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Authors	Canning, Ruth A.
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Profits and Patriotism: Nicholas Weston, Old English Merchants, and Ireland's Nine Years' War, 1594-1603

> I have advertised your Lordships of the stubborn and corrupt dealing of the magistrates and inhabitants in corporate towns, and how that, by their traitorly issuing of their commodities into the country, the rebellion hath been most nourished. For partly out of malice to the State for religion's cause, but especially for their own lucre … they desire nothing more than a continual war, enriching themselves more in one of those years than in seven others.[1]
>
> George Carew,
> 1600

Ireland's Nine Years' War (1594-1603) is all too often represented as a conflict between the forces of Catholic Ireland and those of the Protestant English crown. Yet these lines of demarcation were anything but clear to those living at the time and the existence of the Old English descendants of Ireland's twelfth-century Anglo-Norman conquerors complicated that narrative.[2] Irish-born and predominantly Catholic, the Old English community was firmly attached to an English cultural and political identity. Having preserved the English crown's foothold in Ireland for centuries, the sixteenth century witnessed their gradual, yet unmistakable, demotion from positions of trust and authority in favour of English Protestant appointees sent directly from England. Although some had chosen to conform to the new State Church, the majority of Old English individuals struggled to reconcile their Catholicism, Irish birth, and increasing political alienation with their loyalty to a distant English Protestant ruler. By the 1570s and 80s, escalating tensions had resulted in sporadic episodes of protest and violence, but these demonstrations failed to gain unanimous consent across the wider Old English community. Coinciding with an emerging 'Faith and Fatherland' ideology, the tumultuous last decade of the sixteenth century would test Old English loyalties like never before. But, while notions of loyalty to a native land or a distant queen may have motivated some, economic and political ambitions were just as important in dictating the actions of Old Englishmen.

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[1] *Cal. S. P. Ire., 1600-1601*, 65. G. Carew to Privy Council, 16 December 1600, The National Archives (TNA): Public Records Office (PRO), State Papers (SP) 63/207(6)/75.

[2] The term 'Gaelic Irish' is used here to identify the indigenous inhabitants of Ireland. I employ the term 'Old English' to refer to the descendants of the twelfth-century Anglo Norman conquerors and settlers, as well as the various generations of English colonists who arrived in Ireland prior to the mid-sixteenth century. Though there are only a few instances of the term 'Old English' being employed in contemporary records, it is used here to identify a population which had not yet agreed on specific nomenclature.

Hugh O'Neill, the Irish Catholic Confederacy's energetic leader, recognised that he would need the support of the Old English population if he was ever to achieve the overthrow of English authority in Ireland. Without minimal assistance from the Pale and southern towns, the Confederates would lack the artillery and military supply system necessary for waging a full-scale war. With this in mind, an inspiring Confederate 'Faith and Fatherland' propaganda campaign was launched which specifically targeted the socio-political interests of the Old English community. This was propped up with promises of lands and titles to disenfranchised members of Old English society.[3] But, in spite of crown administrators' fears of a possible alliance between Ireland's two dominant communities, convincing the Old English to join the 'cause' was not such an easy task.[4] Existing evidence for this war period strongly suggests that the majority of Old Englishmen, especially those within the Pale and urban centres, chose to support the crown through military service, intelligence and advice, victuals, and financial aid, all of which contributed to the eventual English victory.[5] There were, of course, many exceptions, like the notorious and revered rebel leader Captain Richard Tyrrell, the Jesuit propagandist James Archer, and junior branches of many important families, including the Butlers and Fitzgeralds.[6] More problematic was that a significant number of Old Englishmen managed to remain ambiguously neutral for much of the war, especially those amongst the mercantile classes of the Pale and English towns. As George Carew's statement at the beginning of this essay maintains, the rebellion did indeed receive support and nourishment from sections of Ireland's Old English community. Yet, the fact that none of Ireland's major urban centres fell to the Confederates during this war is indicative of the Old English population's continuing adherence to the English

[3] Lord Deputy to Privy Council, 26 January 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/186/22. O'Neill planned to re-establish a member of the Eustace family as Viscount Baltinglass. Lt. R. Greame to Lord Deputy, 8 August1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/192/7(IX); Russell to Burghley, 25 September 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/193/32; Russell to Privy Council, 14 October 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/194/15; Russell to R. Cecil, 9 November 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/195/9; Fenton to Burghley, 21 March 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(1)/87; N. Dawtrey to R. Cecil, 6 June 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 62/202(2)/57.

[4] See H. Morgan, 'Hugh O'Neill and the Nine Years' War in Tudor Ireland,' *Historical Journal* 36:1 (1993), 21-37; Morgan, 'Faith and Fatherland or Queen and Country? An Unpublished Exchange Between O'Neill and the State at the Height of the Nine Years' War,' *Dúiche Néill*, 9 (1994), 1-49.

[5] This is addressed in detail in R. Canning, 'War, Identity, and the Pale: The Old English and the 1590s Crisis in Ireland' (Ph.D. dissertation, University College Cork, 2012).

[6] See, for example, K. Nicholls, 'Richard Tyrrell, soldier extraordinary,' in Morgan (ed), *The Battle of Kinsale* (Bray, 2004), pp. 161-178; E. Hogan, *Distinguished Irishmen of the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1894); T. J. Morrissey, *James Archer of Kilkenny, an Elizabethan Jesuit* (Dublin, 1979); J. Corboy, 'Father James Archer, S.J., 1550-1625(?),' *Studies*, 33 (1944), 99-107.

crown. Thus, the discrepancy between condemnations made by crown officials and the actual reactions of Old English individuals warrants deeper investigation.

Although members of Ireland's Old English population did not all share the same cultural values and political aspirations, it is possible to identify general trends affecting the community as well as more specific tendencies and attitudes amongst certain segments of the population. Colm Lennon's prosopography of the Dublin patricians, as well as his biographies of Richard Stanihurst and Richard Creagh, demonstrate that studying the lives and careers of specific individuals can offer great insight into the pursuits and concerns of a wider community.[7] In doing so, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The evidence available for such studies deals almost exclusively with the higher-ranking members of society, a minority composed of government officials, nobility, distinguished clergy and, to a lesser extent, large landowners, prosperous merchants, and civic officials. Nevertheless, surviving material can be used to draw attention to issues affecting the broader community and, through the examination of prominent individuals, it is possible to discern certain factors which may have motivated men of lesser status to act as they did. This essay aims to do just that by comparing State Paper testimonies of large-scale treasonous trading practices by Old English merchants with the specific loyalty and economic success of one of their representatives, Nicholas Weston. It is acknowledged that Weston was an outstanding member of his community, yet his exceptional success draws attention to differing attitudes and experiences within this group. Although several historians have acknowledged the role played by merchants in fuelling the war through the munitions trade, it has thus far been a neglected area in Irish historical scholarship.[8] Deeper investigation is warranted because many English administrators placed a large portion of blame for the rebellion's survival on the trading activities of Old English merchants and townsmen. In fact, according to English servitor Thomas Stafford, it was the Old English townsmen who were the 'principall ayders, abettors, and upholders of this unnatural Rebellion, which proceeded partly out of malice to the

[7] C. Lennon, *The Lords of Dublin in the Age of Reformation* (Blackrock, 1989); Lennon, *Richard Stanihurst the Dubliner, 1547-1618* (Blackrock, 1981); Lennon, *Archbishop Richard Creagh of Armagh, 1523-1586: An Irish Prisoner of Conscience of the Tudor Era* (Dublin, 2000).

[8] Both Hiram Morgan and John McGurk have acknowledged the importance of Old English merchants and townsmen in supplying the rebels, noting that this is an area that warrants greater research. Morgan, *Tyrone's Rebellion*; J. McGurk, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: The 1590s Crisis* (Manchester, 1997).

State for matters of Religion, but principally for their owne benefit.'[9] This may have been true, but the existence of Nicholas Weston indicates that not all Irish merchants could be tarred with the same brush, and an examination of these two contradictory roles might offer a constructive addition to debates about the complicated nature of Old English loyalties in late Elizabethan Ireland.

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Nicholas Weston, a Dublin alderman and prosperous merchant, presents an interesting subject for an examination of Old English allegiances during the Nine Years' War. Firstly, unlike the nobility and country gentry typically studied, Weston was an untitled city-dweller. Secondly, unlike the landed classes, Weston was not required to perform military services; though he did, in his capacity as a civilian merchant, provide equally valuable material assistance. And thirdly, Weston differed from the Old English magnates and the majority of his community in another very fundamental way: he was a Protestant. Exceptional in many respects, it is for these reasons that his name features more prominently in State Paper records than those of his colleagues. Weston was nonetheless a representative of Ireland's mercantile community and an examination of his experiences reveals a great many issues affecting and surrounding Old English merchants in Ireland at this time. This is especially true when Weston's experiences are juxtaposed against the backdrop of those of his colleagues because this allows for a more thorough examination of both the rule and the exception.

Originally from Drogheda, Weston had become a citizen of Dublin City in 1577 and achieved civic prominence in the decade preceding the Nine Years' War. In 1587 he held an annual term as sheriff; between 1591 and 1622 he enjoyed one of the Corporation's twenty-four aldermanic positions; and, in 1597-98 Weston served a term as Dublin City's mayor.[10] As an alderman and leading member of his community, Weston's civic duties included ensuring city defences were adequate, watchmen were appointed to guard the walls, construction projects were managed efficiently, citizens performed their military obligations, and taxes and cesses were

[9] T. Stafford, *Pacata Hibernia* (Dublin, 1810), p. 109. Also, see, 'Some errors to be reformed in the government of Ireland,' August 1598, University Library, Cambridge, Ms. Kk. I. 15, ff. 387-389v.
[10] Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, p. 275; T. Clavin, 'Nicholas Weston,' *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, http://0-dib.cambridge.org.

paid.[11] In addition to these responsibilities, Weston was regularly entrusted with the task of representing the suits of his fellow merchants, civic officials, and municipality before the Dublin administration and crown. For example, in 1582 the Corporation dispatched Weston to England to seek reimbursement 'for money corne wyne and other provisions deliuered for servinge the Garisons' during recent rebellions. According to their petition, the crown owed the city 'the some of 15,000*l*.', for which Weston was appointed to receive the money and convey it to Dublin.[12] This was a civic service he would perform several more times over the course of his career.[13]

Besides being an upstanding member of the Dublin Corporation, Weston had also gained the favour of many crown administrators prior to the outbreak of the Nine Years' War. As early as January 1589 the State Papers expose Weston as a valuable source of intelligence on political and military affairs at home and abroad, even so far as detailing the movements of Richard Stanihurst, the exiled Dublin jack-of-all-trades.[14] Merchants were indispensable government informants because they could acquire intelligence on foreign enemies and conspiracies through their trading contacts and tavern acquaintances at international ports. Pauline Croft has argued that this was especially true of Irishmen trading in Spain where authorities allowed them far greater privileges than their English counterparts because their Catholicism and hostility towards the English made them natural allies.[15] As it transpired, intelligence gathered in this way could be more useful than that obtained through diplomatic channels and, taking advantage of favourable commercial circumstances, Weston and his agents had been particularly successful in acquiring information. Despite severe trade restrictions imposed by English authorities, this success induced crown

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[11] H. F. Berry (ed), 'Minute Book of the Corporation of Dublin, Known as the "Friday Book," 1567-1611,' *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, Section C, 30 (1912/1913), 477-514.
[12] J. Gaydon, Mayor of Dublin, to Burghley, 15 September 1582, TNA: PRO, SP 63/95/48; Petition of N. Weston, factor of Dublin Corporation, 15 September 1582, TNA: PRO, SP 63/95/50; Petition of Dublin merchants, 15 September 1582, TNA: PRO, SP 63/95/52; N. Ball, Mayor of Dublin, to Burghley, 27 September 1583, TNA: PRO, SP 63/104/101; Petition of N. Weston, 12 August 1584, TNA: PRO, SP 63/111/61. Also, see, Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, p. 179; T. P. Dungan, 'John Dongan of Dublin, an Elizabethan Gentleman,' *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 118 (1988), 101-117; Berry, 'Minute Book,' 505.
[13] For example, Berry, 'Minute Book,' 497, 505; Petitions to the queen or the Council, 1586-1601, HMC *Salisbury MSS, Addenda*, p. 196.
[14] Advertisements by N. Weston, 1592, TNA: PRO, SP 63/164/16; Examination of John Brown, 28 January 1589, TNA: PRO, SP 63/141/19(I); Intelligence by J. Prife, 25 April 1591, TNA: PRO, SP 12/238/133.
[15] See, for example, P. Croft, 'Trading with the Enemy, 1584-1604,' *The Historical Journal*, 32:2 (1989), 287-8. Examinations taken by Edward Goeghe, Mayor of Waterford, 9 July 1601, TNA: PRO, SP 63/208(3)/66(I).

administrators to grant Weston special trading liberties so he could continue shipping between Ireland and Spain. And, by the time of the Nine Years' War, the trust reposed in Weston as a reliable source of information was demonstrated by the fact that Secretary Sir Geoffrey Fenton suggested employing two of his agents as Spanish spies.[16]

Weston's mercantile and civic activities continued throughout the Nine Years' War, but the 1590s crisis had a significant impact on his daily life and business operations. Living in the very centre of Ireland's English jurisdiction, Weston was relatively immune to rebel depredations – it was only if Pale border defences, in the charge of marcher lords like the Barons of Delvin and Dunsany, collapsed, that there was any serious threat of a rebel attack. But, despite the protection provided by the distant frontier, this war took a massive toll on urban areas. The inhabitants of Irish towns and cities not only experienced rebel conspiracies to undermine government stability, but they suffered the burdens of supporting large numbers of crown soldiers, constant material and monetary levies, price inflation, harvest crises, famine, disease, and fatal accidents like the 1597 gunpowder explosion. The year 1597 serves to highlight the hardships endured by urban dwellers during this war. In addition to hefty loans and independently supplied materials advanced by members of the Corporation, by June 1597 the citizens of Dublin City had petitioned the crown for the payment of £890 owed to them for the billeting of soldiers and a further £3,000 for their assistance 'in maintaining armed companies in the field and otherwise.'[17] In fact, the burden of supporting crown soldiers had become so onerous that in May 1597 the twenty-four Dublin aldermen, who were statutorily exempt from billeting charges, resolved to waive their exemption and pay 12 pence a day towards victualing the soldiers so as to 'help the other citizens... considering the present scarcity and the poverty of the poor neighbours.'[18] But, the Corporation's suit was made desperately

[16] Fenton to R. Cecil, 25 October 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/194/44; Fenton to Burghley, 29 October 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/194/53; Extract of a letter to N. Weston, 20 September 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/194/53(II); Fenton to R. Cecil, 24 November 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/195/33. Also, see, Advertisements by N. Weston, 1592, TNA: PRO, SP 63/164/16; N. Weston to R. Cecil, 27 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/49(I); Declaration by J. Weston, factor for N. Weston, 10 December 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/206/81(I); Intelligence by J. Prife, 25 April 1591, TNA: PRO, SP 12/238/133. Also, see, Clavin, 'Nicholas Weston'.

[17] G. Young, Mayor of Dublin, R. Cecil, 10 Sep. 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(5)/13; HMC *Salisbury MSS, Addenda*, p. 35; Petition of Mayor and Citizens of Dublin to Burghley, June 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/127; Mayor and Sheriffs of Dublin to Burghley, 6 May 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/11; Mayor and Sheriffs of Dublin to R. Cecil, 6 May 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/12.

[18] Berry, 'Minute Book,' 491.

urgent on account of the recent gunpowder explosion which killed 126 people and cost an estimated £14,076 sterling in damages to buildings and infrastructure.[19] Add to this the cost of providing men for general hostings as well as city watchmen to be on duty round the clock, and it is clear that the inhabitants and civic corporation were at pains to meet all these obligations.[20] To make matters even worse, a combination of war and unseasonable weather had made 1597 a 'year of "great dearth of all things" and ... a time of "great mortality by fever and flux".'[21] The Nine Years' War had a significant impact on the daily functioning of municipalities and the lives of urban inhabitants and their petitions made it clear that their increasing poverty was a source of great discontentment and alienation.[22] For these reasons, the actions and experiences of individuals like Nicholas Weston deserve closer attention.

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Although a respected citizen of Dublin, a Protestant, and a loyal supporter of crown interests in Ireland, Nicholas Weston could not escape the fact that he was a member of Ireland's Old English community. English administrators had grave suspicions about the true allegiances of many Old English nobles and gentry, largely on account of their continued attachment to the Catholic religion and their often

[19] J. Norreys to R. Cecil, 13 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/21; Fenton to R. Cecil, 18 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/24; Russell to Privy Council, 20 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/26; Examinations concerning powder explosion, 16 March 1597, TNA, PRO, SP 63/198/26(IV); Examination of John Shelton and Alexander Palles, Dublin Sheriffs, and others, 18 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/26(V); Certificate by Mayor and Sheriffs of Dublin, 18 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/26(VI); Lord Deputy and Council to Privy Council, 25 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/42; Certificate of the number of dead by Mayor of Dublin, No date, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/42(I); Mayor and Sheriffs of Dublin to Burghley, 6 May 6 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/11; Mayor and Sheriffs of Dublin to R. Cecil, 6 May 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/12; Russell and Council to Burghley, 7 May 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/13; Lennon, 'The Great Explosion in Dublin, 1597,' *Dublin Historical Record*, 42:1 (1988), 7-20; Lennon, 'Dublin's Great Explosion of 1597,' *History Ireland*, 3:3 (1995), 29-34.

[20] HMC *Salisbury MSS, Addenda*, p. 35; Petition of Mayor and Citizens of Dublin to Burghley, June 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/127; Lennon, 'Great Explosion in Dublin,' 14-15; Berry, 'Minute Book,' 490-3.

[21] Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, 96; E. Hogan (ed), *The Description of Ireland and the State Thereof as it is at This Present in Anno 1598* (Dublin, 1878), pp. 43-44; Wallop to Cecil, 3 August 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/200/75. Also see, R. Gillespie, 'Harvest Crisis in Early seventeenth-century Ireland,' *Irish Economic and Social History*, 11 (1984), 5-18.

[22] The greevances of the Englishe Pale, 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(4)/60; "Collections made by Sir James Perrott for his *Chronicle of Ireland*; 1584-1619", BL Add. Ms. 4819, f. 75v; Fenton to Burghley, 14 August 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/182/35.

ambiguous political and cultural ties with their Gaelic Irish neighbours.[23] Although urban residency entailed participation in a much more 'English' society than was the case in rural Ireland, the same questions of loyalty were applied to the citizens of cities and towns. Indeed, open recusancy, factional politics, and familial associations were as much a problem within the walls of Dublin City as they were outside.[24] In fact, these differences had actually become more pronounced over time and, as the author of a 1596 memorandum lamented, 'the mayor, Aldermen, Marchants, and inhabitants generally are known to be notorious papists, hating the english nation and government, and by many speches which they let fall, do not stick to signify asmuch'.[25] It was also frequently noted that the Jesuits and seminarians had free recourse to 'raunge vp and downe, couered and harbored by the subiects both of the better and meaner sort of this realme, and do finde no smale releef and comfort freindshipp within this cytty [Dublin]'.[26] The townsmen were therefore not to be trusted, but the questionable political and religious allegiances of urban merchants were of particular concern since these might lead to devious and destabilising business practices.

Contesting Adam Smith's theory of commerce driven by self-interest, Craig Muldrew has posited that the market in early modern England was driven largely by 'credit relations, trust, obligation and contracts' rather than 'a language which stressed self-interest.'[27] Due to their continuing attachment to both the English crown and English markets, many of Ireland's Old English merchants would have acted similarly. But, by the 1590s crown-community relations had deteriorated, as had any sense of trust or obligation. A combination of reasons, which included political alienation, economic discrimination, and the persecution of the Catholic majority, had caused many within Ireland's Old English community to re-evaluate their position. In the case of the merchant classes, the temptation of a profitable wartime trade must also have been a factor. In fact, one group of Palesmen willingly admitted that 'the

[23] For example, see, T. Lee, 'The Discovery and Recovery of Ireland with the Author's Apology,' ed. J. McGurk (CELT, 2009); Maley (ed), 'The Supplication of the blood of the English most lamentably murdered in Ireland, Cryeng out of the yearth for revenge (1598),' *Analecta Hibernica*, 36 (1995), 3-77; McGowan-Doyle, *Book of Howth*; McGowan-Doyle, '"Spent blood": Christopher St Lawrence and Pale Loyalism,' in *The Battle of Kinsale*, pp. 179-192.
[24] Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*; Lennon, *Richard Stanihurst*.
[25] Memorandum on the state of Ireland, November 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/195/52.
[26] Lord Deputy and Council to Privy Council, 25 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/42.
[27] C. Muldrew, 'Interpreting the Market: The Ethics of Credit and Community Relations in Early Modern England,' *Social History*, 18:2 (1993), 163.

alurements of this vnhappie tyme did offer provocacions to carry vnstaied myndes astray'.[28] Just as the country nobility were motivated to serve the crown by the increased income of land grants and military salaries, and promises of titles and estates tempted men of lesser dignity to join the rebel confederacy, merchants like Nicholas Weston were aroused by the potential financial gains of war-time trade. Crown and country may have been at stake, but so too were profits and, taking advantage of lucrative wartime commerce, Old English merchants played a crucial role in propelling the conflict through the munitions and victual trade. Some merchants chose one side over the other, but others walked a dangerous tightrope by openly supplying the crown while secretly arming the rebels. It must be wondered then, to what degree did this reflect a sense of conflicted loyalty, religious polarisation, or disenchantment with English government. Or, was this merely the result of efforts to exploit the current market?

There is substantial evidence in official correspondence and the testimonies of examinants to indicate that Old English merchants from the Pale and towns helped fuel O'Neill's rebellion through the sale of armaments and other supplies. From an early date English observers expressed surprise at the sophistication and furnishing of O'Neill's army. According to Sir John Dowdall, '[t]hese Cannyballes haue drawen the greatest parte of their kearne to be musketeres, and there Galliglasse Pykes, they want no furniture neyther of mvsketts fowling peeces Calivers swords Graven morions, powder and shott great store, which these Traitores were not accustomed to haue in this measure.'[29] Hiram Morgan has explained that during the early stages of the northern rebellion, and while still considered a commander of royal forces, O'Neill had used his position to secure munitions through local merchants.[30] This was particularly the case in his acquisition of lead roofing, which Archbishop Peter Lombard conceded was accomplished through 'the avidity of merchants intent only on profit.'[31] In fact, according to a declaration made by one Robert Eastfeild, it was

[28] The greevances of the Englishe Pale, 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(4)/60.
[29] J. Dowdall to Burghley, 9 March 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/187/19. Also, see, Morgan, *Tyrone's Rebellion*, p. 181; G. A. Hayes-McCoy, 'The Army of Ulster, 1593-1601,' in *Irishmen in War* Vol. 1 (Dublin, 2005), p. 77.
[30] This was attested to by Fenton, who, in late 1594 'obtained documentary proof that O'Neill had been buying up and transporting large quantities of powder to Dungannon under this pretext since the Fermanagh campaign.' Morgan, *Tyrone's Rebellion: The Outbreak of the Nine Years' War in Tudor Ireland* (Woodbridge, 1993), pp. 181-182.
[31] P. Lombard, *The Irish War of Defence, 1598-1600: Extracts from the De Hibernia Insula Commentarius*, ed. M. J. Byrne (Cork, 1930), p. 31.

Nicholas Weston who had been commissioned to supply O'Neill with twenty tons of lead, 'but as God would, the Earl got but 6.'[32] It is well documented that O'Neill converted this lead into bullets, but six tons of lead would not have made enough bullets to fight this war.[33] O'Neill's ability to keep the field and challenge crown forces at every turn would have required a constant supply of munitions and other necessities and this degree of armament could not have been achieved solely by hoarding munitions in the years leading up to the 1595 proclamation against him. Although there is plenty of documentary evidence to show that Spain sent material assistance to O'Neill and his Confederates, Spanish shipments of arms and treasure were sporadic and did not meet the demands of this conflict either.[34] While it seems that some gunpowder had been produced locally, Ireland did not yield adequate resources, having 'no Brymstone', for the development of a suitable munitions industry.[35] But, these limitations did not hinder O'Neill, largely because he had managed to secure a number of other supply sources. In addition to what he had stock-piled prior to the war, received from Spain, or gained by ambushing English supply convoys,[36] a significant proportion of O'Neill's munitions were transported out of Scotland, England, and other places by Irish merchants, and surviving records indicate the vast majority of these were Old Englishmen from the Pale.[37] For example, a significant proportion of the Scottish trade was conducted by John Bath, a Palesman who became 'a great merchant of Strabane', 'close associate of the earl,'

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[32] R. Eastfeild to Burghley or R. Cecil, 20 December 1596, HMC *Salisbury MSS, 1596*, pp. 529-530.
[33] Dr James O'Neill has calculated that six tons of lead would have made 224,808 bullets (of 17 gauge shot), and that the Confederate forces would have expended 80,000 bullets at the Yellow Ford in 1598. Therefore, while six tons made a significant contribution to the war effort, it was not enough to continue the conflict over nine years. Many thanks to James O'Neill for sharing his work on this.
[34] A. Chichester to R. Cecil, 16 December 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(6)/78. Also, see T. Bartlett and K. Jeffery (eds), *A Military History of Ireland* (Cambridge, 1996); C. Falls, *Elizabeth's Irish Wars* (London, 1996); McGurk, *Elizabethan Conquest*; Morgan (ed), *The Battle of Kinsale*.
[35] John Dowdall to Burghley, 9 March 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/187/19.
[36] Loftus, Carey and Irish Council to Privy Council, 15 December 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/206/84.
[37] G. Nicolson to R. Bowes, 8 July 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 52/56/586; R. Bowes to Burghley, 6 November 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 52/61/98; J. Auchinross to G. Nicolson, 1 August 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 52/56/620; R. Bowes to Burghley, 6 November 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 52/61/98(I); TNA: G. Nicolson to R. Cecil, 27 February 1599, PRO, SP 52/64/329; Scrope to Cecil, 21 February 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 59/38/1149; Advertisements sent to Henry Duke by several espials, 20 February 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/178/53(V); Extracts of a letter from Richard Weston to Fenton, 15 January 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/203/19(I); G. Carew to Privy Council, 30 August 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(4)/105; A. Chichester to R. Cecil, Dec. 16, 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(6)/78. Morgan, *Tyrone's Rebellion*, p. 182; F. Moryson, *An Itinerary*, Vol. II (1617), 237.

and was rumoured to have gained a trade monopoly from the rebels.[38] But Bath was not alone, and as Dowdall exclaimed, 'The Erle of Tyrone hath fraighted Shippes to Danske for powder, and to England for Leadd, out of her Maiesties civill Townes.'[39]

To the chagrin of crown officials, there were a number of enterprising merchants who were willing to profit from supplying the enemy.[40] War, of course, presented certain hazards for overseas trade due to embargos, piracy, and detainment by foreign enemies; domestic trade was equally dangerous on account of the inherent perils of transporting materials through conflict zones.[41] Nevertheless, war is a particularly profitable time for business due to elevated demands for military supplies and corresponding price inflation.[42] In terms of food prices, a very conservative estimate would allow for a minimum two-fold increase during these war years, and correspondence from Ireland usually reported prices to be much higher. In fact, in early 1597 Lord Deputy William Russell contended that prices were five times the normal while other accounts infer treble and quadruple rates.[43] Taking advantage of these economic circumstances, members of Ireland's mercantile community were eager to trade with whom they could and, in doing so, they played a crucial role in equipping and sustaining the Irish Catholic Confederacy.[44]

Because Hugh O'Neill had declared himself for the Catholic cause in order to attract more support at home and abroad, most crown administrators readily endorsed the link between recusancy and rebel support.[45] And, regardless of how devout they actually were, these merchants were indispensable to the progress of the Counter-

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[38] Extracts of a letter from Richard Weston to Fenton, 15 January 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/203/19(I); Morgan, *Tyrone's Rebellion*, 182; Moryson, *An Itinerary*, Part II, 237. Advertisements sent to Sir Henry Duke by several espials, 20 February 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/178/53(V).

[39] J. Dowdall to Burghley, 9 March 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/187/19. For examples of Old English merchants engaged in illegal trade in Cork and Limerick, see, W. Lyon, Bishop of Cork and Ross, to R. Cecil, 15 February 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 62/207(I)/108; G. Carew to Privy Council, 18 July 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(4)/26.

[40] Moryson, *An Itinerary*, p. 298.

[41] H. Brouncker to R. Cecil, 22 January 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(I)/29. For Weston's problems, see, TNA: PRO, N. Weston to R. Cecil, 27 March 1597, SP 63/198/49(I); Privy Council Meeting, 7 November 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 2/24/178. McGurk, *Elizabethan Conquest*, p. 184.

[42] See Bartlett, '"The academy of warre": military affairs in Ireland, 1600 to 1800,' *The O'Donnell Lecture* (Dublin, 2002); J. Nolan, *Sir John Norreys and the Elizabethan Military World* (Exeter, 1997); Nolan, 'The Militarization of the Elizabethan State,' *The Journal of Military History*, 58:3 (1994), 391-420.

[43] Russell to Burghley, 24 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/33; 'The greevances of the Englishe Pale', 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(4)/60.

[44] J. Dowdall to Burghley, 9 March 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/187/19; 'The opinion and advice of Captain John Baynard,' December 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/206/116.

[45] For example, see Fynes Moryson's account in C.L. Falkiner, *Illustrations of Irish History and Topography, Mainly of the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1904), pp. 264-67.

Reformation in Ireland because they provided transport for Irish students heading to continental colleges and return passage for zealous continentally-trained clerics.[46] As Dowdall explained, the merchants carried 'younge men bothe of the Iryshe and Englishe nation, in the company of Iesuytes' to the Catholic colleges of Spain, Italy, and France, and 'when they haue bene thorowlie corrupted, they retourne them againe with Letters of Commendacion, with instructions to seduce the people to disobedience, and Rebellion'.[47] The administration had evidence of this. For instance, it was the Drogheda merchant James Fleming who transported the rebellion's early clerical instigators, Archbishops Magauran and O'Hely, between Ireland and Spain.[48] Merchants like Fleming also provided the means for correspondence with foreign Catholic powers. Presumably most correspondence was in the form of letters, but under interrogation the merchant Valentine Blake admitted that he was instructed to bring the rebels a verbal message of Spanish support rather than a written one for fear that a letter might be intercepted.[49] As a result of this secrecy, and the loss of records over time, evidence detailing the activities of rebel colluders within the Irish towns is fragmentary. It is nonetheless illuminating.

An attachment to the Catholic faith may have been a motivating factor for some merchants, but it is unlikely that religion provided the chief impetus for sedition since there were so many other pressing concerns affecting Ireland's Old English population and the merchant community during this period. That many local merchants were eager to conduct business with crown officials and soldiers cannot be doubted and there were many like Weston who sold their wares to the crown administration and army.[50] But, notwithstanding various petitions and supply

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[46] For example, see, Advertisements sent to Sir Henry Duke by several espials, 20 February 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/178/53(V); Lord Deputy to R. Cecil, 23 May 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/179/90; Lord Deputy to Burghley, 8 November 1594, TNA: PRO, SP 63/177/5; J. Dowdall to Burghley, 9 March 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/187/19; Privy Council to Irish Council, 13 July 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(2)/100; Mountjoy to R. Cecil, 1 May 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(3)/1.

[47] John Dowdall to Burghley, 9 March 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/187/19.

[48] Archbishop Magauran from Spain to Ireland in 1592 and Archbishop O'Hely from Ireland to Spain in 1593. Declaration of Henry Taylor, 10 May 1594, TNA: PRO, SP 63/174/45(II). Also, M. Kerney Walsh, "Archbishop Magauran and His Return to Ireland, October 1592," *Seanchas Ardmhacha*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (1990), 74. Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine the sincerity of James Fleming's commitment to Catholicism.

[49] V. Blake to C. Clifford, 12 May 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/205/58.

[50] Mountjoy and Council to Privy Council, 12 September 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(5)/15; Note of ships entertained at Lough Foyle, 8 Dec. 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(6)/64; Loftus to Cecil, 7 April 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/78. Also, see, 'Note of 2,401*l*. 10*s*. 0*d*. borrowed,' 23 December 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/185/25(II); Docket of Irish Suitors, 20 June 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/112; Docket of Irish Suitors, 26 June 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/121.

proposals put forward by merchants from Ireland,[51] the most lucrative army supply contracts were secured by merchants in England, especially those in London.[52] This preferential treatment was more than likely a product of the ineffectual supply system by which the Privy Council entrusted food and apparelling contracts to a select number of approved civilian merchants, those in London being the most convenient.[53] Nevertheless, this tendency reinforced competition between Irish and English mercantile groups, and it must have served to further alienate Irish merchants from the English establishment.[54]

In addition to religious, political and economic discrimination, there were other more immediate considerations driving Old English merchants to arm the rebels. Amongst the enticements was the fact that Irish merchants had a virtual monopoly on trade within Ireland.[55] As Bishop William Lyons explained: 'Every creek along this coast hath merchants in it, trading without restraint … Where an Englishman dares not to go a quarter of a mile out of any town, but he shall be murdered, the Irish merchant passeth amongst them quietly; they will not hurt their best friends and maintainers.'[56] Another factor was that crown soldiers were not a consistent source of income. The unreliable dispensation of army pay, as well as the crown's failure to honour bills and receipts, meant that soldiers were rarely able to pay for food and goods. This deficit could be remedied by turning to an alternative group of consumers, and the fact that the enemy was willing to pay on delivery, and at higher rates than the crown, must have been a tempting lure.[57] As Thomas Stafford contended, the merchants of Ireland were well known to 'issue their Marchandise to the Rebells (underhand) at very excessiue rates'.[58] And, considering deserting English soldiers were known to sell their weapons to the enemy in order to buy

[51] For example, Plot for furnishing provant apparel, 22 October 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(3)/123.
[52] For examples of Victualing contracts secured by London merchants, see British Library (BL), Add MS 49609 A; BL, Add MS 4757, ff. 19-21; 44-46.
[53] R.W. Stewart, "The 'Irish road': military supply and arms for Elizabeth's army during the O'Neill Rebellion in Ireland, 1598-1601," in M.C. Fissel (ed.), *War and Government in Britain, 1598-1650*. (Manchester, 1991). For corruption charges made against London merchants John Jolles and William Cockayne, see, McGurk, *Elizabethan Conquest*, p. 207
[54] Fenton to R. Cecil, 11 August 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/200/88.
[55] Memorandum by John Bird to Privy Council, July 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/205/125.
[56] *Cal. S. P. Ire., 1599-1600*, p. 476.
[57] Stafford, *Pacata Hibernia*, p. 109; Moryson, *Itinerary*, p. 240.
[58] *Ibid*.

passage out of Ireland or just obtain cash to meet their daily needs, it is hardly surprising that Irish merchants took advantage of the same market.[59]

Officials like Stafford insisted that the rebellion would have quickly crumbled without this illegal supply network. Thus determined to undermine it, a number of crown officials went to great lengths to investigate how the prohibited trade with the enemy was conducted. At the local level, Stafford explained that the merchants bought up 'the Countrey Commodities at their owne prizes' – that is, cheaper than the same could be purchased by crown commissioners – and then sold these products to the royal army rank and file whenever soldiers managed to obtain disposable cash.[60] When this market proved unprofitable, many merchants, often through middlemen, turned to a more dubious clientele because, as Fynes Moryson complained, 'the Rebels will give such extreme and excessive prices, that they will never be kept from them.'[61] This extremely lucrative trade provided merchants with great incentive to procure supplies wherever they could and, as William Saxey, Chief Justice of Munster, despaired:

> they with their moneys repair into England and other places, and bestow all they have, or can get upon credit, for swords, headpieces, muskets, powder and lead (no fit wares for merchants to deal in) ... the reputed subjects of the country buy of the merchants, and sell to the rebels after these rates, viz., they have of the rebels six beeves for a sword, six beeves for a headpiece, six beeves for a culiver or musket, and one beef for a pound of powder, and so from time to time do furnish them, and by the pretended subject the kingdom is put to sale.[62]

Studying the Bristol smuggling trade, Evan Jones has demonstrated that merchants conducted both legal and illegal trade at the very same time, maximizing profits wherever possible.[63] In fact, smuggled goods were carried in the very same vessels as cargo which had been registered with port authorities. The same held true in Ireland where, like their English counterparts, merchants not only evaded custom duties, but also sought to profit by supplying the crown administration while secretly shipping goods to trade with its enemies. As a 1600 intelligence report explained,

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[59] Administrators in Ireland frequently complained about soldiers selling their own arms for these purposes. For example, Lords Justices Loftus and Gardener, Ormond, and Irish Council to Privy Council, 4 May 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(II)/26; Lord Justice Carey to R. Cecil, 3 December 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/206/65.
[60] Stafford, *Pacata Hibernia*, p. 109; Moryson, *Itinerary*, p. 240.
[61] Moryson, *Itinerary*, p. 240.
[62] *Cal. S. P. Ire., 1599-1600*, p. 181; *Cal. S. P. Ire., 1599-1600*, pp. 285-86.
[63] E. T. Jones, 'Illicit Business: Accounting for Smuggling in Mid-Sixteenth-Century Bristol,' *The Economic History Review*, 54:1 (2001), 17-38. Also, see, G. D. Ramsay, 'The Smugglers' Trade: A Neglected Aspect of English Commercial Development,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 2 (1952), 131-157.

Irish merchants' 'caskes are separated in the middest, the one ende whereof comteyneth drincke, and the other powder, and some whiles all powder and matche, And to make the Barrell the more to be thoughte to conteyne all beare, yt shall haue a Bonge on the topp thereof, the which as the Marchaunts in this deceavinge manner of the officers of the customes doe transporte, So do they issue the same in that manner into the countreys to the Rebells.'[64] Due to the nature of contemporary records, it is impossible to ascertain the true scale of illegal trading and smuggling at this time, but it must have been significant since it elicited repeated calls for legislation against trade between 'the merchants in the borough townes & Citties' and suspected rebels.[65] As early as August 1595 the Dublin administration responded to reports of illegal trade by issuing a detailed proclamation against the transportation and sale of munitions by 'suche wicked merchants and others who preferr their private vngodly gaine before the good of their countrie.'[66] The proclamation stipulated that gunpowder could only be shipped by approved merchant adventurers, and only so much 'as may serve to furnishe their shippinge'. Any person who disobeyed this directive would forfeit his goods and 'indure imprisonment duringe the L. Deputies pleasure'. It further decreed that all individuals living in Ireland, including the merchants, were prohibited from accumulating and selling gunpowder and must surrender all that they currently possessed to the chief magistrates of their locale. These local officials were, in turn, instructed to collect the gunpowder and store it in the town hall from where it was 'to be issued … by warrant from vs the L. Deputie … to the Noble men sheriffes and Iustices of peace … and to suche other person or persons as we shall thinke meete.'[67]

This 1595 proclamation left little room for misinterpretation, but like so many others which followed, it failed to stem the illegal arms trade.[68] In 1596, Dowdall

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[64] Intelligences for Her Majesty's services in Leinster, 3 July 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(4)/3.
[65] For example, see, Motions made by the master for the supply of munition, 27 February 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/178/57(I); J. Dowdall to Burghley, 9 March 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/187/19; Memorandum by J. Nott for R. Cecil, July 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/200/67; Fenton to R. Cecil, 7 May 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(2)/28; W. Saxey to Essex, 9 October 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/205/201; W. Saxey to R. Cecil, 1 December 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/206/59; 'The opinion and advice of Captain John Baynard,' December 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/206/116; 'Considerations touching Ireland causes' by Lord Buckhurst, 6 January 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(I)/7. Evan T. Jones and G. D. Ramsay have likewise drawn attention to problems in assessing the extent of illegal trade in their studies on smuggling and English trade. Jones, 'Illicit Business'; Ramsay, 'The Smugglers' Trade'.
[66] Lord Deputy Russell's Journal, Lambeth, Carew, Vol. 612, No. 270.
[67] *Ibid*.
[68] This is hardly surprising since similar efforts had been made by the Irish administration earlier that century to curb smuggling, but these too failed. V. Treadwell, 'The Irish Customs Administration in

informed Burghley that the rebels continued to purchase munitions from 'the merchants of euerye towne in this Kingdome.'[69] A year later, Munster undertaker Sir Edward Fitton alerted Burghley to O'Neill's acquisition of 'lead for Bullett muskettes murryones Hed peeces sordes and dagers,' all of which was transported out of England by Irish merchants, who, 'as I learne are most obstynate papistes and recusants.'[70] Fitton believed that immediate and severe action had to be taken against offending merchants and, because cross-channel trading networks were the chief source of the munitions trade, successful prosecution would require cooperation between authorities in Ireland and England. Fitton therefore shared his knowledge with the mayor of Chester, Thomas Smith, as well as Sir Richard Molynex in Manchester, and his deputy, John Asheton, instructing them 'to stay all vppon the [English] Coast that were Irishe marchantes.'[71] Intelligence and information was duly exchanged between officials on both islands and a thorough investigation of ships was conducted at English ports. Their efforts bore little fruit. As Thomas Smith reported, they had 'staid the owners & broken vpp all the dryfattes barrels & Bales or greate hoppe Sackes' in Chester and Liverpool, but had 'founde nothinge.'[72]

News of this sort would not have surprised William Saxey who noted that the illegal trade was far too profitable for everyone involved, including informers and the searchers at English ports who readily accepted bribes in return for silence.[73] As Geoffrey Elton's work on the informant business has shown, even the highest-ranking ministers in England were susceptible to the profits of commercial corruption, so one

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the Sixteenth Century,' *Irish Historical Studies*, 20:80 (1977), 395-6. Examples of later recommendations and proclamations abound; for example see, 'Considerations touching Ireland causes' by Lord Buckhurst, 6 January 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(I)/7; Intelligences for Her Majesty's services in Leinster, 3 July 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(4)/3.

[69] J. Dowdall to Burghley, 7 June 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/190/10. Also, see, J. Dowdall to Burghley, 9 March 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/187/19; Fenton to Burghley, 10 March 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/187/27; Fenton to R. Cecil, 7 May 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(2)/28; Morgan, *Tyrone's Rebellion*, p. 182. For further examples of Old English merchants facilitating the transportation of Irish Catholic clerics to and from Ireland, see, Advertisements sent to H. Duke, 20 February 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/178/53(V); Lord Deputy to R. Cecil, 23 May 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/179/90; Lord Deputy to Burghley, 8 November 1594, TNA: PRO, SP 63/177/5; Privy Council to Irish Council, 13 July 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(2)/100.

[70] E. Phyton (Fitton) to Burghley, 22 June 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/116.

[71] *Ibid*.

[72] T. Smith, Mayor of Chester, to E. Phyton, 18 June 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/116(I).

[73] W. Saxey to Essex, 9 October 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/205/201; W. Saxey to R. Cecil, 1 December 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/206/59; BL, Add MS 4757, f. 43-4. G. R. Elton, 'Informing for Profit: A Sidelight on Tudor Methods of Law-Enforcement,' *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 11:2 (1954), 149-167; M. W. Beresford, 'The Common Informer, the Penal Statutes and Economic Regulation,' *The Economic History Review*, 10:2 (1957), 231; Jones, 'Illicit Business,' 28, 35; Treadwell, 'The Irish Customs Administration,' 403; McGurk, *Elizabethan Conquest*, 173.

could hardly blame their lesser-paid subordinates.[74] Meanwhile, searchers at Irish ports were known to take bribes for the illegal passage of crown soldiers out of Ireland, so it was not surprising that they did the same for the illegal importation of goods.[75] As Justice Saxey lamented, 'the gain is so excessive, that the merchant, stopping the searcher's mouth, makes treble gain by selling to subjects; if to rebels, as much more.'[76] The government responded by prescribing harsh punishments for offenders, even so far as entertaining recommendations for the death penalty,[77] while promising hefty rewards, 'the Moytie or half of the offenders goods forfeited,' to informers if their testimony proved true.[78] Over the course of the century, many informants had happily profited from this system of justice in England, but in the context of Ireland and the Nine Years' War these incentives were of little avail. Volunteered information was notoriously unreliable, possibly because would-be informers chose to blackmail offending merchants rather than pursue a less rewarding course of legal proceedings.[79] Besides, the Pale was a small community and informing on one's colleagues did not make for easy relations; in fact, it was said that Nicholas Weston had earned the enmity of his colleagues for doing just that.[80] Perhaps others were not as willing to forego friendships and business relations in exchange for crown favour.

In spite of administrative efforts, obtaining reliable information on transgressors proved extremely difficult. John Asheton reported from Manchester that detained Irish and English merchants 'will hardlie speake truthe beinge sworne I feare, ffor that they by such Secrett meanes make a gayne of the Yrishemen.'[81] Thomas Smith had a similar experience in Chester when he apprehended and examined three Dublin merchants in June 1597, one of whom was a factor for the then acting mayor, Michael Chamberlain.[82] He questioned them about their involvement in purchasing and transporting munitions from England to Ireland as well as their knowledge of other

[74] Elton, 'Informing for Profit,' 155. Also, see, Ramsay, 'The Smugglers' Trade,' 138-9.
[75] G. Carew to Privy Council. 25 August 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(4)/88.
[76] W. Saxey to R. Cecil, 1 December 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/206/59.
[77] For example, see, W. Saxey to Essex, 9 October 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/205/201.
[78] Lord Deputy Russell's Journal, Lambeth, Carew, Vol. 612, No. 270.
[79] Beresford, 'The Common Informer'.
[80] Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, 109; Fenton to R. Cecil, 22 October 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(3)/122.
[81] J. Asheton to Mr. Robinson, Under Sheriff of Lancaster, 13 June 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/116(II).
[82] T. Smith, Mayor of Chester, to E. Phyton, 18 June 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/116(I); Examination of three Dublin merchants, 17 June 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/107. Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, p. 179.

Irish merchants doing the same. The first examinant, Patrick Conley, testified that Alderman Robert Panting, along with his factors Thomas Long and Stephen Cashel, 'vseth to buy at London hedpeeces and swordes only, and transported the same over by way of Marchandizes.' The second, Richard Nugent, also identified Panting, but added that 'Walter Galtram & John Wafer of Dublin aforesaid Marchants doe vse to deale for sworde blades and hedpeeces in England and transporte the same by way of Marchandizes ouer to Dublin.' Finally, Nicholas Galtram made a similar report, 'saving that … Walter Galtram hath not vsed to deale for any swords and hed peecs or other Armor aboue the some of 20^{tie} marks by the yeare.' He did however note that another merchant, John Myles, 'delt for hedpeeces sworde blades Calivers musketts and fowling peeces to the value of one hundred pounds by yeare.'[83] Those named were already suspected by the administration, so this was not particularly helpful information. And, upon further questioning, all three examinants denied knowing of any other merchants 'in Dundalke Droheda or of any other parte of Ireland or any other persons then those he hath afore named that doe vse to deale for any sorte of Armor or Weapons.' Suspected of criminal trading practices themselves, the examinants' reluctance to testify against others might be a potential clue to how widespread and lucrative the illicit trade really was. In fact, Conley's employer may have been the same Chamberlain who was caught trying to illegally export coal to France in 1601, and so it is probably an unlikely coincidence that his agent was suspected of smuggling arms for the enemy.[84] In the aftermath of the 1597 gunpowder explosion the administration acquired incriminating evidence of gunrunning against a number of leading Dubliners, but principally John Allen, the English-born crown appointed clerk of the government's storehouse.[85] It was doubted that he had been operating alone and thus two Dublin aldermen along with two prominent merchants were also questioned in relation to their connections with Allen. This would lend itself to the impression that illegal profits tempted people at all levels of Irish society, and that economic interest in this illicit trade helped bind the urban mercantile community in way that deterred them from betraying their colleagues.[86]

[83] Examination of three Dublin merchants, 17 June 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/107.
[84] Berry, 'Minute Book,' 499-500.
[85] Lord Deputy and Council to Privy Council, 25 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/42. Although Allen was an Englishmen, he was suspected of recusancy.
[86] J. Norreys to R. Cecil, 13 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/21; Fenton to R. Cecil, 18 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/24; Russell to Privy Council, 20 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/26; Examinations concerning powder explosion, 16 March 1597, TNA, PRO, SP 63/198/26(IV);

John McGurk has stated that the Nine Years' War 'gave rise to much disloyal trading in arms.'[87] There is no denying that provisioning the queen's enemies was treason; however, it would be difficult to argue that political allegiances had any real bearing on the commercial interests of Old English merchants since there is evidence that merchants who traded with O'Neill also traded with the crown. For instance, Thomas Jones, Bishop of Meath, informed Cecil that although Walter Brady, a Drogheda merchant, had 'somewhat furthered hir ma^{ts} service by procuring a castle to be buylded att the Cavan … the greatest benefit thereof redounded to himself. In the beginyng of this rebellion, vnder pretence of vittayling that castle, the rebels of that countie found great relief.'[88] Potential profits drove trade, and it is unlikely that many merchants struggled with the ethical dilemma of supplying two opposing armies.[89] Only those who entirely abstained from trading with the enemy, be it O'Neill or the crown, can be considered to have been restrained by their allegiances. This would seem to be the case with Nicholas Weston, yet he too probably recognised the economic benefits of his particular brand of patriotism.

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Like the rest of the mercantile community, Nicholas Weston sought to profit from the Nine Years' War, but he would do so by picking a side. He had conducted business with Hugh O'Neill prior to the war, and it is entirely plausible that Weston supplied O'Neill with the lead roofing that was later transformed into bullets.[90] With the exception of one accusatory declaration, however, there is no evidence in existing

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Examination of John Shelton and Alexander Palles, Dublin Sheriffs, and others, 18 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/26(V); Certificate by Mayor and Sheriffs of Dublin, 18 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/26(VI); Lord Deputy and Council to Privy Council, 25 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/42; Certificate of the number of dead by Mayor of Dublin, No date, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/42(I); Mayor and Sheriffs of Dublin to Burghley, 6 May 6 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/11; Mayor and Sheriffs of Dublin to R. Cecil, 6 May 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/12; Russell and Council to Burghley, 7 May 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/13; Lennon, 'The Great Explosion in Dublin,' 10; Lennon, 'Dublin's Great Explosion,' 29-34.

[87] McGurk, *Elizabethan Conquest*, p. 158.

[88] T. Jones, Bishop of Meath, to R. Cecil, 10 September 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(5)/14.

[89] For a discussion on the profitability of illegal trading operations, see Pauline Croft's work on illegal Anglo-Spanish trading relations, see Croft, 'Trading with the Enemy'. What is more, very few showed any ethical scruples when defrauding the banks of exchange following the 1601 coinage debasement debacle. See, H. S. Pawlisch, *Sir John Davies and the Conquest of Ireland: A Study in Legal Imperialism* (Cambridge, 1985), 142-157; J. McLaughlin, "What base coin wrought: the effects of the Elizabethan debasement in Ireland," in H. Morgan, *The Battle of Kinsale*, (Bray, 2004), 193-204; C. E Callis, *The Tudor Coinage* (Manchester, 1978), 268-274.

[90] R. Eastfeild to Burghley or R. Cecil, 20 December 1596, HMC *Salisbury MSS, 1596*, pp. 529-30.

records to suggest that Weston continued to do so after O'Neill had been proclaimed a traitor. Instead, Weston focused his energies on serving the English crown by regularly providing the administration with the necessary supplies for military service. In addition to his participation in local trade, he contributed to the victualing of crown forces by buying and transporting large shipments of grain and other victuals from the continent on a regular basis.[91] More impressive were Weston's two entrepreneurial, but risky, fishing ventures to Newfoundland in 1596 and 1601 by which he intended to feed the army and relieve the hard-pressed inhabitants of Ireland.[92] Weston had greatly benefited from his special licence to trade with Spain, and this, along with his later mortgaging of lands, probably helped finance these ventures and may have given him an advantage over his compatriots.[93] Nevertheless, he had done all this at considerable commercial and personal financial risk, having lost ships at sea, been the victim of piracy on a number of occasions and, on at least one occasion, had his cargo stolen by English seamen under his employ.[94] These hardships aside, Weston's efforts earned him high praise from English officials like Fenton who informed Burghley that 'such offices as this don in her Ma^{ts} seruice, and with so manifest hazard of lyfe, I haue not knowen in anie of this Countrey birth.'[95] Weston's assistance was remarkable, but there were other individuals who strove to do the same, though their efforts failed to garner the same kind of attention. Indeed, official correspondence indicates that other Old English merchants had put their ships and resources at the disposal of the administration.[96] Debts for services and loans were

[91] Lord Deputy and Council to Burghley, 28 December 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/185/34; Fenton to Burghley, 12 January 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/186/13; J. Norreys and Fenton to Burghley, 1 November 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/195/1; 'Considerations,' December 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/196/37; Loftus and other Councillors to Privy Council, 20 July 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/200/40; Wallop to R. Cecil, 27 July 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/200/55.

[92] Fenton to Burghley, 12 January 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/186/13; J. Norreys and Fenton to Burghley, 1 November 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/195/1; Plot for furnishing provant apparel, 22 October 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(3)/123; *Cal. S. P. Ire., 1601-3*, p. 312; Privy Council Meeting 'dated the 28,' 1601, TNA: PRO, PC 2/26/96; 'Warrant to pay 5,520 to the merchants the Council has bargained for,' 9 January 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 12/262/5(I); J. Appleby, 'The Fishing Ventures of Nicholas Weston of Dublin,' *Dublin Historical Record*, 39:4 (1986), 150-155; Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, p. 217.

[93] Clavin, 'Nicholas Weston'; *Cal. S. P. Ire., 1601-3*, p. 456.

[94] Indeed, Weston did suffer a number of significant losses, including a 700*l.* in Danske corn, and other goods in 1596. Fenton to Burghley, 12 January 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/186/13. Also, see, N. Weston to R. Cecil, 27 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/49(I); J. Bagg to R. Cecil, 5 February 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 12/270/31; *Cal. S. P. Ire., 1601-3*, 527; Meeting of the Privy Council, 7 November 1598, TNA: PRO, PC 2/24/178; G. Young, Mayor of Dublin, R. Cecil, 10 September 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(5)/13.

[95] Fenton to Burghley, 12 January 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/186/13.

[96] Mountjoy and Council to Privy Council, 12 September 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(5)/15; Note of ships entertained at Lough Foyle, 8 December 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(6)/64.

likewise owed to merchants like John Firth, and Catholic Aldermen Nicholas Barran and James Bellew, yet their succours were not subject to nearly as much acclaim in State Paper records.[97]

Weston and many of his colleagues assisted the English administration with much needed financial support. Because England failed to meet the fiscal responsibilities of its Irish administration and military enterprise, the Irish Council was driven to solicit capital from Palesmen, usually Old English merchants and aldermen, in order to meet the army's many unanswered needs. Irish creditors were repeatedly promised repayment out of the next expected treasure shipment, but Treasurer Sir Henry Wallop's certificates make it clear that these contracts were rarely fulfilled.[98] Undoubtedly, the administration's failure to honour these debts, as well as outstanding supply bills, was a source of great discontentment, and it may have spurred some merchants into illegal trade since the Confederates were willing to pay ready cash for the same merchandise.[99] This, however, did not seem to be the case with Weston. Nicholas Weston's name figures prominently in Wallop's lists of Irish creditors and his efforts to obtain satisfaction are typical of the situation for many Palesmen. In late 1595 Weston loaned the administration £200 towards the cost of victualing English garrisons, followed by another £300 shortly thereafter.[100] Although promised full reimbursement in 1595, even at this early date it is clear that Weston doubted the £500 debt would be satisfied. Looking for a better way to collect his money, he travelled to the English court bearing letters from the Irish Council

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[97] For instance, Dublin Alderman James Bellew was owed '660 and odd poundes' for supplying 'dyvers of hir Maiesties Army with apparrell and other necessaries.' Loftus to Cecil, 7 April 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/78. Also, see, 'Note of 2,401*l*. 10*s*. 0*d*. borrowed,' 23 December 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/185/25(II); Docket of Irish Suitors, 20 June 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/112; Docket of Irish Suitors, 26 June 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/121.

[98] For example: Wallop to Burghley, 8 November 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/184/11; 'Note of 2,401*l*. 10*s*. 0*d*. borrowed,' 23 December 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/185/25(II); Wallop to Burghley, 10 March 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/187/26; Wallop to Burghley, 8 June 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/190/12; Wallop to Burghley, 29 January 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/197/57; Docket of Irish Suitors, 20 June 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/112. Also, see the certificates submitted by the sheriffs of Dublin, Meath, and Westmeath, Lord Deputy Russell's Journal, Lambeth, Carew, Vol. 612, No. 270; Answers to complaints, December 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(6)/123.

[98] 'Note of 2,401*l*. 10*s*. 0*d*. borrowed,' 23 December 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/185/25(II); Lord Deputy and Council to Burghley, 28 December 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/185/34. Also, see, Loftus and other Councillors to Privy Council, 20 July 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/200/40; 'Warrant to pay 5,520 to the merchants,' 9 January 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 12/262/5(I).

[99] Maurice Kyffin warned that these unpaid debts were a source of discontentment and injustice, which was a root cause of the disturbances in Ireland. M. Kyffin to R. Cecil, 8 November 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/195/6.

[100] 'Note of 2,401*l*. 10*s*. 0*d*. borrowed,' 23 December 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/185/25(II); Lord Deputy and Council to Burghley, 28 December 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/185/34.

recommending his bills be honoured there.[101] It is unclear whether the debt was answered in England at that time, but Weston continued to loan money over the following war years so it is very possible that his debts were satisfied, either partially or in full. Furthermore, over the course of the war several certificates were issued either requesting or stipulating the repayment of certain sums to Weston and, in this respect, he seems to have fared better than many of his colleagues. For instance, in July 1597 Wallop reported that the dearth in government supplies had driven him 'to take vpp vpon my Creddytt of Nicholas Weston … 250 barrells of danishe Rye.'[102] A number of Irish Councillors pleaded with their English counterparts to pay Weston £400 for this victualing service and, within a month, the Privy Council responded by ordering the repayment of that same sum.[103] Nevertheless, Weston constantly struggled to acquire repayment within Ireland, for which reason he was driven to make regular trips to the English court to sue for the payment of multiple loans and debts. These difficulties aside, Weston was remarkably well rewarded in other ways, especially in terms of crown favour and special trading privileges. This provided him with strong incentive to continue performing services for the crown while simultaneously deterring him from the illegal trade.

In addition to assisting the English administration during these war years, Weston also exhibited a charitable civic consciousness. As the conflict dragged on, Dublin became more and more inundated with sick and starving crown soldiers, burdening the citizens with the cost of their upkeep as well as the threat of contagion. In 1598, Weston, along with five colleagues, devised an ambitious scheme to help ease the problem by proposing the erection of a hospital for sick and wounded soldiers as well as a plan for supplying soldiers' attire. While the charges for these services would be borne by the citizens of Dublin, Weston and his associates claimed that their program would not only reduce the queen's apparelling expenses, but it would also create a local manufacturing industry and thereby stimulate the flagging local economy.[104] Although it is unclear how much of this proposal was accepted, it

[101] Lord Deputy and Council to Burghley, 28 December 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/185/34.
[102] Wallop to R. Cecil, 27 July 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/200/55.
[103] Loftus and other Councillors to Privy Council, 20 July 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/200/40; Meeting of the Privy Council, 17 August 1597, TNA: PRO, PC 2/22/217.
[104] Plot for furnishing provant apparel, 22 October 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(3)/123. There was some concern about merchants exporting raw materials out of Ireland during this period and some people seem to have thought that more should be done to encourage the manufacturing of local raw materials into finished goods for export in order to achieve greater returns on trade. For instance, linen yarn was being exported from Ireland but linen cloth was being imported. S. M. Lough, 'Trade and

does seem the hospital scheme was eventually implemented since Lord Deputy Mountjoy awarded Weston, along with Alderman Chamberlain and James Warren, £150 'for erecting of the hospitals near Dublin' in 1600.[105]

Although the vast majority of Palesmen felt that their services and loyalty were under-appreciated by the administration,[106] Nicholas Weston's wartime travails were well recognised by crown officials. In fact, Irish Councillors were eager to extend considerable favour towards him, especially in terms of trading leniencies. In January 1596 Fenton requested assurances from Burghley that Weston's ships, which were due to pass through 'Poole, or some other parte in the west of England', be exempt from any 'generall restrainte of shippinge ... the rather for that they are ymployed for prouision for this Realme, a matter which except by himself, is neyther offred nor performed by anie marchaunt or other in this Realme.'[107] In his examination of the Irish Customs administration, Victor Treadwell has shown that the exceptional regard for Weston was even more clearly demonstrated in February 1596 when he was awarded a crown patent for a four year license to export '300 packs of sheepskins, 300 packs of wool and 50 tons of tallow, from the ports of Dublin and Drogheda, paying only what was normally paid as custom by the freemen of Dublin before 1569, in effect little or nothing.'[108] Export licenses of this sort were commonly used to reward services in England,[109] but in Ireland, this grant, issued directly from the queen rather than any of her representatives, was an exceptional and almost unprecedented liberty which could only be considered 'an act of grace to a very special person.'[110] Nowhere was the Irish Council's favour more apparent than in the endorsement of Weston's unsuccessful suit for the fee farm of the Dublin Customs later that same year. It is unclear exactly why his bid for the fee farm was blocked; more than likely it was due to a combination of local jealousies and complaints of

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Industry in Ireland in the Sixteenth Century,' *The Journal of Political Economy*, 24:7 (1916), 728; Mayor and Citizens of Dublin, 1597, HMC *Salisbury MSS, Addenda*, p. 35.

[105] *Cal. S. P. Ire., 1600*, p. 209; Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, pp. 107-8.

[106] 'The greevances of the Englishe Pale', 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(4)/60; 'A discourse to show 'that planting of colonies, and that to be begun only by the Dutch, will give best entrance to the reformation of Ulster', 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(4)/75; Petition of noblemen and gentlemen of the English Pale to the Queen, 13 June 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(4)/5(I).

[107] Fenton to Burghley, 12 January 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/186/13.

[108] Treadwell, 'The Irish Customs Administration,' 401.

[109] Jones, 'Illicit Business,' 26.

[110] Treadwell, 'The Irish Customs Administration,' 401. There were, however, a number of export licenses granted to English adventurers in Ireland, including those to Sir Walter Raleigh and Henry Pine, which allowed them to export pipe staves from Ireland to the continent. See, BL, Add. Ms. 11402.

favouritism, as well as the fact that the other contender, Thomas Molyneux, was a member of the New English class which was effectively displacing Old Englishmen like Weston from positions of authority.[111] Nevertheless, Fenton's endorsement of Weston shows an uncommon appreciation for the assistance provided by a member of the Old English community as well as an awareness of the need to reward such men in order to encourage their continued collaboration. As Fenton averred:

> he hath so well aunswered the necessyties of the State here, both for money, and other helpes in tymes of great need, and hath not stucke at the mocion of the State to ymploy his goods and credyt in forreine parts to draw hether comodyties of corne, and vittles, to the releef of the Realme, which hath not little pulled downe the prices of the market, and given great succour to the people, and the armye, as he hath and doth well deserue gratyfycacion in any his reasonable suits[112]

For a merchant born in Ireland, Nicholas Weston's experiences were, in many ways, unique. Neither Chamberlain nor Warren received the same kind of praise for their part in the hospital and apparelling proposal, nor for their services in anything else. Instead, the Catholic Chamberlain and his agents were interrogated for their suspected involvement in illegal trading operations.[113] Although Weston's services to the crown were impressive, according to Treasurers Wallop's and Carey's numerous lists of debts, many other Old Englishmen had provided equally valuable material and financial assistance, yet they could not attain such levels of favour or reward.[114] It is therefore likely that Weston's religious persuasions helped mark him out as a man amenable to the interests of crown government and worthy of advancement.[115] As Lord Chancellor Adam Loftus asserted:

> I haue spent allmost forty yeares of my tyme here, yet, for affection to religion, great care in gouerninge and safekeepinge this citie for hir Maiestie, willingness to enterteyne, and well vse hir Maiesties Army, as all tymes of theire comminge hither, And wonted readynes vpon all occasion of want, to lende lardge somes of money out of his owne purss, (notwithstanding his greate losses sustayned by sea) I haue not seene his lyke in that place before him, nor (I thinke) shall not of any that cometh after him.[116]

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[111] Lennon, 'The Great Explosion,' 17; Berry, 'Minute Book,' 493; Fenton to Burghley, 19 May 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/189/32.
[112] Fenton to Burghley, 19 May 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/189/32.
[113] Examination of three Dublin merchants, 17 June 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/107; Plot for furnishing provant apparel, 22 October 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(3)/123.
[114] For example: Wallop to Burghley, 8 November 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/184/11; 'Note of 2,401*l*. 10*s*. 0*d*. borrowed,' 23 December 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/185/25(II); Wallop to Burghley, 10 March 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/187/26; Wallop to Burghley, 8 June 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/190/12; Wallop to Burghley, 29 January 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/197/57; Docket of Irish Suitors, 20 June 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/112; Memorial to Privy Council, 14 May 1601, TNA: PRO, SP 63/208(2)/64.
[115] Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, p. 217.
[116] Lord Justice Loftus to R. Cecil, 22 October 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(3)/121.

It is impossible to determine the sincerity of Weston's Protestantism, especially since it was a profitable life choice and many who conformed publicly could still harbour secret attachments to the old faith.[117] Nevertheless, English officials were confident that he had fully complied with the State Established Church and, as Colm Lennon has argued, Weston's selection of Protestant marriage partners for his own children does suggest that he was strongly in favour of the State religion.[118]

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Notwithstanding excessive praise heaped on Weston by English officials, he did come under some criticism. Interestingly, this criticism did not originate with crown officials; rather, it issued from members of his own community. Weston was an exceptionally enterprising individual, and the special privileges he enjoyed must have irritated many of his peers who felt that his advancement 'ran counter to the spirit of guild collectivism and restriction on private undertakings.'[119] The 1596 export licence, which essentially granted him a trade monopoly in prohibited goods, was a source of contention amongst his fellow merchants since it contravened a statute established to protect civic liberties.[120] His aldermanic colleagues defied the licence by ruling that two of them would be responsible for collecting the normal custom duties on those goods, and should Weston 'refuse to pay, the wares [were] to be seized.'[121] His possible promotion to the Dublin Customership provoked similar outcry, and it was contended that if granted the office Weston 'might convey any prohibited wares at pleasure.'[122] And, while his participation in the State-reformed Church was praised by crown officials, it set Weston apart from the majority of the Old English community, including many of his aldermanic colleagues.[123] This confessional divide, along with the exceptional favour afforded Weston, left him

[117] For example, see, Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*; Lennon, 'Recusancy and the Dublin Stanyhursts,' *Archivium Hibernicum*, 33 (1975), 101-110; Lennon, 'The Rise of Recusancy Among the Dublin Patricians, 1580-1613,' in W. J. Shiels and D. Wood (eds.), *The Churches, Ireland and the Irish, Studies in Church History*, Vol. 25 (Oxford, 1989), pp. 123-32.
[118] Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, pp. 88, 108-109, 137-39. Interestingly, Lennon notes that although Weston married his daughter Alice to the son of the Protestant Alderman Walter Ball, he was married to Anne Sedgrave, whose father and brother were both "staunch Catholics".
[119] *Ibid*., p. 217.
[120] *Ibid*., p. 47; Berry, 'Minute Book,' 493.
[121] Berry, 'Minute Book,' 489-90.
[122] R. Eastfeild to Burghley or R. Cecil, 20 December 1596, HMC *Salisbury MSS, 1596*, pp. 529-30.
[123] Lord Justice Loftus to R. Cecil, 22 October 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(3)/121; Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, pp. 88, 108-9.

subject to the derision of his confreres who did not enjoy the same degree of approval, 'probably because their allegiances were not as unambiguous as Weston's were.'[124] It is, therefore, somewhat surprising that when a certain 'libel' accusing Weston of corrupt practices was brought before the City Council during his mayoral year, his colleagues dismissed the charges and ordered the unnamed libeller punished, for he was 'a dishonest and wicked person.'[125] In fact, the Dublin Corporation continued to employ Weston as an agent at court when pursuing the repayment of debts, and this no doubt was due to the favour he held in official circles and the greater success a Protestant might have in furthering their suits.[126]

The only surviving attack on Weston's crown loyalty was presented by Robert Eastfeild in 1596.[127] Amongst a number of treasonous accusations, Eastfeild alleged that Hugh O'Neill had lodged in the alderman's house shortly before his revolt and, during this time, Weston had 'provided all things of importance the Earl needed', including the lead roofing. More seriously, Eastfeild contended that 'when the Earl was in Dublin, and suspect for his loyalty, [Weston] conveyed him and his train out of Dublin at three of the clock in the morning by the means of the keys Weston got of the city gate next his house.'[128] Weston's name also appeared briefly in accusations brought against Captain William Warren in 1599, though these articles argued that it was Warren who had 'conveyed the Earl away out of the house of one Westall [Weston], a merchant in Dublin.' According to the 1599 report, Warren was the chief offender, but it was stated that the conspirators had implored Weston to go to England and procure 'as many culivers and muskets as he could get, with lead and all other necessaries'. The accusers neglected to mention whether Weston complied.[129]

Possibly unaware of the great liberties afforded Weston in trading with the queen's continental enemies, Eastfeild complained that Weston had violated the embargo on Spanish trade by transporting ten ships laden with corn, sixty tons of Newfoundland fish, and, on an annual basis, a 'great store of tallow and other

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[124] Lennon, 'The Great Explosion,' 17.
[125] Berry, 'Minute Book,' 493; Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, p. 109.
[126] For example, G. Young, Mayor of Dublin, R. Cecil, 10 September 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(5)/13; Fenton to R. Cecil, 31 October 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(5)/130; Names of Irish suitors attending, 16 March 1601, TNA: PRO, SP 63/208(1)/88; Memorial to Privy Council, 14 May 1601, TNA: PRO, SP 63/208(2)/64.
[127] R. Eastfeild to Burghley or R. Cecil, 20 December 1596, HMC *Salisbury MSS, 1596*, pp. 529-30.
[128] *Ibid*.
[129] 'Articles against Captain William Warren,' February 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/203/58.

prohibited wares into Spain.'[130] Eastfeild also claimed Weston had imported large quantities of gunpowder, but admitted that he was unsure what Weston had done with it. The only traitorous activity to which Eastfeild could assert with any certainty was that Weston had 'fished a place called the Bande and other places in the north of Ireland for salmon, which he conveyed to her Majesty's enemies.' Finally, Eastfeild pointedly concluded that Weston had managed to conduct all these dubious activities 'by means of his great credit and countenance that none dare speak against him.'[131]

In an effort to further discredit Weston, Eastfeild drew attention to his less dependable relations. Like the rest of his community, Weston had relatives who supported the rebellion. His brother, Richard, was identified as an employee of Hugh O'Neill, and might even have been one of O'Neill's personal secretaries.[132] But, other than Eastfeild's assertion that Nicholas Weston had 'sent wine, *aquavitae*, corn and all other provision necessary for victualing, which ... the alderman's brother sent secretly to the Earl', there is no other evidence to suggest that Nicholas aided O'Neill in any way once the war began.[133] And, although Richard operated as one of O'Neill's confidantes, from an early date he had also been providing the English administration with valuable intelligence directly from O'Neill's camp.[134] By 1599 Fenton was able to inform Sir Robert Cecil that 'I haue ymploied [Richard Weston] longe abowt Tyrone for Intelligences, of whose good descoueries I haue … founde him to do the best service therin of all others, and withowt chardge to her Ma^{ty}.'[135] According to Fenton, it was based on Richard's information that the State had

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[130] R. Eastfeild to Burghley or R. Cecil, 20 December 1596, HMC *Salisbury MSS, 1596*, pp. 529-30.
[131] *Ibid*.
[132] Fenton to Burghley, 24 June 1595, TNA: PRO, SP 63/180/48; Fenton to Burghley, 12 January 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/186/13; Fenton to R. Cecil, 24 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/35; Fenton to R. Cecil, 15 April 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/87; R. Eastfeild to Burghley or R. Cecil, 20 December 1596, HMC *Salisbury MSS, 1596*, pp. 529-30; N. Dawtrey to J. Fortescue, Chancellor of the Exchequer, 7 Sep. 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(5)/6. Ó Báille has drawn attention to Richard Weston's role as 'chief auditor for Tyrone' and in charge of paying O'Neill's troops. See, M. Ó Báille, 'The Buannadha: Irish Professional Soldiery of the Sixteenth Century,' *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, 22:1/2 (1946), 74.
[133] R. Eastfeild to Burghley or R. Cecil, 20 December 1596, HMC *Salisbury MSS, 1596*, pp. 529-30.
[134] Fenton to Burghley, 12 January 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/186/13; TNA: Wallop to Lord Deputy Russell, 25 September 1596, PRO, SP 63/193/32(I); William Gelle [alias Richard Weston] to Fenton, 22 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/32(III); Fenton to R. Cecil, 24 March 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/35; Fenton to R. Cecil, 15 April 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/87; John Tomson [alias Richard Weston] to Fenton, 14 April 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/87(I); Fenton to R. Cecil, 7 May 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/15; Stephen Waterhouse [alias Richard Weston] to Fenton, 5 May 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/199/15(I); Memorandum by J. Nott for R. Cecil, July 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/200/67; Extracts of letters from R. Weston to Fenton, 31 October and 6 November 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/201/67(II); *Cal. S. P. Ire., 1600*, p. 414; R. Eastfeild to Burghley or R. Cecil, 20 December 1596, HMC *Salisbury MSS, 1596*, pp. 529-30.
[135] Fenton to R. Cecil, 19 January 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/203/19.

obtained regular reports on O'Neill's dealings with Spain and Scotland; intercepted letters sent into Spain; captured one of O'Neill's clerical conspirators; had news of the arrival of various Spanish ships; received detailed estimates of the rebels' strength; learned the real reasons for O'Neill's delays during times of negotiation; and had acquired knowledge that the Old English merchant John Bath was illegally importing arms from Scotland.[136] For all this information, Fenton asserted the government was indebted to Nicholas Weston because it was he who had enlisted the double-agent services of his brother.[137] This perhaps helps explain why Fenton was so fond of Nicholas Weston.

It is unclear what relationship Eastfeild had with Weston, or what may have motivated him to lodge these accusations. But, there is no record to indicate that an investigation was conducted upon the receipt of these charges, nor is there any other evidence in the State Papers to corroborate his allegations that Weston participated in illicit trading during this war. In fact, it seems that complaints against Weston, including customs violations, were readily dismissed without further scrutiny. It was probably rightly assumed that local criticisms of Weston stemmed from jealousies of his commercial success and his great favour with the administration during a period of widespread poverty and disenfranchisement.[138] But, administrators also believed that such charges were made 'the rather (as we conceive) because he is a protestant.'[139] It is therefore presumed that Weston's Protestantism and his friendship with officials like Fenton and Loftus helped guarantee his security. As Secretary Fenton concluded:

> he hath rather drawen envy and malice vpon him, for standinge so resolute for her maiesty, in many thinges in this tyme of trobles, then donn him self any good … And yt stood her maiesties causes in very good stead, to haue a Maior in this broken tyme, so wholly addicted to her seruice, as in respect to further that, he did not regard the murmur of his bretheren, who, as they do greatly stomacke him for the same, so he hath well deserued to be borne vp and countenaunced by the State here, and specyally fauored by

[136] Fenton to Burghley, 12 January 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/186/13; Wallop to Lord Deputy Russell, 25 September 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/193/32(I); John Tomson [i.e. Richard Weston] to Fenton, 14 April 1597, TNA: PRO, SP 63/198/87(I); Extracts of a letter from R. Weston to Fenton, 15 January 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/203/19(I); Advertisements from the North by R. Weston, 20 July 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/205/118(I); R. Weston to Essex, 28 August 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/205/156; Fenton to Essex, 13 October 1599, TNA: PRO, SP 63/205/207; N. Dawtrey to J. Fortescue, 7 September 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(5)/6. Also, see, Morgan, *Tyrone's Rebellion*, p. 194n.
[137] Fenton to Burghley, 12 January 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/186/13.
[138] Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, pp. 88, 108-109.
[139] J. Lodge (ed), *Desiderata Curiosa Hibernica* Vol. I (Dublin, 1772), p. 270; Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, pp. 88, 108-109.

> your honours there, the better to enhable him to proceed further in her Maiesties seruice, as he hath begonn, and to encourage others to do the lyke, of which sorte, this State hath great need, considering the backwardness that is in many, who ought to be more forward.[140]

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It has long been accepted that Ireland's urban centres remained outwardly loyal to the English crown during the Nine Years' War.[141] But, as centres of commerce and trade, it is also clear that the towns played a pivotal role in sustaining the protracted Irish Catholic campaign against English Protestant authority. Crown officials blamed this treachery on the Old English population's attachment to the Catholic faith and a general dislike of all things English. These same officials were particularly incensed about the illegal trading practices of the urban mercantile community which, they contended, were universal and ubiquitous. Yet, contrary to their condemnations, the example of Nicholas Weston demonstrates that there were members of the merchant community who wholeheartedly supported the crown. And, although Weston was the individual singled out for special praise, many other Old English names appear amongst the administration's lists of lenders and suppliers. John Firth, Nicholas Barran, James Bellew, Michael Chamberlain, and James Warren are just a few who rendered services to the crown, yet none of these men were ever the subject of profuse admiration, nor were they the recipients of any special commercial liberties. Unlike Weston though, these men were Catholic, and at least some of them were suspected of treasonous activities.[142] To some extent, Weston did labour under the disadvantage of his Irish birth, and this may have cost him both the Dublin Customership and the lucrative supply contracts which fell to competitors born in England. Nevertheless, it does seem that Weston's Protestantism did much to protect him from administrative scorn, and his success as a government informant helped him gain further approval. Economic and political exclusion had alienated many within his community, but

[140] Fenton to R. Cecil, 22 October 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(3)/122.
[141] A number of contemporaries did believe the towns would remain firm for the crown. For example, Sir George Carew conceded that the majority of Old Englishmen in Ireland, and especially those living within the Pale and the towns, would remain loyal even if a Spanish force arrived to wave the Catholic banner. G. Carew to T. Hennadge, 19 February 1590, *Cal. Carew*, Vol. 3, p. 18. Also see, Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*; Lennon, 'The Great Explosion in Dublin'.
[142] Shortly after the Nine Years' War, Nicholas Barran conformed to the State church. Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, 229.

officials like Fenton and Loftus ensured that Weston was handsomely rewarded with lucrative trading privileges. Undoubtedly, these economic incentives reinforced Weston's commitment to the crown and, in this respect, he was unique.

As a rule, Weston's confreres were denied praise, trading privileges, and the payment of bills and debts. This may have induced them to seek out other consumers, including those amongst their sovereign's enemies. This was not because they were all 'notorious papists, hating the english nation and government'; it had at least as much to with the fact that this war had created a booming market.[143] Although the administration entrusted the most lucrative provisioning contracts to London merchants, those in Ireland had the advantage when it came to the local market. And, as it transpired, the Confederates were better customers than the crown because they not only paid on delivery, but they typically paid more. Considering English officials like John Allen and the searchers at English ports were also found to be profiting from trading with the enemy, it is very unlikely that the behaviour of Old English merchants was dictated by patriotic notions like 'Faith and Fatherland' or 'Queen and Country'. Indeed, addressing the Anglo-Spanish trade during the 1580s, Pauline Croft argued that English merchants did not see the conflict as 'a cosmic struggle of ideologies,' but rather an 'unfortunate interruption to international commerce … which necessitated flexible responses in order to survive.'[144] The same held true in Ireland. Sir George Carew was right: the 'traitorly issuing of their commodities' was only 'partly out of malice to the State for religion's cause'. It was ultimately 'for their own lucre.'[145] But, perhaps this was the administration's fault. Had more of Ireland's mercantile community enjoyed the favour, privileges and economic rewards given to Weston, they too may have rejected the temptations of illegal trade and been 'wholly addicted to her [the queen's] seruice'.[146]

Ruth A. Canning

Marie Curie International Research Fellow
School of History, University College Cork
Tyrconnell, Off College Road

[143] Memorandum on the state of Ireland, Nov. 1596, TNA: PRO, SP 63/195/52.
[144] Croft, 'Trading with the Enemy,' p. 302.
[145] *Cal. S. P. Ire., 1600-1601*, 65. G. Carew to Privy Council, 16 December 1600, TNA: PRO, SP 63/207(6)/75
[146] Fenton to R. Cecil, 22 October 1598, TNA: PRO, SP 63/202(3)/122.

Cork
Ireland
racnnng@gmail.com