



From Gaelic lordships to English counties: the Tudor transition in Leix
and Offaly, c. 1547-1603.

by

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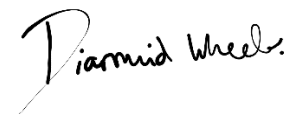
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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my own work. I have not obtained a degree in this University, or elsewhere, on the basis of this work.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diarmuid Wheeler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'D'.

Diarmuid Wheeler

Abstract

This study evaluates whether or not successive Tudor regimes effectively transformed the Gaelic lordships of Leix and Offaly into English counties and as a direct consequence, administered these territories through the normal mechanisms of English local government and the overall principle of 'self-government at the king's command' during the period of 1547-1603. Through an analysis of the primary material of the period, manuscripts, calendars and the like, this dissertation suggests that instead of fully fledged English counties, unique, highly militarised shires were created in the region with martial settler societies, primed for defence and the preservation and consolidation of the administration's position there. It was argued that successive Tudor rulers gradually introduced English local government and administrative structures to Leix and Offaly by 1603 but did not administer these territories through the overall principle of 'self-government at the king's command', found in lowland England. Instead, the Tudor administration established what could be referred to as a distinct and hybrid form of English local government that merged traditional structures with martial. The Leix-Offaly model was composed of elements of the Scottish, Welsh and Louth models but crucially fit into none of these frameworks. As a result, although the midlands shires were technically absorbed within the confines of the English Pale by 1566, at least in the government's eyes, they did not match the traditional archetype and were noticeably distinguishable from the newly created shires of Ireland post 1569. This dissertation also found that this unconventional form of English county government was firmly in place by the conclusion of the period under review dominated by a small but determined group of county gentry. Such a study highlights an often-overlooked perspective of early modern Irish history and the establishment of English administrative structures in less prominent Gaelic dominated territories.

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Finally, I am eternally indebted to my family particularly my parents and my partner Chelsie whose constant patience, belief and support made this dream a reality. It goes without saying that none of this would have been possible without them. This dissertation is dedicated to all of you.

Conventions

Regarding the spelling of Gaelic first names and surnames in this dissertation, modern English versions are used throughout. The same can also be said for the spelling and punctuation in the source documents in order to make it more widely readable from a modern day perspective and for the general reader. Dates have been modified to reflect the modern practise where the year begins on 1 January as opposed to the 25 March, as was custom in the Tudor territories. Information relating to currency is presented as found in the original manuscripts. The footnote reference apparatus is in line with the 'Rules for contributors' (third revised edition) in *Irish historical Studies*, vol. xxxiii (May 2003), no. 131, while the abbreviations of sources prescribed *ibid.* supplement i (January 1968), and in *A new history of Ireland*, are generally used.

Abbreviations

<i>AFM</i>	<i>Annála ríoghachta Éireann: annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters from the earliest period to the year 1616</i> , ed. And trans. John O'Donovan (7 vols, Dublin, 1851; reprint, New York, 1966).
<i>ALC</i>	<i>The annals of Loch Cé: a chronicle of Irish affairs, 1014-1590</i> , ed. W.M. Hennessy (2 vols, London, 1871; IMC, Dublin, 1939).
<i>Anal. Hib.</i>	<i>Analecta Hibernica</i> (Dublin, 1930-)
<i>BL</i>	British Library, London.
<i>Bodl</i>	Bodleian Library, Oxford.
<i>Cal. Carew MSS</i>	<i>Calendar of the Carew manuscripts preserved in the archiepiscopal library at Lambeth, 1515-1624</i> (6 vols, London, 1867-73).
<i>Cal. Pat. Rolls</i>	<i>Calendar of the patent and close rolls of chancery in Ireland, of the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth</i> , ed. James Morrin (Dublin, 1861).
<i>CSPI</i>	<i>Calendar of state papers relating to Ireland, 1509-1670</i> (24 vols, London, 1860-1911).
<i>DNB</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i> .
<i>Fiants Ire.</i>	<i>The Irish fiants of Tudor sovereigns during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Philip & Mary, and Elizabeth</i> (4 vols, Dublin, 1994).
<i>HI</i>	<i>History Ireland</i>
<i>HJ</i>	<i>The Historical Journal</i>
<i>HMC</i>	Historical Manuscripts Commission
<i>HMC, Salisbury</i>	<i>Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, Preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire</i> , 24 vols (London, 1833-1976).
<i>IHS</i>	<i>Irish Historical Studies:</i>
<i>IMC</i>	Irish Manuscripts Commission
<i>JBS</i>	<i>Journal of British Studies</i>
<i>JRSAI</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland</i>
<i>L. & P. Henry VIII</i>	<i>Letters and Papers, foreign and domestic, Henry VIII</i> , 21 vols (London, 1862-1932).
<i>MSS</i>	Manuscripts
<i>NAI</i>	National Archives of Ireland.
<i>NLI</i>	National Library of Ireland.
<i>RIA</i>	Royal Irish Academy.
<i>SCJ</i>	<i>The Sixteenth Century Journal</i>
<i>Sidney Letters</i>	<i>Letters and memorials of state...written and collected by Sir Henry Sidney..., Sir Philip Sidney and his brother Sir Robert Sidney...</i> , ed Arthur Collins (2 vols, London, 1746).
<i>TCD</i>	Trinity College, Dublin
<i>TNA</i>	The National Archives, Kew.

Notes on the text

Throughout this text, spelling and punctuation have been modernised in all quotations.

Introduction

The origins of this doctoral dissertation was an endeavour to reveal whether or not successive Tudor regimes effectively transformed the Gaelic lordships of Leix and Offaly into English counties and as a direct consequence, administered these territories through the normal mechanisms of English local government and the overall principle of ‘self-government at the king’s command’ during the period of 1547-1603. While the territory of Leix alone might have been sufficient it soon became clear that it would benefit the overall argument if the neighbouring territory of Offaly was also incorporated into this survey. This was largely in consideration of its close proximity to Leix and their often shared and overlapping history. However, it must be noted that the geographical area that constitutes the modern-day counties of Laois and Offaly was vastly different from its early modern counterparts. It was not until Upper Ossory to the south-east of Leix, encompassing the lordship of the FitzPatricks, and the south-western region of Offaly, ruled by the O’Carroll clan, were brought into the fold in 1600 and 1605 respectively that we see some semblance to their present day equivalents.¹ Thus, it was decided that this thesis would encompass the entirety of these two territories that lay upon the borders of the English Pale.

The beginnings of the midlands colonial project can be traced back to the early sixteenth century when the Tudor government, who firmly believed that Ireland rightfully belonged to the English crown and that the country’s keeping was essential to England’s overall safety, sought to restore the island to its twelfth century “conquered” state from which the crown hoped to profit.² Brendan Bradshaw argues that the Tudors and the Old English of Ireland were heavily influenced by Renaissance humanism that encouraged

¹ Queen Elizabeth to Lord Deputy Mountjoy and the Council, 21 July 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/41; *Calendar of patent and close rolls of chancery in Ireland, Henry VIII to 18th Elizabeth*, ed. J. Morrin, (2 vols, London, 1862), ii, 405-7.

² Christopher Maginn and Steven G. Ellis, *The Tudor discovery of Ireland* (Dublin, 2015), pp 113, 164, 188.

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them to bring reform to Ireland.³ But the administration lacked significant knowledge and experience of the country, particularly during Henry VIII's reign and quickly realised that reforming the island would take significantly more military and financial resources than they had anticipated.⁴ By the final years of the 1530s, it was apparent that a certain degree of coercion and military force would be necessary to bring about wide scale reform.⁵ Yet the Tudors were also aware that they could not employ outright force to achieve their objectives, lacking the necessary resources to do so. Instead, the Tudor administration recognised that they would need to accommodate the natives of Ireland, at least somewhat, in order to make their aspiration a reality.

Consequently, they pursued policies of assimilation throughout the period under review stretching back to the 1530s and early 1540s with the programme of reform known as "surrender and regrant". "Surrender and regrant" refers to the phrase coined by William Butler in the early twentieth century to describe the process of integration whereby Gaelic chiefs and English lords acknowledged royal authority, in return for a guarantee of their lands under English common law.⁶ As already highlighted, the policy was a rationalisation on the government's part that some kind of accommodation was necessary with the Gaelic Irish in order to fully reform

³ Bradshaw, Brendan, *The Irish constitutional revolution of the sixteenth century* (Cambridge, 1979), pp 35-51; Maginn and Ellis, *The Tudor discovery of Ireland*, pp 138-9.

⁴ Maginn and Ellis, *The Tudor discovery of Ireland*, pp 145-7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 166-7, 171, 188.

⁶ Christopher Maginn, "'Surrender and Regrant' in the Historiography of Sixteenth-Century Ireland", *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (Winter 2007) p. 955. For a general introduction to the policy of surrender and regrant, see William F. Butler, 'The Policy of Surrender and Regrant', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spring, 1913), pp 47-65; Bradshaw, *The Irish constitutional Revolution*, chapter 7; Steven G. Ellis, *Ireland in the age of the Tudors, 1447-1603: English expansion and the end of Gaelic rule* (London, 1998), pp 254-7 and more recently, Christopher Maginn, 'The Gaelic Peers, the Tudor Sovereigns, and English Multiple Monarchy', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (Summer, 2011), pp. 566-86.

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the country.⁷ For Tudor officials such as Walter Cowley, who was by no means a supporter of surrender and regrant or an assimilatory approach towards the Gaelic Irish, the ‘reform’ of Ireland’s natives was imperative. Cowley stressed that the English language was to be encouraged, the wearing of Irish apparel forbidden and Brehon law restricted as much as possible.⁸ Although Cowley supported a militaristic approach in Ireland such as the establishment of English garrisons and settlements, encircled by areas of English control, his call for ‘reform’ echoed the sentiment among many Tudor officials that so long as the Gaelic culture survived, the Irish would never truly embrace civility or general law and order.⁹ In fact, from the late twelfth century onwards, propagandists such as Giraldus Cambrensis promoted English expansion into Gaelic territories so as to introduce English civility (towns, tillage and commerce) to the allegedly savage people who lived in idleness in their woods and bogs.¹⁰ The fundamental problem remained that the Gaelic Irish were deemed different and treated as such by the Tudor state.¹¹ Ireland’s natives were considered uncivilised and ‘unreasonable beasts’ who lived ‘without any knowledge of God or good manners’ and regularly preyed upon the inhabitants of the ‘English Pale’.¹² The moustaches and hairstyle of the Gaelic natives, their indifference to cover their entire bodies with clothing, lack of good table manners or saddles and stirrups whilst riding, were all significant indicators

⁷ Maginn and Ellis, *The Tudor discovery of Ireland*, p. 188.

⁸ David Heffernan, ‘Robert Cowley’s “A discourse of the cause of the evil state of Ireland and of the remedies thereof”, c. 1526’, *Analecta Hibernica*, Vol. 48 (2017), p. 8.

⁹ John Patrick Montaña, *The roots of English colonialism in Ireland* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 114.

¹⁰ Steven G. Ellis, “Reducing their barbarous wildness...unto Civility”: England and “the Celtic Fringe”, 1415-1625’ in Brendan Smith (ed.), *Ireland and the English world in the late Middle Ages* (New York, 2009), pp 185-6.

¹¹ Christopher Maginn, *William Cecil, Ireland, and the Tudor State* (Oxford, 2012), p. 49.

¹² William Thomas, *The Pilgrim: A dialogue on the life and actions of Henry VIII* (1552), ed. James Anthony Froude (London, 1861), pp 66-8.

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of their distinctness from their English neighbours.¹³ They were also considered to be morally inferior, inclined to lustfulness, prone to divorce and legitimisation of illegitimate children as well as fosterage.¹⁴ These concepts were allegedly largely alien to the English.

“Englishness”, on the other hand, was regarded as legally, culturally and socially superior to “Irishness” in every way.¹⁵ Traditionally, civility distinguished the external differences between civil society and those deemed uncivil due to their ‘rudeness’, ‘savagery’ and unwillingness to conform to a mode of conduct organised by reason and principle.¹⁶ In other words, civility distinguished the social man from the savage.¹⁷ Gradually, a religious dimension was added to this rhetoric.¹⁸ By the 1300s, the English adjudged God to be an Englishman and in the mid sixteenth century, during the height of the reformation, English identity became Protestant and in turn, England also became God’s elect nation with Protestantism regarded as a further significant indication of civility.¹⁹ As a result, English civility was expected to closely resemble godliness as much as possible, and any defection to Gaelic Irish culture or customs, was regarded as cultural degeneracy or cultural corruption.²⁰

¹³ R.R. Davies, *The first English empire: power and identities in the British Isles, 1093-1343* (Oxford, 2000), p. 129.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Nicholas Canny, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland* (Hassocks, 1976), p. 120; Maginn, ‘The Gaelic Peers’, p. 580.

¹⁶ Melanie White, ‘An Ambivalent Civility’, *The Canadian Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Autumn, 2006), p. 446.

¹⁷ White, ‘An Ambivalent Civility’, p. 447.

¹⁸ Steven G. Ellis, ‘Civilising the natives: State formation and the Tudor Monarchy, c. 1400-1603’, in Steven G. Ellis and Lud’ a Klusakova (eds) *Imagining Frontiers, Contesting Identities* (Pisa, 2007), p. 84.

¹⁹ Ibid; Jane H. Ohlmeyer, “‘Civilizing of those rude partes’: Colonisation within Britain and Ireland, 1580s-1640s’ in Nicholas Canny (ed.), *The Oxford history of the British Empire: Volume I: The origins of Empire: British overseas enterprise to the close of the seventeenth century* (Oxford, 1998), p. 134.

²⁰ Ohlmeyer, “‘Civilizing of those rude partes’”, p. 84; Susan Flavin, *Consumption and culture in sixteenth-century Ireland: Saffron stockings and silk* (Suffolk, 2014), p. 66.

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English culture, particularly lowland English culture, was associated with economic development: towns, commerce and tillage farming.²¹ These towns were expected to be well populated and the countryside was supposed to be dominated by manors in addition to open and common fields with a dependent landed peasantry, all overseen by religiously devout nobility, country gentry and monarchy.²² Gaelic culture was notably different with compact lordships and limited number of towns and in native heartlands bordering English territories, unstable marcher societies.²³ Lowland territories were seen as distinctive in terms of wealth, land use, social structure and patterns of settlement.²⁴ In direct contrast, border regions epitomised wildness and lawlessness.²⁵

The Tudor government believed that the Gaelic natives needed to be deterred from their idleness and encouraged to resort to husbandry.²⁶ Husbandry was essentially the care, cultivation and breeding of crops and animals and was signified as progress and civility by the administration. Those who did not conform were considered primitive and as such, needed to be “delivered” from their barbarous ways.²⁷ Ergo, the conversion of neglected waste lands into fully cultivated arable plots that produced corn, represented the gift of civility to Ireland’s natives.²⁸ For Old Englishmen such as Robert Cowley, Master of the Rolls during Henry VIII’s reign, leaving lands uncultivated was disastrous as it granted the Gaelic Irish a

²¹ Steven G. Ellis, ‘Centre and Periphery in the Tudor State’, in Robert Tittler and Norman L. Jones (eds) *A Companion to Tudor Britain* (Oxford, 2004), p. 137.

²² Davies, *The first English empire*, pp 113-42.

²³ Ellis, ‘Centre and Periphery in the Tudor State’, p. 137.

²⁴ Ellis. ‘Civilising the natives’, p. 87; Davies, *The first English empire*, pp 113-42.

²⁵ Steven G. Ellis, ‘The Tudor borderlands, 1485-1603’ in John Morrill (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of Tudor and Stuart Britain* (Oxford, 2000), p. 58.

²⁶ Steven G. Ellis, *Tudor Ireland* (London, 1985), pp 185-8, 265-9; Dean Gunter White, ‘The Reign of Edward VI in Ireland: Some Political, Social, and Economic Aspects’, *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 55 (March, 1965), pp 197-202; Montaña, *The Roots of English colonialism*, p. 117.

²⁷ Montaña, *The Roots of English colonialism*, p. 32.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 94; Ellis, ‘Civilising the natives’, pp 77-92.

refuge where they could preserve their savage ways and continue to threaten the civil inhabitants of the Pale.²⁹

Although the term ‘Old English’ was not coined until 1596 by Edmund Spenser, this group were the descendants of the Anglo-Norman conquest of the twelfth century and had built up a strong foothold in the country in what was termed the ‘English Pale’, serving as feudal magnates, merchants, lawyers and general landowners.³⁰ The Old English were described by the Tudor government as ‘English of Irish birth or ‘of that country birth’.³¹ In Tudor eyes, where the land was uncultivated, so were the people and hence the distinction between ‘civility’ and ‘savagery’.³² The building and inhabiting of these wastelands was expected to safeguard these same ‘poor earth tillers’ of the English Pale.³³

In reality, the situation was not so clear-cut. Ellis argues that the Pale frontier was not only a physical frontier, but also a frontier of contact between the two nations.³⁴ These societies were not completely dissimilar to one another and farming was paramount to the two groups. Pastoral farming in particular was extremely significant to the Gaelic Irish economy where

²⁹ Robert Cowley to Cromwell, 1537, TNA, SP 60/4/32; Montañó, *The Roots of English colonialism in Ireland*, p. 99.

³⁰ Valerie McGowan-Doyle, ‘Elizabeth I, the Old English, and the rhetoric of counsel’, in Brendan Kane and Valerie McGowan-Doyle (eds), *Elizabeth I and Ireland* (Cambridge, 2014), p. 166; Nicholas Canny, ‘Identity formation in Ireland: the emergence of the Anglo-Irish’, in Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden (eds), *Colonial identity and the Atlantic world, 1500-1800* (Princeton, 1989), p. 160.

³¹ McGowan-Doyle, ‘Elizabeth I’, p. 166; For further reading on the Old English of Ireland see Nicholas Canny, *The formation of the Old English elite in Ireland* (Dublin, 1975); Ciaran Brady, ‘Conservative subversives: the community of the Pale and the Dublin administration, 1556-86’, in Patrick J. Corish (ed.), *Radicals, and establishments* (Belfast, 1985); Gerald Power, *A European elite: the nobility of the English Pale in Ireland, 1450-1566* (Hanover, 2011).

³² Ellis, ‘Centre and Periphery in the Tudor State’, p. 137.

³³ Robert Cowley to Cromwell, 1537, TNA, SP 60/4/32.

³⁴ S.G. Ellis, ‘Ireland’s “lost” English region: the English Pale in early Tudor times’ in Raingard Esser and S. G. Ellis (eds), *Frontier and Border regions in Early Modern Europe* (Hannover, 2013), pp 57-76.

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the number of livestock tended to serve as an indication of the wealth and power of a particular Gaelic chieftain.³⁵ Pastoral farming was also arguably a more advantageous endeavour in turbulent territories such as Leix and Offaly as it allowed for the quick movement of animals when necessary.³⁶ Although the English viewed tillage farming as a mark of civility, it was more susceptible to warfare in that crops and granaries were usually at the mercy of an invading force.³⁷ Furthermore, although the soil was unquestionably superior in the Pale where wheat, barley, and rye were grown in abundance, the Gaelic Irish unquestionably practised tillage farming. This included the production of oats, which grew on poor soil to some degree in the midlands.³⁸ Pastoralism as well as cattle raids were spun as deliberately destructive and disturbingly different and the society that practiced it was considered backward and underdeveloped.³⁹ In order to promote further the necessity of civilising Ireland's natives, the Tudor government alleged that pastoralism was the main agricultural method employed by the Gaelic Irish and was therefore a significant threat to the Pale's security, civil living and the well-ordered landscape of an arable society.⁴⁰ But, as is described in more detail in chapter 1, settlement was determined to a significant degree by the type of physical terrain that prevailed throughout a particular shire. The English also managed to spin

³⁵ Furthermore, livestock such as cattle, sheep and pigs not only provided food but also important export commodities such as hides and wool. See Colm Lennon, *Sixteenth Century Ireland: the incomplete conquest* (Dublin, 2005), pp 45-6.

³⁶ Kenneth Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicised Ireland in the middle ages*, (2nd Edition, Dublin, 2003), p. 136.

³⁷ Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicised Ireland*, pp 132-3.

³⁸ Upon Mountjoy's arrival in Leix and Offaly, for example, he specifically targeted the tillage in the country and burned it to the value of ten thousand pounds. The Lord Deputy was also allegedly astonished that in so 'barbarous' a region, 'how well the ground was manured and how orderly their fields were fenced'. See The Lord Deputy Mountjoy to Sir Robert Cecil, 7 August 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/59. Nicholls further argues that oats, with the addition of butter, was the staple diet of the Gaelic Irish in the sixteenth century. See Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicised Ireland in the Middle Ages*, pp 132-3.

³⁹ Davies, *The first English empire*, pp 123-4.

⁴⁰ Montaña, *The Roots of English colonialism in Ireland*, p. 99.

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this in their favour. William Newburgh, the twelfth century English historian, alleged that Ireland's soil would have been 'fertile if it did not lack the industry of the dedicated farmer; but the country has an uncivilized and barbarous people, almost lacking in laws and discipline, lazy in agriculture, and thereby living more on milk than on bread'.⁴¹ Newburgh's comments highlighted the degree to which pastoralism was an alien concept to the arable based societies of lowland England. Civility thus stood, as the hallmark of acceptable behaviour and norms and without it, membership of civil or civic English society was impossible.⁴² Consequently, the Tudors deemed it essential for the Gaelic Irish to evolve from "barbarous rudeness" to "sweet civility" before they could be fully accepted as part of the English polity.⁴³

Programmes of assimilation and reform such as surrender and regrant sought to integrate individual Irish lords, both politically and culturally, into the Tudor state by promoting them to the peerage as barons and earls.⁴⁴ The Tudors considered the acceptance of the social, economic, and cultural norms of the English state as a crucial means of overcoming the frontier line between civility and barbarism by which a 'union of manners and conformity of minds' would be initiated 'to bring them (Gaelic Irish) to be one people (with the English)'.⁴⁵ The move was particularly successful in territories such as Upper Ossory, Clanmalire, Ely and northern Offaly which were assimilated into English shire ground with English administrative structures through the collaboration of local chiefs who embraced the policy of surrender and regrant.⁴⁶ Significantly, this presented an alternative model of Anglicisation to the one the government pursued in Leix and Offaly for the majority of the period under review. Yet, surrender and regrant was not

⁴¹ Davies, *The first English empire*, p. 124.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁴⁴ Maginn, "Surrender and Regrant", p. 955; Maginn, *William Cecil*, p. 49.

⁴⁵ *Edmund Spenser, A view of the present state of Ireland: from the first printed edition*, eds Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley (Oxford, 1997), p. 153; Davies, *The first English empire*, p. 142.

⁴⁶ See chapter 6.

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without its shortcomings. The policy often caused turmoil within clans such as the O'Carrolls and O'Connors as it directly conflicted with their lordships and their extended kinship, forcing the government to provide extensive military and diplomatic assistance in order to secure the chieftaincies.⁴⁷ Crucially, there was also no model in place to assist the government with the peaceful extension of Tudor rule throughout Ireland.⁴⁸ The most significant issue with this approach was that it did not have the wide spread support of the Old English or Tudor officials in London as it placed conciliation before coercion, ignoring the alleged decay of the Englishry.⁴⁹ This was testament to the fact that despite the submission of numerous lords, the deeply ingrained resentments and alleged cultural differences remained between the Gaelic Irish and English that had prevailed for centuries.⁵⁰ It also highlights that in the eyes of numerous Tudor officials, the use of military force, however limited, or at least the threat of such was seen as fundamental to reforming the country.⁵¹

As a result, the government explored alternative approaches to reduce the Gaelic lordships to civility and based their strategy upon previous tactics employed in Scotland and Wales. Tudor intervention in Scotland was a direct result of a perceived threat from France whose monarch, Henry II, was hostile towards England and sought to reclaim English held Boulogne. The campaign was an overriding obsession of Somerset's government and its origin was quite practical in that the administration could not afford to cover the costs of regular invasions of the territory in order to bring the Scots to heel.⁵² His goal was to permanently impose direct rule in Scotland and crush any resistance in the process but force was only seen as a means of ensuring obedience and carrying out punishment when necessary.⁵³ On

⁴⁷ Maginn, 'The Gaelic Peers' pp 566-86; Maginn, *William Cecil*, p. 51.

⁴⁸ Maginn and Ellis, *The Tudor discovery of Ireland*, p. 189.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² M.L. Bush, *The government policy of Protector Somerset* (London, 1975), p. 2.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp 6-12.

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the 10 September 1547, Protector Somerset invaded and crushed the Scottish army at Pinkie, which enabled Seymour to enact his strategy of establishing English garrisons in the country.⁵⁴ These garrisons were expected to not only offer protection to loyalist Scots and promote the Protestant faith but were also a show of force and symbolic of the government's aspirations of taking complete possession of the region.⁵⁵ Accordingly, forts were built or repaired to house permanent English garrisons and secure English influence throughout Scotland.⁵⁶ The move was also intended to unite England and Scotland into 'one isle, one realm', which was clearly God's will, since the two nations dwelt on one island and spoke the same language.⁵⁷ But in practise, the move backfired spectacularly and ultimately, a number of scattered garrisons failed to win the Scots over.⁵⁸ Still the appeal of garrisons seized Somerset's mind and unsurprisingly, figured heavily in his plans for bringing the Gaelic Irish to a similar submission.⁵⁹

The Tudors had arguably experienced greater success in Wales. The so-called Act of Union of 1536 had converted the marcher lordships of Wales into shires and incorporated the region as an integral part of the Kingdom.⁶⁰ Welsh law and customs were abolished and the whole territory was brought under English common law and administrative structures.⁶¹ For the Tudor government, the only credible long-term solution for reforming the country

⁵⁴ Penry Williams, *The later Tudors: England 1547-1603* (Oxford, 1998), p. 39.

⁵⁵ Bush, *The government policy of Protector Somerset*, pp 2-7.

⁵⁶ Steven G. Ellis and Christopher Maginn, *The making of the British Isles: The state of Britain and Ireland, 1450-1660* (Harlow, 2007), pp 113-4.

⁵⁷ Ellis and Maginn, *The making of the British Isles*, pp 113-4.

⁵⁸ Bush, *The government policy of Protector Somerset*, p. 2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Peter Roberts, 'Tudor Wales, national identity and the British inheritance', in Brendan Bradshaw and Peter Roberts (eds), *British consciousness and identity: The making of Britain, 1533-1707* (Cambridge, 1998), pp 8-10.

⁶¹ For more on the Welsh model, see W.R.B. Robinson, 'The Tudor Revolution in Welsh Government 1536-1543: its effects on gentry participation', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 103, No. 406 (January, 1988), pp 1-20.

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was to transition the Welsh lordships into English shires with uniform administrative structures in terms of law, justice and jurisdiction.⁶² Accordingly, sheriffs, justices of the peace and other English local government officials were introduced, primogeniture replaced partible inheritance, the English language was made compulsory for administrative and legal matters and Welsh shires received representation in parliament.⁶³ The initiative proved incredibly effective and the new system helped to curb the worst disorders making the Welsh appear more civilised.⁶⁴ In a wider context, particularly in terms of Ireland, the successful transition from native lordships to English counties provided a blueprint for reducing other borderlands spread throughout the kingdom to Tudor reform, general law and order and ‘civility’.⁶⁵ Its application elsewhere was expected to yield similar results. Accordingly, whenever the administration ran into trouble in Ireland with its reform programmes, individuals such as Sir Henry Sidney and William Gerard who had experience in Wales, urged the government to implement the ‘Welsh model’ throughout Ireland, including the midlands.⁶⁶

By the mid to late 1540s, Tudor officials such as Edward Bellingham, Robert and Walter Cowley, William Brabazon and Nicholas Bagenal among others, promoted the confiscation of Gaelic Irish land and encouraged Edward VI and his government to establish garrisons based upon the Scottish model and gradually implement the Welsh framework to rein in and coerce Ireland’s natives, particularly those of the midlands, towards conformity and leading a civilised life.⁶⁷ The twin strategies of coercion and

⁶² Glanmor Williams, *Renewal and Reformation: Wales, c. 1415-1642* (Oxford, 1987), pp 273-4.

⁶³ Ellis and Maginn, *The making of the British Isles*, p. 101.

⁶⁴ Ellis, “Reducing their barbarous wildness...unto Civility”, pp 186-9.

⁶⁵ Ellis and Maginn, *The making of the British Isles*, p. 103.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Ciaran Brady, *The chief governors: the rise and fall of reform government in Tudor Ireland* (Cambridge, 1994), pp 57-9. Regarding the confiscation of Gaelic Irish land, see The Reformation of Ireland, November 1541, TNA, 60/10/44; Walter Cowley to the Lord Deputy Bellingham, 25 January 1549, TNA, SP 61/2/12; Steven G. Ellis, *Tudor Ireland* (London, 1985), pp 185-8,

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conciliation were employed for the remainder of the century in the hope of reforming the island of Ireland and uniting it once again within the Tudor realm.⁶⁸ In the case of the midlands, the Leix-Offaly colonial scheme can more be seen as a frustrated response by the administration to the consistent raids of the O'Mores and O'Connors upon the Pale. The crown was incredibly wary of the threat posed to the Tudor state by these ongoing raids of the Gaelic Irish. With worrying reports of a potential French invasion and the influx of Scots into Ulster, the government feared that Ireland's natives were planning a pre-emptive attack to 'rid themselves of the yoke of England' before they were 'driven out of their ancient possessions'.⁶⁹ Although this was somewhat of an exaggeration and arguably state propaganda at its finest, there can be little doubt that the various Irish lordships, including the O'Mores and O'Connors, were very much aware of the Tudor government's agenda to lay claim upon their lands. Although Gaelic raids were largely launched to seize cattle or other forms of plunder, they also had long been the means by which the midlands clans displayed their dissatisfaction with the administration.⁷⁰ But by 1546/7, the government's patience had well and truly run out and it decided to take action to prevent any further Gaelic assaults upon the heartland of English civility in Ireland. Lord Deputy Bellingham established the fortresses of Fort Protector and Fort Governor in 1547-8, setting into motion the first Tudor colonisation scheme in Ireland, the Leix-Offaly plantation.⁷¹ Such colonial ventures were proposed as a cheap and effective method of spreading English reform throughout Ireland and Anglicising large parts of

265-9; White, 'The Reign of Edward VI in Ireland', pp 197-206; Montañó, *The Roots of English colonialism*, pp 116-7.

⁶⁸ Maginn and Ellis, *The Tudor discovery of Ireland*, p. 189

⁶⁹ John Mason to the Council, 29 June 1550, TNA, SP 68/9A, fos. 23-9.

⁷⁰ Council of Ireland to Cromwell, 10 June 1538, TNA, SP 60/7/5; Brabazon to Cromwell, 30 December 1537, TNA, SP 60/5/53; Patrick Barnewall to Cromwell, 19 May 1540, TNA, SP 60/9/31; John O'Donovan (ed.), *Annála ríoghachta Éireann: annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters from the earliest period to the year 1616*, third edition (Dublin, 1990), s.a. 1546-7.

⁷¹ Lord Deputy Bellingham to the Privy Council, August 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/84.

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it.⁷² Much like in Scotland and Wales, strategically placed garrisons were expected to subjugate the midlands region and bring it under direct Tudor rule.⁷³ Crucially, it was only under Somerset that the garrisoning of Ireland beyond the English Pale became the government's ultimate focus and the very core of its strategy, remaining a crucial component of future policy in the country.⁷⁴

The administration was very much aware that it could not rely solely on the Old English community of Ireland to plant the midlands with freeholders and instead sought additional settlers 'out of England' itself.⁷⁵ In the context of civility, the venture was expected to produce a settled landscape inhabited by civil English farmers who were the key to security and safeguarding the overall region with their strict adherence to the King's laws. The emphasis on the establishment of a loyal settler group in Leix and Offaly who would till the land in place of the wild Irish became a necessary precursor to the introduction of civility to the midlands.⁷⁶ William Thomas, the Welsh scholar and clerk of the Privy Council during Edward VI's reign, although possessing little experience of Ireland, argued that only then would the country be transformed from 'rude, beastly, ignorant, cruel and unruly infidels, to the state of civil, reasonable, patient, humble, and well-governed Christians'.⁷⁷ In the government's view, the Leix-Offaly plantation was expected to bring the Gaelic Irish of the Leinster region to a 'reasonable submission' as quickly as possible with 'certain garrisons of men of war...in every quarter'.⁷⁸ If the natives were unwilling to cooperate with the government's plan, Thomas Cusack encouraged the employment of 'the sword' to 'destroy all the inhabitants of that realm for their wickedness, and

⁷² Maginn and Ellis, *The Tudor discovery of Ireland*, p. 59.

⁷³ Bush, *The government policy of Protector Somerset*, p. 134.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Maginn, *William Cecil*, pp 48-9; A breviat of the getting of Ireland by Englishmen; and of the decay of the same, BL, Cotton Titus B/XII fol. 594.

⁷⁶ Montaña, *The roots of English colonialism*, pp 99, 121.

⁷⁷ Thomas, *The Pilgrim*, pp 66-8.

⁷⁸ The Lord Deputy and the Council of Ireland to Henry VIII, 18 January 1540, TNA, SP 60/9/5.

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to inhabit the land with new'.⁷⁹ The Tudor administration believed that 'substantial garrisons' and an effective midlands plantation would put an end to relentless incursions upon the English Pale and encourage the natives to 'humble themselves to not only perpetual peace, but also to a quiet obedience and order'.⁸⁰ The colonial venture was also desirable as it offered a 'chance for great profit' and a 'yearly' one at that for the crown with extensive territory on offer for those ambitious and bold enough to seize it.⁸¹

However, the enterprise, at least in its early stages, implemented little change in Leix and Offaly. An inadequate survey combined with insufficient land grants and significant Gaelic resistance ensured that the region remained largely unsettled by the early 1560s.⁸² That being said, the plantation unquestionably had potential and captured the attention and imagination of the Tudor government.⁸³ It presented the opportunity to begin a wider colonisation scheme throughout Leinster and Munster, which the administration hoped would wipe out the final elements of Gaelic culture that had gradually crept into otherwise loyal English districts.⁸⁴ Hence, the planting of Leix and Offaly with English freeholders became a significant feature of governing the kingdom of Ireland and served as a model for future colonisation ventures.⁸⁵

Somewhat similar undertakings had already been attempted in Louth and Meath with ample success in the thirteenth and fourteenth-centuries. In the early 1300s, Louth was neither peaceful nor obedient having witnessed the murder of its sheriff, a rebellion against the crown, repeated raids of Scottish invaders and the massacre of its earl and 160 of his family and

⁷⁹ David B. Quinn, 'Edward Walshe's "Conjectures" concerning the State of Ireland 1552' *IHS*, Vol. 5, No. 20 (September, 1947), p. 312.

⁸⁰ Thomas, *The Pilgrim*, pp 66-8.

⁸¹ Thomas Cusack to Northumberland, 8 May 1552, BL, Add. MS. 48015, fol. 266.

⁸² See chapter 1.

⁸³ Maginn, *William Cecil*, p. 48.

⁸⁴ Quinn, 'Edward Walshe's "Conjectures"', pp 303-22; Maginn, *William Cecil*, p. 48.

⁸⁵ Maginn, *William Cecil*, p. 49.

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retainers by his tenants.⁸⁶ Louth was also a border region, but was notably dissimilar to the midlands territories in that it had English administrative structures and more closely resembled the local societies of England by the fourteenth century.⁸⁷ English lords were first granted land in the area following the visit of Lord John, Henry II's son to Ireland in 1185. The government then encouraged a significant number of English peasants to settle in the area soon after on good quality land. With the assistance of these local lords, a prosperous English settlement was quickly established followed by the territory's official shiring in the 1220s. These local active magnates and leading landowners served within Louth's local government ensuring the border region was well defended and reinforced.⁸⁸ Similarly, Meath was a turbulent frontier shire in which peace was precarious.⁸⁹ The leading landowners – nobles and gentry alike – controlled the political machinery of their shire with minimum outside interference and maintained law and order in the same way as in other English shires.⁹⁰

Still, even though these counties most closely resembled the traditional English style of 'self-government at the Kings command', and although they were also borderlands, they were critically different to Leix and Offaly. In the two midlands territories, the English community was mainly composed of soldiers, not seasoned marchers, who had a history of quelling rebellions from the natives and who had developed there as a county community gradually over centuries since the time of the original conquest. It would be amiss to state that Leix and Offaly fit entirely within this framework although they unquestionably bore some resemblance. In order to better understand what the Tudor administration sought to and actually

⁸⁶ Brendan Smith, 'A County community in early Fourteenth-Century Ireland: The Case of Louth', *EHR*, Vol. 108, No. 428 (Summer, 1993), p. 562.

⁸⁷ Smith, 'A County community in early Fourteenth-Century Ireland: The Case of Louth', p. 563.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 563-71.

⁸⁹ Steven G. Ellis, *Defending English Ground: war and peace in Meath & Northumberland, 1460-1542* (Oxford, 2015), p. 84.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

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achieved in the midlands, it was more fitting to analyse the 1569 Statute of Parliament which granted the Government the authority to shire at will in Ireland and create new counties out of territories dominated by Gaelic lordships. For this dissertation, Counties Galway and Cavan in particular provided a sufficient comparative with the Queen's County and King's County.

Nevertheless, although there were notable differences between the Louth/Meath framework and the one employed in Leix and Offaly, it was quite clear that once the two midlands territories were brought under Tudor rule, the government sought to establish English administrative structures there and attract significant numbers of gentry from England capable of discharging the key offices of county government.⁹¹ This was all based around the aforementioned concept of 'self-government at the King's command' which was a basic principle whereby magnates, coalitions of lesser nobles, and gentry were entrusted by the crown to maintain 'good rule' throughout the kingdom as JPs, sheriffs, constables, coroners and escheators.⁹² First the territory would be divided into shires or counties and the King or Queen would then appoint these local officials to administer English common law.⁹³ By the fourteenth century, county gentry had become increasingly politically and regionally conscious and very much aware that they needed to form a united front when presenting community petitions or negotiating taxation.⁹⁴ The leading landowners of shires gradually came together to form 'county communities' for this very purpose.⁹⁵ The county was the chief focus of identity for the gentry and

⁹¹ This was certainly the government's goal in the early 1550s. See Instructions by the King to Sir James Croft, May 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/32; Instructions to Mr. Wood to be brought before the Privy Council, 29 September 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/54; The King to the Lord Deputy Croft, November 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/73; Also see chapter 1.

⁹² Ellis and Maginn, *The making of the British Isles*, pp 48, 57.

⁹³ Ellis, "Reducing their barbarous wildness...unto Civility", p. 186.

⁹⁴ Chris Given-Wilson, *The English nobility in the Late Middle Ages: the fourteenth century political community* (London, 2002), p. 173.

⁹⁵ Given-Wilson, *The English nobility in the Late Middle Ages*, p. 173; However, Christine Carpenter in particular argued that to apply the term

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their activities were the prime expression of county community.⁹⁶ This type of collaboration was crucial to English shires and border regions as it provided a focus for cohesion and helped to build a sense of community against the enemy 'other'.⁹⁷

So what were these offices of English local government and what did they entail? Well firstly, it must be stated that gentry were predominantly split into two categories: county gentry and parish gentry. In England at least, Parish gentry predominantly owned a number of manors with their power largely confined to their respective localities.⁹⁸ They tended to be poorer than county gentry, worth no more than £20 of annual landed income and sometimes less.⁹⁹ Christopher Given Wilson described Parish gentry as 'poorer esquires, gentlemen, lawyers and merchants who had invested inland and acquired country seats and some...richer yeomen'.¹⁰⁰ County gentry on the other hand tended to be knights and wealthier esquires who held land both within and outside their respective county and were involved in its local government as well as central government with an average landed income of at least £40.¹⁰¹ By and large, wealth was the main difference between the two communities.¹⁰² In general, prominent gentlemen tended to be drawn to the most economically attractive regions and were uneasy outside of these confines, which would explain why

community to something the size of a county is a misapplication. See Christine Carpenter, *Locality and polity: A study of Warwickshire landed society, 1401-1499* (Cambridge 1992), pp 342-3, 380.

⁹⁶ Tim Thornton, *Cheshire and the Tudor State* (Suffolk, 2000), p. 31.

⁹⁷ Ellis, *Defending English ground*, p. 112.

⁹⁸ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Suffolk and the Tudors: Politics and religion in an English County, 1500-1600* (Oxford, 1986), p. 28; J.A.F. Thomson, *Transformation of medieval England, 1370-1529* (New York, 2014), pp 110-11, 114-15; Given-Wilson, *the English nobility*, pp 71-2.

⁹⁹ Thomson, *Transformation of medieval England*, pp 110-11, 114-15; Given-Wilson, *the English nobility*, pp 71-2.

¹⁰⁰ Given-Wilson, *The English nobility*, pp 71-2.

¹⁰¹ Judith Middleton-Stewart, *Inward purity and outward splendour: death and remembrance in the deanery of Dunwich, Suffolk, 1370-1547* (Norwich, 2001), p. 88.

¹⁰² MacCulloch, *Suffolk and the Tudors*, pp 285-6.

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turbulent territories such as the midlands tended to attract more soldiers than it did gentry.¹⁰³

Regarding the offices of English local government itself, Justices of the peace, in Ireland at least, were in part quasi-military officers, drawn from the leading landowners of a particular shire and expected to array and lead the able bodied men of their jurisdiction against the enemies of the crown.¹⁰⁴ JPs also held courts where they heard and determined cases of trespass and felony but they remained primarily focused on martial matters, in Ireland anyhow. In the fourteenth century, their duties were also listed as assessors to arms, arrayers, holders of musters and parleys and captains of border warfare.¹⁰⁵ Similar to the Parliamentary knights of the Shire who required an annual landed income of more than £40 a year, the JPs were expected to have a minimum of £20 annually.¹⁰⁶ Next in line was the sheriff who was the main shire officer; a link between central and local government with military, judicial and administrative powers and functions.¹⁰⁷ The sheriff's duties included the clearing of passes through Gaelic terrain, the organisation of defence against Gaelic raids and helping to co-ordinate the general hosting.¹⁰⁸ Aside from this, sheriffs were responsible for empanelling juries, guarding of prisoners and producing them for trial, hanging convicted felons, executing royal writs and organising elections of members of Parliament for a particular shire.¹⁰⁹

The county escheator ensured the monarch received the feudal rights and revenues due to the crown within an individual county. In order to achieve this, escheators held inquisitions post mortem upon the death of a tenant-in-

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 287.

¹⁰⁴ Ellis, *Defending English Ground*, p. 87.

¹⁰⁵ Robin Frame, 'Commissions of the Peace in Ireland, 1302-1461', *Anal. Hib.*, No. 35 (1992), p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ Middleton-Stewart, *Inward purity and outward splendour*, p. 88.

¹⁰⁷ Ellis, *Ireland in the age of the Tudors*, p. 177.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Geoffrey Elton, *Studies in Tudor and Stuart politics and government, Vol. 4, papers and reviews, 1982-1990* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 14.

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chief but only those who held land of the crown by knight service, in order to determine the land's value. The escheator would then take the lands into royal custody and establish the legal heir who, if underage, became a ward. Escheators also restored the possessions and endowments of religious houses following the appointment of a new abbot or abbess.¹¹⁰ Coroners on the other hand investigated felonies, homicide and suicide and were expected to present evidence of such at inquests if they believed the death was in any way unnatural.¹¹¹ At a more local level were the offices of constable and serjeant. Yet there were two different types of office, which went under the name of constable. One was the civil office, which oversaw a parish and was drawn from the higher branches of village and small town society and was entrusted with maintaining the King's peace in their respective districts.¹¹² By the Tudor era, the duties of the office were extended to the enforcement of legislation regarding church attendance, drunkenness, vagrancy as well as more important matters such as taxation and military recruitment.¹¹³ The second office of constable, and the one which predominantly operated in Leix and Offaly, were martial men and commanders of garrisoned castles or fortifications who usually commanded small bands of roughly 25 to 80 footmen.¹¹⁴ The serjeants were the equivalent of the English hundred bailiffs and were normally fairly substantial landowners who delivered writs and collected rents and other dues as well as performing all the routine duties of the sheriff.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Anita Hewerdine, *The yeomen of the guard and the Early Tudors: The formation of a royal bodyguard* (London, 2012), p. 97

¹¹¹ R.F. Hunnisett, *The medieval coroner* (Cambridge, 1961), pp 3-7. Ken MacMillan, *Stories of True Crime in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 2015), p. 8

¹¹² Clive Emsley, *The English police: A political and social history* (New York, 1996), pp 2-4.

¹¹³ Emsley, *The English police*, p. 5.

¹¹⁴ Clifford J. Rogers (ed.), *The Oxford encyclopedia of medieval warfare and military technology*, Vol. 1 (New York, 2010), p. 423.

¹¹⁵ Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven, 'Anglo-Irish Shire Government in the Thirteenth Century', *IHS*, Vol. 5, No. 17 (Spring, 1946), pp 21-7.

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For the most part, the government's twin strategies of assimilation and coercion and its incapability of pursuing a singular and clear approach in Ireland ensured they were impeded at every turn from achieving their goal. On the one hand, the government promoted the policy of assimilation and integration and on the other, endorsed the subjection of the Gaelic Irish by force as evident in the case of the O'Byrnes, O'Tooles and Kavanaghs who had already submitted to the crown in the 1540s.¹¹⁶ Unsurprisingly, successive Tudor rulers and their respective administrations were unable to convince the Gaelic natives of the country to adopt most aspects of English culture.¹¹⁷ A fundamental problem with the overall process of assimilation was that the Gaelic Irish were not fully trusted by the crown. During the reign of Edward VI, for instance, only ten per cent of the army was to be made up of natives and the Council informed Lord Deputy St. Leger to use 'gentleness to such as shall show themselves conformable, to others to do as occasion shall show'.¹¹⁸ Thus, the status of the Gaelic Irish within the Tudor state for most of the sixteenth century remained unclear with successive government policies failing to adequately resolve the problem, which forced them often to appeal to foreign powers, and enemies of the Tudor state for aid.¹¹⁹ In spite of this, by Elizabeth's reign, the crown alleged that Ireland's inhabitants, regardless of ancestry, were equal to English subjects so long as they conducted themselves as Englishmen.¹²⁰ The administration failed to realise that the majority of the native population were disinterested and unwilling to do so.

¹¹⁶ Lord Deputy and Council to the King, 14 November 1540, TNA, SP 60/9/64; Instructions by the King and Council to Sir Anthony St. Leger, July 1550, TNA, SP 61/2/57; Maginn, *William Cecil*, p. 49.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Remembrances for Ireland, July 1550, TNA, SP 61/2/55; Instructions by the King and Council to Sir Anthony St. Leger, July 1550, TNA, SP 61/2/57.

¹¹⁹ Remembrances for Ireland, July 1550, TNA, SP 61/2/55; Privy Council to St. Leger and Council, 26 January 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/4; Maginn, *William Cecil*, pp 49-51.

¹²⁰ Draft instructions for the establishment of a president and council in Munster, 9 October 1568, TNA, SP 63/26/9; Maginn, 'The Gaelic Peers', p. 581; Ellis, *Ireland in the age of the Tudors*, p. 319.

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In sum, successive Tudor rulers were presented with constant difficulties and setbacks, which restricted the establishment of traditional English local government in the territories of Leix and Offaly. These problems such as unsuitable terrain, uncertain leases, hostile natives and financial losses are discussed in detail in chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4. Chapter 1 analyses what framework the Tudor government established in the midlands by the year 1560 considering the fact they could not fully establish county structures of government in territories that had not yet been shired. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 discuss English local government in the two shires and compare it with the implementation of English administrative structures in similar Gaelic dominated territories such as Cavan and Galway. Chapter 4 also deals with the reconstruction of crown government after the Nine Years War and the establishment of a fully operating hybrid system of English local government by 1603. The military preparedness of the leading landowners and local government officers of the Queen's County and King's County, crucial to safeguarding any turbulent border shire, is the subject of chapter 5. But how could these shires be defended without a large standing army? To whom did the responsibility of defence fall to during times of rebellion? And how could these traditional English administrative structures and legal procedures function or even survive in the face of native resistance? These questions are also addressed in chapter 5. Chapter 6 provides an alternative analysis of the establishment of English local government in Leix and Offaly as it deals with the two territories assimilation into English shires through Gaelic co-operation with the policy of surrender and regrant, offering an alternative model of Anglicisation.

In conclusion, the Tudor government's decision to shire the Gaelic lordships of Leix and Offaly and extend English common law and language as well as the reformed faith was considered a means of reducing turbulent border regions, such as the midlands, to civility.¹²¹ But the administration fundamentally underestimated the difficulties of border defence in Ireland and the complexities of its geography and social structures and hence the

¹²¹ Ellis, "Reducing their barbarous wildness...unto Civility", p. 189.

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traditional English local government system struggled. The only way of making it work, at least initially, as this dissertation highlights, was to rely upon English martial captains and settlers as well as a militaristic county government to curb disturbances and retain the peace. Despite the rich and fascinating history of Leix and Offaly and their strategic proximity to the heartland of English rule in Ireland, there has been no significant study done on the establishment of English administrative structures in either area. This glaring deficiency prompted a detailed and dedicated survey of the primary and secondary historical sources relating to the two territories in order to analyse their transition from Gaelic lordships to Tudor shires from 1547-1603, the results of which are presented in this dissertation

Historiography and historical sources:

An extensive range of primary sources from both Gaelic Irish and English perspectives has been used in the creation of this dissertation in order to provide a detailed analysis of local government in Leix and Offaly. Most of the evidence relating to the establishment of English administrative structures in the midlands is derived from English primary sources such as the State Papers (60-3), Carew Papers and Cecil Papers, or printed calendars such as the Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, Letters and Papers of the Reign of Henry VIII, Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts and the Calendar of Patent and Close Rolls. Despite the wealth of sources available to early modern researchers, the discontinuity and gaps in the primary material presented a number of difficulties. As a result, we often have no idea of the background, landed income (in most cases), or activities of local government officers such as a sheriffs or JPs beyond the year in which they were appointed or replaced. A similar remark can be made with regard to the chapter on Gaelic government loyalists. Although there is extensive detail, mostly from an English perspective, relating to the two clans and their activities throughout the period under review, there is a significant lack of primary sources concerning the Gaelic lordships of the region. This was due to the fact that Ireland's natives, for the most part, did not keep administrative records and any that were written or managed to survive the turbulent Tudor period, were lost over the ensuing centuries.¹ As a result, we are missing crucial information regarding certain chieftains such as their early lives and their ultimate fate unless they came in regular contact with the government and were recorded in the State Papers. Unsurprisingly, considering the fact that this dissertation is largely focused on the English settlers of the two territories and the establishment of English local

¹ Kenneth Nicholls, 'Gaelic society and economy in the high middle ages', in Art Cosgrove (ed.) *A new history of Ireland, Medieval Ireland, 1169-1534* (Oxford, 1987), p. 398; Katherine Simms, *From Kings to Warlords: The changing political structure of Gaelic Ireland in the later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1987), p. 1.

government, there is a greater reliance on English sources than Gaelic. That being said, the native sources were by no means neglected. The Annals of the Four Masters in particular regularly provided extensive and rich detail of certain events in the two shires that were dismissed in the Tudor records. As there is unquestionably a significant degree of bias in both sources, it was crucial to proceed with caution and extensively examine them in detail in so far as was possible considering the prejudice of the documentary material available to us. Were it not for the Tudor Fiantes or the Patent and Close rolls that noted local government appointments and grants of land, we would have no idea who any of these individuals were to begin with or their respective backgrounds for that matter. With the assistance of the State Papers, it was then possible to piece together the brief careers of many of these men and their role within the midlands. In most cases, the calendars were examined first followed by an analysis of the original manuscripts available online with the exception of the chapter on Gaelic government loyalists, which drew heavily from Gaelic sources such as the Annals of the Four Masters.

The significance and importance of the study of Tudor local government and county communities is reflected in the wide array of secondary material available on the two topics. As they are so closely intertwined and related to one another, the historiography of the two topics need to be discussed together. The works of Geoffrey Elton in particular, most notably his publication, *The Tudor constitution: documents and commentary* in 1960, was a good starting point as it provided a summary of the instruments of English local administrations and how they operated.² Yet, at times, the author offers somewhat of a general overview of these official roles and responsibilities. The same can also be said for Penry Williams, *The Tudor Regime* which provides an unquestionably compelling but brief analysis inter alia of the leading landowners in the Tudor shires of England. That

² Geoffrey Elton, *The Tudor constitution: Documents and commentary* (Cambridge, 1960), pp 462-82.

being said, Williams' utilisation of a wide array of sources is to be commended, as is his analysis of the central machinery of English government, the religious settlement and the economy.³ Arguably, the historiography of local government and county communities advanced somewhat with the case studies of the Tudor shires of Kent, Norfolk, Sussex and Essex respectively by the historians Alan Everitt, A. Hassell Smith, Joel Samaha and Anthony Fletcher in the 1960s and 1970s.⁴ Everitt's *The Community of Kent* particularly stands out, albeit from a seventeenth century perspective, for its discussion of just how insular or closed off English county government could be. Much like Samaha's detailed study, Everitt emphasised the importance of peers and leading county gentry as opposed to parish gentry in the maintenance of law and order in English counties. Having said that, Everitt's focus is narrow at times and places an overemphasis on the gentry alone and assumes that their views and actions were indicative of the entire population.

Unsurprisingly, an examination of English administrative structures was also necessary to conduct this study and so the works of Ellis, particularly *Ireland in the age of the Tudors* and *Defending English ground: War and Peace in Meath & Northumberland, 1460-1542* were vital, providing clear definitions of the offices of English local government.⁵ In addition, Ciaran Brady's *The Chief Governors* and Jon G. Crawford's *Anglicising the Government of Ireland* were also indispensable.⁶

³ Penry Williams, *The Tudor regime* (Oxford, 1979).

⁴ Alan Everitt, *The community of Kent and the Great Rebellion* (Leicester, 1966); A. Hassell Smith, *County and court: Government and politics in Norfolk, 1558-1603* (Oxford, 1974); Joel Samaha, *Law and order in historical perspective: The case of Elizabethan Essex* (New York, 1974); Anthony Fletcher, *Sussex 1600-1660: A county community in peace and war* (London, 1975).

⁵ Ellis, *Ireland in the age of the Tudors, 1447-1603*; Ellis, *Defending English ground*.

⁶ Brady, *The chief governors*; Jon G. Crawford, *Anglicising the Government of Ireland* (Dublin, 1993).

As this thesis examines the several frameworks employed by the Tudor government in the midlands, a detailed analysis of the historiography of such was imperative starting with the Welsh model. The works of Glanmor Williams are an excellent starting point and his book on *Renewal and Reformation: Wales, c. 1415-1642* in addition to his 1992 publication, *Wales and the Act of Union*, were particularly useful as they provided an excellent summary of the importance of the 1536 statute and the effect it had on the Welsh lordships, their language and culture.⁷ Peter Roberts' articles on Tudor intervention in the Principality and marches of Wales are also invaluable sources providing detailed background on the application of English administrative structures in the country as well as context on the subject, its overall success and the fundamental problems of applying such an approach in Ireland.⁸

Incidentally, one of the first historians to apply this approach to Ireland fact was arguably Brendan Smith in his case studies of Louth in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁹ In his 1993 article, Smith highlighted that the fundamental desire of shire gentry was to be allowed to control the political machinery of their respective county with minimum outside interference.¹⁰ In marcher societies, Smith argued, real power lay with those who could exert control on the frontier and his case study highlights the level of power and authority county gentry possessed. His later 2013 survey is much more

⁷ Williams, *Renewal and Reformation*, pp 270-7; Glanmor Williams, *Wales and the Act of Union* (Bangor, 1992), pp 11-40 in particular.

⁸ Peter Roberts, 'The union with England and the identity of "Anglican" Wales', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 22 (1972), pp 49-70; Peter Roberts, 'The English crown, the principality of Wales and the council in the marches, 1534-1641', in Brendan Bradshaw and John Morrill (eds), *The British problem, c. 1534-1707: state formation in the Atlantic Archipelago* (Basingstoke, 1996), pp 118-47; Roberts, 'Tudor Wales', pp 8-10.

⁹ Smith, 'A County community in early Fourteenth-Century Ireland', pp 561-88; Brendan Smith, *Crisis and survival in Late Medieval Ireland: The English of Louth and their neighbours, 1330-1450* (Oxford, 2013).

¹⁰ Smith, 'A County community in early Fourteenth-Century Ireland', p. 586.

general and discusses local government in Louth and in numerous sections, places a notable emphasis on the impact negligent or absentee landholders had on their respective shires and the overall stability of the English lordship.¹¹ Specifically, the second part of his book is crucial to understanding the importance of marcher regions to defining the counties themselves. Smith analyses Louth within the context of not only Irish history, but also English history and highlights how its local government operated along the same lines as Wales and the north of England but was most notably dissimilar to the lowland shires of southern England.¹² In other words, Smith emphasised that these areas were both Tudor frontiers as well as heartlands of English authority in Ireland, all of which is crucial to understanding a similar scenario in the midlands. Arguably, the most comprehensive study since then from both perspectives is Steven Ellis' comparative work on *War and Peace in Meath & Northumberland, 1460-1542*.¹³ In this perceptive case study, Ellis argues that frontier societies such as Meath and Northumberland and their respective county communities placed a particular emphasis on defence not just government, similar to Leix and Offaly.¹⁴ His chapter on 'Ruling the marches: county communities in Frontier societies' in particular offers a revealing insight into how Irish marcher shires operated, their patterns of landholding, social structures and their respective societies.¹⁵

Continuing on a similar comparative note, it was crucial to examine, in extensive detail, the erecting of English government structures in other Gaelic dominated territories throughout Tudor Ireland. Such a study is significant as it provides us with an insight into government encroachment

¹¹ Smith, *Crisis and survival in Late Medieval Ireland*, pp 34-9, 47-50, 61-2, 74, 211.

¹² In particular see pp 20, 26, 66, 71, 82-5, 90, 98-9; 20, 37, 170, 176 & 234.

¹³ Ellis, *Defending English ground*.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 84-112.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

into native regions and how the local population reacted to such intrusion.¹⁶ It also provides an interesting comparative perspective of how Tudor intervention in these areas shaped the county government there and the overall composition of these newly erected English shires. Counties Cavan and Galway were the most pertinent for this particular study. Regarding County Cavan, Ciaran Brady's 1985 article was one of the first attempts by an early modern historian to analyse surrender and regrant within its historiographical context by focusing on the impact the policy of assimilation had on the Gaelic lordship of the O'Reillys and how it eventually led to their downfall.¹⁷ Bernadette Cunningham's survey on east Breifne is also useful for understanding the O'Reilly lordship's relationship with the English government in Cavan and how they used this connection to their advantage.¹⁸ Cunningham's study goes a long way in deciphering a similar scenario in the midlands with the FitzPatricks, O'Dempseys and the O'Carrolls. In terms of County Galway, Cunningham is once again an excellent starting point and her work on the assimilation of the Gaelic lordships of Connacht and their role as landowners in the region is indispensable.¹⁹ Cunningham is particularly proficient at uncovering the motivations of the Gaelic lords who submitted and how they may have viewed themselves from a cultural standpoint within the Tudor state. This was crucial to establishing a framework for Chapter 6 which compliments Bernadette's work that Gaelic lords could very well have considered

¹⁶ Christopher Maginn, *'Civilizing' Gaelic Leinster: the extension of Tudor rule into the O'Byrne and O'Toole lordships* (Dublin, 2005), p. 3.

¹⁷ Ciaran Brady, 'The O'Reillys of East Breifne and the problem of surrender and regrant', *Breifne*, Vol. 6 (1985), pp 233-62; 'The end of the O'Reilly lordship, 1584-1610', in David Edwards (ed.), *Region and rulers in Ireland, 1100-1560* (Dublin, 2004), pp 174-200.

¹⁸ Bernadette Cunningham, 'The Anglicisation of east Breifne: The O'Reillys and the emergence of County Cavan', in Raymond Gillespie (ed.), *Cavan: essays on the history of an Irish county* (Kildare, 1995), pp 51-72.

¹⁹ Bernadette Cunningham, 'From Warlords to Landlords: Political and Social Change in Galway 1540-1640', in Gerard Moran and Raymond Gillespie (eds), *Galway: history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1996), pp 97-129.

themselves Gaelic Irish and English at the same time. However, it is the work of Joseph Mannion and his PhD thesis in particular on 'Landownership and Anglicisation in Tudor Connaught' and Elizabethan Galway that provide the essential building blocks for understanding a comparative model to the one implemented in the midlands.²⁰ Mannion's work reinforces the point made in this thesis that the implementation of traditional English style government and any chance it had of success was dependent upon a number of factors, most of which were absent from the Leix-Offaly region. Maginn's article on Elizabethan Cavan is just as crucial, providing a comprehensive analysis of the implementation of the institutions of Tudor government in the area.²¹ Maginn argues that the erecting of English style local government and the subsequent exclusion of the ruling Gaelic lordship, the O'Reillys, from prominent positions in the county administration, in direct opposition to the Welsh model, caused significant difficulties for the Tudor crown. Such a system was ill suited to a region where its Gaelic natives ruled supreme but provided an opportunity for ambitious New English adventurers to dominate the local framework, already familiar with English style government. Chapters 1-6 compliment Maginn's survey and there are unquestionably some striking resemblances between the three shires and the situation that unfolded. As a result, the concise analyses of Ellis, Brady, Cunningham, Mannion and Maginn provide the essential framework for conducting a similar study of English local government in the Irish midlands.

Yet it must be stated that such an approach to the study of Irish history is controversial to say the least and it has often clashed and conflicted with the

²⁰ Joseph Mannion, 'Landownership and Anglicisation in Tudor Connaught: the lordships of Clanrickard and Hy Many, 1500-1590' Unpublished PhD thesis, NUI Galway, 2010), pp 241-76; Joseph, Mannion, 'Elizabethan County Galway: The origin and evolution of an administrative unit of Tudor local government', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, Vol. 64 (2012), pp 64-89.

²¹ Christopher Maginn, 'Elizabethan Cavan: the institutions of Tudor government in an Irish county', in Brendan Scott (ed.), *Culture and society in Early Modern Breifne/Cavan* (Dublin, 2009), pp 69-85.

nationalist school of thought in this country and been deemed revisionist. This study has sought to present the facts, as they have appeared in the primary material and drawn conclusions from such, all the while very much aware of and sensitive towards the ‘Two Nations’ debate.²² Similarly, it must also be stated that over the last fifty years or so, there has unquestionably been a rise in the study of social history often at the expense of the study of political and institutional history. That being said, this dissertation has certainly attempted to analyse what occurred in Leix and Offaly from a political, social and institutional perspective.

Due to the emphasis placed on defence in turbulent border shires such as the King’s County and Queen’s County, an in-depth examination of the historiography of Tudor military personnel and martial men was also imperative. The recent works of James O’Neill and Paul E.J. Hammer were particularly useful for this dissertation. O’Neill’s book on the Nine Years’ War comprehensively re-evaluates the Earl of Tyrone and his forces, their adaptation of sophisticated military and technological advances and portrays Gaelic Irish society as more progressive than first thought.²³ From an English perspective, Hammer’s work, *Elizabeth's Wars: War, Government and Society in Tudor England, 1544-1604* excels in its narrative and analysis of the wars of the Tudor state that raged for the majority of the

²² Kenneth Nicholls, ‘Worlds Apart? The Ellis Two-Nation Theory on Late Medieval Ireland’, *HI*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Summer, 1999), pp. 22-6; Steven G. Ellis, ‘More Irish than the Irish themselves? - The ‘Anglo-Irish’ in Tudor Ireland’, *HI*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring, 1999) pp 22-6; Brendan Bradshaw, ‘Revising Irish history’ in D.Ó Cellaigh (ed.), *Reconsiderations of Irish history and culture* (1994), pp 27-41; Brendan Bradshaw ‘Nationalism and historical scholarship in modern Ireland’ in Ciaran Brady (ed.), *Interpreting Irish history: the debate on historical revisionism* (Kildare, 1994), pp 191-216; Nicholas P. Canny, ‘The Ideology of English Colonization: From Ireland to America’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Oct., 1973), pp 575-98; William Palmer, Review of Ellis, Steven G., *Ireland in the Age of the Tudors 1447-1603: English Expansion and the End of Gaelic Rule*, H-Albion, H-Net Reviews. January 2000, URL: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=3755>.

²³ James O’Neill, *The Nine Years’ War: O’Neill, Mountjoy and the Military Revolution* (Dublin, 2017).

sixteenth century and the men who fought them.²⁴ In particular, Hammer's focus on the evolution and modernisation of English warfare throughout this period is particularly well researched and is a fascinating read, providing extensive and rich detail for a better understanding of the Tudor army. Older works of prominent military historians such as Cyril Falls and Gerard Anthony Hayes McCoy also proved crucial. Falls's *Elizabeth's Irish Wars* gives an in-depth analysis of the background of the Irish wars that plagued the Tudor state throughout Elizabeth's reign.²⁵ Falls also provides extensive detail as to the composition of the Irish and English forces and the military administration in general.²⁶ If one were to highlight a particular flaw in his work, it would be that he devotes the majority of his focus to the Nine Years' War, placing less emphasis on the military engagements that came before.²⁷ Similar remarks could also be directed at Gerard Anthony Hayes McCoy's *Irish battles: A military history of Ireland* with the exception of the Battle of Knockdoe and John McGurk's *The Elizabethan conquest of Ireland*.²⁸ That being said, the two works are hugely significant in their own right and provide rich analysis of sixteenth century warfare. McGurk's *Elizabethan conquest of Ireland* diligently describes the Elizabethan soldier and the difficulties of recruitment as well as how they were equipped and swiftly dispatched for the Irish theatre of war.²⁹ Furthermore, he discusses the effect of the Nine Years' War on English society and the demands it placed on the shires of England and Wales. Steven Ellis' and Ciaran Brady's chapters in Bartlett and Jeffrey (ed.), *Military history of Ireland* are also useful for understanding what the government expected of its soldiers

²⁴ Paul E. J. Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars: War, Government and Society in Tudor England, 1544-1604* (Basingstoke, 2003).

²⁵ Cyril Falls, *Elizabeth's Irish Wars* (London, 1950).

²⁶ Falls, *Elizabeth's Irish Wars*, pp 35-49, 67-86.

²⁷ Although Falls does discuss the uprising of Shane O'Neill and the First and Second Desmond rebellions, he focuses the majority of his attention on the Nine Years' War, see *Ibid.*, pp 202-13, 213-30, 268-82, 282-92, 304-19, 319-35.

²⁸ G.A. Hayes McCoy's *Irish battles: A military history of Ireland* (Belfast, 1969); John McGurk's *The Elizabethan conquest of Ireland* (Manchester, 1997).

²⁹ See McGurk's, *The Elizabethan conquest of Ireland*.

and their captains in Ireland.³⁰ Further writings on English military history, most notably David Grummit's case study of the Calais garrison in northern France in the early Tudor period, have provided a fresh perspective on the English soldier during times of unrest.³¹ The most concise secondary source, for the sake of this dissertation, however, is Rory Rapple's *Martial power and Elizabethan political culture: military men in England and Ireland, 1558-1594*.³² Rapple's study of Elizabethan martial men is pivotal to an overall understanding of the experiences and attitudes of the captains who took part in the Tudor conquest of Ireland. Rapple's skilfully written analysis also highlights this group's dissatisfaction and alienation from the Elizabethan regime and argues that the majority acted in a self-serving manner during their careers in the country.³³ Unfortunately, Rapple makes only a few brief references to the captains who served in Leix and Offaly during this period but nevertheless provides a critical insight into the state of mind and political and social thinking of these martial men.³⁴

Finally, regarding the historiography of Leix and Offaly, most historians have placed greater emphasis on the impact Tudor intervention in the midlands had on the Gaelic lordships than the establishment of English administrative structures there. Scholars have also focused more on Gaelic resistance and the various rebellions against English rule. For instance, Robert Dunlop's article on the Leix-Offaly plantation is a brilliant and well-detailed source and a truly invaluable one at that. Although less concerned with the establishment of English local government in the two territories, Dunlop draws attention to the early stages of the midlands venture, its

³⁰ Steven G. Ellis, 'The Tudors and the origins of the modern Irish states: a standing army'; Ciaran Brady, 'The captains' games: army and society in Elizabethan Ireland' in Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffrey (eds) *A military history of Ireland* (Cambridge, 1996), pp 135-59 & 116-35 respectively.

³¹ David Grummitt, *The Calais garrison: war and military service in England, 1436-1558* (Suffolk, 2008).

³² Rory Rapple, *Martial power and Elizabethan political culture: military men in England and Ireland, 1558-1594* (Cambridge, 2009).

³³ See chapters 3-6.

³⁴ See chapter 6.

impact on the native population and the eventual transplantation of the O'Mores and O'Connors to Munster at the end of the century.³⁵ Aside from Dunlop's survey, Vincent Carey's MA thesis on the Gaelic reaction to the Leix-Offaly plantation and the case study of the O'More and O'Connor clans provides a particularly definitive account and reassessment of the Gaelic Irish response to the Tudor government's presence in the midlands.³⁶ It is a fascinating and significant study that highlights how some clans and factions embraced assimilation, others outright rejected it and others flipped their loyalties when it best suited them. As highlighted in Carey's dissertation and again in chapter 6, dispossessed members of the O'More and O'Connor clan, even the most rebellious elements of the two septs, genuinely sought a stake in the Leix-Offaly plantation. Carey's other work such as his *IHS* article on the Mullaghmast massacre is equally important, as it examines the devastating effect the ambush had on the O'Mores and explores controversial themes in the recent history of Tudor Ireland.³⁷ Emmet O'Byrne's book on *War, politics and the Irish of Leinster* highlights the inner-workings of the various Gaelic clans of Leinster including the O'Mores and O'Connors and is therefore crucial to setting out a similar framework in Chapter 6.³⁸ Fiona FitzSimons and Tim Venning have all applied a similar focus and are equally significant works for better understanding the Gaelic response to the midlands colonial scheme, particularly in Offaly. F.R. Montgomery Hitchcock's account of the midland septs, the English Pale and the later settlers of the King's County is also a pivotal contextual source for a better understanding of the history of the O'Connor clan and their rise to prominence in their stronghold of

³⁵ Robert Dunlop 'The Plantation of Leix and Offaly', *EHR*, Vol. 6, No. 21 (Winter 1891), pp 61-96.

³⁶ Vincent P. Carey, 'Gaelic reaction to plantation: the case of the O'More and O'Connor lordships of Laois and Offaly, 1570-1603' (unpublished M.A. thesis, Maynooth College, 1985).

³⁷ Vincent P. Carey, 'John Derricke's "Image of Irelande", Sir Henry Sidney, and the Massacre at Mullaghmast, 1578', *IHS*, Vol. 31, No. 123 (May, 1999), pp 305-27.

³⁸ Emmett O'Byrne, 'War, politics and the Irish of Leinster, 1156-1606', Vol. 2, Trinity College Dublin (2001).

Northern Offaly as well as important background on the Geraldines and their intense rivalry with the Butlers.³⁹ Although Hitchcock's chapter on the Leix-Offaly plantation lacks detail in parts, his subsequent chapters on the rise of the O'Carrolls and O'Molloys and the former's fall from grace are captivating.⁴⁰ The historiography certainly reflects the focus of Irish historians in the past number of decades and the overall emphasis on the Gaelic lordships and to a very minor extent, the English and Welsh settlers in the region.⁴¹ Although Carey in particular exploited Gaelic sources such as the Annals of Loch Cé to provide an insight into the Tudor government's often heavy-handed approach in Leix and Offaly, this does not tell the whole story. Similarly, the works of Rolf Loeber, Patrick Montaña, Ciaran Brady and Dean Gunter White are excellent starting points for comprehending the roots of English colonialism in the midlands but each author focuses their attention on plantation.⁴² A notable exception to this trend is Michael Quinn's article on *Stradbally, Queen's County and the Tudor conquest of Leinster* which uncovers the fascinating career of Francis Cosby, the complete epitome of the violent and controversial military English captain that came to dominate local government in the midlands

³⁹ F.R. Montgomery Hitchcock, *The Midland Septs and the Pale: an account of the early septs and later settlers of the King's County and of life in the English Pale* (Dublin, 1908), pp 53-90; 120-42.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 142-90.

⁴¹ Vincent P. Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order: The O'More lordship of Laois 1536-1603' in Padraig G. Lane and William Nolan (eds) *Laois History and society: Interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1999), pp 213-56; Fiona FitzSimons, 'The lordship of O'Connor Faly', in William Nolan and Timothy P. O'Neill (eds) *Offaly history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1998), pp 207-42; Tim Venning, 'The O'Carrolls of Offaly: Their relations with the Dublin authorities in the sixteenth century', in William Nolan and Timothy P. O'Neill (eds) *Offaly history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish County* (Dublin, 1998), pp 181-206.

⁴² Dean Gunter White, 'Tudor plantations in Ireland to 1571' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Ireland, 2 Vols, 1967); Rolf Loeber, *The geography and practise of English colonization in Ireland from 1534 to 1609* (Athlone, 1991); Brady, *The chief governors*; Montaña, *The Roots of English Colonialism*.

during the sixteenth century.⁴³ Quinn's work also examines the impact individuals such as Cosby had on the county and is a crucial source for undertaking a similar study in chapter 5.

The only scholar truly to analyse the establishment of English administrative structures in the midlands has been Ivan Cosby.⁴⁴ Cosby presents the essential building blocks for the study of the various gentry that comprised the local government of the Queen's County from 1570-1603. Based upon the author's BA dissertation from 1969, Cosby's study is extensive and attempted to deduce English settler's motivations for setting down root in the Queen's County. He divided the freeholders into three categories: 'officers in her majesty's service', 'small landholders', and 'those Englishmen who held land in the county as a reward for service elsewhere in Ireland'.⁴⁵ It must be stated that his first section covering the officers in service to the crown is quite general at times and focuses exclusively on those who held positions in the martial government.⁴⁶ Yet this was also an incredibly useful starting point in terms of highlighting a number of prominent martial men that settled in the area and pinpointing the availability of primary sources relating to them.⁴⁷ Furthermore, Cosby's section on the landholders who settled in the Queen's County is particularly strong and well researched. The analysis of the Tudor map of Maryborough in 1563 also stands out as a noteworthy illustration of Cosby's attention to detail.⁴⁸ The final sections covering the officers who were granted land in the county in reward for services elsewhere in Ireland and the government's mopping up operations in the shire following Tyrone's defeat at Kinsale is

⁴³ Michael Quinn, 'Stradbally, Queen's County and the Tudor Conquest of Leinster', *HI*, Vol. 14, No. 5 (Autumn, 2006), pp 20-4.

⁴⁴ Ivan Cosby, 'The English Settlers in Queens County, 1570-1603', in Pdraig G. Lane & William Nolan (eds), *Laois: History and Society: Interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1999), pp 283-325.

⁴⁵ Cosby, 'The English Settlers in Queens County, 1570-1603', p. 283.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 283, 313-6

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 313-24.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 292-313.

quite vague and lacks detail in parts.⁴⁹ Overall, although Cosby's article suffers from some very minor flaws, it is an unquestionably invaluable source and an excellent introduction to a Leix perspective of the colonial venture. Unfortunately, there is no significant survey for the neighbouring territory of the King's County.

In sum, after reviewing the historiography of English local government, county communities, military men and the territories of Leix and Offaly in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, one conclusion stands out. There is a clear wealth of opportunity for historians in analysing the establishment of English administrative structures in Gaelic dominated territories as it provides a fresh perspective on Tudor Ireland. It is a viewpoint that has been largely overlooked by early modern Irish historians particularly with regard to the midlands region. Thus, taking all of this into account, the following study expands on the scope of previous works to analyse the Tudor transition in Leix and Offaly from Gaelic lordships to English counties from c.1547-1603, the early stages of which will be discussed in Chapter 1.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 316-23.

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“A new departure”: preliminary stages of the Leix-Offaly plantation, c.1547-1560’.

Following the collapse of the Kildare rebellion under Silken Thomas FitzGerald in 1535 and the removal of the Kildare buffer zone, Leix and Offaly were exposed to the interventions of English governors for the first time.¹ Prior to this, the FitzGeralds, the earls of Kildare, kept the Pale in check by policing its turbulent borders and negotiating with its neighbouring Gaelic lords in the government’s interests.² In turn, the earls offered a cheap form of security to the administration and ensured the survival of the Pale itself.³ But by early 1520, the Tudor government was sufficiently established to restore royal authority to Ireland. The works of officials such as Robert Cowley in particular, began to illustrate how decades of Kildare rule had weakened this authority throughout the country.⁴ In response, and in the hope of undermining the FitzGerald’s grip on power, Henry VIII appointed individuals such as Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey as lord deputy in 1520-22, Gerald FitzGerald, 9th Earl of Kildare’s rival Piers Butler, 8th Earl of Ormond as Deputy in 1522-4, Richard Nugent, Lord Delvin in 1527-8 and Sir William Skeffington in 1530-32 and again in 1534-5.⁵ Henry VIII’s decision to appoint Butler as lord deputy exacerbated the feud between the Earl of Kildare and the Earl of Ormond, which in turn seriously weakened the Irish lordship with FitzGerald raiding the lands of Butler and his supporters and Butler retaliating likewise.⁶ The government created further trouble for itself by summoning Kildare and Ormond to court and detaining them there. In their absence Richard Nugent, Lord Delvin, was entirely incapable of maintaining order as FitzGerald’s allies,

¹ Carey, ‘The end of the Gaelic political order’, p. 216.

² Ibid.

³ Vincent P. Carey, *Surviving the Tudors: the ‘wizard’ earl of Kildare and English rule in Ireland* (Dublin, 2002), p. 24.

⁴ Maginn and Ellis, *Tudor Discovery of Ireland*, pp 156-9.

⁵ Steven G. Ellis, ‘Tudor policy and the Kildare Ascendancy in the Lordship of Ireland, 1496-1534’, *IHS*, Vol. 20, No. 79 (Spring, 1977), pp 235-6.

⁶ Ellis, ‘Tudor policy and the Kildare Ascendancy’, p. 241.

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most notably Conn O'Neill and Brian O'Connor Faly, 'in the hope that he should rather come home' stirred up trouble.⁷ In one notable incident in May 1528, O'Connor kidnapped Lord Delvin at a parley in Westmeath for failing to pay him blackrent and refusing a truce.⁸ In August of the same year, Brian's wife Alice FitzGerald, the Earl of Kildare's daughter, encouraged the Offaly chieftain to raid the Pale and 'invade, rob and destroy diverse' of the King's subjects there 'by reason of certain intelligence had with O'Connor, contrary to his allegiance'.⁹ Gerald FitzGerald was eventually released and returned to Ireland but his time there would be brief as Thomas Cromwell secured his recall to London in 1533 having campaigned extensively for a number of years for Kildare's replacement by an English deputy in the hope of bringing Irish patronage under royal control.¹⁰ Following his subsequent detainment, Kildare's son, Thomas FitzGerald, nicknamed Silken Thomas, rebelled. The rising can be seen as a reaction by Gerald and his son Thomas to changes in royal policy that threatened to reduce their authority and position in Ireland and was in line with the tradition of putting pressure on the crown when their dismissal was imminent or had already taken place.¹¹ By all accounts, the revolt was a full-scale assault by Silken Thomas upon the English administration in Ireland alongside his Gaelic allies.¹² Although his rebellion caused significant damage throughout the country, Silken Thomas' support base quickly fell apart as the revolt dragged on.¹³ Having lost O'More support by June 1535 and besieged in the natural fastness of Allen in Offaly alongside

⁷ Quoted in *L & P. Hen. VIII*, iv, no. 3698; Ellis, 'Tudor policy and the Kildare Ascendancy', pp 241-2.

⁸ The Council of Ireland to Wolsey, 15 May 1528, TNA, SP 60/1/55; Ellis, *Defending English ground*, p. 119.

⁹ *Ormond deeds, 1509-47*, no. 144; *L & P. Hen. VIII*, iv, nos 3698-3700, 5392; Ellis, *Defending English ground*, p. 120.

¹⁰ Ellis, 'Tudor policy and the Kildare Ascendancy', pp 238, 251, 255.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp 238-59.

¹² *L & P. Hen. VIII*, vii, no. 530; Conossius Maguire, Lord of Fermanagh to Henry VIII, 20 February 1534, BL, Lamb. MS. 616, fol. 32; Richard Allen to Thomas Allen, 17 May 1534, TNA, SP 60/2/10; John Alen to Cromwell, 26 December 1534, TNA, SP 60/2/29; Lord Leonard Grey to Henry VIII, 24 June 1536, TNA, SP 60/3/42.

¹³ The rebellion was largely lost by early August 1535. See Aylmer and Alen to Cromwell, 21 August 1535, TNA, SP 60/2/57.

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his last remaining ally Brian O'Connor, FitzGerald was left with little alternative other than surrender in August of that year.¹⁴ With the collapse of the rebellion, the territories of Leix and Offaly were fully exposed to the Tudor government and its lord deputies who would thereafter enact crown policy in the two territories.¹⁵

The O'Mores of Leix and the O'Connors of Offaly, the most prominent clans of their respective territories, had for much of the later medieval period threatened the Pale, but had been deterred while it was under the protection of the Earls of Kildare. The breakdown of this system in the aftermath of Silken Thomas's rebellion meant that the Tudors were forced to deal directly with the Gaelic lordships of the midlands.¹⁶ Leonard Grey was the first lord deputy to make significant progress in the region where he negotiated with a number of chieftaincies.¹⁷ In essence, from the 1540s onwards, the Tudor government sought to fulfil Henry VIII's comprehensive aspiration to 'unite settler and native in one commonwealth'; similar to what had been achieved in Wales.¹⁸ Upon arrival in July 1540, Lord Deputy Anthony St. Leger furthered Grey's conciliatory work through the policy of "surrender and regrant".¹⁹ St. Leger's first deputyship largely sought to reassert royal authority throughout the country in the aftermath of Kildare's rebellion. Accordingly, the Lord Deputy launched targeted hostings and enacted surrender and regrant to bring certain septs, including the lordships of the midlands, to submission.²⁰ However, St. Leger's second deputyship was marred by significant challenges in Ireland. For one, the Lord Deputy clashed with James Butler,

¹⁴ Instructions to Walter Cowley, June 1535, TNA, SP 60/2/53, fol. 128; The Council of Ireland to the King, 27 August 1535, TNA, SP 60/2/60.

¹⁵ Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', p. 216; Carey, 'John Derricke's "Image of Irelande"', pp 305-6.

¹⁶ Carey, 'John Derricke's "Image of Irelande"', pp 305-6.

¹⁷ *L & P. Hen. VIII*, xii (ii) no. 1046, 1160, 1537; Lord Deputy Grey to Cromwell, 16 August 1537, TNA, SP 60/5/3.

¹⁸ Maginn, "'Surrender and Regrant'", p. 958.

¹⁹ For a definition of the policy, see Introduction pp 2-8; Brady, *The chief governors*, p. 25.

²⁰ Alen Bryson, 'Sir Anthony St. Leger and the outbreak of the midland rebellion, 1547-8', *RIA*, Vol. 113C (2013), pp 252-3.

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9th Earl of Ormond following St. Leger's attempts to limit Butler power. By 1545, relations had completely broken down which divided the Privy Council along factional lines.²¹ The situation deteriorated further with the death of Ormond in October 1546 which created a power vacuum, leaving the Butler lordship in Counties Kilkenny and Tipperary vulnerable and exposed.

In the interim in Leix and Offaly, Rory Coach O'More, declared captain of his nation following his embracement of surrender and regrant, was murdered by his brother Patrick pushing the O'Mores into open rebellion with the crown.²² The brothers Brian and Cahir Rua O'Connor of Offaly took advantage of the Ormond-St. Leger feud and made common cause with some of the younger FitzGerald of Kildare.²³ St. Leger was in a precarious situation at this point. The Lord Deputy believed that a close and amicable relationship with the O'Connor chieftain was crucial to bringing a long lasting peace to the midlands region and ensuring the overall security of the English Pale. Yet his stance was met with heavy criticism from back home and he was eventually recalled to England to answer corruption charges. In his absence, Anthony's successor William Brabazon assumed the role of Lord Justice of Ireland permanently altering the situation in the midlands. Prior to his appointment, Brabazon participated actively in military campaigns against the Geraldine rebels and was considered the 'best captain and fortunate in the army without comparisons'.²⁴ The Lord Justice was unquestionably a highly ambitious individual and a staunch promoter of aggressively spreading English influence throughout the Gaelic midlands, by force if necessary.²⁵

²¹ Bryson, 'Sir Anthony St. Leger', pp. 253.

²² *L & P. Hen. VIII*, xvii, no. 1071; Bryson, 'Sir Anthony St. Leger', p. 264.

²³ Bryson, 'Sir Anthony St. Leger', p. 258.

²⁴ Quoted in J.S. Brewer & William Bullen (eds), *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts, 1515-74*, second edition, (6 vols, London, 1974), i, 81; Aylmer, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, and Alen, to Cromwell, 27 July 1535, TNA, SP 60/2/54; Lord Leonard Gray to Cromwell, 15 August 1535, TNA, SP 60/2/55; Aylmer and Alen to Cromwell, 21 August 1535, TNA, SP 60/2/57.

²⁵ Power, *A European frontier elite*, p. 116.

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Brabazon also did not share St. Leger's amicable sentiment towards Brian O'Connor and instead sought to bring the Offaly lord to heel. His attempts to lure and imprison the chieftain to Dublin, however, were unsuccessful.²⁶ Allegedly this was the deciding factor in driving the O'Connors and O'Mores into full-scale revolt against the crown and in apparent response, was also the reasoning behind the Lord Justice's invasion of Leix and Offaly in an alleged show of force throughout southern Leinster, Kilkenny and Tipperary.²⁷ However, this is somewhat of an oversimplification of the O'More and O'Connor clan's motivations behind their rebellion. Alan Bryson argues that there were two crucial factors. For one, the O'Connors, and the O'Mores to a lesser extent, had a long-standing relationship with the Geraldine Earls of Kildare and had often been employed by the magnates to threaten the Pale so as to reaffirm Kildare position as lord deputies and persuade the government that they were essential to maintaining the peace. St. Leger's negotiations with the two Gaelic lordships had also failed to supplant their loyalties to the FitzGerald.²⁸ This was particularly evident in the case of Brian O'Connor who had been Silken Thomas' chief ally during his rebellion and who had assumed leadership of the Geraldines following his demise. Bryson's theory would certainly explain why O'Connor continued to carry out regular assaults upon the Pale during the late 1530s and early 1540s right up until St. Leger's agreed surrender and regrant terms with Brian's brother and one time rival claimant to the lordship, Cahir Rua.²⁹ But there is no definitive way of knowing whether or not the O'Mores and O'Connors launched their revolt so as to undermine the Butlers in support of their Geraldine allies or in order to seize Ormond territory. It could also have been the case that the midlands clans' decision was influenced by their determination to undermine St. Leger and his

²⁶ Bryson, 'Sir Anthony St. Leger', p. 260.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 258; *AFM*, s.a. 1547-8.

²⁸ Bryson, 'Sir Anthony St. Leger', p. 264; S.G. Ellis, 'Thomas Cromwell and Ireland, 1532-1540', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 23 (1980), pp 513-4; Fitzsimons, 'The lordship of O'Connor Faly', pp 207-42; Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', 213-56.)

²⁹ Bryson, 'Sir Anthony St. Leger', p. 264. For more on this, see Chapter 6, p. 223.

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overall policy of conciliation in the hope of forcing the government's hand to once again reinstate the Earls of Kildare as lord deputies. Bryson also presents another possible reason for the uprising: William Brabazon's incursion into the midlands in 1546 and the establishment of a crown garrison at Daingean, in what became known as Fort Governor, erected on the site of O'Connor's chief seat as well as the subsequent construction of Fort Protector in Leix and a garrison at Castlebrack in O'Dunne's territory all may have played a part in stirring the O'Mores and O'Connors into rebellion.³⁰ Such a move was intentionally provocative and if undertaken before the unrest, it certainly could have been a major cause of it in the first place.³¹

It is certainly stressed in the Annals of the Four Masters that the administration deliberately launched the expedition into the midlands territories so as to establish garrisons there and secure the Pale's border.³² Indeed, the policy of garrisoning was in line with Protector Somerset and Edward VI's strategy for reinforcing the kingdom against outside invasion and it was this fear that seemed to spurn the administration to conduct hostings, fort-building and gradual colonisation in Gaelic dominated regions of Ireland.³³ As highlighted in the Introduction, Tudor officials such as John Alen, the prominent privy councillor and eventual Lord Chancellor of Ireland and William Brabazon, were critical of St. Leger's conciliatory approach and his overall policy of surrender and regrant. In their eyes, the Gaelic natives of Ireland felt 'natural enmity towards the king's subjects'.³⁴ Thus, for Brabazon, Allen and any others of this viewpoint, the establishment of English garrisons reduced the reliance on diplomacy with the Gaelic Irish.³⁵

³⁰ *AFM*, s.a. 1547 & 1548; Lord Deputy Bellingham to the Privy Council, August 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/84. Mentioned in the Annals as late as 1580 as Port-Laoighise; Bryson, 'Sir Anthony St. Leger', pp 265-6.

³¹ Bryson, 'Sir Anthony St. Leger', pp 265-6.

³² *AFM*, s.a. 1546-7; Bryson, 'Sir Anthony St. Leger', p. 265.

³³ Bryson, 'Sir Anthony St. Leger', p. 263.

³⁴ Introduction, p. 9; BL Lansdowne MS. 159, fol. 31r; Bryson, 'Sir Anthony St. Leger', p. 269.

³⁵ Gerald Power, *A European frontier elite*, p. 115.

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Consequently, they proposed that the only way forward was to pursue garrisoning in ‘southern Leinster, sitting in the midst of the said five obedient shires, to be their rock: of safeguard: which the rest to reduce to obedience’.³⁶ In other words, fortifications such as Forts Protector and Governor, much like in Scotland, were expected to coerce the natives in the area towards conformity and becoming ‘civilised’.³⁷ Other reformers such as Robert Cowley alleged that these forts were then expected to ‘bid peace and obedience through all the realm’.³⁸ Without doubt the establishment of these garrisons in the Gaelic dominated midlands heralded the initial stages of the Leix-Offaly plantation. The Tudor officials who advocated the enterprise all agreed on one central hypothesis, that a submissive population was vital to long term security and if one did not exist, it needed to be imported from England and the existing one either expelled, pushed aside or exterminated.³⁹ From a conceptual standpoint, these plantation schemes were desirable because they offered royal officials a way to achieve security at a low cost. In essence, the government hoped to attract ex-soldiers, trained in arms to the country as settlers who would keep the natives under control without the need for a large standing army.⁴⁰ Through the subsequent establishment of husbandry, cultivation of the land and general law and order, reformers such as Thomas Cusack argued that peace and profit would inevitably ensue for the crown and its government.⁴¹ The midlands project, on paper at least, promised to safeguard the inhabitants of the English Pale and provide them with a level of protection they had not experienced before.⁴²

The reasoning behind the midlands rebellion of 1547-8 aside, there can be

³⁶ BL Lansdowne MS. 159, fol. 31r.

³⁷ Brady, *The chief governors*, pp 57-9.

³⁸ Walter Cowley to Bellingham, 25 January 1549, TNA, SP 61/2/12.

³⁹ Thomas Bartlett, *Ireland, a history* (New York, 2010), p. 87.

⁴⁰ Bartlett, *Ireland, a history*, p. 89.

⁴⁰ Thomas Cusack to Northumberland, 8 May 1552, Add. MSS 48015 fol. 266; Bartlett, *Ireland, a history*, p. 89

⁴¹ Montaña, *The roots of English colonialism*, p. 121.

⁴² Power, *A European frontier elite*, pp 143-4.

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little doubt that it was the most serious insurrection in Ireland since Silken Thomas FitzGerald's uprising, and although following reinforcement by Sir Edward Bellingham in May 1547 and the revolt's eventual collapse in 1548, it would have significant long term implications for the two territories for decades to follow.⁴³ Over time, successive monarchs sought to develop the Leix-Offaly plantation and gradually introduce English local government to the midlands similar to what they had achieved in Wales.⁴⁴ However, they were faced with numerous challenges that hindered progress at every turn. This chapter assesses the reasons why the Tudor government struggled to implement English local government in Leix and Offaly between the years of 1547-60. Accordingly, how much local government actually existed in the two territories by 1560 will also be analysed.

First and foremost, the main difficulty the administration faced in the region was the terrain. At the beginning of the period under review, the two territories were one quarter covered in woodland.⁴⁵ This was not a particularly unique feature of the midlands as it has been suggested that the majority of the country at the time was dominated by either wood or bogland.⁴⁶ Yet, later maps of the seventeenth century, most notably Sir William Petty's Down Survey Maps, suggested that the territories of Stradbally, Maryborough, and Cullenagh were almost completely devoid of

⁴³ *AFM*, s.a. 1546; Dunlop, 'The Plantation of Leix and Offaly', p. 63; Bryson, 'Sir Anthony St. Leger', pp 252-3.

⁴⁴ Lord Deputy Croft to the Privy Council, 28 July 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/38; Instructions from Lord Deputy Croft to Thomas Wood, July 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/39; Lord Deputy Croft and Council to the Privy Council, 2 September 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/51; Instructions to Mr. Wood to be brought before the Privy Council, 29 September 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/54; Instructions of Philip and Mary to Thomas Radcliffe, Lord FitzWalter, their deputy in Ireland, touching the countries of Leix and Offaly, 28 April 1556, BL, Cotton MS. Titus B., XI, fol. 241; Orders for Leix, 1556, TNA, SP 62/1/19. For a summary of the Welsh model, see Introduction pp 10-11.

⁴⁵ William J. Smyth, *Map-making, landscapes and memory* (Cork, 2006), p. 91.

⁴⁶ Seán O'Domhnaill, 'Warfare in sixteenth-century Ireland', *IHS*, Vol. 5 (1946), pp 40-1.

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any form of woodland.⁴⁷ Petty argued that the densely forested regions were limited to the northwest, west and southeastern parts of Leix.⁴⁸ Densely wooded territories included Ballykillcavan, outside Stradbally, Emo and Ballyfin with the entire region of Iregan (O'Dunne territory) considered a continuous forest of oak, wild pine and yew trees.⁴⁹ With regard to Offaly, Petty deemed the densest areas of woodland to be found in the western and southeastern quarters of the territory mainly surrounding the localities of Ballykean and Cully, but arguably to a lesser extent than in Leix.⁵⁰ These forests caused the government several problems in the midlands. Not only were they defensive belts that granted cover to native fighting men, they were also often impenetrable and impassable to English troops unfamiliar with the terrain.⁵¹

To complicate matters even further, large areas of Leix and Offaly were covered in bogland or 'soft ground' and swathes of marshy terrain.⁵² Estimates suggest that close to one third of Offaly and Leix's land surface was covered in either raised, blanket or fen peats.⁵³ Abundant rainfall and

⁴⁷ Sir William Petty, *The Down Survey of Ireland: Leix (Queens County)*, available at: Trinity College Dublin: The Irish research council, <http://downsurvey.tcd.ie/down-survey-maps.php#c=Laois+%28Queens%29&indexOfObjectValue=-1&indexOfObjectValueSubstring=-1>

⁴⁸ Petty, *The Down Survey of Ireland: Laois (Queens County)*.

⁴⁹ John O'Hanlon and Edward O'Leary, *History of the Queen's County* (2 vols, Dublin, 1907), i, 40.

⁵⁰ Sir William Petty, *The Down Survey of Ireland: Offaly (Kings County)*, available at: Trinity College Dublin: The Irish research council, <http://downsurvey.tcd.ie/down-survey-maps.php#c=Offaly+%28Kings%29&indexOfObjectValue=-1&indexOfObjectValueSubstring=-1>

⁵¹ O'Domhnaill, 'Warfare in sixteenth-century Ireland', pp 40-1; Smyth, *Map-making, landscapes and memory*, p. 91.

⁵² O'Domhnaill, 'Warfare in sixteenth-century Ireland', p. 40; Peter Foss and Catherine O'Connell, 'Bogland study and utilization', in John Wilson Foster (ed.), *Nature in Ireland: A scientific and cultural history* (Dublin, 1997), p. 184; Terence Patrick Dolan, *A dictionary of Hiberno-English: The Irish use of English* (Dublin, 2006), p. 27.

⁵³ Matthew Stout, 'Early Christian settlement, society, and economy in Offaly', in William Nolan & Timothy O'Neill (eds), *Offaly: History and Society: Interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1998), p. 32.

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poor drainage levels resulted in the development of these wet lands and gradually, the growth of raised bogs.⁵⁴ Although the largest percentage of bogland lay in Offaly, particularly in the west, Leix was also quite wet and low lying which culminated in natural features such as Moenfanan and the Great Heath.⁵⁵ The south was increasingly hilly and inhospitable, with the west and northwest quite boggy, culminating in the Slieve Bloom Mountains.⁵⁶ O'Domhnaill goes so far as to argue that the greatest ally of the O'Mores and O'Connors in their resistance to the Tudor administration was the terrain over which their struggle was waged.⁵⁷ There can be little doubt that this terrain was not ideal for the English army, which favoured cannon and other forms of artillery.⁵⁸

It was also not ideal planting ground and was undesirable to many English settlers, particularly peers. In January 1552 for example, Lord Deputy James Croft highlighted significant concerns to the Privy Council regarding the land set aside for plantation. He argued that years of relentless warfare had detrimentally altered the landscape into an utterly devastated and inhospitable wasteland.⁵⁹

In the first land grants under Edward VI, c.1550-51, peers were practically absent from the midlands. This was a significant problem for the Tudor administration that typically relied upon the nobility to govern shires and conduct quarter sessions in the place of ruling magnates such as the Earl of

⁵⁴ Stout, 'Early Christian settlement, society, and economy in Offaly', p. 32; P. David Sweetman, *Archaeological inventory of County Laois* (Dublin, 1995), p. 16.

⁵⁵ John Feehan, 'Laois: an overview of the county as a place where history happened' in Padraig G. Lane and William Nolan (eds) *Laois History and society: Interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1999), pp 1-15.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 2-8.

⁵⁷ O'Domhnaill, 'Warfare in sixteenth-century Ireland', p. 40.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Lord Deputy Croft and Council to the Privy Council, 26 January 1552, TNA, SP 61/4/4.

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Kildare.⁶⁰ That being said, prominent individuals such as Gerald Aylmer, the Old English Chief Justice and Sir John Travers, Master of the Ordnance, did put themselves forward as candidates for settlement in Leix in 1550 for which they agreed to pay an annual rental value of £600.⁶¹ However, the majority of settlers paid nowhere near this sum. Knights such as Sir Ralph Bagenal, lieutenant in King Edward VI's army, inherited lands at Eyne, the burgages of Ratheven and a decayed castle in Coolbanagher at a rent of £16.⁶² Sir John Travers held land at Curragh and Clopook among others and paid £42 a year.⁶³

Esquires were also a notable feature of Edward VI's land grants in Leix including Robert St. Leger who settled on extensive lands within the lordship of Gallen, seized from the Gaelic rebel Patrick O'More at a rent of just over £46 a year.⁶⁴ Henry Wise held land at Ballyknockan, Ballyhilan, Ballycarnan and Kilcolmbane at £25 a year.⁶⁵

Beyond these groups, there was a second tier of county gentry, followed by the general English and Welsh soldier. Surnames such as Johns and Apoell were unquestionably of Welsh origin. In total, thirty-three grantees settled in Leix, a large number of whom were attached to the crown army.⁶⁶ Thus, soldiers such as Humphrey Haselwood, John and William Glaceters, Robert Quicke, Hugh Johns, John Thomas, Henry Barrett, Thomas Croucher, Thomas Flody, Thomas Apoell, Thomas Jacobs, William Gerard and John Dunkirkley all settled in the midlands. Thomas Jacobs and William Gerard had served for many years under St. Leger and Bellingham and were well

⁶⁰ Mervyn James, *Society, politics and culture: studies in early modern England* (Cambridge, 1986), pp 68-70.

⁶¹ Offers of Gerald Aylmer, Sir John Travers and others, 10 December 1550, TNA, SP 61/2/69.

⁶² *The Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns: During the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Philip & Mary, and Elizabeth I*, ed. J.J. Digges La Touche, 4 vols (Dublin, 1994), i, nos 703, 1119.

⁶³ *Fiants Ire. Edward VI*, no. 741.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 684.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 716.

⁶⁶ See Appendix 1.

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rewarded for their many years of service with the manors of Stradbally and Ballyadams respectively.⁶⁷

In Offaly, the majority of the land, including that of the imprisoned rebel, Brian O'Connor, was primarily allocated to eighteen English gentlemen including Nicholas Burrell, Matthew King, John Wakely, William and Edward Dickson, Nicholas Herbert, Thomas Masterson, Edmund Dalton, Roger Brook, Thomas Sendall, Roger Finglas, Richard Croft.⁶⁸ Yeomen also featured, including Thomas Chambers and James Brewster, as well as soldiers such as Patrick Sherlock, Redmund Óg FitzGerald, Anthony March and Thomas Wakely.⁶⁹ Wakeley, like Thomas Jacobs and William Gerard in Leix, had served in the crown army in Ireland for several years and was rewarded with a 21-year lease of some 21 town lands in Offaly.⁷⁰ Without a doubt, this was a society organised for war and the core residents of the two shires relied heavily on warfare for their livelihoods. The terms of settlement reflected this and settlers were expected to be sufficiently armed for combat at all times and be capable of defending their respective allotments of land.⁷¹ Certain settlers such as Matthew King of Moyclare were also expected to grow corn on their premises for the nourishment of the crown army in the midlands.⁷² Aside from this, the settlers were permitted to retain their land for twenty-one years so long as they resided upon their premises, bore their proportion of cess for the safeguard and furnishing of Forts Protector and Governor and did not permit any Gaelic clan to inhabit upon their land.⁷³

The issue of Gaelic settlement upon the plantation was a major point of concern for the government. Leix and Offaly were marches, borderlands dominated by clan-based people, such as the O'Mores and O'Connors, who

⁶⁷ *Cal. pat. rolls, Ire.*, pp 225-6, 230-1.

⁶⁸ See Appendix 1.

⁶⁹ *Fiants Ire. Edward VI*, nos 690, 692, 714, 732.

⁷⁰ *Cal. pat. rolls, Ire.*, pp 225-31.

⁷¹ *Fiants Ire. Edward VI*, nos 724, 725, 727, 732, 733, 944.

⁷² *Ibid.*, no. 954.

⁷³ See Appendix 1.

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followed distinctive systems of Gaelic law and had a shared language and customs.⁷⁴ The Tudor administration had already dealt with a similar scenario in Wales. The Act of Union of 1536 made the Welsh citizens of the realm and crucially, granted them equality in the eyes of the law with their English counterparts.⁷⁵ In doing so, the administration formally handed over power to the Welsh gentry, creating self-government in the region with a uniform regime in law, justice, and administration that ensured that power rested in native hands with parliamentary representation.⁷⁶ But there was one significant obstacle in applying this approach in Ireland. Welsh resistance to English encroachment had long since withered, the territory having largely been conquered during Edward I's reign and although the Act of Union abolished Welsh laws and customs and made the English language compulsory for administrative and legal matters, the natives of Wales had long shown an interest in assimilation, particularly amongst the gentry.⁷⁷ Ireland on the other hand had not been conquered and according to Peter Roberts, persisting native customs encouraged resistance to English rule. Whereas the Tudors could rest assured of Welsh obedience, they were wary and distrustful of the Gaelic Irish.⁷⁸ Edward VI's land grants certainly reflect this sentiment.

The government initially did attempt to pacify the O'Mores and O'Connors. In June 1549, the Privy Council approved of the conferring of certain lands to the two clans to ensure the 'quietude of the region'.⁷⁹ The council also suggested that the Gaelic Irish and those of 'English origin' be permitted to 'inherit, purchase and marry freely'.⁸⁰ Arguably, at this early stage, the Council hoped their proposals would help to assimilate the two

⁷⁴ Ellis and Maginn, *The making of the British Isles*, p. 8.

⁷⁵ Williams, *Renewal and Reformation*, p. 277.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ P.R. Roberts, 'The union with England and the identity of "Anglican" Wales', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 22 (1972), p. 62; Ellis and Maginn, *The making of the British Isles*, p. 101.

⁷⁸ Roberts, 'The union with England and the identity of "Anglican" Wales', p. 62.

⁷⁹ Privy Council to the Lord Deputy and Council, 24 June 1549, TNA, SP 61/2/46.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

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lordships and establish law and order in the midlands region.

However, these proposals were met with significant resistance from Tudor officials including John Alen who urged Edward Seymour, Lord Protector Somerset, to relocate the clans to English-held Calais or Boulogne in northern France and permanently remove them as a threat to the Pale.⁸¹ Walter Cowley, the Principal Solicitor for Ireland and Sir John Alen's close ally, had his own distinct proposal for maintaining the King's peace in the unruly region: the appointment of captains, seneschals and sheriffs, who would work alongside the loyalist factions of the O'Dunne and O'Dempsey clans and rule in the absence of leading magnates.⁸² In turn, each captain would maintain 5,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry, paid for by the surrounding Gaelic clans. In Cowley's eyes at least, the only way forward for the administration was to establish a militarised government in the midlands that ruled through martial instead of English common law. His proposals directly conflicted with the Privy Councils and called for the confiscation of Gaelic Irish land and the fortification of four royal houses: Fort Protector, Adamstown, Stradbally and Ballyroan.⁸³ Cowley's proposals were not only hopelessly unrealistic but also unattainable. There can be no doubt that the Tudor army would have maintained law and order much more effectively with such numbers. But neither the King's exchequer nor the inhabitants of the Pale were capable of funding such extravagance. Such a move would unquestionably have also resulted in the isolation of the Gaelic clans of the surrounding areas and sparked further resistance placing the fragile plantation in a precarious situation.

King Edward VI approved of certain aspects of Cowley's proposals and in May 1551, the young monarch ordered Lord Deputy James Croft to 'possess, survey, and let Leix and Offaly and to reduce Leinster to order'.⁸⁴ Croft, distracted by the influx of Scots into Ulster, rumours of a French

⁸¹ Sir John Alen to Lord Protector Somerset, 21 November 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/130.

⁸² Walter Cowley's proposals, March 1549, TNA, SP 61/2/25.1

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Instructions by the King to Sir James Croft, May 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/32.

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invasion and the construction of fortifications in Cork, postponed his work in the two territories until September 1551 when he finally progressed with plans to shire Leix and Offaly and divide them into hundreds or baronies.⁸⁵

The Lord Deputy also agreed with Cowley's proposals for the introduction of the key offices of English local government in the midlands, including sheriffs so that law and order could be maintained.⁸⁶ Realising that peace was incredibly fragile and could be undermined at any stage by Gaelic raids, Croft sought to include the natives as much as possible and even suggested they be granted a government pension.⁸⁷ In November 1551, the King instructed Croft to transform Leix and Offaly into one or two shires under the governance of two constables and one or two sheriffs.⁸⁸ Edward VI stressed that these men were expected to defend their territories and uphold the King's laws.⁸⁹ They were also required to reside at the main fortifications of their territory for which they were granted the surrounding land, rent-free. However, it was close to another decade before any of these positions were exercised in the midlands.

There were many reasons for this. In England, and throughout the outer reaches of the state, the Mid-Tudor crisis, a period of fragile monarchy and social unrest over issues such as the economy and religion prevailed from the latter years of Henry VIII to the consolidation of Elizabeth's reign in the early 1560s. Policy in Ireland during this turbulent episode shifted from programmes of assimilation such as surrender and regrant towards more aggressive forms of Anglicisation such as garrisoning out of fear and paranoia for the safety and security of the Tudor kingdom.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Lord Deputy Croft to the Privy Council, 28 July 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/38; Instructions from Lord Deputy Croft to Thomas Wood, July 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/39; Lord Deputy Croft and Council to the Privy Council, 2 September 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/51; Instructions to Mr. Wood, 29 September 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/54.

⁸⁶ Instructions to Mr. Wood, 29 September 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/54.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ The King to the Lord Deputy Croft, November 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/73.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Power, *A European frontier elite*, p. 113.

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This was certainly reflected in some of the issues, which the government experienced in establishing and consolidating the Leix-Offaly plantation. One such issue was that economic woes plagued the enterprise and any chance for effective local government in the region. These were economically poor areas in comparison to the Pale and from the outset, the midlands enterprise was a monumentally audacious and expensive venture. Even before the O'More and O'Connor rebellion of the late 1540s was crushed, workmen and supplies were gathered from as far afield as Kilkenny and Waterford and carts were supplied from Dublin to transport the wood to the forts for their further consolidation.⁹¹ In the eyes of the government, Forts Protector and Governor were not simply outposts but were instead built to accommodate large garrisons and hold vast quantities of supplies.⁹² Yet, the surveying of the two territories and the construction of the strongholds cost the government nearly £7,000 and although the region was quite peaceful by the early 1550s, the military garrison drained the exchequer by £8,000 per annum.⁹³ Prior to this in 1549, Walter Cowley had proposed that the only means of maintaining a large army in the midlands would be to charge their upkeep on the inhabitants of Kilkenny, Dublin and Kildare and the Gaelic clans of the surrounding areas.⁹⁴ The move was a spectacular blunder on the government's part as by 1552 the c.600 soldiers garrisoned in the two forts financially crippled the residents of the Pale.⁹⁵ The Palesmen were forced to sell wheat and beef at a loss of 75-85% on the market prices in order to maintain the garrisons.⁹⁶ This

⁹¹ Thomas Walshe to Bellingham, 28 August 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/81; Matthew King to William Payne, 16 December 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/151.

⁹² Bellingham to Tallon, March 1549, TNA, SP 61/2/26; Richard Brasier to Somerset, 14 November 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/122.

⁹³ Memoranda by Bellingham, 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/123; Account of the vice-treasurer, 27 May 1548-19 December 1549, TNA, SP 65/5/49; Lord Deputy Croft and Council to the Privy Council, 26 January 1552, TNA, SP 61/4/4.

⁹⁴ Walter Cowley to Lord Deputy Bellingham, 25 January 1549, TNA, SP 61/2/12.

⁹⁵ Report of Sir Thomas Cusack to the Duke of Northumberland on the state of Ireland, 8 May 1552, TNA, SP 61/4/43.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

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continued throughout Thomas Radcliffe's tenure as Lord Deputy as he became increasingly reliant on the inhabitants of the Pale to assist him in implementing his grand scheme of swiftly and effectively reshaping Gaelic Irish society in an English mould.⁹⁷ The breakdown of this relationship was unquestionably the result of the excessive financial burden imposed upon the Palesmen.⁹⁸ The settlers that remained in the midlands by the time of Mary's accession to the throne had also suffered significant financial losses, such as Oliver Sutton of Clanmalire who alleged that he lost 'thousands of pounds by the spoils of the Irishry' during this period.⁹⁹ Disheartened, Cusack and the Privy Council lamented by summer 1552 that the Leix-Offaly plantation was a financially unrewarding enterprise and the rents of the two territories scarcely generated £1,000 a year.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, the government proved unwilling to abandon the venture and instead attempted to relieve the financial drain upon the Pale.

Lord Deputy Croft, Sir Thomas Cusack and the Privy Council all proposed solutions which, they hoped, would resolve the crisis. Croft suggested that, as the two territories were located on a frontier, and the Gaelic locals were likely to harass any incoming lessees to the area, that the land be granted in freehold.¹⁰¹ Croft argued that only then would it be possible to persuade significant numbers of Englishmen to settle in the region and invest the time and money on such a risky, expensive and perilous undertaking.¹⁰² Cusack shared Croft's sentiments and added that if Forts Protector and Governor could transition into market towns, it would effectively populate the area and generate sufficient income for the crown.¹⁰³ The prominent Privy Councillor, John Alen, felt that Cusack's proposition was the best way

⁹⁷ Power, *A European frontier elite*, p. 147.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 157; Brady, *The chief governors*, chapter 6

⁹⁹ Petition of Oliver Sutton to the Queen, 2 December 1565, TNA, SP 63/15/57.

¹⁰⁰ It was alleged by the Privy Council that Leix's rent generated £430 in comparison to Offaly's £450, see Privy Council to Lord Deputy Croft and council, 29 May 1552, TNA, SP 61/4/48.

¹⁰¹ Lord Deputy Croft and Council to the Privy Council, 26 January 1552, TNA, SP 61/4/4.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

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forward and alleged that a ‘few towns well placed, manly inhabited, industriously occupied, justly by laws governed’ would resolve the crisis.¹⁰⁴ Many of Alen’s fellow Privy Councillors also proposed the reduction of the garrisons and the redeployment of troops abroad as a means of cutting costs.¹⁰⁵ The Councillors additionally urged the government to divide the land equally among a multitude of farmers instead of a just a small few.¹⁰⁶ In time, the government hoped the two shires would generate an annual revenue of £1,200.¹⁰⁷ The proposed solutions of Croft, Cusack and the Privy Council were valid and their suggestions were promising. In fact, as the century progressed, the government reverted back to these proposals as a means of pacifying the region and cutting costs.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, the government’s financial woes had deteriorated to such an extent by winter 1555 that St. Leger and his government were unable to cover the costs of victualling Forts Protector and Governor. The Lord Deputy had little alternative other than to supply his own corn and kine to the beleaguered strongholds who were on the brink of starvation.¹⁰⁹ Without a doubt, the financial woes that plagued the administration throughout this period greatly hindered the implementation of English local government in Leix and Offaly.

The shortcomings of Edward VI’s land grants were also apparent by 1552 and restrictive, short-term leases had greatly discouraged permanent settlement in the two territories.¹¹⁰ This was never more apparent than in the case of Walter Pepper, a Leix settler who feared that his leases, some of

¹⁰⁴ Instructions concerning Ireland, 2 November 1556, BL, Lansdowne, MS. 159 fol. 4.

¹⁰⁵ Privy Council to Lord Deputy Croft and council, 29 May 1552, TNA, SP 61/4/48.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Device for the better government of Ireland, 1553, TNA, SP 61/4/82.

¹⁰⁸ See Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

¹⁰⁹ St. Leger to Petre, 18 December 1555, TNA, SP 62/1/8; Notes of remembrance, 1556, TNA, SP 62/1/11.

¹¹⁰ Lord Deputy St. Leger to William Cecil, 19 January 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/3; Walter Cowley to Paulet, 21 February 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/12; Lord Deputy and Council to the Privy Council, 26 January 1552, TNA, SP 61/4/4.

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them a decade old, were quickly expiring with no guarantee from the government of an extension.¹¹¹ Numerous English freeholders faced a bleak reality in the midlands. Farming land for little or no reward combined with living in a state of constant fear meant that settlement on the plantation was an unjustifiable risk for many.¹¹² This point was reinforced by Edward Walshe who in his tract on the state of Ireland, alleged that such restrictive leases provided no adequate incentive for English freeholders to develop their lands, thus undermining the government's aspirations for widespread husbandry and cultivation of the land.¹¹³ In Walshe's view, a successful English colony in the midlands would only be brought about if 'great numbers' of English freeholders were 'planted thick together'. Moreover, the tenants' holdings needed to be small and their tenures secure with affordable rent. Walshe argued that only then would it be possible to turn a profit on the plantation and gradually install elements of English local government, which 'shall bring forth each branch member pertaining to reformation'. So long as these elements were absent from the plantation, the few inhabitants that set down root 'shall be weak, the land shall be waste and an endless cry shall be to the king for help' who himself would be 'at continual charge and things shall' ultimately remain 'in...uncertainty'.¹¹⁴ Overall, Anthony St. Leger and his successor James Croft had ultimately failed to achieve the objectives set out for them by the Tudor government.¹¹⁵ Although law and order was maintained, defensive woes remained as well as the financial strain on the inhabitants of the Pale. Forts Protector and Governor remained little other than military strongholds instead of fully functioning, profitable market towns and the Deputies failed to establish English settlers on a long-term basis. No English colony or local

¹¹¹ Croft to the Privy Council, 22 March 1552, TNA, SP 61/4/30.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *The Conjectures of Edward Walshe, 1552*, TNA, SP 61/4/44; Quinn, 'Edward Walshe's "Conjectures"', p. 311.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ According to Vincent Carey, the Lord Deputy was expected to pacify the two regions, ease the defensive burden on the Pale, upgrade the forts into market towns and establish English settlers on a fee farm basis. See Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', pp 219-20; Instructions by the King and Council to Sir Anthony Sentleger, July 1550, TNA, SP 61/2/57; Instructions by the King to Sir James Croft, May 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/32.

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government could hope to survive without sufficient settlement.¹¹⁶ A major issue with Edward VI's land grants was that they granted land in territories that had not yet been shired making it increasingly difficult to implement county structures of government. The lack of sufficient settlement certainly exacerbated this and what came to exist in the midlands pre-1557 was the granting of land surrounding two military fortifications and little else.

Still, all hope was not lost for the Tudor government and their aspirations for the region. The year 1556 signified the first real development on the plantation. This dramatic transformation was predominantly the result of one man, the new Lord Deputy, Sir Thomas Radcliffe.¹¹⁷ Radcliffe served in the Boulogne campaign during Henry VIII's reign for which he received a knighthood on 30 September 1544.¹¹⁸ He subsequently won favour under Queen Mary for his role in the suppression of Wyatt's rebellion and for his assistance in arranging the marriage with Philip II of Spain.¹¹⁹ In order for Radcliffe's tenure to be considered a success, he needed to establish an effective colonial scheme in the midlands and reduce its drain on the exchequer.¹²⁰

Upon his appointment, the Lord Deputy was ordered to divide Leix and Offaly between the English and Gaelic Irish and proclaim the territories of the O'Mores and O'Connors as shire ground, with Gaelic law abolished.¹²¹ The Irish were not to be entirely expelled from the area, rather relocated and assigned less than one third of the land. King Philip and Queen Mary declared that 'if...those rebels the Mores and the O'Connors...do submit themselves unto order and mercy...those countries shall then be parted in

¹¹⁶ Lord Deputy and Council to the Privy Council, 26 January 1552, TNA, SP 61/4/4.

¹¹⁷ Notes of remembrance, April 1556, TNA, SP 62/1/11; Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', p. 222.

¹¹⁸ George Edward Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain, and the United Kingdom*, second edition, volume 5 (Gloucester, 1987), p. 522.

¹¹⁹ Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, p. 523.

¹²⁰ Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', p. 222.

¹²¹ Carey, 'John Derricke's "Image of Ireland"', p. 307.

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three parts, and thereof to assign unto the said O'Connors, O'Mores and Dempsies, the thirds'.¹²² The clans were 'bound to answer' the 'common laws of that Realm' and 'at their own charges', serve the crown and its heirs 'as good subjects ought to do'.¹²³ The remaining two thirds of the region was to be divided between the forts and the English settlers.¹²⁴ Settlers on the new plantation were to be awarded estates of roughly 360 acres and were ordered to maintain armed men who were capable of defending their allotments of land against any Gaelic intrusion.¹²⁵ Ergo, the defence of the two shires remained of utmost importance. This ensured that whatever society was established in the region, it would be one organised and ever prepared for war.

Queen Mary was very much aware that the most considerable factor restricting significant settlement in Leix and Offaly was changeable and uncertain land grants. In the hope of resolving the issue, the monarch decreed that the land there was to be granted in fee simple, permanently signed over to any incoming lessee who was free to dispose of it at will.¹²⁶ Further stipulations for any incoming settler included the construction of 'one church within three years' in every town with an English priest, no doubt in the hope that the newly created shires, from Mary's perspective, were strictly Catholic.¹²⁷ On the land assigned to the Gaelic Irish, grantees were ordered to use English law and customs, build houses of timber or stone, and not employ Gaelic military personnel or anyone of Irish blood.¹²⁸ Instead, the Gaelic lessees were expected to retain an English archer but were not permitted to keep any firearms of their own without the Lord Deputy's approval. Furthermore, the government warned the natives that

¹²² Instructions of Philip and Mary to Thomas Radcliffe, Lord Fitzwalter, 28 April 1556, BL, Cotton MS. Titus B., XI, fol. 241.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ Orders for Leix, 1556, TNA, SP 62/1/19.

¹²⁵ Orders for the holding of the English that shall be placed in Leix, 1556, TNA, SP 62/1/20.

¹²⁶ Instructions from Queen Mary to the Lord Deputy Sir Anthony St. Leger, October 1553, TNA, SP 62/1/2.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ Orders for Leix, 1556, TNA, SP 62/1/19.

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any assaults upon their neighbour's strongholds, bridges or passes was punishable by death and forfeiture of their land. The O'Mores were predominantly allocated bog land with the condition that they adhered to the 'laws of the realm...cause their children to learn to speak English...keep open the fords, destroy the fastness and cut the passes' and married only those of English blood.¹²⁹

Policy certainly seemed to veer from pursuing an ambitious and expensive militaristic enterprise in the midlands, to what Gerald Power considered 'retrenchment and conciliation', influenced by regular outbreaks of violence.¹³⁰ Such shifts and inconsistency in government policy ensured they became reliant on the plantation to provide a permanent solution to defending the region, which placed a permanent strain on relations with its Gaelic natives.¹³¹ Former Lord Deputy Croft had warned the administration of this in the early 1550s and alerted them to the fact that the two territories lay 'upon a frontier' with its former Gaelic freeholders 'yet living, either in exile or in extreme poverty, and...only too ready to harass the new inhabitants'.¹³² This did not bode well for the fifty or so English settlers of Leix and Offaly, according to Croft at least, as they would not be able 'without great cost and charges in building and defending thereof to' retain their allotments of land.¹³³ The administration certainly had cause for concern. Although the O'Mores and O'Connors swore fealty to the Queen in late 1556 and surrendered all title to their lands, they rebelled in early 1557 and were declared traitors.¹³⁴ That same year, the Parliament of Ireland passed acts permitting Radcliffe to make leases in Leix and Offaly, officially shiring the two lordships as Queen's County and King's County

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Power, *A European Elite*, p. 114.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Croft and council to the Privy Council, 26 Jan. 1552, TNA, SP 61/4/4.

¹³³ Ibid; Appendix 1.

¹³⁴ Declaration of the Order taken between the Lord Deputy and Rory and Donough O'Conor, 25 February 1557, TNA, SP 62/1/24; Lord Deputy Sussex and Council to the King and Queen, 4 April 1557, TNA, SP 62/1/28; *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-74*, no. 208.

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and authorising the shiring of additional territories.¹³⁵ Forts Protector and Governor were retitled Maryborough and Philipstown and the Tudor government progressed with plans to implement English administrative structures.¹³⁶ But the O'Mores and O'Connors made enforcement of such near impossible.¹³⁷ Radcliffe, who became the 3rd Earl of Sussex following the death of his father that year, ruthlessly cracked down on the most rebellious elements of the two clans. In Offaly, Meelick Castle, an O'Connor stronghold, was seized along with the clan's chief and a number of his followers who were swiftly put to the sword.¹³⁸ In Leix, the O'Mores suffered the same fate except that their chief, Conall Óg, was publically executed at Leighlin Bridge.¹³⁹ In doing so, Sussex proved how far he was willing to go to eliminate any Gaelic resistance to his plantation scheme in the midlands. He later justified his actions as retribution for the damage inflicted upon the colony by the O'Mores and O'Connors in the 1540s. Sussex claimed that during this turbulent period, the two clans put 'man, woman and child to the sword, razing the castles and burning everything to the gates of Dublin'.¹⁴⁰ The Lord Deputy also alleged that this devastation cost the exchequer at least £100,000 over the preceding decades.¹⁴¹ Although most likely a gross exaggeration, Queen Mary praised Sussex for his good work in the region and promised to send additional funds in due course.¹⁴²

Despite being held in good regard by the crown, Sussex faced stiff opposition on the ground from prominent figures within the Old English

¹³⁵ Ellis, *Ireland in the age of the Tudors*, p. 272.

¹³⁶ Draft of an Act of Parliament for the well disposing and leasing of the lands of Leix, 10 November 1557, TNA, SP 62/1/60; Butler, *The statutes at large*, pp 241-4.

¹³⁷ Ellis, *Ireland in the age of the Tudors*, p. 272.

¹³⁸ It should be noted that Donagh was spared from execution but many of his followers were not so fortunate. See King and Queen to the Lord Deputy Sussex, 31 July 1557, TNA, SP 62/1/50; *AFM*, s.a. 1557.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Lord Deputy Sussex and Council to the King and Queen, 4 April 1557, TNA, SP 62/1/28.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

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community. George Dowdall, Archbishop of Armagh, claimed the O'Mores and O'Connors were still a constant threat to English power in the country having already 'destroyed and burned Leix and Offaly' with the exception of 'certain forts'.¹⁴³ In his opinion, the 'realm was never...in worse case'.¹⁴⁴ In June 1558, Maryborough and Philipstown were besieged and burned and although they were largely intact by the end of the period under review, Radcliffe really only retained control of the two shires through martial law.¹⁴⁵ This episode proved that so long as the main Gaelic lords were excluded from a stake in the Leix-Offaly plantation, their persistent raids and acts of defiance undermined not only the Queen's peace but also general law and order. Unsurprisingly, the administration struggled to implement the structures of traditional English county government in the face of such overwhelming resistance. Arguably, the administration could have avoided most of the violence during this period had they elevated the Gaelic natives to positions of authority or granted them more of a share in the midlands colonial enterprise. The government fundamentally missed the opportunity to reap the benefits, which the implementation of the Welsh model potentially could have produced.

This begs the question of how much English local government if any existed in the two counties by 1560? And if it was completely absent, what existed in its stead? There is very little evidence that any form of English county government had been installed by 1560. That being said, the midlands plantation unquestionably advanced further under Sussex than any of his predecessors. But although Leix and Offaly were officially English counties, they contained no elements of local government. Forts Protector and Governor stood as little more than military fortifications instead of

¹⁴³ George Dowdall, Archbishop of Armagh to Nicholas Heath Archbishop of York, 17 November 1557, TNA, SP 62/1/61.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Lord Deputy Sussex to Secretary Boxoll, 1558, TNA, SP 62/1/50; *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-74*, no. 211; Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', pp 222-3.

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market towns.¹⁴⁶ The framework in place in the region was martial in character and Sussex developed it further with the introduction of his brother, Sir Henry Radcliffe, as constable of the two forts in 1558.¹⁴⁷ The appointed constables of fortifications such as Maryborough and Philipstown had both civil and military authority and were often also captains of large bands. The ward of each stronghold was immobile and defensive and ‘these men were never to be removed for any service’.¹⁴⁸ Brady has argued that the constables were expected to rule according to local custom and blend common with brehon law when possible and pursue assimilation rather than coercion against the Gaelic natives.¹⁴⁹

Yet, according to one of his main critics, Archbishop Dowdall, ‘a man may ride south, west, and north...and see neither house, corn, nor cattle...many hundreds of men, women, and children are dead of famine’.¹⁵⁰ Dowdall wanted the Queen and her Council to realise that Sussex’s tenure, as Lord Lieutenant was a failure. His argument centred on the fact that Radcliffe failed to bring peace and stability to Ireland. Dowdall certainly had a point. By 1560, in the midlands at least, Sussex had established little beyond a military government, one centred on defence, fragilely held together through strict implementation of martial law.¹⁵¹ Henry Radcliffe, in his role as constable, and Thomas Radcliffe as Lord Lieutenant, certainly did not pursue a conciliatory approach with the Gaelic Irish of the region and what came to exist in the midlands was in direct contrast to a traditional English shire, which usually maintained the peace via Quarter sessions and common law. None of this was surprising as in most border shires defence was the

¹⁴⁶ Draft of an Act of Parliament for the well disposing and leasing of the lands of Leix, 10 November 1557, TNA, SP 62/1/60; Butler, *The statutes at large*, pp 241-4.

¹⁴⁷ *Fiants Ire. Philip & Mary*, no. 228; *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 4, 16, 193. & 379; *Cal. pat. rolls Ire.*, pp 397-431.

¹⁴⁸ Crawford, *Anglicising the Government of Ireland*, p. 278.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.p 278-279.

¹⁵⁰ Articles submitted to the Privy Council by the Primate of Armagh, 30 May 1558, TNA, SP 62/1/44.

¹⁵¹ Elizabeth’s instructions to Sussex and Council, 16 July 1559, TNA, SP 63/1/61; Queen Elizabeth’s instructions to Sussex, May 1560, TNA, SP 63/2/18.

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top priority. By 1557, the two counties, deemed equal in size to Kent and considered quite fertile with large commodities of wood, pasturage, meadows and good tillage land, lay six years largely uninhabited and ‘empty of cultivation, giving no rent or profit at all’.¹⁵² Thus, the government’s hopes of establishing substantial colonies and English local government in the region had failed by 1560 as only a minimal number of English settlers had actually settled in the two areas. In reality, Sussex established little beyond a legal framework for plantation and English county government.¹⁵³

Radcliffe on the other hand viewed his deputyship as a success with stability restored to an otherwise turbulent realm. Upon his departure from Ireland in September 1558 to address the Queen’s grievances regarding the influx of Scots into Ulster, Sussex claimed he left the country in such a state, as ‘there shall be no likelihood of any great hurt’.¹⁵⁴ However, not everyone in London shared the Earl’s sentiments. Elizabeth I, who succeeded her sister Mary as Queen of England and Ireland in November 1558, was extremely dissatisfied with Sussex’s progress in the midlands.¹⁵⁵ Elizabeth argued that ‘our two countries...do yet remain unestablished or uninhabited...planted only with our men of war, whereby they lay waste without peopling, and our charge is likely to grow daily more intolerable’.¹⁵⁶ Arguably, this is an accurate summary of what Sussex had achieved by the conclusion of the period under review.

In conclusion, by the year 1560, the plantation project in Leix and Offaly was a complete failure. There is no doubt that the midlands, similar to other

¹⁵² Lord Deputy Sussex and Council to the King and Queen, 4 April 1557, TNA, SP 62/1/28.

¹⁵³ Carey, ‘The end of the Gaelic political order’, p. 224; Brady, *The chief governors*, p. 96.

¹⁵⁴ Lord Deputy Sussex to the Queen, 13 September 1558, TNA, SP 62/1/69.

¹⁵⁵ *Cal. pat. rolls, Ire.*, p. 428.

¹⁵⁶ Elizabeth’s instructions to Sussex and Council, 16 July 1559, TNA, SP 63/1/61; Queen Elizabeth’s instructions to Sussex, May 1560, TNA, SP 63/2/18.

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peripheral areas of the kingdom experienced shifting and ever changeable policies as well as numerous Lord Deputies during the turbulent Mid-Tudor crisis.¹⁵⁷ The government's original motives behind the venture were to curb the incessant revolts of the O'Mores and O'Connors and to plant loyal Englishmen in their stead, creating an English colony. From this, the administration hoped to implement the English system of local government, but this simply never materialised. Forced to contend with unsuitable terrain, restrictive, short-term leases and hostile natives, English settlers proved unwilling to settle in the two areas in large numbers. The Crown, who hoped the enterprise would turn a quick profit and provide a steady flow of revenue, was instead plagued by financial woes. Instead of generating profit, the plantation absorbed it and plunged the colony and the government into debt. Queen Mary's decision to seize the lands of the O'Mores and O'Connors and to appoint Thomas Radcliffe, as Lord Deputy in the mid 1550s at least, were ill-conceived moves that bore little fruit. As highlighted, the government's reliance on martial law greatly hindered any chances for assimilation with the Gaelic locals and resulted in a further break down in relations, which in turn undermined peace and law and order. Ultimately, little had been achieved or established in Leix and Offaly beyond a militarised framework for county government and an English settler society ever prepared for war. It was also clear that the Privy Council, three successive monarchs and multiple Lord Deputies were unable to agree upon a singular strategy or solution to the crisis. The midlands colonial venture, the implementation of traditional English local government and the advancement of English common law suffered as a result. However, all hope was not lost for the fragile enterprise, as will be explained in the next chapter.

¹⁵⁷ Power, *A European frontier elite*, pp 113-4.

Chapter 2

'Put in good order the rest of our realm...namely our countries of Leix and Offaly'¹: Progress in the midlands, c. 1560-71.

By early 1560, the Tudor government was forced to acknowledge its many failures in the midlands.² The Leix-Offaly Plantation was underdeveloped, poorly defended and constantly under threat from its aggrieved dispossessed Gaelic natives.³ Financially crippled and disgruntled by the settlement crisis, the administration's aspirations of a model English colony in the region simply failed to materialise. But there remained a glimmer of hope and a stern determination on the government's part to learn from its mistakes and develop English administrative structures in the region. Ciaran Brady argues that for Sussex, the midlands plantation was really only ever an opportunity to flaunt his ambition and feed his ego.⁴ In his eyes, he would be the one to establish a new commonwealth in the country, attained through daring strategic manoeuvring and military endeavour.⁵ The Lord Deputyship and Lieutenancy of Ireland was never truly his ultimate goal but more exciting and glorious assignments elsewhere such as the New World.⁶ He clearly had his own designs for establishing an effective English colony in the region, which oftentimes conflicted with the government's plan. He also blatantly ignored the crown's instructions for the two territories on more than one occasion.⁷ But how valid is this assessment of Sussex and his overall strategy for the plantation?

¹ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-1574*, no. 230.

² Elizabeth's instructions to Sussex and Council, 16 July 1559, TNA, SP 63/1/61; Queen Elizabeth's instructions to Sussex, May 1560, TNA, SP 63/2/18.

³ Brady, *The chief governors*, p. 96; Ellis, *Ireland in the age of the Tudors*, p. 279.

⁴ Ciaran Brady alleges that Sussex refused to heed other people's advice and his plans for Ireland were 'prearranged and unalterable'. See Brady, *The chief governors*, p. 82.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ King and Queen to the Lord Deputy Sussex, 23 June 1557, TNA, SP 62/1/44.

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Wallace T. MacCaffrey certainly agrees with Ciaran Brady's argument that the Lord Lieutenant made several mistakes in the two counties but asserts that Sussex learned from and rectified these same mistakes.⁸ By early 1560, the Lord Deputy's own brother, Henry Radcliffe, alleged that native resistance had culminated in a kingdom of complete disorder.⁹ Thomas Cusack, the loyal and well respected Old English judge, informed Cecil that he deemed the north of the country and the territories of Queen's County and King's County to be the most unruly regions in Ireland. However, if brought to good obedience and effectively governed, Cusack claimed the 'whole realm would be' brought to 'quietness'. He was already optimistic that the country was militarily resolute by the dawn of the decade and government loyalists were capable of raising 2,000 fighting men at a moment's notice.¹⁰

Sussex was also positive that the issues the government faced could be resolved. In 1562, he outlined his proposals for 'reducing of your (the Queen's) English subjects in this realm to live under the obedience of the law and...your Irish subjects to live under the directions of certain constitutions more agreeable to their natures and customs'.¹¹ From the outset, this was significant. It proved that Sussex had learned from his previous blunders and was attempting to rectify them. The Lord Lieutenant still sought to extend royal authority throughout the country including the midlands.¹² This included persuading the Gaelic natives of Ireland towards conformity backed by military force only if necessary. In the decades preceding Sussex's appointment, the opposite had prevailed and had brought the administration no closer to making their aspirations a reality in the two counties.¹³ To speed up the process of assimilation, the Lord Lieutenant proposed the blending of Brehon law with common law in

⁸ Wallace T. MacCaffrey, 'Thomas Radcliffe, third earl of Sussex', in Henry Colin Gray Matthew and Brian Howard Harrison (eds), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

⁹ Sir Henry Radcliffe to Cecil, 12 January 1562, TNA, SP 63/5/9.

¹⁰ Mr Thomas Cusack to Cecil, 17 February 1562, TNA, SP 63/5/33.

¹¹ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-74*, no. 236.

¹² MacCaffrey, 'Thomas Radcliffe, third earl of Sussex'.

¹³ *Ibid.* Also see chapter 1.

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Gaelic dominated territories. In other words, patient and peaceful assimilation backed by coercion.¹⁴ In addition, Sussex also proposed the establishment of provincial councils, based upon the Welsh model, each with an English president, reinforced by small groups of soldiers. More locally, in the Queen's County and King's County, the Lord Lieutenant deemed it necessary to 'continue an England born captain...to have the charge and guarding of those counties with the two forts in them'. 20 Horse and 100 foot were deemed a sufficient force to protect Maryborough and Philipstown with an additional 200 kern assigned to captains throughout the countryside.¹⁵ Thomas Cusack argued that 'if...the forts of Queen's County and King's County' were 'committed to the government' in this manner and 'of such as need no aid nor impositions of the country' then things would be well.¹⁶ None of what Sussex proposed was particularly radical or new but what he set out in his proposals of 1562 was a coherent and clearly articulated long term strategy for reforming the country including the two shires and was a testament to the fact that the Lord Lieutenant had, in spite of his many errors, learned a lot from his previous deputyship.¹⁷ In fact, MacCaffrey contended that a great deal of what Sussex set forth was adopted by his eventual successor Henry Sidney. Therefore, his overall mark on the country and on English policy throughout Ireland would be felt for many years following his departure.

From a more local midlands perspective, it was what Sussex proposed for crown officers and captains that was the most significant. The Lord Lieutenant declared that these individuals 'must have authority to execute martial law, which' they 'may use more liberally' in the region 'than the captains of the Kavanaghs and the Byrnes'.¹⁸ This, in addition to the reference to the assignment of an English captain to oversee and guard the two counties as well their main forts, suggests that Sussex sought to retain

¹⁴ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-74*, no. 236; MacCaffrey, 'Thomas Radcliffe, third earl of Sussex'.

¹⁵ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-74*, no. 236.

¹⁶ Mr. Thomas Cusack to Cecil, 17 February 1562, TNA, SP 63/5/33.

¹⁷ MacCaffrey, 'Thomas Radcliffe, third earl of Sussex'.

¹⁸ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-74*, no. 236.

and expand upon the militarised government set up in the previous decade. Consequently, this chapter assesses how the Tudor government was suddenly able to reverse some of its ill fortune in the Queen's County and King's County to establish a unique form of English local government there by 1571. It also analyses how the new administration compared with other shires situated in similar Gaelic dominated territories like Elizabethan Galway.

Gaelic resistance unquestionably impeded Sussex's aspirations for the midlands. Despite the martial tone of the Lord Lieutenant's 1562 proposals, he did not envision a military conquest of the two shires.¹⁹ Yet, the administration was very much aware that native opposition would have to be stamped out if the Leix-Offaly plantation was to stand any chance of survival. Conciliation up to that point, or at least the government's attempts, had failed. As a result, the government decided to pursue a strategy of conciliation reinforced by coercion. For example, Henry Radcliffe, in his role as lieutenant of Maryborough and Philipstown, was ordered to keep the O'Mores and O'Connors in check, while his brother, Lord Lieutenant Sussex, granted land to certain factions within the two clans.²⁰ This land was intentionally situated in the remotest parts of the two territories 'whereof least offence may grow, reserving rents, duties, and services' for the government's utilisation.²¹ This was a calculated move on the crown's part intended to create vacuums of power within the two polities and make the recipients of land reliant upon the administration for their survival.²² In turn, these Gaelic government loyalists were expected to overpower and eventually overthrow their landless kin, eradicating the most rebellious

¹⁹ Brady, *The chief governors*, p. 94; Sussex, 'Instructions', May 1556, BL, Cotton MSS, Titus B XI, no. 241; Orders for Leix, 1556, TNA, SP 62/1/19-21; 63/7/62.

²⁰ Memoranda of matters to be despatched presently into Ireland, 25 February 1561, TNA, SP 63/3/31; Instructions to the Earl of Sussex, 24 May 1561, TNA, SP 63/3/78.

²¹ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-1574*, no. 229; Instructions to the Earl of Sussex, 24 May 1561, TNA, SP 63/3/78.

²² See *In Ireland, amongst a number of wrongs done to Her Majesty*, 18 July 1597, TNA, SP 63/200/33. Furthermore, see chapter 6.

elements of each troublesome clan from within.²³ In the future, the government hoped that these clans would be too busy fighting each other to have the time or resources to offer further resistance to the plantation.²⁴ It was a shrewd and calculated move on the administration's part and seemed promising for a time. Unsurprisingly, violent family feuds quickly erupted throughout the midlands, particularly in the King's County throughout the late 1550s and 60s.²⁵ Sussex, who claimed the credit, boasted to Cecil that the strategy was a resounding success. Not only did he claim that the two most troublesome clans, the O'Mores and O'Connors, were completely subdued but he asserted that during his deputyship they sought 'to give over Irish order' and were content 'to hold their lands of the Queen by succession' and were satisfied that their countries had been 'made shire ground, and to live under the obedience of the laws'.²⁶ This was unquestionably a gross exaggeration on the part of the Lord Lieutenant. The O'Mores and O'Connors were far from subjugated and throughout this decade, regularly rose in revolt to voice their grievances to an administration determined to exclude them from a significant stake in the plantation.²⁷ Arguably, it was Sussex's successor, Nicholas Arnold, who made the most progress in temporarily pacifying the two Gaelic lordships. It was Arnold, not Sussex, who orchestrated the government invasion of the King's County that resulted in the arrest of the competent leader of the landless faction of the O'Connors, Calvach McBrian, in 1564.²⁸ In the subsequent fighting, the administration emerged victorious, claiming the

²³ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 532, 571, 572, 589 & 610; *HMC, Acts of the Privy Council in Ireland, 1556-71* (London, 1897), p. 133; In Ireland, amongst a number of wrongs done to Her Majesty, 18 July 1597, TNA, SP 63/200/33; Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', p. 235.

²⁴ Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', p. 235

²⁵ See chapter 6.

²⁶ Memorandum by Cecil, 19 August 1561, TNA, SP 63/4/37; *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-1574*, no. 237.

²⁷ Commissioners Wrothe and Arnold to the privy council, 16 February 1564, SP 63/10/15; Commissioners Wrothe and Arnold to the privy council, 16 March 1564, TNA, SP 63/10/34; Lord Justice Arnold to the Earl of Pembroke, 3 July 1564, TNA, SP 63/11/21.

²⁸ Sir Thomas Wrothe to Lord Robert Dudley, 23 July 1564, TNA, SP 63/11/35.

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heads of over 90 O'Connors and 35 O'Mores.²⁹ Arnold's actions managed to subdue the midlands' clans for some time allowing the government to implement significant change in the two shires and implement English administrative structures.

However, at times, without further analysis, it can appear as if the O'Mores and O'Connors committed mindless violence in the region, an almost mechanical and routine reflex to English intervention. But their relationship with the administration and Gaelic motivations behind such revolts were far more nuanced than suggested. It must be stated that Arnold's actions in the King's County and the subsequent clashes did not completely crush the two clan's fighting capabilities. Prior to the government assault, Thomas Wrothe, the prominent English politician, courtier and fervent supporter of the Protestant reformation, warned that the 'rebels in Queen's County burn and kill all they may catch or come to. They in King's County gather together and will do all the mischief they can'.³⁰ By May 1565, Sidney alleged that the two tribes still 'daily doth hurt and outrage'.³¹ This plunged local government in the two shires into a state of fear and paranoia and implied that defence and oftentimes offence was paramount and the only chance the Leix-Offaly plantation had for survival. Hence, the sword was promoted and ultimately became the chief means by which law and order in the midlands was maintained. As highlighted, coercion and the application of force mixed with a degree of conciliation, however limited, had always been intended as the means of reforming the country.

Far from condemning the violent reality that existed in the region, the Queen endorsed it. This was not surprising considering that Elizabeth's own ministers, including Henry Sidney, called on her to act against the 'naturals of these two countries of late' who had 'rebelled' and decide 'whether to

²⁹ Lord Justice and Council to the Queen, 31 October 1564, TNA, SP 63/11/97.

³⁰ Sir Thomas Wrothe to Lord Robert Dudley, 23 July 1564, TNA, SP 63/11/35.

³¹ Sir Henry Sidney's articles for the public affairs of Ireland, 20 May 1565, TNA, SP 63/13/46.

quiet them by pardoning them or extirp, or at least banish them by force'.³² The Queen was by no means opposed to employing a heavy hand against the native insurgents of the midlands. For instance, in March 1566, she stated that before further plantations could be attempted in the north of the country, Queen's County and King's County needed to be cleansed of its most rebellious elements.³³ Chancellor Robert Weston most adequately summed up the government's attitude during this period: 'The sword hath brought them in and the sword...must keep them in...until they have felt the fruits and sweetness of your majesty's merciful Justice: which once tasted, will then through love (as I think) work in them more true and faithful obedience than the fear of the battle sword hath or can do'.³⁴ In other words, coercion was expected to gradually sway the Gaelic Irish towards conformity and eventual assimilation.

It was quite clear that such an approach, unsurprisingly, bred a level of resentment among the natives and encouraged further resistance. In February 1566, Shane O'Neill, the Ulster rebel and claimant to the title of Earl of Tyrone, giving reasons for why he would not attend on Lord Deputy Sidney, highlighted the level of distrust felt by the Gaelic Irish population towards the English martial captains and governors over the previous ten years. From a midlands perspective, O'Neill alleged that: 'Conall O'More, chief of that name was invited to the house of Richard Butler, 1st Viscount Mountgarret, father in law to the said Conall, and without trial was executed by Captain Nicholas Heron'. Similarly, Donough O'Connor, whilst under the protection of the government, attended on the lord deputy where he was nearly shot and killed by a Captain Digby. Although O'Connor survived the murder attempt, Digby allegedly received no form of punishment. Instead, although still under protection, O'Connor was allegedly taken prisoner until he delivered pledges at which point, they were swiftly put to death'.³⁵

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Queen Elizabeth to Lord Deputy Sidney, 28 March 1566, TNA, SP 63/16/69.

³⁴ Robert Weston to the Queen, 8 October 1567, TNA, SP 63/22/5.

³⁵ Shane O'Neill's reasons for not attending on Lord Deputy Sidney, 18 February 1566, TNA, SP 63/16/29.1.

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Certainly, the uprisings and raids of the O'Mores and O'Connors can be viewed in several ways: acts of retaliation; a means of displaying their dissatisfaction with the government and a way of highlighting what they deemed to be unfair discrimination and injustice; or simply full scale assaults upon the English presence in the region designed to impede the government's plans and drive any settlers off of land formerly in the hands of the Gaelic natives.

Undoubtedly, the government's decision to exclude factions of the O'Mores and O'Connors from a stake in the plantation was an intentional move that bred contempt. There can also be little doubt that the dispossessed elements of the two clans launched subsequent raids to display their dissatisfaction with the situation. Indeed, Vincent Carey alleges that even the most rebellious of the two parties genuinely sought a share in the midlands enterprise.³⁶ But there may also have been another potential reason, as highlighted by Shane O'Neill: the issue of protection. In August 1566, in a list of complaints against Sir Nicholas Arnold, Sussex alleged that upon his departure, the O'Connors were obedient to the crown having been granted pledges and protection as 'good subjects'. Arnold allegedly damaged and undermined Gaelic-government relations by arresting Calvach O'Connor who upon his escape, declared his loyalty once again. It was allegedly the government's decision to not grant him further protection that led him into open rebellion with the crown.³⁷

Arnold strongly disagreed with the allegations and asserted that the O'Connors had conspired as rebels, claiming that he arrested Calvach to try him for the murder of two gentlemen. He did acknowledge that O'Connor requested protection which he subsequently denied deeming it 'ill of a murderer and traitor', which in turn, caused O'Connor to 'spoil the land'.³⁸

³⁶ For more on this see Carey, 'Gaelic reaction to plantation: the case of the O'More and O'Connor lordships of Laois and Offaly, 1570-1603', chapter 4.

³⁷ Articles against Sir Nicholas Arnold, 15 August 1566, TNA, SP 63/18/82.

³⁸ Answers of Sir Nicholas Arnold to the charges against him, 15 August 1566, TNA, SP 63/18/83.

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From as early as August 1564, the government was worried that any dispossessed O'Mores and O'Connors would be drawn towards Piers Grace, an alleged ally of the Earl of Desmond and notorious rebel who was considered by the government to be a 'murderer of magistrates and good men who escaped arrest'.³⁹ By the following October, it was reported that Piers Grace lay on the borders of the Queen's County with at least 400 swords, the majority of whom were in fact dispossessed O'Mores and O'Connors.⁴⁰ Despite the Queen calling for their immediate arrest and for them to be brought to justice, the rebel coalition remained at large.⁴¹ Lord Deputy Henry Sidney originally granted Piers Grace protection which expired and during that time he apparently 'committed no outrages. They hear that he now wants to come in and live quietly in obedience, but dare not grant him protection or a pardon without the queen's pleasure being known. He deserves to suffer justice, but if this way is chosen he may go on and commit more spoils'.⁴² Thus, it seems apparent that when offered no further form of protection from the crown, rebels such as Piers Grace and elements of the O'More and O'Connor clan were stirred into revolt. Arguably, the dispossessed natives could also have been driven to Grace's side in the first place as a means of survival.⁴³ Therefore, the numerous raids of this period and throughout the century as a whole upon the Pale could very well be viewed not simply as mindless or random attacks but as launched 'in the hope of getting a pardon'.⁴⁴

³⁹ Lord Justice and Council to the Earl of Ormond and Ossory, 7 August 1564, TNA, SP 63/11/65-6; Lords Justice Weston and Fitzwilliam to Sir William Cecil, 23 November 1567, TNA, SP 63/22/24.

⁴⁰ Sir William FitzWilliam to Cecil, 22 October 1565, TNA, SP 63/15/15

⁴¹ Queen Elizabeth to Lord Deputy Sidney, 28 March 1566, TNA, SP 63/16/69.

⁴² Lords Justice Weston and FitzWilliam to Sir William Cecil, 23 November 1567, TNA, SP 63/22/24.

⁴³ Robert Weston to Sir William Cecil, 30 October 1567, TNA, SP 63/22/17; Sir William FitzWilliam to Sir William Cecil, 31 October 1567, TNA, SP 63/22/19; Sir William FitzWilliam to Sir William Cecil, 7 November 1567, TNA, SP 63/22/21.

⁴⁴ Answers of Sir Nicholas Arnold to the charges against him, 15 August 1566, TNA, SP 63/18/83.

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But there may also have been another reason. As outlined in Chapter 1, the O'Mores and O'Connors were traditional allies of the Earls of Kildare and they had often been employed by the magnates to threaten the Pale so as to reaffirm Kildare position as lord deputies and persuade the government that they were essential to maintaining the peace.⁴⁵ Following the demise of their FitzGerald overlords, the O'Connors, and to a lesser extent, the O'Mores, remained staunch supporters of the Geraldine cause. But this did not just mean loyalty to the Earls of Kildare; it also meant loyalty to the Earls of Desmond. Sussex was wary and distrustful of the 'faction of the Geraldines', who he alleged 'depend all the evil-disposed men in the realm. Therefore it shall be good to put in places convenient such as shall depend upon the Crown, in lieu of those of that faction. There would then be less danger of foreign practises and civil conspiracy'.⁴⁶ This was significant as it certainly foreshadowed the First and Second Desmond Revolts but also the government's attempts to undermine the Munster magnates and replace them with English royal authority, similar to what had been done in the case of the FitzGerald. The Earls of Desmond and the Earls of Ormond were traditionally bitter rivals and their complicated factional dispute was adequately summarised by Sussex:

The Geraldines are of Irish blood, not brought or reduced to the English government. The Butlers, for the most part, are of English blood and name, or of the Irishry reduced already to English government. The experience hereof appears in the cases of Thomond and Tyrone, for the Geraldines ever favoured and yet do, Donal O'Byrne and Shane O'Neill, usurping by Irish order, and the Butlers ever favoured the Earl of Thomond and the late Baron of Dungannon, claiming to hold by the Crown.⁴⁷

There can be little doubt that the O'Mores and O'Connors supported the Geraldine cause during this period. For instance, Nicholas Arnold claimed that if he had tried to impose royal authority in Ulster, Shane O'Neill, a close ally of the Geraldines, would have assisted the O'Connors in

⁴⁵ See chapter 1, p. 41.

⁴⁶ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-74*, no. 227.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

rebellion.⁴⁸ As highlighted, Sussex was deeply distrustful of the Geraldine cause and proposed that in order to undermine them, it would be necessary to ‘displace...O’Neill...whereby one of the principal members of that faction shall be taken away and a sure pillar for the Crown placed (O’Donnell)’. Nevertheless, in October 1565, it was alleged that Piers Grace, the O’Mores, O’Connors and John of Desmond spoiled Ormond lands in Kilkenny and Tipperary.⁴⁹ Certainly by July 1566, the government was aware that Piers Grace had a castle in the Earl of Desmond’s territory and we know that in the past that following the death of the 9th Earl of Ormond, the O’Mores and O’Connors raided Butler lands.⁵⁰ Furthermore, in September 1568, Edward Butler accused the O’Mores of been in league with Desmond and committing spoils in the Queen’s County.⁵¹ As a result, the raids of the O’Mores and O’Connors cannot simply be viewed as random acts of violence or even simply in direct opposition to the English presence in the midlands. Instead, the two clan’s motivations were often far more complex.

Although the government had mixed success with the issue of Gaelic resistance during this period, it arguably had greater accomplishment with the settlement crisis. The Queen, much like Sussex, had learned from some of the mistakes of the past, particularly why the previous land grants under Edward VI had failed so spectacularly. Hence, Elizabeth I instructed Sussex to ‘make grants and leases in the midlands’ and construct ‘such castles and houses of strength...for the better possessing of the same countries’.⁵² She also ordered Radcliffe to ‘have convenient persons to take and inhabit the same...for increase of tillage for corn’ and to ‘put in good order the rest of our realm...and namely our countries of’ the Queen’s County and King’s

⁴⁸ Answers of Sir Nicholas Arnold to the charges against him, 15 August 1566, TNA, SP 63/18/83.

⁴⁹ Certificate by John Rowe, 28 October 1565, TNA, SP 63/15/34.

⁵⁰ Articles of interrogation for Sir Nicholas Arnold, July 1566, TNA, SP 63/18/44; See Introduction, pp 41-2.

⁵¹ Edward Butler to the Lords Justices, 24 September 1568, TNA, SP 63/26/4.XIII.

⁵² Elizabeth’s instructions to Sussex and Council, 16 July 1559, TNA, SP 63/1/61; Queen Elizabeth’s instructions to Sussex, May 1560, TNA, SP 63/2/18.

County.⁵³ Sussex subsequently vowed to resurvey the two shires, redivide them into baronies and create estates 'in tail to the inhabitants'. However, it was the government's addressing of the most significant settler grievance of the previous decade: restrictive and changeable land grants that bore the most fruit.⁵⁴ Even by Queen Mary's reign, it was evident that the administration had learned from the mistakes of the past and realised the only way to attract significant numbers of English and militarily capable settlers to the midlands would be to grant the land in freehold.⁵⁵ Elizabeth developed this even further in her land grants of 1562-64 by offering reduced rent for the first seven years to encourage further and more substantial settlement and by and large, it was successful.⁵⁶

A small but steady flow of settlers gradually set down root in the region during this period. With the exception of Thomas Butler, 10th Earl of Ormond and Richard Nugent, Baron Delvin the majority of colonists were English gentlemen, Gaelic Irish government loyalists, and soldiers. The grants of the early 1560s were a significant departure for the government as for the first time the stipulations of settlement in 1562/3 were the same for English freeholders as Gaelic Irish.⁵⁷ The administration ultimately realised that if a successful English colony was ever to become a reality in the Queen's County and King's County, the natives needed to be included and provided with a stake in it, even if it was as tenants on the land. From that point onwards, the success of the colony would be judged not on how 'mere' English its settlers were but instead on how effectively an English order could be imposed there.⁵⁸ Consequently, the O'Kellys, O'Dempseys, Keatings, MacDonnells and factions of the O'More clan featured

⁵³ Queen Elizabeth's instructions to Sussex, May 1560, TNA, SP 63/2/18; *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-1574*, no. 230.

⁵⁴ Lord Deputy Croft and Council to the Privy Council, 26 January 1552, TNA, SP 61/4/4; Lord Lieutenant and Council to the Queen, 27 November 1561, TNA, SP 63/4/75.

⁵⁵ Instructions from Queen Mary to the Lord Deputy Sir Anthony St. Leger and others of the Council, October 1553, TNA, SP 62/1/2.

⁵⁶ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 498, 500, 596

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Dean Gunther White, 'Tudor plantations in Ireland to 1571' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1967), Vol. 2, pp 58, 402.

prominently in the land grants in the Queen's County.⁵⁹ In the King's County, seven Gaelic Irish grantees obtained land, at least four of whom were members of the O'Connor clan.⁶⁰ The terms of the grants included the maintenance of one to nineteen horsemen as well as 'English galloglass', which most likely referred to galloglass mercenaries in service to the Tudor government.⁶¹ In total, thirty-three grantees received land in the King's County.⁶² Of those whose titles we know, four were regarded as English gentlemen, one was described as an esquire, Sir Thomas Tyrell was a knight and finally there was Christopher Nugent, the Baron of Delvin.⁶³ The annual rental value of the estates of Tyrell and Nugent in the King's County were worth a mere £3 5s. and 50s. respectively which proved that although certain gentry possessed vast estates in the midlands, their landed income might have been quite small there.

In the Queen's County, thirty-nine settlers received land, half of whom were English gentlemen.⁶⁴ A significant number of the general settlers in the two shires were also soldiers in bands under the command of leading gentry such as Henry Cowley and Francis Cosby, divided into groups of horsemen, arquebusiers, archers, pikemen and kern.⁶⁵ In total, just over seventy freeholders set down root in the two shires. Once again, a significant

⁵⁹ The Galloglass were planted for strategic purposes by the government who could call upon them for military service when necessary. The MacDonnells were intentionally planted in Tinnakill and Slievemargy for this exact purpose and arguably because they were more adaptable to the wooded and boggy terrain than their English counterparts. See Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', p. 76; Appendix 1

⁶⁰ Appendix 1.

⁶¹ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 498, 500, 596. For instance, Mollmory McEdmund, Hugh Boy MacCallough and Turlough Óg MacAlexander of MacDonnell clan were referred to as her Majesty's galloglass. In the 1570s, they were paid an annual sum of £100 each and instructed not to serve anyone but the Queen. They were also expected to 'perform all duties connected with the marching of the army and assaulting of castles and other services as ought to be done by the Queen's galloglass'. See *Fiants Eliz.*, no. 3291.

⁶² See Appendix 1

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Table of the captains of Ireland, 1562, TNA, SP 63/7/61.

number were soldiers or had at least some connection to the crown army.⁶⁶ The end result was that Elizabeth encouraged increased settlement in the midlands. During Edward VI's land grants, there were thirty-five settlers. This increased to thirty-nine under Elizabeth. In the King's County, numbers increased from sixteen in 1550 to thirty-two by 1564 and although numbers fell well short of the government's aspirations for a sufficient English colony, progress had clearly been made.⁶⁷

Upon taking office as Lord Deputy, Henry Sidney took settler's grievances onboard and urged the government to alter the terms of settlement in the Queen's County and King's County so that 'men of more ability' could 'gain hold of estates there'.⁶⁸ Lucas Dillon, Chief Baron of the exchequer, shared Sidney's sentiments and alleged that the settlers wanted 'larger estates in order to make longer leases on them'.⁶⁹ The Queen was reluctant and cautioned Sidney to 'have good regard that the inhabitants there do not engross many farms unto few hands, whereby hospitality must decay'.⁷⁰ Yet, this exact situation transpired throughout the following decade. Arguably, the government had little alternative and were forced to accept and adapt to the settlement limitations in the two shires especially considering that the numerous Gaelic raids during this period caused 'divers tenants' to depart the country leaving 'their tenancies and estates determined'.⁷¹ It was clear; therefore, in the administration's eyes, that the aspiration of a midlands plantation with multiple estates and a wide array of settlers from England was unobtainable.⁷² As a direct result, the government passed down vast swathes of land to a small but significant group of county gentry and martial men who had the necessary resources to

⁶⁶ White, 'Tudor plantations in Ireland to 1571', p. 56; Also see Appendix 1.

⁶⁷ The Queen to Lord Deputy Sidney, 2 July 1568, TNA, SP 63/25/17; See *Fiants Ire. Edward VI.*, nos 673-1144.

⁶⁸ Suits of Sir Henry Sidney, 1 July 1568, TNA, SP 63/25/14.

⁶⁹ Memorial of Lucas Dillon for Ireland, April, 1570, TNA, SP 63/30/40.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* Instructions for Sir Henry Sidney, 5 October 1565, TNA, SP 63/15/4.

⁷¹ Instructions for Sir Henry Sidney, 5 October 1565, TNA, SP 63/15/4.

⁷² Malby's opinion touching the government of Ireland, 26 September 1579, BL, Cotton Titus B MS. XIII, fol. 290.

discharge the key offices of English local government in the two counties.⁷³ It was this group that became the political elite of the two shires. In doing so, the government also gave up on its dream of attracting large numbers of peers to the midlands from England and elsewhere in Ireland, militarily capable noblemen who were crucial components of any self-sufficient shire and who required no financial assistance from the crown.⁷⁴

This in turn highlights another significant factor that restricted the Tudor government in implementing English local government in the midlands from 1547-60: economic problems. Unlike the settlement crisis, the administration had far less success in resolving its financial woes. In essence, the plantation continued to drain government resources. Sussex deemed wealthy peers to be not only crucial to a self-sufficient colony but vital for reducing the crown's standing army in Ireland.⁷⁵ Had they settled in the midlands in sufficient numbers, Radcliffe was confident he could have reduced the garrisons of Maryborough and Philipstown to 100 soldiers and saved the government at least £2,600 per annum. At this stage, Sussex alleged, the Leix-Offaly Plantation would have been completely self-sustaining and capable of turning an annual profit of £500 increasing by a third after ten years (£666) and eventually by a half within twenty years (£750). The reality, however, was that by 1561, the government was already in debt to the tune of over £13,000.⁷⁶ By the end of the year, this number was predicted to double at a time when the country generated an annual revenue of just over £2500.⁷⁷ The substantial military presence in Ireland had ushered in a period of peace to begin with but in doing so, had drained

⁷³ Elaborated on in more detail in chapter three, pp 80-2. But, for an indication of the competition for land among this small group of settlers, see Justice Edward Fitzsimons to Lord Deputy Sidney, 26 June 1567, TNA, SP 63/21/30 in particular.

⁷⁴ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-1574*, no. 227; Brady, *The chief governors*, p. 94; Sussex, 'Instructions', May 1556, BL, Cotton MSS, Titus B XI, no. 241; Orders for Leix, 1556, TNA, SP 62/1/19-21; 63/7/62.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Memorandum of the charges of Ireland from 1560-1, 10 January 1562, TNA, SP 63/5/8.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

the exchequer dry.⁷⁸ Sussex argued that without the army, the government never would have been able to subdue the O'Mores or the O'Connors in the first place, which, he predicted, had secured the Pale and increased the Queen's revenue by over £500.⁷⁹ The Lord Deputy also attempted to relieve the financial pressure on the freeholders of Queen's County and King's County by allowing them to pay rent twice during the year and pay off any outstanding arrears through military service.⁸⁰ If this failed to improve matters, Sussex argued there were few alternatives to resolve the financial crisis in the midlands. He alleged that so long as inadequate numbers of English settlers relocated to the border region and Ireland in general, the exchequer would continue to be depleted.⁸¹

Certainly, large military expeditions into hostile territories, such as Nicholas Arnold's invasion of the King's County in the year 1564, drained government resources, both financial and military.⁸² Undoubtedly, another problem was embezzlement. From as early as May 1562, Sussex faced determined opposition and criticism from numerous individuals within the Pale community. The group appealed for a thorough and extensive investigation into the Lord Lieutenant's administration, its various abuses and the outbreak of countrywide disturbances, which, they argued, were a direct result of Radcliffe's negligence.⁸³ William Bermingham brought further, more serious charges against Sussex, allegations the crown simply could not ignore. Bermingham alleged that Radcliffe committed gross financial mismanagement throughout his tenure and highlighted the wide array of discrepancies relating to soldier's pay.⁸⁴ The crown subsequently dispatched a commission to the country headed by Nicholas Arnold to

⁷⁸ Elizabeth to Fitzwilliam, 10 March 1562, 63/5/39.

⁷⁹ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-1574*, no. 237.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 224.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, no. 227

⁸² Lord Robert Dudley and Sir William Cecil to the Lord Justice Arnold, 16 September 1564, TNA, SP 63/11/88.

⁸³ Sir Oliver Plunkett and Sir Christopher Chevers to Lord Robert Dudley, 27 May 1562, TNA, SP 63/6/13.

⁸⁴ Fitzwilliam to Cecil, 13 June 1562, TNA, SP 63/6/24; Bermingham's 'Interrogatories', 21 June 1562, TNA, SP 63/6/28; Arnold to Cecil. 13 August 1562, TNA, SP 63/6/67.

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investigate the situation.⁸⁵ In particular, Arnold was instructed to pay close attention to the ‘commodities and profits...taken of the counties of King’s County and Queen’s County yearly’.⁸⁶

Sussex’s disbursement of government funds in the region was always suspicious. In March 1564, the Lord Lieutenant, still under investigation by Arnold and his commission, promised the Privy Council that he would furnish and repair the forts of Maryborough and Philipstown.⁸⁷ At first glance, this was nothing out of the ordinary. The crown expected lords deputy to ensure the main government strongholds throughout the country were maintained. However, Sussex’s pledge became increasingly suspicious upon examination of the council books relating to cess compiled some years later. The books highlighted that the inhabitants of Dublin, Kildare, Carlow and Meath, were charged with the upkeep of the forts and ordered to provide furnishings, timber, food, soldiers and labourers from as early as 1550. By 1556/7, it was reported that the two forts were fully furnished, well supplied and had undergone extensive repairs.⁸⁸ In March 1560, 200 labourers allegedly repaired several fortifications, towers and trenches in the two shires.⁸⁹ Additionally, the two forts were allegedly repaired the following year overseen by Henry Cowley and Francis Cosby.⁹⁰ This leads us to question why Maryborough and Philipstown required repair in March 1564, especially in consideration of the fact that the midlands was experiencing a period of relative peace. Arguably, two conclusions can be drawn. Either years of persistent warfare had finally taken its toll upon the two government strongholds by the early 1560s or the funds set aside for the maintenance of the forts was embezzled and Maryborough and Philipstown fell into ruin as a result. If there was any truth to this claim, it certainly adds

⁸⁵ Instructions to Arnold, 7 July 1562, TNA, SP 63/6/49; Instructions to commissioners, 7 July 1562, TNA, SP 63/6/49-50; Bermingham to Northampton, 16 July, 1562, TNA, SP 63/6/53.

⁸⁶ Instructions given by the Queen to Sir Thomas Wrothe and Sir Nicholas Arnold, 20 October 1563, TNA, SP 63/9/45.

⁸⁷ Resolutions agreed on by the Lord Lieutenant and Council, 15 March 1564, TNA, SP 63/10/31.

⁸⁸ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-1574*, no. 61.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Book of the accounts, 9 March 1561, TNA, SP 63/3/35.

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further credibility to the Palesmen's allegations. Nevertheless, the repair and supply of the two midlands' forts was most likely at the back of Sussex's mind by April 1564 when he was finally relieved of his position by one of the chief men who brought about his downfall, Sir Nicholas Arnold.⁹¹ The younger Radcliffe brother, Henry, was also charged with misappropriating government funds to the sum of £8,000 for which he was eventually imprisoned.⁹² Discrepancies included Henry paying the English settler Andrew Brereton an arquebusier's wage of £8 despite the fact he was only supposed to earn an archer's salary.⁹³

It was also discovered that Maryborough and Philipstown and their respective garrisons of 300 soldiers each had extortionately cessed close to 6,000 pecks of corn from the inhabitants of the surrounding areas.⁹⁴ Cess was an extensive system of taxation, a form of purveyance whereby, in this instance, the inhabitants of the Pale were expected to victual English garrisons or provide English soldiers with food and board in addition to supplying horses, corn and cattle to the crown army in the field.⁹⁵ The gentry of the Pale were unsurprisingly furious at the financial strain

⁹¹ Lord Lieutenant Sussex to the Queen, 24 April 1563, TNA, SP 63/8/35; Sussex to Cecil, 8 September 1562, TNA, SP 63/7/10.

⁹² Arnold claimed Henry embezzled government funds throughout his tenure as Lieutenant of Maryborough and Philipstown. Henry's time in gaol was brief and upon his release, he returned to England. See The Queen to the Commissioners in Ireland, 12 July 1564, TNA, SP 63/11/27; Sir Henry Radcliffe to Cecil, 31 January 1565, TNA, SP 63/12/24; Robert Dunlop, *Henry Radcliffe, fourth Earl of Sussex* (New York, 1909), pp 586-7.

⁹³ Book delivered by Sir Nicholas Arnold, 15 March 1566, TNA, SP 63/16/57; Sir Henry Radcliffe's short and general answers, 15 March 1566, TNA, SP 63/16/59.

⁹⁴ Lord Lieutenant and Council to the Privy Council, 5 October 1562, TNA, SP 63/7/23.

⁹⁵ William Palmer, *The problem of Ireland in Tudor foreign policy, 1485-1603* (Suffolk, 1994), pp 3-4; For more on cess, see Ciaran Brady's 'Conservative Subversives: The community of the Pale and the Dublin administration, 1556-86', in P.J. Corish (ed.), *Radicals, rebel and establishments: Historical studies, XV* (Belfast, 1985), pp 11-32; 'Court, castle and country: the framework of government in Tudor Ireland', in Ciaran Brady and Raymond Gillespie (eds), *Natives and newcomers. The making of Irish colonial society, 1534-1641* (Dublin, 1986), pp 22-49; Brady, *The chief governors*, pp 88-9, 134, 146-9, 151-4, 216-17, 220-7, 230-231-7, 242-243.

imposed upon them by the two forts but were reluctant to call for the total disbandment of the army realising that they were essential to defending them from the 'stirs' of the rebellious midlands Gaelic Irish.⁹⁶ Arguably, excesses such as these were entirely preventable and placed a further financial strain on the exchequer.

By the time of Henry Sidney's appointment as Lord Deputy, the financial crisis in the two counties had deepened. Accordingly, Sidney vowed to 'diminish her (the Queen's) charges...which is to be done only by two ways. One is the augmenting the revenue, the other is the diminishing of the garrison'⁹⁷. This he achieved in 1566 when he reduced the garrisons of Maryborough and Philipstown by 140 men, proving once again, that the government was capable of rectifying its mistakes⁹⁸ But amending the revenue crisis and increasing profit proved more elusive. Although the tithes, rents and mills of Queen's County and King's County generated annual revenue of close to £2,000, Gaelic raids drained the exchequer of double that amount each year.⁹⁹ Furthermore, just six months victuals cost the crown over £1,220 and close to £2,400 annually.¹⁰⁰ In response, Sidney urged the government to remain level headed and realistic, declaring the Leix-Offaly plantation a monumentally expensive venture 'which cost more than would purchase of such rent ten times in England'.¹⁰¹ The government arrived at the conclusion that even in times of relative peace, the administration in the midlands struggled to cover its losses, let alone turn a profit. As a result, financial woes plunged the plantation further into debt

⁹⁶ Palesmen's petition to Arnold, 20 December 1562, BL, Add. MS. 40,061, fos. 35-40.

⁹⁷ Lord Deputy to the Privy Council, 15 April 1566, TNA, SP 63/17/13.

⁹⁸ Lord Deputy Sidney and Council to the Privy Council, 13 April 1566, TNA, SP 63/17/8.

⁹⁹ William Bermingham's declaration of the entertainment due to Sir Henry Radcliffe, 15 March 1566, TNA, SP 63/16/58; Memorandum of impositions and spoils on various counties, 1566, TNA, SP 63/19/80.

¹⁰⁰ Money to be provided to Sir Henry Sidney, 26 April 1568, TNA, SP 63/24/18.

¹⁰¹ Lord Deputy Sidney to Sir William Cecil, 17 April 1566, TNA, SP 63/17/14.

during the period under review from which traditional elements of English local government struggled to emerge.

This leads us to question what form of government was evident in the midlands by 1571? As highlighted from early in Sussex's reign, the Lord Lieutenant envisaged a militarised government in the region. The appointment of Henry Radcliffe as Lieutenant of Maryborough and Philipstown was a good indication of this. Sussex's brother was instructed 'to treat with the Irish of the two counties, to take pledges for the return of stolen goods, to punish all men and countries aiding rebels, thieves or malefactors and to punish such malefactors by death or otherwise in execution by martial law'. Interestingly, as will be discussed shortly, Henry Cowley and Francis Cosby were expected to execute martial law throughout the two shires in Radcliffe's absence.¹⁰² Following his eventual departure from the country, Cosby and Cowley were deemed the ideal candidates to assume the roles of constables of Maryborough and Philipstown respectively.¹⁰³

However, the office of lieutenant of the forts was not the only element of martial government introduced to the region during the 1560s. Sussex also introduced the seneschal. Seneschals were expected to collect rents and dues from the Gaelic Irish in their jurisdiction and bring them to conformity under English common law. Although equipped with powers of martial law, seneschals were also expected to govern the native Irish peacefully and encourage them through the threat of coercion if need be to 'acknowledge the sovereignty of the Queen'.¹⁰⁴ Predominantly stationed near a fortified stronghold in Gaelic dominated areas such as Maryborough and Philipstown, seneschals were also expected to punish by all means all rebels 'in life, limb, whipping or other punishment'.¹⁰⁵ Sussex's eventual successor Henry Sidney trusted these officers to keep the midlands in 'obedience and administer justice, not permitting the Brehon law to be

¹⁰² *Fiants Ire. Elizabeth.*, no. 193.

¹⁰³ Memorial from Sir Thomas Radcliffe, earl of Sussex to Queen Elizabeth, 25 March 1566, TNA, SP 63/16/65.

¹⁰⁴ Crawford, *Anglicising the government of Ireland*, p. 278.

¹⁰⁵ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 819

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used'.¹⁰⁶ This went against what Sussex proposed in 1562 to blend Brehon law with common law but nevertheless it seems apparent that these captains were introduced for a simple reason: to execute martial law throughout the Queen's County and King's County and defend and regain the two territories if required.¹⁰⁷ In the midlands, the two known seneschals were also the constables of the two forts, Cosby and Cowley, described in more detail in Chapter 5.¹⁰⁸ As early as 1567, the Lord Justice Robert Weston pointed out the positive impact seneschals had on their respective territories and alleged that where they exercised their authority, coign and livery was all but abolished, martial law kept any unrest in check and English common law was gradually being accepted by Ireland's natives.¹⁰⁹ In fact, quarter sessions were allegedly becoming a regular feature 'in those remote shires' banishing vagabonds as well as encouraging 'the husbandmen and true labourers'.¹¹⁰

But the administration also introduced a considerable amount of traditional and civil English local government to the two shires during this period such as the crucial offices of Justices of the Peace and sheriff.¹¹¹ In the midlands, the Justices role was typical of the rest of the country:

Take the muster and array, to cress and disperse the Irish for defence of the country; to punish the disobedient, and do all other things for the good government of the province; to treat with enemies and rebels, give safe conduct, and conclude terms at discretion; to raise the inhabitants and punish enemies and rebels with fire and sword; and do all other things for the King/Queen's honour and the peace of her subjects.¹¹²

¹⁰⁶ Lord Deputy Sidney and Council to the Privy Council, 13 April 1566, TNA, SP 63/17/8.

¹⁰⁷ Brady, *The chief governors*, p. 95.

¹⁰⁸ Appendix 3.

¹⁰⁹ Rappale, *Martial power and Elizabethan political culture*, p. 170; Lord Deputy Sidney to the Privy Council, 15 April 1566, TNA, SP 63/17/84.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ For a definition of the two roles see Introduction, pp 17-18.

¹¹² *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 543, 2349, 3601, 3657; For more on Justices of the peace, see Steven G. Ellis, *Reform and revival: English government in Ireland, 1470-1534* (London, 1986), pp 188-91.

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In addition, they were instructed ‘to make inquiry of all crimes, to deliver gaols, to take recognisances and to hear and determine all actions’.¹¹³ Thus, JPs primarily remained military officers, which would explain why so many of them in the two counties were captains in the crown army:

In 1563, we know that the JPs for the Queen’s County were Henry Radcliffe (Knight), Francis Cosby (Esquire), William Girton, Hugh Lippiat, William Portas, John Thomas and Owen McHugh O’Dempsey (Gentlemen), all resident gentry.¹¹⁴ The first significantly wealthy Queen’s County gentleman was Francis Cosby. In 1551/2 he was granted eight townlands in Derrybrook, which were worth £13 a year.¹¹⁵ In 1562, Cosby was granted the friar’s house, lands and water mill in Stradbally as well as Castle Derrybrook at a rent of £18.¹¹⁶ Additional monastic lands were given to him in November 1563 and again in 1569 in Dysartgallen, Kilcolmanbane and Tullomoy rectory near Stradbally worth a rental value of £27 annually.¹¹⁷ By the end of 1569, Cosby also possessed lands in Mountrath, Ballyfin and Trumera worth an additional £4.¹¹⁸ In total, the Queen’s County gentleman possessed estates worth over £60 a year, a quite substantial sum. In comparison, poorer gentry such as Hugh Lippiatt, another military man, who held seven townlands in the county surrounding Ballyknockan, had estates worth a mere £8 in rental value per annum.¹¹⁹ Similarly, John Thomas, another Queen’s County JP and the military constable of Ballyadams, paid a yearly rent of just £9 10s.¹²⁰ Captain William Portas, based in Blackford possessed a mere eight townlands.¹²¹ Thus, with the exception of Francis Cosby, the landed income of the Queen’s County JPs

¹¹³ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 543, 2349, 3601, 3657.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 542; Also see Appendix 2. Owen McHugh O’Dempsey is discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

¹¹⁵ White, ‘Tudor Plantations’, p. 258.

¹¹⁶ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 493.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, nos 576, 1376.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 1375.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 495, *Fiants Ire. Philip and Mary*, no. 228.

¹²⁰ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 403, 698.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, no. 1321; The consignment of Queen’s County, 1556, TNA, SP 62/1/21; Also see Appendix 2.

of this period appears to have been quite insignificant. Crucially, all these men came from a military background.

The same can also be said for the King's County, where in 1563, the JPs were Henry Radcliffe, Francis Herbert (Knight), Henry (Esquire) and Robert Cowley, John Wakely, and Owen McHugh O'Dempsey (Gentlemen).¹²² Robert Cowley's lands in Castletown and Togher castle were worth just £10 a year.¹²³ His uncle Henry's estates in Edenderry were worth little more at £13 annually.¹²⁴ The only known non-resident King's County JP was Sir Francis Herbert a Meath man, who in 1558, was pardoned for the murder of John Walshe.¹²⁵ However, by far the biggest and wealthiest gentleman who held the position of JP in the King's County was John Wakely. His lands at Ballyburly were worth £90, and in total his estates stretched across sixteen townlands and included five hamlets and seven ruinous castles.¹²⁶ This was good land with 2,575 acres set aside for tillage farming, 726 acres of pasture and the remaining 1,936 acres deemed bog, moor and woodland.¹²⁷ We also know that Wakely built a castle at Ballyburly by the 1560s.¹²⁸ Of those whose titles we know, two were described as knights, two as esquires and eight as gentlemen. Once again, apart from one notable exception, the JPs of the King's County had relatively small landed incomes but they were crucially mainly resident county gentry.

Aside from the JPs, the main shire officer, the sheriff was also introduced to the midlands. Lord Deputy Sidney deemed these officers crucial 'for the upright execution of justice'.¹²⁹ We know that Francis Cosby, who was also JP for the Queen's County in 1563, served as sheriff in the years 1561, 1564 and 1566 before being replaced by Edward Brereton in 1567 and the Gaelic

¹²² *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 542.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, no. 479.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 258.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, nos 21, 218.

¹²⁶ *Fiants Ire. Edward VI*, no. 687, White, 'Tudor Plantations', p. 253.

¹²⁷ White, 'Tudor Plantations', p. 253.

¹²⁸ *Fiants Ire. Edward VI*, no. 687; White, 'Tudor Plantations', p. 253; *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-1574*, no. 211.

¹²⁹ Instructions for Sir Henry Sidney, 5 October 1565, TNA, SP 63/15/4.

government loyalist Barnaby FitzPatrick in 1568.¹³⁰ In the King's County, Henry Cowley and John Wakely, both JPs in 1563, served as sheriffs in 1566 and 1571 respectively.¹³¹ We also know there was a sheriff in King's County in the years 1564 and 1567 although their names are unknown.¹³² Of this group, we know that Cosby and Wakely were wealthy landowners. However, there was a significant gulf in terms of wealth between these two gentleman for instance, and the likes of Edward Brereton whose landed base at Shannemullen and Loughteeog Castle near Stradbally in the Queen's County, was worth a mere £5 a year.¹³³ Of the five known sheriffs, we know that two were esquires, one was a knight and two were gentlemen. Taking everything into account, the evidence suggests that sheriffs were appointed on a reasonably regular basis in the region during the years of 1560-71, arguably an indication of English local government operating efficiently. The evidence also suggests that the political leadership of the King's County and Queen's County rested with a group of no more than fifteen landowners. Yet, this was not the only progress the government made with regard to implementing English administrative structures.

The administration also made significant strides with the strongholds of Maryborough and Philipstown setting funds aside for their much-needed repair in 1566/7.¹³⁴ Sidney was confident the timing was perfect for the two forts' transition into market towns as they already stood as the 'strongest...in the English Pale, walled with stone and guardable against any Irish rebel'.¹³⁵ This was significant as, for the first time, Maryborough and Philipstown were regarded as being part of the Pale whereas previously, they were seen as lying among the wild Irish. Moreover, it was further proof

¹³⁰ See Appendix 2.

¹³¹ *Ibid*

¹³² Lord Justice and Council to the sheriff of the King's County, 5 August 1564, TNA, SP 63/11/58; Lord Justice Weston and FitzWilliam and Council to Queen Elizabeth, 30 October 1567, TNA, SP 63/22/16.

¹³³ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 501.

¹³⁴ It was alleged that £100 was set aside for Maryborough and close to £150 for Philipstown's repair. See Money received and spent 15 March 1566 to 31 August 1567, 30 September 1567, TNA, SP 63/21/98.

¹³⁵ Lord Deputy Sidney to Sir William Cecil, 18 November 1566, TNA, SP 63/19/51.

that the midlands region was gradually becoming more civilised and assimilated within the Tudor realm. Within a year, Sidney predicted the two forts would become ‘rich and well peopled’ and capable of supporting themselves ‘without charge to the Queen’.¹³⁶ Further progress was made in August 1569 when Philipstown received its charter and in April 1570 when Maryborough received the same.¹³⁷ The charters ‘incorporated the inhabitants by name of burgomaster, bailiffs, burgesses, and commonality with [the] same liberties and free customs as Naas’, another town in the heart of the Pale. The Burgomaster and bailiffs were to have the return and execution of writs and no sheriffs were permitted to enter the town for that purpose. They also had jurisdiction in all personal pleas in the nature of assize and ‘such power of process and execution as the mayor and sheriffs of Drogheda’ had, intentionally highlighting yet again the fact that the two towns were considered as belonging to the English Pale. The Burgesses were expected to elect annually a burgomaster and two bailiffs and the towns were expected to be fortified with trenches and stone walls, which Maryborough and Philipstown already were. The franchises themselves were to extend 8,000 feet on every side. From an economic standpoint, there was to be a Thursday market and the Burgomaster and bailiffs were expected to receive customs on cattle and goods sold as well as profits of the pleas for the repair of the walls and the paving of the town. In turn, the Burgomaster and bailiffs were expected to render 10s. annually to the exchequer and the two officials were also granted 12 messuages (dwelling houses), ‘a common of pasture in the great moor by the town’ and a mill worth 12s. a year in rent.¹³⁸ Yet the most significant aspect of the charters of Maryborough and Philipstown were arguably that the Burgomaster was expected to act as Justice of the peace and in collaboration with the bailiffs, fulfil the additional roles of escheators, clerks of the market and coroners. This was the first time coroners and escheators, crucial elements of English

¹³⁶ Unsurprisingly, Queen Elizabeth approved of the proposal the following January. See The Queen to the Lord Deputy, 16 January 1567, TNA, SP 63/20/8; Lord Deputy Sidney to Sir William Cecil, 18 November 1566, TNA, SP 63/19/51.

¹³⁷ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 1500, 1510.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 1759.

local government, are mentioned in the primary material relating to the shires.¹³⁹ On paper, it appeared that Sidney and his administration finally made substantial progress in implementing English administrative structures for which the government highly commended the Lord Deputy for his endeavours and insisted they could find ‘no man so fit to end and finish so good a work...as he...being the only author and first deviser of this politic, godly, and easy reformation of this barbarous country’.¹⁴⁰ Certainly the maps of Robert Lythe, the Elizabethan cartographer who arrived in Ireland with Sidney in 1567, illustrated just how much had been achieved during the Lord Deputy’s tenure.¹⁴¹ Moreover, John Tomkin’s map of Maryborough from c. 1571 was also significant as it showed a walled settlement with a square shaped fort at the very centre and a garrison building within the fort itself. The growth of the town is most obvious in the settlement displayed on the outskirts of the stronghold within the walled community of at least twenty-two settler’s homes.¹⁴² Thus, Maryborough and Philipstown, former martial fortifications, evolved into what appeared to be civil, fully anglicized communities with farms and estates radiating out from them.¹⁴³

Edmund Tremayne coaxed Sidney to emphasise the progress he had made in the midlands and throughout the country to the Queen so as to secure his reappointment as Lord Deputy. Tremayne urged Sidney to declare ‘how scant you found the English pale, and how it is now enlarged...and so may you with good commodity thereupon express what your opinion is for fortification in any other place that your lordship shall think good...and finally by these means you shall describe what commodity hath grown of such things as are done, and what her highness shall embrace by proceeding

¹³⁹ Ibid., nos 1500, 1510

¹⁴⁰ Lord Chancellor and Council to the Queen, 23 March 1571, TNA, SP 63/31/33.

¹⁴¹ Robert Lythe to Burghley, 24 March 1571, TNA, SP 63/31/36; J. H. Andrews, ‘The Irish Surveys of Robert Lythe’, *Mago Mundi*, Vol. 19 (1965), pp 22-31.

¹⁴² John Tomkins, Maryborough Fort, c. 1571, MPF1/277, TNA; White, ‘The Tudor Plantations’, Vol. 2, pp 40-1.

¹⁴³ Lennon, *Sixteenth-century Ireland*, p. 185.

onward, ever abating cost behind as she shall bestow it forward'.¹⁴⁴ In other words, Sidney was encouraged to outline to the Queen the desperate situation he found the territories of Queen's County and King's County in upon taking office, the progress he made, the profits that had arisen and further proposals for fortifications elsewhere in the country.

As such, in order to truly assess the progress the government made in implementing English administrative structures in the midlands, it is interesting to compare it with the somewhat similar shire of Galway, also situated in the heart of Gaelic dominated territories.

In 1569, Queen Elizabeth I passed a piece of legislation, a statute which empowered the government to shire native territories at will. The act sought to transform 'countries that be not yet shire grounds into shire grounds'.¹⁴⁵ Galway was one of the first to be shired under this statute alongside Mayo, Sligo and Roscommon although it was already technically ruled by an English system of government ever since the thirteenth century.¹⁴⁶ But its administrative unit had faltered by the fourteenth century when the de Burghs, custodians of Connaught since at least the mid thirteenth century, adopted the Gaelic titles of Upper and Lower MacWilliam, seen as proof of the rejection of royal authority.¹⁴⁷ The crown's influence in the region was said to have disappeared over the following century or so. Yet, crucially, similar to Wales and the Queen's County and King's County to a certain extent, native involvement in local government was evident. The Upper MacWilliam lords of Clanrickard and the MacHubert Burkes were sheriffs of County Galway before and just after the beginning of the sixteenth century.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ The causes why Ireland is not reformed, June 1571, TNA, SP 63/32/65.

¹⁴⁵ Butler, *The statutes at large*, pp 347-9; Victor Treadwell, 'The Irish Parliament of 1569-71', *RIA*, Vol. 65 (1966/1967), pp 55-89.

¹⁴⁶ Mannion, 'Elizabethan County Galway: The origin and evolution of an administrative unit of Tudor local government', p. 64.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Steven G. Ellis, *Reform and revival: English Government in Ireland, 1470-1534* (New York, 1986), p. 199; Quinn, David B., 'Anglo Irish government, 1485-1534', *IHS*, Vol. 1 (1938-9), pp 365-6.

But there was one notable difference between the three counties. By the sixteenth century, there existed a community of settlers in Galway, similar to the shires of the English Pale, most notably Louth and Meath, the remnants of the Anglo-Norman conquest who had developed over centuries to become a 'modest and civil people' who were proud of never having allegedly reduced themselves to the 'customs of the mountainous and wild people of those parts'.¹⁴⁹ The Queen's County and King's County on the other hand were a community of soldiers and martial men and the colonial framework that existed there was experimental and unique.

During the 1530s and early 1540s, the Upper MacWilliam Burkes embraced surrender and regrant with their head Ulick becoming earl of Clanrickard and his son and successor Richard Sassanach following in his father's footsteps as a loyal supporter of the crown and the eventual Connaught Presidency under Sir Edward Fitton in 1569 after which point County Galway came into being.¹⁵⁰ Connaught's official shiring was centred around its economic hub of Galway town and similar to Maryborough and Philipstown, was expected to serve as a focal point of civility with English customs, culture, language and common law amongst the surrounding countryside dominated by rebellious Gaelic Irish clans.¹⁵¹ However, whereas the Burkes of Clanrickard had embraced assimilation, the O'Mores and O'Connors, for the most part, had not.¹⁵² Mannion argues that the submission of the Burkes had re-anglicised Galway's 'wider hinterland' and incorporated the surrounding 'lordships under the second earl's influence into a single county community' which served as 'a manifestation of the successful extension of Tudor rule in the region'.¹⁵³

By October 1569, English administrative structures were firmly implemented in Galway with offices such as the clerk of the peace in

¹⁴⁹ Mannion, 'Elizabethan County Galway', p. 65.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 65-6; Mannion, 'Landownership and anglicisation in Tudor Connaught', pp 100-19; 119-84; Maginn, "'Surrender and regrant'", pp 972-3;

¹⁵¹ Mannion, 'Elizabethan County Galway', p. 68.

¹⁵² See chapter 6.

¹⁵³ Mannion, 'Elizabethan County Galway', p. 68.

place.¹⁵⁴ But the two midlands shires could rival it as in the Queen's County, there also existed a clerk of the peace by the name of Peter Dormer, a gentleman from Kilkenny who was also appointed clerk of the crown and of assizes in the shire.¹⁵⁵ These clerks controlled the records, enrolled pleas and ensured the smooth working of the courts.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, in Galway, John Burke was appointed sheriff in 1571 proving once again that there was native involvement in English local government there.¹⁵⁷ Comparably, Barnaby FitzPatrick, the Gaelic crown loyalist was appointed sheriff of the Queen's County in 1568, additional proof that the local governments of the three shires drew at least some inspiration from the Welsh model.¹⁵⁸

In addition to these offices, Justices of the peace were appointed for the province of Connaught and similar to the Queen's County and King's County were mainly Old and New English.¹⁵⁹ In contrast to the JPs appointed in the west, the ones in the midlands, as highlighted, were mainly resident gentry with the exception of Henry Radcliffe, who although Lieutenant of Maryborough and Philipstown, does not appear to have held land in either shire.

In Galway, the earliest known recorded sessions were held in 1569 where Tibbot Burke was hanged and according to Joseph Mannion, the county was a 'a fitting example for all the others'.¹⁶⁰ In the midlands, 1566 was the first year we see evidence of the courts of assize being held in the two shires.¹⁶¹ In the sessions that April, Sidney recorded that 50 malefactors were hanged by common law and 20 by martial law. In the main strongholds, three Englishmen were indicted for treason at Maryborough as well as two at Philipstown. By the following year, Sidney was pleased with the

¹⁵⁴ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 1427.

¹⁵⁵ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 1254.

¹⁵⁶ J.S. Cockburn, 'Seventeenth-century clerks of assize—some anonymous members of the legal profession', *The American Journal of Legal History*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Autumn, 1969), pp 315-6.

¹⁵⁷ Lord Justice Fitzwilliam to Burghley, 24 May 1571, TNA, SP 63/32/44.

¹⁵⁸ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 1329.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, nos 1417, 1418, 1424.

¹⁶⁰ Mannion, 'Elizabethan County Galway', p. 68.

¹⁶¹ Lord Deputy Sidney to the Privy Council, 15 April 1566, TNA, SP 63/17/13.

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government's progress in establishing English rule in the region, taking note of the fact that the two counties were in good order with regular sessions and the execution of 'several malefactors'.¹⁶² The Lord Deputy was also pleased at the level of enthusiasm and 'obedience shown' at these sessions by not only the soldiers and 'English there lately planted' but also the 'Irishry there inhabiting'. Sidney alleged that this was 'marvelled at by as many as saw it' as was the 'great increase of tillage' considering 'the infancy of any good order' in the two shires. Francis Cosby, whose career is outlined in more detail in chapter 6, oversaw the sessions at Maryborough in June 1567, where 'five people were arraigned...two were executed and three acquitted'.¹⁶³ Consequently, by August 1567, William FitzWilliam and the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, Robert Weston were confident that the Queen's County and King's County had been finally subjugated via regular sessions for the 'due administration of justice' and the subsequent building and tilling of the land 'in places where there had not been the like for many years'.¹⁶⁴ This 'great increase of tillage' was significant for many reasons, none more so than in Tudor eyes, this was seen as an indication of civility finally being established in the former Gaelic lordships of Leix and Offaly. Arguably, if Galway town and county were deemed a fitting example for Connaught, then surely Maryborough, Philipstown and the King and Queen's counties were likewise for Gaelic dominated territories throughout Leinster and further afield.

However, there was one particular flaw in the government's success story. Arguably, the whole point of the midlands colonial venture to begin with was to protect the 'civil' inhabitants of the English Pale from the consistent raids of the natives of Leix and Offaly. But following Sussex's departure from the country, it was claimed that the administration had ultimately failed to protect the region. In January 1566, reports reached the Queen of

¹⁶² Lord Deputy Sidney to Queen Elizabeth, 20 April 1567, TNA, SP 63/20/66.

¹⁶³ Justice Edward FitzSimons to Lord Deputy Sidney, 26 June 1567, TNA, SP 63/21/30.

¹⁶⁴ Sir William FitzWilliam to Sir William Cecil, 22 August 1567, TNA, SP 63/21/87; Lord Justices Weston and FitzWilliam to Queen Elizabeth, 30 October 1567, TNA, SP 63/22/16.

numerous raids upon the Pale by the O'Mores and O'Connors, the reasons for which were already outlined, and it seems quite clear that Elizabeth was greatly displeased these reports had been kept from her.¹⁶⁵ Nicholas Bagenal alleged that on Sidney's arrival 'there was bloodshed and robbery in the Pale', the Queen's County 'was in the same state as before the plantation and murders and robberies were commonplace' with the midlands region being brought no closer to 'English civility'.¹⁶⁶ In March of the same year, Sidney himself alleged that the English Pale was raided on a daily basis and its inhabitants were 'universally poor...they have no military equipment necessary to protect themselves'. Furthermore, the soldiers expected to protect the Pale from any Gaelic threat, were deemed 'slovenly, insolent and...closely linked to the Irish, using Irish prostitutes' and were considered untrustworthy 'in any dangerous mission, as his plans (Sidney) are more than likely to be betrayed to the Irish'.¹⁶⁷ The Queen responded to these regular assaults upon the Pale by instructing Sidney to apprehend those responsible and punish 'the offenders according to the magnitude of their offences'.¹⁶⁸ Following the death of Shane O'Neill in 1567, the government did manage to restore order and secure the Pale once more making it 'never so well ordered'.¹⁶⁹ By the end of 1568, Sir Peter Carew alleged that in 'King's County and Queen's County...things are in very good order, as are all the countries where there are seneschals or sheriffs'.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, it was alleged that the two shires were 'easily kept in obedience' which further proves that the Tudor government was finally seeing some benefits and progress with regard to the implementation of English local government

¹⁶⁵ Queen Elizabeth to Lord Deputy Sidney, 8 January 1566, TNA, SP 63/16/6.

¹⁶⁶ Sir Nicholas Bagenal to Robert Dudley, February 1566, TNA, SP 63/16/33.

¹⁶⁷ Lord Deputy Sidney to Robert Dudley, 1 March 1566, TNA, SP 63/16/35.

¹⁶⁸ Queen Elizabeth to Lord Deputy Sidney, 8 January 1566, TNA, SP 63/16/6.

¹⁶⁹ Lords Justice Fitzwilliam and Weston to Sir William Cecil, 25 March 1568, TNA, SP 63/23/77.

¹⁷⁰ Sir Peter Carew to Sir William Cecil, 26 December 1568, TNA, SP 63/26/59.

there.¹⁷¹ This also proves that despite the militarised government in place in the midlands, the Pale was still threatened and attacked on a regular basis and remained incredibly vulnerable and fragile.

Disturbances became a regular occurrence in the region again by October 1569 as a result of the outbreak of the First Desmond Rebellion and the coinciding Butler revolt forcing Sidney to react.¹⁷² As highlighted earlier, the O'Mores were supporters of the Geraldine cause and were specifically reprimanded by the Lord Deputy for having assisted Edmund Butler in the burning of several strongholds throughout the Queen's county during this period.¹⁷³ In the aftermath of the Butler revolt, Sidney mopped up any remaining pockets of native resistance.¹⁷⁴ The move was praised by the administration including Lucas Dillon, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, who claimed it was 'necessary to make a severe example of those involved in the recent rebellion' and that any who assisted the Butlers 'should...get what they deserve'.¹⁷⁵ There was no way back for Sidney who vowed to 'sweep the house' and 'bare such a hand upon the whole name of the O'Mores as I trust the Queen's county shall be a quiet county'.¹⁷⁶ Arguably, Sidney's hand had been forced having largely failed to safeguard the settlers of the colonial venture in the midlands and the overall Pale from Gaelic raids.¹⁷⁷ Consequently, prominent rebels such as Laoiseach and Cahir MacCeadach O'More were hunted down and swiftly executed.¹⁷⁸ Although Sidney most likely felt his actions were necessary to remove significant threats to the

¹⁷¹ Discourse on abolition of coign and livery, 1568, TNA, SP 63/26/68.

¹⁷² Lord Deputy Sidney and Council to the Privy Council, 26 October 1569, TNA, SP 63/29/70; The two conflicts are elaborated on in more detail in chapters 3 and 5.

¹⁷³ Nicholas Malby to Lord Deputy Sidney, 11 July 1569, TNA, SP 63/29/7.

¹⁷⁴ Sidney to Peter Carew, 28 May 1570, SP 63/30/52.

¹⁷⁵ Memorial of Lucas Dillon for Ireland, April 1570, TNA, SP 63/30/40.

¹⁷⁶ Sidney to Privy Council, 13 April 1566, TNA, SP 63/17/8; Sidney to Peter Carew, 28 May 1570, SP 63/30/52.

¹⁷⁷ Carey, 'John Derricke's "Image of Ireland"', p. 310.

¹⁷⁸ Lord Chancellor Weston to Queen Elizabeth, 23 March 1571, TNA, SP 63/31/33; FitzWilliam to Cecil, 5 February 1571, TNA, SP 63/31/8; Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', p. 238. Laoiseach, meaning belonging to Queen's County, was a common name in use among the O'Mores. See Rev. Patrick Woulfe, *Sloinne Gaedheal is Gall* (Dublin, 1923), pp 400-500.

Chapter 2

Queen's peace before they could properly emerge, they had a tremendously detrimental impact upon Gaelic-government relations from that point onwards. In the future, instances of excessive violence were either condoned or simply ignored by the administration.¹⁷⁹

In conclusion, the period of 1560-1571 was one of mixed success for the Tudor government. On the one hand, the crown's decision to pardon and subsequently grant land to elements of the O'Mores and O'Connors was a shrewd move, which greatly helped to bring some sense of stability to the Leix-Offaly plantation. This permitted Sussex and his successors to introduce important English administrative structures to the midlands. Significantly, it can be argued that during this period, a unique form of English local government emerged in the Queen's County and King's County. It could most adequately be described as a hybrid militarised county government that blended traditional English administrative structures and common law with elements of martial government. Consequently, Justices of the Peace, sheriffs and regular sessions helped to promote English rule and common law throughout the midlands while seneschals, lieutenants and constables of the forts exercised martial law and coerced the Gaelic natives towards conformity and embracing royal authority. The administration was able to resolve, at least temporarily, some of the impediments of the past. The period saw increased settlement in the region, more flexible grants of lands, added incentives for any incoming English settlers and even offered a significant stake in the plantation to its Gaelic Irish natives. This chapter also readdressed Sussex's midlands master plan in the context of programmatic government and highlighted how he learned from his mistakes to implement a coherent and clearly articulated long term strategy for reforming the country that was developed further under Henry Sidney. Furthermore, the Gaelic Irish motivations behind the regular assaults upon the Pale and revolt in general were also reappraised and it was suggested that their reasoning was far more complex than simply a mindless reflex to English intervention in the region. In sum, English local

¹⁷⁹ Elaborated on in more detail in chapter three pp 103-5, particularly with regard to the Mullaghmast massacre.

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government in the Queen's County and King's County significantly evolved during the period of 1560-71 and as highlighted, shared several similarities with more 'civilised' shires elsewhere in the country such as County Galway. The midlands enterprise finally showed promise and potential heading into the 1570s. However, its greatest challenge was yet to come as explored in chapter 3.

Chapter 3

'In a manner overrun'¹: Anarchy on the Leix-Offaly plantation, c. 1571-1580.

The relatively peaceful period of 1560-1571 proved a moderate success for the Leix-Offaly plantation and the Tudor government that oversaw it. For the first time, it had seen the implementation of significant elements of English local government in the turbulent midlands shires which allegedly had been reduced to 'such good obedience and civility that there is hope Her Majesty's laws and writ will be peaceably received and obeyed there, and a yearly rent paid'.² But the promising work of Henry Sidney fell frustratingly short of the government's aspiration for fully-fledged Anglicised communities in Leix and Offaly similar to those found in lowland England. Furthermore, Sidney's 'cleanse' of the O'More clan some years earlier had neglected to deal with one very dangerous element of the family in particular, a man by the name of Rory Óg O'More. O'More was fostered by Hugh MacShane O'Byrne in the Wicklow Mountains where he quickly developed a friendship with his son, Fiach MacHugh and Fiach's sister whom he later married.³ By 1565, Rory Óg had won considerable renown as a swordsman.⁴ Fiach MacHugh O'Byrne on the other hand was already a highly significant figure, descended from the Gabhal Raghnaill sept of the O'Byrne clan who opposed English intervention into their heartland of the Wicklow Mountains.⁵ Within a short period of time, Fiach became a thorn in the side of the English administration in Leinster. Him and his father allegedly captured Captains Henry Davells and George Harvey in 1563 and

¹ Lucas Dillon to Burghley, 28 March 1574, TNA, SP 63/45/36.

² Lord Chancellor Weston and Council to Queen Elizabeth, 23 March 1571, TNA, SP 63/31/33.

³ Christopher Maginn, 'Fiach MacHugh O'Byrne', *DNB*; Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', p. 237.

⁴ Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', p. 237.

⁵ Chris Lawlor, 'From a spark to a firebrand: Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne', *HI*, Vol. 21, No. 5 (Autumn, 2013), p. 21.

held them to ransom and Fiach was a chief collaborator in Edmund Butler's escape from Dublin Castle in 1569.⁶

Rory's determination to exact revenge upon the Lord Deputy who had orchestrated the death of so many of his family members won O'More substantial support amongst his brethren, so much so that he was elected chieftain of his clan in April 1571 and launched a furious assault upon the Leix-Offaly plantation.⁷ This act plunged the midlands into a state of disorder that very nearly destroyed the colonial venture. Thus, in the present chapter, the motivations behind Rory Óg's rebellion and its impact on local government in the Queen's County and the King's County will be analysed as well as how it compared by 1580 with that of the Elizabethan shire of Galway.

So can Rory's rebellion be viewed simply as revenge against Sidney, a rejection of the English presence in the midlands? Or were the rebel's motivations more complex? The answer seems to lie somewhere in between. As highlighted in Chapter 2, the Gaelic Irish clans of Leix and Offaly, particularly the O'Mores and O'Connor, revolted for very specific reasons: to display their dissatisfaction with being excluded from a stake in the plantation; out of desperation and necessity in the hope of being granted protection from the crown; retaliation against what they deemed to be injustices inflicted upon them by martial government captains; or under orders from the leaders of the Geraldine cause in Ireland. Certainly, the whole reason why Rory was able to rise to prominence in the first place and attract such support to his cause was that the Gaelic custom of Tanistry was retained amongst the dispossessed elements of the O'More clan.⁸ With the execution of Laoiseach and Cahir MacCeadach, a power vacuum emerged within the O'Mores, which Rory was able to fill, and so he was elected chieftain in 1571 and was able to attract large numbers of disaffected and

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ FitzWilliam to Cecil, 5 February 1571, TNA, SP 63/31/8; Lord Chancellor to the Queen, 23 March 1571, TNA, SP 63/31/33.

⁸ Carey, 'John Derricke's "Image of Ireland"', p. 310.

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landless O'Mores and O'Connors to his side.⁹ It was quite apparent that despite his assaults upon the plantation, Rory genuinely desired a stake in it:

He seeks to have Gallen which he is sure if they mean to give him any they would be best content to part withal, for that it is waste land. He will not put in pledges until he has been answered by the queen to have the land he requires...and if the queen refuses to let him have the land then he to lose his building and labour, and other pledge then that he will not put in.¹⁰

But Gallen was anything but wasteland. In fact, it was a 2,000 acre natural fortress surrounded by 12 miles of mountain, woodland and bog that potentially could have provided Rory with a gateway into Kilkenny, Tipperary, Ossory, Ely, Carlow, the Queen's County and the very heart of the Pale itself.¹¹

The issue of protection also seemed to play a part in Rory's rebellion, or at least that is what was suggested. Although in June 1572 it was alleged that O'More 'would not be reclaimed to any sort of conformity or obedience for any treaty or offer which of late could be made to him either of protection or safe conduct, or of pardon offered to him'.¹² By the following month, it was alleged that the Gaelic chieftain did not mean to make war upon the Queen at all and instead sought 'protection until the queen certifies her pleasure' but he also refused to submit unless granted 'good assurance of his life and living'.¹³ This was significant as it highlights somewhat of a trend amongst the Gaelic natives and their uprisings in the midlands between 1560 and 1580: when offered no form of protection from the government, elements of the O'Mores and O'Connors would raid the plantation in the hope of eventually obtaining guarantees of their safety.¹⁴ O'More was adamant that unless offered such sureties by the crown, he would not disperse his men

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Earl of Ormond and Earl of Kildare to the Lord Deputy, 14 August 1572, TNA, SP 63/37/37.

¹¹ Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to Burghley, 7 April 1573, TNA, SP 63/40/3.

¹² Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to the Privy Council, 28 June 1572, TNA, SP 63/36/48.

¹³ Earl of Ormond and Earl of Kildare to the Lord Deputy, 14 August 1572, TNA, SP 63/37/37.

¹⁴ Also see chapter 2, pp 71-2.

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‘because he has many enemies and has no other assurance of his life but the defence of himself and his 500 men’.¹⁵

Furthermore, similar to Shane O’Neill’s reasons for why he would not submit to Lord Deputy Sidney, Rory Óg was deeply distrustful of the local government in the midlands alleging that his ‘forbearers submitted to the late lord deputy and were later executed’.¹⁶ Vincent Carey argues that O’More ‘dismissed English civility and justice on the evidence of settler brutality’ and the vicious and cruel environment of the plantation that allegedly saw the Gaelic natives slaughtered with impunity.¹⁷ In essence, Rory Óg allegedly claimed that peaceful coexistence between the settlers and Gaelic Irish could never take place so long as the lives of the midlands natives were held in such poor regard.¹⁸

Another factor, which may have played a role in driving the O’Mores and O’Connors into rebellion, was loyalty to the Geraldine cause, similar to the 1560s. Rory’s revolt coincided with the First Desmond Rebellion and corresponding disturbances in Connaught, Munster and Ulster.¹⁹ As highlighted in Chapter 2, the Earls of Ormond and Desmond were bitter enemies. In 1565, their rivalry boiled over and the two parties clashed at Affane, County Waterford. After which point they were reprimanded by the Queen and Gerald FitzGerald, 14th Earl of Desmond and his brother, John of Desmond were imprisoned in London.²⁰ This left the Earldom in the hands of James FitzMaurice FitzGerald who strongly opposed English intervention in Munster ultimately leading to the outbreak of the First

¹⁵ Earl of Ormond and Earl of Kildare to the Lord Deputy, 14 August 1572, TNA, SP 63/37/37.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Carey, ‘John Derricke’s “Image of Irelande”’, p. 310.

¹⁸ Earl of Ormond and Earl of Kildare to the Lord Deputy, 14 August 1572, TNA, SP 63/37/37; Carey, ‘John Derricke’s “Image of Irelande”’, p. 310.

¹⁹ Lord Justice FitzWilliam to Burghley, 12 April 1571, TNA, SP 63/32/9.

²⁰ Articles administered to the Earl of Ormond by the Lord Justice and Council, 18 February 1565, TNA, SP 63/12/30; The Queen to the Earl of Ormond and Ossory, 28 February 1565, TNA, SP 63/12/39; Note laid before the Queen, May 1565, TNA, SP 63/13/52; Petition of the Earl of Desmond to the Queen, 1 June 1565, *CSPI*, p. 262.

Desmond Rebellion in June 1569.²¹ In November 1573, it was alleged that Rory Óg was in league with Piers Grace, who as highlighted in Chapter 2, was closely allied to the Earls of Desmond and the Geraldine cause.²² The fact that O'More's rebellion broke out at the same time as the First Desmond Rebellion and Rory Óg was allegedly spotted with Piers Grace would suggest that the revolt was much more than an isolated and uncoordinated incident.

The potential motivations for O'More's rebellion aside, Rory's devastating assault upon the plantation in the early 1570s greatly undermined any progress the administration had made up to that point in establishing English local government in the two shires. The O'More chieftain and his forces directly targeted settlers on the colony and exacted a terrible price upon any government loyalists they encountered.²³ Unsurprisingly, this greatly discouraged settlement and farming in the two areas and allegedly forced any remaining settlers to resort to using Gaelic tenants in order to maintain their land.²⁴ FitzWilliam and Sidney alleged that this greatly undermined the Anglicized nature of the settlement and encouraged native resistance, leading to open rebellion.²⁵ By 1573, FitzWilliam admitted that the Queen's County was 'in too miserable a state to be particularly declared' and 'like to be much worse if it is not provided for'.²⁶ Barnaby Googe, a protégé of Burghley, declared that 'rebels burn and spoil in Leix and

²¹ Commissioners in Munster, 1568, TNA, SP 63/23/32; Lady Ursula St Leger to Lord Deputy Sidney, 18 June 1569, TNA, SP 63/28/37

²² Nicholas Walsh to Burghley, 30 November 1573, TNA, SP 63/42/88.

²³ Lord Justice Sir William FitzWilliam and Council to Queen Elizabeth, 7 April 1571, TNA, SP 63/32/2; Lord Justice FitzWilliam to Burghley, 12 April 1571, TNA, SP 63/32/9; Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to Queen Elizabeth, 7 December 1572, TNA, SP 63/38/51; Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', p. 241.

²⁴ Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to Burghley, 7 April 1573, TNA, SP 63/40/3; Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', p. 241.

²⁵ Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to Burghley, 7 April 1573, TNA, SP 63/40/3; Lord Deputy to Walsingham, 27 April 1576, TNA, SP 63/55/37.

²⁶ Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to Queen Elizabeth, 7 December 1572, TNA, SP 63/38/51; Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to Queen Elizabeth, 18 February 1573, TNA, SP 63/39/27.

Offaly...100 horse is now not a scarce safe conduct'.²⁷ Lucas Dillon, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, took it a step further and informed Burghley that the Queen's County and King's County were 'in manner overrun. The O'Connors and the O'Mores seem as stout and courageous now as before we began with them'.²⁸

By the end of 1576, Rory Óg, in collaboration with Connor McCormack O'Connor, had burned roughly 140 thatched houses on the borders of the Pale, 'divers haggard and poor men's (settlers) cottages' in the King's County and a large portion of Leighlin.²⁹ The administration acknowledged that the plantation simply could not survive in the face of such overwhelming resistance and so long as the two groups continued to cause trouble, the crisis would never be resolved.³⁰ The further establishment of traditional English local government in the midlands was put on hold until the rebel onslaught was quelled. So long as Rory Óg and his forces undermined the fragile peace, defence took precedence over the advancement of English common law. Accordingly, Sidney vowed to 'neither spare travel nor charges to make some good end of this service, and to settle her majesty in the quiet possession' of the two shires by the 'total extirpation of those rebels' that he 'daily cut off, and pair' the native's 'wings by little and little'.³¹ Vincent Carey argues that the Mullaghmast massacre was a frustrated reaction on Lord Deputy Sidney's part to Rory's continued evasion, the embarrassment of a languishing midlands colony and a response to criticism from back at court.³² A personal element was added to the mix when Sidney's nephew, who he considered to be like a son, was captured and subsequently mutilated:

The villainous rebel fell upon my most dear nephew, being tied in chains and him most shamefully hacked with my nephew's own

²⁷ Barnaby Googe to Burghley, 18 February 1574, TNA, SP 63/44/49.

²⁸ Lucas Dillon to Burghley, 28 March 1574, TNA, SP 63/45/36.

²⁹ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1575-1588*, no. 70.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 90.

³¹ Lord Deputy to the Privy Council, 26 November 1577, TNA, SP 63/59/57.

³² Carey, 'John Derricke's "Image of Ireland"', p. 311.

sword, to the effusion of such a quantity of blood as was incredible to be told. He broke his arm and with that blunt sword, and cut off the little finger of one of his hands, and in sundry parts of his head so wounded him as I myself in his dressing did see his brains moving.³³

Sidney's pursuit of Rory was relentless and bloody with the Lord Deputy and his forces allegedly slaying the majority of his forces and reducing them from 500 to 50.³⁴ Despite this, the Gaelic chieftain remained at large. His evasion from capture convinced Sidney and the common English soldier to suspect that O'More was somewhat of a sorcerer and an adherent of witchcraft, which he used to elude crown forces.³⁵ According to Carey, in the context of a supernatural enemy and a war of attrition, we must view the massacre at Mullaghmast whereby:³⁶

The people of Offaly and Leix... were all summoned to show themselves, with the greatest number they could be able to bring with them...and on their arrival...were surrounded on every side by four lines of soldiers and cavalry, who proceeded to shoot and slaughter them without mercy, so that not a single individual escaped, by flight or force.³⁷

Although the Gaelic sources implicated martial men such as Francis Cosby and Robert Hartpole as the main perpetrators of the massacre, Gaelic government loyalists may also have played a significant role in the ambush in the hope of acquiring the extensive personal holdings of their fellow clansmen.³⁸ In its aftermath, Sidney, the alleged orchestrator, praised Cosby and Hartpole in particular for their 'great diligence, policy and pain taking' in eradicating the 'principal men' of the O'More and O'Connor clans.³⁹ The

³³ Sir Henry Sidney to Sir Francis Walsingham, 1 March 1583, TNA, SP 12/159/1.

³⁴ Sidney and council to Elizabeth I, 20 April 1578, TNA, SP 63/60/42; Carey, 'John Derricke's "Image of Ireland"', p. 318.

³⁵ Sidney and council to the Privy Council, 1 July 1578, *Sidney letters*, i, p. 263; Sir John Harrington to Sir Anthony Standen, 1599, in Sir John Harrington, *Nugae antique*, Henry Harrington (ed.) (London, 1779), ii, pp 23-4.

³⁶ Carey, 'John Derricke's "Image of Ireland"', p. 319.

³⁷ *AFM*, s.a. 1579.

³⁸ *AFM*, s.a. 1577; Brady, *The chief governors*, p. 275.

³⁹ Sidney to Privy Council, 17 March 1577, *Sidney letters*, i, p. 167; Carey 'John Derricke's "Image of Ireland"', p. 319.

events at Mullaghmast were unquestionably sanctioned so as to exterminate the most rebellious factions of the Gaelic clans of the midlands. With their numbers and military capability greatly depleted, the crown was able to mop up swiftly any remaining pockets of resistance.⁴⁰ The chief rebel, Rory Óg O'More, narrowly managed to avoid capture for some time before he was ultimately hunted down and killed by his cousin Barnaby FitzPatrick, bringing an end to his rebellion.⁴¹ In fact, following the capture of the 'head of the plunderers and insurgents of the men of Ireland in his time' it was said that 'for a long time after his death no one was desirous to discharge one shot against the soldiers of the Crown'.⁴²

Significant issues continued to plague the plantation most notably the land settlement crisis. Lord Deputy FitzWilliam sought the opportunity to rectify the matter but not before acknowledging that 'unless the freeholders state' was 'altered whereby they may pass longer grants than during their own lives...no other dutiful subject' would be 'willing to bestow his time, travel and cost for so uncertain a term, in a place where he must be in continual hazard of his life and goods'.⁴³ The government continued to pursue its goal of planting the two shires sufficiently with good, loyal subjects from England and the permanent expulsion of the O'Mores and O'Connors.⁴⁴ Yet, before this could occur, the administration needed to resolve the various grievances of the freeholders of the past: an end to restrictive, uncertain and short-term land grants. Only then, the Lord Deputy contended, would freeholders be encouraged to settle in the area in significant numbers.⁴⁵ The rebellion unquestionably played a role in

⁴⁰ President Drury to the Privy Council, 21 March 1578, TNA, SP 63/60/25.

⁴¹ Rory survived an additional crown ambush that claimed the lives of his wife and two sons. See William M. Hennessy (ed.), *The Annals of Loch Cé: A chronicle of Irish affairs from AD 1014 to AD 1590*, Vol. II (London, 1871), p. 419; Lord Deputy to the Privy Council, 26 November 1577, TNA, SP 63/59/57.

⁴² Lord Deputy Sidney to the Privy Council, 1 July 1578, TNA, SP 63/61/29; Mr. Edward Fitton to Burghley, 6 July 1578, TNA, SP 63/61/32; *AFM*, s.a. 1579.

⁴³ Lord Deputy and Council to the Queen, 12 June 1573, TNA, SP 63/41/21.

⁴⁴ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1575-1588*, no. 20.

⁴⁵ Lord Deputy and Council to the Queen, 12 June 1573, TNA, SP 63/41/21.

exacerbating the crisis as the land set aside for planting was largely spoiled and any remaining tenants allegedly lived in constant fear for their lives.⁴⁶ The Queen herself admitted that granting land in fee tail as opposed to fee simple had fundamentally restricted grantees from passing land to other English inhabitants, severely limiting the chances of significant numbers of freeholders settling in midlands on a permanent basis.⁴⁷ Admittedly, she was uneasy at the prospect of the land remaining ‘unoccupied or out of English men’s hands’.⁴⁸

Hence, FitzWilliam and his government offered longer and more secure leases of at least three lifetimes, a proposal the crown subsequently approved of.⁴⁹ The leases of 1571-80 ranged from 21 years to permanent and it was clear that despite all the chaos, a small but determined group of freeholders relocated to the midlands during this period.⁵⁰ The primary evidence suggested that a total of fourteen freeholders settled in the Queen’s County and thirteen in the King’s County.⁵¹ Of these, Callough O’Connor and Ross MacGeoghegan were Gaelic Irishmen and were granted permanent leases on their land in the King’s County.⁵² Individuals such as Richard Keating were also a significant feature in the Queen’s County where his family traditionally served as government kern and where his estates

⁴⁶ A memorial of matters for Ireland, 28 October 1574, TNA, SP 63/48/32; *Cal. Carew MSS, 1575-1588*, no. 33.

⁴⁷ Fee tail restricted settlers from passing land to anyone but a predetermined heir along the lines of Primogeniture. Fee simple on the other hand permitted tenants to rent their land permanently and gave them the freedom to dispose of it at will. See *Cal. Carew MSS, 1575-1588*, no. 20.

⁴⁸ Queen Elizabeth to Lord Deputy FitzWilliam, 8 March 1575, TNA, SP 63/50/3.

⁴⁹ Lord Deputy FitzWilliam and Council to Queen Elizabeth, 12 June 1573, TNA, SP 63/41/21; Queen Elizabeth to Lord Deputy FitzWilliam and Council, 29 June 1573, TNA, SP 63/41/58.

⁵⁰ For examples of leases restricted to 21 years, see for instance: *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 1680, 2208, 2371, 2589, 3572. These were most certainly rare and the majority were granted in fee simple. For instance see *Fiants Eliz.*, nos 2828, 2838, 2904, 2915, 2988, 3215, 3285, 3295, 3313, 3315, 3353, 3357, 3395.

⁵¹ See Appendix 1.

⁵² *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 2828, 2915.

stretched across seventeen townlands in Slievemargy.⁵³ Aside from these were prominent magnates such as Gerald FitzGerald, 11th Earl of Kildare who was granted monastic land in the King's County and the two knights Sir Maurice FitzThomas FitzGerald and the government loyalist Sir William O'Carroll.⁵⁴ O'Carroll is discussed in more detail in chapter 6 but we know that FitzGerald held extensive monastic lands in both Leix and Offaly for which he paid a rent of 24 good beeves as well as an additional rental value of £8 a year.⁵⁵ Notably, his lease was for 21 years and he was instructed not to assign his land to anyone other than Englishmen. Gerald FitzGerald, the Earl of Kildare on the other hand, was granted a tower house and land in Killeigh in the King's County as well as monastic land there but his landed wealth in the territory was relatively small at just 33s. a year.⁵⁶ Overall, the government's decision to change its stance on leases was extremely significant. It proved that the administration had learned from its previous mistakes and most importantly, rectified them.

The midlands settlers were expected to serve 'in the manner of armed warfare, with victuals for three days, upon the lord lieutenant...for the defence of the said county'.⁵⁷ This was known as militia service associated with the general hosting whereby all free men between the ages of 16 and 60 were expected to serve in the defence of their respective shire.⁵⁸ They were also instructed to 'go against any Irishman dwelling near' the two shires and respond to 'all hostile armies and hostings according to the proportion and value of their lands.... and... have, guard, sustain and maintain continually...three skilled horsemen of English birth, name and

⁵³ Ibid., no. 3357.

⁵⁴ Ibid., nos 2208, 3313, 3395.

⁵⁵ Ibid., no. 2208.

⁵⁶ Ibid., no. 3313.

⁵⁷ Words of tenures of the freeholders in the Queen's County, 12 October 1573, TNA, SP 63/42/46.

⁵⁸ Steven G. Ellis, 'Taxation and Defence in Late Medieval Ireland: The Survival of Scutage', *JRSAI*, Vol. 107 (1977), pp 5-28; J.M.W. Bean, *The Decline of English Feudalism, 1215-1540* (Manchester, 1968).

blood'.⁵⁹ Aside from the terms regarding the maintenance of English horsemen, which was a common feature of land leases throughout the country, including in the Pale, the terms of settlement in the region were certainly unique.⁶⁰ Going back as far as 1562, the government made it very clear that it wanted a militarised community of settlers in the two shires, capable of defending themselves, their allotments of land and their respective county.⁶¹ By the 1570s, this had come to fruition and the Queen's County and King's County contained societies ever prepared for war with a small but determined group of settlers willing to defend their lands and goods.⁶² In doing so, the Tudor government forced their freeholders in the midlands to become heavily reliant upon warfare and military service for their survival.⁶³ Yet, that may have been the administration's very intention.

Nicholas Herbert was one such freeholder who embodied exactly what the government was looking for. He was the quintessential settler: self-sufficient and capable of defending himself, with a proven track record of constructing castles across his lands.⁶⁴ Herbert came from an Old-English

⁵⁹ Words of tenures of the freeholders in the Queen's County, 12 October 1573, TNA, SP 63/42/46.

⁶⁰ For instance, see the grants of land in Tipperary, Cork, Dublin and Roscommon: *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 2279, 2845, 2380, 2396, 2449, 3372, 3134.

⁶¹ The grants of land in the Queen's County and King's County during this period all make reference to the terms of settlement of 1562 and the government makes it clear that these strict instructions were to be adhered to. See *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 474 in particular. Furthermore, see nos 2371, 2589, 2828, 2871, 2904, 3001, 3050.

⁶² Steven Ellis' chapters on 'Border defence and the character of English marches' and 'County communities in Frontier societies' are crucial to understanding this difference. See Ellis, *Defending English ground*, pp 31-60 & 84-112.

⁶³ This was particularly evident when the government instructed settlers to maintain 'good and sufficient horses and arms, both invasive and defensive both for them and for each of them'. The additional stipulation to construct as many castles upon their land as possible was further validation of the government's aim. See Words of tenures of the freeholders in the Queen's County, 12 October 1573, TNA, SP 63/42/46; Queen's instructions to Lord Deputy Sidney regarding suits of several persons in Ireland, 20 April 1568, TNA, SP 63/24/11.

⁶⁴ Queen's instructions to Lord Deputy Sidney regarding suits of several persons in Ireland, 20 April 1568, TNA, SP 63/24/11; Nicholas Herbert to

background and he was also held in high esteem by the administration who felt he led an honest, 'civil and upright life, by example whereof he does much good in this rude country, but especially his ready forwardness to the furtherance of any service of the queen's'.⁶⁵ The government was insistent that the shires remained as Anglicised as possible and that land strictly passed to Englishmen, those with English parents or settlers born upon English shire ground.⁶⁶ This proved that the administration still aspired for a model English colony in the midlands. Moreover, in comparison to the previous decade when the government decided that the colony would not be judged on how 'mere' English its inhabitants were but how effectively an English order could be established there, the 1570s saw somewhat of a resurgence in the importance of English national identity.⁶⁷ It would appear that from that point onwards, the colony would be judged on how 'mere' English it was. This was certainly a significant turnaround on the government's part and proved that they flipped back and forth on the issue of identity and its overall importance. Nevertheless, settlers such as Herbert were rare. The majority, like the New Englishman John Barnes, constructed castles on their lands and were left financially crippled as a result.⁶⁸ The fundamental problem remained that the government failed to attract sufficient numbers of settlers such as Nicholas Herbert to the midlands. Those actually willing to settle there were referred to by Henry Sidney, as among the 'few...that I know of wealth' or were suitable to 'be farmers there...I think them not the fittest tenants.'⁶⁹ Consequently, Sidney and his government conceded that to 'plant and to inhabit those two counties, I suppose it will be a very hard reckoning, to bring to pass', acknowledging that the settlement crisis remained a serious concern by 1580.⁷⁰ Although

Burghley, 15 September 1571, TNA, SP 63/34/12; *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 682, 953.

⁶⁵ Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to Burghley, 3 July 1572, TNA, SP 63/37/7.

⁶⁶ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.* no. 448.

⁶⁷ See chapter 2, p. 75.

⁶⁸ Gaelic raids unquestionably played a role in exacerbating Barnes' financial situation. See Petition of John Barnes of the Desert in Queen's County to the Privy Council, 3 June 1574, TNA, SP 63/46/50.

⁶⁹ Henry Sidney to Francis Walsingham, 27 April 1576, TNA, SP 63/55/37.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

the administration failed to attract increased settlement in the region like in the previous decade, it could rest assured that progress had been made.

Just as the settlement crisis showed no signs of abating, the administration's monetary woes also persisted throughout the 1570s. Unsurprisingly, Rory Óg O'More's rebellion played an instrumental role in compounding the situation. By April 1571, Gaelic assaults caused over £1,000 damage to the borders of the Pale at a time when the Leix-Offaly plantation scarcely generated an annual revenue of £200.⁷¹ In order to illustrate how insignificant this yearly yield was, rebel raids caused £200 in damages in the final months of 1576 alone.⁷² The Queen's forces were also a significant drain on the exchequer with costs of £1,800 for crown kern.⁷³ Unable to halt its economic losses on the plantation, the administration found itself close to £6,000 in overall debt by 1574.⁷⁴ The situation was adequately summed up Nicholas White who alleged that 'the Queen's charge' was 'great, the subjects much more and the realm universally in the baddest case it has been for a great while'.⁷⁵ Not only was FitzWilliam incapable of covering his losses in the region but he was also unable to pay the wages of the captains and soldiers under his command.⁷⁶ Faced with mounting criticism from London, FitzWilliam alleged he had done all he could to resolve the

⁷¹ Lord Justice FitzWilliam to Burghley, 12 April 1571, TNA, SP 63/32/9; Petition of Thomas Brown and Thomas Burrows to Queen Elizabeth, 1571, TNA, SP 63/34/42; Answers of Thomas Brown and Thomas Burrows to the objections to their suit for the Ards, 1571, TNA, SP 63/34/43.

⁷² *Cal. Carew MSS, 1575-1588*, no. 70.

⁷³ Burghley drafted an additional 80 cavalry for the two shires that cost close to £96 as well as infantry that cost over £320. See Devec for the garrison in Ireland with the consent of Sir Henry Sidney, 30 October 1574, TNA, SP 63/48/37.

⁷⁴ The administration was already £3,000 in debt by the final months of 1573. See Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to Burghley, 26 July 1573, TNA, SP 63/41/659; Anthony Enowes to Burghely, 1573, TNA, SP 63/42/36. This debt then steadily grew to £6,000 by 1574. See Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to the Privy Council, 19 April 1574, TNA, SP 63/45/75; Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to Burghley, 25 March 1574, TNA, SP 63/45/25.

⁷⁵ Nicholas White to Burghley, 12 December 1573, TNA, SP 63/43/14.

⁷⁶ Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to Burghley, 2 March 1574, TNA, SP 63/45/3; Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to Burghley, 25 March 1574, TNA, SP 63/45/25.

plantation's financial woes considering the funds allocated to him.⁷⁷ Henry Sidney fared little better than his predecessor and was also bewildered as to how he could 'increase her Majesty's rent' or 'procure any thence of wealth and substance' from the plantation, conceding that for every 'penny she received in rent for land there' she paid wages of '12d. to keep that land'.⁷⁸ The income from the midlands' venture, according to Sidney at least, scarcely covered 'the 20th part of the charge' so that the 'purchase of that plot is, and has been very dear'.⁷⁹ Sidney thereby clarified that the revenue generated from the Leix-Offaly scheme was wholly insufficient to cover its mounting costs. The increased military presence in the two shires, crucial to the government retaining a foothold there also pushed the administration's financial constraints to their very limit. However, Sidney stressed that the endeavour was 'not to be given over' or abandoned by the crown but instead serve as a reminder of 'how the like hereafter is attempted'.⁸⁰ This was quite significant as it underlines that the government learned valuable lessons about garrisoning and plantation from the Leix-Offaly experiment, which could be rectified in future colonial ventures elsewhere in the country.

So did Rory Óg's rebellion have any significant impact on local government in the two shires? And how did it compare with more 'peaceful' shires elsewhere such as Elizabethan Galway. Edmund Tremayne, Clerk of the Privy Council, alleged that throughout the country 'there was small use of the office of justice of peace... no quarter sessions, few or no court barons, no leets, hundred courts, nor sheriff returns, even in the most civilised regions of the Pale'.⁸¹ But how true is this statement with regard to the Queen's County and King's County? Seemingly the English administrative structures that were installed in the previous decade remained more or less intact by 1580. In fact, local government operated efficiently despite the

⁷⁷ Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to Lord Burghley et al., 18 April 1574, TNA, SP 63/45/72; Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to Burghley, 2 & 25 March 1574, TNA, SP 63/45/3; SP 63/45/25.

⁷⁸ Henry Sidney to Francis Walsingham, 27 April 1576, TNA, SP 63/55/37.

⁷⁹ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1575-1588*, no. 33.

⁸⁰ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1575-1588*, no. 33.

⁸¹ Causes why Ireland is not reformed by Edmund Tremayne, June 1571, TNA, SP 63/32/65.

turmoil throughout the midlands. For instance, we know the sheriffs of the Queen's County were Thomas Merrick in 1572, Thomas Lambin in 1573-4, Edmund Butler in 1575 and Robert Bowen in 1579.⁸² In the King's County, John Wakely was sheriff in 1571, Robert Cowley in 1572, Redmund Bermingham in 1573, Thomas Moore in 1576, John Barnes in 1578 and John Sankey in 1579.⁸³ Of the Queen's County sheriffs, we know relatively little. Thomas Merrick was a resident of Maryborough as was his successor Thomas Lambin although we know the latter's lands were worth an annual rental value of just 27s.⁸⁴ Furthermore, we know that Robert Bowen was based in Ballyadams but it is unclear when he was granted land there.⁸⁵ With the case of Edmund Butler, there is no indication that he ever held land in the Queen's County to begin with.

In contrast, we know a great deal about the gentlemen who held the position of sheriff in the King's County. John Wakely, as already highlighted, held extensive lands throughout the county including Philipstown and his annual rental value was quite substantial at £100 annually.⁸⁶ Moreover, Robert Cowley who served as JP in 1563 had land in the shire worth a mere £6 6s a year.⁸⁷ This was certainly a significant trend as the evidence suggests that other sheriffs such as John Sankey (£3 5s.), John Barnes (49s.) and Redmund Bermingham (36s.) all had relatively small landed incomes in the county.⁸⁸ The only other exception was Thomas Moore whose estates in Castletown, Togher Castle, and ten other townlands was worth a yearly sum of £10, which was still relatively insignificant.⁸⁹ Crucially, practically all of these individuals were resident gentry. It was also apparent that there was a regular turnover of sheriffs in the two shires, which proved that English local government was operating.

⁸² See Appendix 2.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 1802.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 3497.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 1312.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 479.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, nos 483, 1697, 480 respectively.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, nos 2371, 3171.

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In Connaught on the other hand and despite being largely peaceful by comparison to the midlands region, it seemed quite clear that Galway no longer functioned as an administrative unit by the end of 1573 and the absence of common law was quite evident.⁹⁰ So desperate was the situation that in 1576, Sidney reaffirmed Connaught's earlier division into counties, to which he then assigned English sheriffs in the hope of restoring royal authority.⁹¹ The sheriffs of Galway from that point onwards were a mix of native and English. Interestingly, Edward Bermingham, a Palesman and sheriff of the county in 1577 did not hold land or reside in the county. The following year saw the appointment of Gaelic Irish to the role of sheriff namely Tadhg MacWilliam followed by Melaghlin Mac an Abba O'Kelly.⁹² Certainly, this would suggest that the local government of Galway somewhat followed the Welsh model. Joseph Mannion argues that had the government embraced a similar approach elsewhere and appointed Gaelic elites to key government positions, the extension of royal authority and Tudor rule may have been more peaceful and 'less traumatic'. It is an interesting argument but in the case of the Queen's County and King's County is flawed. Chapter 2 highlighted that there was native involvement in the local government in the midlands but it did little to extend peace throughout the region. In fact, the 1560s and 70s were by far the most violent decades up to that point. In contrast to Galway, there was no similar appointment of Gaelic natives to the office of sheriff in the midlands which in turn indicates that the Queen's County and King's County did not fit within the Welsh framework by the 1570s.

Edmund Tremayne certainly had a valid point when he alleged there was 'small use of the office of Justice of peace' in the country, including in the

⁹⁰ Mannion, 'Elizabethan County Galway', p. 70.

⁹¹ Ibid; Sidney to the Privy Council, 27 April 1576, TNA, SP 63/55/34; BL, Cotton MSS, Titus B X, ff 35r-36v; *Sidney letters*, vol. i, pp 104, 105; *Cal. Carew MSS, 1575-88*, p. 48; NLI MS 669, fol. 35.

⁹² Mannion, 'Elizabethan County Galway', p. 71, Note of Malby's abuses, March 1580, TNA, SP 63/72/24 & 25: Malby's abuses, March 1580, TNA, SP 63/79/41.

midlands.⁹³ Nevertheless, we know that JPs were present in the two shires by 1579.⁹⁴ Of the peace commissioners appointed, only Henry Cowley and Gerald FitzGerald were resident gentry. Overall, the evidence suggests that the political leadership of the Queen's County and King's County from 1571-80 lay with a group of just over ten landowners.⁹⁵

Aside from these, the courts of assize were an occasional feature in the two shires. In consideration of their turbulent nature, it was unsurprising that criminal cases overshadowed more civil matters.⁹⁶ However, it would be amiss to say that O'More's rebellion played a major role in the infrequent sitting of local courts as we know that it was July 1579 before regular sessions were held in more peaceful shires such as Galway.⁹⁷ Nevertheless it was quite significant that the men who oversaw these irregular and sporadic sessions were not necessarily martial men; in fact, there was evidence that many had expertise in law.⁹⁸ At the ones held at Maryborough and Philipstown in 1573, Nicholas White and Edward FitzSimons oversaw the proceedings.⁹⁹ This was in stark contrast to the previous decade when military men such as Francis Cosby and Henry Cowley oversaw the assizes in the two counties.¹⁰⁰

Which leads us to question whether or not the local government in the midlands still primarily remained militarised or at least retained militaristic

⁹³ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 2349, 2445, 3182, 3601, 3657.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 3601.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, nos 1810, 2113, 2200, 2340, 2345, 2549, 2555, 2999, 3453, 3590, 3596.

⁹⁶ Note of the extraordinary charges, 25 September 1573, TNA, SP 63/42/49.1; The charge for the extraordinary allowances, 25 December 1573, TNA, SP 63/43/25; Lord Justice Drury et al. to Burghley, 14 January 1579, TNA, SP 63/65/20.

⁹⁷ Mannion, 'Elizabethan County Galway', pp 71-2.

⁹⁸ Note of the extraordinary charges, 25 September 1573, TNA, SP 63/42/49.1; The charge for the extraordinary allowances, 25 December 1573, TNA, SP 63/43/25.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Lord Deputy Sidney to the Privy Council, 15 April 1566, TNA, SP 63/17/13; Justice Edward Fitzsimons to Lord Deputy Sidney, 26 June 1567, TNA, SP 63/21/30; Lords Justice Weston and FitzWilliam to Queen Elizabeth, 30 October 1567, TNA, SP 63/22/16.

elements. The evidence suggests that it most certainly did and that the martial offices implemented during the previous decade, remained intact by 1580. For instance, in June 1576, Barnaby Fitzpatrick was appointed Lieutenant of the forts with powers:

to hear and determine all personal causes; to treat with O'Connors, O'Mores, rebels, or other malefactors, and for that purpose to grant safe conducts; and if necessary to prosecute them with fire and sword, pursuing them into English shires or Irish countries adjoining, and to punish all who aid them; to keep a competent number of kerns at the expense of the counties, by advice of the principal gentlemen; and do all things whatsoever for the defence of the counties.¹⁰¹

Seneschals also remained a presence in the two shires with Francis Cosby and Henry Cowley fulfilling the roles from 1570-1576.¹⁰² At which point in the King's County, Cowley was succeeded by Edward Moore who in turn was succeeded by William Collier in 1578.¹⁰³ Cosby retained the seneschalship of the Queen's County by 1576 when he was ordered to 'follow and attack with fire and sword Rory Óg, the O'Connors and their company, and all other traitors and rebels in any place where they may be found...and he may commit such to gaol or execute them by martial law at his discretion and seize their goods to the use of the crown'. Significantly, Cosby was also permitted, if necessary, to 'call together all lords, seneschals, sheriffs and other officers and the gentlemen and inhabitants of every shire he shall have occasion to travel through, and to command them to attend him'.¹⁰⁴ In other words, Cosby was granted absolute authority in the region at the height of O'More's uprising proving that the position of seneschal, in the midlands at least, was an important office with a significant degree of authority. Crucially, much like the lieutenant of the forts, there was also Gaelic Irish participation in the office with Donal O'Molloy appointed seneschal of his territory in the King's County in 1578.¹⁰⁵ This proved, among other things, that there was at least some form of native involvement in the local government. In this case, it was in a

¹⁰¹ *Fiants Ire. Elizabeth.*, no. 2843.

¹⁰² Appendix 3.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Fiants Ire. Elizabeth.*, no. 2997.

¹⁰⁵ Appendix 3.

military capacity designed to keep their fellow Gaelic Irishmen in check.

In conclusion, Rory Óg O'More's rebellion had a notable impact on the midlands. The motivations behind the revolt, as highlighted, were far more complex than just simply Gaelic Irish retaliation to the English presence in the region. Instead, a desire for a stake in the Leix-Offaly plantation, the issue of protection and loyalty to the Geraldine cause may all have played a role in driving the dispossessed factions of the O'Mores and O'Connors into open revolt with the crown. But in a wider context, particularly with regards to local government in the two shires, Rory's rebellion had little effect. In fact, as this chapter revealed, the administrative structures established in the previous decade remained intact. It was quite clear that the administration that emerged was unique and highly militarised, blending martial law with English common law. This was particularly evident in the case of the settler societies of the two shires, which contained militaristic characteristics and seemed ever prepared for war. In comparison to Galway, the Queen's County and King's County were noticeably different. Whereas the influence and application of the Welsh model was clearly apparent in the Connaught County, the local government in the midlands was noticeably English in character. Whereas natives were offered a stake in the local government in Galway in roles such as the sheriff, they were largely excluded in the Queen's County and King's County. Another crucial finding of this chapter was that a trend had emerged in government thinking in relation to the Leix-Offaly plantation. For the second decade, the administration acknowledged its many mistakes in the region and significantly began to rectify them but serious problems remained. An ever-deepening financial crisis and the government's aspirations of curbing expenditure hit an unanticipated pitfall in the form of Rory Óg O'More's insurrection. The conflict plunged the already struggling colony deeper and deeper into debt and a worrying financial position by the dawn of the 1580s. Despite these setbacks, the future remained hopeful for the administration. William FitzWilliam, his successor Henry Sidney and the captains under their command, had dealt a significant blow to the resistance movements of the two territories with the death of Rory Óg and his adherents, thus

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removing the single greatest impediment to the installation of permanent English local government in the midlands and the most considerable drain on its finances. Arguably, the government could at last look forward to permanently resolving the settlement debacle and turning a profit on the fragile enterprise. On paper, it seemed that the administration simply needed to expand on the existing framework over the ensuing years in order to reverse their fortunes and achieve what they set out to achieve in the 1550s: a consolidated midlands plantation with the machinery of English local government firmly in place. In reality, what transpired over the proceeding decades led to further unforeseen challenges that thrust the colony, its aspirations and very existence into uncertainty. All of which will be explored in chapter four.

Chapter 4

A Leadership Crisis: the Leix-Offaly plantation, c. 1580-1603.

As highlighted in Chapter 3, by the year 1580, the local government of the Queen's County and King's County was functioning and in a satisfactory position. In a countrywide context, however, the Tudor administration was in a far more precarious situation, facing the prospect of a war on four fronts. The Second Desmond Rebellion, initiated by James FitzMaurice FitzGerald, cousin of Gerald, 15th earl of Desmond, in July 1579, in order to restore the Catholic faith in Ireland, quickly evolved from the landing of a small force in Kerry into a tumultuous and bloody conflict, which engulfed Munster for four and a half years.¹ James FitzMaurice was the second son of Desmond's uncle Sir Maurice and as highlighted in Chapter 3, was appointed captain General of the Geraldines in the absence of the Earl of Desmond in the late 1560s.² He was allegedly an expert swordsman and highly competent military commander who launched an all out assault upon the English presence in Munster in 1569.³ His rebellion was ultimately a failure and in its subsequent aftermath, he was swiftly stripped of his land and left Ireland in disgrace seeking aid abroad to reignite his religious crusade.⁴ Meanwhile, released from prison in 1573, Gerald FitzGerald, Earl of Desmond returned to Dublin where he was expected to await the verdict of an examination investigating whether or not he was to be reinstated to his former position. Upon arrival, he broke protocol and swiftly escaped back to his lordship and proclaimed his stern defiance of the Dublin

¹ The Portreeve of Dingle to the Earl of Desmond, 17 July 1579, TNA, SP 63/67/40.II; Anthony M. McCormack, 'The Social and Economic Consequences of the Desmond Rebellion of 1579-83', *IHS*, Vol. 34, No. 133 (Summer, 2004), p. 1.

² See chapter 3, pp 101-2.

³ Ciaran Brady, 'Faction and the Origins of the Desmond Rebellion of 1579', *IHS*, Vol. 22, No. 88 (September, 1981), p. 304.

⁴ FitzMaurice to Justice Walsh, 12 Oct. 1573, TNA, SP 63/42/70; Desmond's grant to FitzMaurice, 23 April 1574, TNA, SP 63/45/80; Munster commissioners to FitzWilliam, 20 July 1575, TNA, SP 63/52/56; Imokilly's deposition, 18 July 1575, TNA, SP 63/52/66; Brady, 'Faction and the Origins of the Desmond Rebellion of 1579', p. 307.

administration's authority.⁵ According to Brady, his actions were borne out of desperation as his feudal authority was quickly fading, as was his power over his vassals. Exacerbating the situation was the government's attempts to impose an English President and Council into Desmond's domain, greatly undermining his overall position.⁶ Brady also alleges that Desmond was close to bankruptcy. His tenants refused to pay him rent and his father had already left him with a substantial debt owed to the crown following his death. The decision to rebel may have been motivated by the fact that he stood no chance of ever repaying what he owed to his debtor, the English crown.⁷

The Earl's brother, Sir John of Desmond had also been sent to the Tower of London in the aftermath of the Battle of Affane in 1565.⁸ John eventually returned to Ireland alongside his brother and following FitzMaurice's landing in Kerry in 1579, Sir John of Desmond murdered Henry Davells, the crown envoy sent to negotiate with his brother, illustrating his commitment to the rebellion.⁹ Their relationship was supposedly quite affectionate and Davells was said to have regarded John as a son, a title Desmond's brother apparently strenuously disagreed with as he hacked the envoy to death in his bedroom at an inn in Tralee.¹⁰ FitzMaurice's unexpected demise on the 18 August 1579 was a blow to rebel morale which left the rebellion in the hands of Sir John of Desmond who in turn was quickly forced to hand over command to his brother, Gerald FitzGerald, following the crown's declaration that the Earl was a traitor that

⁵ Nicholas Walsh to Burghley, 30 November and 3 December 1573, TNA, SP 63/42/88; 63/43/5; Walsh to FitzWilliam, 21 December 1573, TNA, SP 63/44/3; Brady, 'Faction and the Origins of the Desmond Rebellion of 1579', p. 290.

⁶ Brady, 'Faction and the Origins of the Desmond Rebellion of 1579', pp 290-1.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 293-4.

⁸ See chapter 3, p. 101.

⁹ Brady, 'Faction and the Origins of the Desmond Rebellion of 1579', pp 308-10.

¹⁰ A.L. Rowse, *The Expansion of Elizabethan England* (2nd edition, Wisconsin, 2003), p. 107.

November.¹¹ Meanwhile in Connaught, the O'Rourkes and O'Connors also rose in open revolt and were quickly joined by Turlough Luineach O'Neill and the O'Donnells in Ulster.¹²

From a Leinster perspective, by 1580, an unforeseen insurrection was also brewing, the Baltinglass Rebellion. According to Christopher Maginn, the revolt was the most significant challenge to Tudor authority in Ireland since Silken Thomas FitzGerald's uprising in the early 1530s.¹³ The family of James Eustace, 3rd Viscount Baltinglass, had served the crown loyally for centuries and their military resolve had long served to protect the English Pale from the Gaelic Irish of Southern Leinster.¹⁴ His father, Roland Eustace was a vocal opponent of cess who had somewhat of an unconventional relationship with his neighbours the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles with two of his sisters marrying influential members of the two clans.¹⁵ Roland also supported the rebellious Hugh MacShane O'Byrne and the Gaelic Irishman's allegations made against the government that crown forces had unjustly devastated his lands. Eustace deemed these transgressions, much like the issue of cess, to be a flagrant abuse of authority on the administration's part.¹⁶ Roland's death in 1579 paved the way for the rise of his son James who was a fanatical supporter of the counter-reformation movement.¹⁷ Government intervention in Wicklow and the establishment of an English dominated county administration there and in turn the deteriorating relationship with the O'Byrne and O'Toole lordships presented Baltinglass with the perfect alliance and opportunity for launching his religious crusade against the crown in mid summer 1580.¹⁸ In

¹¹ Christopher Maginn, 'The Baltinglass Rebellion, 1580: English Dissent or a Gaelic Uprising?', *HJ*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (Summer, 2004), p. 209.

¹² *Ibid*; Sir Nicholas Malby to Walsingham, 10 September 1579, TNA, SP 63/69/17; Justice James Dowdall to the Lord Chancellor, 10 September 1579, TNA, SP 63/69/21.

¹³ Maginn, 'The Baltinglass Rebellion, 1580', p. 205.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 205, 213.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

¹⁶ 47 TCD, MS 1288, fol. 91; Bodleian Library, Oxford, Carte Papers, lx, fol. 13; Maginn, 'The Baltinglass Rebellion, 1580', pp 213-4.

¹⁷ *AFM s.a.* 1579; Maginn, 'The Baltinglass Rebellion, 1580', p. 214.

¹⁸ Maginn, 'The Baltinglass Rebellion, 1580', pp 205-6, 215.

response to the two rebellions, a coalition of Gaelic clans in Leinster including the O'Byrnes, O'Tooles, Kavanaghs and, most notably, elements of the O'Mores and O'Connors, all flocked to the rebel coalition's cause.¹⁹ Thus, according to Maginn, although Eustace was deemed the ringleader of the rebellion, Gaelic elements of Leinster, including the midlands, played a significant role in disturbances.²⁰

Unquestionably, the two insurrections had a significant impact on the region. The Queen's County in particular, and its natural fastness of the Slieve Bloom mountains, were both utilised as a base by Sir John FitzGerald to attack several towns in the possession of the Earl of Ormond, including the settlement of Abbeyleix.²¹ As highlighted in Chapters 2 and 3, this was not surprising as the Desmonds and Ormonds were bitter rivals. In addition, FitzGerald and his allies, including several members of the O'More and O'Connor clans, as well as Viscount Baltinglass and the O'Byrnes burned and sacked the colony at Maryborough and several other strongholds in the county in the autumn of 1580.²² We know that by this period, the two clans were capable of mustering 160 warriors at the very minimum and were a significant threat.²³ With the rebellion largely quelled by 1581, the crown began to suppress the Gaelic clans ruthlessly. The O'Mores, already weakened following the death of Rory Óg in 1578, decided to assist the government with its new endeavour. Thus, the O'More chieftain, James MacKedagh, collaborated with Captain Humphrey Mackworth, leader of the band of English troops implicated in the Smerwick massacre, in mopping up any remaining resistance in the two

¹⁹ *AFM.*, s.a. 1580.

²⁰ Gerrard to Walsingham, 19 July 1580, TNA, SP 63/74/49; Maginn, 'The Baltinglass Rebellion, 1580', pp 205, 212.

²¹ George Harvey to Lord Deputy Grey, 28 August 1580, TNA, SP 63/75/74.

²² Mr. John Barnes to Lord Deputy Grey, 4 September 1580, TNA, SP 63/76/10; *AFM* s.a. 1580.

²³ Declaration by Arthur Lord Grey of Wilton to the Queen, 1583, TNA, SP 63/106/62; David Edwards (ed.), *Campaign journals of the Elizabethan Irish wars* (Dublin, 2014), p. 140.

counties and particularly within the remaining Rory MacConaill sept.²⁴ Carey argues that Mackworth's time in the midlands was highly controversial and excessively brutal.²⁵ Most notably, it was alleged that the captain orchestrated the massacre of over 40 O'Mores at his own home following a banquet in May 1582.²⁶ According to Lord Deputy Arthur Grey, Mackworth acted in self-defence following an attempt made on his life by one of the O'Mores present, which in turn instigated a slaughter of the Gaelic guests in attendance.²⁷ Irrespective of the guilty party, it was largely accepted that the incident 'pulled that sept [the O'Mores] in manner on their knees, all these being of the chiefest of that nation'. Shortly thereafter, Mackworth dealt another crushing blow to the elite of the two clans when he ambushed and killed over 40 of their forces loyal to Baltinglass. The O'Connors were also unable to bear the brunt of the onslaught having already suffered heavily during Captain John Barrington's decimation of the clan in the year 1579.²⁸ By 1582, Lord Deputy Grey alleged that the O'Connors, with their greatly reduced numbers, had been completely subdued and driven from the King's County.²⁹ The end result was that, by the conclusion of the Second Desmond Rebellion in November 1583, the O'More and O'Connor coalition was a spent force. Significantly, the rebellion had a similar impact on the male ranks of the Desmond dynasty. Noteworthy casualties included the Earl of Desmond himself, his brother Sir John who was killed in an ambush, his half brother Sir James who was subsequently executed following his capture by English forces and finally, his first cousin James FitzMaurice who also died in a skirmish soon after

²⁴ Chancellor and Wallop to Walsingham, 10 October 1581, TNA, SP 63/86/19; Lord Deputy Grey to Walsingham, 6 April 1581, TNA, SP 63/82/6; Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', p. 247.

²⁵ Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', p. 247.

²⁶ Declaration by Arthur Lord Grey of Wilton to the Queen, 1583, TNA, SP 63/106/62; Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', p. 247.

²⁷ Declaration by Arthur Lord Grey of Wilton to the Queen, 1583, TNA, SP 63/106/62

²⁸ A breviat of the proceedings of the right honourable Sir William Pelham, during the time of his government therein which began the 11th of October 1579 and ended the 7th of September 1580, LPL, MS. 597, ff 20r-74r.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

landing on Irish shores.³⁰ In a wider perspective, the Second Desmond Rebellion not only overthrew the traditional social order in Munster but also set in motion the plantation of the province.³¹

With the two serious insurrections brought to an end and the most rebellious elements of the O'Mores and O'Connors brought to heel, at least temporarily, the crown looked forward to a period of lasting peace in the midlands. Yet this period of tranquillity was short lived and violence erupted once again within the Queen's County and King's County. This chapter assesses how the local government of the two shires coped with renewed disturbances, particularly during the Nine Years' War, and the effect of these disorders on the region. Furthermore, the issues of martial law and atrocity will be analysed as well as how the militarised county government fit within the framework of other shires such as Galway and Cavan throughout the 1580s and 90s and what remained of it by 1603.

For all the progress the Tudor government made over the previous twenty years, consistent disturbances took their toll. By December 1579 for instance, it was reported that numerous settlers in the Queen's County had abandoned their estates during the combined revolts of Rory Óg O'More and James FitzMaurice FitzGerald.³² These included gentlemen such as Henry Davells, sheriff of Cork before his untimely death, Richard, John and Walter Keating, Thomas St. Leger, Robert Hartpole, former sheriff of the Queen's County, John Barnes, Edward Brereton, John Birmingham as well as a number of MacDonnells and O'Kellys. These settlers were all regarded as absentees by the government.³³ Thomas Butler, 10th Earl of Ormond, regarded the administration's decision to lease land to men 'of small ability' was the root cause of the problem and their ineffectiveness 'put her

³⁰ McCormack, 'The Social and Economic Consequences of the Desmond Rebellion', p. 10.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

³² Names of such freeholders as are not dwelling in the Queen's County, 1580, TNA, SP 63/79/51.

³³ *Ibid.*

Highness to infinite charge without any commodity or profit'.³⁴ Certainly the freeholders of the midlands, who were planted in the heart of previously Gaelic dominated territories, generally did not have the means to defend their small landholdings in many cases. Consequently, the responsibilities of defence largely fell to the local leading gentry who were expected to defend the settlers and maintain the strongholds in the region. It was apparent that many neglected these duties as by February 1580, Maryborough and Philipstown were in decay.³⁵ Their condition worsened over the following years to the point they were considered among the weakest corporate towns in the kingdom by 1599 which suggests that Ormond's assessment had merit.³⁶

With the crown's military resources stretched, the government was very much aware that the land in the midlands had become increasingly spoiled by the 1580s. The aforementioned siege of Maryborough highlighted the degree to which the condition of the Queen's County had deteriorated by September 1580. Apparently with every hold and castle in the shire, bar three, seized by forces loyal to Viscount Baltinglass, Maryborough was specifically targeted, raided and besieged. Four crown soldiers were killed in the assault and a great deal of plunder and livestock were taken including the constable George Harvey's horses. A force of 300 or 400 horse and foot subsequently surrounded the fort so that there was 'none that can come out of the town'.³⁷ Although the siege was eventually lifted, Baltinglass' rebellion took its toll on the countryside of the shire. This was also the case in neighbouring Carlow which by 1586, was deemed 'waste, besides the borders and skirts of other counties that be adjoined unto it, as the counties of Kildare, the Queen's county, the county of Kilkenny, and the county of

³⁴ Ormond to Burghley, 4 March 1584, TNA, SP 63/108/5.

³⁵ Lord Justice Pelham to Burghley, 4 February 1580, TNA, SP 63/71/34.

³⁶ Wallop to Burghley, 21 September 1581, TNA, SP 63/85/50; Wallop to Burghley, 27 July 1583, TNA, SP 63/103/42; Gerald Comerford to Sir Robert Cecil, 27 August 1599, TNA, SP 63/205/154; The Lord Chancellor Loftus and Sir George Carey, 29 September 1599, TNA, SP 63/205/180; The Lord Deputy to the English Privy Council, 3 September 1601, TNA, SP 63/209/51.

³⁷ Mr. John Barnes to Lord Deputy Grey, 4 September 1580, TNA, SP 63/76/10.

Wexford. These are so impoverished, that they are not able to live'.³⁸ Settlers such as Dorcas Cosby, daughter-in-law of the deceased captain Francis Cosby, claimed she required 12 horsemen to hold the 'waste country' she inhabited in the Queen's County.³⁹ Unsurprisingly, the situation significantly worsened during the Nine Years' War.

Trouble had been brewing for quite some time in Ulster. In 1592, Hugh Roe O'Donnell, the O'Donnell and King of Tir Chonaill drove the English sheriff Captain Willis out of his territory and the following year, Hugh Maguire, Lord of Fermanagh, also rose in revolt against the imposition of Willis as sheriff of the area. Hugh O'Neill, the Earl of Tyrone at first assisted the government in the hope of being appointed President of Ulster. However, when it became clear that the crown intended to appoint Henry Bagenal to the position instead, O'Neill rose in rebellion too and in combination with his Gaelic allies, launched an attack upon the English stronghold situated on the Blackwater River, igniting the Nine Years' War.⁴⁰ By November 1596, Sir Geoffrey Fenton claimed that the Queen's County was 'laid waste' to by rebellious elements of the O'More clan. Fenton warned that if the government and the gentry of the shire continued to neglect the situation, the 'King's County, O'Carroll's country and Upper Ossory' would 'fall into the same state of ruin'.⁴¹ Put simply, with the Pale exposed, the administration feared 'the bastard Geraldines' and their allies would swiftly reclaim the Queen's County and King's County 'from the Crown'.⁴² Crucially, this highlights once again that factions of the O'Mores and O'Connors most likely rose in revolt in support of their Geraldine allies, in this case, the O'Neills in Ulster.⁴³ The administration's fears were soon

³⁸ Note of the reasons which caused the Kavanaghs to stir, 1586, TNA, SP 63/127/68.

³⁹ Petition of Dorcas Cosby to the Queen, 17 July 1589, TNA, SP 63/145/70.

⁴⁰ Hiram Morgan, *Tyrone's Rebellion* (London, 1993), pp 139-67.

⁴¹ Sir Geoffrey Fenton to Burghley, 25 November 1596, TNA, SP 63/195/37.

⁴² Observations of matters seeming to be out of order in Ireland, 3 December 1596, TNA, SP 63/196/2.

⁴³ See chapter 2, pp 73-4.

confirmed in the summer of 1598 upon claims that ‘the rebels of Leinster...after that they had murdered some ancient English servitors’ in the King’s County ‘and burned and left waste a great part thereof...then went they into’ the Queen’s County and ‘burned in most parts of the same, but likewise spoiled and utterly wasted all that county.’⁴⁴ The references to wasteland are significant for a number of reasons. As highlighted in the Introduction, the Tudor government sought to encourage Gaelic Irish and English settler alike to fall to husbandry and convert neglected waste lands into fully cultivated arable plots that produced corn, which ultimately represented the gift of civility to Ireland’s Gaelic population.⁴⁵ The failure to achieve this goal was arguably a failure on the government’s part to civilise effectively the midlands and its native inhabitants. But a report from 1597 on ‘The Description of the Realm’ seemed to contradict a lot of the accounts relating to wastelands in the midlands. In the Queen’s County for instance, it was reported that the soil was ‘fruitful and exceedingly pleasant’.⁴⁶

Despite the conflicting reports regarding the existence of waste ground and the alleged abandonment of estates in the region, the administration managed to attract some new settlers to the two counties, however few. The esquire Thomas Johnson as well as the gentlemen John Sterling and Piers Hovenden were granted land in Maryborough during this period.⁴⁷ All three were relatively new arrivals from England. The Hovendens were particularly significant, as they were originally granted land in the Queen’s County in 1570 around Tankardstown.⁴⁸ We also know that Hugh O’Neill was fostered by the Hovendens as a young boy and spent some time in the Queen’s County where it was alleged that his foster brothers became his closest and most trusted servants. This was notable as three of the brothers,

⁴⁴ The Lords Justices Loftus and Gardener to the Privy Council, 1 June 1598, TNA, SP 63/202/56.

⁴⁵ See Introduction, pp 5-6.

⁴⁶ The description of the realm, 1597, TNA, SP 63/201/157.

⁴⁷ Appendix 1.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Henry, Richard and Piers all served as captains in the crown army.⁴⁹ Other settlers included the Englishman Edmund Barrett who was granted extensive lands in the shire including several tenements and ruined cottages during the height of the Nine Years' War in 1597 for which he paid an annual rent of £8.⁵⁰ Aside from these, Lodowick Briskett, also a New Englishman and the esquire William Browne, certainly of English descent, were granted land around Pallas as well as six additional townlands.⁵¹ In the final years of Tyrone's rebellion, men such as Sir Richard Graham who hailed from the north of England were granted the castle and lands of Raheen and Deere as well as a further 13 town lands. In total, Graham's estates spanned across 717 acres in the county for which he was expected to retain nine galloglass and four English footmen.⁵² By far the most significant settler, in terms of land that is, was Patrick Crosbie or MacCrossan who was granted extensive lands within the lordship of Slievemargy as well as all messuages, cottages, orchards and gardens. Crosbie was a fascinating figure. His brother was apparently an O'More and his father's mother was also supposedly an O'Kelly of Clanmalire, yet Crosbie claimed to be only of 'English blood and surname'.⁵³ Nevertheless, he possessed over 23 town lands including 850 acres of arable land, which included 15 acres in Maryborough.⁵⁴

In the King's County, the New Englishman John Lye was granted monastic lands at Killeigh and Sir Lucas Dillon, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, was granted six rectories at an annual rental value of £13.⁵⁵ Englishmen such as Richard Croft and Henry Duke were granted the castle and lands of Clonmore and Killowen.⁵⁶ In addition, Thomas Morris and Hubert Fox were

⁴⁹ Morgan, *Tyrone's Rebellion*, p. 97.

⁵⁰ *Cal. pat. rolls, Ire.*, pp 409-10.

⁵¹ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 5845, 5931.

⁵² *Cal. pat. rolls, Ire.*, pp 585-6.

⁵³ Thomas, Earl of Ormond and Ossory to Secretary Cecil, 2 December 1601, TNA, SP 63/209/213.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 604.

⁵⁵ Appendix 1.

⁵⁶ *Cal. pat. rolls, Ire.*, p. 84.

granted lands in O'Molloy's territory.⁵⁷ Gaelic government loyalists such as Sir John McCoughlan were also included in the land grants.⁵⁸ In total, a mere eight freeholders were encouraged to set down root in the Queen's County during this turbulent period. The King's County fared little better with just seven new arrivals.

Without question, the unrest and disturbances to the peace did little to help matters. For instance, as already highlighted, following the outbreak of the Nine Years' War, the most rebellious elements of the O'Mores and O'Connors rose in unison in support of Hugh O'Neill. Their objective was arguably quite straightforward: to assault the English presence in the midlands and seize as many strongholds as possible and hold them for the rebel coalition. Accordingly, Gaelic forces swiftly seized numerous castles, including those under the command of Captains Whitney, Hetherington, and Barrington in the Queen's County.⁵⁹ A number of gentry who attempted to resist this onslaught were killed in the line of duty alongside their families.⁶⁰ Sir Thomas Moore, brother of Edward Moore the former constable of King's County, was slain alongside his two daughters at his home in Croghan. His wife was also allegedly 'stripped in a bog' and left to die from exposure to the elements.⁶¹ Other officers such as Captain Gifford and his wife were killed defending Moore's territory as strongholds in the midlands, including Francis Cosby's once formidable fortress at Stradbally in the Queen's County, were subsequently burned.⁶² Maginn argues that the Gaelic rebel forces of Leinster had to contend with the fact that they were outnumbered and did not have the manpower to retain control of significant military or economic strong points.⁶³ Accordingly, attacks were mostly

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 271, 575.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁵⁹ The Lords Justices Loftus and Gardener to the Privy Council, 22 July 1598, TNA, SP 63/202/105.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*; Captain Thomas Reade to Sir Robert Cecil, 20 November 1598, TNA, SP 63/202/167.

⁶¹ The Lords Justices Loftus and Gardener to the Privy Council, 23 November 1598, TNA, SP 63/202/168.

⁶² Captain Thomas Reade to Sir Robert Cecil, 1 December 1598, TNA, SP 63/202/3.

⁶³ Maginn, 'Civilising Gaelic Leinster', p. 167.

comparable to Gaelic raids rather than co-ordinated military offensives on key positions.⁶⁴ Edwards argues that the militaristic culture of Gaelic Irish society saw raids as a means of displaying a lord's martial prowess and to appease his followers and impress his subjects.⁶⁵ That being said, what occurred in the midlands in 1598 was certainly more than this and can be viewed as an intentional, organised and furious assault upon the English born soldier class and their families in the region.⁶⁶ As will be highlighted in Chapter 5, Silken Thomas' rebellion was quelled with distinct ruthlessness by the government.⁶⁷ A violent trend was set during this period that escalated as the century progressed. In the hope of pressurising the inhabitants of the Pale to support the uprising, it was declared that Geraldine forces executed anyone they found of English birth, with reports reaching London of English women and children being slaughtered.⁶⁸ The Tudor government apparently responded in kind in crushing the Kildare revolt. In the late 1550s and 60s with the implementation of martial law, a new line was crossed. All 'suspected enemies' of the crown could be killed by government soldiers without any repercussions. The soldiers were also entitled to a third part of the goods of any 'rebel' they killed which gave them even more of an incentive to execute the policy with a particular fervour.⁶⁹ The Gaelic Irish responded along the same lines and targeted farmers, soldiers and their families.⁷⁰ The incidents mentioned in 1598 can thus be viewed as standard in terms of Irish violence committed against English soldiers and vice versa. Arguably, it was the full-scale epitome of the law of retaliation otherwise known as 'an eye for an eye'. As a result of the violence, the remaining gentlemen of the two shires were allegedly reluctant:

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ David Edwards, 'The escalation of violence in sixteenth-century Ireland', in David Edwards, Padraig Lenihan and Clodagh Tait (eds), *Age of Atrocity: violence and political conflict in early modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2007), p. 41.

⁶⁶ Maginn, 'Civilising Gaelic Leinster', pp 167-8.

⁶⁷ Edwards, 'The escalation of violence in sixteenth-century Ireland', p. 54; chapter 5, p. 156.

⁶⁸ Edwards, 'The escalation of violence in sixteenth-century Ireland', p. 55.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 69.

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp 70-1.

Chapter 4

To manure one foot of their land, or almost to look out of their castles...their tenants being already departed from their dwellings, and become rebels with the rest; so as now we account' the midlands 'no better than lost; the gaining whereof hath heretofore cost England so much English blood and treasure.⁷¹

Even experienced freeholders such as Thomas Lambin, former sheriff of the Queen's County, struggled to retain his home during the rebellion. In fact, Lambin was forced to abandon his lands in the shire after he was besieged in his residence for three months.⁷² On 22 November 1596, Adam Loftus summarised the reality the gentry of the midlands faced:

As for the Queen's county, the state thereof is at this present most lamentable, for the English gentlemen, which there are planted, are all spoiled, and have their towns and haggards burned by the O'Mores (saving only some few gentlemen)... The King's county is, thanks be to God, as yet in safety, but the inhabitants are forced to bear an excessive charge amongst themselves for the guard of that county.⁷³

Adam Loftus' quote was particularly interesting as it seemed to suggest that the King's County fared much better than its neighbour during this period. But how was this the case? 'The Description of the realm' once again throws some light on the matter and alleged that the King's County, a wealthy and generally quiet shire, was by its very 'nature strong, and few passages and those well guarded'. Crucially, it also alleged that 'the inhabitants have better united in good will one to another and have better observed the constitutions appointed unto them than their neighbours of' the Queen's County.⁷⁴ This potentially could have referred to the emergence of a county community in the King's County where the general population and the gentry alike coordinated together as a unit in matters of defence and who seemed to embrace royal authority more than their Leix counterparts. The report also reinforced the accounts that that the newly planted settlers of the Queen's County were 'molested continually with the multitudes of the first

⁷¹ The Lords Justices Loftus and Gardener to the Privy Council, 1 June 1598, TNA, SP 63/202/56; Also see Appendix 1.

⁷² *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 6026, 6077.

⁷³ Adam Loftus and Thomas Jones to Burghley, 22 November 1596, TNA, SP 63/195/27.

⁷⁴ The description of the realm, 1597, TNA, SP 63/201/157.

natives thereof and the O'Mores and especially at this present, as that they have in a manner recovered the country again and expelled all the English inhabitants'. It also acknowledged that the O'Connors 'gathered themselves...and either banished most of the English or constrained them to keep within their castles'.

The gentry of the Queen's County and King's County were forced to helplessly watched as the Gaelic rebels 'cut down and gathered the corn of the...English gentlemen of that county, to the great discomfort of all our nation remaining in this wretched country'.⁷⁵ The government presumed a great deal of their leading landowners in the region. Not only were they and their tenants expected to be 'mere' English to begin with, the gentry were also instructed to erect lodgings capable of housing at least 94 families including 7 for farmers, 6 for freeholders, and 45 for copyholders.⁷⁶ Surprisingly, this is the first reference to such requirements.

Nevertheless, despite the turbulent conditions in the two counties, it seems apparent that numerous freeholders remained, many of whom had been planted under the original grants of Edward VI. English families such as the Parsons, Barringtons, Piggotts, Hartpoles, Whitneys, Breretons, Skeltons, Cosbys, Davells, Lamdens, Eyres, Hetheringtons, Warrens, Cowleys, Herberts, Moores, Leicesters, Wakeleys, Nugents, Tyrells and Sankeys retained their land well into the seventeenth century.⁷⁷ The Welsh settler family, the Bowens, also held on to their land at Ballyadams in the Queen's County.⁷⁸ The Herberts, most notably Nicholas Herbert, built a secure landed base at Durrow, in the same county, including several castles and

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 5032, 5282.

⁷⁷ Dunlop, 'The Plantation of Leix and Offaly', pp 94-5; The Plantation of the King's County and Queen's County, BL, Add. MS. 4756, fos 79v-133r; *Fiants Ire. Eliz.* nos 474, 687, 691, 724, 1554; Edward MacLysaght, *The surnames of Ireland* (Kildare, 1999).

⁷⁸ Dunlop, 'The Plantation of Leix and Offaly', p. 95.

halls by the year 1571 and served as proof that a small number of settlers flourished in such volatile environments.⁷⁹

Similarly, numerous Gaelic Irish grantees retained their land, which proved, that there was also continuity in the retention of land amongst a large share of the native population in the midlands. Gaelic Irish families such as the Finneys (O'Fiannaidh), Floods (Mac an Tuile), Reynolds (Mac Raghnaill) and O'Dempseys all kept their land until at least 1603.⁸⁰ Likewise, the government loyalist branch of the O'Connor clan, the MacCahir Ruas, held on to the land they were granted in reward for their services to the crown.⁸¹ However, the Keatings, planted for strategic purposes by the crown in O'More territory, found themselves largely dispossessed by 1598 for permitting coign and livery within their area.⁸² The majority of the O'Mores and their vassals the O'Kellys, granted land by the crown, were dispossessed by 1603.⁸³ As highlighted in Chapter 2, the Tudor government granted land to elements of the O'More clan and their vassals including the O'Kellys in the hope they would overthrow their overlords and cause conflict within the dominant clans ensuring factions would be too busy fighting each other to have time or resources to resist government intervention in the midlands.⁸⁴ Maurice Óg O'More had been granted land at Raheenduff in the Queen's County under Elizabeth's 1562 grants and additional lands at Clamorgan in 1570, but his lands were attainted and seized for treason in 1601 at the height of the Nine Years' War.⁸⁵ Ferganainm O'Kelly was granted lands in 1562 at Corbally with Frinne O'Kelly being granted lands at Rathaspick in the same county.⁸⁶ Although Ferganainm appeared to retain his land by 1603, Frinne O'Kelly's

⁷⁹ Mr. Nicholas Herbert to Burghley, 15 September 1571, TNA, SP 63/34/12.

⁸⁰ Dunlop, 'The Plantation of Leix and Offaly', pp 94-5; MacLysaght, *The surnames of Ireland*.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 94.

⁸³ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 490, 491, 506, 510, 514, 536, 537, 596; Dunlop, 'The Plantation of Leix and Offaly', p. 94.

⁸⁴ See chapter 2 pp 67-8 and chapter 6.

⁸⁵ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 518, 1153, 6578.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, nos 490, 536.

were forfeited to the crown, most likely for treason.⁸⁷

Yet, other clans, planted for militarily strategic purposes by the crown such as the Galloglass family, the MacDonnells, held on to their land in the Queen's County and remained government loyalists into the following century when their descendant, Fergus McDonnell, was referred to by his clan's Anglicised surname, Donnel.⁸⁸ This was an indication of how much the clan had become assimilated by the 1600s although none actually held positions within the local government of the midlands. This all but confirmed that although the government failed to attract large numbers of English settlers to the midlands, a small but determined group of freeholders set down roots and remained there. Once again, the administration adapted to the situation and permitted any remaining settlers and gentry who wished to depart the country the power to pass their land to 'faithful subjects' of the surrounding area.⁸⁹ Alexander Cosby was one such gentleman who was granted a license in 1593 in due consideration of his 'difficulty in obtaining occupiers'.⁹⁰ Instead, as summarised by Burghley, 'divers of the undertakers' were 'absent from the country...so as such, deputies are forced to let out the grounds to the Irish, without maintaining of any families of English'.⁹¹ Overall, the evidence suggests that there was no significant build up of English tenants on lands held by English gentry. The Tudor government's idealistic aspiration of 'peopling the country with Englishmen, for its better defence against foreign enemies and the rebel' never materialised, nor an exclusively 'mere' English colony.⁹²

Unsurprisingly, considering the consistent turbulent nature of the two shires and almost incessant uprisings by rebellious factions of its Gaelic natives,

⁸⁷ Dunlop, 'The Plantation of Leix and Offaly', p. 95.

⁸⁸ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.* no. 612; Dunlop, 'The Plantation of Leix and Offaly', p. 94.

⁸⁹ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 5835.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Observations of matters seeming to be out of order in Ireland, 3 December 1596, TNA, SP 63/196/2; See chapter 2, p. 75 and chapter 3, p. 109.

the administration's financial woes deepened.⁹³ But in comparison to previous decades, there is a shortage of primary evidence relating to the financial situation in Queen's County and King's County, yet we know it deteriorated. In the 1580s for instance, the government pinpointed the Elizabethan army as the most significant drain on the exchequer. Geoffrey Fenton, the Queen's secretary, proposed the reintroduction of cess, discussed in Chapter 2, whereby the inhabitants of the two shires and the Pale would collectively pay for the general upkeep of the garrisons of Maryborough and Philipstown as well as their repair and general maintenance.⁹⁴ If the residents refused, the Lord Deputy was instructed to make a show of strength in the area in order to bend the settlers to the government's will.⁹⁵ From as early as February 1582, Sir Henry Wallop reported of the 'great sums due' to the two strongholds.⁹⁶ The move proved grossly unpopular and caused significant discontent and anti-government sentiment among the Pale's inhabitants who struggled to cover the cess imposed upon them. In the summer of 1587, Lord Deputy Perrot alleged that their 'corn hath failed them these two last years, and their cattle died...they are scarce able to bear the burden laid upon them'.⁹⁷ In December 1596, the Pale residents complained once again that the excesses of the 'captains and soldiers' had contributed to the 'impoverishing and discomforting of the people'.⁹⁸ The freeholders of the Queen's County fared much the same and from as early as April 1591, forty-four were behind on their rent.⁹⁹ Of these, no fewer than seven Keatings were in arrears, one O'Kelly, one O'Carroll and one O'More. The remainder were largely English with one Welsh freeholder, some of them quite prominent including Alexander Cosby and Edward Brereton. Consequently,

⁹³ *AFM s.a.* 1584; Sir John Perrot's declaration touching the state of Ireland, TNA, SP 63/135/54; *Cal. Carew MSS, 1589-1600*, no. 111.

⁹⁴ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1575-1588*, no. 587; For more on cess, see chapter 2, p. 81.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Wallop to Burghley, 5 February 1582, TNA, SP 63/89/16.

⁹⁷ The Lord Deputy to the Privy Council, 20 May 1587, TNA, SP 63/129/89; Also see p. 111 in particular.

⁹⁸ Observations of matters seeming to be out of order in Ireland, 3 December 1596, TNA, SP 63/196/2. For more on cess, see chapter 2, p. 81.

⁹⁹ Note of arrearages of rent in the Queen's County, April 1591, TNA, SP 63/157/71.

by 1598, the government had little alternative other than to alter their approach in the midlands. From that point onwards, the administration covered the majority of the expenses of Maryborough and Philipstown as well as various strongholds throughout the two shires with only minor support from the residents of the city of Dublin.¹⁰⁰ Albeit putting an increased strain on the exchequer, it highlighted the government's willingness to adapt and rectify their blunders, or at least attempt to do so.

Considering the accounts of violence against Gaelic Irish and English alike during this period, it is impossible not to analyse the implementation of force in the midlands as well as the execution of martial law. J.M. Collins argues that from the 1550s onwards, the government was flexible in its application of 'terror' in the form of martial law.¹⁰¹ Its motivations behind employing such coercive methods was apparently in order to end rebellions, Gaelic raids and private wars which had hindered sufficient English settlement in Ireland and restricted the expansion of royal authority.¹⁰² Martial law, first introduced in the midlands during the early reign of Queen Elizabeth and the tenure of Lord Lieutenant Sussex, was originally envisioned as a means of quelling the incessant raids and uprisings of the O'Mores and O'Connors in addition to protecting the fragile Leix-Offaly plantation.¹⁰³ The policy proved largely effective in safeguarding both new territories and their respective forts, but the brutality by which it was executed greatly tarnished Gaelic-government relations and did very little to advance English common law throughout the country.¹⁰⁴ Periods such as when Sir John Perrot served as President of Munster were particularly turbulent whereby over 800 rebels were executed via martial law in the aftermath of the First Desmond rebellion.¹⁰⁵ If anything, the violence and

¹⁰⁰ Robert Newcomen, Commissary for Leinster, 30 June 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/136; The Lords Justices Loftus and Gardener to the Privy Council, 23 November 1598, TNA, SP 63/202/168.

¹⁰¹ Collins, *Martial Law and English Laws*, pp 43-75.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹⁰³ Brady, *The chief governors*, pp 95-6.

¹⁰⁴ Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', p. 248; Brady, *The chief governors*, p. 276.

¹⁰⁵ Sir John Perrot to the Privy Council, 9 April 1573, TNA, SP 63/40/6.

brutality exercised in the name of martial law and the maintenance of law and order only escalated further in the 1580s such as during Arthur Grey's tenure as Lord Deputy from 1584-88 whereby over '1,485 chief men and gentlemen slain, not accounting those of meaner sort, nor yet executions by law and killing of churls, which were innumerable'.¹⁰⁶ In another instance, the heavy-handed officer Francis Lovell, put hundreds to death during his time as sheriff of County Kilkenny supposedly in the hope of increasing his own assets and financial gain.¹⁰⁷ Martial law commissioners came to be viewed, particularly by the Gaelic Irish and even the inhabitants of the English Pale as little more than private conquerors, men of 'mean calling', out for their own gain, material and otherwise who did as they pleased.¹⁰⁸ Collins suggests that these crown officers had somewhat of an incentive to exercise their authority excessively, particularly those ambitious individuals out to make material gain as these officers were allowed to claim the moveable property of those executed.¹⁰⁹

The Queen, despite encouraging coercion in Ireland to achieve the government's aims and to spread royal authority, was hesitant of the summary martial law commissions that permitted sheriffs, constables and seneschals to execute any vagrants, suspected felons and traitors on site, believing it to be dishonourable.¹¹⁰ Even the English Privy Council by the 1580s began to allege that the extensive and unsupervised application of martial law undermined the colonial project in Ireland.¹¹¹ As a result, the government's overall reliance on the policy generally decreased from 1586 onwards following successive appeals by Nicholas White among others for the Queen to embrace a more 'temperate government' in Ireland and move

¹⁰⁶ Declaration by Arthur Lord Grey of Wilton to the Queen, 1583, TNA, SP 63/106/62.

¹⁰⁷ By the Lord Deputy, 14 April 1587, TNA, SP 63/129/7; The Lord Deputy to the Privy Council, 30 April 1587, TNA, SP 63/129/41.

¹⁰⁸ "A Remembrance for Ireland", 1582, TNA, SP 63/90/69; Collins, *Martial Law and English Laws*, p. 69.

¹⁰⁹ Note of the Matters to be laid to Captain Heron's charge, 17 January 1565, TNA, SP 63/12/12; *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 218; Collins, *Martial Law and English Laws*, p. 69.

¹¹⁰ Collins, *Martial Law and English Laws*, p. 67.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

away from the one which threatened to ‘waste the revenue, depopulate the Pale, weaken the English nobility, and avail the wild Irish’.¹¹² According to David Edwards and Hiram Morgan, Queen Elizabeth was eventually persuaded to pursue a more restrained approach in Ireland and to abandon a policy that was deemed no longer necessary and overtly provocative and thus counter-productive.¹¹³ In fact, Hiram Morgan argues that post 1586, just ‘ten martial law commissions were issued over the next five years until it was altogether abolished in 1591’.¹¹⁴ Collins on the other hand argues that in territories which still retained a large Gaelic Irish population, such as in the Queen’s County and the King’s County ‘the policy continued unabated’.¹¹⁵ However, the primary evidence simply does not support this theory. There can be little doubt that martial law commissions, much like in the rest of the country, gradually declined in frequency in the early to mid 1580s. In the Queen’s County, they receded sometime around 1583 and 1585 in the King’s County.¹¹⁶ That being said, martial law was by no means abolished in either shire post 1591. In the Queen’s County, the policy was reintroduced in January 1596, over eighteen months after the outbreak of the Nine Year’s War and again in the year 1599.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, in the King’s County, martial law recommenced as early as 1594 with regular commissions right up until 1601.¹¹⁸ Although David Edwards does agree that the policy was quickly reintroduced and widely re-established by 1597, it is misleading to say the policy was ever wholly ‘abolished’.¹¹⁹ One could also argue that it is misguided, therefore, to state that martial law ‘continued

¹¹² Nicholas White to Burghley, 23 December 1581, TNA, SP 63/87/55.

¹¹³ David Edwards, ‘Beyond Reform: Martial Law & the Tudor reconquest of Ireland’ *HI*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Summer 1997), p. 20; Hiram Morgan, ‘Overmighty Officers: The Irish Lord Deputyship in the Early Modern British State’, *HI*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (Winter, 1999), p. 20.

¹¹⁴ Morgan, ‘Overmighty Officers’, p. 20

¹¹⁵ Collins, *Martial Law and English Laws*, p. 73; David Edwards, ‘Ideology and Experience: Spenser’s View and martial law in Ireland’, in Hiram Morgan (ed.), *Political Ideology in Ireland, 1541-1641* (Dublin, 1999), pp 136-7; *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 4119, 4161, 4190, 4549, 4640, 4658, 5397.

¹¹⁶ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 4190, 4658.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 6028, 6281.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, nos, 5882, 6092, 6199, 6246, 6281, 6288, 6528.

¹¹⁹ Edwards, ‘Martial law and the tudor reconquest of Ireland’, p. 21.

unabated' in the midlands post 1586, as there was no evidence of commissions in the Queen's County for another thirteen years and roughly nine years in the King's County.¹²⁰ As a result, although the commissions were drawn in, they were crucially never eradicated and martial law was deemed an effective means of governance and maintaining law and order once properly monitored.¹²¹

Brendan Bradshaw argued that coercive policies such as martial law were part of a wider evangelising campaign such as that which Edmund Spenser spoke of which argued that before the 'wild' natives of Ireland could be truly exposed to the word of God and the reformed faith, they would first have to feel the sharp edge of the sword. In other words, before the Gaelic Irish could accept the Reformation, they needed to be brought to submission and this could only be achieved via war and famine.¹²² The normal mode of operation for government therefore was discipline symbolised by the sword. By wielding the sword, administrations such as the Tudor government fulfilled God's design for social order and progress. This was a common opinion among the more 'civilised' nations of Europe in the sixteenth century.¹²³ Bradshaw therefore asserts that martial law was more prevalent in Ireland because Gaelic Irish life was deemed less important and inferior to English life.¹²⁴

The disturbed conditions of the two shires throughout the 1580s and 90s leads one to question how the militarised local government of the midlands related to other shires such as Galway and Cavan throughout this period and what ultimately remained of it by 1603. Firstly, it seems quite apparent that the martial elements introduced into the local government from the late 1550s onwards remained firmly intact throughout the final two decades of the century. Seneschals and Lieutenants of the forts remained crucial to the

¹²⁰ *Fiantis Ire Eliz.*, nos 4190, 4658, 5882, 6028.

¹²¹ Collins, *Martial Law and English Laws*, p. 75.

¹²² Brendan Bradshaw, 'Sword, word and strategy in the Reformation in Ireland', *HJ*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Autumn, 1978), p. 482.

¹²³ Bradshaw, 'Sword, word and strategy in the Reformation in Ireland', p. 498.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54; Edwards, 'Beyond Reform', pp 16-21.

maintenance of law and order, particularly during Tyrone's rebellion. Seneschals were present in the King's County in particular where William Collier carried out the position from 1579-84 and we know there was also Gaelic Irish involvement in the role during this period in the form of Sir John MacCoughlan.¹²⁵ Hubert Fox also held the title of seneschal for his area in the King's County in 1591.¹²⁶ But following the government's reining in of the policy of martial law, seneschals were gradually superseded by the lieutenants of the forts. This unique post remained in operation where Warham St. Leger and George Bouchier undertook the role for their respective strongholds of Maryborough and Philipstown.¹²⁷ The duties of the general constable of the forts also regularly overlapped that of the seneschal and the lieutenants. George Harvey served as a perfect illustration of this as he was instructed to suppress 'the rebels...by martial law, death, loss of life and members and whipping...and to prosecute and invade, punish and chastise...the nations of the Moores'.¹²⁸ Admittedly, the government's decision to retain elements of martial government was inevitable considering the turbulence of the overall region. From a Tudor perspective at least, this was most likely viewed as necessary in order for the crown to retain a foothold in the two shires. In doing so, surely such a move also greatly undermined the government's aspirations for traditional English local government that maintained the Queen's peace through common law as opposed to by military force.

Yet, the evidence suggests that the midlands local government was unique in that despite containing martial elements it was also composed of traditional English administrative structures that endured right up until 1603 and fundamentally still promoted common law. The courts of

¹²⁵ Wallop to Burghley, 14 September 1583, TNA, SP 63/104/75; *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 3360, 4024, 4590.

¹²⁶ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 5568.

¹²⁷ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1575-1588*, nos 528, 652; *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 4549; Memorials for Mr. Edward Norris, 6 August 1584, TNA, SP 63/111/43; Book of the Garrisons, 31 March 1586, TNA, SP 63/123/21.

¹²⁸ Appointment of George Harvey, *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Vol. 2, No. 16.

assize continued to be held frequently.¹²⁹ In February 1581, sessions were held at Philipstown overseen by Lord Deputy Grey whereby ‘such malefactors as were proved to have committed open spoils and outrages to the general disquiet of all those borders’, most notably Hugh O’Molloy, chieftain of his clan and an alleged ‘famous thief and traitor’ were executed.¹³⁰ In 1582, we also know that Thomas Freeman was appointed usher of the fort of Philipstown which was an official position in a law court whose duties include swearing in jurors and witnesses and keeping order at sessions.¹³¹ In addition, the gentleman Gerald Dillon was appointed as clerk of the peace, clerk of the pleas of the crown and clerk of the assizes for the two shires in 1587 which suggested that local courts sat regularly after this point as these men tended to keep records of the assizes, act as private clerks to the judges and enroll pleas.¹³² In 1588, Lord Deputy John Perrot appointed Justices of assize throughout the Pale, including the King’s County and Queen’s County who apparently did ‘much good in their circuits by the hanging of sundry malefactors, and doing of justice’.¹³³ Perrot claimed that he hanged most of the O’Mores and O’Connors by common law ‘so that there was not one of them...left to make head against her Majesty’. In January 1589, Chief Justice Robert Gardiner called for the assize circuits to continue throughout the country.¹³⁴ This was all part of the Tudor government’s plan for ‘countries of late years...reduced into shires’ to have yearly appointments of sheriffs, justices of assize and justices of the peace who would govern these territories ‘according to the course of common law’

¹²⁹ This is based on the assumption that the courts of assize were held at least yearly only disrupted by extraordinary circumstances such as widespread rebellion and disorder. See J.S. Cockburn, *A History of English assizes, 1558-1714* (Cambridge, 1972), pp 23-5.

¹³⁰ Lord Grey to the Lord Treasurer, 27 February 1580, HMC, *Salisbury*, p. 189.

¹³¹ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 4325.

¹³² *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 5141; Cockburn, *A History of English assizes, 1558-1714*, pp 70-1.

¹³³ A brief declaration of part of the services done to your Majesty by Sir John Perrot, 14 December 1588, TNA, SP 63/139/7.

¹³⁴ A memorial for Ireland delivered by Justice Gardener, 4 January 1589, TNA, SP 63/150/5.

and the recall of seneschals and other elements of martial government.¹³⁵ In 1593, Anthony St. Leger, Master of the Rolls, oversaw the circuits in the midlands where he noted ‘very good appearance, and the people...very willing, though yet very ignorant, to embrace justice and obedient to the laws, and therefore hope that in convenient time there will be planted in them a reverend regard of their duties and obedience to Her Majesty and her laws’.¹³⁶ Although we know that it was 1603/4 before sessions resumed on a regular basis in the Queen’s County and King’s County, the evidence already presented highlighted that these sessions were certainly in operation during the 1580s if not during the tumultuous years of the Nine Years’ War.¹³⁷

JPs were also a notable feature in the two shires.¹³⁸ The first reference to Justices appeared in 1580 when various members of the Privy Council, most notably Henry Cowley, were commissioned to be ‘justices, commissioners and keepers of the peace’.¹³⁹ Their instructions were straightforward and did not stray far from the ones issued in 1563. The Justices were expected to make terms with any rebels they encountered, to raise and lead the Queen’s forces when called upon and to punish any renegades with fire and sword.¹⁴⁰ It can be concluded therefore, that in Queen’s County and King’s County, the primary role of the JP, even in times of war and turbulence, was to ensure that the Queen’s peace and general law and order was maintained in the absence of the Lord Deputy in addition to carrying out the general muster and the censing of the inhabitants of the two territories for the overall defence of their respective shire.¹⁴¹ Although Cowley was a resident of the King’s County, Nicholas Malby was not and as Lord President of

¹³⁵ Articles containing sundry things to be considered of by the Lord Deputy and Council in Ireland, and to be answered to Her Majesty, 1592, TNA, SP 63/164/49.1.

¹³⁶ Sir Anthony St. Leger to Burghley, August 1593, TNA, SP 63/171/29.

¹³⁷ Concordatums from 3 February 1604 until 1 May 1605, 1 May 1605, TNA, SP 63/217/129.

¹³⁸ Appendix 1.

¹³⁹ *Fiantis Ire. Eliz.*, no. 3657

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, nos 3750, 4067.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, no. 6054.

Connaught was arguably more concerned with events in the west throughout the year instead of the midlands shire.¹⁴² Similarly, Sir Lucas Dillon, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, Adam Loftus, Archbishop of Dublin and Sir Henry Wallop, Vice Treasurer, soon to be joint Lord Justices of Ireland, were all commissioned to serve as JPs in 1581 yet none of them were resident gentry there.¹⁴³ This was quite normal to have such leading judges and nobles heading the commission, but resident gentry did most of the actual work. This trend continued for the remainder of the 1580s up until the outbreak of Tyrone's rebellion with fluctuating appointments of non-resident JPs including Adam Loftus, Robert Dillon, Edward Waterhouse, Henry Wallop, Edward FitzSimon, Thomas FitzWilliams, Thomas Le Strange, Geoffrey Fenton and William Sarsfield among others.¹⁴⁴ Yet we also know that during the Nine Years' War in particular, resident gentry such as Sir Edward Moore, Sir George Bouchier and Sir Warham St. Leger were active JPs.¹⁴⁵ Of this latter group of knights, we know that Bouchier held only minor lands in the King's County in MacCoughlan territory worth an annual rent of just £3.¹⁴⁶

The evidence also suggests that sheriffs were appointed regularly in the King's County. Henry Warren served in 1582, George Cowley, son of the former sheriff and JP, Henry Cowley, was appointed in 1583, Edward Herbert in 1585, Warren again in 1587, the Gaelic government loyalist Terence O'Dempsey in 1591, Henry Duke in 1594 and Cowley for the years 1598 and 1599.¹⁴⁷ Of this group of leading gentry, their landed income in the shire was relatively small. Henry Duke, who settled in the area in the original land grants under Elizabeth in 1562, possessed Clonmore and

¹⁴² Sir Nicholas Malby to Walsingham, 4 January 1580, TNA, SP 63/71/5; Same to Walsingham, 20 July 1580, TNA, SP 63/74/50; Same to Walsingham, 17 November 1580, TNA, SP 63/78/41.

¹⁴³ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.* no. 3750.

¹⁴⁴ These gentleman mainly resided in Dublin, Meath and Wexford. See *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 3750, 4067, 4498, 4750, 4929, 5342, 5353, 5387.

¹⁴⁵ See Appendix 1.

¹⁴⁶ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 1680.

¹⁴⁷ Appendix 1.

Kiltown which were worth a mere 48s. per annum in rental value.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, Edward Herbert's landed base at Monasteroris, including a former house of friars, two castles and twenty cottages was worth just £5 12s.¹⁴⁹ George Cowley fared somewhat better following the inheritance of his father's estates and additional monastic land in O'Molloy territory at Kilcormac, which brought the annual rental value of his landed property to £18.¹⁵⁰ This was significant; as was the reference to MacCoughlan's territory as it highlights that Gaelic Irish areas were still distinguished in what was officially shire ground.

In the Queen's County, we know of just two sheriffs who served during this period, John Barnes in 1581 and Alexander Cosby in 1587.¹⁵¹ We also know that there was a sheriff in 1594 and 1597 although their identities are unclear.¹⁵² Of the two men we know, Alexander Cosby held a total of 1385 acres of arable and pastureland worth an annual revenue of over £70.¹⁵³ John Barnes by direct contrast, had estates worth a mere 49s..¹⁵⁴ Of the eight sheriffs whose titles we are aware of, seven were described as gentlemen and one as a knight.¹⁵⁵ Overall, the political leadership of the region during this period lay with a group of just over twelve gentry and leading landowners of varying degrees of wealth and landed income.

On paper at least, English local government operated right up until 1603. As highlighted, there was a regular turnover of JPs and sheriffs and courts of assize operated on a frequent enough basis. But how did this unique form of county government compare by 1603 with that of similar shires established in Gaelic dominated territories? Did they share any similar characteristics or did they all follow a similar model or framework to one another?

¹⁴⁸ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 476.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 2519.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, nos 258, 3572.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Cal. Carew MSS, 1589-1600*, no. 140; Sir Ralph Lane to Sir Robert Cecil, 8 December 1597, TNA, SP 63/201/97.

¹⁵³ Estimate of Mr. Cosby's lands in the Queen's County, 17 July 1589, TNA, SP 63/145/69; *Cal. pat. rolls, Ire.*, p. 268; *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 1622-3, 5824-5, 5827, 6064.

¹⁵⁴ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 1697.

¹⁵⁵ Appendix 1.

Similar to Galway, Cavan was one of counties created by the Tudor government post 1569. Much like the Queen's County and the King's County, Cavan was also carved out of Gaelic lordships whose native populations had little experience of English methods of governance.¹⁵⁶ However, crucially similar to the Welsh model, the O'Reilly lordship, close to the border and the English Pale county of Meath, actively sought the shiring of their lordship by Elizabeth's reign and interacted frequently with the administration.¹⁵⁷ The O'Reillys were the only Gaelic lordship of sixteenth century Ireland to foster 'the emergence of an urban centre within its borders'.¹⁵⁸ Once again, similar to in Wales, with the ruling elite having embraced English culture and due to its strategic location between Ulster and the Pale, Cavan offered a doorstep from which the Tudor government could extend royal authority throughout the north of the country. Maginn asserts that English intervention in the O'Reilly lordship, much like it had been in the O'More and O'Connor lordships, was somewhat of an experiment to see if English shire government would take hold there and if not, the administration would know it would stand little chance of advancing their authority throughout the Gaelic heartlands of the north and Lower Connaught.¹⁵⁹

Accordingly, Cavan was officially shired in August 1579. During Sussex's reign, the Lord Lieutenant felt that the O'Reilly lordship was unique for a Gaelic dominated territory and as such, could be governed in a different manner to the O'More and O'Connor lordships. This was due to the fact, in Sussex's eyes, that the O'Reilly lordship was on the border of the Pale and its Gaelic elite had already proven themselves open to assimilation and English style government. Crucially, the territories of Leix and Offaly also

¹⁵⁶ Maginn, 'Elizabethan Cavan', p. 69

¹⁵⁷ Christopher Maginn, 'The limitations of Tudor reform: the policy of "surrender and regrant" and the O'Rourkes', *Breifne*, Vol. 43 (2007), pp 430–1; Ciaran Parker, 'Cavan: A Medieval Border Area', in Raymond Gillespie (ed.), *Cavan: Essays on the History of An Irish County* (Kildare, 2004), p. 49; Maginn, 'Elizabethan Cavan', p. 69.

¹⁵⁸ Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicised Ireland in the Middle Ages*, p. 140; Maginn, 'Elizabethan Cavan', p. 69.

¹⁵⁹ Maginn, 'Elizabethan Cavan', p. 70.

lay on the border of the Pale but obviously, in Sussex's view, had not shown a similar willingness to embrace English royal authority. The O'Reilly region was to be excluded from provincial government and instead ruled as an extension of the English Pale.¹⁶⁰ The evidence certainly does suggest that the clan genuinely sought for their territory to be made shire ground.¹⁶¹ Yet it was at least another four years before the first example of traditional English local government was established in Cavan in the form of the Clerk of Crown and peace. Richard Bellewe, a gentleman from Meath, similar to Peter Dormer from Kilkenny who was appointed to the same position for the Queen's County in 1568, was an outsider.¹⁶² As was Patrick More, another Meath gentleman that succeeded Bellewe in November 1583.¹⁶³ Christopher Maginn argues that the Tudor Government made a conscious decision to appoint outsiders to positions within Cavan's local government and intentionally excluded members of the O'Reilly clan from holding an office there. In December 1584, Henry Duke, who was also a gentleman that hailed from Meath, was appointed sheriff of the county.¹⁶⁴ This was in direct opposition to the Welsh model and arguably, if the O'Reillys genuinely embraced assimilation with the government as much as they alleged, Cavan would have been the ideal county to implement such a framework. But for the most part, like the midlands, Gaelic natives were largely excluded from holding prominent positions within their respective local government. Maginn suggests that the government intentionally fragmented the O'Reilly lordship, similar to what they did with the O'Mores and O'Connors ensuring, whether intentional or otherwise, that they could never dominate county government to any significant degree.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, in contrast to the midlands shires, Cavan was never committed

¹⁶⁰ *Cal. Carew MSS., 1515-1575*, no. 236; Cunningham, 'The Anglicisation East Breifne', p. 61; Maginn, 'Elizabethan Cavan', p. 72.

¹⁶¹ Lord Justice Drury to Walsingham, 26 June 1579, TNA, SP 63/67/12; Maginn, 'Elizabethan Cavan', p. 73.

¹⁶² *Fiants Ire., Eliz.*, no. 4185; Maginn, 'Elizabethan Cavan', p. 74. Also see chapter 2, p. 92.

¹⁶³ *Fiants Ire., Eliz.*, no. 4259; Maginn, 'Elizabethan Cavan', p. 75.

¹⁶⁴ *Fiants Ire., Eliz.*, nos 4259, 4556; Maginn, 'Elizabethan Cavan', pp 75-6.

¹⁶⁵ Maginn, *William Cecil*, p. 194; Chapter 6.

to a martial government and so positions such as the seneschal were not present there.¹⁶⁶

Instead, the O'Reillys were reduced to less prominent roles such as assisting successive sheriffs in taking the muster and array of the inhabitants of the county.¹⁶⁷ Eamonn and Philip O'Reilly were notable exceptions who were elected knights of the Shire, travelling to Dublin to represent Cavan in the House of Commons.¹⁶⁸ The trend of appointing outsiders to the position of sheriff continued in 1589 when Edward Herbert, formerly of the King's County, was appointed to the role.¹⁶⁹ Burghley alleged that this caused real tension between the administration and the O'Reillys and greatly damaged relations between the two parties.¹⁷⁰ In direct contrast, the majority of English local government officers in the midlands, with the exception of the Justices of the Peace, were resident gentry. There was no similar correspondence to suggest that the main clans of the Queen's County and King's County were similarly disgruntled with being excluded from a position within the local government. Instead, elements of the midlands clans seemed more concerned with grants of land than status.¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, the Tudor government's decision to largely exclude the O'Reillys from holding positions in Cavan was perplexing as the clan were mostly deemed 'obedient subjects'.¹⁷²

Another factor that unquestionably bred further contempt toward English government in Cavan, much like in the midlands, was the execution of martial law throughout the region.¹⁷³ According to Maginn, this had also greatly restricted the growth of common law in the county. This was not the case in the Queen's County and King's County which, as highlighted, saw

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Fiants Ire., Eliz.*, no. 5130; Maginn, 'Elizabethan Cavan', p. 77.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Fiants, Ire. Eliz.*, no. 5361; Maginn, 'Elizabethan Cavan', p. 78.

¹⁷⁰ Observation of matters seeming to be out of order in Ireland, 3 December 1596, *CSPI, 1596-7*, p. 181; Maginn, 'Elizabethan Cavan', pp 78-9.

¹⁷¹ See chapter 6.

¹⁷² Observation of matters seeming to be out of order in Ireland, 3 December 1596, *CSPI, 1596-7*, p. 181.

¹⁷³ Draft Proclamation to restrain martial law in Ireland, 4 January 1589-90, TNA, SP 63/150/4; Maginn, 'Elizabethan Cavan', pp 79-80.

extensive execution of martial law during the 1580s and 90s but also witnessed the continued promotion of English common law which was by no means restricted. The outbreak of the Nine Years' War further exacerbated matters in the northern shire where Hugh O'Neill sought to restore authority to the chieftain of the O'Reilly clan in an attempt to undermine the English government's position there and slow down the advance of royal authority further into Ulster. Accordingly, Philip O'Reilly, former knight of the shire, declared himself the O'Reilly and reinstated tansitry and outlawed English common law.¹⁷⁴

By 1599, most of Cavan was in rebel hands but the appointment of a clerk of the crown and peace suggests that English local government and common law continued to function much like it did in the midlands. Maginn argues that this proved that the Tudor government was committed to the continuance of English common law even in the most war ravaged shires.¹⁷⁵ In Cavan, in terms of defence, it appears that the role of the sheriff quickly became supplanted and the position was allowed to remain vacant.¹⁷⁶ This was in direct contrast to the midlands where sheriffs continued to play a prominent role in the defence of the region and were appointed on a regular basis.

Maginn concludes that the government's mistakes in Cavan and the exclusion of its natives from prominent positions in its local government within the framework of the Welsh model, backfired and led to a breakdown in Gaelic-government relations. Disgruntled and disillusioned, this led elements of the O'Reilly clan into open rebellion with the crown. Therefore, before English administrative structures could properly take hold there, the total destruction and supplantation of the O'Reilly clan was necessary.¹⁷⁷ This was also the case with the O'More and O'Connor clans as the

¹⁷⁴ Philip O'Reilly to Thomas Jones, 4 June 1595, TNA, SP 63/180/10; Lord Deputy to the Privy Council, 29 June 1596, TNA, SP 63/190/44; Cunningham, 'The Anglicisation of East Breifne', p. 69; Maginn, 'Elizabethan Cavan', pp 80-1.

¹⁷⁵ Maginn, 'Elizabethan Cavan', pp 81-2.

¹⁷⁶ *Fiants, Ire., Eliz.*, no. 6164

¹⁷⁷ Maginn, 'Elizabethan Cavan', p. 84.

administration showed little interest in offering them prominent positions within the county government.

1580s Galway saw the arrival of Sir John Perrot as lord deputy and Sir Richard Bingham as President of Connaught. Crucially, from the outset, Bingham set about curtailing some of the abuses committed by sheriffs in order to protect the county's inhabitants against extortion.¹⁷⁸ Perrot also set about introducing English administrative structures such as JPs, escheators, coroners and constables to the shire.¹⁷⁹ As a result, by 1585, County Galway was administratively functioning quite well. The county was represented in the House of Commons by two knights of the shire in the form of Thomas le Strange and Francis Shane with the Earl of Clanrickard and Lord Bermingham of Athenry taking their seats in the House of Lords.¹⁸⁰ By 1589 and similar to Cavan and the midlands, sheriffs were twice as likely to have been New English instead of Old English and certainly Gaelic Irish. This was significant turnaround, as earlier during the 1560s and 70s, we saw that the natives were included to some extent in Galway's local government.¹⁸¹ Yet, much like in the midlands and in Cavan, Galway's Gaelic natives were instead mainly demoted to minor roles in the local administration. In the case of the Connaught shire, this was in the form as acting bailiffs.¹⁸² These New English officials also supposedly took advantage of their position there to enhance their own material gain.¹⁸³ By 1590, Galway was a fully functioning administrative unit of English local government with Gaelic opposition largely non-existent. Government Loyalists such as the O'Kellys were deemed her 'Majesties best subjects

¹⁷⁸ Memo for Edward Norris, 6 August 1584, TNA, SP 63 / 111 /43; Perrot's declaration of his services as lord deputy, 14 December 1588, TNA, SP 63/139/7; Declaration of Perrot's housekeeping, 14 December 1588, TNA, SP 63/139/9; Mannion, 'Elizabethan Galway', p. 74.

¹⁷⁹ Perrot's letter to the justices of peace, 18 December 1584, TNA, SP 63/113/29; Perrot's declaration of his services as lord deputy, 14 December 1588, TNA, SP 63/139/7; Mannion, 'Elizabethan Galway', p. 74.

¹⁸⁰ Mannion, 'Elizabethan Galway', p. 75.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*; Also see Chapter 2, p. 84.

¹⁸² Mannion, 'Elizabethan Galway', p. 78.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

within the province'.¹⁸⁴ Although elements of the O'Flahertys, O'Kellys and O'Maddens all rose in revolt during the Nine Years' War, many remained loyal to the crown.¹⁸⁵ Significantly, much like the Queen's County and King's County, despite the turbulent effect of the Nine Years' War, sheriffs continued to be appointed in Galway which highlighted the administration's commitment to the continuance of English common law, sessions and general shire government in the three shires.¹⁸⁶

So how unique really was the local government that emerged in the Queen's County and King's County by 1603? Well we know that in neighbouring lordships such as that of the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles, the county government formed there in the late 1570s contained seneschals but no officers of common law such as the sheriff.¹⁸⁷ Cavan on the other hand had sheriffs but did not have any seneschals proving that the local government of the Queen's County and King's County was certainly unique.¹⁸⁸ Not only did it have seneschals and sheriffs but also distinct offices such as lieutenants of the forts, a position not present in any other county it would seem.

In conclusion, by 1603, the local government of the midlands had endured and survived yet another countrywide revolt. The land was unquestionably detrimentally altered following years of incessant warfare and destruction. Furthermore, the government's attempts to stem the tide of the Gaelic onslaught placed a substantial financial strain on the exchequer and the

¹⁸⁴ Bingham to Burghley, 12 December 1586, TNA, SP 63/127/26; Mannion, 'Elizabethan Galway', p. 78.

¹⁸⁵ The state of Connaught, 14 January 1597, TNA, SP 63/197/21; The state of Connaught, 24 March 1597, TNA, SP 63/198/38; Mannion, 'Elizabethan Galway', p. 79.

¹⁸⁶ Bingham to Burghley, 11 June 1596, TNA, SP 63/190/17; Payments and disbursements to government officers, 18 January 1597, TNA, SP 63/197/33.I; Mannion, 'Elizabethan Galway', p. 80.

¹⁸⁷ Maginn, *William Cecil*, p. 207.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

surrounding Pale inhabitants.¹⁸⁹ Lord Justices Loftus and Gardner summed up the reality of the situation in August 1598:

The Leinster rebels being nevertheless exceedingly increased, and daily burning, preying, and spoiling the country' have 'already possessed themselves of all the Queen's County...some three or four castles at the most excepted, which cannot long hold out. There they possess the lands so dearly bought by Her Majesty and her predecessors...to the great discomfort of all our nation remaining in this wretched country. The like stir have they already begun in Offaly, called the King's County, and the like end, in all likelihood, will they make there.¹⁹⁰

Nonetheless, the Tudor government recovered the two territories by early 1600 and found them and their strongholds mostly abandoned and left 'desolate by the inhabitants'.¹⁹¹ In fact, Ormond alleged that in Maryborough, 'many of the English were driven to abandon the place' and there remained 'no house or tenement there without the fort'.¹⁹² The King's County it would seem fared little better.¹⁹³ To complicate matters, it was estimated by September 1601 that the repair of Maryborough and Philipstown alone cost the exchequer at least £750.¹⁹⁴ Lord Lieutenant Mountjoy was also frustrated that the administration was reluctant to reduce the garrisons in the two shires, as most of the land still remained abandoned and uninhabited.¹⁹⁵ Any settlers who remained were financially crippled from the war and suddenly found themselves in the possession of

¹⁸⁹ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1575-1588*, no. 587; Observations of matters seeming to be out of order in Ireland, 3 December 1596, TNA, SP 63/196/2; Robert Newcomen, Commissary for Leinster, 30 June 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/136; The Lords Justices Loftus and Gardener to the Privy Council, 23 November 1598, TNA, SP 63/202/168.

¹⁹⁰ The Lords Justices Loftus and Gardener to the Privy Council, 17 August 1598, TNA, SP 63/202/24.

¹⁹¹ Patrick Plunkett to Sir Robert Cecil, November 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/46; John King to Sir George Carey, 9 February 1601, TNA, SP 63/208/43.

¹⁹² Thomas, Earl of Ormond and Ossory to Secretary Cecil, 2 December 1601, TNA, SP 63/209/213.

¹⁹³ Document endorsed my Lord Mountjoy's discourse concerning Ireland, March 1601, TNA, SP 63/208/122.

¹⁹⁴ The Lord Deputy to the English Privy Council, 3 September 1601, TNA, SP 63/209/51.

¹⁹⁵ The Lord Deputy Mountjoy to the Privy Council, 1 May 1601, TNA, SP 63/208/35.

Chapter 4

impossibly large tracts of abandoned land.¹⁹⁶ But local government remained firmly intact. The Queen's County and King's County were fully functioning administrative units of English local government but crucially, were far from traditional. Instead, by the conclusion of the period under review a hybrid framework of Tudor county government had emerged in the midlands that blended common law and martial law. It reinforced the idea that the administration always viewed coercion as a necessary means of spreading royal authority throughout Ireland, particularly within its most turbulent sectors. Ultimately, the Tudors had learned invaluable lessons from the midlands colonial experiment and the Leix-Offaly model stood as an example of how other Gaelic dominated territories could be brought to a similar submission and how English administrative structures could be implemented in such volatile environments.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

Chapter 5

Defending the marches of the midlands

Without question, peace was precarious in the Queen's County and King's County between 1547 and 1603. The Tudor administration experienced constant challenges in establishing traditional English local government due to the persistent opposition and rebellions of the dispossessed O'Mores and O'Connors. When settler societies were finally established in the midlands, they were highly militarised and ever organised for war and the repulsion of Gaelic raids.¹ The government's goal for the region, as highlighted in Chapters 1-4, was to safeguard the Pale and gradually advance social and political reform as well as extend English royal authority.² In order to achieve this aim, the captains, settlers who assumed positions within the county government, were instructed to favour the lordships that were sympathetic towards these aims in addition to holding local informal judicial sessions that dispensed common law.³ But defence remained paramount and coercion was seen as the essential backbone of reform. The administration was aware that if it was to stand any chance of introducing English administrative structures and local government to the two shires, the maintenance of peace and law and order was imperative. Captains were expected to defend and hold on to government held positions and punish any rebels who threatened the existing balance of power.⁴ This chapter assesses whether or not these captains pursued and actually achieved the goals set out for them by the administration from 1547-1603.

¹ Sussex himself referred to the two regions by 1560 as border shires. Furthermore, the historian D.G.White claims that by 1570, the plantation resembled a rural society organised for defence against the Queen's enemies. See Notes by Sussex, May 1560, 63/2/20; White, 'Tudor plantations in Ireland to 1571', p. 80; *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 543, 2349, 3601, 3657; Ellis, *Ireland in the age of the Tudors*, p. 177.

² Ciaran Brady 'The Captains' games', p. 153.

³ Memorandum by Cecil, 19 August 1561, TNA, SP 63/4/37; Instructions for Sir Henry Sidney, 5 October 1565, TNA, SP 63/15/4; Brady 'The Captains' games', p. 153.

⁴ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 543, 2349, 3601, 3657; Brady 'The Captains' games', p. 139.

Prior to the official shiring of Leix and Offaly, the burden of defence fell to the captains of the martial government, the lieutenants of Forts Protector and Governor with the co-operation and assistance of the leading landowners. William St. Loe was the first such lieutenant of the midlands in 1548.⁵ St. Loe was born into a wealthy English family in Somerset in c.1520.⁶ His father, Sir John St. Loe, a proficient soldier served in Ireland during Silken Thomas' rebellion 1534-35 and was appointed marshal of the King's unruly army there on the 30 April 1535.⁷ Upon his appointment, William quickly gathered significant praise and recognition from the government for his actions against the remnants of Brian and Cahir Rua O'Connor's rebellion.⁸ According to the then Lord Deputy, Sir Edward Bellingham, William was 'highly responsible and efficient' in his role and execution of his duties.⁹ This was crucial for the government, which wanted the suppression of the midlands insurrection to serve as 'a terrible example to cause all others beware how they did attempt the like'.¹⁰ In early January 1549, William was commended for bringing peace to the Leix countryside.¹¹ According to Henry Wise, one of St. Loe's subordinate captains in Fort Protector, 'disturbances to the peace' were rare and swiftly dealt with and robberies were practically non-existent in the surrounding towns or countryside. St. Loe managed to maintain order and discipline amongst his troops by ensuring that the soldiers had sufficient provisions, thus avoiding any mutinies, and making sure that any 'drunkenness or

⁵ Appendix 3.

⁶ Henry Southern & Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas, 'Memoirs of Sir William St. Loe', *The Retrospective Review, and Historical and Antiquarian Magazine*, ii (No. 2; 1828), p. 315.

⁷ Ireland, 1535, TNA, SP 60/2/449; *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-1574*, no. 57; *L & P. Hen. VIII*, viii, no. 621.

⁸ Patrick Sherlock to the Lord Deputy, August 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/74; Lord Deputy Bellingham to Mr. Cusack, August 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/76; Lord Deputy Bellingham to the Privy Council, August 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/84.

⁹ Lord Deputy Bellingham to the Privy Council, August 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/84.

¹⁰ John Roche Dasent (ed.), *Acts of the Privy Council, 1542-47, Vol. 2*, (London, 1890), p. 496.

¹¹ Henry Wise and John Moorton to Lord Deputy Bellingham, 6 January 1549, TNA, SP 61/2/4.

misdemeanours among the officers' was promptly rectified. In due consideration of his stellar service, St. Loe was appointed as a Privy Councillor in 1548 and granted a knighthood in 1549.¹²

His ability to maintain law and order in the area was no doubt facilitated by the funds he was allocated and the number of troops under his command. Over a seventeen-month period, St. Loe was paid over £2,500 for his lieutenancy.¹³ He also had over 250 men under his command at Fort Protector, which may have included an additional 100 horsemen.¹⁴ The fundamental reason why St. Loe was so well paid for his role and had such a large military retinue at his disposal was a result of the so-called "Great Tudor Debasement" of 1542-51. This was a financial experiment carried out by the Tudor crown to bring in additional revenue by reducing the weight and fineness of silver and gold coins and replacing them with cheaper metals including copper making it inexpensive to create new currency.¹⁵ As a result, the government was able to generate significant additional revenue and profit but in doing so, the value of the English coin itself gradually disintegrated.¹⁶ Considering the level of success St. Loe achieved within the midlands, in such a short period of time, it was unsurprising that he was eventually reassigned to more prominent positions, departing Leix and Offaly in 1549 in order to serve as one of Princess Elizabeth's chief attendants.¹⁷ Although his lieutenancy in the midlands was brief, there can be no question that his tenure was successful. His commitment and dedication to his job ensured Forts Protector and Governor survived their initial years. In fact, by the time of his departure, the two

¹² Lord Deputy Bellingham to the Mayor of Dublin, 16 November 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/126; Meeting, 31 January 1549, TNA, PC 2/2/442.

¹³ Account of the vice-treasurer, 27 May 1548-19 December 1549, TNA, SP 65/5/49.

¹⁴ Lord Deputy Bellingham to the Privy Council, August 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/84; Account of the vice-treasurer, 27 May 1548-19 December 1549, TNA, SP 65/5/49.

¹⁵ C.E. Challis, 'The debasement of the coinage, 1542-1551', *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Winter, 1967) pp 441-3.

¹⁶ Challis, 'The debasement of the coinage, 1542-1551', p. 447.

¹⁷ Henry Wise and John Moorton to the Lord Deputy Bellingham, 6 January 1549, TNA, SP 61/2/4; Sir John Bourne to Secretary Petre, 25 February 1554, TNA, SP 11/3/34.

fortifications had been transformed into the most formidable crown strongholds of their respective territories. St. Loe also ensured these fortifications were well provisioned and its captains were both professional and disciplined. Crucially, St. Loe managed to keep the O'Mores and O'Connors in check, which, in turn, ensured that peace, and law and order prevailed. This provided the government the breathing space it needed to establish the preliminary stages of the Leix-Offaly plantation.

For all his success, there was also evidence that St. Loe condoned excessive violence against the Gaelic natives of the region and was opposed to their assimilation within the Tudor state. His personal letters highlighted a level of disdain, wariness and distrust towards them and emphasised his lack of patience for their unruly behaviour. In a letter to Sir William Brabazon, St. Loe referred to the Gaelic Irish in the midlands as 'no better than traitors unto the King's majesty, in disobeying your commandments...suffering thereby his highness' countries and forts willfully to be cast away...what a key and stay should be lost if these untrue dissemblers and wavering Irishmen revolt'.¹⁸ St Loe's solution was unforgiving and he proposed that it was 'better to give them a sudden scourging plague', than await their inevitable revolt.¹⁹ These statements highlighted a darker and more violent side to St. Loe's character and emphasised his level of resentment towards clans such as the O'Mores and O'Connors. However, his attitude was quite typical of broader English sentiment at the time. As outlined in the Introduction, most Englishmen of the Tudor period were convinced of the superiority of English society over Gaelic Irish society with the former deemed civil and the latter as savage.²⁰ For New English arrivals such as St. Loe and Brabazon, it was crucial that they were the ones to shape the landscape and its native inhabitants, once conquered, in their own image. This group of individuals, that came to dominate the Irish government particularly during Elizabeth's reign, had little regard or respect for the Gaelic Irish and their customs, which they deemed to be barbaric and in

¹⁸ Southern & Nicolas, 'Memoirs of Sir William St. Loe', p. 316.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Maginn, *William Cecil*, p. 142; See Introduction, pp 2-8 in particular.

need of reform.²¹ Montaña argues that the government's decision to appoint deputies such as William Skeffington, Leonard Grey and William Brabazon in the 1530s and 40s serves as proof that Cromwell and his government were gradually adhering to more coercive methods in Ireland. In fact, a hard-line approach was arguably set with the execution of the gunners at Maynooth Castle in spring 1535, which was followed by Brabazon, the treasurer at war's slaughter of over one hundred FitzGerald gallowglass the same month.²² In fact, Brabazon sent a very clear message to the Gaelic Irish upon taking office with his subsequent beheading of 25 gunners to ring in the New Year.²³ A trend was certainly set during Silken Thomas' rebellion regarding the treatment of Gaelic Irish prisoners of war. In August 1536, Lord Deputy Grey put the garrison of the O'Brien castle of Carrigogunnel to death (46 men, 17 killed in the government assault) following their surrender having warned them that if a single crown soldier was killed in the assault (30 were killed), then Grey would put the entire garrison to death.²⁴ Furthermore, in June 1537, the ward of Bracklin Castle in Offaly, an O'Connor stronghold, was also put to the sword for resisting the government siege.²⁵ From the time of Brabazon's appointment as Lord Justice, roughly around the time of St. Loe's tenure in the midlands, New English military men encouraged Cromwell and the government to violently subdue the enemies of the King and redistribute and repopulate their lands with civilised Englishmen.²⁶ According to Montaña, by 1547, the process of conciliation was seen as a failed policy of a previous regime. As a result, from that point onwards, more aggressive and coercive policies of future government officials in Ireland started to view the Gaelic Irish, their customs and cultural differences as a means of sustained resistance to

²¹ Montaña, *The roots of English colonialism*, p. 333.

²² Lord Deputy Skeffington and Council to the King, 26 March 1535, TNA, SP 60/2/39.

²³ Montaña, *The roots of English colonialism*, pp 335-6

²⁴ Council of Ireland to Cromwell, 22 August 1536, TNA, SP 60/3/67; Montaña, *The roots of English colonialism*, p. 336.

²⁵ Gray and Brabazon to Cromwell, 11 June 1537, TNA, SP 60/4/26; Montaña, *The roots of English colonialism*, p. 336.

²⁶ Brabazon to Cromwell, 10 September 1535, TNA, SP 60/2/62.

government policies.²⁷ A mindset had firmly emerged by the late 1540s that the barbarous ways of Ireland's natives had contributed to a rejection of civility.²⁸ By Edward VI's accession, this culminated in a significant shift in government policy away from assimilation towards a militarised approach that sought to destroy the crown's Gaelic Irish enemies and in turn, their barbarous culture.²⁹

Despite St. Loe's sentiments, which were quite common for the time, he arguably achieved what the Tudor government expected of their captains in the midlands. But, crucially, for every dutiful officer present in Leix and Offaly prior to their shiring, there were several examples of grossly ineffective crown servants. John Thomas for instance, another English settler in Leix, served as constable of Ballyadams castle in 1549 for which he was paid an impressive annual salary of £68.³⁰ Ballyadams was a key strategic government stronghold as it contained the region's main gaol.³¹ Although Fort Protector also had a gaol, it was quite small and incapable of holding more than three prisoners at any one time.³² John Thomas eventually advanced within the administration to be appointed Chief Remembrancer of the Exchequer by September 1552 at which time he was granted extensive estates in Wexford, which included vast amounts of monastic land and the rights to all mines within the territories.³³ In 1556, he put his name forward for permanent settlement in Leix.³⁴ Thomas was an eager land expansionist who pursued financial gain throughout his career. So much so that in a song composed by anti-cess advocates in Dublin

²⁷ Montañó, *The roots of English colonialism*, pp 337-8.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 338.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 342-3.

³⁰ *Fiants Ire. Edward VI*, no. 403; Account of the vice-treasurer, 27 May 1548-19 December 1549, TNA, SP 65/5/49; Again, his high salary was most likely due to the additional revenue available to the exchequer due to the debasement of coinage.

³¹ Anthony Colcloght to Lord Deputy Bellingham, 6 January 1549, TNA, SP 61/2/5.

³² Henry Wise and John Morton to Lord Deputy Bellingham, 6 January 1549, TNA, SP 61/2/4.

³³ Lease to Tintern abbey to Thomas Wood, 10 September 1552, TNA, SP 61/4/60.

³⁴ The consignment of Leix, 1556, TNA, SP 62/1/21.

during the 1569 parliament, Thomas was referred to as ‘the rankest knave and vilest briber, extortioner and bloodsucker’.³⁵ In addition, the advocates alleged that John Thomas embezzled over £10,000 from the ‘Queen and her poor subjects’ in his lifetime.³⁶ If what his critics said was true, Thomas was the first notable example of a negligent crown captain in the midlands during the period under review.

Two known officers succeeded St. Loe: Henry Wise, and Patrick Sherlock. Wise and Sherlock served under St. Loe whilst he was acting lieutenant of Forts Protector and Governor from 1548-1549, leading bands of 100 arquebusiers during Brian and Cahir Rua O’Connor’s rebellion. For their seventeen-month service, the two men were handsomely rewarded with a combined sum of over £1,700.³⁷ Little or nothing is known of Sherlock’s activities in Offaly during his brief tenure but we know a great deal more about Henry Wise. Born into a prominent Old English Waterford family, Wise succeeded St. Loe as Fort Protector’s captain in 1549 and retained his position until 1552.³⁸ But from the outset, his tenure was marred by allegations of gross negligence and corruption. Lord Deputy Bellingham accused Wise of ‘dereliction of duty and perpetration of crimes’ during an incident in December 1548.³⁹ Bellingham proclaimed that Wise permitted ‘women of the country’ to enter the stronghold and commit ‘dishonesty’ over the Christmas period which resulted in ‘wantonness or persuasions of lightness’ within the fort. As a result of Wise’s careless actions, according to the Lord Deputy at least, watches and patrols were neglected and scuffles broke out between soldiers that resulted in ‘horsemen’s houses’ being damaged.⁴⁰ Yet these allegations do not seem to have damaged Wise’s career to any great extent as he retained his position for another three years.

³⁵ Bill against John Thomas, 30 November 1571, TNA, SP 63/35/192.1; Victor Treadwell, ‘The Irish Parliament of 1569-71’, *RIA*, Vol. 65 (1966/1967), pp 84-5.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Account of the vice-treasurer, 27 May 1548-19 December 1549, TNA, SP 65/5/49.

³⁸ *Fiants Ire. Edward VI*, nos 1163; *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 1209.

³⁹ Henry Wise and John Morton to Lord Deputy Bellingham, 6 January 1549, TNA, SP 61/2/4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

In fact, the following year, the government granted the captain permission to settle permanently in the area around Ballyknockan.⁴¹ Henry Wise was a vastly contrasting character to William St. Loe. Whereas St. Loe was committed, effective, dutiful and hardworking, on paper at least, in carrying out his responsibilities, Wise was accused of gross negligence of duty and general unruly behaviour which no doubt had a detrimental effect on the two forts, the maintenance of the King's peace, and the advancement of the Leix-Offaly plantation.

Following the appointment of Thomas Radcliffe, 3rd Earl of Sussex as Lord Deputy of Ireland in the 1550s, he appointed his brother Sir Henry as lieutenant of the two shires and forts in 1558.⁴² There was little difference between the roles with the lieutenant of the forts expected 'to treat with the Gaelic Irish of the surrounding areas, take pledges for the return of stolen goods, to punish all Irish men and countries aiding rebels, thieves or malefactors, and to punish such malefactors by death or otherwise in execution of martial law'.⁴³ The lieutenant was also expected to carry out these same responsibilities as well as the punishment 'with fire and sword of the Irish of the said' two shires.⁴⁴ Arguably, Sussex appointed Henry to a position of command for one reason alone. He was the Lord Deputy's kin and so could be relied upon to follow his brother's every instruction. Sussex did not even try to hide the fact that there was a very clear and disciplined chain of command in his close-knit government.⁴⁵ Henry Radcliffe and his father were the first to swear fealty to Queen Mary in 1553 for which Henry received a knighthood.⁴⁶ Upon his arrival in Ireland, Radcliffe took part in the crown expedition into Ulster in August 1557 for the expulsion of the Scots.⁴⁷ The following year, he was appointed JP for county Kildare.⁴⁸

⁴¹ *Fiants Ire. Edward VI*, no. 716.

⁴² Appendix 3.

⁴³ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 193.

⁴⁴ *Fiants Ire. Philip & Mary*, no. 228.

⁴⁵ Brady, *The chief governors*, pp 82-3.

⁴⁶ Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, p. 525.

⁴⁷ *Fiants Ire. Philip & Mary*, no. 159

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 222.

However, it was his reassignment to the midlands that created the greatest test of his character and challenge to his overall authority up to that point. Almost immediately, he faced stiff resistance. Maryborough and Philipstown were besieged soon after taking office but ultimately survived.⁴⁹ Prominent settlers such as Francis Cosby, who will be explained in greater detail shortly, assisted the lieutenant of the forts in maintaining peace. In the aforementioned siege of Maryborough in June 1558, Cosby rallied the English garrison and launched a devastating counter-attack to drive the rebels from the fort.⁵⁰ Cosby allegedly pursued these rebels to their encampment where the military veteran, according to Sussex at least, slew Richard Óg O'Connor 'with his own hands, which would not have been done by no man else' as well as at least thirty of 'the best of them'.⁵¹ In due consideration of his service, Cosby was appointed General of the kern.⁵²

In the meantime, Radcliffe largely held on to power through rigorous implementation of martial law.⁵³ His tenure was marred by allegations of favouritism and nepotism with the lieutenant receiving extensive monastic lands in Wexford, Kilkenny, Carlow, Kildare, Tipperary and Dublin.⁵⁴ The sources certainly suggested Henry Radcliffe was yet another violent and corrupt crown captain, heavily invested in his own financial gain. Nevertheless, it must be stated that the midlands' captain managed to eventually restore peace to the two shires by 1560, however fragile. This was some testament to Henry's commitment to his role in the midlands. His actions were certainly extreme though and if anything, greatly undermined Gaelic-government relations for many years to follow.

With the official shiring of Leix and Offaly in 1557, the responsibilities of defence passed to the leading landowners of the two new shires. Henry Radcliffe's return to England and absence from the region following his imprisonment for financial mismanagement, created a vacuum of power,

⁴⁹ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-74*, no. 211.

⁵⁰ Lord Deputy Sussex to Secretary Boxoll, 1558, TNA, SP 62/1/50.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² The Queen to the Lord Deputy Sussex, 13 July 1558, TNA, SP 62/1/60.

⁵³ Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', pp 222-3.

⁵⁴ *Fiantis Ire. Eliz.*, nos 292 & 293.

providing a window of opportunity for a number of ambitious adventurers and captains eager to make a name and career for themselves.⁵⁵ The previously mentioned Francis Cosby and Henry Cowley, who dwelled on the border of the King's County, were two such opportunists who were more than willing to fill Radcliffe's boots.

The Cosby family originated in Hermaston, Lincolnshire, with Francis being born sometime around 1510, the second son of John Cosby and his wife Mabel Agarde of Great Leak, Nottinghamshire.⁵⁶ His early career was predominantly spent alongside his brother Richard serving in the English army, most notably in the Low Countries during Henry VIII's reign.⁵⁷ Francis boosted his social standing at home by marrying Mary Seymour, daughter of Edward Seymour, 1st Duke of Somerset.⁵⁸ Following Protector Somerset's fall from grace in England, Francis was forced to flee the country. He chose to relocate to Ireland and grasped the opportunity to make a career for himself by undertaking the role of sheriff of County Kildare in early 1548.⁵⁹ One year later, most likely in the hope of securing a landed base for himself, Cosby appealed to the crown for permission to plant in Leix and eventually became part of the committee, which surveyed the region in the early 1550s.⁶⁰ As highlighted in chapter 2, Cosby held the positions of Justice of the Peace and sheriff of the Queen's County successively between 1561 and 1566.⁶¹

Henry Cowley on the other hand was the son of the prominent lawyer Walter Cowley and grandson of Robert Cowley, master of the rolls in

⁵⁵ See chapter 2, pp 79-80.

⁵⁶ John Burke, *History of the commoners of Great Britain and Ireland, volume III* (London, 1836), p.154; W. Fitzgerald, 'Genealogy of the Cosbys of Stradbally', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, Vol. 5 (1906-9), pp 316-17.

⁵⁷ Quinn, 'Francis Cosby', p. 21.

⁵⁸ Burke, *History of the commoners of Great Britain and Ireland*, p. 154.

⁵⁹ Francis Cosby to Lord Deputy Bellingham, 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/46; Burke, *History of the commoners of Great Britain and Ireland*, p. 154.

⁶⁰ John Brereton et al. to Lord Deputy Bellingham, 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/41; Quinn, 'Francis Cosby', p. 21.

⁶¹ See Appendix 2.

Ireland during Henry's reign.⁶² The family moved extensively throughout Ireland, mainly residing in Waterford, Dublin and Kilkenny but when Henry's father served as a member of the commission which surveyed Offaly in the early 1550s, the family were subsequently granted land there.⁶³ The Cowley heir, Henry, also began his career in Co. Kildare where he served as JP in 1558.⁶⁴ He subsequently served as deputy to Henry Radcliffe in January 1559, surveyor of victuals in 1561, and oversaw the execution of martial law in the King's County from 1559-1563 where he also served as JP and sheriff successively between 1563 and 1566.⁶⁵

From the outset Cosby and Cowley appeared to pursue the government's goals in the midlands. With regard to the extension of English rule and common law, Francis and Henry oversaw quarter sessions in their respective districts in the years 1566/7.⁶⁶ Furthermore, during the reign of Edward VI, many officials within his government viewed husbandry, or the cultivation and breeding of crops and animals as a means of extending English rule in Ireland.⁶⁷ Cosby and Cowley pursued this by the building and tilling of land in the region apparently 'in places where there had not been the like for many years'.⁶⁸ The two captains also supported the

⁶² Walter Cowley to his father, Robert Cowley, 29 April 1536, TNA, SP 60/3/20; *Fiants Ire. Edward VI*, no. 1004 reveals that Walter Cowley was dead by 1552.

⁶³ *Fiants Ire. Henry VIII*, nos 11, 151, 155; Lord Deputy St. Leger to the Privy Council, 29 October 1550, TNA, SP 61/2/64; The extent and survey of the lordship and dominion of Offaly, 10 November 1550, TNA, SP 61/2/65; Council to the Privy Council, 10 July 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/33; The King to the Lord Deputy Croft, 17 August 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/48;

⁶⁴ *Fiants Ire. Philip and Mary*, no. 222

⁶⁵ See Appendix 2.

⁶⁶ Lord Deputy Sidney to the Privy Council, 15 April 1566, TNA, SP 63/17/84; Justice Edward Fitzsimons to Lord Deputy Sidney, 26 June 1567, TNA, SP 63/21/30; Lords Justice Weston and FitzWilliam to Queen Elizabeth, 30 October 1567, TNA, SP 63/22/16.

⁶⁷ See Introduction, pp 5-7 in particular.

⁶⁸ Sir William FitzWilliam to Sir William Cecil, 22 August 1567, TNA, SP 63/21/87.

O'Carroll clan of Ely during the Butler rebellion of the late 1560s, fulfilling the government's instructions of assisting and favouring loyalist clans.⁶⁹

That being said, the captains' commitment to conciliation was fragile at best. It was conditional upon the opportunities it provided them and the continued authority of those driving the initiative.⁷⁰ In other words, their commitment depended upon how closely monitored by their superiors the two officers were: the Lord Deputy and to a lesser extent, the Queen. Cosby and Cowley were no different. When the opportunity presented itself for entrepreneurial prospects or financial gain, the two officers tended to stray from the path of reform.⁷¹ This highlighted a clear discrepancy between the goals of government and those of the men on the ground. Unquestionably, Cosby and Cowley enjoyed considerable independence and control in the midlands. For instance, the two captains received a plough day's labour from each tenant and controlled the number of Gaelic Irish permitted on their land and throughout the plantation.⁷² According to Rory Rapple, English captains interpreted their responsibilities in the most personally beneficial way and sought supremacy in their localities.⁷³ The abuses, which this level of control encouraged, were multiple.⁷⁴ This was the norm and widespread throughout the country during the Tudor period. Captains were perfectly placed to 'cheat everyone in the system, and to a greater or lesser degree they did'.⁷⁵ By 1565, Cosby had garnered significant attention from the crown over his handling of military funds.⁷⁶ Although an investigation was launched, nothing could be proven. In the case of Cowley, he and his family's acquisition of land was always controversial. Before even settling in the midlands, the Cowleys persuaded the crown to grant them land already in the possession of the settler Roger Finglas. Finglas was a captain

⁶⁹ Lords Justice Weston and FitzWilliam and Council to Edward Butler, 4 September 1568, TNA, SP 63/26/4.III.

⁷⁰ Brady 'The Captains' games', p. 156.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁷² *Fiants Eliz.*, no. 474.

⁷³ Rapple, *Martial power and Elizabethan political culture*, p. 202.

⁷⁴ Brady 'The Captains' games', p.153.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Certificate of the yearly value and estimate of the spiritualities of Ballyroan. 1565, TNA, SP 63/12/15.I.

of the kern and, according to the Irish Privy Council, he had served the King ‘very loyally in Ireland, France and elsewhere’.⁷⁷ We also know that by July 1551, he had cultivated his land in Offaly and constructed a castle there at his own expense.⁷⁸ This was not the first time the crown and the Privy Council showed a degree of favouritism towards the surveyor general and his heirs over their fellow Old English counterparts. In August 1551, Walter Cowley was granted land in Kilcloggan, County Wexford, despite it being in the possession of Richard Keating, yet another Old English captain who claimed the land had been in his family’s name since the early fifteenth century.⁷⁹ Once again, the matter was appealed but Keating’s pleas fell on deaf ears.⁸⁰ By Elizabeth’s reign, individuals such as Edmund Tremayne alleged that the midlands’ captains seemed more driven by ‘profit and authority, than to reduce the people to civility and law’.⁸¹ Montaña reinforces this argument and claims that the New English settlers in Ireland had one overriding goal: to reduce the country to obedience, including the midlands and in turn, obtain ‘land, status, wealth, and power there’.⁸²

Montaña’s assessment is interesting as it supports the idea that the Tudor government sought to reduce the country and its respective shires, particularly those located in Gaelic dominated areas to obedience and thus placed a particular emphasis on defence over reform.⁸³ He argues that the administration’s goal to reform Ireland’s natives, grant them the ‘gift of civility’ and deliver them from their barbarous and heretical ways was little more than rhetorical strategy.⁸⁴ Rapple, on the other hand, contends that the

⁷⁷ Account of the vice-treasurer, 27 May 1548-19 December 1549, TNA, SP 65/5/5; Council to the Privy Council, 10 July 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/33.

⁷⁸ Council to the Privy Council, 10 July 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/33. Although the exact grant to Cowley is difficult to ascertain, it was most likely the same lands granted to Roger Finglas in: *Fiants Ire. Edward VI*, no. 765.

⁷⁹ King Edward VI to Lord Deputy Croft, 17 August 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/48; Richard Keating to the Privy Council, November 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/59.

⁸⁰ Lord Deputy Croft and Council to the Privy Council, 6 November 1551, TNA, SP 61/3/60.

⁸¹ Causes why Ireland is not reformed, June 1571, TNA, SP 63/32/65.

⁸² Montaña, *The roots of English colonialism*, p. 333.

⁸³ See chapters 1-4.

⁸⁴ Montaña, *The roots of English colonialism*, p. 369.

government's particular emphasis on defence was so as to address their economic and strategic concerns. A large standing army was neither economically feasible nor realistic. The government hoped that the employment of martial captains in turbulent areas, such as Cosby and Cowley in the midlands, would save the administration money and impede Gaelic resistance in the process.⁸⁵ But Brady asserts that total conquest was never an aspiration of the government; instead they placed much more significance on retaining what they already possessed.⁸⁶

During the 1560s, Cosby managed to maintain the peace, particularly at the height of Donagh O'Connor's rebellion in 1564 and again in July 1568, when he hunted down and killed the the Queen's County rebel Piers O'More.⁸⁷ Not much is known of Henry Cowley's military career up until the 1570s other than he also maintained the peace during O'Connor's rebellion of 1564 when he oversaw the defence of Philipstown and pursued rebels throughout the King's County.⁸⁸ The two captains also repaired and maintained the chief strongholds in the early 1560s.⁸⁹ By October 1567, Lord Justices Weston and FitzWilliam praised Cowley and Cosby for reducing the midlands shires to obedience.⁹⁰ Although the government was impressed with Cowley and Cosby's commitment and work in the region, Queen Elizabeth was reluctant to grant the two men their offices for life 'unless she was shown good reason why they should not be removed at will'.⁹¹ Maginn argues that the Queen's reasoning behind the move was that it touched on her prerogative right.⁹² Arguably, the monarch realised that the two captains were disposable and could be replaced if they became slack

⁸⁵ Rapple, *Martial power and Elizabethan political culture*, p. 238.

⁸⁶ Brady 'The Captains' games', p. 156.

⁸⁷ Lords Justice Weston and FitzWilliam to Queen Elizabeth, 16 July 1568, TNA, SP 63/25/45.

⁸⁸ Lord Justice and Council to Captain Henry Cowley, 4 August 1564, TNA, SP 63/11/51; Lord Justice and Council, 8 August 1564, TNA, SP 63/11/69.

⁸⁹ Book of the accounts of the total charge of the Queen's revenues, 9 March 1561, TNA, SP 63/3/35.

⁹⁰ Lords Justices Weston and FitzWilliam and Council to the Queen, 30 October 1567, TNA, SP 63/22/16.

⁹¹ Tomás Ó Laidhin (ed.), *Sidney State Papers, 1565-70* (Dublin, 1962), Sec. 12, no. 75.

⁹² Maginn, *William Cecil*, p. 103.

in their duties. Lord Deputy Sidney agreed for the most part but also urged the Queen to be considerate of the fact that Cosby and Cowley were men 'of great and substantial revenues' who had offered to save Elizabeth an annual sum of £500.⁹³ This leads one to suggest that during the 1560s at least, Francis Cosby and Henry Cowley, followed the government's instructions closely and safeguarded the colony against native encroachment. By the 1570s, the captain's responsibilities changed little from the preceding decade which was unsurprising considering the turbulence that prevailed throughout the two shires as a result of the multiple uprisings of the dispossessed elements of the O'Mores and O'Connors. But there was potentially an alternative to the adverse relationship that had developed between the Tudor government and the two clans by this stage, which arguably could have proved more fruitful and peaceful in the long term. The County of Longford was shired in 1571 from the O'Farrell lordship, but unlike the Queen's County and King's County, no English population was introduced to the region. As a result, the O'Farrells dominated the new county and its local government particularly the position of sheriff and were spared a similar martial county administration to the one established in the midlands.⁹⁴ This was the very epitome of the Welsh model, a template not implemented in the Leinster region to a significant extent.

Very much aware of the fragility of the plantation, from the earliest stages of Rory Óg O'More's rebellion in the 1570s, many crown captains understood the necessity to quash the insurrection as swiftly as possible. In April 1571, Henry Cowley offered to banish or kill the chieftain before the situation escalated.⁹⁵ But lacking sufficient manpower for such a mission, Cowley and the government were forced to watch helplessly as Fiach MacHugh O'Byrne and his brother in law Rory rampaged throughout the Pale.⁹⁶ The administration's response to the crisis was laborious to say the

⁹³ Lord Deputy Sidney to the Privy Council, 24 June 1570, TNA, SP 63/30/56.

⁹⁴ Maginn, *William Cecil*, p. 194.

⁹⁵ This was at a time when O'More's forces scarcely numbered 100 swords. Lord Justice FitzWilliam to Burghley, 12 April 1571, TNA, SP 63/32/9.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

least, and it seems clear that captains who were posted in the two shires were frustrated and perplexed. Thomas Lambin, sheriff of the Queen's County in 1573, was infuriated at FitzWilliam's lack of action against Rory Óg and the rebels.⁹⁷ With the full support of his fellow settlers in the area, John Barnes and John Whitney, Lambin pleaded with FitzWilliam to crush the rebellion before the winter of 1573, at which point, intelligence sources predicted that the rebels intended to retake the entire county from the crown.⁹⁸ This correspondence was significant for a number of reasons, none more so than it served as evidence, however minor, that a number of the Queen's County's gentry came together during the period under review to coordinate military arrangements, resembling a county community.

In response to the crisis, the successive Lord Deputies William FitzWilliam and Henry Sidney actively promoted militarily experienced men to positions within the local government, particularly those with past experiences of combating rebels. Thomas Merrick, sheriff of the Queen's County in 1572, was a former captain of the kern and was considered an energetic servant of the crown and 'well worthy of his salary of just over £15'.⁹⁹ Similarly, in the King's County, the sheriff Robert Cowley who had also served as JP in 1563, had experience in exercising martial law alongside his uncle Henry.¹⁰⁰ In consideration of this, Robert was specifically appointed to hunt down and kill any O'More or O'Connor who committed violence against government loyalists in 1572.¹⁰¹ But how diligent were these men in actually ensuring that the crown retained a foothold in the region?

⁹⁷ Thomas Lambin et al. to Lord Deputy FitzWilliam, 11 March 1573, TNA, SP 63/39/46; Thomas Lambin to his Captain, 12 March 1571, TNA, SP 63/31/28.I.

⁹⁸ Thomas Lambin et al. to Lord Deputy FitzWilliam, 11 March 1573, TNA, SP 63/39/46.

⁹⁹ Book of the establishment of the Irish garrison, 20 March 1569, TNA, SP 63/27/56; *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 2113; Book of the army and garrisons in Ireland, 1 January 1572, TNA, SP 63/35/1.

¹⁰⁰ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 542, 682, 953

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, no. 2164.

Henry Cowley allegedly used ‘justice with offenders’ and permitted no rebel ‘nor any of their race to possess anything in the country’.¹⁰² Lord Deputy FitzWilliam was certainly full of praise for Cowley who he regarded as ‘a right serviceable man...none more vigilant and circumspect than he is’ having prevented ‘great extremities’ from occurring.¹⁰³ Nicholas White, master of the rolls, also praised Cowley as being ‘the only Englishman that through the fruits of his regiment by law does confute all other policies of government’.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, even the captain’s tenants commended him for protecting them from the rebel threat.¹⁰⁵ However, it was arguably Henry Sidney who encapsulated just how effective a servant of the crown Cowley truly was, describing him as a ‘valiant, fortunate, and...good’ captain who ensured that the King’s County was ‘well ordered, and in good obedience’ throughout his lifetime.¹⁰⁶ It was clear that Sidney considered Cowley to be as ‘good a borderer as ever I found anywhere...and a sound and fast friend to me’.¹⁰⁷

Another sheriff by the name of Thomas Merrick proved invaluable to the administration at the height of the crisis when he brokered a truce with the O’More chieftain, paying him off with a bond of £200, slowing his momentum and granting the government a much needed, if temporary, breathing space.¹⁰⁸ Other captains proved themselves so effective at maintaining law and order during the period that their authority was extended to neighbouring territories such as when Robert Cowley was granted permission to oversee Tinnahinch and parts of Westmeath.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰² Articles for the government of Ireland, 3 March 1572, TNA, SP 63/35/27.

¹⁰³ Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to Burghley, 6 October 1572, TNA, SP 63/38/7.

¹⁰⁴ Nicholas White to Burghley, 17 July 1573, TNA, SP 63/41/80.

¹⁰⁵ Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to the Privy Council, 28 June 1572, TNA, SP 63/36/48.

¹⁰⁶ Sir Henry Sidney to Arthur Grey, 1580 in C.H. Gifford, *The life of the most noble Arthur, Duke of Wellington*, Vol. 1 (London, 1817), p. 2.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Lambin to Lord Deputy FitzWilliam, 5 June 1573, TNA, SP 63/41/9.

¹⁰⁹ *Fiantis Ire. Eliz.*, nos 2163, 2164

Merrick's successor, Edmund Butler, regarded as one of the few men competent enough to govern the country in any way effectively, spent a significant portion of the 1550s and early 1560s pursuing any rebels within the Queen's County and King's County that continued to resist the plantation.¹¹⁰ Butler was born c.1534 and was the second son of James, 9th Earl of Ormond.¹¹¹ Following his father's mysterious death in London in 1546, Edmund inherited the western part of the barony of Idrone in County Carlow, known as the Duloogh.¹¹² As mentioned, Butler claimed the heads of notorious rebels such as Turlough McShane, Tadhg O'Dowling and Piers O'More during the 1560s, making him the prime candidate for sheriff of the Queen's County in 1574/5.¹¹³ Hence, for those committed to their role of ensuring the government retained control over the two shires, their actions were deemed 'service in pursuit of traitors' and served as an example of 'how other' individuals could better 'serve Her Majesty'.¹¹⁴

Yet, this level of commitment often came at a heavy price. For instance, the Queen's County sheriff Thomas Lambin, was burned out of his town land of Morett, near Ballybrittas in June 1573 and was forced to watch helplessly as his tenants were killed and his possessions were carried off.¹¹⁵ His predecessor, Thomas Merrick also paid the consequences of challenging the Gaelic coalition when he was ambushed and grievously wounded that

¹¹⁰ Ibid, nos 2164, 2555; Lord Deputy Sidney to Queen Elizabeth, 20 Apr 1567, TNA, SP 63/20/66.

¹¹¹ James Hughes, 'Sir Edmund Butler of the Duloogh, knight' in *The Journal of the Royal Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland*, I (no. 1; 1870), p.153.

¹¹² Hughes, 'Sir Edmund Butler of the Duloogh, knight', p.153.

¹¹³ Sir Edmund Butler to the Lord Justice Sir N. Arnold, 11 June 1564, TNA, SP 63/11/4; A note of some part of the earl of Ormond's brethren's service, 13 August 1569, TNA, SP 63/39/64; Lords Justice Weston and FitzWilliam to Queen Elizabeth, 16 July, 1568, TNA, SP 63/25/45; *Fiants Eliz.* no. 2555.

¹¹⁴ Sir Edmund Butler's petition to the Queen, 6 November 1566, TNA, SP 63/19/34.

¹¹⁵ Thomas Lambin to Lord Deputy FitzWilliam, 5 June 1573, TNA, SP 63/41/9.

winter.¹¹⁶ A later sheriff, John Barnes apparently suffered complete financial devastation during the same period at the hands of O'More. Barnes claimed that O'More plundered 140 kine, 1,000 sheep, calves and 126 plough horses from the captain as well as burning and spoiling his lands and tenants.¹¹⁷ Even the seasoned veteran Henry Cowley was left destitute as a result of the midlands insurrection and found himself 'sore oppressed by the rebels, the Connors' due to his many years of 'honest governance'.¹¹⁸ The end result was that by c.1575, Cowley had lost all he ever had having being burnt out by rebel forces in the area.¹¹⁹ Despite their losses, the majority of these local government officers survived the turbulence. Robert Cowley on the other hand, was not so fortunate. In July 1573, the King's County captain was cornered and killed by O'Connor rebels during the sack of Philipstown.¹²⁰ These cases served as suitable examples of how isolated some captains were in turbulent shires such as the King's County and Queen's County, forced to support and fend for themselves in incredibly hostile environments. This was particularly prevalent in 1573/4 when FitzWilliam was assigned just £100 for the payment of his captains in the midlands. The Lord Deputy was then instructed to divide this grossly insufficient sum amongst his officers with some receiving 40 marks, others considerably less.¹²¹ Unsurprisingly, this irked a number of captains in the region, 'Henry Cowley only excepted'.¹²² FitzWilliam also alleged that there were just 100 soldiers in the Queen's County during this period to keep 'the O'Mores at some stay' and 200 in the King's County 'to suppress the O'Connors'.¹²³ Crown forces were outnumbered in the Queen's County

¹¹⁶ The charge for the extraordinary allowances, 25 December 1573, TNA, SP 63/43/25.

¹¹⁷ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 3453; Petition of John Barnes to the Privy Council, 3 June 1574, TNA, SP 63/46/50.

¹¹⁸ Henry Cowley to Burghley, 20 January 1573, TNA, SP 63/39/11.

¹¹⁹ Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to Burghley, 14 January 1574, TNA, SP 63/44/6.

¹²⁰ Nicholas White to Burghley, 17 July 1573, TNA, SP 63/41/80.

¹²¹ Sir Edward Fitton to Burghley, 24 December 1573, TNA, SP 63/43/24.

¹²² Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to Lord Burghley, 18 April 1574, TNA, SP 63/45/72.

¹²³ Lord Deputy FitzWilliam and Council to Queen Elizabeth, 24 March 1574, TNA, SP 63/45/21.

by nearly three to one with O'More being backed by at least 240 swords.¹²⁴ The captains' personal retinues were also under strength. Thomas Lambin had a personal band of just six men while he was sheriff of the Queen's County.¹²⁵ In turn, this encouraged many local government officers to utilise their troops for their own purposes such as the protection of their private holdings, which jeopardised the government's forts and strongholds, and the general English freeholder within these districts.¹²⁶ Overall, these examples illustrated that to serve within the county government of the two shires, was to resign oneself to a precarious existence. Although a number of captains unquestionably excelled at the roles given to them, the burden of their responsibilities including the maintenance of law and order and the defence of government held positions, proved too great a challenge for some.

Just as effective captains proved crucial to the defence of a shire in times of war, ineffective officers arguably jeopardised the Queen's peace and the government's hold on the region. Certainly the actions and negligence of officers such as Francis Cosby during the height of O'More's rebellion very nearly led to the Gaelic coalition reclaiming the Queen's County in 1573/4. Nicholas White, Master of the Rolls, and William Cecil, the Queen's chief advisor held Francis personally accountable 'for the loss of Leix', having enabled the territory to become 'far out of order' by refusing to use 'justice against offenders'.¹²⁷ Although Cosby was reluctant to accept total responsibility for O'More's rise to power, he conceded that he could have done more to prevent the spoiling of the county.¹²⁸ Indeed, at the height of Rory Óg's insurrection, Lucas Dillon, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, claimed that he had never seen such a fall from duty in the 'degenerate men

¹²⁴ Maginn, '*Civilizing' Gaelic Leinster*, p. 123.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Lord Deputy FitzWilliam and Council to the Privy Council, 18 April 1574, TNA, SP 63/45/72.

¹²⁷ Nicholas White to Burghley, 17 July 1573, TNA, SP 63/41/80; Articles for the government of Ireland, 3 March 1572, TNA, SP 63/35/27.

¹²⁸ O'More originally served under Cosby before his rebellion. See Sir William FitzWilliam to Sir William Cecil, 5 & 11 February 1571, TNA, SP 63/31/8.

of English name' the Queen's County and the King's County 'are in manner overrun. The O'Connors and the O'Mores seem as...courageous now as before we began with them'.¹²⁹ It would appear that Dillon meant Old and New English alike when he referred to the 'degenerate men of English name' as he also heavily criticised 'the borderers of the English Pale' for failing to resist the 'wicked and rebellious sort either for falsehood or fear'.¹³⁰ However, negligence such as what Cosby exhibited during this period was by no means isolated.

In the King's County, Edward Moore, Privy Councillor and JP of the shire in the 1580s and 90s, was recommended by FitzWilliam for his 'ableness of body, behaviour in that country, credit abroad and good experience of this country's dealings and service fittest to be assigned thereto'.¹³¹ Descended from a long line of well-established gentry in Benenden, Kent, Moore travelled to Ireland in the early 1560s seeking reward and renown.¹³² His career prior to setting down root in Offaly was unquestionably impressive. Based in Mellifont, County Louth, Edward served as sheriff for close to ten years and regularly reported on the movements of Turlough Luineach O'Neill, who, FitzWilliam argued, could only be kept in check by Moore.¹³³ This was arguably an exaggeration on FitzWilliam's part and there can be little doubt that Moore's actual ability to keep O'Neill in check was overstated. Nevertheless, in consideration of his stellar military record, 'mere Englishness' and the fact he was 'well beloved' throughout the country, Edward was deemed the ideal candidate to succeed Henry Cowley.¹³⁴ But not everyone within Elizabeth's administration was as enthusiastic about granting the Englishman a position within the local government. Edmund Tremayne, clerk of the Privy Council was sceptical

¹²⁹ Lucas Dillon to Burghely, 28 March 1574, TNA, SP 63/45/36.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Lord Deputy FitzWilliam and Council to the Privy Council, 18 April 1574, TNA, SP 63/45/71.

¹³² Gerald Power, 'Migration and identity in Early Modern Ireland', pp 247-8.

¹³³ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 682, 953, 1832; Lord Justice FitzWilliam to Burghely, 26 November 1571, TNA, SP 63/34/31.

¹³⁴ Lord Justice FitzWilliam to Burghely, 26 November 1571, TNA, SP 63/34/31.

and informed Burghley that although he bore no ill will towards Moore, the ‘greatness of his demand makes me afraid to hinder others that be more ready’.¹³⁵ Nicholas White also had his concerns and warned the Queen’s chief advisor that promoting Moore to a position in the midlands would be misguided as the captain was said to have been in league with the O’Mores and O’Connors and that ‘mean men advanced by service to great wealth serve the queen badly’.¹³⁶ Moore was known to have been on friendly terms with the O’Neills in Ulster who as we are aware, were also close Geraldine allies with the O’Mores and O’Connors.¹³⁷ White’s assertion would therefore not have been all that surprising. Despite the warnings, the government appointed Moore as Cowley’s successor with instructions to execute martial law throughout the county, wage war on the O’Connors and use the general hostings for the shire’s defence.¹³⁸

Edward’s initial months in charge seemed fruitful. In June 1574, FitzWilliam claimed that the captain swiftly brought the dispossessed O’Connors to heel.¹³⁹ Within just eight days, it was alleged that Moore had done such a fine job ‘as they [the O’Connors] are all fled not only from King’s County but also from all the borders both English and Irish adjoining’.¹⁴⁰ Subsequently, the Lord Deputy claimed that the the King’s County captain put measures in place to prevent the clan from returning to the shire via pledges from the Gaelic clans of the surrounding areas and the issuance of threats of execution for anyone found to have harboured or

¹³⁵ Edmund Tremayne to Burghley, 1571, TNA, SP 63/34/40.

¹³⁶ Nicholas White to Burghley, 17 July 1573, TNA, SP 63/41/80.

¹³⁷ Morgan, *Tyrone’s rebellion*, p. 97.

¹³⁸ The general muster assessed the number of infantry and cavalry the inhabitants of a shire county could assemble for utilisation by the Lord Deputy. The process also noted the name, weapon and capability of each man according to their respective properties. See *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 474, 2810.

¹³⁹ Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to the Privy Council, 2 June 1574, TNA, SP 63/46/41.

¹⁴⁰ Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to Queen Elizabeth, 10 June 1574, TNA, SP 63/46/54.

assisted individuals of the O'Connor name.¹⁴¹ In reality, the situation on the ground was very different.

Walter Devereux, 1st Earl of Essex, who arrived in Ireland in 1573 to serve the Queen in colonising parts of Ulster, alleged that the O'Connors not only refused a crown pardon and ignored Moore's instructions, but also dispersed by their own free will and lay upon the borders of the King's County with a large army, waiting for an opportunity to strike.¹⁴² Essex based these claims upon intelligence he had received that alleged that the Gaelic clan, and their ally, Gerald FitzGerald, 11th Earl of Kildare, were determined to disrupt Moore's tenure as much as possible and make his position in the county completely untenable.¹⁴³ Devereux also claimed that the O'Mores worked alongside their Offaly counterparts to ensure Moore's dismissal.¹⁴⁴ Edward faced subsequent challenges over his competence in the year 1577 when Barnaby FitzPatrick, the Gaelic government loyalist and Henry Cowley, Moore's predecessor, argued that the Philipstown captain had prompted the O'Connors into open rebellion in the first place.¹⁴⁵ This leads to several conclusions. On the one hand, we know that Moore's actions did little to deter or subdue the O'Connor military threat as the clan continued to be a

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Walter Devereux, Earl of Essex to Burghley, 14 June 1574, TNA, SP 63/46/62.

¹⁴³ FitzGerald, clearly disgruntled at having been overlooked for the role, had a proven record against the O'Mores and O'Connors and even offered to permanently banish the O'Connors from The King's County at his own expense, if in turn, he was granted the position of seneschal and given the charge of Philipstown fort. See *Fiants Ire. Eliz nos 823, 1452*; Privy Council to the Earl of Kildare, 22 June 1565, TNA, SP 63/13/68; Lord Deputy FitzWilliam and Council to the Privy Council, 31 January 1574, TNA, SP 63/44/20; Vincent P. Carey, *Surviving the Tudors: The 'wizard' Earl of Kildare and English Rule in Ireland, 1537-1586* (Dublin, 2002), p. 162.

¹⁴⁴ Walter Devereux to Burghley, 14 June 1574, TNA, SP 63/46/62.

¹⁴⁵ Arguably, it was most likely the subsequent uprising of Rory Óg O'More that encouraged the O'Connors to rebel rather than the actions of Edward Moore. See Lord Justice FitzWilliam to Queen Elizabeth, 4 January 1572, TNA, SP 63/35/3; Nicholas White to Burghley, 10 February 1577, TNA, SP 63/57/25.

significant encumbrance to the administration for decades to follow.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, the level of criticism aimed at Moore from officials of various backgrounds would suggest that he was a corrupt and inadequate officer. In addition, FitzWilliam's reports back to London commending Edward's good work in the King's County suggested that Moore either inflated his achievements to the Lord Deputy or FitzWilliam covered up the captain's shortcomings and negligence. The truth was most likely muddled somewhere in between. What remains clear is that there was often a noticeable disparity in reports being sent back to London regarding the situation on the ground in the midlands and the reality. Nevertheless, we know that the actions or lack thereof of captains such as Francis Cosby and Edward Moore directly endangered the Queen's peace in the region. Arguably, a negligent officer in one place, such as Cosby at Maryborough, put added pressure on effective and vigilant captains elsewhere, such as Cowley at Philipstown who often pleaded that there was nothing but 'rebels in every place' and unless the situation was addressed by the administration, there would 'be neither corn nor anything else left' for the government to reclaim.¹⁴⁷ These examples underline that when and where there was an effective and dutiful captain in place, law and order tended to subsist. However, when a corrupt and ineffective captain retained his position, disorder tended to prevail. In doing so, the government proved its reluctance to punish or reprimand those individuals when the need arose. This in turn ensured that effective crown captains such as Henry Cowley among others were a rarity and always in the minority.

Conditions in the late 1580s and 1590s did little to improve matters and in fact ensured that challenges such as the Nine Years' War became a stern test of loyalty for the numerous individuals who assumed prominent positions within the local government of the King's County and Queen's

¹⁴⁶ Wallop to Walsingham, 1582, TNA, SP 63/92/42; Lord Deputy to the Privy Council, 20 February 1585/6, TNA, SP 63/122/76.

¹⁴⁷ Cowley's accounts were supported by FitzWilliam, see Lord Deputy FitzWilliam to Queen Elizabeth, 7 December 1572, TNA, SP 63/38/51; Henry Cowley to Burghley, 20 January 1573, TNA, SP 63/39/11; Henry Cowley to Nicholas White, 10 October 1573, TNA, SP 63/42/45.I.

County. From the outset, the county gentry of the two shires were heavily criticised for their conduct throughout the period. Thomas Butler, 10th Earl of Ormond, who lost his nephew during the unsuccessful relief of Maryborough fort in the late 1590s, launched a scathing attack upon the government's captains scattered throughout the country for not offering more resistance to the rebel onslaught and for having surrendered their strongholds 'most vilely and cowardly...being well furnished with munition and victual'.¹⁴⁸ The 'gentlemen of Leix of English blood' were particularly reprimanded for their failure to answer 'Her Majesty's service, wherein they' were considered 'slack and faulty, this has greatly increased the pride of the rebels'.¹⁴⁹ Essentially, those captains who were inattentive in fulfilling their duties such as defending their region from Gaelic rebel incursion were deemed negligent by the government. There can little doubt that the problem of ineffective, negligent captains was a serious concern for the administration. Thomas Lee, the Elizabethan army captain, encapsulated this sentiment perfectly when he stated that the 'negligence of officers hurt the subject and put the prince to charge'. Lee also alleged that remiss captains 'cost her Majesty many thousand pounds to recover' the two shires 'from the traitors'.¹⁵⁰

The criticism aimed at the gentlemen of the region certainly had some basis. The examples of George Cowley and Henry Warren, successive sheriffs of the King's County, were testament to this. Yet the two men's early careers were quite distinguished. In fact, in the early 1580s, Cowley and Warren were highly commended by Geoffrey Fenton, Principal Secretary of Ireland, and Archbishop Adam Loftus for their good service throughout the shire.¹⁵¹ By May 1582, Warren was acting as the crown's chief negotiator

¹⁴⁸ The Earl of Ormond to Burghley, 31 July 1598, TNA, SP 63/202/112.

¹⁴⁹ A short particular of the estate of the Queen's County, 1599, TNA, SP 63/206/145.

¹⁵⁰ Captain Thomas Lee, 'The Discovery and Recovery of Ireland with the Author's Apology', BL, Add. MS. 33743, fos. 92 & 95.

¹⁵¹ Archbishop of Dublin to Burghley, 11 January 1580, SP 63/71/17; Book of the discharge of soldiers, 1582, TNA, SP 63/88/40.I.; Geoffrey Fenton to Walsingham, 17 December 1581, TNA, SP 63/87/51; Treasurer Wallop to Walsingham, 14 December 1582, TNA, SP 63/98/45.

with the O'Connor clan and had built a formidable landed base at Ballybrittan.¹⁵² The two officers subsequently married into the prominent Loftus family, which proved to be an incredibly beneficial move on their part.¹⁵³ Cowley had his father-in-law intervene on his behalf on numerous occasions including an appeal for the continuance of his crown pension and a knighthood in 1593/4.¹⁵⁴ Henry Warren received additional lands in Kildare in quite controversial circumstances, as they were already in the possession of an individual by the name of John Cusack.¹⁵⁵ It seemed quite apparent that Warren's connections to Loftus paid dividends as his father-in-law unquestionably intervened in the dispute in order to ensure the land was granted in his son-in-law's favour.¹⁵⁶ In March 1583, Loftus intervened once again to ensure Warren received reinforcements as he dwelt at the time 'in the midst of the O'Conors'.¹⁵⁷ However, during the Nine Years' War, the two captains' fortunes well and truly soured. George Cowley, sheriff of the King's County in the 1590s was allegedly 'preyed and burnt even to his gate' and was criticised by Lord Deputy Thomas Burgh for failing to attend to his duties and prevent the destruction of the county.¹⁵⁸ Burgh also asserted that Cowley and Warren were culpable for the collapse of law and order in the King's County as they failed to put up sufficient resistance to Gaelic rebels and neglected their duties.¹⁵⁹ If 'good execution had been applied', according to the Lord Deputy, it 'might have prevented'

¹⁵² *Fiants Eliz.*, no. 4040; Henry Warren to the Lord Deputy, 15 May 1582, TNA, SP 63/92/40.II; Henry Cowley to Nicholas White, 10 October 1573, TNA, SP 63/42/45.I; Dunlop, 'The Plantation of Leix and Offaly', p. 95.

¹⁵³ Wallop to Burghley, 21 February 1583, TNA, SP 63/99/68; A note how the Archbishop of Dublin, June 1592, TNA, SP 63/165/32.

¹⁵⁴ Archbishop of Dublin to Burghley, 11 January 1580, TNA, SP 63/71/17; Names of such gentlemen, 1593-4, TNA, SP 63/173/8.II.

¹⁵⁵ John Cusack to Walsingham, 10 March 1583, TNA, SP 63/100/10.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ The Lord Justice Chancellor Loftus to Walsingham, 24 March 1583, TNA, SP 63/100/42.

¹⁵⁸ Philip Williams to Sir Robert Cecil, 31 October 1597, TNA, SP 63/201/43; The Lord Deputy Burgh to the Lord Chancellor Loftus, 26 September 1597, TNA, SP 63/201/25.I.

¹⁵⁹ The Lord Deputy Burgh to the Lord Chancellor Loftus, 26 September 1597, TNA, SP 63/201/25.I.

the 'present ill' of the shire.¹⁶⁰ This sentiment was echoed by Philip Williams, Perrot's former secretary, who claimed that Gaelic rebels roamed 'all over the Pale...burning, preying, and spoiling, especially in' the King's County, 'where the fire' began 'to kindle again'.¹⁶¹ On the other hand, Archbishop Loftus defended his son in law for having 'tasted...the miseries of this country, more than any other of their sort in all the kingdom'.¹⁶² These damning reports certainly give the impression that every captain neglected his duties during this turbulent period and simply turned a blind eye to the Gaelic rebels that rampaged throughout the midlands. It would also appear that they ultimately failed to fulfil their obligations to defend and retain the two shires for the government. But, in reality, there were some noteworthy exceptions to this trend.

The first such exception was the the Queen's County officer, Warham St. Leger, who was born in Hollingborne, Kent, the eldest son of William St. Leger, who himself was the eldest son of the former Lord Deputy Anthony St. Leger.¹⁶³ Unfortunately, there is a great deal of confusion and mix up between Warham and his uncle Sir Warham St. Leger who served in Munster during Lord Deputy Sidney's tenure and beyond.¹⁶⁴ Little is known of Captain Warham St. Leger's early career other than he most likely arrived in Ireland at some stage in the 1570's, serving under Walter Devereux.¹⁶⁵ In 1580, St. Leger was praised by Edward Waterhouse, the eventual Chancellor of the Exchequer of Ireland from 1586-91, for his valour and stated that he pitied the captain as 'he was spoiled of his birthright'.¹⁶⁶ By 1583, then having ensured the full support and commendation of Lords Justices Wallop and Loftus, St. Leger put his name

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Philip Williams to Sir Robert Cecil, 31 October 1597, TNA, SP 63/201/43.

¹⁶² The Lord Justice Loftus to Sir Robert Cecil, 29 December 1598, TNA, SP 63/202/50.

¹⁶³ John Hooker and John McClean, *The life and times of Sir Peter Carew* (London, 1857), p. 218.

¹⁶⁴ Hooker and McClean, *The life and times of Sir Peter Carew*, p. 218; Lodge and Archdall *The Peerage Of Ireland*, vol. 6, pp 108-10.

¹⁶⁵ David Edwards, 'Sir Warham St Leger (d. 1600)', *DNB*.

¹⁶⁶ Edward Waterhouse to Walsingham, 24 April 1580, TNA, SP 63/72/65.

forward for a position in the Queen's County where he volunteered to spearhead the prosecution of the O'Mores and the Keatings.¹⁶⁷ On the 6 August 1584, Warham was appointed Lieutenant of Maryborough and was granted the overall title of Governor of Leix.¹⁶⁸ His counterpart in the King's County was George Bouchier although little is known of his activities in the county aside from the fact that his influence allegedly extended into Tipperary and he subsequently surrendered his office in 1592 having been made master of ordnance and munition.¹⁶⁹ So what did this title actually entail? Well the role was somewhat similar to that of Sir Conyers Clifford, chief commissioner of the province of Connaught and Thomond in the late 1590s. St. Leger was appointed as a 'chief leader of the army for the prosecution of rebels and traitors' in the shire 'with power to suppress with fire and sword and all other good ways...for the conservation of the peace of the queen's subjects'. Therefore, the role was pretty much the same as lieutenant of the forts and was primarily concerned with maintaining the peace. Crucially, however, it was stressed, as referenced in Chapter 4, that any rebels who submitted to the crown were to be granted 'clemency' and duly received 'into the queen's favour, highlighting the government's attempts to rein in martial law in the 1580s.¹⁷⁰ Aside from St. Leger's appointment, we also know that an individual known as John Painter was appointed Governor of Maryborough.¹⁷¹ His responsibilities it would seem were largely concerned with the transport of munition and the general furnishing of the fort.¹⁷² These appointments were noteworthy for a number of reasons, none more so than it stressed once again, just how militaristic and unique the local government of the midlands was.

¹⁶⁷ Captain Warham St. Leger to Burghley, 30 July 1583, TNA, SP 63/102/52; Lords Justices to the Privy Council, 30 July 1583, TNA, SP 63/103/51.

¹⁶⁸ Appendix 3.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ *Fiant's Ire. Eliz.*, no. 6035.

¹⁷¹ *AFM s.a.* 1584; Sir John Perrot's declaration, TNA, SP 63/135/54; *Cal. Carew MSS, 1589-1600*, no. 111.

¹⁷² *Carew MSS, 1575-1588*, no. 574;

The state papers reported little of note in the region between the years of 1585 and 1594, and it appears that the two shires were largely peaceful.¹⁷³ This all changed following the outbreak of Tyrone's rebellion in 1594 as St. Leger remained the sole lieutenant in the Queen's County. We also know that he played an active role further afield in Ulster where he acted as chief crown negotiator with Hugh O'Neill.¹⁷⁴ However, with the outbreak of Owny McRory O'More's coinciding uprising in the midlands in 1596, St. Leger diverted his full attention to the devastated and beleaguered shire.¹⁷⁵ Owny, the son of the infamous Rory Óg, was fostered much like his father had been by the O'Byrnes in Wicklow. Fiach MacHugh O'Byrne was actually Owny's uncle. Owny quickly rose in prominence to assume the position of chieftain of the dispossessed elements of the O'More clan in the early 1590s and won a skirmish against the Cosbys at Stradbally Bridge in May 1596 where Alexander and his eldest son Francis were slain along with a number of their retinue.¹⁷⁶ The engagement stirred the rebellious elements of the O'Mores and O'Connors into rebellion with the crown and can be seen as the start of disturbances in the midlands theatre of the Nine Years' War.¹⁷⁷ It would appear that Warham was somewhat relieved by the outbreak of the war in the region as he stated that 'for now the Queen shall know what to expect. Whereas, if we had patched up a peace, no doubt in an instant we should have had all our throats cut'.¹⁷⁸ For St. Leger, the solution to quelling the rebellion was relatively straightforward: 'the Queen must either resolve to now conquer Ireland, or be conquered out of it'.¹⁷⁹ Hence, offering the O'Mores no further protection, St. Leger dispatched his small band of troops to key strategic positions throughout the county where

¹⁷³ *AFM s.a.* 1584; Sir John Perrot's declaration, TNA, SP 63/135/54.

¹⁷⁴ Note subscribed by Captain Warham St. Leger and Captain William Warren, 30 October 1595, TNA, SP 63/184/6.II; Captain Warham St. Leger to Sir Anthony St. Leger, 6 July 1596, TNA, SP 63/191/15.

¹⁷⁵ Captain Warham St. Leger to Sir Anthony St. Leger, 6 July 1596, TNA, SP 63/191/15.

¹⁷⁶ Lord Chancellor to Burghley, 20 May 1596, TNA, SP 63/189/33.

¹⁷⁷ Dunlop, 'The Plantation of Leix and Offaly', p. 88.

¹⁷⁸ Captain Warham St. Leger to Sir Anthony St. Leger, 6 July 1596, TNA, SP 63/191/15.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

he hoped they would ‘offend the enemy’ as much as possible.¹⁸⁰ In another manoeuvre, Warham pleaded with Lord Deputy William Russell for the permanent settlement of the O’More clan in Gallen.¹⁸¹ The captain alleged that it would not only bring peace to the area but would also force the O’Mores ‘to keep and defend, the things they had; by which means’ we ‘would know where to find them, whereas now they keep in no place’.¹⁸²

Although a vocal critic of martial law, claiming that it did ‘some hurt, and is like to do more’, the Maryborough lieutenant also stressed that if the Gallen settlement failed, it would be necessary to put the O’Mores ‘down at first’ or swiftly and effectively subdue the clan and permanently neutralise their threat to the shire.¹⁸³ As it transpired, St. Leger more or less attempted to bring this to pass. When it became abundantly clear that the government was in no rush to embrace the Gallen resettlement project, St. Leger pursued the alternative and targeted the ringleaders of the rebellion. In December 1596, he cornered and killed William MacRory O’More in the woods just outside of Stradbally.¹⁸⁴ The following January, the seasoned veteran and his forces claimed the heads of two more of Owny’s most formidable lieutenants but also warned the government of the growing strength of the dispossessed O’Connor’s in the King’s County and nightly Butler cattle raids in coalition with the landless O’Mores.¹⁸⁵ Although St. Leger’s actions during this period earned him the height of praise from the government and a subsequent knighthood, he was allegedly detested by the

¹⁸⁰ Captain Warham St. Leger to the Lord Deputy, 7 August 1596, TNA, SP 63/192/7.

¹⁸¹ See chapter 3, p. 100.

¹⁸² Captain Warham St. Leger to the Lord Deputy, 7 August 1596, TNA, SP 63/192/7.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ Captain Warham St. Leger to the Lord Deputy, 21 December 1596, TNA, SP 63/196/31.

¹⁸⁵ Captain Warham St. Leger to the Lord Deputy, 11 January 1597, TNA, SP 63/197/13; Captain Warham St. Leger to the Lord Deputy, 3 September 1596, TNA, SP 63/193/9.

O'More clan for holding 'a hard hand over them' and 'not suffering any strangers to follow them'.¹⁸⁶

By late 1597, St. Leger's fortunes had well and truly soured as he suffered a crushing defeat alongside Captain Walter Hovenden, who was slain in the encounter, outside the walls of Maryborough.¹⁸⁷ In the aftermath of the battle, the fortress was once again sacked and burned.¹⁸⁸ In March 1598, Owny O'More and his ally Hugh O'Neill eventually agreed to talks, by which time, St. Leger managed to persuade the crown that the Gallen scheme was the only feasible solution to the crisis.¹⁸⁹ But it was simply a case of too little too late as the O'More chieftain had seemingly grown overtly ambitious and defiant at this stage and vowed to reclaim 'all the spiritual lands' of the Queen's County.¹⁹⁰ Having incurred yet another setback in restoring peace to the shire, St. Leger retired to Dublin in January 1599 where he was mysteriously ambushed and his home set alight. Narrowly managing to escape with his life, the incident left St. Leger destitute.¹⁹¹ Sir Geoffrey Fenton, former secretary to Lord Deputy Arthur Grey and a prominent Privy Councillor, appealed to the Queen soon after to compensate the Maryborough lieutenant for his extensive losses considering that he had 'served long in Ireland, with good credit, and without reproach'.¹⁹²

It seems quite clear that by April 1599, St. Leger, then a Privy Councillor, had not been reimbursed by the crown for his extensive financial losses or

¹⁸⁶ National Library of Ireland MS. G 669, p. 134; Captain Sir Warham St. Leger to the Earl of Ormond, 9 December 1597, TNA, SP 63/201/99.II.

¹⁸⁷ Sir Ralph Lane to Sir Robert Cecil, 8 December 1597, TNA, SP 63/201/97.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ Thomas Jones, Bishop of Meath to Burghley, 22 March 1598, TNA, SP 63/202/89.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Sir Geoffrey Fenton to Sir Robert Cecil, 19 January 1599, TNA, SP 63/203/20.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

the entertainment of his band of troops.¹⁹³ In August of the same year, St. Leger desperately pleaded once again to the Queen for financial assistance and alleged that in the Queen's county, a place he regarded as 'well seated with English gentlemen...no subject can keep his house without immediate means from Her Majesty' fearing that 'now the traitors have and will not only reap their own harvest, but most of the subjects'.¹⁹⁴ Unsurprisingly, St. Leger's pleas went unnoticed. In September 1599, he was reassigned alongside Sir Henry Power to the province of Munster to administer its civil and martial affairs on a salary of 20s. per day.¹⁹⁵ It was there that St. Leger met his end in mid-February 1600 in a skirmish with Hugh Maguire, Lord of Fermanagh, and Hugh O'Neill's most significant cavalry commander.¹⁹⁶ Arguably, it was a fitting end for the seasoned war veteran who committed so much of his life to serving the government's interests in the midlands. The position of governor did not die with St. Leger, however, as we know that his partner in Munster, Henry Power, undertook the role in the Queen's County following Warham's death.¹⁹⁷ In the King's County, that same year, Gerald FitzGerald, 14th Earl of Kildare was likewise appointed Governor.¹⁹⁸

The second exception was St. Leger's successor at the Queen's County stronghold, Francis Rush.¹⁹⁹ Rush's family hailed from Sudborne, Suffolk, and Francis was a direct descendant of Sir Thomas Rush who was knighted in 1533 following the coronation of Anne Boleyn.²⁰⁰ Before undertaking the position in Maryborough, Rush served in Normandy, Cadiz and Picardy as well as a commissioner of musters in 1593 and 1596 respectively for the

¹⁹³ Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Essex, 31 March 1599, TNA, SP 63/204/114; Sir Warham St. Leger to Sir Robert Cecil, 30 April 1599, TNA, SP 63/205/44.

¹⁹⁴ Sir Warham St. Leger to Sir Robert Cecil, 31 August 1599, TNA, SP 63/205/161.

¹⁹⁵ The Lords Justices Loftus and Carey to the Privy Council, 29 October 1599, TNA, SP 63/205/228.

¹⁹⁶ Sir Henry Power to the Privy Council, 4 March 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/9.

¹⁹⁷ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 6403.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 6462.

¹⁹⁹ The Earl of Ormond to the Privy Council, 26 March 1599, TNA, SP 63/203/101.

²⁰⁰ Sylvester R. Rush, *Historical and genealogical account of the Rush family* (Omaha, 1925), p. 5.

counties of Suffolk and Norfolk before eventually being granted a knighthood by Essex in May 1599.²⁰¹ It seemed that Ormond considered the captain to be of 'better trust' than his predecessors and the ideal candidate for restoring law and order to the stronghold and its surrounding area.²⁰² There can be little doubt that Rush had a staggering challenge ahead of him as the troops under his command and throughout Leinster were in a desperate state. In fact, Ormond alleged that the great majority of them were totally impoverished, starving and severely underpaid for their services, receiving just two months' pay out of nine.²⁰³ Instantly, the new constable made an impression on the beleaguered colony's stronghold. There can be little doubt that the additional troop numbers he was assigned, over 500 men, played a significant role in this.²⁰⁴ From 9 to 18 May 1599, Rush executed a number of 'famous' rebels including a Captain Nugent, 'reckoned to be one of Tyrone's best captains' and placed their heads on pikes on the walls of Maryborough to serve as a warning against any future incursions by the Gaelic Irish upon the fort.²⁰⁵

Rush also recruited an elderly English soldier, married to a Gaelic Irishwoman and suspected of treason, as a spy to help to infiltrate Owny MacRory O'More and his band of rebels.²⁰⁶ The strategic move paid dividends for Rush when his agent managed to persuade a large contingent of the rebel's soldiers to follow him into the fort on the night of 4th January

²⁰¹ Hammer, 'Base rogues and gentlemen of quality', p. 200; The Expedition to Cadiz, August 1596, HMC, *Salisbury, Vol. 6: 1596*, p. 361; Meeting, 23 July 1593, TNA, PC 2/20/124; Meeting, 23 September 1596, TNA, PC 2/21/65.

²⁰² The Earl of Ormond to the Privy Council, 26 March 1599, TNA, SP 63/203/101; Sir George Carey to Sir Robert Cecil, 26 May 1599, TNA, SP 63/205/67.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ Journal of the Lord Lieutenant's journey into Leinster, 9 May-18 May 1599, TNA, SP 63/205/63.I; List of the Army serving in Ireland, 1 October 1603, TNA, SP 63/215/143. It is highly probable that the normal garrison in Maryborough at the time was 150 foot soldiers and 12 cavalry.

²⁰⁵ Journal of the Lord Lieutenant's journey into Leinster, 9 May-18 May 1599, TNA, SP 63/205/63.I.

²⁰⁶ The Earl of Ormond to the Privy Council, 24 January 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/40.

1600.²⁰⁷ There, Sir Francis launched a devastating ambush and trapped a number of the unsuspecting rebels in a cellar just below the fortification. A furious engagement ensued whereby over 35 rebels were slain with not a single loss allegedly incurred to the Maryborough garrison. Rush himself suffered grievous wounds during the skirmish including the loss of an eye and a significant blow to his right hand.²⁰⁸ But the ambush was also shrouded in controversy. It appears that in the final stages of the garrison's assault upon the cellar, Rush's men, in an apparent fit of rage, butchered several O'Mores who had already surrendered. Whereas in the 1530s and 40s when men such as Leonard Grey, Brabazon and Skeffington had boasted of giving Irish soldiers 'The Pardon of Maynooth', the evidence suggests that that Rush gave no such order for the prisoner's execution.²⁰⁹

Nevertheless, in the aftermath of massacre, Rush was highly commended by numerous individuals within Elizabeth's government including Lord Justice George Carey for having 'of late done very good service at the fort in' the Queen's County, 'I wish he received thanks according to his good desert'.²¹⁰ The Queen herself also praised Rush for showing 'good government and carriage as hath deserved commendation...her Majesty does conceive that good opinion of the gentleman...for his sufficiency and knowledge in martial affairs'.²¹¹ Rush quickly followed up the government victory at Maryborough with a second ambush where over twenty-eight rebels were killed and numerous cattle and treasure were seized.²¹² As a result, his talents for martial affairs did not go unnoticed by the crown and he was proposed as the ideal candidate for difficult and prominent assignments further afield such as in Gallen that allegedly cried out for a 'discreet commander' such as Francis Rush with a proven record of

²⁰⁷ Sir Francis Rush to the Lords Justices Loftus and Carey, 7 January 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/22.II.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ The Lord Justice Carey to Sir Robert Cecil, 11 January 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/22.

²¹¹ Meeting, 1600, *Acts of the Privy Council of England: A.D. 1542- June 1631*, Vol. 30: 1599-1600, ed. John Roche Dasent (London, 1905), no. 314.

²¹² The Earl of Ormond to the Privy Council, 24 January 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/40.

pursuing ‘rebels into their fastness (as foxes into their dens)’.²¹³ Thus, it seems apparent that by 1600, the government sought to plant Gallen with Englishmen once more and not to dispossessed elements of the O’More clan. In the early 1600s, Rush was granted land in the north as part of the initial stages of the Ulster plantation where the crown hoped that ‘worthy gentlemen’, such as Rush, who were ‘humble and discreet’ would assist in the ‘removal’ of ‘some headstrong natives’.²¹⁴ No doubt, the government realised that Rush was perfect for such a venture that required ‘a significant degree of force as well as persuasion’, once again reaffirming the Tudor government’s sentiment that true reform could only be brought about by employing some degree of coercion.²¹⁵

In sum, we may return to the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter: whether or not local government officers in the Queen’s County and King’s County between 1547 and 1603 diligently fulfilled their obligations to the Tudor administration in defending and retaining government held positions and punishing any rebels who threatened the existing balance of power? The case studies of William St. Loe in the 1540s certainly suggest that the government had promising and dutiful captains in the midlands from the very beginning of the Leix-Offaly plantation yet the example of Henry Wise also indicates that patterns of negligence had also emerged quite early on in the enterprise. Similarly, the 1550s and 1560s highlighted how officers such as Henry Radcliffe fulfilled their duties through strict implementation of martial law and that individuals such as Henry Cowley and Francis Cosby ensured that law and order prevailed throughout the two shires all the while advancing English common law in their districts. In the 1570s, as illustrated, numerous captains played a significant role in ensuring the government retained a foothold in the two counties and proved themselves highly effective at subduing the rebel threat and establishing law and order. This level of commitment was often in the face of overwhelming odds and significant challenges including lack of

²¹³ Intelligences for Her Majesty's services, 3 July 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/3.

²¹⁴ Sir Arthur Chichester to Salisbury, 25 April 1610, TNA, SP 63/228/719.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

supplies, troops and infrequent payment. In addition, numerous captains were financially ruined as a result of this devotion and some even paid with their lives. Yet, not every local government officer proved as willing to follow orders during this period as demonstrated by captains such as Francis Cosby and Edward Moore. As emphasised throughout the chapter, the case studies of negligent individuals such as these certainly suggest that they were concerned with little other than the acquisition of power, wealth and land.²¹⁶ The government's disinclination to reprimand such individuals for their actions manifested into significant unrest at times on the plantation. The case studies of Warham St. Leger and Francis Rush on the other hand challenged the critiques of county government officers during the period under review. It was quite apparent that the two men fulfilled the duties expected of them by the crown. Although St. Leger was ultimately unsuccessful in preventing Maryborough from being seized by rebel forces at the height of the war, he otherwise set a high standard of what was to be expected of crown captains in the midlands. His actions, including the despatch of what little troops he had to strategic areas associated with dissent and the elimination of the O'More clan's elite, ultimately prevented the Queen's County from being reclaimed by its dispossessed and disgruntled natives. Comparably, Francis Rush, regularly praised for 'his valorous service at the fort of the Queen's County and considered 'free from match with the Irishry, and other suspectful causes of corruption', played an instrumental role in restoring law and order to the midlands countryside.²¹⁷ Not only did the O'Mores and O'Connors fail to seize Maryborough again for the remainder of the Nine Years' War but Francis also managed to inflict several heavy defeats on the Gaelic rebel coalition often putting his life at risk and incurring grievous wounds in the process. This was all the more impressive considering that his achievements were carried out with an under equipped, under paid and practically starving band of troops. So why did some local government officers stand out from the others during particularly turbulent times in the midlands? Lord Justice

²¹⁶ Montaña, *The roots of English colonialism*, p. 369.

²¹⁷ The Lord Deputy Mountjoy to Sir Robert Cecil, 8 May 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/23.

Chapter 5

Loftus pinpointed the exact rationale why captains such as William St. Loe, Henry and Robert Cowley, Thomas Merrick, Edmund Butler, Warham St. Leger and Francis Rush were so committed to their duties, particularly during times of war: they had ‘many effectual reasons’ to recover ‘their lands...their goods, and the revenging of all the spiteful injuries done them’ by the Gaelic rebels.²¹⁸ Furthermore, the Lord Justice stated that the ‘English gentlemen...inheritors of Leix and Offaly...are known to be men of worth and sufficiency; whereof there are a great many’.²¹⁹ Arguably, Loftus realised that it was these officers that recovered Leinster from the Gaelic rebel coalition, being ‘good guides in those countries’ and having ‘very good means for intelligence and’ drawing ‘good draughts upon the rebels in those places’.²²⁰ Therefore, a small but determined group of crown captains were committed to the defence of the midlands region between 1547 and 1603. Ultimately, these individuals ensured that government held positions were maintained and any rebels that threatened to undermine existing balance of power were duly punished. As a result, these case studies illustrated that the critiques by individuals such as the Earl of Ormond among others were in fact disingenuous and a gross overgeneralisation. Moreover this chapter also readdresses the perception of English officers during the Early Modern Period in Ireland. Crucially, in line with the overall thesis argument, it also highlights just how militaristic the local government of the midlands really was and how significant a concern defence was to the Tudor government.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ The Lord Justice Loftus to Sir Robert Cecil, 20 January 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/34.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

Chapter 6

Gaelic Government Loyalists of the midlands, c.1540-1600

The Tudor government's decision to confiscate the majority of land of the two most prominent clans of Leix and Offaly, the O'Mores and O'Connors, was a bold move. Yet in the crown's eyes, their goal was quite straightforward: to transform the territories of the Gaelic Irish lordships of the midlands into English shires through a plantation scheme and establish English administrative structures and local government there. As highlighted in Chapters 1-4, the administration faced constant difficulties as a result of stern resistance from the dispossessed and aggrieved factions of the Gaelic natives. But this does not tell the whole story. There were in fact several Gaelic Irish chieftains and their respective kin willing to co-operate with the Tudor administration and see their agenda for the midlands come to fruition. Through the collaboration of this small number of native elite, certain territories were assimilated gradually into English shire ground, often with English county government, via the embracement of the policy of surrender and regrant. But, this particular argument is controversial to say the least and runs against the traditional nationalist narrative of the Tudor conquest of Ireland. Maginn argues that nationalist historians have viewed the whole notion of Gaelic Irish embracement of the policy of surrender and regrant and English noble titles through a narrow lens. Such a move was deemed an acceptance and embracement of Englishness and foreignness and in turn, a rejection of traditional Gaelic Irish identity and culture.¹ Consequently, nationalist historians have tended to focus on the resistance centred accounts of sixteenth century Ireland, a view that is far too simplistic an interpretation of Gaelic Ireland that disregards native assimilation with the government.² Thus, this chapter presents a more nuanced argument that Gaelic loyalism was central to the extension and crucially the preservation of Tudor rule in the country. It also assesses this alternate model of Anglicisation and highlights that there was another way

¹ Maginn, 'The Gaelic Peers', p. 568.

² Ibid., p. 568; This is discussed in more detail in Edmund Curtis, *A History of Ireland: From Earliest times to 1922* (London, 2004), p. 150

for the Gaelic natives of Leix and Offaly to participate in the transition from Gaelic lordships to English shires between 1547 and 1603.

During Henry VIII's reign, there does not seem to have been a government agenda to grant noble ranks and title to Gaelic chieftains. In fact, it would appear that it was the Gaelic lords who approached the Tudor administration first and petitioned for 'a creation of a name of dignity' in return for holding their lands of the crown by letters patent.³ The government was aware of the benefits such a move could produce including a more peaceful extension of royal authority throughout the country and a cheap means of establishing English social and political structures in Gaelic dominated territories.⁴ Certainly, in the 1520s, the decision by Gaelic Irish lords to abandon their native titles and assume English ones were rare but as the decades progressed, it gradually became more common particularly during the mid to late 1530s. By the 1540s, the policy of surrender and regrant was flourishing and the government was inundated with submissions from Gaelic chieftains.⁵ Brian FitzPatrick was one such notable chieftain who submitted.

FitzPatrick crown loyalism

By the early sixteenth century, Upper Ossory was wedged firmly in the southwest corner of Leix on the border with Kilkenny.⁶ Originally committed supporters of the Geraldines, the FitzPatricks were forced to alter their allegiances in the wake of increasing Butler military power.⁷ The Butlers had benefitted greatly militarily via crown encouragement but the FitzPatricks were by no means insignificant in terms of martial capacity and were also capable of fielding a moderate sized army of their own.⁸ Edwards

³ Maginn, 'The Gaelic Peers', p. 570.

⁴ Ibid., p. 571.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ David Edwards, 'The MacGiollaPhádraigs of Upper Ossory, 1532-1641', in Pádraig G. Lane and William Nolan (eds), *Laois History and society: Interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1999), p. 332.

⁷ Edwards, 'The MacGiollaPhádraigs of Upper Ossory', p. 334.

⁸ Ibid. Estimates put the Butler forces at anywhere between 160-180 men. The FitzPatricks on the other hand were capable of deploying 40 horsemen,

argues that faced with the possibility of being overrun by Butler military might and Upper Ossory being reshired as part of County Kilkenny, Brian FitzPatrick, chieftain of his clan, entered into a marital alliance with Margaret Butler. Brian's motivations behind such a move were twofold. On the one hand, Brian knew that the government wished to restrict Butler power as much as possible, whilst also promoting them to higher office. On the other hand, Brian seized the opportunity to strengthen his faction's position, making it clear to the Tudor administration that once he completed surrender and regrant, he and his family could serve as competent rivals to Butler power in the south midlands.⁹

The MacBrian FitzPatrick's amiable relationship with the Tudor crown began in the 1520s when Brian FitzPatrick's father held the position of clerk of the diocese of Ossory.¹⁰ Brian junior further consolidated this when he met Leonard Grey on the 8 November 1537 and agreed to an arrangement similar to what would eventually become the policy of surrender and regrant in 1541.¹¹ Brian swore to hold his lands of the king, to adopt the English tongue, renounce the Pope and conduct himself and govern Upper Ossory in a similar manner to the feudal border lords of the Pale such as the barons of Delvin and Slane.¹² The process secured Brian's position as chieftain and ensured the protection of the crown, thus safeguarding the FitzPatricks against any future Butler aggression.¹³ Considering the wide ranging benefits surrender and regrant provided Brian and his clan, it was hardly surprising that he agreed to a more expanded form of the policy during Anthony St. Leger's tenure as Lord Deputy. Brian officially became "Baron of Upper Ossory" in 1541.¹⁴ The granting of the peerage to Brian can be viewed as kick starting the assimilation policy but it was certainly not a

a battle of galloglass (80 men) and 60 kern. See Maginn and Ellis, *The Tudor Discovery of Ireland*, pp 80-1.

⁹ Edwards, 'The MacGiollaPhádraigs of Upper Ossory', p. 331.

¹⁰ Papal Provision, 14 April 1529, TNA, SP 1/53/5464.

¹¹ See Introduction for a discussion of surrender and regrant, pp 2, 7-8.

¹² The submission of MacGillaPatrick to the King's Majesty, 8 November 1537, TNA, SP 60/5/41.

¹³ Edwards, 'The MacGiollaPhádraigs of Upper Ossory', p. 335.

¹⁴ *Fiants Ire. Henry VIII*, no. 193.

typical move on the government's part.¹⁵ In fact, the Baron of Upper Ossory was one of just four Gaelic Irishmen to be granted a similar title during Henry VIII's reign.¹⁶ The actual terms of his surrender were quite similar to the original under Leonard Grey whereby Brian swore to renounce his title of MacGiollaPhádraig, to hold his lands by knight's service, to adopt the English language and dress, introduce English methods of agriculture, cease any form of cess upon the inhabitants of his domain, not to keep any galloglass or kern unless instructed to do so, never to harbour rebels, provide military aid to the lord deputy when requested and to obey the king's laws.¹⁷ This highlighted how the Tudor government only accepted the submission of Gaelic Irish lords on the grounds that it erased all evidence of their native nobility.¹⁸ Furthermore, it suggests that Gaelic lords were also expected to undergo 'a constitutional and cultural transition' before genuinely being considered as English peers.¹⁹

However, David Edwards argues that Brian was pressurised into accepting the terms of the policy due to the presence of St. Leger and his army in Upper Ossory and once he had agreed, and St. Leger's army had withdrawn, he returned to being an autonomous Gaelic lord once more.²⁰ Brian's promises were insincere according to Edwards and the MacBrian faction offered little more than political collaboration with the Tudor government.²¹ For Brian and his immediate family, co-operation with the administration was the only means of protecting themselves from being absorbed within the jurisdiction of the Butlers.²² Maginn certainly agrees that a trend was unquestionably set in the early 1540s with regards to Gaelic lords accepting

¹⁵ Maginn, 'The Gaelic Peers', p. 572.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 573.

¹⁷ See Introduction for a discussion of these marks of English civility, pp 3-7; MacWilliam and MacGillpatrick, 3 June 1543, TNA, SP 60/11/12/16; Edwards, 'The MacGiollaPhádraigs of Upper Ossory', p. 337

¹⁸ Maginn, 'The Gaelic Peers', p. 573.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Edwards, 'The MacGiollaPhádraigs of Upper Ossory', p. 337.

²¹ David Edwards, 'Collaboration without Anglicisation', in Patrick J. Duffy, David Edwards and Elizabeth FitzPatrick (eds) *Gaelic Ireland c. 1250-1650: Land, Lordship and Settlement* (Dublin, 2001), pp 80-1.

²² Edwards, 'Collaboration without Anglicisation', pp 86-7.

English titles. Lords of lesser rank in particular faced a difficult dilemma; follow the trend or face being left behind. Critically, according to Maginn's analysis of the State Paper evidence, Gaelic lords actively pursued titles of English nobility for the benefits such titles provided. In other words, Gaelic lords were driven by practicality and the embracement of surrender and regrant offered a realistic means of overcoming local rivals or symbolised conformity to the Tudor government in the hope it would deter them from subjugating their clan or particular faction by force.²³ In essence, both Edwards and Maginn seem to agree that many Gaelic nobles petitioned for English noble titles only as a means of preserving and strengthening their local positions.²⁴ But, Edwards and Maginn disagree on some fundamental aspects of the policy of surrender and regrant. Edwards argues that Gaelic Irish lordships such as the FitzPatrick were insincere in their participation in the process of surrender and regrant and were little more than collaborators with the Tudor state, all the while retaining their Gaelic political and cultural order within their lordship.²⁵ Maginn on the other hand concludes that Gaelic lords and Gaelic Irish society assimilated and adapted their English titles of nobility in their own unique way. Gaelic society was hierarchal and the overall concept of nobility was not unfamiliar to Gaelic lords.²⁶ Instead of viewing the titles as a slight or an insult, or even a betrayal of Irish customs and ways of life, the offer of noble titles was too alluring to ignore and far from a mark of shame.²⁷ This leads one to question how sincere Brian and his successor's submissions truly were? Did the MacBrians embrace English rule or didn't they?

By 1541, St. Leger informed King Henry VIII that Brian had remained true to his word and pledges and even requested that he be permitted to attend

²³ Maginn, 'The Gaelic Peers', pp 582-4; Edwards, 'Collaboration without Anglicisation', pp 77-97; Edwards, 'The MacGiollaPhádraigs of Upper Ossory, 1532-1641', pp 327-76.

²⁴ Maginn, 'The Gaelic Peers', p. 584.

²⁵ Edwards, 'Collaboration without Anglicisation', pp 77-97; Maginn, "'Surrender and Regrant'", pp 970-1.

²⁶ Maginn, 'The Gaelic Peers', p. 584.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 584-6.

the next parliament.²⁸ The King approved and was pleased by how well the MacBrian faction had assimilated and promised to reward the baron with lucrative land grants in the future.²⁹ Thus, Brian became the first Gaelic Irishman to sit as a member of the Irish parliament in the House of Lords, even travelling to London in 1543 to be knighted by Henry VIII in person.³⁰ He was joined at the said parliament by the leaders of the O'Reillys and the O'Connors as well as the representatives of five other lords and clans.³¹ Conn O'Neill and Murrough O'Brien, two of the most powerful Gaelic lords in Ireland followed in 1542 and 1543 being created earls of Tyrone and Thomond respectively.³² Brian was subsequently granted his land requests with a court leet and hundred in Upper Ossory and a Thursday market approved at Aghaboe.³³ His lands, including the township of Glashare, which had been seized by the Earl of Kildare some years earlier, were restored as well as monastic land in Aghmacart and Abbeyleix at an annual rent of £3 14s. 4d.³⁴ On 1 November 1544, in an apparent attempt to prove his loyalty and usefulness to the crown, Brian acted as a spy for St. Leger, informing him of meetings between the O'Mores and O'Connors as well as warning the Lord Deputy of suspicious behaviour amongst the earls of Ormond, Thomond and Desmond.³⁵ In 1546, Thomas Cusack, Master of the Rolls in Ireland, suggested that Brian was one of the many Irish lords who lamented St. Leger's recall to England, vowing to defend the country until his return.³⁶ If Brian truly was disinterested in full assimilation with English rule, his actions as well as that of his son's post-1543, were

²⁸ Lord Deputy St. Leger to the King, 21 February 1541, TNA, SP 60/10/4.

²⁹ Henry VIII to the Deputy and Council of Ireland, 26 March 1541, TNA, SP 60/10/6.

³⁰ *Cal. pat. rolls, Ire.*, p. 71; Deputy of Ireland and Others to Henry VIII, 28 June 1541, TNA, SP 60/10/18; Bradshaw, *The Irish constitutional revolution*, pp 238-40.

³¹ Maginn, 'The Gaelic Peers', p. 572.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ The court leet was a manorial court held yearly or every six months by the lord of the manor in the presence of all male inhabitants. They had jurisdiction over lesser offences such as minor affrays. See Morrill, *Oxford illustrated history of Tudor and Stuart Britain*, p. 445.

³⁴ An abridgement of the Irishmen's requests, 1543, TNA, SP 60/11/10.

³⁵ Sir William Wise to St. Leger, 1 November 1544/5, TNA, SP 60/12/1.II.

³⁶ Sir Thomas Cusack to Paget, 28 March 1546, TNA, SP 60/12/41.

perplexing. As highlighted by Edwards, there is no evidence to suggest that Brian was able to speak English.³⁷ The baron ensured that his son and heir Barnaby FitzPatrick would not be held back in the same way and would become completely assimilated. As such, Barnaby was educated in the Pale from an early age and after little over a year there, he was fluent in English.³⁸ In 1543, Brian sent Barnaby to London to be raised as a courtier and to obtain court influence and favour with the crown.³⁹ Clearly Brian embraced English rule, which compliments the argument that Gaelic lords were more than willing, in the 1540s in particular, to adopt English titles and embrace assimilation with the Tudor government.⁴⁰

Within just four years, Barnaby had flourished and impressed his newfound mentors in England and was even chosen to march in Henry VIII's funeral procession carrying a 'banner of ancient arms'.⁴¹ By this stage, he also signed himself as 'FitzPatrick' and presented in person his father's petition for monastic land in Abbeyleix to the master of requests.⁴² By 1551, he had advanced further and was made a gentleman of the king's privy chamber alongside Robert Dudley.⁴³ Barnaby, although technically Edward VI's 'whipping boy', was deemed the poorest and yet most agreeable of Edward's henchmen and seems to have been the only adherent of that elite ensemble with whom Edward had become personally close and until his untimely death, he allegedly spoke to Barnaby with 'an ease and informality suggesting a strong personal affection'.⁴⁴ So strong was the trust between the two young men that Barnaby was eventually assigned to France to serve

³⁷ Edwards, 'Collaboration without Anglicisation', p. 83.

³⁸ Lord Deputy St. Leger to the King, 21 February 1541, TNA, SP 60/10/4.

³⁹ Edwards, 'The MacGiollaPhádraigs of Upper Ossory', p. 341.

⁴⁰ Maginn, 'Surrender and regrant', p. 971.

⁴¹ Order of ceremonies to be observed at the funeral of Henry VIII, February 15 1547, TNA, SP 10/1/16.

⁴² Edwards, 'The MacGiollaPhádraigs of Upper Ossory', p. 341.

⁴³ John Gough Nichols, *Literary remains of King Edward the sixth: edited from his autograph manuscripts, with historical notes and a biographical memoir, part 2* (London, 1857), p. 64.

⁴⁴ Konrad Eisenbichler, *The premodern teenager: youth in society, 1150-1650* (Toronto, 2002), pp 140-1; W.K. Jordan, *Edward VI: The young King* (Cambridge, 1968), p. 44.

as gentleman of the King's privy chamber to Henry II and to act as Edward's eyes and ears during the Italian War 1551-1559 against The Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, monitoring events on the European mainland.⁴⁵ Before his departure from France, Barnaby secured glowing recommendations from prominent figures such as Henry II and Anne de Montmorency, King and Constable of France respectively.⁴⁶

King Edward's death the following July should have spelt disaster for Barnaby, but instead, he remained at court and played an active part alongside his cousin, Thomas Butler, 10th Earl of Ormond, in crushing Thomas Wyatt's rebellion of 1554, receiving further praise and recommendations from Queen Mary I of England and King Philip II of Spain.⁴⁷ Barnaby proved his ability not only to charm his way into political favour under one monarch, but two vastly contrasting sovereigns at that. He also built powerful connections at court with individuals including William Cecil, later 1st Baron Burghley, who allegedly became somewhat of a father figure to the young Barnaby.⁴⁸ By the end of 1554 Barnaby had achieved all of his father's aspirations and more. Arguably, he was transformed into a highly respected, well educated, and well travelled Anglicised son of a Gaelic chieftain and a radiant example of successful cultural assimilation.

Upon his return to Upper Ossory, Barnaby quarrelled with his father and his stepmother, Elizabeth O'Connor, whom he deemed 'the most naughty and malicious creature alive'.⁴⁹ Furthermore, he was clearly dissatisfied with his

⁴⁵ Nichols, *Literary remains of King Edward the sixth*, p. 64.

⁴⁶ Henry II, King of France to King Edward VI, 8 December 1552, TNA, SP 68/10/589; The Constable Montmorency to King Edward VI, 8 December 1552, TNA, SP 68/10/590.

⁴⁷ Archdall, *Lodge's Peerage of Ireland*, Vol. 2, p. 335; Gilbert, *Facsimiles of the national manuscripts of Ireland*, p. 171; Cathaldus Giblin (ed.), 'Catalogue of Irish material in the Nunziatura di Fiandra' *Collectanea Hibernica*, No. 1 (1958), p. 46; Edwards, 'The MacGiollaPhádraigs of Upper Ossory', p. 343.

⁴⁸ Sir William Pickering to Sir William Cecil, 29 December 1551, TNA, SP 68/9/522; Barnaby FitzPatrick to Sir William Cecil, 12 February 1551, TNA, SP 68/10/534.

⁴⁹ Gilbert, *Facsimiles of the national manuscripts of Ireland*, p. 172.

father's reluctance to assist the government in its efforts to establish the Leix-Offaly plantation and the suppression of the rebellious elements of the O'Mores and O'Connors. Having managed to gain favour under Mary's regime, Barnaby was unwilling to allow his father to jeopardise all he had achieved in England and abroad.⁵⁰ It soon became clear that the new administration in Dublin, headed by Thomas Radcliffe, the Earl of Sussex, wanted to make the Leix-Offaly plantation a reality, as it was one of the linchpins of his national strategy in Ireland.⁵¹ From that point onwards, the government informed Barnaby that they wished to deal with him as the head of the FitzPatrick clan as opposed to his father Brian.⁵² Barnaby seized the opportunity with open arms. In 1556, he was made captain of a band of his clan's horsemen and kern and given a yearly salary of £300 by the government.⁵³ Military assignments soon followed in Ulster to resist the presence of the Scots there and in France from 1557-8, when Barnaby took part in the unsuccessful defence of English held Calais.⁵⁴ In March 1558, following instructions from Queen Mary, he assisted the government in crushing O'More and O'Connor resistance in neighbouring Leix and Offaly, proving that he was not willing to make the same mistakes as his father.⁵⁵ It seems quite clear that Brian was standing in the way of Barnaby's growing ambitions at this stage and his son quickly proved that he was more than willing to dispose of his father in rising to the top. Bolstered by Sussex's military might and the full backing of the crown by 1559, Barnaby gathered the necessary support from the majority of his faction, overthrew his father as chieftain, and seized control of Upper Ossory.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Edwards, 'The MacGiollaPhádraigs of Upper Ossory', p. 343.

⁵¹ See chapter 2, pp 65-7 in particular.

⁵² *HMC: Acts of the Privy Council in Ireland, 1556-1571*, pp 4-5.

⁵³ *HMC: Report on the manuscripts of Lord de l'Isle & Dudley*, Vol. 2 (London, 1925), pp 366, 376 and 384.

⁵⁴ *HMC: Acts of the Privy Council in Ireland, 1556-1571*, p. 18; Kingsford, *Report on the manuscripts of Lord de l'Isle & Dudley*, pp 366, 376 and 384; Edwards, 'The MacGiollaPhádraigs of Upper Ossory', p. 344.

⁵⁵ Mary to Barnaby, 12 March 1558, TNA, SP 62/1/18; *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-74*, no. 215.

⁵⁶ Lord Justice and Council to Upper Ossory, 5 August 1564, TNA, SP 63/11/61; Edwards, 'The MacGiollaPhádraigs of Upper Ossory', p. 344.

Meanwhile, in 1560, Barnaby proved his loyalty and worth to the government yet again when he served as Lieutenant to Sir George Howard, General of the men at arms and demi-lances, at the Siege of Leith.⁵⁷ His bravery during the siege earned him a knighthood at Berwick on the 18 July.⁵⁸ In 1564, he negotiated a ceasefire with the O'Mores and O'Connors, handing his own nephew over as a hostage and bringing an end to their rebellion.⁵⁹ He further assisted the crown during the northern expedition of 1566 to oust Shane O'Neill from power.⁶⁰ However, it was his request to the Privy Council that provides us with the greatest indication of his commitment and loyalty to the Tudor crown. Appealing for the territory of Upper Ossory to be shired, Barnaby urged the government to join it 'to such shire as is fittest for the service of the prince and quiet of the inhabitants'.⁶¹ This was a testament to the fact that although the FitzPatricks embraced surrender and regrant, according to Barnaby at least, Upper Ossory remained unshired by 1566. Nevertheless, Barnaby also requested the grant of two friaries promised to his father before Edward VI's death worth an estimated value of £8 per annum and the abolition of the maintenance charge for galloglass upon his territory.⁶² In June 1568, Elizabeth agreed to Barnaby's requests and ordered Sidney to conduct a survey of Upper Ossory in order to ensure Barnaby received his father's land following Brian's death.⁶³ Citing Brian as aged and impotent by the year 1566, Lord Deputy Sidney declared that Barnaby was a 'gentleman of noble service and valour who already has that captainry without competitors'.⁶⁴ This incident proved how highly regarded Barnaby was by the Queen and her inner circle and demonstrated just how far the MacBrian faction of the FitzPatricks had advanced in their influence at the Tudor court by the 1560s. Not only did the Queen grant all of Barnaby's requests but also her decision to permit the

⁵⁷ Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, pp 184-5.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁵⁹ O'Hanlon & O'Leary, *History of the Queen's County*, ii, 450.

⁶⁰ *HMC: Acts of the Privy Council in Ireland, 1556-1571*, p. 167.

⁶¹ Petition of Sir Barnaby FitzPatrick, 1566, TNA, SP 63/19/88.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ The Queen to the Lord Deputy, June 1568, TNA, SP 63/25/12.

⁶⁴ Lord Deputy Sidney to the Privy Council, 13 April 1566, TNA, SP 63/17/8.

official shiring of Upper Ossory directly conflicted with the Butler family's aspirations for the territory.⁶⁵ From that point onwards, it could be argued that the Butlers lost any real hold they had over the area.

But why was Upper Ossory unshired by 1566 and why was it not shired after 1569 as a separate county? In the Earl of Ormond's view Upper Ossory had already been shired and was part of County Kilkenny since the 1170s, something the FitzPatricks strenuously denied.⁶⁶ In 1573, Thomas Butler requested that the Queen order all the inhabitants of Upper Ossory to appear at quarter sessions in Kilkenny.⁶⁷ Butler subsequently claimed that Barnaby managed to retain his independence in return for only token compliance with the government and assimilation: 'Is he not suffered to live lawless and none of his country to appear at sessions? I would those of Ossory were answerable to English law, that they might live in some order. They never come to assizes or sessions, as the rest of the County of Kilkenny do'.⁶⁸ Ormond was unquestionably frustrated at the government's apparent lack of interest and unwillingness to intervene in the dispute over Butlers' claims on Upper Ossory. To make matters even worse for the Earl, Sir William Gerrard, Lord Chancellor and the second most important royal official in Ireland, supported Ormond claims on the territory but the government ignored even his endorsement.⁶⁹ So bitter was the rivalry and the dispute that the FitzPatrick's allegedly refused to ever 'consent to be of that County (Kilkenny) for the native malice between them, the one having been utter enemy to the other'. Instead the FitzPatrick's pleaded to become part of the county (Queen's County) and in 'all criminal cases to be tried by the late planted English, than by their ancient enemies in the county of

⁶⁵ Edwards, 'Collaboration without Anglicization', p. 86.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Remembrances of the requests of Thomas Butler, earl of Ormond, 1573, TNA, SP 63/42/79.

⁶⁸ Ormond to FitzWilliam, 28 November 1573, Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Carte MS. 56, fol. 216; Ormond to Fitzwilliam, 6 August 1575, Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Carte MS. 55, fol. 330.

⁶⁹ Edwards, 'Collaboration without Anglicization', pp 88-9; Charles MacNeill (ed.), 'Lord Chancellor Gerrard's notes of his report on Ireland, with extracts from original Irish records exhibited by him before the Privy Council in England, 1577-8', *Anal. Hib.*, no. 2 (January, 1931), pp 167-8.

Kilkenny'.⁷⁰ The matter was finally resolved in July 1600 when the Queen and her Privy Council ruled that Upper Ossory was to be annexed to the Queen's County, much to the Butler's dismay.⁷¹ The government also clarified that 'it had been doubtful whether the country [Upper Ossory] was part of any county or not'.⁷² Arguably, this was definitive proof that in the administration's eyes, the territory of Upper Ossory was not part of County Kilkenny and remained unshired until that point. In 1602, the FitzPatrick clan formally answered the jurisdiction of the sessions in Maryborough proving their willingness to embrace English common law and administration, refuting Ormond and David Edward's claims that Barnaby and his clan were simply token collaborators.⁷³

In fact, Barnaby repaid the Queen's trust in him time and time again throughout the remainder of his life. In 1569, he helped the government crush Butler rebels during their uprising in the midlands before they could crucially draw Shane O'Neill's support from Ulster.⁷⁴ Throughout the 1570s, he was a thorn in the side of the dispossessed elements of the O'Mores and O'Connors at the height of Rory Óg O'More's rebellion vowing 'with the help of God to kill or banish' the two clans from the midlands.⁷⁵ In July 1578, the rebel coalition was struck a fatal blow when Barnaby hunted down and killed Rory Óg, bringing an end to his devastating uprising. According to Sidney, when offered the reward of the bounty on O'More's head of £1000, Barnaby was content to accept a mere £100 for his services.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ The description of the realm, 1597, TNA, SP 63/201/157.

⁷¹ Queen Elizabeth to the Lord Deputy Mountjoy, 21 July 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/41; *Fiants, Ire. Eliz.*, no. 6610.

⁷² *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 6610.

⁷³ Edwards, 'Collaboration without Anglicization', pp 89-90.

⁷⁴ Edwards, 'The Butler revolt of 1569', pp 231, 249-50.

⁷⁵ Ormond to Fitzwilliam, 6 August 1575, Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Carte MS. 55, fol. 330; Upper Ossory to Walsingham, 30 January 1577, TNA, SP 63/57/8; Edwards, 'Beyond reform', pp 16-21; Edwards, 'The MacGiollaPhádraigs of Upper Ossory', p. 347.

⁷⁶ Herbert Hore (ed.), 'Sir Henry Sidney's memoir of his government of Ireland', *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 8 (1860), p. 189.

Chapter 6

The Desmond revolt of October 1579 combined with the coinciding insurrections of Fiach MacHugh O'Byrne and Viscount Baltinglass, ultimately brought an end to Barnaby's illustrious career. Threatening to tear Upper Ossory apart and out of fear of isolating a number of his clansmen, Barnaby offered Sir John FitzGerald, brother of the Gerald FitzGerald, 15th Earl of Desmond, hospitality in Coumkill Castle.⁷⁷ The decision rebounded spectacularly on Barnaby as upon leaving Coumkill, FitzGerald attacked the Earl of Ormond's brother Piers Butler. In addition, Dermot and Turlough FitzPatrick, Barnaby's half brothers, declared for the rebels.⁷⁸ Ormond seized the initiative and accused Barnaby of treason against the crown for which Barnaby and his wife were imprisoned in Dublin Castle on 14 January 1581.⁷⁹ Despite receiving the full support of the Queen's secretary Francis Walsingham, who referred to Barnaby as 'sound a man to Her Majesty as any of his nation', FitzPatrick's health dramatically deteriorated during his time in prison and he died in November 1581 aged 46.⁸⁰

According to David Edwards, Barnaby's sole achievement during his lifetime was securing Upper Ossory's 'independence, an accomplishment which cost him his life in the end'.⁸¹ However one could argue that this is an unfair assessment of what Barnaby actually achieved through his loyalism to the crown. As highlighted throughout Chapters 1-4, the Tudor government did not pursue the Welsh model on a large scale in the midlands. Yet Barnaby was very unique in that he was one of the very few Gaelic Irishmen (albeit greatly Anglicized by this point) with the exception of Owen MacHugh O'Dempsey and Terence O'Dempsey to be appointed to such positions within the local government of the two shires. According to

⁷⁷ Edwards, 'The MacGiollaPhádraigs of Upper Ossory', p. 348; For more on Sir John FitzGerald, see chapter 4, pp 119-20.

⁷⁸ Examination of Sir James FitzGerald, 25 August 1580, TNA, SP 63/76/25.

⁷⁹ Ormond to Lord Grey, 28 August 1580, TNA, SP 63/75/73; Treasurer Wallop to Walsingham, 14 January 1581, TNA, SP 63/80/5.

⁸⁰ Lord Deputy to the Privy Council, 6 November 1581, TNA, SP 63/86/51; Edwards, 'The MacGiollaPhádraigs of Upper Ossory', p. 349.

⁸¹ Edwards, 'The MacGiollaPhádraigs of Upper Ossory', p. 349

Jon G. Crawford, the structure of the military establishment of Ireland post-1556 centred around three distinct positions/posts of which Barnaby held all three: a captain over a band of soldiers, the constable/sheriff and the seneschal.⁸² He also held the position of commander of musters for the Queen's County in 1572 and 1573 as well as Justice of the Peace for Munster and Connaught in 1576 and 1580 respectively.⁸³

Barnaby's successor in Upper Ossory, Florence FitzPatrick, lacked the same connections and influence in London that his brother had possessed.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, despite almost incessant internal strife within his clan, Florence continued in his brother and father's footsteps by co-operating with the crown, securing the support of Lord Deputy Perrot and a commission of martial law in May 1585.⁸⁵ From that point onwards, Florence ruthlessly purged Upper Ossory of any rebel elements, which included certain factions within his own clan, particularly during the height of the Nine Years' War.⁸⁶ His most notable achievement during his time as third Baron Upper Ossory was securing his territory's annexation to the Queen's County.⁸⁷ He also secured extensive monastic land in Upper Ossory including Aghamacarty monastery with its own water mill and tithes of grain and hay as well as an additional five rectories at an annual rent of

⁸² Barnaby was appointed captain over a band of kern from as early as 1558. See Mary to Barnaby, 12 March 1558, TNA, SP 62/2/18; Barnaby was appointed sheriff of the Queen's County from 1568-9. See *Fiants, Eliz. I*, no. 1329; He was also appointed Lieutenant of the Queen's county and King's County as well as the two forts in 1576. See *Fiants, Eliz. I*, nos 2843-4. Also see Crawford, *Anglicizing the Government of Ireland*, pp 277-8.

⁸³ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 2117, 2345, 2862, 3667.

⁸⁴ Sidney to Elizabeth I, 20 April 1567, TNA, SP 63/20/66.

⁸⁵ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 4640; Edwards, 'The MacGiollaPhádraigs of Upper Ossory', pp 349-50.

⁸⁶ This included the MacShane FitzPatrick faction. He also crushed his son Tadhg's uprising in 1601 and executed over 200 rebels in the process. See Florence Fitzpatrick, Baron of Upper Ossory, to Sir Robert Cecil, Feb. 3 1601, TNA, SP 63/208/31; Florence, Earl of Upper Ossory to Secretary Cecil, 2 May 1602, TNA, SP 63/211/22.

⁸⁷ Queen Elizabeth to the Lord Deputy Mountjoy and the Council, July 21 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/41.

just over £28 a year.⁸⁸ The MacBrian faction were far from token collaborators with the Tudor government. On the contrary, they seemed to embrace English rule.

But how are we to account for their actions? The evidence certainly suggests that the MacBrians were simply motivated by the opportunity to remove the Butler stranglehold over their territory. Brian's submission offered his faction security and consolidated their overall position. From an economic standpoint, the move made Brian a wealthy and powerful individual. Barnaby seemed to be motivated by similar circumstances. The evidence also suggests that he was driven by personal ambition and regarded himself as one of the Tudor crown's most devoted subjects.

In sum, the FitzPatricks exemplified what could be achieved through surrender and regrant. Arguably, they became a symbol for the crown to other Gaelic clans of what could be achieved through total loyalism and assimilation, exactly what the government envisaged and hoped to achieve under the policy of assimilation. Furthermore, contrary to Edwards's hypothesis that the clan never truly embraced loyalism and in turn never advanced Anglicisation within their territory, the evidence simply does not support this argument. Instead, it reaffirms that the clan did in fact embrace both co-operation with the crown and advance Anglicisation within their territory to some extent, regardless of their motivations behind such a move.

O'More Loyalism:

The experience of the FitzPatricks was far from exceptional.⁸⁹ Even the most rebellious factions of the Gaelic clans of the midlands like the MacConnell O'More branch sought a stake in the Leix-Offaly plantation and had loyalist elements. Connell O'More swore fealty to Henry VIII in 1520.⁹⁰ Little is known of his actions between 1520 and 1537 aside from the fact that he died in 1537 and was succeeded by his son Rory MacConnell.

⁸⁸ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 6493.

⁸⁹ Edwards, 'Collaboration without Anglicization', p. 96.

⁹⁰ Stile to Wolsey, 19 October 1521, TNA, SP 60/1/26.

According to Rory, his father was allegedly a devoted crown loyalist who

Even in the midst of the rebellion of the Geraldines forsook them and served... Sir William Skeffington against them...and others until they submitted; and divers times when O'Connor procured him to war against the King he refused. Connell allegedly proclaimed on his deathbed that "I leave my blessing with my sons...to serve them (the King and his Deputy) truly against all men".⁹¹

Rory more or less followed his father's instructions and swore fealty to the crown and submitted in 1541. Similar to the terms of Brian FitzPatrick's submission, Rory promised to be a 'faithful and liege subject with the other gentlemen of his country' receiving land from 'his Highness'. He also pledged to reject the 'usurped primacy' of the Pope and was permitted to retain 72 kern for the rule of his territory. Furthermore, Rory was expected to assist the Lord Deputy with general hostings and provide him with 20 cows as well as paying 20 marks a year as a subsidy.⁹² However, the crown's decision to recognise Rory as Captain of Leix caused significant tension with his rival MacGillaPatrick (or Patrick O'More as he was sometimes known) who sought the captaincy for himself. MacGillaPatrick subsequently murdered Rory in 1545 which overturned the surrender and regrant scheme set in place, which as detailed in Chapter 1, drove the MacGillaPatrick sept into open rebellion with the crown.⁹³

Rory left behind two sons: Calvagh and Rory Óg who had vastly contrasting upbringings and personal ambitions. Whereas Rory was fostered by the O'Byrnes in the Wicklow Mountains, Calvagh, much like Barnaby FitzPatrick, was raised in London and studied law at Gray's Inn. Calvagh and Rory were second cousins of Thomas Butler, 10th Earl of Ormond, who appealed to the Queen to grant his loyal and assimilated relative Calvagh some livelihood in Ireland. Ormond pointed to the fact that Calvagh's father was 'killed in service' to the crown and it would be 'a deed of charity to a

⁹¹ Rory O'More to Henry VIII, 1545, TNA, SP 60/11/49.

⁹² *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-1575*, no. 163.

⁹³ See chapter 1, p. 40; Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', pp 216-19; Christopher Maginn, 'A window on mid-Tudor Ireland: the "Matters" against Lord Deputy St. Leger, 1547-8', *Historical Research*, Vol. 78 (2005), pp 471-2; O'Byrne, 'War, politics and the Irish of Leinster, 1156-1606', pp 313-4.

poor gentleman to help him to some stay of living in this country'.⁹⁴ However, Calvagh was excluded from holding lands in the Queen's County due to the previous resistance offered by his more rebellious kin, particularly during the 1547/8 rebellion. He appealed to the Queen stating that his father had combated the rebellious elements of the O'More clan and had paid for it with his life. Accordingly, Calvagh petitioned the government to restore his father's lands to him in due consideration of Connell's good service to Henry VIII, vowing that he would then 'be able to serve her Majesty better'.⁹⁵ Despite government reservations due to the actions of his brother and his rebellious fellow clansmen, Calvagh was eventually granted land in Kildare in the 1570s. He was granted former monastic land in Meath as well as plots of land in Dublin.⁹⁶ Calvagh remained a loyalist throughout Rory's rebellion and in 1580 he was appointed to parley with the O'Mores and to levy 100 kern.⁹⁷ In October of that year, he was granted a crown pension and by 1582 the Queen recommended that he be granted a stake in the Leix-Offaly plantation in the form of 'waste lands' in the Queen's County.⁹⁸ The granting of the fee farm of Clonagh in the same shire followed in 1586 and it would appear that Calvagh lived out his final days as a government loyalist.⁹⁹ But, despite his background in law and in direct contrast to Barnaby FitzPatrick, the Tudor administration was unwilling to offer him a position within the local government. The reasoning behind the administration's reluctance is difficult to ascertain. Calvagh appeared to be a loyal crown subject that embraced English rule. However, the link to his rebellious brother may very well have been his undoing and limited his chances of being appointed to the county government. Maginn argues that in shires with English

⁹⁴ Thomas Butler, earl of Ormond to Sir William Cecil, 19 July 1569, TNA, SP 63/29/16; Thomas Butler, earl of Ormond to Burghley, 11 January 1572, TNA, SP 63/35/7.

⁹⁵ Petition of Callough O'More to Queen Elizabeth, 19 July 1569, TNA, SP 63/29/18.

⁹⁶ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 2448, 2606, 3967.

⁹⁷ *Carew MSS, 1575-1588*, no. 243.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 480; The Queen to the Lords Justices, 12 November 1582, TNA, SP 63/97/34.

⁹⁹ Petition of John Lye, 5 January 1586, TNA, SP 63/128/7.

freeholders, such as the Queen's County and King's County, it was not uncommon for the Gaelic natives to be overlooked for positions in the local administration in favour of English candidates.¹⁰⁰ For every successful example of a Gaelic Irishman being elevated to a position such as Barnaby FitzPatrick, there were numerous cases of anti-Irish sentiment hindering loyalist natives from a similar appointment throughout the country.¹⁰¹

The case study of Calvagh is significant for a number of reasons. On the one hand, it highlights that even the most rebellious clans of the Queen's County and King's County contained elements of government loyalists who were more than willing to accept English rule in return for grants of land. Furthermore, it reveals the Tudor government's reluctance to implement the Welsh model in the midlands on a large scale and offer the Gaelic natives of the region, even the most willing Anglophiles, a role within the English local government.

Owen MacHugh O'Dempsey and Gaelic loyalism in Clanmalire (Queen's County & King's County):

The MacBrian FitzPatricks and components of the MacConnell O'Mores were not the only Gaelic factions of Leix to realise or take advantage of the benefits collaboration with the Tudor crown posed. The government was also more than aware of the level of friction and rivalry within the Gaelic lordships of Ireland. Using this to its advantage, the administration sponsored the rise of the Gaelic *Uirríthe* or vassal lords; the goal was that in return for the freehold of their land, they would switch allegiances from the O'More and O'Connor chieftains, to the crown, thus negating the threat of the rebellious factions of the two clans to the Pale and the Leix-Offaly plantation. In turn, the administration also hoped to reduce the Queen's expenses and demonstrate the benefits of cooperation with the Tudor government.¹⁰² Wedged between Leix and Offaly and subordinate to the

¹⁰⁰ Maginn, *William Cecil*, p. 194.

¹⁰¹ chapter 5, p. 166; Brief of Lord Delvin's suit to the Queen, June 1597, TNA, SP 63/200/132; Maginn, *William Cecil*, p. 195.

¹⁰² Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', p. 235.

O'Mores and O'Connors, Owen Mac Hugh O'Dempsey was one such vassal lord who was willing to overthrow his Gaelic overlords and seize the lordship of Clanmalire for himself.¹⁰³

The O'Dempsey's of Clanmalire hailed from the north east of Leix, near present day Ballybrittas and their territory expanded into Offaly primarily around Geashill and Clonygowan. To the north lay the domain on the O'Connors and to the south lay the realm of the O'Mores. From the outset, O'Dempsey supported English rule, assisting the government with the suppression of the dispossessed O'Mores and O'Connors.¹⁰⁴ In 1558, he hunted down and killed the rebel Donagh MacBrian O'Connor for which he was rewarded with an appointment as captain of the kern and wages of over £1000 for the elimination of rebellious dissent in the midlands.¹⁰⁵ By 1563, he was part of the local government of the region where he served as Justice of the Peace for the Queen's County and was instructed to make war upon any invading enemy or rebel.¹⁰⁶ He was also a member of the county gentry in the two shires and a leading landowner with his estates spread across 89 townlands worth over £40 annually.¹⁰⁷ As outlined in chapter two, only Francis Cosby rivaled him in terms of landed possessions. The government expected O'Dempsey to maintain 27 English horsemen and 28 footmen on his lands in the two shires particularly in Maryborough and Philipstown forts as well as attendance at the general hosting.¹⁰⁸ In 1564, Owen MacHugh and his fellow clansmen, mostly crown kern, were pardoned in consideration of their services against the Gaelic Irish rebels of the Queen's County and King's County 'in which without malice they may have offended against the rigours of the laws'.¹⁰⁹ Arguably, the crown pardon was a testament of the O'Dempsey clan's commitment to the government

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Lord Deputy Bellingham to the Lord Chancellor Sir John Alen, July 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/40.

¹⁰⁵ *AFM*, s.a. 1558; A.K. Longfield (ed.), *FitzWilliam accounts 1560-65* (Dublin, 1960), pp 52-106.

¹⁰⁶ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 542-3.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., nos 596, 1322, 1509, 1654.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, no. 634.

and to maintaining their position as well as the level of animosity they felt towards their former O'More and O'Connor oppressors. Yet despite his stern commitment to the government, for some reason the evidence suggests that Owen did not take out a grant of English liberty, nor did he officially surrender his lands in the two shires until 1570 after which point he was granted an English title to Clanmalire.¹¹⁰

During Rory Óg's rebellion, Owen was listed as a gentleman alongside Henry and Robert Cowley and Francis Cosby and was instructed to pursue the dispossessed O'Mores and O'Connors as far afield as Westmeath and any other place they fled. When found, O'Dempsey, the Cowleys and Cosby were instructed to confiscate the midlands clan's goods for the crown and punish anyone found to have harboured the Gaelic rebels.¹¹¹ According to Lord Deputy FitzWilliam, settlers such as Owen MacHugh O'Dempsey were the ideal fit for the Leinster region, capable of surviving in volatile environments and crucial to the preservation of the Pale and the Leix-Offaly plantation.¹¹² Furthermore in 1574, FitzWilliam deemed Owen MacHugh to be the ideal candidate to plant of the rebel stronghold of Gallen. As already mentioned, Gallen was a 2,000-acre plot of land covered in wood, bog and mountains that offered the rebels access to every corner of the Pale. Owen vowed 'to place there at his own cost 100 householders at least. For his backing, the rest of the county which is almost forsaken by the Englishry needs to be better inhabited'.¹¹³ Thus, O'Dempsey offered the government a means of fortifying a former Gaelic rebel fastness at practically no expense to the crown. Vincent Carey argues that this was a highly significant move by the administration as it signalled a transformation of the political and social order whereby an English Lord Deputy suggested the supplanting of a dominant clan with that of its former vassal.¹¹⁴ But nothing more ever came of the proposal.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 1631.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, no. 2164.

¹¹² FitzWilliam to Burghley, 7 April 1573, TNA, SP 63/40/3; Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', p. 241.

¹¹³ Fitzwilliam to Burghley, 7 April 1573, TNA, SP 63/40/3.

¹¹⁴ Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', p. 240.

In February 1575, O'Dempsey acted as an informant for the crown and reported back to the government on activities both within and surrounding the midlands.¹¹⁵ Arguably, however, it was the year 1577/8 that truly exemplified O'Dempsey's level of commitment to the Tudor government and English rule when he was implicated in the Mullaghmast massacre of the O'More and O'Connor elite.¹¹⁶ As outlined in chapter 3, although the Gaelic sources implicated English settlers such as Cosby and Hartpole as the main perpetrators, it appears that other county gentry such as O'Dempsey most likely played a significant role.¹¹⁷ Owen's decision to participate in the massacre was a grave mistake, as in its aftermath; he was hunted down and killed by one of Rory Óg O'More's chief lieutenants, Niall MacLaoiseach O'More, in 1578.¹¹⁸ Upon his death, and due to the fact that he had no male offspring, his lands passed to his nephew Terence O'Dempsey.¹¹⁹

But Terence was just a minor when he succeeded his uncle, his own father having been slain in 1566.¹²⁰ Hence, he was put under the wardship of Francis Cosby who was granted custody of his lands. Upon coming of age in 1581, Terence inherited his father and uncle's estates as well as a yearly landed income of just over £50.¹²¹ By 1591, Terence was an esquire, a member of the county gentry and was referred to as the late sheriff of the King's County.¹²² He undertook the same role in the Queen's County in 1593.¹²³

¹¹⁵ Declaration of Owen Mac Hugh, 10 February 1575, TNA, SP 63/49/60; Declaration of Richard FitzGerald, 12 March 1575, TNA, SP 63/50/11.

¹¹⁶ *AFM*, s.a. 1577.

¹¹⁷ *AFM*, s.a. 1577; Also see chapter 3.

¹¹⁸ *Fiantis Ire. Eliz.*, no. 3397; Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order', p. 236.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Fiantis Ire. Eliz.*, nos 885, 3397.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, nos 3397, 3830.

¹²² *Ibid.*, no. 5601.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 6439; Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, vol. 1, p. 224.

When the Nine Years' War broke out in 1594, the sources indicate that Terence was determined to hold Clanmalire as a loyalist area for the government.¹²⁴ P.J. Goode argues that had Terence declared for the rebels, it would have greatly destabilised an area referred to as 'such kind of strength that it were impossible for the enemy to pass to and fro without great damage'.¹²⁵ Thus, Clanmalire was a crucial loyalist stronghold for the administration. Goode also argues that Terence only wavered once in his loyalty to the crown, following the sack of Maryborough in 1597 following which he agreed to a ceasefire with Hugh O'Neill and assessed his options.¹²⁶ He eventually decided to remain loyal to the Queen and rallied any remaining crown forces in the area throughout the final years of the sixteenth century, inflicting defeats to O'Neill's forces in 1598 and 1599 for which he was rewarded with a knighthood.¹²⁷ To prove his loyalty, Terence pledged his son as assurance to the government, sending his other son James to be educated in the Pale, similar to what Brian FitzPatrick had done in Upper Ossory.¹²⁸ Terence and his immediate family were also listed as the only faction of the O'Dempseys to resist the Gaelic coalition during the Nine Years' War, despite the fact that his lands were attacked on several occasions¹²⁹

However, not everyone within the Tudor administration wholly trusted him. Captain Thomas Lee argued that the entire O'Dempsey sept along with the O'Mores needed to be suppressed.¹³⁰ Lord Deputy Mountjoy was also

¹²⁴ P.J. Goode, 'O'Dempseys in Offaly, some references in an Elizabethan document', *Journal of the Offaly historical and archaeological society*, Vol. 4, (2006), p. 13.

¹²⁵ Goode, 'O'Dempseys in Offaly, some references in an Elizabethan document', p. 13

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹²⁷ Rough notes of a manuscript history, May 1599, TNA, SP 63/205/70; Goode, 'O'Dempseys in Offaly, some references in an Elizabethan document', p. 19; Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, vol. 2, p. 224.

¹²⁸ List of pledges which certain submittees of the province of Leinster agreed to put in, 14 August 1599, TNA, SP 63/205/141.

¹²⁹ A view of the last certificate made to the Earl of Essex at entering into his government, January 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/71.

¹³⁰ Offer of service by Captain Thomas Lee, April 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/157.

sceptical as was Sir Geoffrey Fenton who was convinced that Terence was a Gaelic rebel sympathiser and that there was little 'hope...of good measure at his hands'.¹³¹ In response, Terence appealed to Robert Cecil, Burghley's son and successor, to disregard the suspicions over his loyalty, deeming the reports to be little more than 'malicious accusations' made by his 'adversaries'.¹³² O'Dempsey insisted that he was a loyal subject and vowed not only to victual Maryborough and Philipstown on a consistent basis, but to cleanse also the Queen's County and King's County of its most rebellious elements.¹³³ By June, he had finally won the trust of his former critics including Lord Deputy Mountjoy who listed him as among the 'subjects of the Irishry' and Fenton, who praised Terence for his intelligence gathering in the aftermath of Hugh O'Neill's defeat at the Battle of Kinsale.¹³⁴

During his mopping up operations of any pockets of Gaelic resistance in the midlands, Mountjoy praised O'Dempsey for his advancement of Tudor law and husbandry in his respective district and its surrounding area. In fact, the Lord Deputy claimed that it was nothing short of incredible that 'in so barbarous a country how well the ground was manured, how orderly their fields were fenced, their towns inhabited, and every highway and path so well beaten'.¹³⁵ By 1613 Terence was considered a noblemen of Ireland although it is unclear what position he held within the local government. Nevertheless, he was encouraged to send his son to London for further education and assimilation.¹³⁶ By the 1630s, he held the title of Viscount of

¹³¹ Sir Geoffrey Fenton to Sir Robert Cecil, 14 May 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/36; The Lord Deputy Mountjoy to Sir Terence O'Dempsey, 6 May 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/16.

¹³² Sir Terence O'Dempsey to Sir Robert Cecil, 26 December 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/105.

¹³³ Note for Mr. Secretary touching Leinster, September 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/64.

¹³⁴ The Lord Deputy Mountjoy to the Privy Council, 14 June 1601, TNA, SP 63/208/17; Sir Geoffrey Fenton to Secretary Cecil, 6 January 1602, TNA, SP 63/210/4.

¹³⁵ Fynes Moryson, *Itinerary*, Vol. II, p. 330.

¹³⁶ A Note of the Noblemen's Sons in Ireland, 1613, TNA, SP 63/232/24.

Clanmalire and Baron Phillipstown and was known to have attended parliament in Dublin on a regular basis.¹³⁷

Consequently, Owen MacHugh and his nephew Terence, much like Brian and Barnaby FitzPatrick, embraced the opportunity and benefits that cooperation with the Tudor government offered them and their clan: the chance to overthrow their oppressors that had a stranglehold over their territory. Significantly, Owen and Terence were also among the few natives to be offered a stake in the quasi Welsh model framework of English local government of the Queen's County and King's County. The two men were unquestionably stern loyalists and committed members of the county gentry. In sum, the case study of the MacHugh O'Dempseys serves as proof once again that there was another way for Gaelic chieftains to participate in the transformation from Gaelic lordships to English shires and demonstrates that the policy of surrender and regrant was a successful alternative to plantation and at times a more effective means of establishing English local government in the region.

Crown loyalism within Ely O'Carroll (Offaly, eventually King's County):

Within Offaly, and Ely in particular, the policy of surrender and regrant also attracted elements of the O'Carroll clan. Located in the southwest of the territory, the O'Carroll clan were faced with a dilemma following the collapse of the Geraldine rebellion and the prospect of an English Lord Deputy in 1534. Their options were limited to two: submit to the crown or attempt to remain independent as long as possible.¹³⁸ The chieftain of his respective clan, Ferganainm, chose the first option and submitted to Lord Deputy Grey in June 1538 and received the terms under which he would rule as the O'Carroll.¹³⁹ The terms of the new arrangement included a payment of 12d per carucate of land and 120 marks upon the declaration of

¹³⁷ The King for Sir Terence Dempsey, 7 July 1631, TNA, SP, Vol. CCLII, 1987; Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, vol. 2, p. 224; The manner of proceeding to the Parliament held in Dublin, 14 July 1634, TNA, SP 63/254 fol. 320.

¹³⁸ Venning, 'The O'Carrolls of Offaly', p. 185.

¹³⁹ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-74*, no. 122.

a new chieftain. Furthermore, the clan was expected to provide 12 cavalry and 24 infantry to each general hosting.¹⁴⁰ Thus began the O'Carroll's path of cooperation with the new crown administration.

Peace prevailed within Ely for at least eighteen months following Ferganainm's submission to Grey after which time, factional disputes boiled over and the O'Carroll chieftain was murdered and replaced by his son Tadhg.¹⁴¹ Maginn argues that there can be little doubt that submissions to the administration created significant tension within Gaelic lordships which tended to split in two between the Anglophile elements that embraced English rule and those who did not.¹⁴² Tadhg was certainly a supporter of the government's initiative and followed in his father's footsteps, travelling to London in summer 1542 where he was received in person by Henry VIII, commended to the Irish Privy Council and praised for his diligence, receiving £20 of a reward for his troubles.¹⁴³ In 1544, he was officially granted the captaincy of Ely 'with such jurisdictions and profits as other captains in the marches of the kingdom'.¹⁴⁴ The new captain flourished in his role quickly solidifying his position in Offaly and receiving a knighthood in addition to the title of 'Lord Baron of Ely' following his acceptance of the assimilation policy.¹⁴⁵ Extensive land grants followed including the territories of Ballybritt, Moneygall, Castletown and Dungar among others.¹⁴⁶ Tadhg's growing power in turn bred resentment amongst his fellow clansmen. William murdered him in 1554 and subsequently seized power for himself. In doing so, William proved his unwillingness to be passed over in the line of succession when tanistry was replaced by

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Venning, 'The O'Carrolls of Offaly, pp 188-9.

¹⁴² Maginn, "Surrender and Regrant", p. 970; Maginn, 'Civilising' Gaelic Leinster, pp 63-99.

¹⁴³ Henry VIII. to the Deputy and Council of Ireland , 5 July 1542, TNA, SP 60/10/65.

¹⁴⁴ *Fiants Ire. Henry VIII*, no. 411.

¹⁴⁵ William Arthur Shaw, *The Knights of England Scotland and Ireland*, Vol. 2 (London, 1906), p. 66; Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, Vol. 2, pp 62-3; *Fiants Ireland, Edward VI*, nos. 1018, 1146.

¹⁴⁶ *Fiants Ireland, Edward VI*, nos. 1018, 1146.

primogeniture.¹⁴⁷

Within a short period of time, William eliminated any rival claimants to the chieftaincy and seized control of Ely.¹⁴⁸ He provided 12 horsemen and 24 kern for the government's northern expedition against the Scots in 1556.¹⁴⁹ Despite this, he committed himself initially to impeding the plantation of Leix and Offaly, combining with the other Gaelic clans of the midlands in 1557.¹⁵⁰ However, he quickly realised that he could potentially become a very valuable asset to an administration too weak militarily to control western Offaly.¹⁵¹ William changed sides and allied himself to the crown and before her death in 1558, Queen Mary promised to raise William to the peerage as a baron.¹⁵² By 1559, William was proclaimed 'Captain of Ely' and referred to by Sussex as a loyal ally who supported the lord deputy in his expeditions each year by supplying 80 galloglass, 12 horsemen and 24 kern.¹⁵³ William consolidated his position further through a mutually beneficial marital alliance with Sabine FitzPatrick whose clan promised to assist him in suppressing any future Butler aggression or claims upon his region.¹⁵⁴ Lord Deputy Sidney subsequently granted him a knighthood on the 30 March 1567 during an inaugural expedition through Limerick.¹⁵⁵ The following month, Sidney referred to William as a 'loyal and civil' subject who wished 'to hold his lands of the queen, paying her rent, and to have the title of baron'.¹⁵⁶ The Queen subsequently approved of Sidney's

¹⁴⁷ Venning, 'The O'Carrolls of Offaly', p. 191; *AFM*, s.a. 1554.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁴⁹ *HMC: Acts of the Privy Council in Ireland, 1556-1571*, p. 17.

¹⁵⁰ *AFM*, s.a. 1557.

¹⁵¹ Venning, 'The O'Carrolls of Offaly', p. 191.

¹⁵² Queen Mary to O'Carroll, 12 March 1558, TNA, SP 62/2/22; Maginn, 'The Gaelic Peers', p. 575.

¹⁵³ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 274; Declaration of risings out and bonnaughts, 1566, TNA, SP 63/19/85.

¹⁵⁴ Venning, 'The O'Carrolls of Offaly', p. 193.

¹⁵⁵ Shaw, *Knights of England*, Vol. 2, p. 73; Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, p. 63.

¹⁵⁶ Lord Deputy Sidney to Queen Elizabeth, 20 Apr 1567, TNA, SP 63/20/66.

suggestion.¹⁵⁷ But despite all of this, for some unknown reason, the title was not granted. In 1578, Sir William surrendered yet again and was granted ‘all manors, lands, rents and customs’ in Ely with a landed base worth £100 annually.¹⁵⁸ He was referred to simply as ‘captain of the country’ as opposed to ‘Baron of Ely’.

William appointed his son John as heir in line with the right of primogeniture followed by Calvagh, his illegitimate son, thus abolishing tanistry in the O’Carroll chieftancy.¹⁵⁹ Early the following year, he was listed as among only a few Gaelic Irishmen in the area to attend sessions which meant that he was not only a knight but a freeholder holding land of the crown and answerable to English common law.¹⁶⁰ However, William’s persistent loyalism to the crown bred intense resentment amongst his own clan and those of the surrounding area.¹⁶¹ In 1581, O’Carroll was ambushed and killed on a return journey from Dublin to Ely by a group of O’Connor clansmen.¹⁶²

Consequently, John succeeded his father as chieftain before his untimely murder, which sparked a dynastic dispute within the clan.¹⁶³ Following a year of intense violence, Calvagh, William’s illegitimate son, defeated any rival claimants and became head of the O’Carroll clan.¹⁶⁴ The crown backed his accession and Calvagh was granted the castle of Ballindarra near Birr, followed by a knighthood.¹⁶⁵ He hunted down and killed a rebel O’Kennedy in January 1585 who murdered Sir John MacCoughlan’s eldest son, a well-

¹⁵⁷ Queen Elizabeth to Lord Deputy Sidney, 11 June 1567, TNA, SP 63/21/10.

¹⁵⁸ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 3395-6.

¹⁵⁹ President Drury to the Privy Council, 21 March 1578, TNA, SP 63/60/25; Venning, ‘The O’Carrolls of Offaly’, p. 195

¹⁶⁰ Lord Justice Drury to Walsingham, 14 January 1579, TNA, SP 63/65/21.

¹⁶¹ It was alleged that seven of O’Carroll’s men were hanged at his door. See Lord Justice Drury to Walsingham, 14 January 1579, TNA, SP 63/65/21; Sir Edward Fitton to Walsingham, 18 April 1579, TNA, SP 63/66/38.

¹⁶² *AFM*, *s.a.* 1581.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*

¹⁶⁴ *AFM*, *s.a.* 1582.

¹⁶⁵ Venning, ‘The O’Carrolls of Offaly’, p. 196; Shaw, *Knights of England*, ii, p. 83.

known government loyalist in Offaly.¹⁶⁶ This was unquestionably a warning to the Gaelic clans of the surrounding area as much as a statement of his commitment to the Tudor administration.

Still, Calvagh, or Sir Charles as he became known, was not completely trusted by the government or its officials. Lord Deputy Sir John Perrot claimed that he was 'on good terms' with the Gaelic Irishman but warned that he was 'not to be accounted assured'.¹⁶⁷ Charles faced further challenges closer to home from Thomas Butler who was determined to secure his downfall and absorb Ely within the Ormond domain.¹⁶⁸ Thus, Butler accused O'Carroll of the murder of a number of Cantwells, vassals of Ormond, in summer 1589.¹⁶⁹ Venning argues that Ormond's tactic was to ensure Charles faced justice before the Tipperary palatinate court, which if successful, would prove that O'Carroll's territory of Ely was under Butler jurisdiction.¹⁷⁰ The Earl had unsuccessfully attempted a similar move against Barnaby FitzPatrick of Upper Ossory in 1573.¹⁷¹ Responding in kind, Charles appealed for his territory to be made shire ground and united with the King's County.¹⁷² Sir John MacCoughlan and his tenants supported Charles' appeal and urged for the Lord Deputy's approval citing O'Carroll's effectiveness in 'withstanding their enemies', as he was a 'man whom the enemies greatly' feared, and arguing that he was the only one capable of protecting them 'in their dwelling places'.¹⁷³ Despite Ormond's

¹⁶⁶ Lord Deputy Perrot to Walsingham, 19 January 1585, TNA, SP 63/122/32.

¹⁶⁷ Sir John Perrot's declaration touching the state of Ireland, 29 June 1588, TNA, SP 63/135/54.

¹⁶⁸ Venning, 'The O'Carrolls of Offaly', pp 196-7.

¹⁶⁹ Statement of Sir Charles O'Carroll's case, June 1589, TNA, SP 63/145/37.

¹⁷⁰ Venning, 'The O'Carrolls of Offaly', p. 197.

¹⁷¹ Remembrances of the requests of Thomas Butler, Earl of Ormond, 1573, TNA, SP 63/42/79.

¹⁷² Petition of Sir Charles O'Carroll to the Privy Council, June 1589, TNA, SP 63/145/34.

¹⁷³ Petition of John MacCoughlan to the Lord Deputy, June 1589, TNA, SP 63/145/38; Petition of the gentlemen and freeholders of the borders of Fercal to the Lord Deputy, June 1589, TNA, SP 63/145/39.

persistence, the English Privy Council held a high opinion of Charles and commended his 'good disposition and behaviour'.¹⁷⁴

Charles continued to repay the trust the crown placed in him over the following year. He hunted down and captured the notorious Leix rebel Brian Reagh O'More and brought him before the Privy Council on charges of treason.¹⁷⁵ O'More was considered 'more dangerous... to the Queen's county, to Sir Charles O'Carroll's country and those parts than Fiach MacHugh' O'Byrne.¹⁷⁶ In August 1595, Adam Loftus, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, commended Charles for his 'dutiful demeanour and forwardness...in Her Majesty's service'.¹⁷⁷ This did not deter Ormond. The Queen reopened the investigation that very month but chose to defer the trial.¹⁷⁸ In December, Charles informed Burghley that he was convinced that Ormond was hell bent on ensuring his 'utter overthrow' and that the Earl daily spoiled his territory.¹⁷⁹ Defiant, Charles vowed to 'never yield to be of Ormond's liberty of Tipperary'.¹⁸⁰

By early February the following year, Ormond was informed that O'Carroll was not going to face execution in his forthcoming trial.¹⁸¹ In direct response, the Earl launched fresh allegations that O'Carroll was in league with the rebel Brian Reagh O'More.¹⁸² The Lord Deputy and the Irish Council gave Ormond two weeks to produce evidence of his allegation

¹⁷⁴ A meeting at the Starchamber, 28 January 1591, TNA, PC 2/19 fol. 168.

¹⁷⁵ Examination of Brian MacWilliam O'More, 6 March 1591-92, TNA, SP 63/163 fol.105.

¹⁷⁶ William Wade, Clerk of the Council to Sir Robert Cecil, 22 January 1592-3, HMC, *Salisbury*, Vol. 4, no. 651.

¹⁷⁷ Lord Chancellor to Burghley, 15 August 1595, TNA, SP 63/182/37.

¹⁷⁸ Queen Elizabeth to the Lord Deputy, 20 August 1595, TNA, SP 63/186/73.

¹⁷⁹ Sir Charles O'Carroll to Burghley, 15 December 1595, TNA, SP 63/185/18.

¹⁸⁰ Same to Sir Robert Cecil, 15 December 1595, TNA, SP 63/185/19.

¹⁸¹ Privy Council in England to the Lord Deputy and Council, 7 February 1596, TNA, SP 63/186/98.

¹⁸² Articles of high treason preferred by the Earl of Ormond against Sir Charles O'Carroll, 11 February 1596, TNA, SP 63/186/60; Robert Piggott to Captain Warham St. Leger, 5 February 1596, TNA, SP 63/186/56.

whilst Charles was detained in Dublin.¹⁸³ Lord Deputy William Russell, however, was sceptical of Ormond's claims and argued that they were the result of 'passion and malice' on the Earl's part.¹⁸⁴ Charles agreed with the Lord Deputy's assessment and pleaded with Burghley for his immediate release so that he could be of assistance to the crown once more.¹⁸⁵ This was a shrewd move on O'Carroll's part and he clearly knew when and where to play the loyalty card. Furthermore, we know that around this time, an armed force of seven hundred rebels, most likely the O'Maddens lay upon the borders of Ely and Ormond's territories, so one can understand O'Carroll's sense of urgency.¹⁸⁶ Charles was finally released in March 1596 upon the request of the loyalist MacCoughlans and the freeholders of Fircall who appealed for O'Carroll's assistance in resisting the O'Madden threat.¹⁸⁷

The Privy Council eventually quashed the charges against O'Carroll and declared that Brian Reagh O'More was in fact something of a double agent for the government, and if Charles had met him, he was meeting with a loyal subject and not a rebel.¹⁸⁸ In addition, the Council questioned Ormond's authority and claim upon Ely and declared that O'Carroll would not stand trial in Tipperary due to fears over an unfair hearing.¹⁸⁹ Venning argues that the crown's verdict was proof of their unwillingness to disgruntle and isolate a major loyalist Gaelic sept.¹⁹⁰ Their necessity for military support during the height of Hugh O'Neill's uprising was most likely the deciding factor.¹⁹¹

¹⁸³ Lord Deputy and Council to Lord Burghley, 14 February 1596, TNA, SP 63/186/60.

¹⁸⁴ Lord Deputy to Burghley, 15 February 1596, TNA, SP 63/186/65.

¹⁸⁵ Sir Charles O'Carroll to Burghley, 18 February 1596, TNA, SP 63/186/73; Petition of Sir Charles O'Carroll to the Lord Deputy and Council, 1596, TNA, SP 63/186 fol. 236.

¹⁸⁶ Sir Charles O'Carroll to Sir Robert Cecil, 18 February 1596, TNA, SP 63/186/74.

¹⁸⁷ Lord Deputy to Burghley, 14 March 1596, TNA, SP 63/187/36.

¹⁸⁸ John Roche Dasent (ed.), *Acts of the privy council of England, 1596-97*, vol. 26 (London, 1902), pp 25-6, 360-1; Venning, 'The O'Carrolls of Offaly', p. 199.

¹⁸⁹ Meeting at the Court of Greenwich, 19 July 1596, PC 2/21 fol. 308.

¹⁹⁰ Venning, 'The O'Carrolls of Offaly', p. 199.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

Despite Tyrone's growing power and influence, Sir Charles remained a loyalist during the Nine Years War allegedly carrying out 'sundry assaults of his enemies' despite incurring 'great losses'.¹⁹² O'Carroll's position grew so desperate by November 1598 that even his arch nemesis Ormond was forced to appeal for Charles's immediate relief.¹⁹³ When Redmund Burke, Owny MacRory O'More and Captain Richard Tyrell arrived in the midlands to gather support and allies for Hugh O'Neill's cause soon after, Charles brokered a truce with Tyrone's lieutenants.¹⁹⁴ The following February, Tyrone himself arrived in Ely where he allegedly did 'his will without resistance, saving that O'Carroll' refused to 'join him'.¹⁹⁵ Hopelessly outnumbered and underequipped to even attempt to challenge O'Neill, O'Carroll bolstered his own personal defence by recruiting one hundred MacMahon mercenaries. When the time arrived for their payment, Charles had the men butchered in their lodgings and hanged from the nearest tree.¹⁹⁶ This was perhaps a testament to O'Carroll's growing paranoia, the O'Carroll government loyalist was most likely in fear for his own personal safety or simply lacked the funds to pay the sell swords. A letter from O'Carroll to Robert Cecil in November 1599 certainly suggested that he was in financial arrears at that point.¹⁹⁷ Nevertheless, his actions incurred the full wrath of Tyrone who launched a full-scale attack on Ely soon after resulting in the devastation of the territory. According to Charles, the Gaelic rebels carried away the majority of Ely's 'possessions, wealth, and riches', leaving nothing 'but ashes instead of its corn and embers in place of its mansions'.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹² Sir Charles O'Carroll to Sir Robert Cecil, 11 August 1598, TNA, SP 63/202/17.

¹⁹³ The Earl of Ormond to Sir Robert Cecil, 20 November 1598, TNA, SP 63/202/166.

¹⁹⁴ *AFM*, s.a. 1598; Portion of a manuscript history, May 1599, TNA, SP 63/205/74.

¹⁹⁵ The Mayor of Limerick to Sir Thomas Norris, 2 February 1599, TNA, SP 63/203/30.

¹⁹⁶ *AFM*, s.a. 1599.

¹⁹⁷ Sir Charles O'Carroll to Sir Robert Cecil, 29 November 1599, TNA, SP 63/206/48.

¹⁹⁸ *AFM*, s.a. 1599.

In desperation, Charles declared that he ‘had imbrued’ his ‘hands so far in traitors’ blood as I must violently prosecute them, or they will have my life. I was never in more distress’.¹⁹⁹ In December 1599, the Archbishop of Cashel commended Charles for being a good, loyal subject and claimed that had O’Carroll decided to join Tyrone, it would have resulted in the complete ‘overrun of all Munster and Leinster’.²⁰⁰ Despite this, Charles’ days were numbered and he was subsequently deposed by Tyrone for his role in the MacMahon murders and replaced by his brother Mulroney O’Carroll who, one can only assume, was more sympathetic towards O’Neill’s cause than his sibling and had already established a strong support base at home.²⁰¹ Charles eventually met his end in July 1600, murdered by members of his own kin in collaboration with the O’Meaghers.²⁰²

But, instead of assisting the Gaelic rebel coalition, Mulroney continued in his brother’s footsteps and cooperated with the government. Throughout summer 1600 the new O’Carroll chieftain claimed the heads of over fifty rebels including a brother of Hugh Roe O’Donnell.²⁰³ He was subsequently knighted for his services and continued loyalty in July 1603.²⁰⁴ The real reward arguably came in 1605, when Ely was officially annexed to the King’s County, ensuring that the Butlers could make no further attempts at absorbing the territory: ‘The aforesaid territory of Ely O’Carroll...into two hundreds or baronies we divide...and that the same barony shall always be called the barony of Ely O’Carroll and the other barony shall contain the

¹⁹⁹ Sir Charles O’Carroll to Sir Robert Cecil, 29 November 1599, TNA, SP 63/206/48.

²⁰⁰ Miler MacGrath, Archbishop of Cashel, to Sir Robert Cecil, 15 December 1599, TNA, SP 63/206/85.

²⁰¹ The declaration of James FitzRedmond, 31 January 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/67; A letter of advertisements written to Sir Geoffrey Fenton, 14 February 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/104.I.

²⁰² *AFM, s.a.* 1600; The Lord Deputy Mountjoy to Sir Robert Cecil, 16 July 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/16.

²⁰³ Sir Francis Stafford to Sir George Carey, July 1600, TNA, SP 63/207/43.

²⁰⁴ Shaw, *Knights of England*, ii, p.127.

residue of said territory...and be called the barony of west Ely O'Carroll'.²⁰⁵ Thus Ely was officially assimilated into English shire ground.

In sum, the O'Carroll clan's decision to submit and cooperate with the Tudor government in the late 1530s was a greatly beneficial move for both parties. Under Tadhg's leadership, the Offaly sept flourished, dominating their region for close to a decade. Tadhg himself was rewarded with a knighthood, the title of 'Baron of Ely', and numerous lucrative land grants by the administration. All the more significant was the fact that Tadhg did not speak any English.²⁰⁶ Tadhg was the last chieftain to do so with his successors taking the assimilation process a step further by learning and corresponding with the administration through English. Much like his predecessor, William O'Carroll also received the full benefits of cooperation with the crown including a knighthood, title of 'Captain of Ely' and extensive land grants. Although he was treated at times with great suspicion and his loyalty was questioned, particularly in the early stages of his career, William gradually earned the government's trust and before his death, was listed as among only a few Gaelic clans in Offaly to attend Quarter sessions. Arguably, it was Sir Charles O'Carroll, however, who epitomised the real benefits of Tudor government-O'Carroll cooperation. Charles was a constant thorn in the side of any Gaelic rebels in Offaly and the King's County, helping to suppress their revolts with ruthless efficiency. Arguably, what the O'Carrolls achieved in Offaly was similar to what the FitzPatricks achieved in Upper Ossory, all of which would not have been attainable without the assistance and full support of the administration. That being said, the evidence does not suggest that any loyalist O'Carrolls held positions within the local government but their actions paved the way for the establishment of English administrative structures later and assimilated Ely into English shire ground due to the collaboration of its various chieftains who embraced surrender and regrant. In fact, in July 1598, the

²⁰⁵ *Cal. Pat. rolls, Ire.* p. 406.

²⁰⁶ Lord Deputy Bellingham to O'Carroll, November 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/138.

O'Carroll and MacCoughlan were listed as examples of how to increase royal revenue in Ireland, recover a troubled country and abate rebels:

Both are lords of great countries; both have been rebels...yet both are subjects, but why? They have rivals...if they should not be subjects they lose both lands and lives. Their surrender to Her Majesty is their only security...they cut off the heads of some of their name and nation; but those heads which they send in are better pledges of their own security than any kind of assurances of their loyalties.²⁰⁷

This quotation by an anonymous author accurately sums up the type of relationship that existed between loyalist Gaelic clans and the administration, one born out of necessity and a means of survival, and oftentimes sheer desperation. The O'Carrolls, much like the FitzPatricks, struggled to maintain their independence against the Ormonds and cooperation with the crown, ensured their continued existence and protection from aggressors both within and outside the lordship. In return, the government obtained a crucial ally capable and willing to subdue their Gaelic counterparts. Thus, the loyalism of the O'Carroll clan was central to the extension and preservation of Tudor rule in the midlands region. This was an ideal solution for the administration in Ireland who desperately needed any and all military support it could muster.

O'Connor division and government loyalism:

The final lordship, the O'Connor clan of northern Offaly, had been key allies of Silken Thomas FitzGerald during his rebellion of 1534-5. Yet, Piers Butler, Kildare's opponent, sought to instigate internal strife within the O'Connor polity by offering to assist Cahir Rua in the overthrow of his brother, the chieftain Brian.²⁰⁸ In August 1535, Cahir surrendered and agreed to assist the government in usurping Brian. Furthermore, he pledged to assist the administration with quelling Silken Thomas' rebellion for which he was assigned twelve horsemen and 160 kern. Cahir Rua's

²⁰⁷ Anonymous Author, In Ireland, amongst a number of wrongs done to Her Majesty, 18 July 1597, TNA, SP 63/200/33.

²⁰⁸ FitzSimons, 'The lordship of O'Connor Faly', pp 211-3; Lord Butler to Hugh Inge, Chancellor of Ireland, 20 May 1528, TNA, SP 60/1/57; Archbishop of Dublin and Chancellor, and Chief Justice Patrick Bermingham to Norfolk, 20 June 1528, TNA, SP 60/1/60.

defection made war no longer tenable for FitzGerald and his Offaly allies and he was forced to surrender on 24 August 1535.²⁰⁹ Cahir quickly faced his brother's vengeance for his actions and was soon overthrown and exiled from Offaly along with his supporters. Brian regained the chieftaincy but was in turn deposed by Lord Deputy Leonard Grey in June 1537 who restored Cahir Rua to power. The government eventually conceded soon after that Brian held most of the support within the O'Connor clan as well as superior military and political alliances with neighbouring Gaelic lords and a strong military base at Daingean.²¹⁰ Cahir Rua, in the administration's eyes at least, was no longer a viable option for crown interests in northern Offaly.²¹¹ Nevertheless, the Privy Council still saw potential in the usurped lord and suggested reassigning him elsewhere in the country with the title of baron.²¹² In the meantime, Brian allegedly bent the knee and became a loyal and obedient servant of the crown.²¹³ However, within just three months he had broken the peace and rampaged throughout Offaly, this time alongside Cahir Rua who betrayed the government and refused to assist them in apprehending his brother.²¹⁴ By the end of December 1537, Brian O'Connor ruled supreme in northern Offaly.²¹⁵ According to Lord Deputy Grey, Cahir Rua was to blame for Brian's sudden revolt having dissuaded his older brother from total submission to the government.²¹⁶ Cahir Rua's decision to turn his back on the crown was a puzzling one. Although the administration had backed him in the past, it could be argued that by the final months of 1537, he felt the government had no further use for him and was left with little alternative other than to join Brian in open rebellion or else face the prospect of almost certain death at the hands of his kin in retaliation for his actions of the past. Certainly, a letter the following April suggested that

²⁰⁹ Aylmer and Alen to Cromwell, 21 August 1535, TNA, SP 60/2/57; *L & P. Hen. VIII*, ix, no.173; FitzSimons, 'The lordship of O'Connor Faly', p. 214.

²¹⁰ Grey and Brabazon to Cromwell, 11 June 1537, TNA, SP 60/4/26; The Council to Cromwell, 26 June 1537, TNA, SP 60/4/29.

²¹¹ FitzSimons, 'The lordship of O'Connor Faly', p. 215.

²¹² The Council to Cromwell', 26 June 1537, TNA, SP 60/4/29.

²¹³ Lord Deputy Gray to Cromwell, 16 August 1537, TNA, SP 60/5/3.

²¹⁴ Examination of Thomas Albany, 25 November 1537, TNA, SP 60/5/45.

²¹⁵ Brabazon to Cromwell, 30 December 1537 SP 60/5/53.

²¹⁶ Grey to the King, 31 December 1537, TNA, SP 60/5/54.

Cahir was frightened of his brother and in fear of his life.²¹⁷ Nevertheless, it was quite apparent at this early stage that the O'Connors were unwilling to embrace cooperation with the Tudor administration as readily as some of their counterparts had been.

By April 1540, the crown's patience with Brian had run out. Henry VIII instructed Grey's successor, Anthony St. Leger, to expel 'that traitor O'Connor...utterly [from] his country...he should be made an example to all other Irishmen, by his perpetual exile and just punishment' and restore the chieftaincy to Cahir Rua.²¹⁸ Faced with permanent expulsion from his homeland, Brian submitted and vowed to keep the peace.²¹⁹ The Privy Council and Lord Deputy St. Leger advised the King to divide Offaly between the two brothers. Henry VIII approved, but this never came to fruition.²²⁰ Still, the government was optimistic that Brian would keep his promise and suggested that he be granted the title of Viscount.²²¹ However, these aspirations were shattered soon after by St. Leger's recall to London to answer corruption charges, at which point, Brian launched a devastating assault upon the Pale and its surrounding areas.²²² Despite being driven into Connaught by St. Leger's temporary replacement, William Brabazon, the government was still hopeful that Brian would adhere to his former promise and the terms of surrender and regrant.²²³ Despite submitting yet again following St. Leger's return to Ireland, it was only a temporary respite for

²¹⁷ Matthew King to Cromwell, 26 April 1538, TNA, SP 60/6/48.

²¹⁸ King Henry VIII to The Lord Deputy and Council of Ireland, 7 Sep 1540, TNA, SP 60/9/47.

²¹⁹ The Lord Deputy and Council to King Henry VIII, 13 November 1540, TNA, SP 60/9/63.

²²⁰ The Lord Deputy and Council to King Henry VIII, 28 Aug 1541, TNA, SP 60/10/30; King Henry VIII. to the Lord Deputy and Council of Ireland, 23 Sep 1541, TNA, SP 60/10/37.

²²¹ The Privy Council to the Deputy and Council, 4 June 1545, TNA, SP 60/12/10.

²²² Walter Cowley to the Privy Council, October 1546, TNA, SP 60/12/53; FitzSimons, 'The lordship of O'Connor Faly', pp 218-9.

²²³ FitzSimons, 'The lordship of O'Connor Faly', p. 219; David Heffernan, 'The Reduction of Leinster and the Origins of the Tudor Conquest of Ireland, c. 1534-1546', *IHS*, Vol. 40, No. 157 (Summer, 2016), p. 17.

the administration.²²⁴ Brabazon's subsequent invasion of Offaly in 1546 and the establishment of Fort Governor at Daingean spurred O'Connor into rebellion with the crown. The government's suggestions of raising Brian to the peerage were just that, a suggestion, and it is unclear whether or not O'Connor struck first with an attack upon the Pale.²²⁵ By October 1547, Brian was in open revolt once again but this time, the Privy Council made it abundantly clear to St. Leger that he was not to accept O'Connor's submission under any circumstances.²²⁶ A war of survival quickly broke out in northern Offaly. Cahir Rua rode out in support of his older brother alongside his sons and nephews and other septs of the area including the O'Molloys and MacGeoghegans.²²⁷ The rebel coalition targeted the Pale where they allegedly 'burnt, destroyed, and killed man, woman, and child' before inflicting significant casualties in skirmishes with government forces.²²⁸

Cahir had little to lose at this point as he had been largely ignored and neglected by an administration that seemed to favour his brother as the ideal candidate for a viable settlement in Offaly. Cooperation had also reaped few benefits for the Offaly Gaelic Irishman or any tangible reward such as grants of land.²²⁹ Thus, open rebellion was Cahir Rua's only real means of survival.²³⁰ Despite combining with rebellious elements of the O'Mores, the Gaelic rebel coalition quickly collapsed following a string of defeats in August 1548.²³¹ By November, Brian's position was desperate and he was

²²⁴ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 68, 78.

²²⁵ For more on the origins of the midlands rebellion, see chapter 1, pp 41-3; Bryson, 'Sir Anthony St. Leger', pp 252-64; Heffernan, 'The Reduction of Leinster', p. 18.

²²⁶ Privy Council to the Lord Deputy and Council, 2 November 1547, TNA, SP 61/1/8.

²²⁷ John Brereton et al. to Lord Deputy Bellingham, July 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/42; Francis Cosby to Lord Deputy Bellingham, 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/46.

²²⁸ Lord Deputy Bellingham to the Privy Council, August 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/84.

²²⁹ FitzSimons, 'The lordship of O'Connor Faly', p. 220

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ Lord Deputy Bellingham to MacWilliam Burke, 19 August 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/70; Patrick Sherlock to the Lord Deputy, August 1548, TNA, SP

left with little alternative other than to surrender.²³² Cahir Rua remained in rebellion until early January 1549 when he was captured and sent to Dublin where he was executed.²³³ In the aftermath of the rebellion, Lord Chancellor John Alen suggested that the O'Connor clan 'should never be restored to their own lands'.²³⁴ The O'Connor rebellion had all but confirmed their intentions to the government. William Brabazon implored the administration to detain Brian in London 'considering how often he has been an offender, and that no reconciliation could win...nor promise stay him to abstain from rebellion'.²³⁵ The former Lord Justice certainly had a point. It was quite clear that Brian and the rebellious elements of his clan were never going to follow the same path as their counterparts in Upper Ossory or Ely. Accordingly, the northern Offaly lord was transferred to England and imprisoned in London and the government proceeded with plans to plant the region.²³⁶

In an attempt to reconcile the O'Connor clan with the crown, the government pardoned any remnants of the sept in the early 1550s.²³⁷ By 1553, the rival factions of the MacBrian and MacCahir Rua branches were at each other's throats. Tensions boiled over in 1555 when Donagh MacBrian murdered his cousin Brian MacCahir to establish his undisputed authority as lord of Offaly and chieftain of his clan.²³⁸ This split within the O'Connor polity persuaded the MacCahir Rua faction that loyalism and cooperation with the crown would greatly benefit their position and assist them in the overthrow of their archrivals, the MacBrians. They submitted

61/1/74; Lord Deputy Bellingham to Mr Cusack, August 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/76.

²³² Lord Chancellor Alen to Sir William Paget, 21 November 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/129.

²³³ FitzSimons, 'The lordship of O'Connor Faly', p. 220

²³⁴ Lord Chancellor Alen to the Protector Somerset, 21 November 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/130.

²³⁵ Lord Justice Sir William Brabazon and Council to the Privy Council, 26 March 1550, TNA, SP 61/2/52.

²³⁶ Remembrances for Ireland, July 1550, TNA, SP 61/2/55; Heffernan, 'The Reduction of Leinster', p. 19.

²³⁷ *Cal. Pat. rolls Ire.*, pp 181, 199, 202, 211, 216; *Fiants Ire. Edw. VI.* nos. 242, 952, 642, 856, 1122.

²³⁸ FitzSimons, 'The lordship of O'Connor Faly', p. 223; *AFM*, s.a. 1555.

and were employed by the government as crown kern.²³⁹ On 4 October 1556, Donagh MacBrian met with Sussex where he offered pledges and allegedly discussed his family's role in the plantation of Offaly.²⁴⁰ However, the faction rejected Sussex's proposals and rebelled against the crown.²⁴¹ Donagh was subsequently hunted down and killed by the government loyalist, Owen MacHugh O'Dempsey, and in the aftermath of his demise, Sussex pardoned any remaining rebels but proposed the total exclusion of the MacBrian branch from ever holding land again in Offaly.²⁴² Instead, the MacCahir Rua kern were put forward as ideal candidates for sufficient settlement and land grants in the territory.²⁴³

The MacBrian faction was far from defeated. In March 1560, the government received reports of Brian O'Connor's escape from prison, reigniting fears of renewed rebellion in what was then the King's County. By May, these fears were alleviated somewhat when it was reported that the former chieftain had died, news that must have come as great relief to the Tudor administration.²⁴⁴ Certain members of the MacBrian faction, forced into exile following Donagh's death, pledged their allegiance to Queen Elizabeth. One Cahir MacBrian, in particular, acted as a crown spy in Scotland 'for certain special causes touching the Queen's service'.²⁴⁵ This proved that many of Brian O'Connor's former sept were forced to serve the queen in the aftermath of his imprisonment and death or face permanent exile and extinction. Between 1563 and 1564, the government granted extensive land in the King's County to the MacCahir Ruas and the crown

²³⁹ Division of Offaly, 1562, TNA, SP 63/7/62; *HMC: Report on the Manuscripts of Lord de L'Isle & Dudley Preserved at Penhurst Place*, vol. 1 (London, 1925), p. 366.

²⁴⁰ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-74*, no. 208; FitzSimons, 'The lordship of O'Connor Faly', pp 225-6.

²⁴¹ *AFM, s.a. 1557; Cal. Carew MSS, 1515-74*, no. 208.

²⁴² *AFM, s.a. 1558; Cal. Pat. rolls Ire.*, pp 397-8.

²⁴³ Division of Offaly, 1562, TNA, SP 63/7/62.

²⁴⁴ Sir William FitzWilliam to Sussex, 8 March 1560, TNA, SP 63/2/7; Sir William FitzWilliam to Cecil, 8 March 1560, TNA, SP 63/2/8; Advertisements out of Ireland, May 1560, TNA, SP 63/2/15.

²⁴⁵ FitzSimons, 'The lordship of O'Connor Faly', pp 229-30.

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spy, Cahir MacBrian O'Connor.²⁴⁶ This meant that the MacCahir Rua faction became freeholders holding land of the crown and all other factions were excluded.²⁴⁷ According to Fiona FitzSimons, the government's distribution of land in the King's County allowed the administration to manipulate the O'Connor clan at will.²⁴⁸

Before this could happen, however, the government needed to root out any significant remaining pockets of resistance within the clan. In 1564, excluded from the settlement scheme and very much aware of the government's intentions, the remaining MacBrian O'Connors and their allies amassed what little forces they could muster and prepared for war.²⁴⁹ Unsurprisingly, the government crushed the rebel coalition with the assistance of their loyalist forces in just four months.²⁵⁰ The MacCahir Ruas were subsequently rewarded for their role in the suppression of their kinsmen and were absolved by the government for their 'services against the Irish during which they may have offended against the rigour of the law'.²⁵¹ In the aftermath of the rebellion, the surviving members of the FitzPatrick, MacMurrough and MacBrian factions were all pardoned but were still excluded from holding any land in the county.²⁵²

By 1569, the O'Connor lordship was firmly split in two. The MacCahir Ruas, unwavering in their cooperation with the crown, had become the dominant force in their lordship and northern Offaly. They also established a secure and substantial military base, something their predecessor, Cahir Rua, was unable to achieve as well the usurpation of the MacBrians from power.²⁵³ The faction's military advantage, combined with their status as subjects of the crown, ensured that they would dominate a region of great

²⁴⁶ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos. 532, 571, 572, 589 & 610.

²⁴⁷ *HMC: Acts of the Privy Council in Ireland, 1556-71*, p. 133.

²⁴⁸ FitzSimons, 'The lordship of O'Connor Faly', p. 230.

²⁴⁹ chapter 2.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁵¹ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 717.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, nos 1148, 1165, 1387.

²⁵³ FitzSimons, 'The lordship of O'Connor Faly', p. 234.

importance and interest for the government for many years to come at the exclusion of their landless clansmen.²⁵⁴

But how valid is FitzSimons assessment that the government's goal was to divide the O'Connor clan and cause infighting and internal conflict?²⁵⁵ Arguably a perfect example to settle this argument was the famous account of single combat between Tadhg MacGillaPatrick and Cormack MacCormack at Dublin Castle in September 1583. First, it is necessary to provide some context. Connor MacCormack O'Connor was a close ally of Rory Óg O'More during his rebellion and assisted him in the burning of Naas in September 1577.²⁵⁶ In January 1579 we know that Connor MacCormack and Tadhg MacGillpatrick O'Connor agreed to submit, 'labour and pay rent and leave off the spending of the country'.²⁵⁷ We also know that Connor MacCormack sought protection from the crown in October 1581.²⁵⁸ In January, allegedly refused protection, Connor MacCormack fled to Scotland.²⁵⁹ The following year he was granted a crown pension.²⁶⁰

Tadhg MacGillpatrick O'Connor on the other hand was considered a gentleman of the Queen's County by 1576 and went on to hold land in the King's County at Cappincur.²⁶¹ In October 1578, Tadhg submitted to the crown. Upon doing so, Lord Justice Drury alleged that Tadhg was greatly feared by Gaelic Irish and English alike.²⁶² Tadhg married a sister of Fiach MacHugh O'Bryne in June 1582, which was treated with great suspicion by

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ Council of Ireland to the Queen, 12 September 1577, TNA, SP 63/59/6.

²⁵⁷ Articles offered by the O'Connors, 14 January 1579, TNA, SP 63/65/20.I.

²⁵⁸ Malby and Fenton to the Privy Council, 10 October 1581, 63/86/7.

²⁵⁹ Treasurer Wallop to Walsingham, 28 January 1582, 63/88/46.

²⁶⁰ Lords Justices to Walsingham, 13 January 1583, TNA, SP 63/99/18.

²⁶¹ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 2984, 5174.

²⁶² Lord Justice Drury and Fitton to Burghley, 10 October 1578, TNA, SP 63/63/6.

the government.²⁶³ It would appear that the government's apprehensions were correct as Tadhg, deemed the 'chiefest of the O'Connors' assisted his father in law during the Leinster theatre of the Second Desmond Rebellion for which he subsequently appealed for pardon and submitted once more.²⁶⁴ However, the government was reluctant to accept that Tadhg's submission was genuine. Following reports that that he was allegedly ready to rise out once more having been refused protection along with the rebellious elements of the O'Connor clan, the Lords Justices recommended that it 'were well to fall on them suddenly and dispatch many of the principals'.²⁶⁵

The origins of the trial by combat itself allegedly began when Tadhg slew a number of Cormack's supporters. Tadhg admitted to the killings and justified that his actions were done in accordance with the law as the victims had allegedly broken the terms of their protection from the crown and were in league with Cahill O'Connor, 'the principal rebel of the Pale'. Tadhg and Cormack faced off against each other armed with a sword and target with Tadhg emerging victorious having managed to dispatch and behead his opponent. In the aftermath of the trial by combat, Geoffrey Fenton promised to recommend Tadhg's good service to Robert Dudley, 1st Earl of Leicester and his elder brother Ambrose Dudley, 3rd Earl of Warwick, both of whom were close to the Queen. Fenton argued that had all the rebellious O'Connors met a similar end 'no such disturbances would rise again in Leinster as hath done through their quarrels'.²⁶⁶ In October 1583, Nicholas White disclosed that Tadhg had taken a farm to settle upon with the Lord Justices approval; living out his final days it would seem as a government loyalist.²⁶⁷ Thus, there can be little doubt that the government intentionally sowed division within clans such as the O'Connors as seen in the case of Brian and Cahir Rua O'Connor. Clearly little had changed by 1583 when

²⁶³ Lord Deputy to Walsingham, 7 June 1582, TNA, SP 63/93/12; Wallop to Walsingham, 16 June 1582, TNA, SP 63/93/26.

²⁶⁴ Loftus to Burghley, 15 September 1582, TNA, SP 63/95/47; Geoffrey Fenton to Burghley, 16 September 1582, TNA, SP 63/95/54.

²⁶⁵ Lords Justices to Walsingham, 25 March 1583, TNA, SP 63/100/50

²⁶⁶ *Cal. Carew MSS, 1575-1588*, no. 504.

²⁶⁷ Nicholas White to Burghley, 15 October 1583, 63/105/20.

the Tudor government evidently continued to breed contempt amongst traditionally troublesome Gaelic clans by dividing the captaincy between the two main competitors.²⁶⁸ Overall, the additional case study of the MacGillpatricks and MacCormacks certainly add credibility to FitzSimon's claim.

In sum, loyalism and cooperation with the Tudor government unquestionably tore the O'Connor polity apart. Nevertheless, those who remained faithful to the administration reaped great rewards including extensive grants of land as well as wages in their role as crown kern. The sources indicate that the greatest reward was power, an incentive the MacCahir Rua faction were unwilling to imperil. Those who refused to bend the knee were excluded from holding land in the area and were denied a stake in the Leix-Offaly plantation. In return, the government gained crucial allies in a previously rebellious territory who were capable of maintaining law and order at practically no expense to the Queen, even if none of the clan became members of the county community or held positions within the local government.

In conclusion, this chapter assessed the alternate model of Anglicisation to the plantation scheme attempted by the Tudor government to establish English local government and administrative structures in Leix and Offaly. In doing so, a counter case was presented as to what the administration could potentially have achieved throughout the midlands had they persuaded more Gaelic Irish chieftains to embrace the policy of surrender and regrant. The evidence certainly suggests that the majority of clans that submitted were motivated by power, others by the prospect of significant financial gain and extensive allotments of land. There were also many clans who saw cooperation as a way of overcoming and removing a neighbouring rival's hold over their lordships such as the O'Carrolls and FitzPatricks with the Earls of Ormond. For many of the small clans of the midlands, assisting the Tudor government offered them military and financial security.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

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Although not the case with every clan examined, it does seem apparent that some genuinely embraced or at least attempted to embrace some form of English cultural assimilation achieving what the Tudor government set out to achieve in the first place. Furthermore, these crown loyalists proved indispensable and invaluable to the government during times of war and rebellion, which seemed relentless throughout the sixteenth century. This proves how crucial Gaelic loyalism was to the extension and preservation of Tudor rule in Ireland. Thus, it could be argued that this alternate model achieved what the plantation scheme could not, the assimilation into English shire ground of previous rebellious territories and lordships whose inhabitants were largely willing to cooperate and crucially, become part of the new English administration in the midlands.

Conclusion

The primary aim of this study has been to evaluate whether or not successive Tudor regimes effectively transformed the Gaelic lordships of Leix and Offaly into English counties and as a direct consequence, administered these territories through the normal mechanisms of English local government and the overall principle of ‘self-government at the king’s command’ during the period of 1547-1603. From an early stage, it was evident that the Tudor government drew inspiration from numerous frameworks for the Leix-Offaly plantation, the first of which was the Scottish garrisoning model. In Leix and Offaly, prior to their official shiring, the administration viewed garrisons as a means of imposing direct rule and crushing any resistance to ensure obedience and the subjugation of the two territories. Military strongholds such as Fort Protector and Governor were built to house English garrisons and secure English influence in the region as well as policing the border of the Pale to protect its inhabitants from the consistent incursions of the Gaelic Irish.¹ Such an approach in the midlands was problematic. Whereas the garrisons in Scotland were envisioned as a means of offering protection to loyalist Scots, the midlands did not see government intervention until the aftermath of Silken Thomas’ rebellion.² There were no loyalists to protect in this Gaelic dominated heartland and in direct contrast to Scotland, soldiers were installed as settlers on the surrounding lands of the two territories to secure what were abruptly established shires.

The government was also influenced by the Welsh model, which revolved around and relied upon non-English gentry participation to run the local administration. Chapter 6 served as proof that Gaelic loyalism was central to the extension and preservation of Tudor rule in Ireland, particularly in the midlands. Although we know that most Gaelic Irish factions of the two shires resisted the Leix-Offaly plantation and the installation of Tudor local government in the region, there were a few notable exceptions. Barnaby

¹ Chapter 1, p. 42.

² Introduction, pp 9-10.

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FitzPatrick held the position of Lieutenant of Maryborough and Philipstown forts as well as sheriff of the Queen's County from 1568 until 1569.³ Another Gaelic Irishman, Terence O'Dempsey, was sheriff of the King's County in 1591 and the Queen's County in 1593.⁴ More importantly, these respective factions of Gaelic clans offered a counter case to the midlands colonial scheme. By contrast, MacBrian FitzPatrick's territory of Upper Ossory, MacHugh O'Dempsey's region of Clanmalire as well as Ely O'Carroll and to a lesser extent O'Connor Faly territory, were assimilated into English shire ground with English local government through the collaboration of their respective chieftains who embraced the policy of surrender and regrant. By the early seventeenth century, the administration's efforts to assimilate certain factions of native clans had arguably paid off. We know that in 1613, in the run up to the sitting of the first Irish parliament in 27 years, two Gaelic Irishmen, Sir John McCoughlan and Callough O'Molloy, both King's County locals with strong traditions of loyalty to the government, put their names forward as knights of the shire at the election held in Philipstown. The event served as further evidence of native willingness to cooperate with the Tudor regime in the hopes of obtaining a stake in the county government.⁵ Crucially, this proved that there were alternative models of Anglicisation to the colonial enterprise, which were arguably more effective and fruitful.

However, the Welsh model was applied only to a very limited extent in the region. In direct contrast to the newly erected shires of the late 1560s and 70s such as Galway, the natives were excluded from holding positions in the county government for the most part. The Queen's County and King's County were relatively similar to County Cavan where the O'Reilly's were typically overlooked for positions.⁶ This was all the more perplexing

³ Chapter 6, p. 203; Appendix 2.

⁴ Chapter 6, p. 210; Appendix 2.

⁵ Furthermore, it was alleged that Callough O'Molloy did not speak a word of English. See Commission to Examine the Abuses in Parliament and Country, 12 November 1613, TNA, *CSPI, Vol. 4: 1611-1614*, p. 436; Brid McGrath, 'A Biographical Dictionary of the membership of the Irish House of Commons, 1640-1641', Vol. 2, Trinity College Dublin (1997), p. A14.

⁶ Chapter 4, p. 145.

Conclusion

considering that the O'Reillys, much like the MacBrian FitzPatricks and the O'Carroll clan in general had regular amicable interactions with the administration and actively sought the shiring of their respective lordships.⁷

The Louth model was also evident in the midlands framework. It most closely resembled traditional English-style 'self government at the king's command'. Although it took close to two decades, the Tudor administration eventually managed to establish traditional elements of English local government in the Queen's County and King's County by the early 1560s such as Justices of the peace and sheriffs. English common law was also actively promoted and sessions were regularly held.⁸ But, the county government vastly differed in many ways from the Louth model. It was highly militarised and most certainly not 'self government at the king's command'. Although Louth, like Leix and Offaly, was also a borderland, it contained a large community of English settlers who developed there as a county community organically over centuries following the Norman invasion. This was also the case in Galway whose inhabitants were deemed a 'modest and civil people'.⁹ The case study of the Connaught shire was particularly significant as it highlighted exactly why traditional English style local government could never have survived on its own in the midlands. Galway had strong Anglo-Norman roots, a large English population and a genuine desire on the part of the majority of the Gaelic natives to embrace English rule.¹⁰ As emphasised in Chapters 1-6, the Queen's County and King's County possessed none of these characteristics. The residents of Louth and Meath were hardened marchers accustomed to Gaelic rebellions and raids from within their shire. The settler community of the Leix-Offaly plantation on the other hand were effectively imported English and Welsh soldiers who faced incursions from without.¹¹ These new arrivals that assumed positions within the local government in the midlands acting primarily as military officers and the very frontline of the Tudor

⁷ Chapter 6, pp 213-23.

⁸ Chapter 3, pp 84-7.

⁹ Chapter 2, pp 90-3.

¹⁰ Mannion, 'Elizabethan Galway', p. 81.

¹¹ Appendix 1.

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crown's justice in the region. They were charged with keeping musters, cessing the inhabitants of the two shires for defence and punishing any and all rebels with fire and sword as well as whatever was deemed necessary for the honour of the crown and the peace of its subjects.¹² The framework itself was heavily focused on defence and simply adapted the local government structures of England to more militarised conditions.¹³ The county government was thereby distinctive in that it blended martial roles with the traditional ones found on the English mainland. This was common throughout Leinster and particularly apparent by 1598. What set the midlands government apart from the rest was the fact that its martial administration contained positions not found elsewhere in the country. In contrast to Counties Cavan and Longford for instance, similar Gaelic dominated territories, the Queen's County and King's County were committed to the government of seneschals, lieutenants of the forts and shires and governors as well as traditional English county administration roles such as Justices of the Peace and sheriffs.¹⁴ Whereas martial law and elements of martial government restricted the growth of common law in newly created shires such as Cavan, this was not the case in the midlands. Offices of local government were also allowed to remain vacant in Cavan such as the sheriff, something that did not occur in the Queen's County and King's County to any significant degree.¹⁵

As highlighted by Ellis, in order for traditional English style government to operate effectively, it required the crucial cooperation of the local population organised by the ruling elites of their respective shires.¹⁶ In the absence of peers in the midlands, these responsibilities instead fell to a number of county gentry, knowledgeable in the ways of war. These men were far from prominent landholders in their respective territories but many still managed to carve out a modest living whilst discharging local offices

¹² Chapter 2, p. 84.

¹³ See Ellis, *Defending English Ground*, p. 164

¹⁴ Chapter 2, pp 82-4; Chapter 3, pp 114-5; Chapter 4, pp 138-9; Chapter 5, pp 178-9; Maginn, William Cecil, p. 194

¹⁵ Appendix 2.

¹⁶ Ellis, *Defending English Ground*, pp 164-7.

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such as that of the sheriff. Individuals such as Thomas Merrick, deemed an energetic servant of the crown, received an annual salary of just over £15.¹⁷ Another sheriff of the Queen's County, John Barnes, was also quite modest, with minor landholdings, yet he took part in the survey of O'Dunne's territory of Tinnahinch and oversaw the general muster in the years 1572 and 1573.¹⁸ A similar situation was evident in the King's County where captains such as Robert Cowley, with a small tract of land at Croghan, went on to serve successively as JP and sheriff during the period under review.¹⁹

Still, despite the emphasis on defence, there was a noticeable crisis of leadership, particularly during times of rebellion and unrest. In England, gentry and minor peers regularly came together to coordinate a strategy of defence as they did in certain parts of Ireland such as Louth and Meath.²⁰ Consequently, these groups were expected to assist and co-operate militarily with each other in a joint effort against native resistance. The communities in the midlands, however, did not operate on a similar united front.²¹ In fact, the evidence suggested that many local government officers there were largely self-serving.²² Therefore, lacking a collective blueprint for defence, the Queen's County and King's County were overrun on numerous occasions throughout the century, threatening the very existence of the two shires. Again, this was not traditional English style 'self-government'. As a result, castles and towns often fell into ruin and were repaired only occasionally including Maryborough and Philipstown.²³ Unable to defend themselves sufficiently without outside assistance, the administration was forced to install financially draining garrisons in the two forts in the hope of retaining control over the region. This contributed to an ever-deepening economic crisis that showed no signs of resolution as the crown treasury was forced to dispense inordinate military and financial resources

¹⁷ Chapter 5, p. 167.

¹⁸ Chapter 3, p. 109.

¹⁹ Chapter 2, p. 86.

²⁰ Ellis, *Defending English Ground*, p. 166.

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 113.

²² There was one notable exception to this in 1573. See Chapter 5, p. 167.

²³ Chapter 2, pp 87-8; Chapter 4, pp 134, 150; *The Plantation of the King's County and Queen's County*, BL Add. MS 4756, ff. 80v.

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throughout the plantation to secure its survival. The absence of self-sufficient ruling peers in the region further exacerbated the situation.

Although less wealthy than their counterparts elsewhere in the more civilised regions of Ireland and England, the evidence suggested that the political leadership of the two shires was conducted by a small but prominent group of little over thirty five landowners.²⁴ These gentlemen assumed positions in the county government and those ordered to construct castles for the advancement of English common law and the extension of royal authority in their area largely did, including the likes of Nicholas Herbert and John Barnes in the Queen's County.²⁵

There can be little doubt that the administration expected their officers in the midlands to ensure that peace was maintained and its position was preserved in the region. This they more or less achieved. However, there were some notable exceptions. As highlighted, captains such as Francis Cosby and Edward Moore were grossly negligent in fulfilling their duties, which undermined their positions by entering into dubious alliances with rebellious clans and focusing on acquiring and expanding their extensive personal holdings.²⁶ Yet, significantly, the evidence suggests that the majority of local governmental officials in the two shires were scrupulous, dutiful and hardworking individuals who often attempted to introduce and promote English law in their respective areas. We know that several captains selflessly spent their own money and funds on raising additional troops during times of unrest or constructed castles to ensure the colony survived and their tenants were kept safe. Still, it was quite clear that the granting of martial law powers to some of these men had a detrimental effect on government-Gaelic relations. But there is also little evidence to suggest any of these men, with the exception of Cosby and perhaps Barnaby FitzPatrick, implemented martial law with a particular fervour or ruthlessness. Therefore, this dissertation has concluded that, for the most

²⁴ See Appendix 2 for a list of who these leading gentry were.

²⁵ Chapter 3, pp 109-110.

²⁶ Chapter 5, pp 172-5.

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part, local government officers in the midlands conducted their roles dutifully committed to the crown in the face of overwhelming odds and significant challenges.

The Tudor government sought to not only transition the Gaelic lordships of Leix and Offaly into English shires in a bid to control the region; it also endeavoured to remodel the midlands in the image of England. As a result, from 1557 onwards, it was clear that the administration wanted as 'mere' or pure an English colony there as possible. Aside from a minor deviation in the 1560s when the government's stance changed to how effective an English order could be established there, the Leix-Offaly plantation and its county government was very much English in nature.²⁷ The settler grants of the period under review reflected this.²⁸ Settlers were overwhelmingly English, militarised and geared towards defence, ever prepared to repel any attempted incursions by some of the dispossessed and disgruntled Gaelic natives of the surrounding areas.²⁹

In sum, the findings of this study suggest that successive Tudor rulers gradually introduced English local government and administrative structures to Leix and Offaly by 1603 but did not administer these territories through the overall principle of 'self-government at the king's command'. The means by which these shires were administered was slightly different to those found in lowland England. Instead, the Tudor administration established what could be referred to as a unique and hybrid form of English local government that merged traditional structures with martial. The Leix-Offaly model was composed of elements of the Scottish, Welsh and Louth models but crucially fit into none of these frameworks. Although the midlands shires were technically absorbed within the confines of the English Pale by 1566, at least in the government's eyes, they did not match the traditional archetype.³⁰ They were also noticeably distinguishable from the newly created shires of Ireland post 1569. Thus, the midlands model of

²⁷ Chapter 2, pp 75-6.

²⁸ Appendix 1.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Chapter 2, p. 87.

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English local government was distinctive and gradually evolved over the following decades. The move was unquestionably a fruitful one and when peace was finally restored in the early years of the seventeenth century, the government made significant progress. By early 1604, Sir John Davies, the solicitor-general of Ireland commented that he was pleased to find so ‘many civil and substantial gentlemen and freeholders’ in the two counties and ‘in a word...the public peace’ was ‘well established’.³¹ Furthermore, it was alleged that the English families who had been uprooted during the Nine Years’ War, had begun to ‘govern the country’ once again and any Gaelic Irish that remained, for the most part, conformed ‘themselves to civil life, and gave their attendance very dutifully’ at sessions and that ‘the great part of the people do willingly come to church’.³² By 1607, the Lord Deputy Arthur Chichester remarked that he considered the Queen’s County in particular ‘for the most part planted with English’ and that the ‘kern and idle gentlemen who are not departed to the wars abroad now apply themselves to husbandry’ requesting ‘more people of that quality to break up and manure their waste grounds’.³³ Finally, by the year 1622, an Irish commission concluded that the plantation scheme in Leix and Offaly had been a relative success and the colony ‘hath prosperously continued, and was for the most part well peopled by the English and a great strength to the country’.³⁴ The inhabitants were also praised for having ‘maintained their houses in the greatest extremities’ and that they ‘dwelled and inhabited upon their plantations, which were to be wished were pursued in all other places’.³⁵ Arguably, this was a testament to the crown’s perseverance in establishing a distinctive framework of English local government in the midlands, the groundwork for which was implemented and firmly established during the period of 1547-1603.

³¹ Sir John Davies to Cecil, 19 April 1604, TNA, SP 63/216/15.

³² Observations made by Sir John Davies, Attorney of Ireland, after a journey made by him in Munster, 4 May 1606, TNA, SP 63/218/52.

³³ Lord Deputy and Council to the Privy Council, 20 April 1607, TNA, SP 63/221/39; Sir John Davies to Salisbury, 7 August 1607, TNA, SP 63/222/117.

³⁴ The Plantation of the King’s County and Queen’s County, BL, Add. MS 4756, ff. 80v.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Appendix 1

The Landowners of Leix & the Queen's County

1547-1603

Leix (1547-60)

Thomas Jacob of Stradbally
Thomas Page

Gentlemen:

Gerald Aylmer of Kildare
William Hidney of Kilmaynan
Oliver Sutton of Ricketstown
Thomas Smith
Anthony Colclough
Donal McShane at Killeen
Thomas Masterson
John Ley of Ballina
William Gerard
Francis Cosby of Kildare
Callough McTurlough of Killeany
Edmund Fay
Walter Pepper of Kilka
John Bellingham
Edward Randolph
Richard Mannering

Soldiers:

John Glaceters
William Glaceters
Humphrey Haselwood
Robert Quicke
Hugh Johns
John Thomas
Henry Barrett
Thomas Croucher
Thomas Flody
Thomas Apoell
John Dunkirkley

Esquires:

Robert St. Leger of Carlow
Henry Wise

Knights:

Sir John Travers of Monkstown
Sir Ralph Bagenal¹

¹ *Fiants Ire. Edward VI* nos 698, 727; Offers of Gerald Aylmer, Sir John Travers and others, 10 December 1550, TNA, SP 61/2/69; *Fiants Ire. Edward VI* nos 685, 693, 696, 697, 700, 705, 711, 712, 724, 725, 736, 740, 830, 1131, 1145, 674, 674, 686, 694, 695, 698, 701, 704, 709, 710, 713, 684, 716, 741, 703.

Queen's County (1560-71)

Ferganainm O'Kelly
Hugh McCallough
John Morris
Thomas Johnson
John Barrington
Nicholas White
Hugh Lippiatt
Callough McTurlough
Patrick Hetherington
Edward Brereton-
Thomas Keating
Murtough McLaoiseach McConnell
Molmoricus McEdmund
Arthur Tomen
Tadhg Duff McMurrough
Donal FitzPatrick
Henry Davells
Ceadach McPiers
Edmund Keating
Muirgheas Óg
John Keating
Walter Keating

Matthew Skelton
Murrough McCarroll
David McMurrough
Robert Hartpole
Richard Keating
Tadhg O'Dolan
Frinne O'Kelly
Hugh McDermot O'Dempsey
Terence McDonnell

Gentlemen:

Thomas St. Leger
George Delves
Francis Palmes
John Dunkirkley of Naas
George Frevill
John Piggott of Dysart

Esquires:

Francis Cosby of Stradbally

Surgeon:

Tadhg McDonagh ²

² *Fiantis Ire. Eliz.*, nos 490, 492, 624, 625, 647, 494, 495, 498, 500, 501, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 514, 515, 518, 519, 521, 529, 530, 531, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 540, 559, 575, 499, 488, 496, 493/542, 491.

Queen's County (1571-80)

John Hovenden	Robert Hartpole of Carlow
Piers Hovenden	Robert George
Robert George	Richard FitzGarrett
<i>Gentlemen:</i>	David Hetherington
George Bouchier	Richard Keating
John Barnes	<i>Knights:</i>
John Whitney	Sir Maurice FitzThomas FitzGerald
Thomas Lambin	of Lackagh ³
Anthony Hungerford	

Queen's County (1580-1603)

Patrick Crosbie	<i>Gentlemen:</i>
Edmund Barrett	John Sterling
<i>Esquires:</i>	Piers Hovenden of Tankardstown
Thomas Jenison-	Lodowick Briskett
William Browne of Mulrankin-	<i>Knights:</i>
	Sir Richard Graham ⁴

³ *Fiantis Ire. Eliz.*, nos 1698, 1699, 1689, 1680, 1697, 1720, 1802, 2778, 2838, 3295, 3315, 3353, 3357, 2208.

⁴ *Cal. pat. rolls Ire.*, pp 604, 409-10, 4293, 5931, 4394, 409-10, 5845, 595-6 respectively.

The Landowners of Offaly & the King's County

1547-1603

Offaly (1547-60)

Edmund Dalton of Nowalt
Redmund Óg FitzGerald

Gentlemen:

Matthew King of Moyclare
Nicholas Burrell
John Wakely of Navan
William Dickson of Ballyskeagh
Edward Dickson of Jordanstown
Nicholas Herbert of Portlester
Thomas Masterson
Roger Brook

Thomas Sendall
Richard Croft
Roger Finglas

Yeomen:

Thomas Chambers of Kilmaynan
James Brewster of Kilmaynan

Soldiers:

Patrick Sherlock
Anthony March
Thomas Wakely⁵

King's County (1560-71)

Thomas Morris
Henry Warren
John Apprise
Redmund Bermingham
Geoffrey Philips
John Sankey of Ballyleakin
Walter Bermingham
Richard Pepper of Balrenett
Christopher Nugent, Baron of
Delvin
John Baynam
David Sumpter
John Davy
John Till
David Flody
Humphrey Reynolds
Tadhg McCallough
Peter Leicester
Laoiseach McMurrough

Charles O'Connor
Tadhg McCahir O'Connor
Callough McTadhg O'Connor
Charles O'Connor
George Leonard
William Fures
Edward William
Anthony March
Francis Appleyard

Gentlemen:

Richard Croft of Castlejordan
Henry Duke of Castlejordan
Robert Cowley
Owen McHugh O'Dempsey

Esquires:

Henry Cowley of Castlecowley

Knights:

Sir Thomas Tyrell⁶

⁵ *Fiantis Ire. Edward VI*, no 726, 732, 661, 663, 687, 688, 689, 691, 705, 735, 766, 829, 1144, 692, 690, 714; *Cal. pat. rolls Ire.*, pp 225-31.

⁶ *Fiantis Ire. Eliz.*, nos 475, 477, 478, 480, 481, 483, 484, 485, 486, 513, 516, 517, 520, 522, 523, 532, 566, 571, 572, 589, 589, 610, 610, 611, 623, 627, 628, 476, 476, 479, 596, 474, 482.

King's County (1571-80)

Thomas Moore of Mellifont
Nicholas Herbert of Monasteroris
Callough O'Connor
Ross McGeoghegan
James FitzGerald
Gerald FitzGerald, 11th Earl of
Kildare

Gentlemen:

Meyler Hussey of Mulhussey
Edward Sore
Francis Lany
John Sankey
Thomas Morris
George Cowley

Knights:

Sir William O'Carroll⁷

King's County (1580-1603)

John Lye
Richard Croft
Henry Duke
Thomas Morris
Hubert Fox

Knights:

Sir Lucas Dillon, Chief Baron
Sir John McCoughlan⁸

⁷ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 2371, 2519, 2828, 2915, 2988, 3313, 2589, 2904, 3215, 3285, 3471, 3572, 3395.

⁸ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 4334; *Cal. pat. rolls Ire.*, pp 84, 271, 275, 4366, 35 respectively.

Appendix 2

Local Government Officers, Queen's County and King's County

Justices of the Peace, Queen's County

1563

Henry Radcliffe, knt.
Francis Cosby, esq.
William Girton, gent.
Hugh Lippiat, gent.
William Portas, gent.
John Thomas, gent.
Owen MacHugh O'Dempsey, gent.

1599

Warham St. Leger, knt.¹

Justices of the Peace, King's County

1563

Henry Radcliffe, knt.
Francis Herbert, knt.
Henry Cowley, esq.
Robert Cowley, gent.
John Wakely, gent.
Owen MacHugh O'Dempsey, gent.

1579

Henry Cowley, knt.
Gerald FitzGerald, Earl of Kildare

1580

Henry Cowley, knt.

1599

Edward Moore, knt.²

Justices of the Peace, Queen's County and King's County

1595

George Bouchier, knt.
Edward Moore, knt.

1596

George Bouchier, knt.
Edward Moore, knt.

1599

George Bouchier, knt.
Edward Moore, knt.

1600

George Bouchier, knt.
Edward Moore, knt.³

¹ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 549, 6293.

² *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 542, 3601, 3657, 6293 respectively.

³ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 5938, 6054, 6293, 6438 respectively.

Sheriffs of the Queen's County

1561 Francis Cosby, esq.
1564 Francis Cosby, esq.
1566 Francis Cosby, esq.
1567 Edward Brereton, gent.
1568 Barnaby FitzPatrick, knt.
1572 Thomas Merrick, gent.
1573 Thomas Lambin, gent.
1574 Thomas Lambin, gent.
1575 Edmund Butler, knt.
1579 Robert Bowen, gent.
1581 John Barnes, gent.
1587 Alexander Cosby, gent.
1594 Unknown Sheriff.⁴

Sheriffs of the King's County

1564 Unknown Sheriff
1566 Henry Cowley, esq.
1567 Unknown Sheriff
1571 John Wakely, gent.
1572 Robert Cowley, gent.
1573 Redmund Bermingham, gent.
1576 Thomas Moore, gent.
1578 John Barnes, gent.
1579 John Sankey, gent.
1582 Henry Warren, gent.
1583 George Cowley, gent.
1585 Edward Herbert, gent.
1587 Henry Warren, gent.
1591 Terence O'Dempsey, knt
1594 Henry Duke, gent.
1598 George Cowley, gent.⁵

Sub-Sheriff of the King's County

1583 Edmund Flanagan.
1599 George Cowley, gent.⁶

⁴ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 381, 682, 953, 1027, 1329, 2113, 2345, 2549, 2555, 3590, 3799, 5132 respectively; *Cal. Carew MSS, 1589-1600*, no. 140; Book of the army and garrisons in Ireland, with the charges of the same for one month and notes on how it can be reduced, 1 January 1572, TNA, SP 63/35/182; Brief of the receipt and payments by the treasurer for one year ending 20 March 1572, 20 March 1572, TNA, SP 63/35/217; Thomas Lambin, sheriff of Queen's County to Lord Deputy Fitzwilliam, 5 June, 1573, TNA, SP 63/41/576; Book of the estate of the army and garrisons with the charge of the same for one month, 15 April 1574, TNA, SP 63/45/934.1.

⁵ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 953, 1810, 2200, 2340, 2999, 3453, 3596, 4040, 4658, 5126, 5601, 5882, 6221, 6288; Lord Justice and Council to the sheriff of the King's County, 5 August 1564, TNA, SP 63/11/58; Lord Justice Weston and Fitzwilliam and Council to Queen Elizabeth, 30 October 1567, TNA, 63/22/549.

⁶ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 4308.

Appendix 3

Martial Officers, Queen's County and King's County

**Lieutenants of Maryborough,
Philipstown, the Queen's County and
King's County**

1548-9

William St. Loe, knt.

1558-64

Henry Radcliffe, knt.

1576

Barnaby FitzPatrick, knt.

1582

William Collier, esq.

1584-92

George Bouchier (Philipstown & the
King's County), knt.

1584-99

Warham St. Leger (Maryborough & the
Queen's County), knt.¹

Constable of Maryborough

1565-78

Francis Cosby, esq.

1578-98

George Harvey, esq.

1598-99

Philip Harvey, gent.

1599-1603

Francis Rush, knt.²

Constable of Philipstown

1565-76

Henry Cowley, esq.

1576-1601

Edward Moore, esq.

1601-03

Garret Moore, knt.³

Seneschal of the Queen's County:

1565-76

Francis Cosby, esq.⁴

Seneschal of the King's County:

1565-76

Henry Cowley, esq.

1576-8

Edward Moore, esq.

1578-84

William Collier, esq.⁵

¹ Lord Deputy Bellingham to the Privy Council, August 1548, TNA, SP 61/1/84; *Fiants Ire. Philip & Mary*, no. 228; *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 4, 637; Memorials for Mr. Edward Norris, 6 August 1584, TNA, SP 63/111/43; *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 2843, 4044, 4549 & 5758; The Lords Justices Loftus and Carey to the Privy Council, 29 October 1599, TNA, SP 63/205/228 respectively.

² *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 819, 3482, 6269; The Earl of Ormond to the Privy Council, 26 March 1599, TNA, SP 63/203/101 respectively.

³ Memorial from Sir Thomas Radcliffe, earl of Sussex to Queen Elizabeth, 25 March 1566, TNA, SP 63/16/65; *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 2810, 6590 respectively.

⁴ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, nos 819, 1196, 2113, 2117, 2163-4.

⁵ *Fiants Ire. Eliz.*, no. 1196, 1786, 2117, 2163-4, 2340, 2810, 3508, 4590 respectively.

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The National Archives, Dublin

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