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The Question of Obedience and the Formation of Confessional Identity in the Irish Reformation

By Mark A. Hutchinson

This article sets out to explain religious change in Ireland in terms of the crown's call for obedience in a well-ordered commonwealth. This means thinking about the problem of religious change in Ireland in terms of the categories of authority and obedience, as opposed to those of confession and choice. There is no doubt that tentative confessional positions had emerged by 1530 with the Augsburg confession. But Henry VIII, like other European rulers and magistrates, did not ask his subjects to choose a new confession. Whilst the king was quite clearly asking his subjects to change their religious position by rejecting papal authority, this was presented as a demand that the king's subjects obey the prince as the correctly ordained head of the commonwealth; and in setting out such a position Henry emphasized his religious orthodoxy. Significantly, in presenting religious change as a traditional demand for obedience to the prince, this placed severe limits on the conceptual space for dissent and disobedience. This is important, because it suggests that in such a mental world, where orthodoxy and obedience were key, dissent would only become possible if different languages of obedience and orthodoxy became available, which could explain and justify different positions.[1] For the Old English community in Ireland this was particularly pertinent. The Old English consisted of those English residents in Ireland, who, since the twelfth century conquest,

    1. See Ethan Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1–27; Lee Palmer Wandel, *The Reformation: Towards a New History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 40–63, 89–146.

were tasked with upholding English civility and extending the writ of English government throughout the whole island.[2]

What this article observes is how competing accounts of Irish society and its reform came to sanction different ideas of civil obedience, which in turn came to sanction the emergence of different religious identities. On the one hand, thinking mostly of the Old English community, they stuck to an account of obedience and commonwealth reform which emphasized a set of fixed duties and an established order. Different 'reform' writers argued that the reform of the structure of society would provide Ireland's inhabitants with the paths through which they could participate in civil life and act for God and the common good.[3] Such a view looked to a fixed order, where in following the rules of behaviour set out by English law and the Church, reason would be brought to conform with the divine and Ireland's inhabitants would be brought to know how they should act. This meant fulfilling one's office as determined by God, which, for example, meant fulfilling one's responsibilities as a gentleman. For the Old English, this entailed upholding the twelfth century conquest of Ireland. On the other hand, with the arrival of the New English in the 1560s, a very different position was set out. As reformed Protestants, they argued that humanity's 'will' was corrupted to such an extent by the Fall that it was only through the action of God's grace, which came from hearing the word of God preached, that the crown's subjects would be brought to understand their duties in society and be brought to civil obedience. Importantly, in the absence of grace, it was believed that 'the will' would overpower the intellect.[4]

As a consequence of the emergence of a New English critique of reform in Ireland, the Old English were left with an alternative account of civil obedience and society, which, nevertheless, explained Ireland's condition in a set of orthodox categories. In this respect, the Old English did not choose a new confession, but instead stuck fast to their account of society, and they began to understand that the 'older' religious position they held to explained their circumstances best. In turn, they understood their religious identity as something

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2. See S. J. Connolly, *Contested Island: Ireland 1460–1630* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 26–34.

3. See Brendan Bradshaw, *The Irish Constitutional Revolution of the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 36–57; Ciaran Brady, *The Chief Governors: The Rise and Fall of Reform Government in Tudor Ireland, 1536–1588* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 245–70.

4. Brendan Bradshaw, "Sword, Word and Strategy in the Reformation in Ireland," *Historical Journal*, 21 (1978): 475–502, made some early observations on these differences in outlook.

distinct from the New English and the crown.[5] Of course this involved a hardening of confessional categories. The New English knew that they were Protestant and the Old English were quite aware that they had held fast to Catholicism. But the point is that such positions were underwritten and understood within the categories of obedience and orthodoxy, not those of choice. In this manner, the article argues that religious Reformation in Ireland needs to be seen more in terms of ideology, as a system of ideas and concepts which explained the world as made by God and one's position in it.[6] After all, to argue that such decisions were motivated simply by economic or social circumstance is to demote the strength of religious conviction, whilst to argue that it was largely about religious conviction is to say nothing about the mechanics involved in the process of religious Reformation when everyone was a believing Christian.

Furthermore, what is set out here can be read as the intellectual underpinnings of the process of dual confessionalization which was described by Ute Lotz-Heumann. In applying the German model of confessionalization to the Irish situation, in order to explain the peculiarity of the Irish experience, Lotz-Heumann argued that two parallel processes were present.[7] One process involved the English government which imposed the modes of confessional and institutional reorganization from above. This sat out of kilter with another

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5. Following Nicholas Canny, "Why the Reformation failed in Ireland: *Une Question Mal Posée*," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 30 (1979): 423–50, there was a shift in Irish Reformation historiography. More attention has been paid to religious ritual and practice, as opposed to seeing the Reformation as a straightforward question of accepting or rejecting a confession. See Colm Lennon, "The Survival of Confraternities in Post-Reformation Dublin," *Confraternitas: The Newsletter of the Society for Confraternity Studies* 6 (1995): 5–15; James Murray, *Enforcing the English Reformation in Ireland: Clerical Resistance and Political Conflict in the Diocese of Dublin, 1534–90* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Nevertheless, the overall framework for explaining the Reformation remains one defined by the idea of choice. See James Murray, "After Bradshaw: The Debate on the Tudor Reformation in Ireland," in Mark Empey, Alan Ford, Miriam Moffit, ed., *The Church of Ireland and its Past: History, Interpretation and Identity* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017), 266–85.

6. See Peter Lake, "Antipopery: The Structure of a Prejudice," in Richard Cust, Ann Hughes, ed., *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603–1642* (Harlow: Routledge, 1989), 72–106. See also Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, ed. by Mark S Cladis, transl. by Carol Cosman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3–43.

7. Ute Lotz-Heumann, *Die doppelte Konfessionalisierung in Irland: Konflikt und Koexistenz im 16. und in der ersten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 219–316. See also Karl S. Bottigheimer, Ute Lotz-Heumann, "The Irish Reformation in European Perspective," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte/Archive for Reformation History* 89 (1998): 268–309.

process, which involved a parallel reconfiguring of social and political relationships within the Old English and Gaelic Irish communities, spearheaded by Counter-Reformation forces. Such an explanation captures the point that religious change was about how different political relationships were understood within the political community – and this article explores how competing ideas of obedience shaped those different relationships.[8]

<div style="text-align:center">I</div>

Henry VIII's Reformation in England encapsulates Henry's demand for obedience, as it came to be applied in an Irish context, and the difficulty of dissenting from such a position. In an English scene, as Richard Rex has demonstrated, the Reformation message as set out by Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell focused on the nature of obedience in a correctly ordained commonwealth. Such a message ran through Tyndale's *The Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528), which was republished in England in 1537.[9] Tyndale drew on a reading of the Decalogue and the fourth commandment. He argued that one should honour thy father and mother and from this position he extrapolated that God had instituted a particular order where direct obedience should be given to the ruler. This formed a key structure in a well-ordered society.[10] In this regard, the papacy, in claiming obedience should first and foremost be given to the Church, and only to the Christian prince who acted to support the Church, had tampered with the structure of society. With emphasis placed on the contemplative life and penance, the citizen or subject had not fulfilled their primary duties, which entailed following the prince and carrying out their specific roles in acting to build and preserve the Christian commonwealth. Such a message can be found inflected through the different treatises and pamphlets which justified the king's course of action, such as Thomas Starkey's *An Exhortation* […] *to Unitie and Obedience* (1536) and Richard Morsion's *An*

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8. Ute Lotz-Heumann, "Confessionalization", in Alexandra Bamji, Geert H. Janseen, Mary Laven, ed., *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013), 44–62, here 54, makes the point that it was in reaction to "specific political and social circumstances in Ireland [that the Old English] […] became conscious Catholics", an observation which is echoed in this article.

9. William Tyndale, *The Obedyence of a Christen Man* (1537), fol. 24v.

10. Richard Rex, "The Crisis of Obedience: God's Word and Henry's Reformation," *Historical Journal* 39 (1996): 863–94.

Exhortation to Styrre all Englyshe Men to the Defence of Theyr Countreye (1539).[11]

Here Rex has drawn attention to two distinct theological underpinnings which could be associated with Henry's call for obedience – namely one based on a Protestant emphasis on faith and the other seeing obedience in more Catholic terms as a good work. The texts so far addressed looked to obedience as a product of faith. They rooted their accounts in the Gospel and the idea that through the preached word, and the operation of God's grace, a subject's conscience would be reformed and the subject brought to understand their duty to the commonwealth; although Thomas Starkey's account was more humanist in character in that it emphasized the use of the intellect in understanding the precepts of good behaviour as set out in the Gospel. For Rex, however, Stephen Gardiner's contribution, in *De vera obedientia*, presented obedience as a good work. Gardiner sought to open up a chink in the theology of Henry's Reformation in the role assigned "to obedience in the plan of salvation" by using "obedience of the faith" from St Paul to argue that faith must be accompanied by good works "which are performed by obedience to the law."[12] Obedience became, not a product of faith, but an act which contributed towards salvation. One followed the rule of law as established and communicated by the medieval Church. This demonstrates the manner in which a call for obedience could be read in two theological ways, one more traditional than the other, and in the long-run in Ireland it was the distinction between two accounts of obedience which would underwrite an emerging difference between the Old and New English.[13]

The important point, however, is that this explains the ease with which the Reformation was furthered in England, because Henry insisted on his orthodoxy and his adherence to tradition. Reformers asked people to acknowledge what was ingrained in the early modern mind – that they should be obedient to the prince and that they should fulfil their roles in society as God had intended. Broadly speaking, this is part of the position adopted by Ethan Shagan in his explanation for the ease with which the early Reformation was adopted in England. For Shagan, the Reformation's imposition should not be understood as a moment of Pauline conversion, because Henry's subjects were not asked to choose a particular confession or a new set of beliefs. Instead, it was a tradi-

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11. Thomas Starkey, *An Exhortation to the People* (1536), 17; Richard Morison, *An Exhortation to Styrre All Englyshe Men to the Defence of Theyr Countreye* (1539), 2.
12. Rex, "Crisis of obedience" (see note 10), 885–7.
13. This is detailed in sections III and IV of this article.

tional' reshaping of society, where the king's claims demanding obedience, and emphasizing his own orthodoxy, meant a limited set of languages existed that would allow opposition to be conceptualized.[14] It was only possible to object to the command that one should obey God and the prince, if one had the facility to argue that the prince had directly acted against God and God's order.

II

Crucially, a similar set of arguments came into play in Ireland, where emphasis was placed on the need to obey God and the prince by fulfilling one's role within the Christian commonwealth. The division which exists within Irish History writing on the Tudor period between 'the political' and 'the religious', however, has meant Old English engagement with the full panoply of politico-religious Reformation, and their rejection of papal authority, has not been recognized. For instance, the question of the island's longer-term reform from a perceived condition of widespread civil disorder and disobedience has tended to be viewed as a strictly political discussion about the extension of English law throughout the island, the reform of land tenure and the integration of the Gaelic Irish within the structures of English society.[15] In turn, religious Reformation tends to be understood as involving liturgical change, the survival of daily religious practices and whether enough new personnel had been provided.[16] This is not to suggest that patterns and habits of worship are not important in shaping how one encounters God. The continued presence of penitential ritual was important for a medieval Catholic account of redemption, which required penitential acts; and in the absence of penitential ritual such an account of redemption was more difficult to sustain.[17] Nevertheless, as in England, 'the religious' and 'the political' were intertwined – a point made clear by the German model of confessionalization. This meant the question of soci-

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14. Shagan, *Popular Politics* (see note 1), 7–16.

15. Brady, *The Chief Governors* (see note 3), xi, which argues that "reformation anthropology" had nothing to do with political reform. Also see David Heffernan, *Debating Tudor Policy in Sixteenth-Century Ireland: 'Reform' Treatises and Political Discourse* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018).

16. There has been some attempt to integrate religious and political reform discussion. Ciaran Brady, James Murray, "Sir Henry Sidney and the Reformation in Ireland," in Elizabethanne Boran, Crawford Gribben, ed., *Enforcing Reformation in Ireland and Scotland, 1550–1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 14–39.

17. Two significant contributions are Colm Lennon, "The survival of Confraternities" (see note 5) and James Murray, *Enforcing the English Reformation* (see note 5).

etal reform had strong religious underpinnings which concerned one's obligation to God and the commonwealth.

Such a set of arguments can be found within the very first act of the Reformation in Ireland, the dissolution of the religious orders. The explanation for the eventual acceptance of the dissolution in the Irish parliament has been based on two broad arguments. First, it was understood, Brendan Bradshaw argued, that many of the religious orders required some form of reform or were in a state of decay and thus their abolition could be understood in traditional terms as very much justified.[18] This does not sit so far from the orthodox and reforming demands made by the king which underwrote his demand for obedience. But second, Bradshaw argued, a need for negotiation over the dissolution arose because of a concern amongst the Pale gentry that their own interests in monastic properties and leases would not be respected. There was also a concern that the charges placed upon the community for the upkeep of government would increase dramatically and that a general pardon after the Kildare Rebellion of 1534 would not be forthcoming.[19] Many of the Old English had strong associations with the Fitzgeralds. This suggests that the eventual commitment to dissolution in the Irish parliament did not necessarily express a deep commitment to religious Reformation. Instead, acquiescence arose because of other outstanding issues.

When the question of the dissolution is placed firmly within the broader argument over obedience and the commonwealth, Old English commitment appears very different. For instance, in the 1536 rendition of the ubiquitous Irish reform treatise, Finglass's *Breviat*, the reform of the Church was presented within the framework of obedience and the fulfilment of duty within the commonwealth. Following a discussion of the need to end coigne and livery (bastard feudal practices) and the need for armed defence in order to counter the strength of the Gaelic Irish, it was explained how "ther be dyv[e]rse abbayes adioynyng to this Irishe men which do more ayde and supportacion to these Irishe men than to the kynge or his subiectes."[20] The problem was that some religious orders had failed to act for the royal commonwealth.[21] Furthermore,

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18. Brendan Bradshaw, *The Dissolution of the Religious Orders in Ireland under Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 35–8.

19. Ibid., 47–65, which is ambiguous about the motivation which underlay the eventual support for dissolution.

20. "A breviate of the getting of Irelande and of the decaye of the same," in Christopher Maginn, Steven Ellis, ed., *The Tudor Discovery of Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2015), 77.

21. For evidence of the wider debate, see Robert Cowley to Cromwell, *Letters and Papers,*

when the actual dissolution legislation is considered, and in particular the ne-
gotiations surrounding the passage of the Act, the conceptual limits on dissent
become more apparent. Even the question of revenue and finance, so much
associated with the appropriation of the resources of the religious orders, was
presented and understood in terms of obedience to God and the fulfilment of
one's ordained role in society. Such vocabulary can be found in a February
1537 letter from Henry to the lord deputy and Irish council, which reflected
Henry's own discussions with the young Old English lawyer Patrick Barnewall.
Barnewall had been sent to the English Court to give voice to Old English
opposition to the proposals which had arisen in the Irish parliament. As briefly
discussed, there was some fear within the community that they were about to
be burdened with increased charges and their standing undermined.

In the king's letter, the specific question of the religious orders was contex-
tualized as part of the question of commonwealth reform and obedience.
Henry wrote of his general concern for "the state of that our land of Ireland
[…] [and the] sundry opinions, discourses and devices touching the advance-
ment of the public weal." Here the question of revenue and finance was framed
in terms of "the public weal of the country" and "the advancement of our com-
mon wealth." Furthermore, it was in amongst such a discussion, where the
king also spoke of placating Old English concerns that they might have to meet
further costs, that the question of "the suppression of the monasteries" was
raised. After all, in using their financial resources simply to maintain their re-
ligious communities, the religious orders had misused those resources by not
directing them towards the "public weal" as God expected. This was the central
issue, that the king was looking to build a Christian commonwealth in Ireland,
and those who might oppose such policies in parliament, including the disso-
lution, must understand they were opposing the building of such a common-
wealth. Thinking of potential opposition, the king wrote: "you do your parts
but evil towards us and we would you should all think that we have such a zeal
to the advancement of the good of that country, that like as we propose ear-

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Henry VIII, xi, August-December 1535, ed. by James Gairdner (London: Her Majesty's Sta-
tionery Office, 1886), no. 540; "As to the suppression, the reasons that served to suppress
abbeys in England might serve here, where they do not keep such good rule and show no
hospitality except to their concubines and children." Cowley had been in Ireland since 1505
and was very much part of the Old English community, having been on good terms with the
Fitzgeralds and subsequently the Butlers. Terry Calvin, Anthony M. McCormack, "Cowley,
Robert," in James McGuire, James Quinn, ed., *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 2009).

nestly to devise for the reformation thereof and the reducing of it to a perfect civility."[22]

Such language, in stressing the simple facts of obedience to the prince and the need to act for the commonwealth, left little room for dissent. The fact that a general pardon eventually followed the attainder of the earl of Kildare no doubt helped narrow any room for dissent. The king displayed the characteristics of a Christian prince, and in particular those of clemency and magnanimity. Henry's dispute with the papacy had helped facilitate rebellion, because the Fitzgeralds had been able to argue the king had forfeited his position as the higher authority by supposedly acting against the Church.[23]

The full significance of such a position really emerges when the centrepiece legislation of Henrician reform in Ireland is addressed – both the Act of Supremacy and the Act of Kingly Title. Interestingly, Brendan Bradshaw in 1979 laid out much of the framework in *The Irish Constitutional Revolution of the Sixteenth Century*, which gives an account of commonwealth reform and the centrality of the Act of Kingly Title in such a programme.[24] Before Bradshaw, the standard interpretative position was that since Ireland had been held as a lordship by the English crown with the issuing of the papal bull *Laudabiliter* in 1155, the rejection of the pope's authority made the king's status in Ireland problematic, which necessitated the erection of Ireland as a kingdom. But for Bradshaw, this was not the real intent of the Act of Kingly Title; it was about providing the constitutional mechanism through which Ireland's lords could become subjects of the crown and thus hold their estates directly from the prince. This had not been possible whilst Henry VIII remained only Lord of Ireland and the Gaelic Irish continued to have the status of enemies. In this manner, the Act of Kingly Title allowed political reform to be extended to the whole island, by drawing the Gaelic Irish within the boundaries of a new kingdom. Security of tenure, the proper administration of justice and the duties of

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22. Henry VIII to the lord deputy and Irish council, 20 Feb. 1537, The National Archives, Kew, State Papers (in the following: TNA) SP60/4/11. Barnewall never protested the Supremacy. His initial objection was that the spiritual jurisdiction the king had, similar to the claim made by the papacy, was different from temporal jurisdiction. The king could reform the monasteries in spiritual matters but not abolish the foundations. Bradshaw, *Dissolution* (see note 18), 50.

23. Henry A. Jefferies, *The Irish Church and the Tudor Reformations* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), 72–74 – though the analysis would be better framed in terms of the category of obedience to a higher authority, as opposed to being presented as a pure and simple confessional choice before such a choice had emerged.

24. Bradshaw, *The Irish Constitutional Revolution* (see note 3), 196–200.

fidelity to the prince would draw Ireland's lords to understand the benefits of civility.

Akin to much of early modern Irish historiography, the division struck by Bradshaw between 'the political' and 'the religious' has meant that the importance of the political reform programme for the question of religious Reformation, which we have so far outlined, has remained overlooked. Whilst Bradshaw accepted that the Supremacy and religious Reformation, from Thomas Cromwell's perspective, were integral to the programme of reform, this, he argued, was subsumed under the question of unitary sovereign – the Act of Kingly Title being the clearest expression of this. This allowed Bradshaw to do two things. First, he claimed that the Act of Kingly Title, in encompassing both the Gaelic Irish and the Old English, had laid the basis for an island wide 'national consciousness' which was non-ethnic in character. Second, he claimed that since the Old English, in supporting the Act of Kingly Title, had really only been intent on constitutional and commonwealth reform, the religious Supremacy should be seen as a side-issue. Crucially, for Bradshaw, a great deal of commonwealth reform was indigenous, emanating from the Old English community, as opposed to England. This was important for the more extended argument present in the *Constitutional Revolution*, because it meant that when a 'national consciousness' emerged it had its roots in Ireland as opposed to an English movement of reform.[25] It also meant that when the programme of commonwealth reform began to falter after Henry VIII's reign, an emerging Irish nation could re-embrace its Catholicism without the complication that such a 'national consciousness' had been forged through an initial rejection of papal authority. When writing of the "Irish Reformation Parliament", Bradshaw even argued: "If on the one hand the colonists continued to accord the papacy a central position in the traditional ecclesiastical structure, on the other they were prepared to acquiesce in the supremacy legislation."[26]

The position we have so far outlined suggests that in no sense could the Supremacy, obedience and political and religious Reformation be thought of as distinct issues.[27] In fact, the rejection of papal authority has to be seen as integral to the very idea of obedience to the prince and commonwealth reform,

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25. Ibid., 245, 254–88.

26. Brendan Bradshaw, "The Opposition to the Ecclesiastical Legislation in the Irish Reformation Parliament," *Irish Historical Studies* 16 (1969): 285–303, here 303.

27. Whilst I disagree with this aspect of Bradshaw's interpretative position, Bradshaw's vision, in both the *Dissolution* (see note 18) and *The Irish Constitutional Revolution* (see note 3), established the intellectual platform through which Irish historians continue to think.

because the papacy was seen as drawing the citizen or subject away from meeting their obligations to the Christian commonwealth. The Bishop of Meath Edward Staples, in a 1537 treatise sketching such a policy, made this quite clear. Staples had been born and educated in England, but he was prominent within the government of Ireland and involved with the commonwealth thinking of the Old English community. Right at the opening he stated that "First where the Irish men of long continuance hath supposed the regal estate of this land to consist in the Bishop of Rome for the time being and the lordship of the King of England here to be but a government under the obedience of the same which causeth them to have more respect of due subjection unto the said bishop than to our sovereign lord therefore me seemeth it convenient that his highness be recognised here by act of parliament supreme governor of this dominion by the name of king of Ireland and they then to induce the Irish captains as well by their oaths as writing to recognize the same which thing shall be in continuance […] bring them to due obedience."[28]

The point was simple. The Gaelic Irish sought to obey an authority, 'the bishop of Rome', who sat outside the structure of the commonwealth as ordained by God; and the Gaelic Irish needed to be brought within the confines of a properly structured political community. Furthermore, in the different statements on government sponsored societal reform, little distinction was drawn between the question of the Supremacy and the question of political obedience and the reform of the commonwealth. The "Ordinances for the Government of Ireland", issued by Cromwell in 1534, which drew on Old English reform discussions, addressed first the question of duty and obligation concerning the need to end coigne and livery, properly arming the citizenry to defend English-Ireland and the active administration of justice. It was in amongst these considerations that the Church and its wider responsibility to defend the commonwealth was raised. It was explained that "the temporall lordes, gentyll men" contributed to the defence of the commonwealth in line with their Christian duty: "it is consonant to all reason, conscience and equitie."[29] These obligations should also be met by the Church – "that the landes of the spiritualtie, and benefyces, to all commen charges of the countreye shall contribute, as the landes of the temporaltie is charged. And all lordes, and other personnes of the spiritualtie, shall sende companyes to ostynges and jour-

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28. "A certain information for our sovereign lord most honourable commissions in Ireland," TNA SP60/5/15.

29. "Ordinances for government," *State Papers of Henry VIII*, ii, part 3 (London, 1834), 207–16.

nayes." This was followed by a list of the precise charges to be met by each bishop and abbot.[30]

It was in this vein that "The Ordinances" addressed the authority of the bishop of Rome, and the language used echoed that of contemporaneous English pamphlet literature: "for asmoche as it is […] manifest that thabhomynable abuse and usurpation of the Bishoppe of Romes jurisdiction […] hath not onely distroyed the Churches of Irelande, but also ben the moost occasion of […] discencion amonges the people […] and the dissolation, ruyn, and decaye of the same; the Kynges Hyghnes, lyke a moste vertuous christen Prince, above al thynges desyryng the repressyng of any anormitie or abuse, whiche, by any meane, mought tende to the violation of the lawes of God, or be an occasion to his people to digresse from charitie or christen maners […] commaundeth his Deputie and Coounsayle […] that they […] indevour thyemselfes […] to resiste the sayde Byshoppe of Romes provisions, and other his pretensed and usurped jurisdiction."[31]

The papacy was presented as drawing citizens and subjects away from their Christian duty, which was to serve the commonwealth. In a manner, this was no different from the criticism made of those Englishmen who had refused to remain resident in Ireland and fulfil their duty in building the Christian commonwealth there. "The Act of Absentees" emphasized the need for resident authority and that citizens or subjects fulfil their duties and responsibilities to the commonwealth. The Act read, "this the King's land of Ireland, heretofore being inhabited and in due obedience and subjection unto the King's most noble progenitors […] hath principally growen into ruine, desolation, rebellion, and decaie" because those responsible for the commonwealth had remained resident in England thus shirking their responsibilities.[32]

It is also the case that the Oath of Supremacy could never be viewed as incidental by those who took it, because it required one to voice one's conscience before God. The recent reconsideration of the conceptual world involved in the taking of oaths, by Jonathan Gray, points out that to swear an oath was an act of worship, because taking an oath was to give voice to your conscience before God. Once an oath was taken it locked individuals into Henry's Reformation and made dissent a very difficult proposition if such dissent were to place your spiritual health at risk. The series of oaths sworn ac-

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30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. "Act of Absentees," *The Statutes At Large, Passed in the Parliaments Held in Ireland*, 9 vols. (Dublin: B. Grierson, 1765–1801), vol. I, 84.

knowledging Henry's supremacy over the Church, by their very nature, imposed the Reformation on people's minds. Gray also observed in relation to the English scene, that whilst scholars have focused on the taking of the Oath of Supremacy, there were in fact different versions of such an oath, and there was also the Oath of Succession. In this regard, there was a negotiation over the contents of the different oaths taken, but what was important was that any version taken committed a person at the level of conscience to an aspect of Henry's claim to unitary sovereignty and thus the rejection of papal authority.[33] In a similar vein, the Act of Succession in Ireland, which involved a simple statement of obedience to the prince, immediately committed an individual's conscience to a particular scheme of Reformation, because it implicitly accepted the king's authority to re-marry in opposition to papal disapproval.[34]

<center>III</center>

The problem which needs to be addressed is how could dissent emerge within the framework of obedience and how could a firm re-engagement with papal authority be conceptualized at a later stage. In particular, why did such an idea of obedience not equally underwrite the Elizabethan Reformation in Ireland as it did Henry's and indeed Edward's and Mary's religious policies? Here the usual set of explanations do not fully account for the conceptual problem. Irish historians have tended to suggest that, with the Marian Restoration, traditional Irish religious practices, which were still operative, were given a Counter-Reformation edge which allowed more effective opposition to Protestantism to emerge.[35] There is no doubt that there is some truth in this, especially when we consider the failure of the Elizabethan Church to establish an effective preaching ministry. By the 1550s the different confessional distinctions had also clarified more. There was surely a clear awareness that Edwardian Protestantism and Marian Catholicism involved two different accounts of salvation. Yet it remained the case that with each change of confession the population continued to be asked to obey the instructions of an ordained higher authority,

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33. Jonathan Michael Gray, *Oaths and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 116–42.

34. "An Act of Succession of the King and Queen Anne," *Statutes At Large* (see note 32), vol. I, 76–83.

35. See, for example, Colm Lennon, *Sixteenth-Century Ireland: The Incomplete Conquest* (Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 1994), 309; Jefferies, *The Irish Church* (see note 23), 104–21.

the prince, thus there remained limited conceptual space to conceive of disobedience.

For instance, the Henrician account of obedience and reform remained in play in Edward VI's Irish Reformation and the Marian Restoration.[36] An anonymous "A treatise for the Reformation of Ireland", opened with reference to Henrician commonwealth reform and how the king "saw written his charge from God over Ireland", though written sometime in 1554–5 during the reign of Philip and Mary. Reference was even made to the "Act of Kingly Title" which joined the Irish and English in one nation "in charge from God".[37] This reflected a certain continuity of outlook with the late Edwardian contribution of Thomas Walshe's "Report on the state of Ireland, 1552", which continued to circulate under Mary Tudor. The report argued that the reform of Munster was the responsibility of the "Archbishop of Cashel, and Bishop of Ossory", which would have put Munster, in part, under the authority of John Bale – although Walshe was certainly not a radical Protestant.[38]

The manner in which Mary restored papal authority, moreover, left the question of obedience somewhat confused, despite the hardening of confessional positions. This was something Cardinal Pole acknowledged in his critique of the opening acts of Mary's restoration of Catholicism. Pole disliked the fact that Mary's title to the crown and marriage to Philip had been confirmed by acts of parliament. At the root of Pole's concern was the manner in which such action confirmed the definition of obedience which ran through Henry's Reformation – that obedience should be given to the prince as the correctly ordained head of the commonwealth. This undermined the attempt to restore papal authority and the Church. After all, the papacy should have determined the legitimacy of marriage and the legitimacy of a Christian prince, as opposed to parliament acknowledging Mary's position. This all underwrote

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36. The different Edwardian instructions for government continued to emphasize 'commonwealth' reform. There was nothing overtly confessional at this point. "Remembrance for my brother Thomas Allen," TNA SP 61/2/106 or "Instructions," July 1550, TNA SP61/2/57. When the Church was addressed, it was about service to the commonwealth, e.g. the discussion of commissions issued, 1552, TNA SP61/4/66. Mary's instructions, whilst they opened with the restoration of the Catholic Mass, also continued to emphasize commonwealth reform. "Instructions given to […] Anthony St Leger," 1553, TNA SP62/1/2.

37. "A Treatise for the Reformation of Ireland 1554–55," in Brendan Bradshaw, ed., *'And so Began the Irish Nation': Nationality, National Consciousness and Nationalism in Pre-Modern Ireland* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 295–311, here 307.

38. Thomas Walsh, "Report on the State of Ireland, 1552," in David Heffernan, ed., *'Reform' Treatises on Tudor Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission, 2016), 7–15, here 10.

the way in which she had restored the Mass.[39] Mary had not waited for reconciliation with the papacy but had instead acted on the basis of the royal supremacy, which allowed the celebration of Mass to be understood as a command from the prince not necessarily the Church. She had relied on crown and parliamentary authority when obedience to the Church should have come first: "And so it happeneth ever when prudence […] will take upon her to order the matters that pertain to conscience and religion in other fashion than God in His Church hath ordered them."[40]

Her approach to the legacy of her father was also deemed highly problematic. Mary had referred to Henry VIII as "regem piissimae memoriae", and whilst this might have been done out of "piety natural", she had forgotten that whilst one should honour one's parents, Christ's followers had to hate their parents. Mary should honour Christ and disregard her father's legacy. In fact, if Henry was "piae memoriae", then what about those who had resisted his actions? Was the king not an "unnatural father" since he sought to take the position of the "supernatural father"? Pole went straight for Henry's idea of obedience which had been underwritten by the fourth commandment and the argument that the instruction to honour one's father and mother demanded direct obedience be given to the head of the commonwealth.[41]

What this meant was that in restoring Catholicism Mary continued to speak, in part, in the language of Henrician obedience to the prince. The fact that there was not a wholesale programme of reconciliation with Rome in Ireland did not help clarify any ambiguity here. For example, Hugh Curwen was appointed archbishop of Dublin, and despite conforming under Henry and Edward, he did not swear an oath of obedience to the pope. It is also the case that outside the upper echelons of the Church much of the lower clergy did not seek reconciliation with Rome.[42] Many of the Old English gentry also held on to church property they had acquired as a result of the dissolution of the religious orders, because the act which repealed the statutes against the papacy nevertheless confirmed the redistribution of the suppressed monasteries.[43]

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39. *The Correspondence of Reginald Pole,* ed. by Thomas Mayer, 4 vols. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002–2208), vol. 2 (2003): *A Calendar, 1547–1534: A Power in Rome*, no. 1765, 1/2 December, Pole to Mary, 236. Also see Henry A. Jefferies, "The Marian Restoration in Ireland," *British Catholic History* 33 (2016): 12–31.

40. *Correspondence of Reginald Pole* (see note 39), 236.

41. Ibid.

42. *Correspondence of Reginald Pole*, vol. 3 (2004): *A Calendar, 1555–1558: Restoring the English Church*, no. 1099, 6 March 1555, Pole to Hugh Cory, p. 50; Jefferies, "Marian Restoration" (see note 39), 22.

43. Jefferies, "Marian Restoration" (see note 39), 24.

How then did the Old English manage to articulate opposition to the Eliza-
bethan Reformation, if the category of obedience remained operative?

IV

What can be identified under Elizabeth is a pulling apart of the shared lan-
guage of obedience and commonwealth, which arose when the New English
started to emphasize the necessity of God's word and God's saving grace. To
begin with the Old English continued to speak in terms of God's word and
obedience, as had been the case under Henry's reign. The major legislative
planks of the Elizabethan Church were passed in the 1560 parliament, and
whilst the 1569–71 parliament did not meet with huge success, there was a
shared intent when it came to the provision of schools and a university.[44] James
Stanihurst, the father of Ireland's soon-to-be Counter-Reformation scholar Ri-
chard Stanihurst, supported such a programme. Richard himself, in his contri-
bution to the Irish section of Holinshed's *Chronicles*, spoke of commonwealth
reform using a shared language of both grace and duty. Stanihurst emphasized
"the lack of good bringing up [of] the youth of this realm in public and private
schools"; but he also pointed to Old English participation in parliament. The
Act of Attainder against Kildare and the Act of Kingly Title had been passed
and thus the community had demonstrated their loyalty and maintained a
Christian civil order.[45] Stanihurst spoke in terms of grace and redemption.
The Irish preachers "who reprove not in their sermons the peevishnesse" of
the native Irish were singled out for chastisement. Stanihurst asked that "God
with the beams of his grace clarifie the eies of that rude people, that at length
they maie see their miserable estate."[46]

   This reflects another difficulty with articulating dissent, since not only the
category of obedience, but the stress placed on God's word and grace was pre-
sent within the medieval tradition. What gradually emerged, however, was a
very different New English understanding of what constituted God's word. In
the medieval tradition it was defined in terms of scripture, mediated through
the rules, traditions and teaching of the medieval Church. In contrast, Protes-
tants emphasized the direct unmediated preaching of scripture as the sole

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   44. Victor Treadwell, "The Irish Parliament of 1569–71," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish
Academy,* section c 65 (1966): 55–89.
   45. Richard Stanihurst, "The thirde booke of the histories of Ireland," in Raphael Hol-
inshed, *Chronicles* (London, 1577), 23, 29, 104–11.
   46. Ibid., 29.

source of God's saving grace. Crucially, for Protestants, this meant that a failure to preach God's word would entail the absence of God's saving grace. In turn, this entailed the corruption of 'the will' which called into question the obedience of Elizabeth's Irish subjects and whether they could fulfil their duty to her and God.

Hints of a growing strain in a shared language of obedience and God's word can be found in Robert Weston's own frustrations with the failure of legislation regarding a university and the reform of the Church. Robert Weston served as chancellor of Ireland under the Elizabethan Lord Deputy Henry Sidney, who was part of a wider reformed Protestant network at the Elizabethan court headed by the earl of Leicester.[47] The chancellor's concern was that the continued failure to provide for a Protestant preaching ministry (which had arisen due to structural and financial problems) entailed an absence of God's saving grace. In explaining the condition of the island and his frustrations with the Irish parliament, Weston emphasized a lack of godly reform and the corruption of 'the will' which followed the absence of God's grace. There "is no knowledge of god, or of their duties to their prince, in the hearts of this people that should teach or move them to their dutiful obedience, only the fear of the sword […] can contain them in their office no longer than it hangeth over their heads."[48] For Weston, only "learning, understanding and knowledge of God […] in their hearts would breed in them good liking and love of honesty, civility and true obedience and without further charge to the prince."[49] By implication such a position called into question Old English claims that they were dutiful and obedient by raising questions about the internal condition of Elizabeth's subjects.

This critique within New English circles picked up through the 1570s and into the 1580s. Edmund Tremayne, a former Marian exile, who again had clear reformed Protestant credentials, drew attention to the absence of true religion which he saw as all encompassing. Tremayne began one of his reform proposals with: "First, of religion which is the cause of God without whose due adoration no kingdom can prosper […]. [Elizabeth's Irish subjects] have neither fear nor love of God in their hearts that [would] restraineth them from ill."[50]

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47. Wallace T. MacCaffrey, "Sidney, Sir Henry (1526–1586), Lord Deputy of Ireland and Courtier", in H. G. G. Matthew, Brian Harrison, ed., *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

48. Robert Weston to William Cecil, 12 March 1570, TNA SP63/30/29.

49. Ibid.

50. Edmund Tremayne, "Notes for the reformation of Ireland, 1571," TNA SP63/62/66. Also Tremayne, "The causes why Ireland is not reformed," June 1571, TNA SP63/32/65.

By 1580, when William Pelham commented on rebellion in Munster, he pointed to the problem of an incorrect knowledge of God within the Irish Church: "obedience dependeth upon the right knowledge of God and true discipline of the church […] [and thus] all the spiritual livings in Munster should be resigned into her Majesty's hands."[51] Lord Deputy Arthur Grey was more explicit in his assessment of the gentry risings in the Pale of 1580–81 and the wider Desmond rebellion of 1579. Grey, with a particularly Protestant emphasis, traced rebellion to the corruption of the 'will' in the absence of God's word and grace. He argued that "the small care had of true religion and settling of God's word hath been the only destruction of this government, which trial enforceth me to say that only the sword will solve."[52] Naturally, the most direct critique emerged in clerical circles in Ireland, with Marmaduke Middleton, the bishop of Waterford and Lismore, arguing that "the word of God is the thing [that] teacheth all duty and obedience and is the restraint of man's wicked affections, of the want thereof occasioned such blindness, that every man, yieldeth to his own lust which is prone and ready to all disobedience and hidden in them."[53]

In fact, such an emphasis on grace- and conscience-based reform authorized a departure from the established political order upheld by the Old English. In correspondence emanating from Ireland, the accounts of the interactions with the different Gaelic Irish and Old English lords were peppered with references to an Irish 'faithlessness', an unreformed or corrupted 'conscience' and a lack of knowledge of God's word.[54] The use of such terms is indicative of an implicit observation that the normal structures of the commonwealth were thought to no longer function, because with a failure to evangelize, God's grace was thought to be absent as an agent of reform.[55] John Perrot, as president of Mun-

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51. William Pelham, "A probable discourse," in David Heffernan, ed., *'Reform' Treatises on Tudor Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission, 2016), 182–97, here 184.

52. Arthur Grey to Elizabeth, 16 April 1581, TNA SP63/82/54.

53. Marmaduke Middleton to Francis Walsingham, 21 July 1580, TNA SP63/74/53.

54. Mark A. Hutchinson, *Calvinism, Reform and the Absolutist State in Elizabethan Ireland* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2015), 40–45, 123–33. See also the different letters sent by provincial presidents such as Nicholas Malby, Edward Fitton and Richard Bingham – e. g. Malby to Walsingham, 20 Sept 1576, TNA SP63/56/34; Malby to Walsingham, 17 March 1577, TNA SP63/57/40; Malby to Walsingham, 17 Oct. 1579, TNA SP63/69/52; Fitton to Cecil, 13 April 1570, TNA SP63/30/42; Fitton to Burghley, 9 Aug. 1573, TNA SP63/42/2; Fitton to Burghley, 5 Jan. 1575, TNA SP63/49/11. See note 60 below for Richard Bingham.

55. See, for example, "Instructions to Henry Sidney" (Draft), 4 July 1566, TNA SP63/14/2; "Instructions" for Lord Justice Drury, 29 May 1578, Lambeth Palace Library Carew MSS 611, fols. 351–60; John Perrot to the bishop, sheriff and justices of several places, 4 March 1585, TNA SP63/115/11.

ster, explained the current dysfunction of lordly government in the province on the basis that the archbishops and bishops needed to ensure the "setting forth of God's word" because it was through this means that the "people will sooner grow to know their duty to God and perfect obedience to the prince."[56] This fed into a change in the approach to reform. Those in government began to argue that Ireland's lordships needed to be dramatically reduced in size and that the Old English needed to be excluded from office. This responded to a concern that virtue and fidelity would be absent in the absence of God's grace. In turn, this raised questions about the ability of Elizabeth's Irish subjects to act in the commonwealth and suggested that such ability needed to be curtailed until religious Reformation was successful.[57] In an extended report, Perrot made such a suggestion, on the basis that the prince could no longer rely on an older model of lordly and gentry government if duty and fidelity were questionable. For Perrot "Reformation must […] begin at God. His will and word must be duly planted"; but such Reformation had not taken place thus "how […] [can] a people so estranged from God and their duty to him have any grace to know their lawful prince and their duty to her."[58]

Similarly, William Herbert, as a leading figure in the first Munster plantation, understood the justification for the appropriation of land by planters as based on a responsibility to make provision for the preaching of God's word to reform the wider population, stressing the need to preach in Irish.[59] The really dark notes in such an account can be seen in Richard Bingham's ruthless actions, as president of Connaught, against the McWilliam Burkes, where he asked whether we should "keep our words with those which have no conscience, but break words daily."[60] Furthermore, John Hooker's continuation of Holinshed's *Irish chroniclers* stressed the connection between the dysfunction of the commonwealth and the corrupted consciences of the Gaelic Irish and Old English. Hooker emphasized the ungodly disposition of indigenous lords, Old English misuse of their customary rights to participate in government, a failure to evangelize and a growing 'papistry'. He concluded his account of the 1579–81 rebellions with the frustrated hope that: "they may repent […] and be

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56. Roger Turvey, ed., *A Critical Edition of Sir James Perrot's The life, Deedes and Death of Sir John Perrot* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 2002), 45.

57. Hutchinson, *Calvinism* (see note 54), 98–136.

58. "Sir John Perrot on the government of Ireland," British Library Sloane MS 2200, fol. 2r.

59. William Herbert to Lord Burghley, 30 April 1587, TNA SP63/129/42.

60. "A true discourse of cause of the late rebellion of the Burkes," 16 Nov. 1586, TNA SP63/126/83.

coverted unto the Lord [...] [and brought to] all dutifull obedience [...] [and] dailie more and more grow from grace to grace, and live in all holinesse and virtue towards him [God], and persist in all dutifull obedience unto hir maiestie."[61]

<p style="text-align:center">V</p>

It was in the context of such a discussion that the Old English began to clarify their own position. Renewed emphasis was placed on the particular components of their account of orthodoxy and obedience – namely an ordained order of prescribed duty which arose from obedience to English law and now more explicitly the rules of the Church – as opposed to an emphasis on internal grace-based reform. This can be seen in *The Book of Howth*, compiled by the Baron of Howth, which put forward a counter-narrative to New English questioning of Old English commitment to, and the success of, the conquest. At one level, the narrative tells of the Old English building abbeys and castles, and it is when Old English leadership and knowledge was ignored that the conquest faltered. Thus the language of commonwealth reform, which emphasised Old English virtue and duty as upholders of English civility, came to the fore. Moreover, in the miscellaneous material appended to the narrative, a different orthodox emphasis on Christianity and society was brought forward.[62] Here Howth's chronicle saw stability and order as resting with the unity of Christendom, and the overarching authority of the Church, as opposed to the word preached. In particular, Howth's chronicle anchored the language of duty in an appeal to the papacy, which represented a significant departure in Old English discussions.

The main body of the chronicle discussed the papal bull *Laudabiliter*, which had justified the original conquest of Ireland on the basis that the Gaelic Irish needed to be reformed, and it defined Christian duty and wider societal reform according to the rule set by the Church. The chronicle recounted how "by the

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61. John Hooker, "The supplie of the Irish chronicle [...] until this present yeare 1586," in Holinshed, *Chronicles* (London, 1587), 109–83, here 183; Hutchinson, *Calvinism* (see note 54), 139–43.

62. Valerie McGowan-Doyle, *The Book of Howth: The Elizabethan Re-conquest of Ireland and the Old English* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2011), 69–86. McGowan-Doyle first drew attention to the importance of the text as political position taken by Howth. McGowan-Doyle also identified how the material in the appendix was added by different scribes and acted as a comment upon the main text.

authority of the Pope, and by his Council" Henry II had received the Lordship of Ireland, because the island "was out of the right rule of Christendom and right belief", and Henry was tasked with bringing Ireland into conformity with "the law of [the] holy church in the manner of England."[63] There is a strong hint of Aquinas, where reason is a rule and now specifically through the rule imposed by the Church and its moral order, reason would be brought into conformity with the divine.[64] Furthermore, in the appendix to the main narrative, the rejection of papal authority, and the disunity of Christendom, was associated with failure and degeneration; and no doubt read in light of the faltering authority of the English in Ireland, the rejection of the authority of the "holy church" could be read as a cause for the faltering Irish context. It was pointed out how the fall of the island of Rhodes to the Ottoman Turk arose when "Sultan Solyman" saw that "all the great princes in Christendom (were) now at discord."[65] It was also pointed out in the appended text that the authority of the Holy Roman emperor was subject to that of the pope.[66]

Clearly, the fracturing of a shared language of obedience coincided with a decline in Old English influence in government; but this is not to argue that economic, social or political motivation led the Old English to a different account of civil obedience so they could justify their position. Instead, it is to argue that their entire religious position was an all-encompassing view of society; that their focus on the fulfillment of their duties within the commonwealth as set out under English law and the Church described their position as upholders of the colony. This sat in contrast to a New English godly citizenry who sought to remake the colony. In fact, the New English, in articulating so strongly their own confessional understanding of God's word and obedience, and in redefining the role of the Irish Church and crown government in relation to the Old English, left the community of the Pale in need of an alternative framework in which to root its language of orthodoxy and obedience, which was available in *Laudabiliter* and the papacy.

The cooption during the Marian Restoration of the full panoply of commonwealth language and its Catholicization also ensured that the Old English view of the world had already been firmly re-anchored, by some, in a more defined Roman Catholicism. Cardinal Pole had persuaded the papacy to issue

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63. *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts*, ed. by J. S. Brewer, 6 vols. (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1867–73), vol. 5 (1871): *The Book of Howth*, 1–269, here 71.

64. Aquinas, *Political Writings*, ed. by R. W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), xxxii-xxxvi.

65. *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts* (see note 63), vol. 5, 172.

66. Ibid., 244.

a papal bull confirming Ireland's status as a kingdom.[67] Mary's Archbishop of Armagh James Dowdall also adopted wholesale the language of politico-religious reform and rooted it firmly in a Catholicism headed by the papacy. In a reform treatise which went through the standard tropes concerning the need to extend English rule throughout the island in order to bring Ireland to obedience and civility, Dowdall explained that the mandate to bring the island within the confines of civility had been given to the original Old English colonists by *Laudabiliter* and the papacy: "And therffore as it is well written in the Civill Lawe, [Quod Princeps debet Purgare Provinciam suam malis hominibus].[68] I doe Call it godlye, to plante good men, in the steade of evill. And this was the occasion, that moved the Popes Holynes, to give the Kinge Lycence at the tyme of the ffirst Conquest, to take their Landes ffrom them, as the Chronicles doth declare."[69]

This fusion between Old English Catholicism and an account of civil society might go some way in explaining the distinctions between Catholicism in England and in Ireland. As Michael Questier has shown, Catholicism survived within different noble households and entourages in England, whose experience mirrored aspects of the Old English experience in Ireland.[70] The difference, however, was that the Old English in Ireland had the potential to anchor their Catholicism in a full account of the Kingdom of Ireland and in particular the question of full-scale societal reform. In contrast, a Catholic nobleman in England had to protest that his Catholicism did not conflict with his loyalty to the crown, thus certain constraints of obedience to the prince remained in play which limited the sort of public presence his Catholicism could have. In Ireland, the Old English simply needed to talk about the reform of the Irish kingdom which sat within an established framework of obedience and which gave their Catholicism an immediate civil or political presence.

In this context *Laudabiliter* also emerged as a forceful urtext in Richard Stanihurst's *De Rebus* (1584), which was written in the context of Stanihurst's full engagement with the Counter-Reformation in European exile, alongside his more considered engagement with Irish identity. The story was told of John of Salisbury's mission to Pope Adrian IV, where Henry II promised "to wipe out

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67. Jefferies, "Marian Restoration" (see note 39), 23.

68. That the king ought to rid his province of evil men.

69. Joseph T. Dolan, ed., "The Archbishop of Armachane's opinion touching Ireland," *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society* 2 (1909): 157.

70. Michael C. Questier, *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage and Religion, c. 1550–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), passim.

the barbarism from the character of the rural population and […] to instill laws which were consonant with the Catholic faith."[71] Furthermore, *De Rebus* laboured Henry II's failure to live up to the obligations of *Laudabiliter*. We are told how the Gaelic Irish Laurence O'Toole, bishop of Dublin, journeyed to Normandy to ask for certain "immunities" from taxation in order to allow the Church to fulfil its mission to bring the Irish into conformity with the moral standards of Christendom. O'Toole also wanted "British knights" to be made to behave dutifully, "especially after the replacement of [Hugh] de Lacy [in Ireland]", because they "gorged themselves on the fortunes of the Irish."[72] There was a hint of commonwealth reform with Ireland's Gaelic Irish bishop calling for a financially secure Church and a nobility that understood duty.

Akin to Howth's chronicle, moreover, a failure to abide by the governing structures of a united Christendom spelled disorder and degeneration. Stanihurst drew on Henry II's failure to meet his wider Christian duty when he refused aid to "the patriarch of Jerusalem", who had asked for support against "Saladin, the most powerful king of the Saracens."[73] It was "internal disputes among Christians" which had left Jerusalem vulnerable and when Henry was not willing to do more than provide some money (he would not lead a military force), the patriarch admonished him: "Therefore since you put your private concerns before the common cause of Christendom, I will not take it upon myself to put forth oracles like a prophet, but this I dare to announce to you: Christ, whose right hand is unvanquished […] will exact bitter penalty for your inactivity."[74]

Such an ideological framework underpins Ciaran Brady and James Murray's observation that a New English emphasis on statute law in ecclesiastical affairs, which departed from medieval canon law, was problematic because it violated the terms of *Laudabiliter*, which underwrote Old English claims to governance of the island.[75] Such a position, as suggested, was part of a broader debate over the very definition of duty and obedience, which in emphasizing prescribed modes of behaviour as set out by English law and the Church now made more sense within the confines of the Counter-Reformation Church and not within the New English establishment.

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71. Hiram Morgan, John Barry, ed., *Great Deeds in Ireland: Richard Stanihurst's De Rebus in Hibernia Gestis* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2013), 271.

72. Ibid., 325.

73. Ibid., 333.

74. Ibid., 337.

75. Brady, Murray, "Reformation in Ireland" (see note 16), 14–39; Murray, *Enforcing the English Reformation* (see note 5), 48–81, 159–203, 261–316.

In fact, Howth's and Stanihurst's texts themselves are particularly important, because much of the discussion which is mediated through the *Irish State Papers* means that the Protestant reshaping of the language of obedience is the dominant voice, whilst full-blown Old English statements on their politico-religious views are hard to come by. The political vocabulary used by the Old English is, nevertheless, suggestive of the manner in which their adherence politically to tradition was rooted in their medieval Catholicism. As is well established within discussions of early modern Irish 'political' history, the Old English used a set of historical arguments over customary rights and limits on the crown's prerogative powers to defend their position. Inflections of this can be seen in the community's opposition to cess, the charge levied for the upkeep of the governor's household, which had been enlarged to support the entire administration.[76]

Here the standard formula used by representatives of the community, such as Patrick Bermingham, couched petitions within the framework of a fixed order of duty originally encapsulated by *Laudabiliter*. In a 1582 letter to Elizabeth, Bermingham felt he should communicate the complaints concerning the actions of the government in Ireland because "as mine ancestors hath been to your highness most noble progenitors sithence the conquest, I thought it belonging to my duty humbly to signify this much"; and Bermingham wanted Elizabeth to protect the position held by the Old English gentry and to preserve the order as established: "I beseech the omnipotent and most almighty preserve your majesty long to reign in most happy estate, with increase of felicity and empire, to the joy and comfort of your loyal subjects."[77] Bermingham echoed something of the standard formula of an early Henrician definition of obedience, which recognized the prince as the ordained head of the commonwealth. This sits in contrast to a New English language which spoke of God in terms of Protestant renewal (change) and action. Lord Deputy Henry Sidney had concluded an April 1576 report to Elizabeth by emphasizing "a zealous mind for reformation of this your church and country," and asking for the continuance of Elizabeth's "prosperous and godly reign."[78]

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76. Brady, *Chief Governors* (see note 3), 209–44, points towards this in some form.

77. Patrick Bermingham to Elizabeth, 4 April 1582, TNA SP63/91/13. Also see "Supplication of Barnaby Scurlock, Richard Netteryll and Henry Burnell," TNA SP63/67/8 – which concludes, "your said subjects will never cease to make intercession to almighty God for your highness's long and prosperous reign over us."

78. Henry Sidney to Elizabeth, in Arthur Collins, ed., *Letters and Memorials of State*, 2 vols. (London: T. Osborne, 1746), vol. 1, 113–4. Also see Lord Deputy Arthur Grey, Sidney's successor, who ended a letter to Francis Walsingham, which emphasized a sense of godly

VI

In understanding the shifting religious positions of the Old and New English the crucial observation is how from each perspective each community stuck to their own perception of an unchanging orthodoxy and the question of obedience. When the Old English started dissenting, they continued to speak in a language they had always used. Clearly, the Old English had always been medieval Catholics and they chose to remain so. Different confessional positions also clarified and sharpened from the 1530s through to the 1580s. But even as confessions clarified, the question posed was never phrased in terms of a choice between two positions. Instead, what was asked was that the Old English obey the prince and fulfil their duties within the commonwealth. Here it was an Old English understanding of what obedience and duty meant which led them to hold fast to their Catholicism, as the New English continued to emphasize a different part of a wider body of thought on obedience, grace and the word of God. It was also in re-articulating such a view of society that the Old English began to recognize the significance of *Laudabiliter* and the specifically 'Catholic' underpinnings of their view of the commonwealth. This is not to say that the prescriptions of orthodoxy and obedience could not be broken. The Counter-Reformation overtones of the second Desmond Rebellion and the Baltinglass and Nugent Risings, as well as the earlier Kildare Rebellion, are all significant events, which would at a later point form part of a story of continued Old English adherence to an orthodox Catholicism.[79] The point remains, however, that the prescriptions of orthodoxy and obedience quickly drew much of the Old English back from dissent or rebellion, which underlines the importance of thinking in terms of ideology and the category of obedience in a well-ordered commonwealth, as opposed to thinking in terms of conversion.

   This may also help in understanding the more problematic position of Gaelic Ireland. Gaelic title entailed a claim to an independent sovereign jurisdiction; as a result the Gaelic Irish sat outside these boundaries of orthodoxy and obedience. The confines of religious authorization placed no limits on disobedience to the crown, because it was not necessarily disobedience to a recognized

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citizenship – "I earnestly pray you God increase all his virtues in you" – 24 April 1581, TNA SP63/82/47.

   79. Salvador Ryan, "Reconstructing Irish Catholic History after the Reformation," in Katherine van Liere, Simon Ditchfield, Howard Louthan, ed., *Sacred History: Uses of the Christian Past in the Renaissance World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 186–208.

higher authority.[80] What might have made this difficult was the adoption of, or understanding of, commonwealth norms, which locked individuals into an idea of a godly order which sat out of kilter with transhumance and Brehon law; but Brehon law itself had godly or Christian authorization, with the Gaelic priesthood embedded in, and authorizing, Gaelic practice.[81] It is no coincidence that it was Hugh O'Neill, the earl of Tyrone, who in adopting his Gaelic title of the O'Neill, led the Gaelic lords of Ulster in a rising of 'Faith and Fatherland', which drew openly on Counter-Reformation thought. This was a call to war an Old English orthodoxy could not comprehend.[82] Instead, the Old English continued to understand the world according to a specific claim to orthodoxy and obedience. Such a claim underpinned the negotiation of 'the Graces' from Charles I, which would have provided some form of 'toleration' for Old English Catholicism had events not taken a different turn.[83] Later Old English opposition to the ruling regime in Dublin was expressed in the same terms. Claims of continued obedience to the crown ran through the statements of many of the leaders of 'Confederate Ireland' in the 1640s when a near distinct Catholic polity emerged during the English Civil Wars.[84] The vocabulary of obedience to the crown would come to underpin more general Catholic demands for emancipation, in opposition to the concerns of an Irish protestant elite.[85] In short, a language of obedience and appeals to the crown would continue to provide a language of opposition, because it allowed Catholic identity to be openly vocalized.

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80. See Kenneth Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicized Ireland in the Middle Ages* (Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 1972).

81. See Marc Caball, *Poets and Politics: Reaction and Continuity in Irish Poetry, 1558–1625* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998), 107–13; Samantha A. Meigs, *The Reformations in Ireland: Tradition and Confessionalism, 1400–1690* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1997), 41–53, 77–89.

82. Hiram Morgan, "Hugh O'Neill and the Nine Years War in Tudor Ireland," *Historical Journal* 36 (1993): 21–37.

83. Aidan Clarke, *The Old English in Ireland, 1625–42* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1966), 60–88, 194–233.

84. Micheál Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland 1642–1649: A Constitutional and Political Analysis* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), 46–86.

85. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 324–34.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Aufsatz untersucht den religiösen Wandel im frühneuzeitlichen Irland vor dem Hintergrund des Aufrufs der Krone zum Gehorsam in einem wohlgeordneten „commonwealth". Es wird die These vertreten, dass die religiöse Reformation zunächst nicht als eine Wahl zwischen verschiedenen Konfessionen dargestellt wurde. Stattdessen wurde zum Gehorsam gegenüber dem Monarchen und zur Rückkehr zur „ursprünglichen Wahrheit" aufgerufen. Infolgedessen gab es nur wenige Möglichkeiten, Dissens oder Opposition zum Ausdruck zu bringen. Dissens konnte in Irland nur deshalb entstehen, weil sich zwei konkurrierende Definitionen von Gehorsam herauskristallisierten. Die Bevölkerungsgruppe der „Altengländer" hielt an der ursprünglichen Forderung nach einer Reform des Staates fest, die im englischen Recht und in von der Kirche festgelegten Regeln verankert war. Im Gegensatz dazu betonten die reformierten Protestanten, die sogenannten „Neuengländer", die Notwendigkeit von Gottes rettender Gnade und einer auf dem Gewissen beruhenden Reform als Grundlage des Gehorsams. Längerfristig ermöglichte das Festhalten an ihrer eigenen Vorstellung von Gehorsam und Reform den Altengländern, eine eigene religiöse Identität in ihrer eigenen Sprache des Gehorsams zu artikulieren.