The Career and Problem of David Wolfe, 1528-1579?
Jesuit, and Papal Commissary to Ireland*

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A detailed examination of the career of the first Irish Jesuit who was born in Limerick in 1528. In an eventful and turbulent career he was deeply and significantly involved in the political and religious history of sixteenth-century Ireland. The circumstances of his eventual departure from the Order are analysed while the failure of the reformation in Ireland is also discussed.

David Wolfe was the first Irishman in the Society of Jesus, and as a papal commissary to Ireland he played a significant role in fostering the spirit of the Counter-Reformation before the government-inspired reformation took root. Despite his notable achievements, a well-known Jesuit historian, James Broderick, an Irish man in the English Jesuit province, considered that Wolfe's total career presented problems. In his study of the Jesuits in the period 1566-79, Broderick claimed that Wolfe 'fell into moral delinquencies, and had to be dismissed' from the Order. By implication, Wolfe was an embarrassment, and this, Broderick claimed, resulted in the historical neglect of the sixteenth-century Jesuit mission in Ireland. The present article explores Wolfe's career in considerable detail and, by way of introduction, makes reference to other Irish Jesuits who functioned during his later years and concludes by examining why the reformation failed in Ireland.

The evidence available indicates that during the generalate of Fr. Everard Mercurian, 1573 - 1580, there were approximately ten Irish Jesuits, all of whom entered the Society of Jesus on the continent, but only four of whom returned to Ireland. Two, although barely known in their home country, were prominent in other Jesuit provinces: Richard Fleming served as chancellor of the university of Pont-à-Mousson, and Thomas Fielde, also of Limerick, was a zealous and early missionary in Brazil and Paraguay. Wolfe's name is more familiar to students of Irish history than to historians of the Society. Although Thomas McCooch discussed him from a Jesuit perspective in his 1996 study of the Society in Ireland, Scotland and England in the period 1541-88, he merits further attention.

David Wolfe was the key figure in the second Jesuit mission to Ireland from 1560 to 1586. About his family and early life we know very little. He was born in Limerick in 1528 and became a priest in his native diocese. Before he was thirty, he was dean of the diocesan chapter. His command of Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese makes it highly probable that he completed his ecclesiastical studies on the continent. He was related to Thomas Fanning, canon of the chapter to whom Wolfe resigned his deanery on 21 June 1555, and to the Jesuit scholastic, Edmund Daniel (O'Donnell). In 1551 he is said to have visited Ignatius of Loyola in Rome, where in 1554 he was

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1 James Broderick, S.J. The Progress of the Jesuits (1556-79), (London, 1940) p. 234, n.2.
5 John MacErlane, S.J., transcribed this resignation from a document then deposited in the State Archives in Rome. That collection was eventually involved in an exchange with the Vatican Archives and the Fondo Resignaciones returned to ecclesiastical hands. Letter of Wolfe to Diego Laínz, Limerick, 29 June 1561, in Mon. Ang., 3:361-71, refers to Edmund Daniel.

* This article is based on the author's article "Almost Hated and Detested by All": The Problem of David Wolfe in Thomas M. McCooch, S.J. (ed.), The Mercianer Project, Forming Jesuit Culture, 1573-88, (St. Louis, 2004), with the permission of Fr. McCooch, Institute of Jesuit Sources, Rome.
received into the Society of Jesus. Writing to Reginald Cardinal Pole, Ignatius described Wolfe as ‘a young Irishman of great promise.’ In November 1555 he was assigned to Loreto for private study. Loyola’s successor as Father General, Diego Lainez, sent him to Modena in November 1556. He was appointed vice-rector (and eventually rector) of the college in April 1558. On 12 July 1559, he protested to Lainez about the unworthy Irish bishops whom he saw passing through Modena. Unknowingly, he claimed, popes consecrated as bishops men known in Ireland as public sinners, one of whom was a murderer. He remained in northern Italy consolidating the collegiate foundation in Modena, seeking funds for another college in Como, and working with Antonio Possevino until Pope Pius IV appointed him papal commissary to Ireland on 2 August 1560.

Perhaps because of protests from Wolfe and others, Pius IV initiated clerical reform in Ireland in line with the direction currently being charted at the Council of Trent (about to start its final session). Moreover, somewhat exaggerated reports from Irish chiefs seeking foreign assistance warned Rome that many people were ‘falling into heresy.’ Such reports were exaggerated in that the majority of the people spoke only Irish, and the Protestant missionaries would not be able to communicate with — let alone evangelize — them for another forty years. The Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity legally established a Protestant Church in Ireland on 1 February 1560. Even before word of the religious changes reached Rome, the newly elected Pope Pius IV sought two Jesuits to go to Ireland as papal nuncios. Wolfe was the only Irish Jesuit priest and, on Lainez’s recommendation, he was appointed. Jesuit authorities considered conferring early ordination upon an Irish scholastic, Dermot Geraldine, so that he could be the second nuncio. But, for reasons left unexplained, Geraldine instead was freed from his religious vows and, with the blessing and approval of Father General, accompanied Wolfe as a layman. Because the Jesuit General, Diego Lainez, did not wish Wolfe to be consecrated bishop and to have all the trappings of a nuncio, the latter went to Ireland as papal commissary with the full faculties of a nuncio.

Wolfe’s faculties were numerous and impressive. He was instructed to establish mones pietatis for relief of the poor, to establish schools wherever possible, and to reform any monasteries that continued to exist. In the Pope’s name, Wolfe was to visit principal Catholic leaders, congratulate them on their constancy, and exhort them to persevere in their resolve. When dealing with the hierarchy, Wolfe was instructed to encourage bishops who remained faithful to Rome, admonish those in need of reform, and delate to Rome those who could not be reclaimed from scandalous lives. He was to remind all bishops to promote only worthy priests and to supervise and maintain ecclesiastical discipline, as well as forward to Rome lists of candidates worthy of bishoprics. Moreover, he was expected to deter ‘Rome runners’ from going to Rome in quest of bishoprics or major benefices. Primarily because of this last commission, Wolfe earned much obloqui, opposition and hatred from ambitious clergy and their families. In addition to tasks received from the Pope, the Jesuit General asked Wolfe to report on the prospects of securing Jesuit foundations in the country. Finally, his mandate stated that ‘for all these things, which are to be undertaken for the salvation of souls, no rewards are to be taken.’ Fourteen years later, Wolfe claimed that his original instructions told him not only to make himself acquainted ‘with the state of the

6 John Begley, The Diocese of Limerick in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Dublin, 1927) p. 166.
8 Juan de Polanco, ex commissione, to Oliver Mannaerts, Rome, 23 November 1555, ibid., 168 f.
10 Ibid., pp 297-300.
11 For an examination of Possevino’s later Jesuit career, see John Patrick Donnelly, S.J., ‘Antonio Possevino: From Secretary to Papal Legate in Sweden,’ in The Mercatorian Project, pp 323-46; McCaughey, Society of Jesus; p. 54.
12 Diego Lainez to Francis Borja, Rome, 16 February 1560, in Mon. Ang., 3,323.
13 See ibid., 325f., 337ff.
14 The Jesuit founder was opposed to his followers accepting any ecclesiastical titles, unless at the expressed wish of the Pope.
15 Pope Pius IV to David Wolfe, Rome, 2 August 1560, ibid., 511-313; ‘Instructions to the Agents of the Holy See in Ireland,’ translated in Patrick Francis Moran, History of the Catholic Archbishops of Dublin since the Reformation (Dublin, 1864) pp 415-17.
hearts of the good and bad, but also (as hath been commanded me) with the real state of towns, cities, sea-ports, fortresses, and munitions.\(^{16}\) If Wolfe's memories were accurate, this suggested a suspicious but cautious policy regarding Queen Elizabeth. Although Elizabeth was not officially excommunicated until 1570 and at different times in the 1560s there were hopes that she would accept Catholicism, there was sufficient doubt in Rome and Spain to collect information against the day when she might be excommunicated and deposed.\(^{17}\) Wolfe, however, being a city man accustomed to loyalty to the English sovereign, had no hostile intent at this stage.

On his arrival in Ireland, Wolfe made his base at Limerick, his native city. Shortly thereafter, he celebrated a public Mass attended by two thousand people, and within six months he dealt with over a thousand marriage dispensations. But for the most part he had to move cautiously.\(^{18}\) By the end of two years, he had travelled through those parts of Ireland least controlled by the Elizabethan government: the provinces of Munster, Connacht, and Ulster, and parts of Leinster. He avoided areas of Leinster where English authority was strong and delegated authority to a Dublin priest, Thadeus Newman.\(^{19}\) Wolfe's account of his travels was a depressing one. He found great scarcity in the country; and although few were influenced by the new religious doctrines, corruption was widespread among bishops and clergy, and concubinage existed even among members of religious orders. The bishops were 'hirelings and dumb dogs,' he would later declare in a letter to exiled bishop Redmond O'Gallagher at Lisbon.\(^{20}\) Sermons were seldom preached, even by more orthodox prelates. Some bishops openly opposed him, declaring him a mere priest and refusing to acknowledge his authority.\(^{21}\) Even some of his own relatives brazenly traded in benefices: Canon Thomas Fanning, to whom Wolfe had ceded the deanery of Limerick, had sold that benefice and committed other acts of simony.\(^{22}\) Wolfe's refusal to accept payment for his work infuriated a number of ecclesiastics.\(^{23}\)

Seeing the sad state of the clergy, Wolfe encouraged aspirants to the priesthood to seek education on the continent in dioceses where the spirit of Catholic Reform was strong. Within months of his arrival, the first three candidates for the Society were sent overseas: Maurice Halley, Edmund Daniel, and David Dymus.\(^{24}\) Wolfe, reprimanded by Lainéz on 17 October 1563, for not writing more frequently, left little record of his endeavours to send secular clergy abroad; but that his and Thadeus Newman's efforts were considerable is suggested by the expansion of the government's system of espionage and by reports to Queen Elizabeth that large numbers of young men were leaving through Munster ports.\(^{25}\) The impact of this movement is reflected in two reports thirteen years apart. In 1564 it was noted that three young men, John and James White of Clonmel and Nicholas Comerford of Waterford, were students at Louvain.\(^{26}\) In 1577 Sir William Drury, lord president of Munster, reported that John White and Nicholas Comerford had recently left Louvain with James Archer of Kilkenny, and that the three of them, like all 'the

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16 David Wolfe's Description of Ireland (1574) is summarized in Myles V. Ronan, The Reformation in Ireland under Elizabeth, 1558-1580 (London, 1930) p. 478. The original Italian document with a longer English summary can be found in Begley, Diocese of Limerick, pp 27-52, 494-515.
18 Wolfe to Laináz, Limerick, 29 June 1561; ibid., 361-71.
19 Wolfe to Princes of Leinster, Limerick, 7 December 1563, in Edmund Hogan, S.J., Iberica Ignatiana, (Dublin, 1880) pp 13f.
22 Wolfe to [Lainéz], June 1561(?), ibid., 371-74.
23 Wolfe to Lainéz, Limerick, 29 June 1561, ibid., 361-71.
24 Wolfe to Lainéz, Limerick, 29 June 1561; ibid., Cristóbal de Madrid, ex commissione, to Lainéz, Rome, 28 August 1561, ibid., 382.
26 Ronan, Reformation in Ireland, p. 113.
students of Ireland that are in Louvain,' were 'the nearest traitors and breeders of treachery that liveth.' They had 'taught all the way betwixt Rye and Bristol against the religion.' Due to their efforts, Drury claimed, the inhabitants of Waterford were 'canker'd in Popery' and 'feared not God or man.' The education of 'the new priests' had been paid for by 'their fathers and friends.' Others had been financed out of the slender resources of the local clergy. Already at this stage the contrast was becoming apparent, as Edmund Spenser noted in 1596, between 'the Ministers of the Gospell' and 'the zeale of Popish Priests,' who 'by long toyle and daungerous travailing hither, where they know perill of death awayteh them, and no reward or richesse is to be found only to draw the people unto the Church of Rome.'

An even more significant contribution to the future of the Church in Ireland was Wolfe's recommendation of candidates for bishoprics. The lot of the Irish bishops was difficult. Their problems were not confined to government pressure and persecution. In native Irish areas, chieftains tried at times to obtain control of the revenues from Church lands and to advance their own dependants to benefices; and both chiefs and people frequently showed themselves lacking in respect for ecclesiastical dignitaries and for places of worship. Thus, Redmond O'Gallagher, zealous bishop of Killala in the west of Ireland, had been pursued 'with intent to kill or take him prisoner' by the people of his diocese and had to flee to Portugal; and the widely esteemed Richard Creagh, archbishop of Armagh, had his cathedral church burned (this was not the first time the cathedral was attacked); several monasteries destroyed, and one of his priests hanged by Shane O'Neill (who presented himself to Rome as concerned for religion) in retaliation for Creagh's refusal to support his military against the Crown. In more settled areas, like Munster, where government authority was greater, bishops found themselves faced with deprivation of their sees and possible exile; and a number of them, even among those whom Wolfe had chosen, resorted to legalism, much to his disgust. They took an oath of allegiance to Elizabeth as head of the Church and agreed to hold their temporalities from her, but they refused to take the oath of supremacy, and always maintained that their spiritual jurisdiction came from the pope. Some, indeed, suffered imprisonment and death rather than deny the spiritual supremacy of the pope. Allegiance to Rome was the vital factor. The papal commissary's example of poverty and zeal, his encouragement of young men to seek their education abroad, his choice of candidates for the episcopacy, and his support of loyal bishops helped improve conditions in a number of dioceses; but his main contribution to the Irish Church was to strengthen the spirit of loyalty to the papacy and to bring Irish ecclesiastics more fully into the mainstream of European Church life. The presence of three of his chosen bishops — Andrew Crean, O.P., of Elphin; Donal MacCongail of Raphoe; and Eugene O'Harte, O.P., of Achnony — at the final sessions of the Council of Trent in 1562 and their participation in discussions, including those dealing with the pope as the source of episcopal jurisdiction — was, in effect, symbolic of the Irish Church's independence of government control and of its commitment to a revitalized Catholicism in union with Rome. By contrast, as Sir William Petre reported to Sir William Cecil

28 Ronan, Reformation in Ireland, p. 113.
30 See Wolfe to O'Gallagher, Dublin, 13 October 1568, summarized in Ronan, Reformation in Ireland, pp 471 f. (the full text is in Costa, Fontes inediti, pp 132-48); and Creagh's letter to the Privy Council in 1574, p. 457. For more on Creagh see Colm Lennon, 'Primiate Richard Creagh and the Beginnings of the Irish Counter-Reformation,' Archivum Hibernicum Societatis Jesu, 51 (1997) pp 74-86, and Lennon's book An Irish Prisoner of Conscience of the Tudor Era. Archbishop Creagh of Armagh, 1523-86 (Dublin, 1999). As early as 1555, Wolfe had recommended Creagh to Ignatius of Loyola as a candidate for bishop, and in 1562 Wolfe ordered Creagh to go to Rome with a view to his being appointed bishop (Ireland of Conscience, pp 48 f.). O'Neill proclaimed that Queen Elizabeth was the only person he hated more than Creagh (Lennon, 'Primiate Richard Creagh,' p. 79).
31 Ronan, Reformation in Ireland, pp 472 f.
32 Ibid., 491 f.
on 6 June, 1560, no one from the Established Church was willing to go to Ireland as a bishop.  

In the midst of his travels and tribulations, sometime around 1563 Wolfe drew up a religious rule of life for some Limerick women. They were known as ‘Menabochta’ (mná bochta, ‘the poor women’) and appear to have been a quasi religious body for the reclamation of fallen women. The guiding spirits of the novitiates included women of known virtue, such as Helen Stackpool, widow of a former mayor of Limerick and mother of a Jesuit. This Ignatian type of apostolate occasioned criticism of Wolfe, especially, it seems, when some reclaimed women lapsed.

Virtually alone, under constant pressure, and exhausted, Wolfe expressed to Francis Borja on 29 July 1563, his feeling of banishment ‘in the exile of Ireland far away from the fathers and brothers of the Society.’ His spiritual desolation continued a year later was indicated by a letter of Everard Mercurian to Láinez on 28 May 1564: ‘David Wolfe says he is in danger of losing soul and body; he desires to be recalled because he cannot achieve that for which he was sent.’ That same summer, however, Pius IV issued new faculties to Wolfe to further his work; and in the light of this renewed trust shown by the Pope, Láinez expressed his inability to recall Wolfe. He informed him, however, that the recently appointed archbishop of Armagh, Richard Creagh (also from Limerick), was going to Ireland and Wolfe could discuss matters with him. He also recommended that Wolfe move to Ulster, because that area would be less dangerous and it might be possible to establish a novitiate there. At this stage, the government sought to placate rather than challenge Shane O’Neill. Láinez promised that some Jesuits would be sent to assist Wolfe. Further bolstering the decision to send more Jesuits was the desire of the Pope and Archbishop Creagh to establish a Catholic university in Ireland. Moreover, wishing to have a Jesuit residence in Ireland to support his mission, the archbishop requested that an English-speaking Jesuit be appointed to accompany him to Ireland, believing that such a man would find abundant resources in Ireland for membership in the Society. The Jesuit appointment was William Good, an Englishman.

Good and the archbishop travelled part of the way together, parted in Dover, and arrived in Ireland separately. Shortly after Creagh’s arrival, he was arrested and transferred to the Tower of London in January 1565. After escaping in March, he went to Antwerp; and from there he wrote to the Jesuit Father General, Francis Borja, on 23 May, 1565, recommending that Wolfe be recalled because of the danger of the situation. Good, meanwhile, unaware of Creagh’s arrest, went north after arriving in Ireland, visited Shane O’Neill, and, not finding the archbishop, went south to Limerick to meet Wolfe. He arrived there on 1 February 1565. With Wolfe was his relative Edmund Daniel, who had returned to his native air to recoup his health. Within a short time, Good and Daniel opened a school that survived in Limerick for eight months. Apart from official

36 Wolfe to Borja, Limerick, 29 July 1563, in ARSI, Germ. 144, ff. 142-143v; O’Fionnagáin, Jesuit Missions, p. 18.
37 Mercurian to Láinez, Tournai, 28 May 28 1564, in ARSI, Germ. 145, ff. 104v-105v.
38 Brendan Bradshaw, S.M., refers to Wolfe and Creagh as ‘the formidable Limerick duo.’ From Wolfe’s attraction to the newly established Society of Jesus, and Creagh’s early odyssey, Bradshaw argues that ‘the ethos of the Counter Reformation was already a potent influence in Limerick’ in the 1550s, see ‘The Reformation in the Cities: Cork, Limerick and Galway, 1534-1603’, in John Bradley (ed.), Settlement and Society in Medieval Ireland: Studies Presented to F. X. Martin, O.S.A. (Kilkenny, 1988) p 469.
39 Láinez to Wolfe, Rome, 27 July 1564, in Láinez, 8, pp 114-16.
40 The proper education of Irish youth concerned Creagh greatly. See Lennon, Primate Richard Creagh, pp 76ff. Bradshaw sees ‘policing, catechism, education’ as characteristics of the Counter-Reformation, ‘Reformation in the Cities,’ p. 470.
42 Creagh to Borja, Antwerp, 23 May 1564 (sic, instead of 1565), in MHSI, Borja, 3, pp 703-14; McCoog, Society of Jesus, p. 64; Lennon, Primate Richard Creagh,’ pp 78f.
43 O’Fionnagáin, Jesuit Missions, p. 19.
hostility, the school needed financial support if it was to survive without charging fees. In October 1565, judges of the assizes, headed by Sir Thomas Cusacke, the lord chancellor, summoned Good to appear before him in Limerick to explain his activities. They also issued a warrant for Wolfe and denounced him as a traitor. Warned by friends, Wolfe escaped across the Shannon in a skiff. A reward of £100 was placed on his head, and Wolfe learned that some young fellow citizens of his were eager to earn the blood money. Officials searched the city. On 13 October the mayor and some soldiers closed the school and dispersed Good, Daniel, and some hundred students. Shortly afterwards, Good fell seriously ill. Wolfe, meanwhile, stayed across the Shannon in the vicinity of Ennis. Of this period he later commented, 'Only the Lord knows how often in winter I spent the night semi-naked and under the open sky. On hearing of Good's serious illness, Wolfe made his way back to Limerick. When Good recovered, thanks to the nursing of Helen Stackpool and Edmund Daniel, Wolfe decided that the school should move to Kilmallock, in County Limerick, where accommodations had been promised. Furthermore, this school might also serve as his base of operations now that he could no longer stay in Limerick. The school returned to the city in the spring of 1566. But by 8 June Good was informing the General that Jesuits could not teach in the cities unless they submitted to the conditions laid down by the royal officials, namely, that they promise to have no contact with Wolfe and not celebrate Mass publicly. Good wished to leave the country, and had argued with Wolfe that it was not 'the mind of the Society' to expose them to such danger. Wolfe disagreed, and reminded him that, in any event, the apostolic nuncio did not have authority to leave the country or to send Jesuits back to the continent. Despite Good's misgivings, the school managed to survive until the summer of 1568.

Good went to Clonmel and then to Youghal, beginning a school in each place.

In the spring of 1566, Archbishop Creagh was at Madrid, planning to return to Ireland. Because of rumours, details of which he relayed to Francis Borja, he concluded that it would be better if Wolfe were withdrawn from Ireland or at least from his native district. The precise nature of the rumours is not clear. But by then the General assumed that, following the death of Pope Pius IV, Wolfe's role as papal commissary had expired, and he sanctioned Wolfe's recall to spend some time at Antwerp or Louvain. Negotiations for his recall continued throughout the following year, but came to nothing because Wolfe was heavily in debt and had given his word to his creditors that he would not leave the country until he had paid them in full. His debts amounted to two hundred ducats (some £66 sterling of the period) incurred in housing and supporting the two Jesuits in Limerick. To relieve these debts, Gregory XIII gave Creagh one hundred gold crowns to take to Wolfe but the money was lost or confiscated during the journey. Wolfe set out to meet Archbishop Creagh in November 1566. He journeyed northward with a party of eleven, composed of Dominicans and laity, on pilgrimage to St. Patrick's Purgatory, Lough Derg. Towards the end of November, Donal O'Gallagher, bishop of Raphoe, travelled through the snow to visit Wolfe; and a couple of days later, Wolfe made his way to Beleek to meet with the Ulster chieftain, Hugh O'Donnell, the great rival of Shane O'Neill, whom he was

44 Wolfe to O'Gallagher, Dublin, 13 October 1568, in Costa, Fontes inéditos, pp. 132-48; O Fionnagáin, Jesuit Missions, pp 23 ff.
46 There is no indication that 'Wolfe fled north' at this time, as stated by McCoog, Society of Jesus, p. 64.
47 Good to Borja, Kilmallock, 8 April 1566, in ARSI, Angl. 41, ff. 01-02. See O Fionnagáin, Jesuit Missions, p. 24; McCoog, Society of Jesus, pp 64ff.
48 Good to Borja, 8 June 1566, in ARSI, Angl. 41, ff. 04-05; Wolfe to Polanco, June 1566, Ital. 13i, ff. 382**; McCoog, Society of Jesus, p. 65.
49 Creagh to Borja, Madrid, 17 April 1566, in ARSI, Epp. Ext. 10, ff. 290**.
52 Lainez to Wolfe, Rome, 21 August 1564, in ARSI, Germ. 105, ff. 162**.
to defeat in battle the following May. The meeting was at O'Donnell's invitation. Following it, Wolfe travelled to meet Archbishop Creagh, who greeted him affectionately, and within a few days named him vicar-general of the diocese, despite his earlier request that Wolfe be recalled. This appointment seems to indicate definitely that Wolfe no longer saw himself as papal commissary. This also, perhaps, gave additional scope to his enemies. Shortly after this appointment, he remarked that he escaped the 'sacrilegious hands of Cornelius MacArdle, the pseudo-bishop of Clogher.' MacArdle published a libellous pamphlet against him, of which there is no extant copy. Wolfe replied with a pamphlet. At a meeting of northern bishops, Archbishop Creagh was prominent in condemning MacArdle's libels and ordering him to pay Wolfe a fine of two hundred cows. The latter let the matter drop, but it was not the last he was to hear of MacArdle. Creagh and Wolfe were as alien bodies in the north of Ireland. As city dwellers, they had a tradition of loyalty to the Crown and a sense of law and order different from the native parts of the country, especially those far removed from towns. As a result, they were likely to find themselves, from time to time, subjected to insult and even persecution, an experience from which Wolfe had been partly protected as papal representative. Creagh, disheartened at the hostility he was experiencing in the north, determined to withdraw for a time to visit his relatives in Munster. Wolfe, pointing to the dangers involved, tried to dissuade him, but he insisted on going.

As Creagh’s friend and vicar-general, Wolfe travelled with him as far as Sligo. There on the advice of two of Wolfe's appointees, Andrew O'Crean, bishop of Elphin, and Donal O’Gallagher, bishop of Raphoe, who counselled against their venturing farther south, they split into two groups, going by different routes. On the way, Creagh was captured and detained for some weeks in a local castle. Transferred to Dublin, he was imprisoned there, despite 'his deeply ingrained loyalty to the queen,' on charges of treason and conspiring with O’Neill against the Crown. He was acquitted, but nevertheless sent to the Tower of London, where he died in late 1586 or early 1587. Wolfe, hearing of Creagh's capture, wrote from Limerick asking for advice. Part of his letter concerned his own financial problems. Creagh, in response, stated that he could do nothing with regard to Wolfe's creditors, but he recommended that through the intervention of some Catholic nobles, Wolfe make peace with Sir Henry Sidney, the viceroy. Wolfe decided to seek the intervention of Hugh O'Donnell.

On July 13, he journeyed north. On his arrival in Ulster, he found to his horror that MacArdle had spread a report that Wolfe had betrayed Creagh to the English, and that the calumny was widely accepted by the majority of nobles and religious. So prevalent was the rumour that Creagh called it a 'dangerous and diabolical fiction' in a letter to bishops in Ulster. Nonetheless, in Armagh, the libel was thrown in Wolfe's face before a crowd, and he was fortunate to escape with his life. O'Donnell, in due course, arranged a meeting for Wolfe with the viceroy at Carrickfergus. Wolfe found the viceroy friendly and accommodating, so much so that he requested an instrument of pardon in writing. This, he was assured, would be available in Dublin. Wolfe went to Dublin, only to find that Sidney had brought the request before the executive council, who had decreed that the pardon could be given only on condition that Wolfe first declared the Pope to be the anti-Christ and the Queen of England supreme head of the Church. He refused to make such a declaration, and was imprisoned at once in Dublin Castle. He lingered in noisome captivity for five years,

subjected to intermittent interrogation and torture, including being stripped naked and whipped with rods, and having his hair and beard torn out. Moreover, as he further informed Redmond O’Gallagher in his letter of 1568, the ‘heretics’ sought to blacken his reputation and authority by rumours and false accusations such as never crossed his mind even in dreams.55

Despite the rigours of his treatment in prison and the treachery of his capture, his letter displayed no hostility to the Queen’s temporal sovereignty. Over the five years various attempts were made to pay the jailer to release him. Pope Pius V and some Jesuits sent money, which did not arrive; and two hundred ducats were collected in Portugal, but the negotiations were bungled by the merchant who acted as intermediary. The latter was honest enough, however, to return the money. Edmund Daniel travelled over and back to Spain and Portugal in an effort to collect ransom money.56 He was captured as he returned to Ireland. In his possession authorities found a copy of Pius V’s bull Regnans in excelsis (1570), excommunicating Elizabeth; the copy was destined for Sir James FitzMaurice (FitzGerald), the idealistic leader of the southern Geraldines, Wolfe’s close friend, and a dedicated advocate of the overthrow of Elizabeth and the establishment of strong Roman religious authority. Daniel, charged with high treason, was first tortured and then hanged, drawn, and quartered. ‘He died,’ Wolfe wrote to Mercurian on 7 May 1574, ‘in the City of Cork on 25th of October 1572, for the Catholic Faith and in the Catholic Faith, to the great edification not only of the Catholics, but even of the heretics.57

Wolfe purchased his liberty from his jailer in September 1572 with money obtained from a merchant after Wolfe had assured him that he would be reimbursed in Lisbon. The merchant also provided enough money to cover Wolfe’s debts to Limerick merchants for supplying the necessities of life to Good and Daniel.58 How Wolfe spent the next year is not clear, but he was in considerable danger of recapture. Meanwhile, the rumour circulated that he had escaped by breaking parole: a self-serving explanation offered, perhaps, by the jailer to exonerate himself. As he sought passage to Spain or Portugal, Wolfe apparently devoted his time to preparing, if not actually writing until later, what became known as his Description of the Realm of Ireland. In it, he pointed out that he had been absolved from allegiance to Queen Elizabeth by the bull of Pius V, and that his motive in writing was ‘zeal for the honour of God, the salvation of souls in Ireland, and the rooting out of the Lutheran pest from that kingdom.’ Like his close friend, James FitzMaurice, he concluded that the preservation of the Catholic religion depended on the overthrow of Elizabeth with the assistance of Rome and Spain.

With this in mind, his Description assessed the country’s inhabitants, leaders, political and religious inclinations and geography – with particular reference to harbours, fortresses, and strategic potential. That he was amassing information while he was in prison, before the excommunication, is indicated by his statement that while in Dublin Castle ‘many a time I purchased with my own money permission to go in and see the munitions in the armoury, which I examined minutely, saw and tried repeatedly.’ He directed his message primarily to Philip II. He recommended that Don Juan of Austria be made king of Ireland; but if Philip wished to take the kingdom for himself, it was essential that he have as captains James FitzMaurice and Sir Thomas Stukely to reconcile others, secure peace and, if necessary, overcome the rebellious. On the size of the required invasion force, he added that ‘according to expert opinion four thousand soldiers would be sufficient to conquer the kingdom, but he would never advise sending less than twelve thousand exemplary and God-fearing men.59

56 Francis Borja to Diego de Acosta, Rome, 14 September 1568, in ARSI, Germ. 107, ff. 173r, Jorge Serrão to Mercurian, Almerina, 6 December 1573, Lus. 65, ff. 269v; Wolfe to id., Lisbon, 7 May 1574, Lus. 66, ff. 119-122; Ó Fionnagáin, Jesuit Missions, pp 25-8. In the spring of 1568, Pius V requested Philip II to write to Queen Elizabeth on behalf of Archbishop Cragg in prison in London and David Wolfe in Dublin. The appeal had little effect, see Lemon, Irish Prisoner of Conscience, pp 94f.
57 Wolfe to Mercurian, Lisbon, 7 May 1574, in ARSI, Lus. 66, ff. 119-122 (translation from Ronan, Reformation in Ireland, p. 419).
59 Cited from Begley’s more extensive summary in his Diocese of Limerick, ii, pp 41ff. and 49f.
When the document was presented to the Spanish monarch in 1574, Philip was sufficiently impressed to send a military expert, Diego Ortiz, to Ireland to investigate. His report, dated 24 June 1574, confirmed the findings of the Description and repeated with approval the proverb quoted by Wolfe: ‘He that England would win, let him with Ireland begin.’ The King’s reply in December was not altogether unfavourable: he presented Wolfe with a substantial sum of money for FitzMaurice, but hesitated to do anything more.60

But we have jumped ahead. Wolfe was not able to leave Ireland until 17 September, 1573. To obtain passage to Portugal, he was obliged to pay ‘danger money’, a sum far greater than that paid by other passengers. Even then, ‘it was not possible for me,’ Wolfe recorded, ‘to go on board until James FitzMaurice came in a well-armed galley to conduct me away from all danger to the Portuguese ship.’ ‘I went on board at 4 o’clock on the night of 17 September,’ he continued. ‘With me was a child, aged seven years and three months, FitzMaurice’s eldest son, whom I had baptized. Raising anchor at midnight, we left the country and after many dangers from storms and pirates arrived at Bayonne in Galicia on the Feast of St. Michael (29 September), to my great consolation on seeing the little lad and myself out of all danger.’61 ‘The little lad,’ through the intercession of Wolfe, was befriended by the Spanish ambassador to Portugal, Juan Borja (son of the late Jesuit general Francis Borja), who persuaded Philip to support the boy at the Jesuit college in Lisbon.62

Wolfe’s bailsmen, the merchant, accompanied him from Ireland. After a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, Wolfe headed for Lisbon to collect the ransom, but only after the merchant had required him to swear on oath before the Jesuit superior at Oporto that he would not flee or go away until full satisfaction was paid. At Lisbon, after five years in prison and the hardships endured there, his Jesuit brethren were taken aback by his appearance. Although he was approximately forty-five years of age, he looked as if he had passed his sixtieth year! He related that he suffered continual back pains, that his bones were brittle, and that he could not kneel or sit without leaning on something.63 Their compassion changed to embarrassment when Wolfe mentioned the five hundred scudi to be given immediately to the merchant who had ransomed him and paid his debts. Questions were raised about payment. The merchant, meanwhile, turned up, protested publicly about Jesuit bad faith, and demanded that Wolfe return to Ireland with him. Wolfe went begging on the advice of some Portuguese Jesuits, Jorge Serrão, the provincial, produced 100 scudi under pressure, and promised a further hundred, and whatever else could be obtained from the General. He suggested that Mercurian approach the Pope for aid, since Wolfe had been on a papal mission, and also request assistance from other provinces.64 Wolfe’s problems took an unexpected but more serious turn when Thebold, an Irishman at the university of Coimbra, informed Manuel Rodrigues, the rector, that it was commonly reported in Ireland that Father David had had carnal knowledge of a niece and from this there had been offspring and that when he served as Nuncio he took bribes and he secured his release by swearing to obey the Queen’s laws.65

These charges were transmitted by cipher to the General, who decided to defer payment of the ransom money until he could investigate them. A second rumour, that the ransom money was intended for the purchase of munitions for Ireland, and a report from Ireland that

60 Ronan, Reformation in Ireland, pp 499-501.
62 Ó Fionnagáin, Jesuit Missions, p. 32.
64 Wolfe to Mercurian, Lisbon, 12 December 1573, in ARSI, Lus. 66, ff. 286-288; Serrão to Mercurian, Lisbon, 9 December 1573, Lus. 65, ff. 277v; see McCoog, Society of Jesus, pp 94-6.
65 Cited in Ó Fionnagáin, Jesuit Missions, p. 32.
Wolfe had broken parole to escape, were widely believed. On top of all this, when Alessandro Vallareglio, the Portuguese Jesuit procurator for the missions, heard that Wolfe was writing a book encouraging Spain to conquer Ireland, he indignantly demanded that Wolfe abandon the work. Meddling in matters of war and politics was alien to our profession, he argued, but Wolfe remained unimpressed. Vallareglio wrote to Mercurian on 23 March and 1 June 1574, asking the General to withdraw Wolfe from Portugal. Wolfe continued seeking money to pay the persistent merchant. On 7 May he wrote again to the General, pointing out that the Portuguese provincial threatened to have the merchant banished from the kingdom if he continued to plague the Society. Visibly upset, Wolfe declared that the merchant was an honest man seeking what was rightly his, and that such abuse and failure to keep their word did not reflect well on the order. Vallareglio acknowledged Wolfe’s indignation: he frequently heard Wolfe say that he would rather be in chains in Dublin again than suffer such treatment from his Portuguese brothers. The treatment of Wolfe troubled and grieved many Portuguese Jesuits, as Francisco de Varia declared in a letter. When he was in Ireland, the fathers venerated him; now they treated him in a way unbecoming to one who had so suffered. He now understood why few foreign Jesuits came to the province. And those who did generally left dissatisfied and dejected.

Mercurian was a cautious man who wished to keep his subjects free from any meddling in matters of war and politics, but the Society took a special vow of obedience to the pope; and in a world that presumed the unity of church and state and acknowledged the papal power to excommunicate and depose, it was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to separate religion from politics, all the more so when dealing with a militant pontiff like Gregory XIII. Thus, when the Pope supported Nicholas Sander, an Englishman who worked with English exiles in Flanders and who rallied forces of rebellion in Ireland, Mercurian in turn provided enthusiastic assistance. In a letter on 29 August 1573, he called Sander a true pillar of the Church, and requested all Jesuits at Philip’s court to assist him. In a personal letter to Sander on 8 February 1574, he prayed that Sander’s hopes for England would be realized and offered his and other Jesuits’ assistance in whatever way they could. Not surprisingly, therefore, he sympathized with Wolfe’s views and predicament and trusted his behaviour. Hence, when a priest was sought to work in Sanlucar de Barrameda, Mercurian recommended Wolfe, describing him as a man of virtue; and in replying to Vallareglio on 25 July 1574, he asked the procurator to do all he could to console Wolfe.

At the same time, he had to deal with the accusations made against Wolfe. On 11 August, 1574, Mercurian asked Wolfe to answer these three questions: (1) Did he commit any exterior act against the faith in Ireland by promising to follow the Queen’s religious settlement? (2) Whose son was the young boy that he brought to Portugal? (3) What was the true amount of the ransom and was anything to be diverted to support the boy or to buy arms? Wolfe wished to speak with the General personally, but was dissuaded by Jorge Serrão. Consequently, he sent his responses through the provincial. He claimed that he had never denied the faith either interiorly or by an exterior act; that he had no child, and never fell carnally; that his explanation of the ransom was the truth, the amount was as specified and not inflated in any way. Following these responses, the provincial informed Mercurian that most of the ransom had been paid, and the merchant had promised the rest within three months. None of the money, however, seems to have come

65 Alessandro Vallareglio to Mercurian, Lisbon, 23 March 1574, in ARSI, Lus. 66, ff. 91-93.
66 Lisbon, 23 March 1574, in ARSI, Lus. 66, ff. 91-93; Lisbon, 1 June 1574, Lus. 66, ff. 154-156; See McCooch, Society of Jesus, pp 96.
67 Wolfe to Mercurian, Lisbon, 7 May 1574, in ARSI, Lus. 66, ff. 119-122.
68 Vallareglio to Mercurian, Lisbon, 1 June 1574, in ARSI, Lus. 66, ff. 154-156.
69 Francisco de Varia to Mercurian, Lisbon, 17 October 1574, in ARSI, Lus. 66, ff. 281.
70 Mercurian to Francesco de Parres, Rome, 29 August 1573, in ARSI, Tolet. I, f.6v.
71 Mercurian to Sander, Rome, 8 February 1574, in ARSI, Tolet. I, f.7v.
72 Mercurian to Pedro Bernal, 2 May 1574, in ARSI, Baet. 1a, ff. 13-14; Mercurian to Vallareglio, Rome, 25 July 1574, in ARSI, Baet. 1a, ff. 13-14; Mercurian to Vallareglio, Rome, 25 July 1574, Epp. N.N. 1, ff.4-5.
73 Mercurian to Wolfe, Rome, 11 August 1574, in ARSI, Epp. N.N. 1, ff.6-7. See McCooch, Society of Jesus, p. 96.
from the Portuguese Province.\textsuperscript{75}

Towards the end of October, Wolfe set out for Sanlúcar de Barrameda, to which he was assigned by the General. On the way, however, either on his own accord or at the instigation of Juan Borja, he changed direction and went to Madrid.\textsuperscript{76} On 20 December 1574, the apostolic nuncio to Spain, Nicholas Ormanetto, wrote from Madrid to Tolomeo Galli Cardinal Como that Wolfe had just arrived at court to ask Philip II to aid FitzMaurice in his revolt against Elizabeth. FitzMaurice had even offered his son as a hostage. Wolfe wished to continue his journey to Sanlúcar, but Ormanetto persuaded him to remain in Madrid, saying that King Philip II had been impressed by Wolfe's report (presumably the Description) and promised assistance.\textsuperscript{77} Wolfe remained, and consistently received encouragement from Spanish Jesuits at the court. On 14 March 1575, Gonzalo Meléndez, Jesuit procurator at Philip's court, reported that he had supported Wolfe's petition and had helped him gain admission to the King, who had been impressed by what he heard. After the audience, Philip suggested that Wolfe return to Portugal to work for the enterprise, and the procurator agreed.\textsuperscript{78} The Portuguese Jesuits were not enthusiastic to see Wolfe return. Their own national feeling was stirred by suggestions of Spanish interference.\textsuperscript{79}

In March 1575, after five months in Madrid, Wolfe arrived in Évora with a long beard and announced that he had come by order of King Philip to procure arms in Lisbon for a certain lord in Ireland. He hoped to obtain the approval of the Portuguese king Sebastian and his great-uncle Cardinal Henry. Jesuits at Évora questioned Wolfe's story of a mission from King Philip, disapproved of his layman's beard and his manner of dealing with merchants. They sought to discourage him from journeying on to Lisbon. Unmoved, he set off for the capital. Upon his arrival, the new provincial, Manuel Rodrigues, convened a consultation. His provincial advisors unanimously agreed that Wolfe's business in Lisbon, procuring munitions, was unbecoming a religious man. Moreover, it was impertinent and perhaps an insult to national honour to collect arms in Portugal for use in Ireland when their King was at peace with the Queen of England.\textsuperscript{80} The provincial ordered Wolfe to remain inside the house until he had received news from Madrid of his conduct there. That was not long in coming. The nuncio in Lisbon, Giovanni Andrea Caligari, informed Cardinal Como on 17 April 1575, that the Portuguese Jesuits were preventing an Irishman 'from executing his holy work' namely, 'Father David ... who brought 3,000 scudi from the Catholic King to bring to the Catholics of Ireland' and also came recommended by the nuncio at Madrid.\textsuperscript{81} Mercurian, meantime, besieged by letters from Portugal, wrote to Wolfe from Rome on 29 April 1575, in somewhat ambiguous terms. He hoped that Wolfe's return to Ireland would bring great benefits; but he exhorted him to act 'according to the spirit of the Society,' meaning that he was to be circumspect in everything and not meddle in matters alien to the spirit of the order's Institute.\textsuperscript{82}

From Madrid Francesco de Porres informed Rodrigues that Wolfe was truly engaged on the business of King Philip; detecting a strong hint of awkward consequences, Rodrigues decided not to hinder Wolfe any further. From a higher source there came a stronger reminder: Gregory

\textsuperscript{75} Jorge Serrão to Mercurian, Lisbon, 31 October 1574, in ARSI, Lus. 66, ff. 296'-297'; McCoog, Society of Jesus, p. 97. Ô Fionnagáin, Jesuit Missions, p. 33.

\textsuperscript{76} Jorge Serrão to Mercurian, Lisbon, 31 October 1574, in ARSI, Lus. 66, ff. 296'-297; Manuel Rodrigues to Mercurian, Coimbra, 5 August 1575, Lus. 66, ff. 150'-151'; see McCoog, Society of Jesus, pp 97f.


\textsuperscript{78} Meléndez to Mercurian, Madrid, 14 March 1575, in ARSI, Hisp. 123, f. 206f.

\textsuperscript{79} Tense relations between Portuguese and Spanish Jesuits play a role in at least two articles in The Mercurian Project: Ronald Cueto, 'The Society of Jesus, Court Politics and the Portuguese Succession,' and Nano da Silva Gonçalves, S.J., 'The Jesuits in Portugal during the Genealogical Period of Everard Mercurian.'

\textsuperscript{80} Rodrigues to Mercurian, Coimbra, 5 August 1575, in ARSI, Lus. 67, ff. 150'-151'. See also McCoog, Society of Jesus, pp 111f.

\textsuperscript{81} Cited in Ô Fionnagáin, Jesuit Missions, p. 34. See Caligari's earlier letter to Galli, Évora, 21 March 1575, in Rigg (ed.), Calendar of State Papers (1572-78), pp 198f., in which he complained about the influence of Portuguese Jesuits over King Sebastian.

\textsuperscript{82} Mercurian to Wolfe, Rome, 29 April 1575, in ARSI, Toxl. 1, ff. 45'-46'.
XIII made his displeasure known to the General, who in turn spoke sharply to the superiors of the Portuguese Province.83

Early in the summer of 1575, Wolfe showed Rodrigues a letter in which FitzMaurice asked Wolfe to meet him at a French port whence they would go together to Rome.84 Subsequently news reached Lisbon that Wolfe was at St. Malo with FitzMaurice, who had come from the French court.85 He and FitzMaurice decided that Wolfe should go to Rome via Lisbon. On his way to Lisbon, Wolfe met at Madrid the newly elected bishop of Cork, Edmund Tanner (a former Jesuit), Charles Lea, S.J., and Jesuit scholastics Thomas Field and John Yates, an Englishman.86 All five travelled together to Lisbon, where they arrived on 8 September. Wolfe sailed for Italy at the end of October.87 The rest of his career is obscure.

Wolfe spent 1576 in Rome, where he presumably met with the General. FitzMaurice joined him there, and the two left Rome towards the end of February 1577. At this point Wolfe was no longer a Jesuit, but he did not inform his devout and close friend of his departure from the Society. At Lisbon, however, the behaviour of the Portuguese Jesuits towards Wolfe so scandalized and upset FitzMaurice that he asked Mercurian why Wolfe was ‘almost hated and detested by all the fathers of your Society.’88 Mercurian’s reply is not extant; but when FitzMaurice subsequently wrote to express his gratitude for all the Society had done for him and to request that some Jesuits accompany him on his Irish expedition, he inquired if the Society would be offended if he remained friendly with Wolfe. In his gracious reply on 28 June 1578, Mercurian hoped that the light of Catholicism would advance in Ireland, but regretted he could not approve sending more Jesuits because of conditions there. Regarding Wolfe, Mercurian wished FitzMaurice to continue to use his services, and it would be pleasing to the Society if Wolfe could be helpful to him.89

On 3 June 1578, Wolfe was living in Lisbon with papal financial assistance (‘sustentatus a Summo Pontifici’).90 On 23 July 1579, Wolfe made his final appearance in Jesuit records: the Portuguese procurator, Gabriel Alfonso, wrote of a contribution to the ransom of Father David, ‘who was of the Society.’91 This comment is the earliest evidence that David Wolfe had ceased to be a Jesuit. Time and place of his death remain unknown. It may be significant that he was not named as one of the ecclesiastics who accompanied FitzMaurice to Ireland on his ill-fated expedition on 17 June 1579.92 But given his state of health, he may not have been able to go, and may have ended his days in Portugal supported, one hopes, by alms from the Pope.

There remains the major question: Did David Wolfe leave the Society at his own request? Or was he expelled? And if he had been expelled, why? Intensive exploration of the Society’s archives by Irish Jesuit historians over the years concluded that the sole contemporary evidence of Wolfe’s severance from the Society was the brief reference by Gabriel Alfonso. Later historians, Brodrick for one, claimed Wolfe had been dismissed, but provided no evidence for their claim. Manuel da Costa blamed this interpretation on the seventeenth-century Jesuit historian Francisco Sacchini, who, according to Costa, referred to Wolfe as ‘dimissus’.93 Costa, however, did not substantiate his assertion with any references to Sacchini’s history.94 But dimissus does not necessarily mean

83 See McCoog, Society of Jesus, pp 112f., especially the notes, and Ó Fionnagáin, Jesuit Missions, p. 34.
84 Rodrigues to Mercurian, Coimbra, 5 August 1575, in ARSI, Lus. 67, ff. 159-157.
87 Ó Fionnagáin, Jesuit Missions, pp 34f., McCoog, Society of Jesus, p. 113.
88 FitzMaurice to Mercurian, Lisbon, 1 October 1577, in ARSI, Lus. 66, f. 187.
89 Mercurian to FitzMaurice, Rome, 28 June 1578, in Hogan, Ibernia Ignata, pp 24f.
90 Ibid., p. 24.
91 ARSI, Lus. 68, ff. 153-154. See Ó Fionnagáin, Jesuit Missions, p. 35.
93 Costa, ‘Last Years’, p. 141.
94 Fr. T. McCoog has searched Sacchini’s history without finding any such claim. The complete text of Sacchini’s evaluation of Wolfe reads: ‘Feliciter si talibus eordinis conveniens attesteretur. Nam demum pro solitudinem & impatiendum, remissa paulatim cura sui, utilem multis, quaesumus ut homo persit. ut segregandas ab Societate fuerit’ (Historia Societatis Iesu: Pars seconda die Lutinas [Antwerp, 1620], 3196, no. 149). See Hogan, Ibernia Ignata, p. 26, where he inaccurately cites the text.
that he was dismissed in the sense of expelled from the Society. Mercurian's positive concern for him could be interpreted as proof that he was not expelled. *Dimissus* could also mean that Wolfe asked for and obtained a dispensation from his vows as a religious, perhaps because he could no longer live a community life, and because, committed as he was to the cause of FitzMaurice as the means of preserving the faith in Ireland, his political and military negotiations were necessarily embarrassing to the Society and an occasion of friction.

As to charges made against him as grounds for expulsion, the findings of the Portuguese historian Manuel da Costa merit respect. He had an encyclopaedic knowledge of sixteenth-century Portuguese Jesuit history and an intimate knowledge of the history of Ireland for the same period. He devoted much time and study to Wolfe's final years, and discussed his findings with the knowledgeable and reliable Irish Jesuit historian John MacErlean. Costa concluded: "From the documents I have produced I can only say that the charges made against Wolfe in Coimbra are far from proved. Not only have we no convincing argument (on the contrary Wolfe denied them outright) but his enemies would have used them as a weapon had they been notorious in Ireland as was alleged by the student." Costa, however, does leave open the possibility that Wolfe's involvement with FitzMaurice may have been a factor if he had been expelled: "[Wolfe] showed little concern when Alexander Vallaregro pointed out to him the danger to his vocation in dealing with matters of war; and he behaved as a man who was more intent on military undertakings than on anything else."

With Wolfe's departure from Ireland in 1573, Robert Rochford was the only Jesuit left on the island, Rochford, a Wexford man, had crossed to Ireland from France in the autumn of 1572 and opened a small school in his home town. In November 1576 Charles Lea, who came from a medical family and entered the Society in 1570, arrived with Bishop Tanner. Tanner told Mercurian of attempts made to capture or even kill him, and of a general persecution that prevented many people from coming to him. He had, nevertheless, reconciled many noblemen and citizens of different cities. Frs. Charles Lea and Robert Rochford were, he claimed, 'spreading everywhere the good name of the Society of Jesus' and were conducting 'not without molestation,' a school at Youghal with very beneficial results. Tanner, who administered the sacraments for nearly three years as he travelled around the island 'secretly for fear of persecution' and who left a sombre written account of the state of religion, died exhausted in the diocese of Ossory on 4 June 1579.

In 1579 FitzMaurice launched his expedition without any assistance from His Most Catholic Majesty Philip II, believing that 'the salvation of Ireland and England, not to say of Scotland, Flanders, and France,' hung upon the success of his venture, since it was 'from England that the great evil of schism was propagated into all the neighboring countries.' His pitiful small force, assisted only by Pope Gregory XIII, had no chance. FitzMaurice was killed in a petty skirmish by his wife's cousin within months of his arrival. Another paper commissary, Nicholas Sander, sought to rally forces against the 'pretended queen'; but, without strong Spanish aid, such as Wolfe had suggested, the Irish chiefs were not prepared to rise. By 1583 it was all over, and Munster a desert.

95 Costa, 'Last Years,' p. 141 f.
96 Ibid., p. 142.
97 William Good to Francia Borja, Louvain, 1 November 1572, in IRSI, Germ., 141, ff. 1-4.
98 Tanner to Mercurian, Ross, October 11, 1577 in Hogan, *Pernia Ignatiana*, p. 23.
99 Ibid., p. 25.
The second Jesuit mission inaugurated by Wolfe survived for three more years in the persons of Robert Rochford and Charles Lea. Rochford, like Wolfe with FitzMaurice, identified with another idealistic figure, James Eustace Viscount Baltinglass who rose out against the 'pretended queen' in July 1580. Baltinglass's revolt caught the English government off guard. Not expecting trouble from within the Pale, the English government was surprised by the support Baltinglass received. Indeed, it was even rumoured that the revolt of Turlough Luineach O'Neill, lord of Tyrone and Shane O'Neill's successor, would follow. It did not, and the rebellion was crushed in late 1580. Baltinglass, accompanied by Rochford, escaped from Wexford early in 1581. Matthew Lambert, a baker, and five sailors were executed in Wexford for aiding the fugitives: they were beatified in 1992. In 1588 Rochford was one of twenty-three Jesuits who sailed with the Spanish Armada, and one of the three who did not return. Charles Lea was the sole survivor of the second Jesuit mission. Arrested in 1580, he spent four years in prison, where he used his hereditary medical skill to alleviate the intense sufferings of Archbishop Dermot O'Hurley (executed in 1584 and beatified in 1992), a victim of torture. After his release, Lea lived in quiet seclusion in Ireland until his death in 1586.

With Lea's death the second mission came to an end. But before the close of the Mercian generalate, many young Irishmen were attending continental universities. Because of increased pressure at English universities and at the Inns of Court to conform to the Established Church, from the 1570s many families sent their sons to Louvain and other universities. There they encountered the new religious orders, including the Society of Jesus. Eventually some entered the Society and later initiated the third Jesuit mission to Ireland. Through the establishment of Irish seminaries in the Iberian peninsula, the next generation continued Wolfe's work of raising standards among Irish Catholic clergy. Primarily because of the Counter-Reformation zeal and educational training imbued there, these clerics enabled Ireland, more so than any other country, to defy the Augsburg principle of cuius regio eius religio.

This unique occurrence, it may be said in conclusion, has moved historians in recent years to re-examine the question why the Protestant Reformation failed in Ireland and the Counter-Reformation succeeded. A consideration of their deliberations clarifies both the background to Wolfe's career, and the importance of the link which he helped to forge between the native culture and tradition, and Catholicism and the papacy. From these recent studies — and, indeed, from earlier ones - it seems clear that there is no inherent reason for Protestantism's failure. General ignorance in religious matters was such that many seemed unaware of the articles of the Creed and unacquainted with basic prayers such as the 'Our Father.' Under Henry VIII there was little organised opposition to the Oath of Supremacy or to the suppression of shrines and monasteries. Admittedly, these reforms were applied only spasmodically and over a limited area, but the virtual absence of opposition encouraged the reformers.

On the other hand, the absence of hostility to traditional religion among the Irish and the popularity of the Observant Orders discouraged reformers. By the time Queen Mary took the throne in 1553, followed by the reassertion of Catholic teaching and the demonstration that reform was reversible, the Protestant reform had made relatively little headway. Her reign had scarcely ended when the arrival of Wolfe and then the return of Archbishop Creagh gave new impetus to a Catholic Reformation already initiated by Observant mendicants. This reform,
unlike its Protestant counterpart, was linked to the culture and language of the native population and not identified with Anglicization and a foreign government. Indeed, with the exception of a Protestant catechism published in Irish in Dublin in 1571, efforts to promote the Reformation were in English. According to Alan Ford, ‘Rather than changing the nature of the English reformation to suit its Irish context, the Irish setting was to be transformed to meet English requirements’.

So the Irish would be compelled to adopt the English language, mores, and theology. The excommunication of Elizabeth, the idealistic venture of FitzMaurice with the support of a paper legate, Nicholas Sander, the savage repression and expropriation of land carried out by a frightened Elizabethan government who considered Ireland a flank vulnerable to Spanish attack - all of these factors strengthened Catholic allegiance. English policy alienated many of the Old English as well as native chieftains. Soon burghers of the main port towns, distrusted by the Elizabethan government and thus ignored for prominent administrative positions, joined them. By the mid-1590s there was a general repudiation of any reformation associated with the English Crown. Support for the Catholic Counter-Reformation, by comparison, was strong. But this must not be understood as widespread interest in and application of Tridentine legislation, but as opposition to royal supremacy in ecclesiastical affairs.

Political, pedagogical, and financial links with Spain promoted Catholic reform in Ireland. James Archer, who had imbibed the militant spirit of the Counter-Reformation in Louvain before he joined the Jesuits, spearheaded the third Jesuit mission to Ireland. As a Jesuit, Archer served as chaplain to Irish soldiers in the Spanish army in the Netherlands and as first rector of the Irish College in Salamanca. Like Wolfe, Archer was hounded by government forces after his arrival in Ireland in 1596. He sought shelter with the supporters of Hugh O’Neill, earl of Tyrone, and thus became associated with opponents of the English government partially for religious reasons. Subsequently he served as prefect of all Irish colleges in the Iberian peninsula, thereby maintaining Wolfe’s concern for education, especially of the clergy.

With hindsight, the Protestant Reformation had failed by 1640 because of its identification with Anglicization, privilege, oppression, and the expropriation of land, which became especially severe after 1587. Catholicism, for its part, remained linked to an amalgam of native culture and tradition, and continued the strong missionary spirit of the seminary priest to which Spenser witnessed before the close of the sixteenth century.

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