹ Hans Claude Hamilton (ed.), *Calendar of the State Papers relating to Ireland*, i, 1509–1573 (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1860) (hereafter cited as *CSPI*, Mary, I), no. 62.

⁹² *CSPI*, Mary, I, no 42.

⁹³ *SP* 62/2/9.

⁹⁴ Bradshaw, *Dissolution*, 151, 163–9.

⁹⁵ *CSPI*, Mary, I, nos 58, 59.

of the Augustinian priory at Waterford.⁹⁶ All in all, by the time of the queen's death only a fraction of the former monastic possessions had been returned to the Church. Yet there had been little time to achieve much more by means of restitution and the queen herself had set a fine example by reviving the hospital at Kilmainham with property to the value of £426 *per annum*,⁹⁷ and by restoring St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin.

By another act of Mary's Irish parliament the crown renounced its claim to the payment of first fruits and twentieths, to tithes, glebes and advowsons – except those revenues that had been granted away by letters patent [c. 10]. This was a strikingly generous act which, as in England, Cardinal Pole hoped to use as the basis for a concerted assault on clerical poverty.⁹⁸ He reckoned that impoverished benefices were unlikely to appeal to well-educated pastors, while poor pastors were unlikely to enjoy the respect they were entitled to. He wanted to establish diocesan seminaries to educate and train an exemplary priesthood.⁹⁹ However, in the event, there was insufficient time left for the planning and administration required before Mary died.

Pole believed that in the short term Catholicism could best be promoted through the revival of traditional practices of worship conducted with order and ceremonial.¹⁰⁰ To that end royal commissions were established in Ireland on 3 December 1557, as they had already been in England and Wales, to enquire as to the location of all chalices and ornaments, bells, houses and lands belonging to parish churches and chapels, with the aim of restoring any items that had been confiscated by the crown under Edward VI and his father to the use of the Church. The Irish commissions were issued later than the English ones, possibly because the losses sustained in Edward's reign were less than in England. There was certainly no need for the 'herculean efforts' required in England to reconstruct the ritual and sacramental framework of the Catholic religion.¹⁰¹

Among the remaining acts of Mary's Irish parliament was one to revive the three medieval statutes for the suppression of heresy [c.9]. One cannot say for certain what action, if any, was taken against Protestants in Ireland under this legislation. Six English-born councillors and five other Englishmen were granted pardons

⁹⁶ *CSPI*, Mary, I, nos 66, 65.

⁹⁷ The hospital was subsequently dissolved again by Elizabeth and its assets seized by the crown. Ware, 'Annals', s.a. 1557, 1559.

⁹⁸ R.H. Pogson, 'Revival and Reform in Mary Tudor's Church: A Question of Money' in Christopher Haigh ed., *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 140–52.

⁹⁹ Pogson, 'Mary Tudor's Church', 16; David Loades, *The Reign of Mary Tudor: Politics, Government and Religion in England, 1553–1558* (London: Longman, 1979), 82.

¹⁰⁰ Pogson, 'Mary Tudor's Church', 11; Loades, *The Reign of Mary Tudor*, 82.

¹⁰¹ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1993), 526–8.

inter alia for heresy. This suggests that there was no persecution of Protestants. Eamon Duffy has demonstrated convincingly that a Counter-Reformation programme was put in place in Marian England.¹⁰² No such programme was implemented in Ireland: Pole's contribution to the Irish Church was one of promise rather than achievement.¹⁰³ Yet, it seems that the Church 'gained the confidence which enabled it to mount a determined resistance to the policies of the next government'—just as Christopher Haigh discovered in Lancashire.¹⁰⁴

V

A dearth of contemporary records makes it very difficult to form a qualitative assessment of the Marian restoration in Ireland. Outwardly, much was achieved. Catholic liturgies were restored where ever they had been suppressed under Edward VI, and the *Book of Common Prayer* was proscribed. Catholic bishops were promoted in place of prelates who had married, including three Catholic exiles who brought their experiences of religious controversy on mainland Europe to bear on Ireland. The Catholic order was reestablished, while the seemingly irresistible Reformation promoted under Edward VI had been reversed. Archbishop Dowdall's synodal records show that Catholicism was restored quickly and uncontentiously in the diocese and ecclesiastical province of Armagh. The same is likely to have been true of the rest of Ireland.

James Murray's thesis that Archbishop Dowdall framed the legislation of Armagh's provincial synod of 1553 'with the English Pale in view rather than his own predominantly Gaelic province' as they were 'more relevant to the Church in English Ireland, including the diocese of Dublin and its suffragan sees' must be rejected as preposterous.¹⁰⁵ Canon law did not countenance a synod of one province legislating for another. Murray's putative 'Dowdall programme' for Dublin was concocted by crediting Dowdall for every ecclesiastical initiative of Mary's reign; including the queen's decisions to depose married bishops, promote her chaplain to Dublin, restore St Patrick's Cathedral *et cetera*. Indeed, Murray's over-arching thesis, that the doctrinal and liturgical aspects of the Reformation

¹⁰² Duffy, *Fires of Faith: Catholic England Under Mary Tudor* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2009), *passim*.

¹⁰³ Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 120.

¹⁰⁴ Christopher Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 207–8.

¹⁰⁵ James Murray, 'The Tudor diocese of Dublin: episcopal government, ecclesiastical politics and the enforcement of the Reformation, c.1534–1590' (unpublished PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1997), 174; see also Murray, *Enforcing the English Reformation in Ireland: Clerical Resistance and Political Conflict in the Diocese of Dublin, 1534–1590* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 220.

were of ‘little concern’ to Dublin’s clerical élites and that they opposed the Reformation because it threatened ‘their historic role in Ireland: the reformation of Gaelic society along conventional canonical lines’, is both improbable and unsubstantiated by any evidence.¹⁰⁶

In terms of the deeper significance of the Marian restoration the evidence is conflicting. The endorsement of the Elizabethan religious settlement by the Irish parliament in only three weeks in January 1560 shows that the Counter Reformation was not yet established in Ireland.¹⁰⁷ Yet it must be recognized that the parliamentarians, who were drawn overwhelmingly from the old colonial community, were not free agents. Their long-standing dependence on the English crown was underlined by the apparent threat posed by Shane O’Neill, lord of Tyrone. Nonetheless, the very fact that they endorsed the Elizabethan settlement at all reflected a pragmatic outlook on politics and religion at the start of Elizabeth’s reign.

On the other hand, antipathy towards Elizabeth’s Reformation was made very clear very soon after the 1560 parliament in Ireland.¹⁰⁸ By very stark contrast with England, the attempt to impose the oath of supremacy on the clergy and on the local élites even in the most anglicised parts of Ireland was quickly abandoned because so many refused it that to persist in levying it would simply have exposed the absence of popular assent.¹⁰⁹ In any case it was extremely difficult to find men to promote in place of any clergymen deprived of their benefices. It was almost six years into her reign before Elizabeth was able to have bishops in place at the one time to take the places of Dowdall, Walsh and Leverous in the key dioceses around Dublin.¹¹⁰ It was harder still to find Protestant preachers for Ireland: in 1564 Elizabeth was informed that, almost six years into her reign, her Reformation was being preached among the approximately 2,500 parishes in Ireland by only one Englishman and one Irishman, and by a vicar visiting briefly from London.¹¹¹ An Irish Protestant in July 1600 declared that in all of Ireland there were still only eight Irish-born Protestant preachers, fourteen English army chaplains and literally a couple of other preachers.¹¹² Without preachers the Elizabethan Church of Ireland could not mount a convincing challenge for the hearts and souls of people.

The principled rejection of Elizabeth’s royal supremacy was well-nigh universal among the clergy and the secular élites in

¹⁰⁶ Murray, *Enforcing the English Reformation*, 56, 80.

¹⁰⁷ Jefferies, ‘The Irish Parliament of 1560’: 128–41.

¹⁰⁸ Jefferies, ‘Elizabeth’s Reformation in the Irish Pale’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 66 (2015): 524–42.

¹⁰⁹ Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 128–30.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 131–6.

¹¹¹ Shirley, *Original letters*, no. liv.

¹¹² SP 63/207, pt. 4/3; Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 246.

Ireland, and that made the Elizabethan Reformation well-nigh unenforceable on the ground. Lord Lieutenant Sussex complained that dissent was so great that no commission would be sufficient to tackle it and he proposed that parliamentary legislation was needed to address it.¹¹³ Adam Loftus, the Elizabethan archbishop of Armagh and primate of all Ireland, explained to Elizabeth that the nobility and leading gentlemen ‘condemned your majesty’s most godly laws and proceedings more manifestly than the rest’.¹¹⁴ Nor were the élites the only dissidents: Loftus complained that there were ‘many and great offences’ committed by the lower orders also. He reckoned that the scale of non-conformity was such that ‘we shall never be able to correct them by the ordinary course of the statute’. The queen’s commissioners decided that dissent was so general that it was best to ‘meddle not with the simple multitude’.¹¹⁵ The simple fact is that Tudor government on the ground functioned through the local élites; without their cooperation in the implementation of religious changes there could be no change imposed by the English crown. In 1570 Bishop Brady was still complaining of the local élites that, ‘So are they, for the most part, nay, I might say all, thwarters and hinderers of matters that should tend to the reformation of religion’.¹¹⁶

The Elizabethan *Book of Common Prayer* could not be imposed on most parishes in Ireland in the face of popular opposition. Where the *Prayer Book* was used for services there is evidence of a general boycott, and of disruption to services by people forced to attend them against their will, even in Dublin and the Pale around it.¹¹⁷ Elizabeth was obliged to establish the Irish Ecclesiastical High Commission in October 1564 specifically to tackle both those who ‘obstinately absent themselves from Church and divine service as by law established’ and those responsible for ‘any disturbance or misbehaviour committed or perpetrated in any church or chapel, or against divine service’.¹¹⁸ Archbishop Loftus discovered, nonetheless, that very few of the nobles or leading gentlemen of the Pale had ever attended a Protestant church service, but attended the Mass continually.¹¹⁹ That general manifestation of recusancy *avant la lettre* had no parallel in contemporary England. It directly contradicts the unfounded notion that ‘church-papistry’ was prevalent across the Pale.

The boycotting of Protestant services from the start of Elizabeth’s reign was so general that it must have been co-ordinated. William

¹¹³ Shirley, *Original letters*, no. xlv.

¹¹⁴ SP 63/10/42; Shirley, *Original letters*, no. lxx.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, no. liv.

¹¹⁶ *State papers concerning the Irish church in the time of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. W. Maziere Brady (London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1868), no. 5.

¹¹⁷ Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 139–41; Jefferies, ‘Elizabeth’s Reformation’: 528–30.

¹¹⁸ *CPCR*, i, 489–90.

¹¹⁹ Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 139–40.

Walsh, the Marian bishop of Meath, certainly played a key role in galvanising Catholic opposition to Elizabeth's Reformation. In 1565 Loftus complained that Walsh 'of great credit amongst his countrymen and upon whom (touching causes of religion) they wholly depend'.¹²⁰ Another Counter-Reformation figure of significance from the start of Elizabeth's reign was a Jesuit, David Wolfe. Wolfe was appointed as a papal commissary in 1560.¹²¹ He was instrumental in having a number of Catholic bishops appointed, three of whom attended the final session of the Council of Trent in 1562.¹²² On their return to Ireland there is some fragmentary evidence to show that they strove to give effect to the decrees of Trent, though the process was protracted in the face of hostility from the English crown.¹²³

In addition, there is clear evidence of an underground network being in place from the early 1560s to transport Catholic priests and aspirant priests from Ireland to Catholic colleges on mainland Europe.¹²⁴ The mendicant orders, after a nadir following the dissolution of most of their houses under Henry VIII, experienced renewal since Mary's reign and from the early years of Elizabeth's reign there were Irish friars returning from mainland Europe with the confidence and determination of Counter-Reformation agents.¹²⁵

There continued to be a general resort to Catholic services provided either by recusant chaplains and tutors employed by the wealthy, or by priests working within the established Church who subsisted on the fees paid by parishioners for Catholic rites and sacraments.¹²⁶ The friars, Jesuits and other seminary priests who returned to Ireland from Catholic colleges on mainland Europe from the middle years of Elizabeth's reign did not have to build a Catholic Church *de nova* in the second half of Elizabeth's reign – they preached to the already-converted. Already by 1585, before Jesuits or seminary priests had arrived home in large numbers, John Long, Elizabethan archbishop of Armagh and primate of all Ireland, declared that there were hardly 40 Irish-born Protestants in the entire kingdom.¹²⁷

Whenever English officials were obliged to account for the lack of progress made by the Reformation in Ireland they pointed to the strength of Irish opposition to religious change. Bishop Brady of

¹²⁰ Shirley, *Original letters*, no. lxxvii.

¹²¹ Morrissey, 'Wolfe', *ODNB*.

¹²² Jefferies, *Irish Church*, p. 77.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 147.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 149–50.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 178–80.

¹²⁶ Colm Lennon, *The Lords of Dublin in the Age of Reformation* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1989), 130, 142–51, 156–7, 163, 186, 215; see also Lennon, 'Mass in the Manor House: The Counter-Reformation in Dublin, 1560–1630' in James Kelly and Dáire Keogh eds., *History of the Catholic Diocese of Dublin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 117–18; Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 189–90, 177–8.

¹²⁷ Brady, *State Papers*, no. lxix.

Meath wrote in 1564 that the élites in his diocese were ‘sworn enemies of the [Reformed] truth’, while the ‘multitude’ were ‘hardly to be won’.¹²⁸ Bishop Daly of Kildare in 1564 was confronted by ‘sturdy and proud Papists’ who would not conform.¹²⁹ Lord Deputy Sidney observed in 1566 that the Reformation progressed slowly because Catholicism was ‘inveterated and leavened in the people’s hearts’.¹³⁰ Archbishop Loftus, after serving as a bishop for eleven ‘troublesome’ years in Ireland, asked in 1574 to be translated to an English diocese where his ministry might be ‘more profitable to the Church of God amongst the well-affected people of England than the rest of my time has been here amongst this stubborn and obstinate generation where men of far greater perfection than myself have long and vainly employed both doctrine and good examples’.¹³¹ In September 1590, with three decades of experience in Ireland, Loftus observed that ‘there has been in these people a general disposition to Popery, as a thing wherein they were nursled even from the cradle’.¹³²

Peter Marshall has argued for England that it seems likely that ‘Mary’s reign had helped to clarify issues at stake, and to sharpen confessional identities’.¹³³ He reckons that ‘the intractableness of conservative forces looks if anything greater after the bracing experience of restored Catholicism. ... after 1558 local communities seem to have been slower to respond to the wishes of government than they had been under Henry or Edward’. The contrast in Irish responses to the Tudor reformations before and after Mary’s reign suggests that the same was true of Ireland.

Why Mary’s reign should have been so significant is not clear from the evidence available. There is no evidence in Ireland for the kind of Counter-Reformation programme Eamon Duffy discovered in England.¹³⁴ The Irish evidence points to modestly-conceived conservative restoration.¹³⁵ Yet the speed and popularity of Mary’s restoration of Catholicism may have restored some of the confidence lost during the religious upheavals instigated under Henry VIII and Edward VI. The promotion of highly-regarded Irish Catholic bishops

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, no. liii.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, no. lxxiii.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, no. lxxxii.

¹³¹ SP 63/56/27; SP 63/55/59.

¹³² SP 63/94/37; Ciaran Brady, ‘Conservative Subversives: The Community of the Pale and the Dublin Administration, 1556–1586’ in P.J. Corish ed., *Radicals, Rebels and Establishments: Historical Studies* 25 (Belfast: Appletree Press, 1985), 11.

¹³³ Peter Marshall, *Reformation England, 1480–1642* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), 111. That observation was reiterated in a stronger manner when Marshall described the place of Mary’s reign in the English Reformation as ‘its central crux and crisis, and that it set the tone of much of what was to follow’; see also Marshall, ‘Confessionalization, Confessionalism and Confusion in the English Reformation’ in Thomas Mayer ed., *Reforming Reformation* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 15.

¹³⁴ Duffy, *Fires of Faith*, passim.

¹³⁵ Jefferies, *Priests and Prelates of Armagh*, 165–70; Jefferies, *Irish Church*, 104–21.

of the calibre of Dowdall, Walsh and Leverous, who had chosen exile rather than conform to Protestantism, probably strengthened Catholics' confidence further and, in Walsh's case, and perhaps Thonery and Lacey too in their respective dioceses, left Ireland with bishops who would provide leadership in opposing Elizabeth's Reformation.

The endorsement of the Elizabethan religious settlement by the Irish parliament of 1560 shows that the Counter-Reformation was not established in Ireland in Mary's reign, but Mary's restoration of Catholicism was certainly significant in strengthening Catholics' resistance to her sister's Reformation in Ireland. That is not to argue that the Reformation was bound to fail because of Mary's restoration, but the general resistance mounted from the start of Elizabeth's reign, which was so significant for the subsequent course of the Reformation in Ireland, owed much to the galvinising effects of the Marian restoration.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Jefferies, 'Elizabeth's Reformation', *passim*.