



Provided by the author(s) and NUI Galway in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite the published version when available.

Title	The Kildare rebellion and the early Henrician Reformation
Author(s)	Ellis, Steven G.
Publication Date	1976
Publication Information	Ellis, S.G. (1976) The Kildare rebellion and the early Henrician Reformation Historical Journal, 19, 807-30
Item record	http://hdl.handle.net/10379/790

Downloaded 2022-08-23T07:35:38Z

Some rights reserved. For more information, please see the item record link above.



THE KILDARE REBELLION AND THE EARLY HENRICIAN REFORMATION*

STEVEN G. ELLIS
The Queen's University, Belfast

In the 1530s, Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell carried out fundamental changes in the Tudor state. These changes amounted to a revolution in which three elements may be distinguished: the erection of the commonwealth into a sovereign empire, the king's divorce of Catherine of Aragon, and important alterations to the nature and structure of the English church. Because of the fundamental nature of the issues involved and the threat to the established order, the revolution very soon provoked widespread discontent among all sections of society. Nevertheless, opposition was spasmodic and uncoordinated, with each group of conspirators relying on another to rise, and all looking to the emperor, Charles V, to rectify the evils which, it was thought, the king's policies had brought about. Lack of effective leadership and failure to agree about what constituted the major grievances enabled the government to deal with the dissidents one by one. Cromwell was allowed to use parliament to ratify the government's programme and to manipulate public opinion. By constant vigilance and an intelligent use of the constraints placed on the populace by the penal clauses in the statutes, he secured the observance of the more unpopular measures. In spite of the overall success of this policy, the difficulties were many, and the final outcome always in doubt. Its enforcement was thus 'a political task of some magnitude' for the government. Probably the most determined challenge to the revolution was presented in Ireland, where rebellion broke out in June 1534.¹

The administration established by the Normans in Ireland was modelled on that in England, but it had become considerably less effective. The task of enforcing government policy was made difficult, not only by the weakness of the Dublin administration, but also because conditions there often differed from those in England. After the middle of the fourteenth century the colony provided no worthwhile return, financial or otherwise, to the English administration, and as the colony declined, so successive monarchs contracted out of its government. The Crown left its most

* I wish to thank Dr Christopher Haigh, Professor G. R. Elton and Dr David Hayton for their comments on this paper.

¹ G. R. Elton, *Policy and Police* (Cambridge, 1972), p. 3 and passim; G. Mattingly, *Catherine of Aragon* (London, 1942), pp. 283-91.

powerful Anglo-Irish subjects to wrestle with the lordship's problems with increasingly little interference from England. Only when a threat to the king's security arose there did royal interest revive. This policy led to the erosion of allegiance to the king, and stimulated a particularism which conflicted with the emerging consciousness of nationhood in England. The colonists looked instead to the leadership of the three Anglo-Irish earls, Ormond, Desmond and Kildare. After the attainder of Ormond and Desmond in 1463 and 1468, successive earls of Kildare dominated the administration and confounded all challenges to their control. The differences between kingdom and lordship extended to the church too, which in spite of its advanced state of secularization did not inspire the anti-clericalism and denunciations by reformers that preceded the changes in England. This and the failure of humanist ideas to influence to any great extent the outlook of the Irish clergy, left them essentially conservative and resistant to change.²

The decision to initiate a revolution in England posed a dilemma for the government with regard to Ireland. Faced with a choice between the two incompatible ideologies of a united Christendom or a national church in a sovereign state, it had to insist that, despite the differences in conditions, the lordship should conform to the new English ideal. As contemporaries viewed the relationship, a member of a body-politic must obey its head. At the same time the revolution precipitated a crisis which had long been looming in the administration of the colony. With the great expense of direct intervention apparently the only satisfactory alternative to aristocratic delegation, the government had hesitated and tried to find some acceptable compromise. The Kildare rebellion began as a protest against the centralizing policies of the Crown. However, the insurgents made skilful use of emerging disaffection with the revolution, promoting discontent in Ireland, and incorporating the demands of the malcontents into their own manifesto. By founding their appeal for support from foreign powers upon the protest against royal policy, the rebels identified their aims with those of the dissidents in England and created an extremely dangerous situation for the government. The swift response of Charles V to this appeal, and the possibility of intervention on a large scale, transformed what would probably have been just another disruption of the fragile peace of the colony, into a revolt of international importance, in the very year which Professor Elton regards as critical to the revolution.³

Before considering the course of the rebellion, it is necessary to consider the progress made by mid-1534 in implementing in Ireland the

² J. F. Lydon, *Ireland in the Later Middle Ages* (Dublin, 1972), pp. 27–8, 104–6, and chs. 5 and 6; D. B. Quinn, 'Anglo-Irish Local Government, 1485–1534', *Irish Historical Studies* 1 (1938), 354–81; and 'Henry VIII and Ireland, 1509–1534', *ibid.* xii (1961), 318–44; J. Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1972), ch. 6; B. Bradshaw, *The Dissolution of the Religious Orders in Ireland under Henry VIII* (Cambridge, 1974), ch. 1.

³ Elton, *Policy and Police*, p. 278; Quinn, 'Henry VIII and Ireland', pp. 322–43.

acts of the Reformation Parliament. A statute of Poynings' parliament had enacted that English legislation was to be 'accepted, used and executed within this land of Ireland'. Administrative procedure, however, required that such statutes be certified into Ireland before they came into force, and those of particular importance were usually reenacted by the Irish parliament. Thus, the position of the Reformation legislation was only clarified by the Irish parliament of 1536-7, which was projected before the revolt broke out.⁴ In order to steer so controversial a programme through parliament and to enforce it, the king required an Irish Council completely loyal to his wishes, and a team of clerics willing to expound his supremacy in spirituals. In 1533, the Council was dominated by the rival factions of Kildare and Ossory and the only clerics who could be relied on to preach the doctrinal changes were John Alen, archbishop of Dublin, Edward Staples, bishop of Meath, and John Rawson, prior of Kilmainham, who were all members of the Council and Englishmen preferred in Ireland. An essential preliminary to the execution of the new policy was the replacement as lord deputy of Gerald Fitzgerald, ninth earl of Kildare. The restoration of Kildare to power in 1532 had not noticeably strengthened the government of the colony. Thomas Cromwell, responsible for the security of the realm and English oversight of the lordship, found him wilful and unsatisfactory. At a time when Cromwell was busy suppressing opposition to government policy in England and providing against possible intervention from abroad, he needed a reliable deputy to prevent trouble in Ireland.⁵

Kildare was called for in September 1533 but delayed his departure until the following February.⁶ In the interval, Cromwell made preliminary moves towards the enforcement of the religious changes. A reshuffle of the Irish Council was planned in order to promote ministers who were more amenable to English control. Preparations for defence were also necessary, as Kildare's kinsman and ally, Thomas Fitzgerald, eleventh earl of Desmond, had resumed intrigues with Charles V for an Imperial intervention in Ireland.⁷ Irish affairs therefore appeared on the agenda of a special meeting of the Privy Council called for 2 December to consider the new policy and measures for defence. The minute concerning Ireland ran:

⁴ *Statutes at large, Ireland*, ed. Dublin 1786, I 10 Henry VII c. 22 (c. 39 on roll); *State Papers of the Reign of Henry the Eighth* (London, 1830), II, 369; R. D. Edwards, 'The Irish Reformation Parliament of Henry VIII, 1536-7', *Historical Studies*, VI, 59-84. 10 Henry VIII c. 22 reasserted the principle, denied in 1460, that English legislation should apply to Ireland: A. J. Otway-Ruthven, *A History of Medieval Ireland* (London, 1968), pp. 190, 387; H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, *The Irish Parliament in the Middle Ages* (2nd edn, Philadelphia, 1964), pp. 245, 263.

⁵ Quinn, 'Henry VIII and Ireland', pp. 320, 330, 337, 341. For this and the following, see also S. G. Ellis, 'The Kildare Rebellion, 1534', University of Manchester M.A. thesis 1974, ch. 2.

⁶ Quinn, 'Henry VIII and Ireland', pp. 340-2.

⁷ *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, ed. Brewer, Gairdner and Brodie, VI, nos. 1056, 1381; *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish*, v, Part 1, ed. Gayangos (London, 1886), no. 8.

Item, specyallie to remember to sende som trustie persons into Irelande, to see that domynyon establisshed, and also to drawe, combyne and adhere towards the King asmany of the grete Yrisshe rebelles as is possible.

To this Cromwell himself added:

And to practise to kepe peax there, and to withstand all other practysys that might be practysyd therwith other.⁸

It had been rumoured for several months that Charles hoped to use Ireland as a means to bring pressure to bear on Henry over the king's rejection of his aunt. This note probably represents the government's first definite information about the emperor's interest there.⁹

Henry and Cromwell determined upon the replacement of Kildare, and decided to pursue their Irish policy without reference to the Privy Council on this occasion. Towards the end of December, the earl received a letter from Cromwell informing him that the king, for 'diuerse his affaires & causes of gret importaunce concerneng the weale, suirtie & defence' of Ireland, was sending back two members of the Irish Council with instructions. His pleasure was to be put into 'spedie execution... in everye thing according to your dewtye and his most gracyus expectacyon'. Royal letters were also directed to the more loyal of the Irish lords beyond the Pale, informing them of the change of deputy and aimed at securing their allegiance to the Crown.¹⁰ Since only Cromwell's draft letter and the reply of one of the Irish chieftains to the circular survive, there is nothing to connect these moves with the implementation of the religious changes. However the letters clearly derive from Cromwell's remembrance for the Privy Council: and, according to the Imperial ambassador, Eustace Chapuys, the recall of Kildare and the enforcement of reform were again linked at a Privy Council held soon afterwards.¹¹

Before May 1534, a decision had been made that Sir William Skeffington should be reappointed as deputy. His instructions, which also formed a manifesto for a programme of administrative reform entitled *Ordinances for the Government of Ireland*, were printed officially as a pamphlet for circulation there. They included a direction to Skeffington to lead a campaign against the pope, and to resist his provisions and jurisdiction 'accordinge to the statutes therupon provided, and the lyke to be enacted there the next Parlyament'. The deputy was to be supported in this policy by the earl of Ossory, who on 31 May indented with the king to

⁸ Public Record Office, London SP6/3/178 (LP VI 1487ii); G. R. Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government* (Cambridge, 1953), pp. 361ff. and *Policy and Police*, pp. 180, 211, 213.

⁹ LP VI 541, 821, 1547. StP II 198 reporting the arrival of an Imperial ambassador in Ireland to Cromwell, dated by LP VI 815 to 1533, belongs to 1534 – cf. LP VII 945, 957, and StP II 201 – in spite of Cromwell's title of 'counsellor'.

¹⁰ P.R.O. SP1/238/188 (LP Add. 889 – undated draft, from which internal evidence is later in date than Cromwell's projected ministerial reshuffle); *Calendar of Carew Manuscripts*, ed. Brewer and Bullen (London, 1867), I, no. 41 (Maguire's favourable reply, disclosing the letter's contents).

¹¹ LP VII 121.

denounce 'the usurped jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome', and to assist in 'reducing the people to Cristen manners'.¹²

The enforcement of the changes was only one side of the coin. The population had to be informed and convinced of the truths newly recovered, and in this much depended on the efforts of Archbishop Alen.

The see of Dublin was the most anglicized in the country, and was traditionally held by an Englishman with a seat on the Council. Yet Alen was unpopular in his diocese. He was a former servant of Wolsey who had been employed in the earlier limited monastic dissolutions and he had been promoted in Ireland in order to extend the cardinal's legatine authority to that country. This had provoked resistance from Irish clergy who disputed his faculty. In 1530-1, when Henry tried to stifle opposition to his divorce among the English clergy, Alen was indicted of praemunire along with them and fined. In response, he caused his clergy to renounce 'all liberties, immunities and apostolic privileges derogating from the archbishop's ordinary, diocesan and metropolitan jurisdiction'. Thereafter, his sympathies seem to have lain with the king in the dispute with Rome, for he styled himself 'primate of the Church of Ireland after the manner of the Church of England'.¹³ Alen's earlier career, together with his quiescent attitude to royal policy, cannot have commended him to the conservative clergy of his diocese. To support him, Cromwell sent over in 1533 two of his chaplains, John Dethyke and Roger Beverlaye, probably to spearhead Henry's propaganda campaign when it began, and to keep an eye on political developments. Dethyke was presented to the rectory of Norragh, but Beverlaye was not so lucky. Although Alen promised him the rectory of Delgany, he was still without a living in May 1535, and with Alen's death in July 1534 (he was murdered six weeks after the rising began) Beverlaye lost his patron. Since conservative influence was as yet almost unchallenged in the diocese, his association with government policies was a hindrance to preferment, as appears from his letter to Cromwell beseeching the secretary 'in the honour of Cristis passion' to find him a benefice. In Ireland, he thought,

pe (they) that entendes trewlly to god and the kyng cannot have no thyng not withstondyng per tender letter that your gud mastershippe made in my be halffe.¹⁴

Such was the limited progress made towards enforcing the revolution when Kildare's deputy, his son Thomas, Lord Offaly, rebelled. The

¹² *StP* II 194-7, 207-16. Cf. D. B. Quinn, 'Government Printing and the Publication of the Irish Statutes in the sixteenth century', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 49C (1944), 48-9.

¹³ Quoted in translation in C. McNeill, *Calendar of Archbishop Alen's Register, c. 1172-1534* (Dublin, 1950), pp. 276, 286; *LP* IV 2488, v 412, 657, 779; *Ware's Bishops*, ed. W. Harris (Dublin, 1739-46), *sub nomine* John Allen; M. V. Ronan, *The Reformation in Dublin, 1536-58* (Dublin, 1926), pp. xvi-xxiii.

¹⁴ P.R.O. SP60/2/113 (*LP* VIII 728); *StP* II 180-1; *Calendar of Patent and Close Rolls, Ireland*, ed. J. Morrin (Dublin, 1861), I, 30. I have assumed that Beverlaye arrived with Dethyke. He was certainly in Ireland before the rising.

government had begun to reassert some control over the lordship but had done little to persuade the king's subjects there of the justice of his cause. The *Ordinances* did not appear before the autumn of 1534. Even then their circulation was limited, and they did little more than mention the religious question.¹⁵ There was no government-inspired propaganda programme parallel to that in England to declare what the people were now to believe and why they were to believe it. Nor was there anything similar to the pamphlet war being waged in England between the ecclesiastical authorities and the early reformers, which contributed to a public awareness of the issues. News of the changes must have reached the English areas of Ireland and some printed pamphlets circulated there, but this was not through any deliberate policy of the government. To the majority of the lords and gentry the ideas associated with the Reformation were, in mid-1534, new, unexplained and English.¹⁶

While the government neglected to present its own case, attempts were made by its opponents to stiffen resistance even before the rising. By April 1534, the emperor had become so optimistic about the possibility of creating trouble in Ireland that he instructed his agent, Gotskalk Eriksson, who was sent on a mission to Scotland, to travel by way of Ireland. His ambassador in London, Chapuys, was directed to contact Gotskalk in Ireland if the opportunity arose.¹⁷ In the same month, the provincial of the Franciscan Observants, Francis Faber, had left England to visit his Irish houses, and had promised Chapuys that he would do his utmost there to preserve the authority of the Apostolic See. Likewise, the recently appointed chancellor of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, Dr John Travers, an Englishman educated at Oxford, had busied himself writing in support of the papal primacy, and he later took his opposition so far as to join the rebellion.¹⁸ Offaly's decision to turn his revolt into a religious crusade was doubtless prompted by the hope of Imperial intervention and the likelihood of clerical support for his cause which these developments held out.

The changes taking place in England soon appeared as the justification for Offaly's resort to arms. Hitherto there had been no hint that religion might become an issue with the Geraldines. Kildare had signed the petition of the English nobility to the pope in 1530 demanding a quick decision in Henry's favour in the divorce case, even if the description of

¹⁵ *StP* II 207-16, 226.

¹⁶ Quinn, 'Government Printing', 48-9; *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. I 164. A good example of the unfamiliarity of the Irish with the ideas of the Reformation is to be found in the entry for 1537 in *The Annals of the Four Masters*, ed. J. O'Donovan (Dublin, 1856): 'A heresy and a new error in England, through pride, vainglory, avarice, lust, and through many strange sciences, so that the men of England went into opposition to the Pope and to Rome. At the same time, they adopted strange opinions and the old law of Moses in imitation of the Jewish people, and they styled the King the Chief Head of the Church of God in his own Kingdom. New laws and statutes were enacted by the King and Council according to their own will.'

¹⁷ *LP* VII 437, 726.

¹⁸ *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. I 70; *LP* V 715, VI 36, 334, 887; R. D. Edwards, 'Venerable John Travers and the Rebellion of Silken Thomas', *Studies* XXIII (1934), 687-99.

two books in his library – *the Kyng of Englonde his answer to Lutter* and *Sir Thomas Moore his booke Agayns the new opinions that hold agayns pilgrimages* – suggests that his tolerance of innovation did not extend to Lutheranism.¹⁹ Nevertheless Cromwell was informed shortly after the rebellion broke out that

the said Erles son, bretherne, kynesmen, and adherentes doo make theire avaunte and booste that they bee of the Popes secte and bande, and hym wol they serve against the kinge and all his partetakers, saying further that the king is accursid, and as many as take his parte, and shalbe opynly accursed.

Chapuys wrote that Offaly caused the inhabitants of the towns he took to swear fealty to the pope, to the emperor and to himself.²⁰ In the subsequent negotiations, the tenth earl (as Offaly became on his father's death in September 1534) and his allies reminded Charles V that, as holder of the temporal sword and arbiter between princes, he should intervene in Ireland for the defence of the catholic faith.²¹ From Pope Paul III (as is hinted in the despatch to Cromwell just quoted), Kildare required confirmation of the conditional sentence of excommunication decreed against Henry in July 1533. The condition of this was that the king should return to Catherine of Aragon by September.²² He also hoped to get the pope to legitimise his usurpation of the lordship, sending his chaplain, Charles Reynolds, archdeacon of Kells, to Rome in December with

diverse oold munymentes and presidentes, which shuld prove that the kinge hold this lande of the See of Rome, alledging the King and his realme to be heretiques digressed from thobedience of the same and the faith Catholique.

Rumours that the king was accursed and a heretic circulated in England at the time, and were widespread during the Pilgrimage of Grace. However when rebellion broke out in England, the rebels ostensibly confined their attack to heretic counsellors who had led the king astray, and there seems to have been no support for the idea that Henry should be deposed.²³ In Ireland such agitation had a historical tradition which could provide a direct challenge to the Crown. The oath of vassalage to Innocent III in 1213 by which King John received England and Ireland as a papal fief was an excellent precedent and one to which Kildare was not slow to appeal. Before the Anglo-papal estrangement owing to Imperial pressure on the pope in the divorce proceedings, there had been little opportunity to exploit the oath. However, like the well-worn invocation of Imperial

¹⁹ LP IV 6513; British Museum, Harleian MS 3756 fos. 79–81 (list of contents of the ninth earl's library entered in his Rental, printed in *Historical Manuscripts Commission, 9th Report: The Leinster Manuscripts* (London, 1883), pp. 288–9).

²⁰ StP II 198; *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. I 86.

²¹ *The Pilgrim*, ed. J. A. Froude (London, 1861), pp. 175–6 (prints LP VII 999 in extenso in translation); StP II 222.

²² *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. I 164; J. J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (London, 1968), pp. 317–21.

²³ StP II 222. Cf. M. H. and R. Dodds, *The Pilgrimage of Grace* (Cambridge, 1915), I, 66, 69, 114, 177, 263, 346–74; Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, pp. 340–4; Mattingly, *Catherine of Aragon*, pp. 283–90; Elton, *Policy and Police*, pp. 6–12, 24, 59–60, 100, 278, 354.

protection made as recently as 1529, the idea that Ireland was a papal fief still had wide currency, as Chapuys was quick to point out. It also had unlimited appeal among those disaffected with government policy. The prevalence of such a notion was an influential factor in Henry's later decision to assume the title of King of Ireland.²⁴ Cromwell himself realized its importance in rebel attempts to attract support, and in his examination of the earl after the rising, he wanted to know

what spirituall persons in Irelande ded denunce vnto him that the kinge was an heretike, and that it was lafull therfor to him to digresse from his obedience?²⁵

Kildare's answer has not survived, but there can be little doubt that the move was suggested by his clerical retainers – by Richard Walsh, parson of Ballymore Loughsewdy, a member of the council which the ninth earl had, before his departure, appointed to advise his son; and by his chaplains, Reynolds and Edward Dillon, dean of Kildare. All of them played a prominent part in the insurrection.²⁶

The promotion of religious discontent was part of a wider campaign by the Geraldines in which the active support of both the Anglo-Irish gentry and the Irish chieftains was necessary. By appealing to their common mistrust of Englishmen, it was hoped ultimately to establish an independent lordship. To this end, the support of the colonists countered the charge that Kildare had turned Irish, and that of the chieftains greatly strengthened his military potential. Kildare lost no time in proclaiming that all Englishmen should leave the country on pain of death, and, as the news circulated at Court,

spareth not to put to deth, man, woman or child which be borne in England, & so contynueth in as well tyranny & murtheryng the kynges subiectes.

Some hapless English fishermen arriving on the coast were also executed.²⁷ None the less, the distinction between resistance to the ecclesiastical changes and anti-English sentiments manifested in the rebellion seems very tenuous. It is perhaps significant that a contemporary annalist cites, as examples of the victims of the anti-English policy, only the three protagonists of English ecclesiastical policy – Alen, Staples and Rawson. Staples and Rawson fled to England, while Alen was executed on 27 July after escaping from Dublin castle, then besieged by the rebels.²⁸ Ireland had little in common with the concept of the

²⁴ *StP* II 480; *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. 1 70, 164. The theory had last been used by the earl of Desmond in 1344 – J. F. Lydon, *The Lordship of Ireland in the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 1972), pp. 197, and 39, 43–4, 148, 168, 190, 289. For Desmond's appeal to the emperor in 1529, see *The Pilgrim*, ed. Froude, pp. 169–75. ²⁵ P.R.O. SP60/2/159 (*LP* IX 514). ²⁶ See below.

²⁷ P.R.O. SP3/14/41 (*LP* VII 1064) *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. 1 86; *StP* II 198, 201; Ellis, 'The Kildare Rebellion, 1534', pp. 60–9. I hope to discuss this and other aspects of the rebellion elsewhere.

²⁸ *The Annals of Ulster*, ed. W. M. Hennessy and B. McCarthy (Dublin, 1887–1901), *sub anno* 1534, III 628 note 6, IV iv–v; *StP* II 201; *LP* VII 1064; *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. 1 84; Sir James Ware, *The Historiæ and Antiquities of Ireland*, ed. R. Ware (Dublin, 1704), p. 89; *Holinshed's Chronicles* (London 1808 edn.), VI (*Stanyhurst's chronicle*), pp. 294–5; *Cal. Carew* 1 84.

autonomy of the state on which the revolution was founded, nor with the patriotism and loyalty to the king so emphasized by the government at this time to assuage discontent. However, Anglo-Irish reaction to the revolution and resentment at the increasing English interference in the lordship were effectively directed at the same target, the English government, for which the three clerics and members of the Council were chief spokesmen. Likewise from the English viewpoint, the new political philosophy obscured the distinction between measures for the security of Ireland and those against the usurped authority of foreign potentates. If Archbishop Alen 'died for his fathfull and true service to his souiergne lorde', he probably suffered for his admittance of Henry's claim to the ecclesiastical *potestas jurisdictionis*, as well as for his support of Cromwell's closer oversight of the lordship.²⁹ X

~~It was one thing for Kildare to proclaim a crusade for the faith against English heresy, but quite another to convince contemporaries that this was the underlying cause and aim of the revolt. However, the fate of the rising hung in large measure on the reception accorded this device abroad. To ensure success, the rebels had to obtain substantial support from foreign heads of state. The revolution in England was of common concern to Paul III, Charles V and James V of Scotland, and even Francis I showed interest in the rebellion at first. Although Charles and James could be expected to show interest in any movement likely to embarrass the king of England, the religious element made it more attractive. A rebellion which avowedly upheld the honour of the emperor's aunt and cousin touched the emperor's own honour, and by opening negotiations for a marriage between the king of Scots and the Princess Mary, Charles had sought to enlist the support of James against the divorce.³⁰ The proclamation of a religious war was, therefore, a very shrewd adjustment of policy on Kildare's part. It had serious repercussions, both in Ireland and abroad.~~

Since Kildare's proclamation succeeded in influencing continental attitudes to the revolt, the religious agitation in Ireland is discussed first. The evidence is scanty, for the government was naturally more concerned with the immediate task of crushing the rebellion. Dispatches reflect the concern about the widespread participation of Irish chieftains and the threat of Spanish aid, and rarely mention the attitude of the clergy. Nevertheless, it appears that the clergy were on the whole very sympathetic to the rebels, and that a significant proportion took an active part in the rising. Afterwards, Cromwell was advised that 'agrete meny of the spirituality and temporalty there have gretely offended', and the earl of

²⁹ P.R.O. SP60/2/61 (LP VII 1404); B. Bradshaw, 'The opposition to the ecclesiastical legislation in the Irish reformation parliament', *Ir. Hist. St.* xvi (1968-9), 296, note 30.

³⁰ LP VII 437, 726; Mattingly, *Catherine of Aragon*, p. 260. It was reported in October 1534 that Francis had sent letters to encourage the rebels, but if so, he soon returned to a policy of alliance with England against Charles V: LP VII 1302, 1303, 1507, 1519, 1554, VIII 37, 48; *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. I 102.

Ossory urged that 'suche of the cleregye... as have defylid their treuth' should be made to pay fines.³¹ An influential group among these dissidents were the friars of the Observant movement, 'the holy confessors of the late Garrantynes' as they were afterwards dubbed, who were held in high esteem by the laity and were very much more numerous than in England. The outcome of the visit of the Franciscan Observant Provincial to Ireland is unknown, but it was two friars who conducted an ambassador of Charles V to Kildare who arrived at Galway, and the earl later left some of his plate in the custody of the White Friars of Kildare.³² Monasteries also provided some support. Dr John O'Hickey, abbot of the Cistercians of Monasterevin, and Gerald Walsh, prior of the Augustinian Canons of Ballymore Loughsewdy, were among the earl's most prominent supporters. When, after the rising, an extension of the policy of monastic dissolution to Ireland was being considered, Vice-Treasurer Brabazon urged that houses in the marches should be suppressed, not for the financial gain to the Crown – which would be small – but because they harboured rebels. In 1536, the commissioners surveying the monasteries denounced the prior of St John's, Kilkenny West, as 'avery traytor', and George Dowdall, prior of St John's, Ardee, as 'a papistical fellow able to corrupt the whole country'.³³

With regard to the secular clergy, an indication of the extent of their involvement is the exceptional number of benefices which became vacant during or shortly after the rebellion. This can best be illustrated by a table, set out triennially, giving the total presentations by the Crown as entered on the Irish Patent Rolls during the latter part of Henry's reign:

1532-4	1
1535-7	36
1538-40	8
1541-3	39
1544-6	28

If the yearly variation in the number of royal presentations was usually minimal, the totals should have risen steadily after 1536 as advowsons returned to the king by means of attainders, resumptions, monastic dissolutions, and an act of 1542 which resumed them specifically.³⁴ From the

³¹ P.R.O. SP60/4/4 (LP IX 332); StP II 256.

³² StP II 539, III 124; Cal. Sp. v, Pt. 1 70; LP VII 1567, x 937. For the standing of the friars in Ireland at this time, see Bradshaw, *The Dissolution of the Religious Orders*, pp. 9-16, and Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland*, pp. 193-202.

³³ P.R.O. SP60/3/192 (LP XI 1416); LP x 1032; A. Gwynn and R. N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: Ireland* (London, 1970), pp. 210, 213; Bradshaw, *The Dissolution of the Religious Orders*, p. 42. Dowdall later became the Henrician archbishop of Armagh.

³⁴ Cal. Pat. Rolls Ire. 11-138; *Statutes at large, Ireland*, 33 Henry VIII session I c. 14 (c. 6 on roll); Bradshaw, *The Dissolution of the Religious Orders*, ch. 3; Edwards, 'The Irish Reformation Parliament', pp. 67-78. Of the Irish patent rolls of Henry VIII, most before the 22nd year did not survive into modern times, and the remainder were destroyed in 1922. Many entries can only be dated to one of successive regnal years, so it has seemed best to give the totals triennially.

late 1530s, the Crown's contesting of papal provisions, and its expulsion of Irishmen from livings also swelled the total until, between 1541 and 1543, about half of the benefices which fell vacant were expressly stated to have been in the king's gift as a result of these changes. However, of the total of 112 royal presentations in the period from 1532 to 1546, 36 occurred in the years 1535 to 1537. Only sixteen of these at most were affected by one such abnormal factor, the vacancy in the archbishopric of Dublin from 1534 to 1536, by which advowsons temporarily fell into the hands of the king; of these sixteen, only seven were expressly stated to have been made by virtue of the king's right *sede vacante*. Most of the reasons adduced for the presentations are obscure: *certis legitimis causis*, *pro hac vice*, and vacant *certo modo* or *debito modo*. It would seem very likely then that these phrases, together with the exceptionally high number of presentations between 1535 and 1537, conceal extensive participation of beneficed clergy in the rebellion, and their subsequent flight or execution. In some cases, the evidence is conclusive. The prebend of Maynooth in St Patrick's, Dublin, filled on 3 April 1535, was, according to the Calendar,

vacant by the death of Edward Dyllon, and in the presentation of the Crown 'for certain reasons'.

In fact, Edward Dillon, who held the prebend in plurality with the deanery of Kildare, had been executed nine days previously when Kildare's castle of Maynooth surrendered.³⁵

It might still be argued, however, that these figures merely reflect the expansion of royal influence in Ireland after 1534 as a result of the reconquest. If this were so, totals for presentations would increase proportionally with those for grants of English liberty to individual Irish clerics. As the area in which royal rights could be enforced was extended, Irishmen who had long been prohibited by statute from obtaining livings in English areas were driven to obtain grants of denization in order to retain them. However, a correlation of the two totals shows that this was not the case, and indicates that some other factor was involved. The rebellion must account for this increase in presentations in 1535-7, for the increase was particularly marked within the Pale, which was precisely the area from which the rebels drew most support. Though there was also an increase beyond the Pale, the situation there was more complicated. Any increase could be explained by the general expansion of royal influence. At the same time, the insurrection was by no means universal in Ireland, so that in some areas the clergy lacked this opportunity to protest against government policy. Finally, if the government had no control over a district, or if its surveillance was inadequate, the disaffection passed unnoticed.

If all presentations made in the period 1535-7 are taken into consideration, not merely those made by the Crown, the same geographical pattern emerges. A list of those benefices for which first-fruits were paid in 1536

³⁵ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Ire.* I 15; *StP* II 236-7.

Year	Presentations		Grants of Liberty
	Within the Pale	Beyond the Pale	
1532-4	1	0	6
1535-7	24	12	19
1538-40	2	6	24
1541-3	10	29	5
1544-6	8	20	9

and 1537 is available in the vice-treasurer's accounts, and two more may be added from other sources. Together with royal presentations, this assumes a total of 61 vacancies. Most of these occurred in areas where the rebels had strong support, viz. 20 in Kildare, 17 in Dublin, 6 in Meath, 3 in Louth, and 3 more in areas controlled by the earl of Kildare – Killabban (two vacancies) and Geashill. Derrygalvin in Limerick also fell vacant at this time, and as Kildare is known to have held the advowson, it may be included in this category.³⁶

This overall increase in vacant benefices necessarily understates the extent of the clerical protest against the government's religious policies. Participation in the revolt was a very extreme consequence of clerical discontent, and it is by no means clear that support for the rebels automatically led to vacant benefices in those areas normally controlled by the administration. In fact, judicial proceedings against Kildare's supporters in general and the controversy which arose about the royal supremacy in the diocese of Dublin after the rebellion strongly suggest that the vacancies represent only the core of resistance to the changes. As with the aftermath of the Pilgrimage of Grace, the government was forced to act with restraint in view of the widespread participation in the rebellion. The support of the gentry, always an important factor in the administration of the localities, was necessary for another reason – the favourable consideration of the programme to be laid before the 1536-7 parliament in order to defray the heavy cost of the campaign and to ratify the important legislation of the Reformation Parliament.³⁷ Consequently, the law was only executed against the most obstreperous and notorious Geraldine supporters, and others were allowed to compound for their treasons.³⁸ Since the number of executions, actual and intended, was low, it follows that only the more committed of Kildare's clerical supporters can have been proscribed, and these were the men whose benefices fell vacant after the insurrection.

Events in the diocese of Dublin in the period 1534-8 indicate that the

³⁶ P.R.O. SP65/1/2 (*LP* xliii 1310 43). The two other vacancies were the vicarage of Rathbegan and the abbacy of Monasterevin, for which see below.

³⁷ *StP* II 200, 270, 320; *LP* VIII 82; Bradshaw, 'The opposition to the ecclesiastical legislation', pp. 289-302; Edwards, 'The Irish Reformation Parliament', pp. 66-80. Cf. Elton, *Policy and Police*, p. 389.

³⁸ Ellis, 'The Kildare Rebellion, 1534', pp. 183-91.

king's policies caused much resentment there both before and during the rebellion. Archbishop Alen's unpopularity seems to be reflected in the events surrounding his murder. The chronicler Stanyhurst's story about Kildare's supporters misinterpreting his orders and hacking the archbishop to death does not need to be retold in detail, but it is worth noting that the rebels also executed his chaplains and servants, confiscated most of his goods, and collected some of his rents.³⁹ More of his goods were stolen by a priest, who

bracke owyt of the kynges Castell in the nygt with part of my lordis mony... and my lordes gudly Crosse of gowld with agreatt perll ther at,... (who since) hathe pursschased a gud benefise & hathe mony at will.

Afterwards, his debts were left unpaid; a miserable sum of less than five pounds being donated at his vigil and burial so that he lay 'god knowith, after the moost symple maner'.⁴⁰ The disaffection centred on his secular chapter of St Patrick's, where five prebends, the chancellorship, the treasurership, the deanery and the two archdeaconries of Dublin and Glendalough fell vacant at this time. The chancellor, Dr Travers, was executed, the dean Geoffrey Fiche died naturally, and two prebendaries, James Humphrey and Christopher St Lawrence, were promoted.⁴¹ This leaves six others unaccounted for, whose views about reform are unknown. However, the contrast between the fates of Travers, and Fiche and Humphrey, is perhaps instructive. Travers, as was the usual method of removing dangerous opponents of the royal supremacy, was tried and despatched for treason, but Fiche and Humphrey, who were also known to oppose the changes, were left unmolested, presumably because they were not involved with the rebels. Humphrey was promoted to the inappropriate rectory of Tipperkeven and also presented to the rectory of Payneston, where he proceeded to denounce the changes from his pulpit.⁴² The 'aged and impotent' Dean Fiche was the subject of a campaign by the Council to cause him to resign. With the support of others of the chapter 'before admonished that our intent wer to have an Englishman preferred therunto', he refused, although, as the Council pointed out, he had earlier hoped to resign in favour of the English traitor, Dr Travers. The Council thereupon appealed to Cromwell, and at that juncture Fiche conveniently died.⁴³ Clearly, by no means all who disliked royal policy, and said so, joined the rebels. This became apparent to Alen's successor, Archbishop George Browne. Browne soon had trouble with his chapter and clergy who were very reluctant to preach 'the

³⁹ Stanyhurst, p. 294; *StP* II 201; *Cal. Carew* I 84; *LP* VII 1064. The government later made allowance of £70 10s. 1d. for rents collected by the rebels - P.R.O. SP65/1/2.

⁴⁰ P.R.O. SP60/2/61, 113 (*LP* VII 1404, VIII 728).

⁴¹ H. Cotton, *Fasti Ecclesiae Hibernicae* (Dublin 1868), II, passim; *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Ire.* I 14-24; Edwards, 'John Travers', pp. 687-99.

⁴² B.M. Add. 4793 fo. 124v; Edwards, 'John Travers', pp. 696-7; *StP* III 1-2; *LP* XIII 1310.

⁴³ *StP* II 420-1, *LP* XIII 477, 549. But see Bradshaw, 'The opposition to the ecclesiastical legislation', p. 296 note 30.

mere and sincere doctryne of Godes Worde'. Of the twenty-eight clerics attached to the two cathedrals in Dublin, he thought that amongst them all, there vs nott 3 lerned off them, nor yet scarce one that favoreth Goddes Worde.

For since the royal supremacy had been enacted, he observed, they that then coulde and wolde, very often even till the right Christians were wery of theym, preache after tholde soarte and facion, will now not ons open their lippes in any poulpett for the manifestation of the same, but in cornars and souch company as theym liketh, they can full earnestlie utter their opynion.⁴⁴

Such evidence of the attitude of the clergy in an area in which government surveillance and control was at its strongest, shows quite clearly that the Irish administration can only have taken action after the rising against those foremost in denouncing the king as a heretic.

There was then, significant clerical participation in the rebellion. The motivation for this involvement is, however, obscured by lack of evidence; nor is it possible to say how far laymen were swayed by the example of their spiritual leaders. The number of recalcitrant priests known by name is very small – only ten, who with the exception of Travers, were all linked with the Kildare interest. During the rising Cromwell was informed that the official of Mith (Reynolds)... with thofficial of the Bishop of Armachan, the Deane of Kildare, Parson Walsche, the Bishop of Killalo, and certen other papistis, hath been his lerned counsailours in all theis maters against the King and his Crowne.

Dillon and Reynolds were chaplains to the ninth and tenth earls, and Walsh a principal adviser of the tenth earl.⁴⁵ Two of Walsh's kinsmen involved were Simon Walsh, vicar of Rathbegan, who was executed at Maynooth with Dillon; and Prior Walsh, who accompanied Parson Walsh and James Delahide on a rebel embassy to Charles V at Easter 1535, and went on to Rome to solicit the aid of Paul III.⁴⁶ Edward Delahide, parson of Kilberry, was the son of the ninth earl's surveyor and receiver-general, and brother to James Delahide, one of the tenth earl's most trusted advisers.⁴⁷ Dr O'Hickey was a well-known supporter of the ninth earl: he had been implicated in Kildare's efforts to make trouble for Thomas Howard, earl of Surrey, when he was lieutenant in 1520.⁴⁸ It is less easy to discern the connection with the earl of the remaining two clerical

⁴⁴ *StP* II 539–40. Cf. *StP* III 6–7. I have altered the context of the second quotation in accordance with Browne's intended meaning. The original ran illogically: 'Before the royal supremacy had been declared...'

⁴⁵ *StP* II 221–2; B. M. Harleian 3756 fo. 9 (printed in H. F. Hore ed., 'The rental book of Gerald Fitzgerald, ninth earl of Kildare', *Journal of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society*, VIII (1862–3), 114); *Cal. Carew* 184. In spite of his attainder, Reynolds was still archdeacon of Kells in 1543; A. Gwynn, *The Medieval Province of Armagh* (Dundalk, 1946), p. 127.

⁴⁶ *StP* II 236–7; *Cal. Carew* 184; M. A. Costello, *De Annatis Hiberniae* (Dublin, 1912), I, 82.

⁴⁷ *Statutes at large, Ireland*, 28 Henry VIII c. 1; *LP* IV 4302.

⁴⁸ *StP* II 45; *LP* XIII 1310 II 9; Bradshaw, *The Dissolution of the Religious Orders*, p. 42.

supporters. Bishop James Curran of Killaloe administered a diocese which was dominated politically by one of Kildare's allies, O'Brien. His status readily accounts for his delation.⁴⁹ Cormac Roche, archdeacon of Armagh, was probably a relative of Kildare's 'trusty and welbelovyd servant, John Rothe'. During the rebellion, he was in high favour with his archbishop, George Cromer, a more circumspect Geraldine supporter, who at that time gave him licence to hold a further living in plurality. Cromer's support of his archdeacon, and his equivocal attitude towards the rebels and the religious changes, excited the suspicions of Henry, who in March 1535 instructed Lord Deputy Skeffington to examine him on a charge of treason. The archbishop was conveniently ill at the time, and thereafter retired from political life.⁵⁰

Clearly, the connexion between the Kildare interest and its most prominent ecclesiastical supporters antedates the rebellion. This is not surprising, for the earl would tend to assign the more important tasks to supporters of long standing: it also simplified the government's efforts to track down the leading rebels. Nevertheless, the bias of the surviving evidence and the prominence in the rising of such ecclesiastics ought not to lead us to the conclusion that all the clergy involved were merely currying favour with the earl. The discontent in the diocese of Dublin is proof against this argument, and there is, moreover, a comparative lack of correlation between benefices which were vacant in or shortly after the rising and benefices of which the earl held the advowson. Kildare's Rental lists thirty-three benefices as being in his gift before his attainder, of which only eight became vacant in 1535-7.⁵¹ Yet there were at least twenty vacancies in Kildare and seventeen in Dublin at this time. Even if most vacancies occurred in areas in which the rising flourished, there is no necessary connection between allegiance to Kildare and religious agitation in the revolt. It is not known how far the Kildare influence had pervaded the Pale by 1534, but some distinction ought perhaps to be drawn between the twenty benefices vacant in Kildare, and the seventeen in Dublin. In Kildare the earl owned most of the land and rebel control was almost unchallenged until after the fall of Maynooth, whereas Dublin, in which his holding was comparatively small, fell to the king's forces

⁴⁹ A. Gwynn and D. Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe* (Dublin, 1962), I, 448-9. Curran may formerly have been a priest in the diocese of Meath (Gwynn and Gleeson, op. cit.). His predecessor was in receipt of gifts from Kildare: *H.M.C. 9th Report*, pp. 280, 282. In 1536, the government narrowly failed to capture the bishop and two of his sons: *Cal. Carew* I 135.

⁵⁰ *StP* II 221, 243, 402-3; Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS 557 XII 545 (copy of Cromer's register, fo. 77v of original in Armagh Public Library). Cromer was lord chancellor of Ireland until August 1534: *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Ire.* I 13. He died in 1543. The political affiliations of Roche and Cromer during the rebellion are discussed in Gwynn, *The Medieval Province of Armagh*, pp. 61-2.

⁵¹ B. M. Harleian 3756 fos. 28, 31v-39, 64v-66 - certain sections printed in Hore ed., 'Rental book of Kildare', *Jn. Kilkenny Arch. Soc.*, VIII (1864-5), 527-45, and *H.M.C. 9th Report*, p. 278; *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Ire.* I 12-35.

shortly after their arrival in October.⁵² It appears, therefore, that in addition to those committed to the rebel cause, a significant body of clergy, owing little to the Kildare interest, actively demonstrated their dislike of government ecclesiastical policy in the favourable circumstances presented by the rebellion.

With royal policy being loudly denounced from the pulpit, there was a considerable likelihood that in the negotiations between the rebels and foreign powers, the response of the latter to the revolt would be coloured by a false appreciation of the circumstances surrounding the rising. Beginning with two agents sent by Kildare and O'Brien in July 1534, rebel embassies set out for Spain at regular intervals until Easter 1535. Before his death about December 1534, Desmond had an agent at the Imperial court begging assistance on two occasions.⁵³ Kildare sent his chaplain to Rome via the Scottish court during the truce over Christmas 1534, and an important embassy left for Spain and Rome at Easter 1535.⁵⁴ Throughout the revolt, O'Neill and Manus O'Donnell were in communication with James V, solicitating aid for the rebels.⁵⁵

The response of the emperor, the pope and the king of Scotland to these overtures was initially encouraging, but in the long term insubstantial. Charles V reacted very quickly. His chaplain, Gonzalo Fernandez, arrived at Dingle in Desmond's territory on 27 June, although the revolt had only broken out on the eleventh, and he had probably left Court on the sixth.⁵⁶ His advent, and the continued presence of Gotskalk Eriksson, who gave the rebels the 'munition de guerre' on board the pinnace which had conveyed him, seem to have spurred O'Brien into despatching his own ambassadors. In response, another embassy led by a man named Antony arrived in Galway at the beginning of September. The agent brought letters of encouragement to Kildare from Charles, who promised to inform the rebels of his plans during the following March.⁵⁷ The earl of Ossory reported at the time that in addition to the movements of Imperial

⁵² *StP* II 204-7; *LP* Add. 982. The Crown's delegation to its deputy of the lesser ecclesiastical presentations in its gift may seem relevant here. However, between 1519 and 1534, Kildare was only in a position to exercise this power for a total of less than four years, and it does not follow that nominees would support the rebels. In connection with clerical motivation, M. Bowker, 'Lincolnshire 1536: Heresy, Schism or Religious Discontent', *Studies in Church History*, IX, ed. D. Baker (Cambridge, 1972), 195-212, provides a useful comparison of the conflicting reasons for the participation of individual clergy in a better documented, contemporary revolt.

⁵³ *The Pilgrim*, ed. Froude, pp. 175-6 (*LP* VIII 999); *Stanyhurst*, pp. 303-4; *Ware*, p. 90; *LP* VII 1457, 1535; *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. 1 70, 90.

⁵⁴ *StP* II 221-2; *Cal. Carew* I 84.

⁵⁵ G. A. Hayes-McCoy, 'Unpublished Letters of King James V of Scotland relating to Ireland', *Analecta Hibernica* XII (1943), 179-81; *StP* II 248.

⁵⁶ *StP* II 197-9, 201-2; *LP* VII 945; *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. 1 70.

⁵⁷ P.R.O. Transcripts 31/18/3/1 fo. 183v: 'munition de guerre' - probably 'ammunition', but perhaps 'ordnance' - cf. *Cal. Sp.* v, Pt. 1 127 and *LP* VIII 48; *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. 1 87, 103, 127; *LP* VII 999, 1567. *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. 1 103 (minutes of an Imperial Council, 31 October: cf. *LP* VII 1336) mistranslates an important section concerning Charles V's notification of his intentions to the rebels by March 1535. Fortunately, the original is quoted in a footnote.

ambassadors to and from Ireland, two shiploads of lances and other arms had arrived. Whatever the precise quantities involved, the insurgents were not short of ammunition at the siege of Maynooth, whereas their supplies had been exhausted in besieging Dublin castle the previous summer.⁵⁸ It seems certain that Antony associated with Eriksson after his arrival, for their movements were very similar. Eriksson's principal mission had been to Scotland for negotiations about the Princess Mary's marriage, and after talks with Kildare and other lords, he was escorted through Ireland by a force of 500 horse. However he did not reach the court of James V before 1 October, returning then to Flanders in December, and he was back in Spain at the beginning of 1535.⁵⁹

The emperor's main interest at this time was in the expedition being prepared against Barbarossa at Tunis. This crusade against the Turks was both popular with his Spanish and Italian subjects, and countered the danger to Sicily and Naples. For its sake, Charles had acquiesced in the loss of Württemberg and even advised his brother to abandon Hungary if that were necessary. He was unlikely, therefore, to be seriously diverted from his plans by the rebels in Ireland. Indeed it is somewhat surprising that he had allowed himself to become so involved there in view of his instructions to Chapuys that he was to do no more than hold out vague promises of goodwill to the English dissidents. Nevertheless, as his Council was quick to grasp, the insurrection came as a godsend to the emperor, because it hindered Henry from combining with Francis I to attack him in the rear whilst he was away. Although Chapuys had written earlier to advise that the Irish be encouraged in their revolt, its repercussions on the French threat were the main consideration when the Imperial Council discussed Ireland on 30 October. They debated whether the offers of various Irish lords to become Imperial subjects and to support the Aragon marriage should be accepted, or whether it would be better to wait until December, when, as the emperor had earlier promised, an ambassador was to be dispatched. Since encouraging letters had already been sent and no assistance could be given during the winter, the Council thought that it was better to wait and see how the situation developed. By November, though Charles still toyed with the idea he had apparently entertained two months earlier, he was obviously satisfied that the rebellion had already seriously weakened the power of any Anglo-French intrigues against him, which were his main concern.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. 1 87, 103, 127; *LP* VII 1425, 1567, VIII 48; G. A. Hayes-McCoy, 'The early history of guns in Ireland', *Galway Archaeological and Historical Society Journal* XVIII (1938), 54-5; *The Letters of James V*, ed. D. Hay (Edinburgh, 1954), pp. 264-7, 277-8, 281. The movements of Antony and Eriksson are obscure: the emperor lost touch completely with Eriksson at one stage.

⁵⁹ *LP* VII 1425, 1567, VIII 189; *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. 1 122, 126, 127 (misreading 'v' for 'v' horse-men - P.R.O. Transcripts 31/18/3/1 fo. 183v: cf. *LP* VIII 48).

⁶⁰ *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. 1 70, 84, 86, 103; *LP* VII 1425; E. Armstrong, *The Emperor Charles V* (London, 1902), I, 272-4; Mattingly, *Catherine of Aragon*, pp. 259-60, 266; R. B. Wernham, *Before the Armada* (London, 1966), pp. 127-31.

By 25 February, when the Council discussed Ireland again, the support which the emperor still contemplated sending was trifling and would fall far short of the ten thousand men which Kildare had demanded for the conquest of England and Ireland. The promised Imperial ambassador was by then in Ireland and expected to remain there during March when Charles was to let the Irish know of his intentions. A minute of the meeting suggests that some token of encouragement was contemplated, though the advanced state of the season and the impossibility of doing anything after Charles' departure from Madrid required its rapid despatch.⁶¹ However, the following day the emperor wrote to Chapuys about his preparations for North Africa. He noted Chapuys' remarks about the disaffection in England concerning the divorce, but stated that because of more pressing business he could not afford to redress grievances by force. Chapuys was therefore instructed to try to alleviate the condition of the queen and princess and to sow discord between England and France by working towards an 'unofficial' Anglo-Imperial détente.⁶² This decision probably ended all consideration of sending help to the insurgents in Ireland. There is no record that any arrived, though if such had been prepared, news of Maynooth and other setbacks for the rebels might have deterred Charles. Alternatively, he perhaps considered that the rebels would continue to divert Henry's attention from intervening on the continent until he had returned from North Africa for which he set sail on 30 May. He was of course concerned not to lose face over the divorce: even though there was no longer any question of military intervention, appearances had to be maintained, and to that end Chapuys was warned that whatever course the rebellion in Ireland might take, he was not to prejudice Kildare's cause.⁶³

If the Imperial negotiations did not alter the final outcome of the revolt, there is no doubt that they had a significant impact on its course and consequences. The insurgents' 'firme trust and expectacion' of Spanish aid – ten thousand men by 1 May, as the Council heard from a close confidant of Kildare captured at Maynooth – prolonged the rebellion by at least four months. In December 1534, one of the Irish Council had reported that Kildare

openlie bostethe that he expecteth for an army at this somer ought of Spayne, cumforting his friends therwith.

As late as July 1535, the emperor sent word via James Delahide that he would send as much aid as he could by the following March. Whereas an early end to the fighting would have preserved the Pale from much devastation, saved the king's purse, and perhaps partly have averted the

⁶¹ P.R.O. Transcripts 31/8/145 fo. 63 (calendared twice in *LP* VII 229, VIII 272ii); B.M. Add. 28588 fos. 161–2 (*LP* VIII 270). The two transcripts are French and Spanish versions of an original document in Spanish. Charles V left Madrid at the end of February: *LP* VIII 272.

⁶² *LP* VIII 272.

⁶³ *LP* VIII 697; Armstrong, *The Emperor Charles V*, I, 273.

ruin of the house of Kildare, the earl was encouraged to hold out in the expectation of Spanish reinforcements.⁶⁴

Much less is known about the negotiations between Kildare and Paul III. Reynolds arrived in Rome in May 1535 and a report of his interview with the pope has survived, written by Dr Ortiz, the Imperial ambassador. Reynolds informed Paul III that he had come on behalf of the earl, of the other great lords of Ireland, and also of his allies in England, and he seems to have argued his case about Henry's ecclesiastical policy generally, rather than simply with reference to Ireland. The pope, he claimed, was guilty of negligence in allowing so many souls to be lost by not putting an end to the matrimonial cause at once, nor preventing the king from sowing heresy. Had he pronounced the sentence of excommunication and forfeiture already incurred, the English would willingly have risen and helped in its execution. In support of these assertions, Reynolds exhibited one of the king's printed propaganda pamphlets, and also a copy of the grant by Innocent III to King John, of England and Ireland for 700 and 300 marks a year respectively. A condition of the grant was that if at any time the king should fail in payment, his kingdom would devolve upon the papacy. In addition, Reynolds asked for absolution of his master from the murder of Archbishop Alen, which he had encompassed because of the archbishop's support of the English in Ireland, and because of his implication in the alleged murder of the ninth earl and attempts against Kildare's own life. According to Ortiz, the pope in reply excused himself for his past negligence, promised to do his duty, and absolved the earl. Prior Walsh visited the Curia during August to ascertain the response of Paul III to Kildare's letter. However, nothing more is known of the attitude of the pope, except that he subsequently dispatched a brief to the rebels, the contents of which have not survived.⁶⁵

It seems, therefore, that Kildare received very little more than prayers and promises from Charles V and Paul III, and this was also the response of James V. The king was sympathetic, but unwilling to act openly against Henry at a time when the latter, because of his quarrel with the pope, was for once courting Scottish support and negotiating a treaty which was concluded in September. Nevertheless, James encouraged the rebels, and gave them to understand that he would send help.⁶⁶ Henry found him very uncooperative about Irish affairs. He refused to renounce his title to Ireland during the peace negotiations, and made no move to prevent the MacDonnell galloglass from participating in the revolt. In January 1535, Henry sent Norfolk's brother on an embassy to Scotland, among other reasons to demand that James recall his subjects from Ireland. James was

⁶⁴ *StP* II 221, 227, 237, 247 note. Kildare surrendered conditionally on 24 August.

⁶⁵ *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. I 164, 208; Costello, *De Annatis Hiberniae*, I, 82.

⁶⁶ *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. I 84, 87; *StP* II 237, 247 note 2, 248. James wrote to Manus O'Donnell that he would refuse him no just request: Hayes-McCoy, 'Unpublished Letters of James V', 179. See also J. D. Mackie, 'Henry VIII and Scotland', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th Ser. XXIX (1947), 111.

evasive, replying that a prohibition of such movements would be counter-productive, but that whenever the English could prove to him that one or more Scots had crossed to Ireland, he would set about recalling them. A later request by Cromwell met with a similar response. Bishop Stewart of Aberdeen asserted that there was no subject of the king in Ireland,

but if it be some miserable and private person stealing forth of the isles for poverty and scant of his living.⁶⁷

Yet the Scottish king went further than non-cooperation with Henry over Ireland, although Henry never obtained conclusive evidence that James did not ignore the approaches which he knew the rebels were making. In travelling to Rome via Scotland, Reynolds obtained a letter from James commending him to the care of his agent, the cardinal of Ravenna.⁶⁸

In England, the king was more concerned about the rebels' negotiations with Charles V, from which the major threat to security and policy would come. Henry's agents kept him fairly well informed of the movements of ambassadors to and from Spain, but there is no doubt that at times fear of possible intervention from that quarter caused grave concern at Court.⁶⁹ Early in July 1534, Chapuys reported that Henry and his Council were very worried about a rumour from Ireland that the rebels would receive assistance from twelve thousand Spaniards, and the government subsequently received reports to this effect from continental sources. On occasion Chapuys himself was questioned about the emperor's contacts with the rebels, an indication of the despair and impotence of the government against this threat.⁷⁰ Alarm was redoubled by mistrust that the forces being assembled for the expedition against Barbarossa might not all be destined for that theatre of war. The king therefore ordered his agents to keep a close eye on the preparations, and when Chapuys received permission to disclose despatches refuting Henry's suspicions, both he and Cromwell were greatly relieved.⁷¹ What Henry could not know, however, was the enthusiasm of the emperor for a crusade against the Turks, nor the precise state of Imperial negotiations with the rebels. In England, of course, measures against the Irish revolt were the primary consideration, and Charles' fears of intrigue between the English and French to exploit the developments in the Mediterranean were groundless. Chapuys reported that the news about Barbarossa's capture of Tunis

⁶⁷ *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. 184, 127, 139; *LP* VII 1350 (misplaced in October 1534); *StP* v 23 (spelling modernised); *Stanyhurst*, p. 295. The Scots took the opportunity to increase their presence in Ulster: *LP* IX 515. Galloglass were the heavily armed mercenary footmen employed in Irish warfare from the fourteenth until the seventeenth century.

⁶⁸ Hayes-McCoy, 'Unpublished Letters of James V', p. 180; *LP* IX 514.

⁶⁹ *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. 190, 102; *LP* VII 1457, 1535, 1575, VIII 189, 263, *StP* II 198-9, 201.

⁷⁰ *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. 170, 102, 127; *LP* VIII 189, 263, 697. Cromwell had earlier calculated that the emperor would not intervene against government policy, but frankly admitted to Chapuys that the king was ruined if he did: Mattingly, *Catherine of Aragon*, 265-6, 276.

⁷¹ *LP* VII 1457, 1567, 1575, VIII 18, 189.

had been much to the taste of the king, who concluded that the emperor would now attend to the defence of Sicily rather than to the assistance of the Irish. Henry was, however, left guessing about Charles' precise intentions, and whatever his private opinions, the news that a third Imperial ambassador had arrived in Ireland early in 1535, together with the continual and not entirely unfounded rumours of an army out of Spain, was sufficient to worry him until Kildare's final surrender.⁷²

The government's response to the threat from Spain was complicated by news from Ireland. Strengthened by religious support, the insurrection proved to be considerably more serious than had originally been foreseen. A full analysis would require a lengthy excursus; suffice to say that the original expedition was cancelled, and an army of about 2,300 men hurriedly raised. If small by English standards, this was probably the largest force sent to Ireland since Richard II's expedition in 1399, and plans were laid for augmenting it if necessary. The insurrection was, however, allowed to run unchecked for four months, since the army did not arrive until October.⁷³

A serious rebellion in Ireland, though very worrying for the government, did not have the same impact as that of a more immediate challenge to the Crown. In parts of England and abroad, however, public opinion about the rising favoured the rebels and so magnified the threat to security. The government had expended considerable energy in searching out and publicizing respectable precedents with which to conceal the extent of the changes, and to persuade subjects that they did not amount to a revolution but rather to a restoration of the ancient order. The characteristic appeals of the Tudors to order and obedience were also made in Ireland to try to prevent the spread of rebellion to Munster.⁷⁴ Notwithstanding, the revolt was soon firmly established as a factor in international politics; and from the scanty evidence available, it seems that the ready acceptance of Kildare's claim to be leading a crusade against English heresy enabled him to turn the charge of levying war against his prince. So far as the government could parry this thrust, it had to do so in kind. Perhaps the best, certainly the most ironic indication of this, if it may be believed, is the proclamation in Dublin of an indulgence and jubilee from Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, to be gained by taking up arms against the rebels. This supplemented the excommunication of the earl, pronounced in October for the murder of Archbishop Alen,

⁷² *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. I 109; *LP* VIII 189; *StP* II 227, 229, 237, 247 and note.

⁷³ P.R.O. SP65/1/1 (*LP* XI 934); *StP* II 203, 267; *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. I 102, 109; *LP* VII 1291, VIII, 121. See Ellis, 'The Kildare Rebellion, 1534', pp. 75-6, 107-8, 112-17, 122-3. Richard II brought 6000 men in 1394-5 and rather less five years later. Poyning had about 700 men with him and Norfolk 500: Lydon, *The Lordship of Ireland in the Middle Ages*, pp. 233-4, 238, 268, 274; Quinn, 'Henry VIII and Ireland', p. 326.

⁷⁴ Elton, *Policy and Police*, ch. 4. For the rebellion in Munster, see Ellis, 'The Kildare Rebellion, 1534', pp. 108-11, 124-30. It was contained by a commission and a series of letters from England, see especially, B.M. Add. 4799 fos. 43-3v, 44v; P.R.O. SP1/89/34 (*LP* VIII 58).

from which the pope subsequently absolved him.⁷⁵ Kildare rapidly became something of a martyr for the faith, and on the continent the religious motivation of the rising was unquestioned. Dr Ortiz told the empress after the earl's surrender that he would either die a martyr or be entirely perverted. Reginald Pole, launching a campaign to execute the papal bull of 1535 deposing Henry, was sure that those who defended the faith this third time would win gloriously, even though it had twice been conquered – in England and in Ireland.⁷⁶ Chapuys had no doubts about the religious inspiration of the rising, and frequently urged his master to attend to the support of the rebels.⁷⁷

Even in England, the government had to move to ensure that the official view of the rebellion was accepted. Chapuys' dispatches are full of reports about attempts by Cromwell and other ministers to manipulate public opinion, both in London, and, by means of merchants trading there, in Ireland. Favourable letters from Ireland were leaked and ministers did not fail to publish at Court news of any successes achieved by the army, whilst remaining silent about reverses.⁷⁸ Towards the end of September when news was particularly bad, a prohibition against speaking about Irish affairs was imposed at Court.⁷⁹ Chapuys, however, seems to have encountered little difficulty in obtaining the information which the government was so reluctant to publish.⁸⁰ He reported variously that he had obtained such intelligence from a chaplain to the ninth earl's wife, 'a worthy citizen', 'a worthy individual', an Irishman, English gentlemen, and others privy to government despatches.⁸¹ This suggests that news about the rebellion travelled further than the government would have liked. John Hale, vicar of Isleworth, identified the rising in Ireland firmly with grievances against ecclesiastical policy in England, and his views were probably not untypical. There are suggestions that the rebels themselves had contacts with English dissidents, as the report of Reynolds' interview with the pope suggests.⁸² Two of Chapuys' dispatches provide clear

⁷⁵ *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. I 164, 176; *StP* II 217–19. Even if an indulgence were not granted, the rumour still supports the argument.

⁷⁶ *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. I 217; *LP* XIII 73. Cf. *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. I 164, 208; *LP* XI 376.

⁷⁷ *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. I 70, 84, 86, 109; *Calendar of State Papers, Milan* (1385–1612), ed. Hinds (London, 1912), p. 976. Cf. Mattingly, *Catherine of Aragon*, pp. 259–60.

⁷⁸ *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. I 84, 86, 87, 90, 102, 111, 114, 118, 122, 127, 142, 150, 178, 257.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 90, 97.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 70, 84, 102, 111, 122, 127, 142, 150, 198, 257; *LP* VIII 263.

⁸¹ *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. I 70, 84, 87, 127. The picture drawn by G. Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (London, 1955), pp. 243–6, of Chapuys' attempts to improve his intelligence network seems to be relected in the remarkably accurate intelligence he received from Ireland.

⁸² *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. I 164; *LP* VIII 565. Hale was indicted, and executed at Tyburn for the following treasonable words: 'Until the king and the rulers of this realm be plucked by the pates, and brought, as we say, to the pot, shall we never live merrily in England; which I pray God may chance and now shortly come to pass. Ireland is set against him, which will never shrink in their quarrel to die in it. And what think ye of Wales? – Their noble and gentle ap Ryce so cruelly put to death, and he innocent, as they say, in the cause. I think not contrary but they will join and take part with the Irish, and so invade our realm. If they do, doubt ye

indications that the rebels were infiltrating their own propaganda into England, and the king was particularly incensed to read that he would be driven out of his realm.⁸³ Lord Darcy, the ablest of the northern conspirators, told Somerset Herald during the Pilgrimage of Grace that had the duke of Richmond, the titular lieutenant of Ireland, been able to secure Kildare's pardon, the earl would have surrendered to him, and the government was later very anxious to learn how he came by this information. It is known that Darcy had earlier urged Chapuys to write to Charles to send help for the rising.⁸⁴ From Wales, it was reported that the 'papistical secte' in the diocese of St David's had been 'agreatt setter-fourthe of the late rebellyon yn Ireland'. In September 1534, Sir James ap Gruffydd ap Howell, an influential rebel who could be relied upon to raise many of the Welsh to support a revolt brewing under the marcher lords, decided after a period of exile in Scotland to try his hand in Ireland. This development, the government viewed with some unease. In 1530 Sir James had fortified himself into the castle of Emlyn in the south, and later inherited the leadership of the Catholic cause there after an ill-organized conspiracy in favour of Queen Catherine had brought about the execution in 1531 of his nephew, Sir Rhys ap Gruffydd.⁸⁵

Once the rising had been crushed and control of the lordship vested in the hands of trusted ministers, the government could extend the revolution to Ireland. Not surprisingly, parliamentary opposition to the religious programme was very muted when the principal statutes of the English Reformation Parliament came to be enacted in 1536-7.⁸⁶ The long process of reconquest began, and for the time being foreign interest in Ireland evaporated. If its chief consequences belong to the history of the lordship, the rebellion was also of significance for Tudor policy in the 1530s. Kildare's skilful manipulation of public opinion created the first

not but they shall have aid and strength enough in England; for this is truth, three parts of England is against the king, as he shall find if he need; for of truth they go about to bring this realm into such miserable condition as is France, which the commons see and perceive well enough a sufficient cause of rebellion and insurrection in this realm. And truly we of the Church shall never live merrily until that day come' - quoted in *LP* VIII 609. Cf. *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. I 86, 87, 257.

⁸³ *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. I 87, 150.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 86; *LP* XI 1086, XIII 944. Cf. Mattingly, *Catherine of Aragon*, p. 287; A. G. Dickens, 'Secular and Religious Motivation in the Pilgrimage of Grace', *Studies in Church History*, IV, ed. G. J. Cuming (Leiden, 1967), 46-7. The government suspected a connection between the English dissidents and the rebels: Lambeth Library MS 602 fos. 139v, 140v (entirely omitted from *Cal. Carew* I 84).

⁸⁵ P.R.O. SP1/101/67 (*LP* X 19); *Cal. Sp.* v Pt. I 90; C. A. J. Skeel, *The Council in the Marches of Wales* (London 1904), pp. 55-6. Cf. *LP* VII 650, 710, 1567, IX 319, XIII 845; Mattingly, *Catherine of Aragon*, pp. 288-9.

⁸⁶ See the debate on the reasons for this in R. D. Edwards, *Church and State in Tudor Ireland* (Dublin, 1935), pp. 7-15, and 'The Irish Reformation Parliament', p. 70, and in Bradshaw, 'The opposition to the ecclesiastical legislation', pp. 289-302, and 'The Beginnings of Modern Ireland', in *The Irish Parliamentary tradition*, ed. B. Farrell (Dublin, 1973), pp. 72 and 263 (note). No doubt, any potential martyrs had already attracted government attention for complicity in the rebellion.

instance of a resort to arms in defence of the old religion – a new source of disaffection which was periodically to disrupt the peace of the mid-Tudor period. Though the causes of the rising owed little to the religious changes, the Kildare rebellion was hardly less a protest against royal ecclesiastical policy than the Pilgrimage of Grace. As in the Pilgrimage, local sources of discontent – for the Geraldines, the royal challenge to their control in government – were at work alongside a movement of far wider appeal, linking the agitation in Ireland with that in England and with continental displeasure at the revolution.⁸⁷ Outside Ireland, the general belief that the revolt was sparked off by the king's attacks on the church generated considerable interest in the rising. This development strengthens the view of some historians that the principles at stake in the controversy about the Reformation were widely appreciated in England long before the dissolution of the monasteries and other more visible innovations displayed the king's new powers to the world. As the government was no doubt aware, rebel denunciations of the king as a heretic might easily have raised Wales and the north; had this occurred the king's plight would have been desperate in the extreme. Foreign monarchs were encouraged to intervene in the rebellion to exploit the government's difficulties largely because its longevity allowed them ample time to do so. However, Charles V was engaged in fomenting rebellion in Ireland long before it eventually broke out – the most serious intervention he made against Tudor policy. Had he not subsequently been preoccupied elsewhere, the outcome of the rising might well have been very different. Thus, the revolt posed a threat to the Crown which was not rivalled until the middle years of Elizabeth's reign. Though conditions in Ireland favoured them, the rebels demonstrated amply the weakness of the Crown against determined opposition. Their conduct set an example which the English malcontents would have done well to follow. If such problems could be created for the king by a revolt in an outlying region, how much greater would have been the impact on policy from such opposition nearer to the centre of power?⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Cf. R. R. Reid, *The King's Council in the North* (London, 1921), pp. 121–36.

⁸⁸ Mattingly, *Catherine of Aragon*, p. 290.