An English Bishop afloat in an Irish See: John Bale, Bishop of Ossory, 1552-1553[*]
Stephen Tong

The Irish Reformation has traditionally been seen as an unmitigated failure. This is perhaps symptomatic of the historiographical trend to isolate the Irish Reformation from its English counterpart, and simultaneously to perceive the outcome of the Irish Reformation as a failure of English reformers to establish Protestantism at a popular level there as a foregone conclusion.[1] On the other hand, Ireland has generally been ignored by English historians who take an Anglocentric view.[2] Henry Jefferies has recently challenged these models by conceiving the sixteenth-century Irish Church as existing under the umbrella of the English Church.[3] By following Jefferies' lead, this essay seeks to understand the Irish Reformation from a contemporary English perspective, namely the autobiographical account given by John Bale in *The Vocacyon of Johan Bale to the bishoprick of Ossorie in Irelande his persecusions in ye same & final delyueraunce*

[1] For an introduction to this discussion, see Brendan Bradshaw, 'Sword, word and strategy in the Reformation of Ireland', *Historical Journal* 21 (1978), 475-502; Nicholas Canny, 'Why the Reformation failed in Ireland: une question mal posée', *JEH* 30 (1979), 423-50; K.S. Bottigheimer, 'The failure of the Reformation in Ireland: une question bien posée', *JEH* 36 (1985), 196-207; S.K. Bottigheimer and B. Bradshaw, 'Revisionism and the Irish Reformation: a debate', *JEH* 51 (2000), 581-92; H.A. Jefferies, 'The early Tudor Reformation in the Irish Pale', *JEH* 52 (2001), 34-62.

[2] For the Edwardian Reformation, see Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor Church Militant: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (London, 1999); Catharine Davies, *A religion of the Word: The Defence of the Reformation in the Reign of Edward VI* (Manchester, 2002).

[3] Henry Jefferies, *The Irish Church and the Tudor Reformations*, (Dublin, 2010), esp. 101-103; idem, 'The Marian Restoration in Ireland', *British Catholic History* 33:1 (2016), 12-31. See also Brendan Bradshaw, 'The Edwardian Reformation in Ireland, 1547-53', *Archivium Hibernicum* 34 (1977), 83-99; James Murray, *Enforcing the English Reformation in Ireland: Clerical Resistance and Political Conflict in the Diocese of Dublin, 1534-1590* (Cambridge, 2009).

(1553).[4] It will be argued that the appointment of English ministers to Irish bishoprics was consistent with efforts to expand the burgeoning Tudor 'empire' through extension of the English state's religious policy.

The *Vocacyon* tells John Bale's story of being appointed to the bishopric of Ossory, County Kilkenny, by Edward VI; his struggle to make headway against a bloc of conservative clergy; his escape from murderous mobs upon the accession of Mary; and his high-sea adventures involving pirates en route to a safe refuge on the continent.[5] Due to the specific dates given in the text, it is likely that Bale worked from a diary to compose the *Vocacyon* almost immediately after arriving on the continent.[6] This 'factual' quality has led it to be described as one of the earliest examples of autobiography in the English language.[7]

Bale's narrative, however, must be treated with caution. The *Vocacyon* is a carefully constructed piece of self-representation in which Bale offers his own theological interpretation on very recent events with a specific pastoral objective in mind. Written for a beleaguered community of English evangelicals in the nascent stages of their continental exile under Mary, it was a 'homily to true

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[4] Hereafter *Vocacyon. The Vocacyon of Johan Bale to the bishoprick of Ossorie in Irelande his persecusions in y^e same & final delyueraunce* (Wesel? 1553). The critical modern edition of the text is *The vocacyon of Johan Bale*, ed. P. Happé and J. N. King, (New York, 1990).

[5] Ibid. See also Felicity Heal, *Reformation in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2003), 1-12). For biographical details of Bale, see Leslie P. Fairfield *John Bale: Mythmaker for the English Reformation* (West Lafayette, 1976); Peter Happé, *John Bale* (New York, 1996), 1-25.

[6] See Happé and King, *The vocacyon*, 'Introduction', 12-13, 17-18.

[7] Leslie P. Fairfield, '*The vocacyon of Johan Bale* and early English autobiography', *Renaissance Quarterly* 24 (1971), 327. See also Meredith Anne Skura, *Tudor autobiography: Listening for inwardness* (Chicago, 2008), ch. 3.

believers' designed to encourage them to persevere in the face of acute persecution.[8]

This work has long attracted attention from literary scholars interested in early modern concepts of nationality.[9] Likewise, historians have turned to the *Vocacyon* for insights into the prevailing religious conditions of mid-Tudor Ireland.[10] However previous evaluations of the *Vocacyon* have too readily taken Bale at face value.[11] There is another aspect that is often overlooked, even in Steven Ellis's important essay on Bale's episcopal career: many academics have failed to appreciate that Bale saw himself as an agent of the English crown.[12] This essay explores the extent to which Bale's self-conscious English identity affected his attitude to his episcopal office. His ministry as a bishop in Ireland will be contextualised within the wider English movement of religious reform during the reign of Edward VI (1547-1553) in an attempt to throw new light on the imperial designs of the English government in this period, when the Edwardian Reformation was in its apogee.[13]

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[8] Steven Ellis, 'John Bale, bishop of Ossory, 1552-3', *Journal of the Butler Society* 2 (1984), 286.

[9] Fairfield, '*The vocacyon of Johan Bale* and early English autobiography', 327-40; John N. King, *English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton, 1982), 56-76; Andrew Hadfield, 'Translating the reformation: John Bale's Irish *Vocacyon*', in B. Bradshaw, A. Hadfield, and W. Maley (eds.), *Representing Ireland: Literature and the Origins of the Conflict, 1534-1660* (Cambridge, 1993), 43-59; Stewart Mottram, *Empire and Nation in Early English Renaissance Literature* (Suffolk, 2008), 11-34.

[10] See fns. 1 and 3.

[11] For example, Katherine Walsh, 'Deliberate provocation or reforming zeal? John Bale as first Church of Ireland bishop of Ossory (1552/53-1563)', in Vincent Carey and Ute Lotz-Heumann (eds.), *Taking Sides? Colonial and Confessional Mentalities in Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2003), 42-60.

[12] Ellis, 'John Bale, bishop of Ossory, 1552-3', 283-93.

[13] For the Edwardian Reformation at this period, see MacCulloch, *Tudor Church Militant*, 126.

Little is known about Bale's appointment to the vacant see of Ossory in August 1552 apart from the account that we are given in the *Vocacyon*. Thus it remains unclear why he was chosen to fill this role at this particular moment. Bale was well qualified as a known evangelical and author of the first full commentary in English on the book of Revelation, *The Image of Both Churches* (c.1545), which viewed history through an apocalyptic lens, and significantly shaped the way mid-Tudor reformers conceived their times as a spiritual contest between members of the true and false churches.[14] Yet despite this, his own romanticised account of being 'called in a manner from deathe to this office' by the king during his royal progress through Winchester gives the impression that the establishment had previously overlooked Bale for ecclesiastical preferment.[15] Indeed, upon his return to England from a self-imposed exile during the 1540s in the wake of the fall of his former patron Thomas Cromwell and in reaction to the Act of Six Articles, Bale was only able to secure the rather minor post of rector of Bishopstoke, Hampshire, on 26 June 1551, before being

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[14] John Bale, *The Image of Bothe Churches* (c. 1545). See also *John Bale's The Image of Both Churches*, ed. Gretchen E. Minton (Dordrecht, 2013), 1-34. See also Katharine Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530-1645* (Oxford, 1979), 32-68; Catharine Davies, ''Poor Persecuted Little Flock' or 'Commonwealth of Christians'; Edwardian Protestant Concepts of the Church', in Peter Lake and Maria Dowling (eds.), *Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth Century England* (London, 1987), 78-102.

[15] *Vocacyon*, sigs. B8-C1, at C1. The King's direct involvement in Bale's appointment is consonant with the view that Edward began to take greater control of government from 1550 onwards, especially in regard to the religious policy, despite still being a minor. See W. K., Jordan, *Edward VI: The Threshold of Power, The dominance of the Duke of Northumberland* (London, 1970), 367-8.
 Jennifer Loach, *Edward VI*, ed. George Bernard and Penry Williams (New Haven-London, 1999), 130-4.

promoted to vicar of Swaffham soon after – both thanks to his friend John Ponet, Bishop of Winchester.[16]

A possible reason for Bale's ministerial obscurity is because the influential Council member, Sir William Paget, was ill disposed toward him. In 1547, Bale had critisied Paget for trying to force the Protestant martyr, Anne Askew, to recant before her execution and accused him of defending transubstantiation.[17] When Bale returned to England in 1548, Paget was still in a powerful political position, and was therefore 'well placed to block Bale from advancement'.[18] It is interesting to note that Bale's appointment to Ossory occurred while Paget was disgraced and faced charges of corruption (he received a full pardon in December 1552, and was reinstated to Council the following February).

Other records corroborate the view that Bale had been overlooked by the Edwardian regime. When Archbishop Cranmer wrote to William Cecil on 25 August 1552, he suggested four men for the Primacy of Ireland, that is as Archbishop of Armagh; Bale was not on the list.[19] One of Cranmer's

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[16] For details, see John N. King, 'Bale, John (1495–1563)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/1175.

[17] John Bale, *The lattre examinacyon of Anne Askewe latelye martyred in Smythfelde, by the wycked Synagoge of Antichrist, with the Elucydacyon of Iohan Bale* (1547), sigs. C4v-7v.

[18] Happé and King, *The vocacyon*, 'Introduction', 6. See also Sybil M. Jack, 'Paget, William, first Baron Paget (1505/6–1563)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/21121.

[19] Thomas Cranmer, *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer* (Cambridge, 1846), ed. J.E. Cox, 438. Armagh had been vacant since the Roman Catholic George Dowdall had fled to the continent in 1551 on the grounds that 'he would never be bishop where the holy Mass (as he called it) was abolished', *Original Letters and papers in illustration of the history of the Church in Ireland during the reigns of Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth* (London, 1851), ed. E.P. Shirley, 58. See also Jefferies, *The Irish Church*, 93-8. W. K. Jordan also suggests

recommendations was Hugh Goodacre, who was to join Bale in Dublin for their joint consecration service the following March.[20] Although Cranmer had not considered Bale to fill the important see of Armagh, it is certainly possible that John Ponet had had a hand in the promotions of both Bale and Goodacre: Bale was a prebendary at Winchester, and Goodacre was Ponet's chaplain. Ponet's signature topped the list of signatures on the letter that bestowed the bishopric of Ossory upon Bale, dated 26 August 1552.[21]

Until this point, Bale's name had also been absent from any discussions regarding vacant sees emanating from Ireland. Ossory had been vacant since the death of Milo Baron in 1550, despite two successive Lords Deputy of Ireland proposing qualified candidates to the Privy Council in London. In October 1550, Sir Anthony St. Leger recommended his own chaplain, Patrick Walsh, for the position.[22] Six months later, St. Leger's newly arrived replacement, Sir James Croft, complained to William Cecil about the 'neglicence of the Bysshopes and other spyrituall mynistres'.[23] He called for 'some lerned men' to be sent over to reform the Irish Church.[24] A short while after this, Croft wrote to John Dudley, the Lord President of the Council, and suggested Thomas Leverous to fill one of the vacant sees: Armagh, Cassell or Ossory.[25] According to Croft's commendation, Leverous was a highly suitable and qualified candidate since he was able to

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that William Turner had been offered the See of Ossory, but had 'declined because of his ignorance of the language', *The Threshold of Power*, 368.

[20] Ibid. Note that Cranmer refers to Goodacre as 'Whitacre'. See also *Vocacyon*, sigs. C2-2ᵛ. For Goodacre see Henry Jefferies, 'Goodacre, Hugh (d. 1553)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/10947 .

[21] A full copy of the letter is found in the *Vocacyon*, sigs. B8ᵛ-C1.

[22] Walsh was later made the Dean of Waterford. See *Original Letters*, 41-2, 47-8.

[23] Ibid. 63.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid. 61-2.

preach in both English and Irish.[26] However, these requests fell on deaf ears. Their dismissal – or ignoring – of the suggestions for episcopal promotion made by local authorities indicates that the Edwardian administration treated ecclesiastical reform in Ireland as a matter for the English authorities, and the Irish Church as part of the English establishment.

Other bishoprics in England had only been offered to trusted evangelicals.[27] Ireland was no different. The Council had made it clear to Croft that 'the [financial] fruicts of the busshoprick' are not meet for any man 'but a good mynister and a preacher of the worde of God'.[28] In other words, the administration would only appoint a trusted political ally who would also be willing and able to administer the type of reform that matched the evangelical mould being promoted elsewhere in the Tudor 'empire'. Bale certainly fitted that bill. Having trained as a Carmelite friar, he converted in the early 1530s and soon made a name for himself as a political dramatist and a writer with a 'brass-knuckled polemical style'.[29] But as already noted, he had been overlooked for ecclesiastical promotion until this point in time.

Whatever the political reasons for Bale's appointment, he portrayed it as a providential act. Bale framed his 'vocacion to the bishoprick of Ossorie in Ireland' as a matter of divine 'election' facilitated by his earthly king.[30] In doing

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[26] Ibid.
[27] Barret L. Beer, 'Episcopacy and Reform in Mid-Tudor England', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 23:2 (Summer, 1991), 231-252.
[28] *Original Letters*, 52-3.
[29] Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England: The Making of John Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs'* (Cambridge, 2011), 38-79, at 38.
[30] *Vocacyon*, sig. C1.

so, he unashamedly associated himself with the apostle Paul.[31] Just as Christ had appointed Paul Apostle to the Gentiles, so Edward had appointed Bale as his ambassador and advocate to tame the 'wild Irish' through religious reform.[32] The letter of appointment carried the king's authority,[33] and Bale understood it as a directive to establish English order in Ireland. Within days of his arrival to Ireland, Bale noted that 'heathnysh behavers' (i.e. traditional practices associated with the Mass) went unchecked because 'Christe had there no Bishop, neyther yet the Kynges Majestie of Englande any faithful officer of the mayer'.[34] Soon after, Bale's disgust was compounded when he discovered that it was considered 'an honour in this lande to have a spirituall man as a bishop, an Abbot, a Monke, a Fryre, or a Prest' as father.[35] Thus he resolved 'to refourme it [i.e. the Irish Church] … by our preachinges [so that] the popes superstitions wolde diminishe & true Christen religion increase'.[36] There was little doubt in Bale's mind that he was being sent as a missionary bishop, ordained by God and commissioned by Edward to help establish the English Church in Ireland.

Throughout his ministry, Bale applied the concept of empire to describe his work, seeking to exploit England's imperial prerogative and impose evangelical doctrine and practice upon his diocese by constantly invoking the Royal Supremacy.[37] Reflecting on his time as Bishop of Ossory, Bale claimed to

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[31] Cf. Acts 9. For a contrasting discussion, see Skura, *Tudor Autobiography*, 55-60.
[32] *Vocacyon*, sig. F7.
[33] Ibid. sig. C1.
[34] Ibid. sigs. C1ᵛ-2.
[35] Ibid. sig. C2.
[36] Ibid. sigs. C2-2ᵛ.
[37] See comments regarding the contemporary use of 'empire' made by J.R. Tanner, *Tudor Constitutional Documents A.D. 1485-1603 with an historical commentary* (Bath, 1922), 40; and, G.R. Elton, *The Tudor Constitution: Documents and Commentary* (Cambridge, 1960), 332; Mottram, *Empire and Nation*, 11-34.

have 'mayntened the politicall ordre by [preaching evangelical] doctrine, & [thus] moved the commens always to obeye their magistrates'.[38] Despite fleeing Henry's regime in the 1540s, Bale referred to Henry in the *Vocacyon* as 'that noble prince' who completed 'that wonderfull wurke of God ... an overthrowe [of] the great Golias of Rome'.[39] The Royal Supremacy continued to affect modes of thinking within the fledging communities of exiled evangelicals even as Henry VIII's elder daughter sought to dismantle it. Other Marian exiles would soon challenge this view: most prominently, Bale's close friend and mentor, John Ponet, would go on to write the first defence of regicide in his treatise, *Politike Power* (1556).[40] Bale never followed Ponet's lead in this regard, however.[41] The picture Bale gives of his time in Ireland is quite the opposite. He had, in his view, leveraged the political hegemony of the English Church afforded by the Tudor empire to pursue his goal of reforming his remote diocese in south-eastern Ireland. Although Bale crossed the Irish Sea, he understood his ministry as falling under English legal jurisdiction, both civil and ecclesiastical.

Bale's view was not out of step with the prevailing culture of obedience throughout the Tudor century.[42] Nor was it a novel way of conceiving the reach

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[38] *Vocacyon*, sig. C4ᵛ.

[39] Ibid. sig. B7ᵛ.

[40] John Ponet, *A shorte treatise of politike power, and of the true Obedience which subjects owe to kynges and other civile Governours, with an Exhortation to all true naturall Englishe men* (1556). See also Stephen Alford, *Kingship and Politics in the Reign of Edward VI* (Cambridge, 2002), 176-9; Mark Earngey, 'New Light on the Life and Theology of Bishop John Ponet (1514-1556)' (unpublished MPhil thesis, Oxford, 2016), 41-3.

[41] Walsh points out that in comparison to other Marian exiles, Bale was a first-generation reformer. This may help to explain the variance between Bale and Ponet on the Royal Supremacy. 'Deliberate provocation', 47.

[42] Hadfield argues that the Old English in the Pale generally considered themselves as under the jurisdiction of the English crown, 'Translating the Reformation', 43-4. See also Ryan Reeves, *English Evangelicals and Tudor*

and influence of the English crown in Ireland. The various acts of parliament that established the Royal Supremacy refashioned Henry VIII's position and title as combined ruler over Church and State with imperial terminology. According to the Act in Restraint of Appeals (1533), 'this Realme of Englond' was 'an Impire',[43] and Henry was declared the 'Supreme heede and King having the Dignitie and Roiall Estate of the Imperiall Crown' over 'a Body politike compacte of all sortes and degrees of people', including those living in areas outside England, such as the Irish Pale and Calais.[44]

This imperial concept was reinforced with ecclesiastical overtones during Edward's reign. The royal proclamation of July 1547 that ordered the *Book of Homilies* to be read out in every parish referred to the ecclesiastical institution as 'this Church of England *and* Ireland'.[45] Edward VI was called the 'supreme head immediately under God of the spirituality and temporality of the same church'.[46] By the end of the reign, Edward was being hailed as 'king of England, France and Irelande defendoure of the faith: and of the church of Englande and also of Ireland in earthe the Supreme head…' in the official catechism.[47] Thus in both a civic and ecclesiastical sense, mid-Tudor reformers saw Ireland and its Church as falling under the dominion of the English crown. In theory, then, the Edwardian Church, as an institution of the Tudor empire, extended beyond the geographic borders of England and incorporated the dioceses of Ireland. On this basis, the

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Obedience, c.1527–1570 (Leiden, 2014), esp. ch. 3; Stephen Chavura, *Tudor Protestant political thought, 1547-1603* (Leiden, 2011), esp. ch. 5.
[43] *Statues of the Realm*, III (London, 1963), 24 Hen. VIII c. 12, 427.
[44] Ibid.
[45] No. 287, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, I (New Haven, 1964) eds. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, 403. Emphasis added.
[46] Ibid.
[47] *Catechism* (1553), sig. A2.

ecclesiastical institution could be used as a political instrument to enhance the colonial reach of the Tudor crown.

From an ecclesiastical perspective, the Diocese of Dublin (if not the entire Irish Church) had long been seen as the handmaid of the English Church.[48] Edward's reign saw a continuation of this relationship. In 1547 George Browne, the Archbishop of Dublin (1536-1554), proposed a scheme for the endowment of a university in his diocese to advance 'the unspeakeable reformacōn of that realme ... [and to increase] the obedience of [the king's] Lawes' there.[49] Browne also promoted the ministry of Walter Palatyne, a Scotsman who preached in Dublin against the Pope, 'the masse and other ceremonies'.[50] In 1548 Christopher Bodkin, the Archbishop of Tuam (1536-1572), wrote from beyond the Pale in County Galway to render his 'diligent service' to Edward Bellingham, the Lord Deputy at the time.[51] Bodkin had noted that due to a 'lack of regemen & Justice', his county 'nydyth reformacōn more than eūr'.[52] These examples demonstrate that well before Bale was considered for the See of Ossory, existing bishops were making some attempt to reform their Irish sees in accordance with the new ecclesiastical outlook of the Edwardian regime.[53] Political weight was added to this movement with the 1549 Act of Uniformity, which Bellingham actively enforced.[54] Moreover, as Jefferies argues, although the act did not explicitly mention Ireland, it was imposed upon the Anglophone parishes of the

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[48] Murray, *Enforcing the Tudor Reformation in Ireland*, 20-47.
[49] *Original Letters*, 11.
[50] Ibid. 19-21, at 19. See also Lambeth Palace Library MS 602 fol. 104ᵛ.
[51] Ibid. 17.
[52] Ibid.
[53] For other examples, see *Original Letters*, 22-5, 28-35.
[54] Ibid. 32-3.

Pale 'with the acquiescence of the local secular elite'.[55] Such moves emphasised to the local population the extension of England's political, and thereby ecclesiastical, authority over Ireland.

Changes to public worship furthered the Edwardian regime's process of annexing the Irish Church to itself. In 1551, the 1549 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* became the first book printed in Ireland. Royal instructions to the Lord Deputy made it clear that the new English liturgy was to become the standard form of public worship in Ireland.[56] Church services were to be conducted 'in the englishe tongue in all places'.[57] The only exception allowed was where a majority did not understand English, in which case the liturgy was to be 'translated truly into the Irish tongue, unto such tyme as the people maye be brought to understand the englishe'.[58] This was 'an exemplary moment of colonization'.[59] A population that had showed no previous signs of welcoming reform was now impelled to pray for deliverance from 'the tyranny of the bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities' in the English language.[60] Initially, however, the Edwardian Reformation in Ireland was in practice aimed at and intended for those who understood English. An abridged Irish-Gaelic translation of the 1559 Prayer Book the Prayer Book was not produced until 1608, while the

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[55] Jefferies, *The Irish Church*, 93.
[56] *Original Letters*, 39-41.
[57] Ibid. 40.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Brian Cummings, 'Introduction', in Brian Cummings, ed., *The Books of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662* (Oxford, 2011), xlvii.
[60] A prayer from the Litany, *The boke of common praier* (Dublin, 1551), sig. O5. This copy is housed in Trinity College Library, Dublin, and a digitised version is available at http://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/home/index.php?DRIS_ID=BOCP1551_001.

complete liturgy only appeared in 1712.[61] As a point of comparison, Thomas

Gualtier made a French translation of the 1552 Prayer Book for use on the

Channel Islands and the French Stranger Church in December 1552.[62] At the

same time, William Salesbury was translating sections of the 1549 Prayer Book

into Welsh, although this was not published until 1567.[63] No Latin version of the

1552 Prayer was ever produced, nor did the 1559 version appear in French.[64]

Forcing the Irish Church to adopt English as its official language of prayer

and worship was a powerful means of enveloping it into the English

Reformation. As Felicity Heal has demonstrated, 'authority … was clearly on the

side of the dominant tongue'.[65] Although Cranmer encouraged reformers in

Ireland to gain the Irish Gaelic language in order to be better equipped to reach

local communities, there is no evidence to suggest that Bale ever entertained this

possibility.[66] This limited Bale's reach to those within the Pale. His inability to

engage with the Gaelic population was also partly a function of the politico-

cultural divisions within sixteenth-century Ireland. As Ellis points out, imposing

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[61] D.N. Griffiths, 'Prayer-Book Translations in the Nineteenth Century', *The Library*, 6th series 4:1 (1984), 11. Griffiths lists all translations of Prayer Books before 1900 in an appendix, 20-4. See also idem., 'The French Translations of the English Book of Common Prayer', *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* 22 (1972), 90-114, and, 'The early translations of the Book of Common Prayer', *The Library* 6th series 3:1 (1981), 1-16.

[62] Griffith, 'The early translations of the Book of Common Prayer', 7; Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'The importance of Jan Laski in the English Reformation', in Christoph Strohm (ed.), *Johannes a Lasco (1499-1560): Polnischer Baron, Humanist und europäischer Reformator* (Tübingen, 2000), 336. See also Jennifer Loach, '"A Close League with the King of France": Lady Jane Grey's proclamation in French and its part in a planned betrayal', *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* 25 (1991), 235.

[63] Felicity Heal, 'Mediating the Word: Language and Dialects in the British and Irish Reformations', *JEH* 02 (2005), 261-86.

[64] Griffiths, 'The French Translations of the English Book of Common Prayer', 93.

[65] Heal, 'Mediating the Word', 265.

[66] Cranmer to Cecil, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 438. See also Jefferies, *The Irish Church*, 98-99.

religious reform upon the Gaelic communities required a 'political conquest' via military means.[67] Bale was surely not ignorant of these circumstances. He delineated the population between the native-born Irish and those of English birth.[68] Yet Bale's decision to conduct his ministry according to the doctrines and rites established by English law reflected his political and religious allegiance to the Edwardian establishment, and mirrored the official relationship of Church and state between England and Ireland.

The most obvious example of this in the *Vocacyon* is Bale's description of his consecration. The service became a flashpoint because the dean of the cathedral church in Dublin, Thomas Lockwood, or as Bale calls him 'Blockhead', tried to prevent the use of the revised Ordinal of 1552 in consecrating the bishops elect, Bale and Goodacre.[69] Although the 1549 Prayer Book had been printed in Ireland in 1551, it did not contain the reformed Ordinal of 1550, which was subsequently revised and incorporated into the 1552 Prayer Book.[70] This variance of Prayer Book editions between England and Ireland highlights the difference in pace of official reform within the Tudor empire, from its centre in London to the farthest outposts in the English Pale of Ireland. While the English Church accelerated its reform programme under the Protectorship of John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, the Irish Church lagged behind.[71] Lockwood understood this. Thus

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[67] Ellis, 'John Bale', 284.
[68] *Vocacyon*, esp. sigs. F3-8.
[69] Ibid. sigs C2-3ᵛ. The presiding bishop was 'George the archebishop of Dublyne', who had 'Thomas the bisshop of Kyldare & Vrbane yᵉ bishop of Duno assisinge him', sig C2ᵛ.
[70] *The boke of common praier* (Dublin).
[71] Ellis, 'John Bale', 285; MacCulloch, *Tudor Church Militant*, 52-6.

> ... he wolde in no wise permyt yᵉ obseruacion to be done after yᵉ boke of consecratinge bishoppes wᶜ was last set fourth in Englāde by acte of parlement alleginge yᵗ it wolde be both an occasiō of tumulte and also that it was not as yet consented to by acte of their parlemēt in Irelande.[72]

This standoff between Bale and Lockwood was not just about which edition of the Prayer Book was to be used in Ireland, nor was it about retaining traditional forms of ceremonial as embodied in the 1549 Prayer Book. At a deeper level, it was a disagreement over which parliament had authority in Ireland, and by implication, the freedom which the Irish Church had from the English Church in matters of doctrine and worship.

Ironically, had Bale been familiar with the Irish Prayer Book of 1551, he could have invoked it to counter Lockwood's argument.[73] The 'Prayer for the Lord Deputy' was an additional prayer for the Irish edition that for obvious reasons was not in the English equivalent of 1549. By using it, Irish congregations beseeched God to 'lighten the herte of thy seruaunt [i.e. the Lord Deputy], now gouernour ouer this realme under our most dread and soueraigne Lord, Edward the sixt', so that he might set the example of living in 'due obedience to their kyng'.[74] This prayer reveals one way that liturgy was used to establish a clear political hierarchy of England over Ireland. The implication was that every Irish resident who prayed it was an English subject.

The impasse at Bale's consecration was eventually broken by his forceful will and obstinate obedience to English law. He was adamant that the more conspicuously evangelical Prayer Book of 1552 was to be used in all of Edward's

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[72] *Vocacyon*, sigs. C2ᵛ-3. Constitutionally, Lockwood was right. I thank Paul Cavill for pointing this out to me.
[73] *The boke of common praier* (Dublin), sig. S4ᵛ.
[74] Ibid.

domains: 'If Englande and Ireland be under one kinge they are both bounde to the obedience of one lawe under him'.[75] Clearly Bale saw Ossory as a diocese of the wider Edwardian Church, not as a separate entity. Furthermore, the soon-to-be consecrated bishop asserted that once he set foot in Ossory 'I wolde execute nothinge for my part there but accordinge to the rules of that lattre boke [i.e. the 1552 Prayer Book]'.[76] This was more than a matter of political principle; it was an issue of godliness. Bale argued that 'true obedience to Gods most holy wurde' involved obeying 'the commaundement of your christen Kynge'.[77] Hence Bale 'requyred [all prebendaries and priests in Kilkenny] to observe and folowe that only boke of commen prayer whych the kynge & hys counsel that yeare put fourth by acte of parlement'.[78] Thus the Prayer Book became a signal of Tudor imperial domination in the Diocese of Ossory at least. The liturgical reform enforced by Bale throughout his diocese serves to highlight again that the Edwardian Reformation was advanced in Ireland on the back of political might. Paradoxically, it would be political forces that undid Bale's Irish mission too.

The abrupt change in monarchs in July 1553, from the evangelical Edward to the Roman Catholic Mary, drastically altered the ecclesiastical circumstances throughout the Tudor empire. The local Irish clergy acted quickly to restore traditional religion.[79] Bale was hounded from his episcopal see by mutinous clergy who looked to the new monarch for religious leadership, and he fled

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[75] *Vocacyon*, sig. C3.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid. sig. D5ᵛ.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid. sigs. C8-D4.

Ossory in search of a safe refuge on the continent.[80] The Marian exile reminds us that, for many mid-Tudor evangelicals, the Edwardian Reformation remained unfinished business. That was how Bale felt about his time in Ireland.

At the time of writing the *Vocacyon*, the outcome of the Reformation in Ireland was far from a foregone conclusion.[81] According to Bale, a 'great nombre' of people had been won over to his brand of Protestantism.[82] This did not stop a band of 'cruell murtherers' from killing five of Bale's household servants in August 1553, however.[83] In response, the local mayor, Robert Shea, deployed a retinue of a hundred horsemen and three hundred foot soldiers to deliver Bale from the imminent threat to his life.[84] The many 'yonge men' in this coterie carried their bishop to safety that night while 'syngynge psalms and other godly songes'.[85] Bale recorded that they were welcomed to Kilkenny by the townsfolk lining the streets with 'candels lyght in their hādes [and] shoughting out prayses to God for deliuerynge me'.[86] These positive remarks suggest that Bale believed (or wished to believe) that he had made some inroads into the hearts and minds his Irish flock. Beyond the *Vocacyon*, however, there is little evidence to suggest that the doctrinal aspects of the Edwardian Reformation had formed any deep roots within the Irish population by the end of 1553.[87] Both Ellis and Jefferies point to the lack of evangelical preachers as a key reason for the shallow

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[80] Bale first intended to travel to Scotland, but pirates intervened. Hence he ended up on the continent. Ibid. sigs. D8ᵛ-F2ᵛ.
[81] See Bradshaw, 'The Edwardian Reformation', 95-6; Jefferies, *The Irish Church*, 104-121.
[82] *Vocacyon*, sig. D4ᵛ.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid. sig. D5.
[87] Jefferies, *The Irish Church*, 101-103.

acceptance of reform in sixteenth-century Ireland.[88] Walsh points the finger directly at Bale, arguing that his 'insensitivity ... and lack of pragmatism guaranteed that he was doomed to failure'.[89] From Bale's perspective, his attempt to import the Reformation into Ireland did not fail due to strategy. Rather, it was explained as God's providential punishment of the Tudor 'empire' for not having embraced 'the heavenly doctryne' of justification by grace through faith in Christ alone.[90]

Bale may have lost his Irish battle, but he was confident of God's ultimate victory in the spiritual war in which the mid-Tudor 'empire' was embroiled. This was the broader point of the *Vocacyon*. Bale manipulated his personal experience in Ireland to provide an example for other exile congregations to mimic. Continued use of the Prayer Book would give these new congregations 'the face of an English churche' as it had done for Bale in Ossory.[91] This proved to be tendentious for some exiles, as the unsavoury affair of the so-called 'Troubles at Frankfurt' (1554-1555) demonstrated.[92] But as an initial response to the Marian restoration, the *Vocacyon* must be read as an attempt to conceive the fellowship of believers associated with the Edwardian Reformation as belonging to a unified church of the Tudor 'empire'. This applied as much to evangelicals in England as it did to those in Ireland and those exiled on the continent.

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[88] Ibid; Ellis, 'John Bale', 291-2.

[89] Walsh, 'Deliberate provocation', 59.

[90] *Vocacyon*, sig. F2ᵛ.

[91] *A Brief Discourse of the Troubles Begun at Frankfort, in the year 1554, about the Book of Common Prayer and Ceremonies* (London, 1846), ed. John Petheram, fo. XXXVIII.

[92] Timothy Duguid, 'The 'Troubles' at Frankfurt: a new chronology', *Reformation & Renaissance Review*, 14:3 (December, 2012), 243–268; Karl Gunther, *Reformation Unbound: Protestant Visions of Reform in England, 1525-1590* (Cambridge, 2014), 158-188; Jane Dawson, *John Knox* (New Haven, 2015), 90-108.

Bale's Irish mission stands as an instructive episode within the wider story of the evangelical movement of the sixteenth-century English Church. His episcopal career was an expression of the overlapping interests of Church and state in the Tudor 'empire' under Edward VI. Ecclesiastical reform in Ireland was complemented by political subjugation, and vice versa. While Bale sought to unify the doctrine and practice of the Irish Church to its English counterpart, the political dominance of England was reinforced through the use of the English liturgy. In this way, Bale was simultaneously his king's ambassador and the mouthpiece of his Sovereign Lord.