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THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OF THE IRISH MINT, 1460-c. 1506

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ABSTRACT

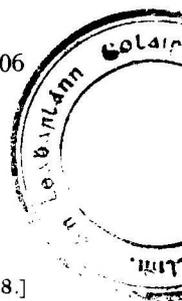
Correlation of archæological evidence with that from administrative records provides a comparatively large body of information about the operation of the Irish mint under the Yorkists and Henry VII. This period was one in which the king's control over his Irish lordship was particularly slack and when, in contrast with previous policy, a distinctive coinage was minted especially for the lordship to a lower standard than that in England. The mint's survival depended on the maintenance of a difficult balance between the economic interests of the colonists and the king's fear that lack of proper control might undermine confidence generally in the royal mint or, worse, constitute a political risk. The relations between the king and his Irish government with regard to this one aspect of administration thus provide a useful guide to Anglo-Irish relations more generally in the late medieval period.

Throughout the middle ages, kings of England authorised the occasional issue of a coinage of distinctive type in their Irish lordship. In the thirteenth century the primary function of these issues seems to have been to supplement the output of the English mints and to help pay for the king's French wars, rather than to serve the needs of the colony, and indeed in Edward I's time they were put out frequently and on a large scale.¹ After 1315, when the lordship ceased to be a source of profit to the crown, an Irish mint operated only for short periods in 1339 and 1425 to provide a supply of small change for circulation in Ireland. Although these Irish coinages were often of distinctive type, after 1204 they were always minted to the English standard: from 1460 for a period of nearly half a century, however, the Irish mint kept up a comparatively continuous flow of small coinage for the lordship which was not only of distinctive type but was usually between a quarter and a third lighter in weight than its English counter-

¹ See Michael Dolley and W. A. Seaby, *Anglo-Irish coins: John-Edward III, Ulster Museum, Belfast* (Sylloge of coins of the British Isles, C [I], pt. 1, London, 1968); Michael Dolley, "The Irish mints of Edward I" in *R.I.A. Proc.*, lxvi, C, no. 3 (1968), pp. 235-97.

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In connection with this study, I have relied on Michael Dolley, *Medieval Anglo-Irish coins* (London, 1972), concerning matters of purely numismatic interest, although I have not generally thought it necessary to cite it. References to material used follow T. W. Moody, *Rules for contributors to Irish Historical Studies* (revised ed., Dublin, 1968; 2nd revised ed., 1975). I have to thank Professor Dolley and Mr Colm Gallagher for answering my queries about the coinage.



part. Towards the end of Henry VII's reign the mint was again abandoned and was only resurrected in 1548, when the production of an essentially military coinage for the payment of the English garrison in Ireland was temporarily transferred to Dublin.

Control of the coinage was one aspect of their regality which kings of England were reluctant to delegate, and this probably explains the absence of an Irish mint throughout most of the later middle ages. There is no difficulty in accounting for its re-establishment in 1460: Richard, duke of York, in assenting to the act for the coinage as king's lieutenant, sacrificed the king's interests for the political support of the Anglo-Irish; and the economic justification for a mint had existed since the fourteenth century. What is much less clear is why, if the crown objected to an Irish mint, and particularly on the terms specified by the act of 1460, the mint should have continued in operation into the sixteenth century.

In a summary of the more important documentary evidence some forty-five years ago, it was suggested that the mint was abandoned because the eighth earl of Kildare lost interest in it.² This suggestion is, as will be shown, probably not very wide of the mark, but it ignores the question of the relationship between royal distrust of a separate Irish coinage and the support for such a coinage in Ireland between 1460 and 1506. A considerable amount of work has more recently been done on the numismatic evidence, in reconstructing the sequence of issues and the denominations coined;³ but although we know what coins were produced, when, and where, we are no nearer to understanding why they were produced. This paper seeks to answer the latter question, and also contends that the explanation for the survival of the Irish mint under the Yorkists and Henry VII lies in a struggle between the king and his Irish council over its control. The documentary evidence for the operation of the mint is disappointingly slight, but (and this must serve as a justification for burdening the argument with so much technical detail) it can be amplified by a greater attention to the chronology of the issues and to individual responsibility for them. The mint was clearly a source of friction between the king and an Irish administration which was usually weak, often at odds with the king, and occasionally in revolt against him. The manipulation of the mint in this wider struggle between king and council is thus an instructive pointer to the relative strengths of the London and Dublin governments.

The economic explanation for the reintroduction of an Anglo-Irish coinage was, in the words of the statute's preamble, that Irish merchants were accustomed "de aler annuelment en le dit reyaume [of England] preignaunt ousque ceux grauntz summez dargent de temps en temps par eaux emploiez en mesme le reyaume sur tielx merchaundisez que ils porterount en la dit terre [of Ireland]"

² D. B. Quinn, "Tudor rule in Ireland in the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1933), pp. 619-26.

³ Summarised in Dolley, *Medieval Anglo-Irish coins*, pp. 20-36.

with the result that the land was "destitute dascun ore ou argent".⁴ As was discovered in 1339 and 1425 when a small output had been authorised, the mere transfer of a mint to Ireland was no answer to the tendency of merchants and absentee landlords to export the coinage. In 1460, however, the scheme was devised of revaluing English and foreign coins in the lordship to run above their face value and of introducing an Irish coinage of distinctive design, weighing only three-quarters that of its English counterpart, but with the same nominal value. These differences provided an effective deterrent to the export of the Irish coin, while at the same time the premium on foreign coinages attracted gold and silver into the lordship.

Although the profits of the mint might help to mitigate the financial drain on the English exchequer for the lordship's defence, the terms of the act of 1460 were in normal circumstances quite unacceptable to the king. Royal policy on coinage accepted that, provided its activities were under proper control, an Irish mint was desirable from time to time for small coin, and even permitted distinctive Irish types; but the coins had always to be of the same weight and fineness as their English counterparts: the mounting complaints of the colonists at the dearth of coinage as, following political decline, the balance of trade turned against them were otherwise ignored. In 1460, however, the political revaluation of the lordship which followed its embroilment in the Wars of the Roses temporarily altered the balance between the needs of the king and those of the lordship.

Towards the end of 1459, the arrival of a "grete lorde of the kynges blode" for which the colonists had been agitating for years,⁵ transformed the political climate. Richard duke of York had been lieutenant of Ireland almost continuously since 1447 but, with the exception of one year, he had acted by deputy throughout the period. When, in July 1449, he took up office in person however, his prestige as heir-apparent to the throne and as a comparatively successful lieutenant of France until his recall in 1445 had sufficiently dazzled the Anglo-Irish magnates and Irish chiefs as to create the sort of atmosphere in which a political initiative, aimed at solving the problem of Ireland, might have succeeded. In the event, Richard had lacked the financial resources for this, and in the 1450s "lack of governance" and the feuds among the magnates had led to a further deterioration in the strength of the colony. Thus, although he was a fugitive from the king, Richard's return in 1459 was regarded hopefully in the lordship as a presage of strong rule: and since he was desperate for support, he was also prepared to be conciliatory and to devise a common programme of reform. The upshot was the parliament which met at Drogheda on 8 February. It proceeded to assert that "la terre dirland est & a toutz foitz ad este corporate de luy mesme de lez auncientz leies & custumez vse en le mesme", accepting only such English

⁴ Parliament roll, 38 Henry VI, c. 11 (*Stat. Ire., Hen. VI*, p. 662). The act also claimed that whereas previously governors of Ireland had been subsidised heavily by the English exchequer, thus counterbalancing the export of currency by merchants and landlords, lately such subsidies had not been paid. Imports of coin to the lordship in this way had in any case declined steadily since the peak of the later fourteenth century.

⁵ Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 369. For York's lieutenantancy, see Edmund Curtis, "Richard, duke of York, as viceroy of Ireland, 1447-60" in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, lxii (1932), pp. 158-86.

statutes as were ratified by Irish parliaments or great councils.⁶ Since the king had a separate seal for Ireland, and a constable and marshal there by which appeals of treason might be tried, no one ought to be made to answer any appeal or other matter outside the land save under the seal of Ireland: and since the king was absent from Ireland and had appointed the duke as his lieutenant for ten years, parliament ratified York's patent and gave him the protection of the law of treason. So far as the colonists were concerned the main sequel to this statement of principle was contained in chapter 11, which authorised a separate coinage for Ireland on the grounds that the duchies of Normandy and Guienne, when under the English crown, had also had their own coinages.

The constitutional difficulty of the relationship between the realm and the lordship was thus disposed of by asserting that the two were independent of each other but under the same crown; the practical difficulties of administering a mint in Dublin were perhaps more serious, however. In particular the uncertainty in Ireland about the outcome of the dynastic struggle in England led to the first issue of the Irish mint being regally anonymous, and the issue was preceded by a series of conflicting appointments to the office of master of the mint. By patent dated 8 December 1460 Thomas Barby, merchant, was appointed during good behaviour, and this appointment was confirmed by patent of 15 March in the name of Edward IV.⁷ Barby's patents were presumably under the Irish great seal and attested by the earl of Kildare, whom York had left as his deputy on returning to England the previous October and who was elected justiciar by the Irish council when news arrived of York's death on 31 December.⁸ In England, however, Germain Lynch was appointed for life by patent of 1 February 1461 and this was confirmed by Edward on 6 August.⁹ Although all the appointments were made for the Yorkists, Barby remained in office: the terms of Lynch's patent granted him almost all the profits of the mint, so perhaps Kildare chose to ignore the king's grant on the pretext that it was under the English great seal contrary to statute and confirmed Barby instead.¹⁰ Barby later accounted at the exchequer for £221 15s. 0d., two-thirds of the profit of 6½d. per ounce upon his coinage up to 3 February 1463.¹¹

⁶ Parliament roll, 38 Henry VI, cc 4-6, 11 (*Stat. Ire., Hen. VI*, pp. 640-46, 660-66).

⁷ Pipe roll, 2 Edward IV (R.I.A., MS 12 D 10, p. 199; N.L.I., MS 761, p. 324).

⁸ F. M. Powicke and E. B. Fryde (ed.), *Handbook of British chronology* (2nd ed., London, 1961), p. 154.

⁹ *Cal. pat. rolls, 1452-61*, p. 643; *ibid.*, 1461-7, p. 40. Lynch's first patent was in the name of Henry VI, but the king was still at that time under the control of the Yorkist lords.

¹⁰ It is quite likely that Kildare knew nothing of Lynch's first patent, and Barby's grant would in any case require confirmation because Kildare was no longer deputy to York for Henry VI but justiciar to Edward IV: the Pipe roll extracts state that he was "confirmed by Edward 4 from 15 March 39 Hen. VI" (*sic*), which suggests that the Irish administration remained uncertain about the chronology of events in England. Lynch's patent would also lapse, but after August 1461 the only alternative explanation for his failure to take office is that Lynch did not choose to exhibit his patent, and this does not seem likely. Lynch's patent stipulated groats of 48 grains instead of the 45 grains required by statute: he was to coin 120 groats to the pound silver with smaller denominations *pro rata*, paying 114 for the silver and accounting for 1 before the governor's nominee.

¹¹ R.I.A., MS 12 D 10, p. 199; N.L.I., MS 761, p. 324. In addition, there was a profit of £16 12s. 1d. on the "Patricks". The statute of 1460 stipulated payment of 3s. in new groats per ounce of silver for coining, so that if Barby coined groats of 45 grains, the king's profit should have been 6¾d. per ounce. Barby's account, therefore, is fair evidence, making due allowance for medieval arithmetic, of adherence in principle to the stipulated standard of 45 grains.

The existence of Barby's patent (which has not been generally remarked) helps to explain the regal anonymity of the crown groats, as the earliest issue is known. Despite the fact that Edward IV was initially in an extremely weak position it would have been odd if Lynch, at least after his confirmation by the new king, had not struck coins in Edward's name; whereas Barby had probably struck the dies for the coinage in the period of extreme uncertainty ending with the Yorkist victory at Towton on 29 March.¹² The crown groats must have been discontinued with Barby's supersession on 3 February 1463, and most probably the previous October.¹³ With regard to the denominations of the issue, the survival of crown groats and pennies accords with the statute which stipulated groats, pennies and silver half-farthings named "Patricks". No silver half-farthings have survived however, so it seems likely that none were minted; but Barby's account shows that the "Patricks" minted in billon and thought to be of 1463 were in fact his responsibility and also, as the surviving examples suggest, that all three were minted exclusively at Dublin.¹⁴

By the end of 1463 Lynch had succeeded in getting his patent recognised. There is no doubt that the crown groats with the legend "Edwardus dei gratia, dominus Hibernie" on the obverse, and on the reverse "Posui deum adiutorem meum" (the normal legends for Irish coinage throughout the period) were his work. The issue was authorised by a statute of 1463, probably passed after parliament's adjournment to Waterford on 14 November, and examples survive from the Waterford and Dublin mints. This act confirmed Lynch's patent of August 1461 and allowed him to strike coins additionally at Waterford and Limerick.¹⁵ Already in October 1462 Lynch had been able to get a proviso inserted in an act authorising the minting of farthings in Dublin castle, though it looks as if Barby was responsible for these and a small issue (to judge by their scarcity) of groats and pence with the king's title restored. These have for their obverse and reverse types respectively a rose and a cross and a sun in splendour. There is no documentary evidence for the groats and pence but the fact that they survive only from the Dublin mint and differ from the half-groats and "Salvator" farthings which Lynch was empowered to mint and which have also survived suggests that they and the farthings were minted by Barby between October

¹² For the old view, see for example, D. W. Dykes, "The Anglo-Irish coinage and the ancient arms of Ireland" in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, xcvi (1966), pp. 114-15. News of the proclamation (8 Nov.) of York as heir-apparent and protector had probably reached Ireland before Barby's appointment, but the fact that this was a compromise, after York's decision on leaving Ireland to claim the throne, may not have been realised. The settlement was disavowed by the Lancastrians and York killed at Wakefield. Henry VI, however, remained in Yorkist hands until freed at the battle of St Albans (17 Feb.), after which the Yorkists had to find their own king (E. F. Jacob, *The fifteenth century* (Oxford, 1961), pp. 522-6; M. H. Keen, *England in the later middle ages* (London, 1973), pp. 447-9).

¹³ Pipe roll, 2 Edward IV (R.I.A., MS 12 D 10, p. 199; N.L.I., MS 761, p. 324); and below.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*; Dolley, *Medieval Anglo-Irish coins*, pp. 21-2, 29-30. Barby was also empowered by his patent to mint at Trim, but there is no evidence that he did so.

¹⁵ Parliament roll, 3 Edward IV, c. 32 (*Stat. Ives., Edw. IV*, i, 110-16). The act also excepted Lynch from the terms of the resumption authorised by chapter 105 (*ibid.*, p. 264) of the parliament.

1462 and February 1463.¹⁶ Lynch's crown groats and the parallel smaller denominations therefore probably did not appear much before 1464.

There can be little doubt that the king was behind this change of mint-master. In appointing Desmond as deputy in 1463, Edward took a calculated risk over his reliability: in consequence, careful supervision of his conduct of government was necessary, particularly as the appointment was not a universally popular one.¹⁷ It is unlikely therefore that the king would have tolerated the anonymous coinage further, and Desmond was no doubt ordered to admit Lynch to office. The act of 1463 thus appears to mark a step towards a more effective royal control over the Irish mint, a step which was to be consolidated in the years following. In appointing Lord Hastings as master of the moneys for England, Ireland and Calais on 13 August 1464, Edward resumed from Lynch the power he had previously enjoyed of making the dies and punches where he pleased. Thenceforward they were to be made in the Tower.¹⁸ Not surprisingly, therefore, Lynch's second issue (which presumably postdates the act passed on 14 October 1465 authorising it) reverted to coins of purely English type. Edward also ordered that the new coinages of England and Ireland should be of the same nominal value in the lordship, that Lynch should account for 4*d.* of every 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ *d.* per ounce profit on the coinage before the deputy's assignee and that he should make assay twice yearly and be sworn before the barons of the exchequer.¹⁹ Thus, in theory, by 1466 the king had restored the *status quo ante bellum*.

In fact, however, the standard of the Irish coinage remained appreciably lower than that in England. Barby's crown groats, and probably his second issue too, were a fair approximation to the specified weight of 45 grains. The weight of Lynch's first issue was, however, slightly less, despite the fact that Edward had earlier ordered an increase to 48 grains; and his English types, the weight of which were supposed to be 45 grains, were lighter still. The explanation is to be found in the reduction of weight of the English groat in 1464 from 60 to 48 grains: clearly the Dublin administration disliked the effective parity which Edward's order would have achieved and connived at a further reduction.²⁰ Though Edward cannot have envisaged a 48 grain standard in England when he ordered it in Ireland, the act of 1465 in effect laid down a difference of only three grains for parallel issues which also looked very similar. By successive unofficial reductions, the Irish administration contrived to keep the weight of its own issues appreciably lower than those in England, but in the event this turned out

¹⁶ Parliament roll, 2 Edward IV, c. 6 (*ibid.*, p. 20). It would have been odd, moreover, if Lynch had immediately disobeyed instructions to strike crown groats with the king's titles. The act stipulated that no more than 100 marks' worth of farthings were to be coined.

¹⁷ See Art Cosgrove, "The execution of the earl of Desmond, 1468" in *Kerry Arch. & Hist. Soc. Jn.*, viii (1975), pp. 16-21.

¹⁸ *Cal. pat. rolls, 1461-7*, pp. 370-71. The Hastings patent also stipulated that a mint signature should appear, although this was normal practice.

¹⁹ Parliament roll, 5 Edward IV, c. 19 (*Stat. Ire., Edw. IV, i*, 294-8).

²⁰ Dolley, *Medieval Anglo-Irish coins*, pp. 23-5. The act of 1465 implies that Lynch's crown groats were lighter than earlier issues. Since this reduction probably reflected that in England, the correlation of the documentary and numismatic evidence provides a further indication in favour of the sequence and chronology of the early Yorkist issues suggested above.

to be a bad compromise: the similarity of the designs and the effective assimilation of weight encouraged the export of the Irish coins to England, which was precisely what the Irish administration was trying to avoid; and the king was still dissatisfied because he now had an official issue of lightweight coins to worry about. Not surprisingly, therefore, by autumn 1467 if not before, the issue had been countermanded. The failure of the reform was acknowledged in complaints, ostensibly emanating from the Commons in a parliament which met in December, to the effect that

cest terre dirlande est destitute del argent et le argent ore tarde fait en cest dit terre est de iour en aultre emporte outre meer as diuerses terres et issint continuelment le peuple de la dit terre preignount contrarie al estatute le roy argent tonse.²¹

Having failed to gain recognition in Ireland for the principle of parity, the king seems to have decided on a reversion to the principle on which the earlier Anglo-Irish coinage had been based, with the aim of keeping the coinage out of England and of exploiting its revenue potential more effectively. The experiment coincided with the strongest intervention in terms of men and money to date by Edward in Ireland, in which Desmond was superseded by an English deputy, John Tiptoft, earl of Worcester. Worcester's first parliament met on 11 December 1467, but one of the few indications of a forward policy in this session was a statute authorising a new coinage for Ireland.²² A distinction in types and weight between English and Irish coins was again legalised by the stipulation that the reverse of the new issue should depict a sun with a rose in the centre, and that the new double-groats, the highest denomination ever to appear from the late medieval Irish mint, should weigh 48 grains, or about the weight of a contemporary English groat. These measures, of course, effectively kept the new coins out of England, but perhaps as significant was the relatively large profit on the coinage—8*d.* per ounce. The mint was thus to make a small contribution towards offsetting the cost of Edward's intervention in Ireland, though at the risk of subjecting the Irish economy to a period of rapid inflation arising out of the sharp devaluation.

Worcester's efforts were curtailed by renewed political unrest in England culminating in the readeption of Henry VI in October 1470 and Edward's restoration in April 1471. In Ireland Kildare was elected justiciar by the council in mid-1470 and, in default of instructions to the contrary, was still acting in Edward's name in late November. By February, however, he had been appointed

²¹ Parliament roll, 7 & 8 Edward IV, c. 9 (*Stat. Ire., Edw. IV*, i, 438). Receipt roll, 7 & 8 Edward IV (R.I.A., MS 12 D 19, p. 173) apparently contained no reference to the mint (cf. chief chamberlain's counter-roll of receipts, 14-18 Edward IV (*ibid.*)): this suggests that the mint was not then in operation.

²² Parliament roll, 7 & 8 Edward IV, c. 9 (*Stat. Ire., Edw. IV*, i, 438-42); Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, pp. 391-4; Richardson and Sayles, *Ir. parl. in middle ages*, pp. 227-9; Cosgrove, *loc. cit.*, pp. 21-3. The act stipulated a fee for the mint-master instead of the usual division of the profits by ratio of 2: 1—another indication that financial reform was intended. Worcester's intervention also signalled the abandonment, in the king's indenture with Hastings on 2 March 1469, of the reservation to the Tower of striking the dies for the Irish coinage (*Cal. pat. rolls, 1467-77*, pp. 138-9, 149-50, 227, 313-15).

deputy to the duke of Clarence, lieutenant of Henry VI.²³ The precise sequence of events becomes uncertain at this stage, but the evidence suggests that Edward IV, shortly before he lost control in England and perhaps acting on complaints by the colonists, countermanded Worcester's coinage and again ordered the Irish mint to revert to the English standard. Thus while the re-adoption parliament met on 26 November to declare Henry king, Kildare's parliament meeting on the same day in Edward's name authorised a new coinage with the king's English style: "' Edwardus dei gratia, rex Anglie & dominus Hibernie ', ou le non de ascun aultre roy pur le temps esteaunt".²⁴ Since Kildare was not, as had previously been supposed, courting martyrdom for the Yorkist cause, it seems more likely that the substitution of the English style reflects instructions from England to conform to the English standard. The inflation caused by Worcester's coinage, however, led to attempts by parliament to fix prices, and the commons petitioned that "le dit people sount si grandement empouerrishez que plusours de eaux ount surrendeuz lour measons & seruantes & auoient auoidez la dit terre et graunde chierite est de tout manere marchandise".²⁵

The standard ordained by parliament for the new coinage, however, fell just short of the English standard at 43½ grains to the groat, and considering the exceptional scarcity of the issue it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Edward's English-style coinage was no more popular with the Dublin administration than the previous one, and that an excuse was made of the proclamation of Henry VI to discontinue it. It is probably significant that after the Yorkist restoration the Irish mints reverted immediately to Edward's Irish style and to striking coins lighter than the new standard. Part of the trouble was clearly that the central administration, having authorised mints in more distant localities, now found it could not control them. In 1463, Waterford and Limerick had been added to Dublin and Trim as authorised mint centres; in 1466 Galway was included, and in 1467 Drogheda and Carlingford (though no coins are known from the latter). This decentralisation of the coinage soon produced a crop of unauthorised mints, and in December 1472 parliament had to legislate against mints at Cork, Youghal, Kinsale and Kilmallock.²⁶ The king's attitude to the Irish mint at this time is unclear and it may be that after a series of interventions in the 1460s had miscarried, Edward left its regulation to the deputy for the next few years. Kildare, of course, was less inclined than Desmond to tolerate mints beyond the Pale and the 1471 issue was officially

²³ Parliament roll, 10 Edward IV, heading (*Stat. Ire., Edw. IV*, i, 650); S. G. Ellis, "Taxation and defence in late medieval Ireland: the survival of scutage" in *R.S.A.I. Jn.* (forthcoming), appendix; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, pp. 394-5. Kildare's client, Barby, was reappointed master of the mint for life on 18 Oct. (Parliament roll, 11 & 12 Edward IV, c. 65 (*Stat. Ire., Edw. IV*, i, 842-4)); his cousin, Gerald Fitzgerald, was appointed controller of the mint at Drogheda on 10 Feb. 1471 (Memoranda roll, 10 Edward IV m.21d (P.R.O.I., MS RC 8/41, p. 267): cf. Donough Bryan, *The great earl of Kildare* (Dublin, 1933), p. 12).

²⁴ Parliament roll, 10 Edward IV, c.4 (*Stat. Ire., Edw. IV*, i, 650-56). For a recent summary of the interpretation of Kildare as a Yorkist, see J. F. Lydon, *Ireland in the later middle ages* (Dublin, 1972), pp. 153-4.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Parliament rolls, 3 Edward IV, c. 32, 5 Edward IV, c. 19, 7 & 8 Edward IV, c. 9, 12 & 13 Edward IV, c. 10 (*Stat. Ire., Edw. IV*, i, 112, 116, 294, 442, ii, 16-18).

restricted to Dublin, Drogheda and Trim. This restriction was clearly disregarded, for examples of coins with Edward's restored Irish style have survived from mints at Cork, Waterford and Wexford. The legislation against unauthorised mints had also to be renewed in July 1475 and December 1476.²⁷ Another difficulty probably arose from the sharp revaluation to the earlier standard. Parliament had fixed the price of bullion at 3s. 4d. per ounce leaving 4d. profit for the mint, but the price for returning Worcester's coinage was to be 3s. 6d. leaving only 2d. for the king and master. This margin seems to have been insufficient: in October 1472 the master received a parliamentary pardon for the activities of Patrick Keyn, one of the under-masters, in striking light-weight coins; and Lynch, then undermaster at Drogheda, was subsequently indicted for striking pennies at the rate of 4s. to the ounce and groats at 4s. 8d. to the ounce instead of the statutory 3s. 8d.²⁸ These difficulties elicited further legislation in a parliament meeting on 4 December 1472: the unauthorised reduction in weight was confirmed and the standard fixed at 34½ grains; the price of bullion was fixed at 4s. 5d. per ounce if struck into groats and 4s. 4d. if struck into smaller denominations, with a profit to the king and master of 3d. or 4d. respectively so as to encourage the coining of smaller denominations. And thirdly, as Barby had since died, Lynch was promoted to mint-master again *quamdiu se bene gesserit* and the coinage appointed to be made in Dublin castle and "en nule aultre lieu deins la terre d'irland".²⁹

For the next five years there were no important changes in the Irish coinage and with Edward back in control the maintenance of a standard which was only three-quarters that in England was the best that could be done to keep the coinage in the lordship. This measure was only partly successful and from July 1475, because "graunde habundaunce des coynes . . . nest par deinz [cest terre] al graunde lesion del bone publique", parliament legislated periodically to fix the premium on English and foreign gold and silver coins.³⁰ The corollary was mounting complaints in England against the influx of light coins, and in response the king was again driven to interfere. The first indications of his disquiet appear in changes in the office of mint-master. On 20 August 1474 Edward appointed, in place of Lynch, a London merchant, Richard Heron, as master of the mints in "Dublin, Drogheda, Trym, Waterford, Cork, Lymeryk & elsewhere" in Ireland, with the manifest aim of controlling the coinage by placing its production in more reliable hands. By Hilary 1476, however, Philip

²⁷ Parliament rolls, 10 Edward IV, c. 4, 15 & 16 Edward IV, c. 5, 16 & 17 Edward IV, c. 21 (ibid., i, 652, ii, 256, 490); Dolley, *Medieval Anglo-Irish coins*, pp. 25-7.

²⁸ Parliament rolls, 10 Edward IV, c. 4, 11 & 12 Edward IV, c. 65 (*Stat. Ire., Edw. IV*, i, 652, 842-4); Coram Rege roll, 13 Edward IV (T.C.D., MS 655, f.1v; 1731, p. 6. Cf. *Rec. comm. Ire. rep. 1816-25*, p. 112). Lynch was pardoned the offence.

²⁹ Parliament roll, 12 & 13 Edward IV, c. 59 (*Stat. Ire., Edw. IV*, ii, 128-30). Barby had been appointed in 1470 jointly in survivorship with William Grampe, but it is clear that Grampe knew nothing about the mint and after Barby's death left the work to the undermaster. By December, he had been induced by a pension to vacate the office in favour of Lynch. In July 1475, mints at Drogheda and Waterford were again authorised (Parliament roll, 15 & 16 Edward IV, c. 5 (ibid., p. 256)).

³⁰ Parliament rolls, 15 & 16 Edward IV, c. 5, 16 & 17 Edward IV, cc 23, 43 (ibid., pp. 254-6, 490-92, 544-6).

Brentwood held office, presumably under Irish patent, as master of the mint in Dublin castle. And by Trinity 1477, Lynch was back, but this time in association with one, William Hateclyff, goldsmith of London who was probably a relation of the king's secretary and may even be the man who served as under-treasurer of Ireland in 1495-7 during the Poynings episode. It appears, therefore, that Heron was acting by deputy and that the attempt to restrict the mint to places easily controlled by the Dublin administration had had finally to be abandoned: Lynch and Hateclyff were empowered to coin as specified in Heron's patent, this provision being subsequently confirmed by Kildare's 1478 parliament.³¹

The inception of a firmer policy towards the Irish mint coincided with Edward's decision to intervene directly in Ireland by way of another English deputy, Henry Lord Grey. On Grey's arrival in mid-September 1478 the chancellor refused to recognise his appointment and the young earl of Kildare who had succeeded his father in March continued as justiciar. Grey sent to England for instructions and summoned a parliament to meet at Trim on 6 November. This parliament declared void a parliament held by Kildare and, since the chancellor withheld the great seal, confirmed an order for the making of a new seal "ouesque vne difference de vne rose en chescun partie del mesme accordaunt al commaundement le roy al meistier del minte en cele parte directe".³² With regard to the mint, Edward aimed to stop the influx of Irish coin by authorising a distinctive design: on 15 September, a more reliable mint-master, Thomas Galmole, described in 1483 as servant to Edward's son, Richard, was appointed during pleasure only, and Edward apparently ordered that on the Irish coins a rose be substituted in the centre of the reverse for the groupings of pellets traditional on English coinage. This much may be deduced from the king's order for the great seal and further instructions about the mint in 1479, although the original instructions may have been more sweeping. In fact the new issue did not appear until 1480. In the interim, the dispute between Grey and Kildare had encouraged the king to attempt a more general reformation of the Irish administration. At the end of 1478, they and other magnates were summoned to court and when, in May 1479, Viscount Gormanston was appointed deputy-lieutenant, the regulation of the mint and the appointment of all its officials were specifically excepted from his powers. During the summer, Edward decided that Kildare should be entrusted with the deputyship, and for his guidance issued a series of ordinances concerning the government of the land and in particular the mint. The king ordered that the mastership of the mint be resumed by act of parliament, and on 5 October reappointed Lynch.³³ The importance attached to this office and to the mint generally by the king at this time can be gauged from the fact that it was one of six offices the nomination to

³¹ Chief chamberlain's counter-roll of receipts, 14-18 Edward IV (R.I.A., MS 12 D 19, pp. 175-7); *Cal. pat. rolls, 1467-77*, p. 468; Parliament rolls, 12 & 13 Edward IV, c. 59, 18 Edward IV, sess. 3, c. 4B (*Stat. Ire., Edw. IV*, ii, 128-30, 636); *D.N.B.*, sub Hatteclyffe.

³² Parliament rolls, 18 Edward IV, sess. 3, c. 4B, 18 & 19 Edward IV, cc 6, 11, 12 (*Stat. Ire., Edw. IV*, ii, 636, 650-54, 662-6); Memoranda roll, 19 Edward IV m. 18 (P.R.O.I., RCS/42, p. 57); Richardson & Sayles, *Ir. parl. in middle ages*, pp. 264-5.

³³ Gilbert, *Viceroy*s, pp. 592-9; Rymer, *Foedera* (ed. 1740-41), v, pt ii, p. 102; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1476-85*, pp. 137, 164.

which was excepted from governors' powers in the patents of 1479, 1480 and 1484: the other five all carried *ex officio* membership of the privy council, which suggests that the master ranked higher in royal estimation than the remaining two councillors, the clerk of the rolls and the serjeant-at-law. A section of the ordinances dealt specifically with the mint and clarified Edward's instructions of 1478: the master was to coin only in Dublin castle, to the authorised standard and design. The new coins were to "ber a notable difference on eyther side" from the English issues, a rose on the reverse and on the obverse some other "notable difference . . . easy to be known to every body", and in making the dies the master was to follow "suche prints as ben delivered unto the maister of the mynt here". It is also apparent from the ordinances that Edward suspected that successive mint-masters had been quietly debasing the coinage: he confirmed the standard set in 1472, but by reducing the price of bullion increased the margin of profit to 6*d.* and ordered that "touching be fynesse it be according to the standard of England".³⁴

By 1479, Edward had become sufficiently concerned about the maladministration of the Irish mint to interfere in the *minutiae* of its running. Though Kildare as deputy was again entrusted with its general oversight, he was clearly aware that this was a sensitive area; and when Lynch's new issue was authorised by parliament in February 1480, because the act prescribed a slightly lower standard of 4*s.* 10*d.* per ounce, Kildare thought it expedient to add "puruieu auxi que si le roy ne face my countremaunder lez premisses".³⁵ In the event, the king's instructions were flouted, for not only were the coins struck at Drogheda as well as Dublin, but the English obverse was retained and only the rose on the reverse distinguished them from the English issues. Probably because of this, the king appears to have tolerated the issue for less than a year, for a parliament held on 19 March 1484 bemoaned the fact that

le bone publique dicest terre ore de tarde deins cestez iij anes passez ad este greusement [lesse entaunt] que le minte le roy fuit surcesse & nient excercise en cest terre, par quele . . . tiell chierite & defaulte del cune & money le roy . . . ad & est fortune entre le comune people en la mesme qil ne poet my estre levez, ne pur achatement, ne pur vendaunce en marchees ne pur eschaunge de ore saunz tres graundez deperdes pur lescheaunge, ne de paiier petites parcels as seruantez, labourers ne artificers, par le quele diuerses & plusours dez lieges du roy auoient departez & de iour en aultre ount departez dicest terre & lessount lour habitacions desolatez & gastez.³⁶

Immediately before his death Edward took steps to remedy this situation by reappointing Galmole on 7 March 1483, but it is significant of the king's hardened attitude to the Irish mint that Galmole's indenture empowered him to mint only

³⁴ Gilbert, *Viceroyes*, pp. 592-601; Rymer, *Foedera*, v, pt ii, p. 102; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1476-85*, p. 477.

³⁵ Parliament roll, 19 & 20 Edward IV, c. 28 (*Stat. Ire. Edw. IV*, ii, 746).

³⁶ Parliament roll, 1 Richard III, c. 8 (P.R.O.I., MS RC 13/8). On 18 May 1480, James Ketyng, prior of the Knights Hospitallers, was appointed master of the mint (*Memoranda roll, 20 Edward IV m.10d* (St Peter's College, Wexford, Hore MS I, p. 1137)); since this appointment was almost certainly a sinecure, it probably marks the end of the run.

pennies and halfpennies at the English standard of 48 grains.³⁷ By such measures, as the Irish administration subsequently pointed out, the scarcity of coin "ne poet nule chose remedie", and the colonists took advantage of the political upheavals in England after Edward's death to shelve his plans in favour of measures of their own. The precise sequence of events is unclear, though not the main outlines. Very soon after news of Richard's accession reached Ireland, a further issue of groats and pennies of the 1480 type was struck at Drogheda from the altered dies of the old king. Just possibly they were the work of Lynch and included in the condemnation by the 1484 parliament of the false and counterfeit money coined by him and others at Waterford and elsewhere.³⁸ Richard, however, was probably ignorant of this coinage when he wrote to the Irish council on 18 July reminding them of "the grete clamor, grugge, and complaints" against the lightweight Irish coin circulating in England "for lak of expresse difference that shuld have be graved upon the same"³⁹; but the fact that he was attending to the Irish mint within three weeks of his accession suggests that the new issue had in fact been officially authorised and that the Irish council, while taking matters into its own hands, had at least notified the king of its intentions. Richard, however, ignored the colonists' grievances against Edward's later policy: on 16 July he confirmed Galmole's appointment during pleasure, empowering him to strike groats and the smaller denominations to the English standard and the new design; and two days later he ordered the Irish council to destroy any dies "wherwith the sylver coignes of that our land hath hiderto be made and stryken at any place or tyme", to revoke all powers to coin except at Dublin and Waterford, and that "unto the tyme we have otherwise ordeigned" all Irish coin should bear "a clere and express difference fro that sylver that is coigned here within this our royalme, that is to say, on the one side the armes of England, and on the other side iij corones". Richard's concern about the mint at this time is also apparent from the prominence, in a covering set of instructions to William Lacy sent to expound the king's letter and policies to the council, of an order that responsible officers be appointed to the mint: the king specifically reserved to himself the nomination of the master and ordered Lacy to "ensiste that in all possible hast the content of that lettre be put in execucion".⁴⁰

To deliberate on the royal instructions, Kildare as justiciar seems to have summoned a great council, probably late in August, at which an ordinance was passed authorising the striking of half-groats to the English standard:⁴¹ but Richard, in his need to conciliate possible opponents of his regime, was soon brought to compromise. Though dies were made in England roughly in accord-

³⁷ *Cal. pat. rolls, 1476-85*, p. 346. The indenture is printed in Richard Sainthill, *An olla podrida* (2 vols., London, 1844-53), ii, 62-4.

³⁸ Parliament roll, 1 Richard III, cc 8, 13 (P.R.O.I., MS RC 13/8).

³⁹ *L. & P., Ric. III & Hen. VII*, ii, 286 (not a "Proclamation touching the Irish Coinage" but a signet warrant to the privy seal).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* i, 43-6; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1476-85*, p. 461.

⁴¹ Parliament roll, 1 Richard III, c. 8 (P.R.O.I., MS RC 13/8). The great council is otherwise undocumented, but see D. B. Quinn, "Guide to English financial records for Irish history, 1461-1558" in *Anal. Hib.*, x (1941), pp. 23-4, for an indication of its date.

ance with additional, more detailed, instructions sent over, presumably with Galmole, it was claimed with regard to the actual coining that "le amesner de tiell bullion fut mise a tres graundez deperdez a demurer le fynyng . . . [so that] la tranquillite & bone del comune people vnqore par vertue del dit ordenaunce est nule chose encesse mesque diminuse".⁴² This at any rate was the argument later accepted by parliament for the abandonment of the issue, although as no three-crown coin to the English standard has survived it seems likely that royal policy was stillborn. According to Lacy's instructions, Kildare was to send to England to agree the terms of his indenture with the king, so it is probable that he used the opportunity to raise objections to royal policy on coinage. The outcome was the compromise confirmed by parliament on 19 March 1484: the king's directions were to stand, but with the crucial difference that the standard should be the same as for the 1471 issue as ratified in December 1472. Richard also agreed that Kildare should receive the profits of the mint directly for the defence of the land during his deputyship.⁴³ Galmole took up office on 1 September and seems to have acted by deputy, but the issue was probably not begun before the new year, being retroactively authorised by parliament from 1 January. The first run of the three-crown groats from the Dublin mint ended on 8 March 1485 and Galmole later accounted for profits of £94 15s. 9½d. for this period.⁴⁴

The next three years were to disclose as never before the risks run by the crown in allowing a weak Irish administration control over its own coinage. News of Richard's death at Bosworth Field on 22 August seems to have been greeted with disbelief in Dublin: when the exchequer opened on 30 September, the clerks headed the memoranda roll "Proffra de termino sancti Michaelis anno regni regis Ricardi tercii tercio" and though the second membrane reverted to "anno regni regis Henrici septimi primo", Kildare held a fourth session of Richard III's 1485 parliament as late as 24 October.⁴⁵ Shortly before Richard's death, the Dublin mint had begun a second run of three-crown groats and these can be die-linked with the following regally anonymous series which read simply "Rex Anglie et Francie" on the obverse and "Dominus Hibernie" on the reverse. It appears, therefore, that the Dublin administration, by now growing accustomed to the changes of dynasty, was awaiting developments before committing itself, although the Waterford mint immediately placed Henry's name with the traditional legends on its parallel issue. During the Simnel episode

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Parliament roll, 1 Richard III, cc 8, 9, 13 (P.R.O.I., MS RC 13/8); *L. & P., Ric. III & Hen. VII*, i, 45. The sense of chapter 8 of the 1484 parliament is obscure: it appears to contradict itself in prescribing, in different clauses, three separate standards for the new coinage. One of these seems to be a garbled version of Richard's original instruction, repeated from an equally garbled version in the preamble: the second is an allusion to the standard of Worcester's coinage. I have followed the third, which coincides with the standard of surviving specimens. The act also appears to suggest that the mints were to be Dublin, Drogheda and Trim, as prescribed for the 1471 issue, though in the event the king's preference for Dublin and Waterford was acceded to.

⁴⁴ Parliament roll, 1 Richard III, c. 8 (P.R.O.I., MS RC 13/8); Quinn, "English financial records", pp. 23-4; Memoranda roll, 2-3 Richard III m.6, 1 Henry VII m.11 (P.R.O.I., Ferguson repertory, iv, 51, 75). Galmole's deputy was Richard or Robert Tailor alias Newall of Dublin: he is styled "master of the coinage", perhaps inaccurately.

⁴⁵ *Rec. comm. Ire. rep. 1816-25*, p. 538; D. B. Quinn, "Parliaments and great councils in Ireland, 1461-1586" in *I. H. S.*, iii (1942-3), pp. 68-9.

which followed, when the pretender "Edward VI" was established in Dublin, both mints put out coinage with the two legends, "Edwardus dei gratia, rex Anglie et Francie" and "Et rex Hibernie", and after the battle of Stoke they reverted to regal anonymity and flanked the arms of England and France by miniature shields with the Geraldine saltire.⁴⁶

In view of its activities, 1485-c. 1490, Henry VII seems, not surprisingly, to have been no more enthusiastic about the Irish mint than his predecessors. The documentary evidence for the Irish mint after 1485 is unfortunately exiguous, with the exception of the period 1495-7. The first two sets of appointments, though manifestly they did not take effect, set the tone for the reign. On 19 November 1485, Robert Bowley was appointed master for life with instructions to coin in accordance with the indenture of Edward IV with Thomas Galmole in 1483 and, in a rare appointment under the English great seal to a subordinate office in the Irish mint, the king also included Ireland in the appointment of Nicholas Flynt, a former officer of the London mint, as controller and assayer throughout the king's dominions: and on 26 March 1487, on the eve of the Simnel conspiracy, he appointed John Estrete, king's sergeant-at-law in Ireland, as master with an additional fee of £20 per annum.⁴⁷ The purpose of this second grant to a man who can hardly have had any experience in a mint was probably to give Estrete a retainer after he had been made king's councillor.⁴⁸ Probably after Henry VII had regained some sort of control over the lordship with Edgewcombe's mission in 1488, Bowley would be admitted to office and Estrete would receive his annuity, for on numismatic evidence the closure of the Waterford mint and the commencement of a large issue from the Dublin mint can be dated approximately to this time.⁴⁹ Obviously, Henry had had to abandon any hopes of re-establishing an English standard in Ireland, but it is probably significant that for what must have been the final run of the issue, the king in March 1490 appointed Bowley jointly with one John Coton as master and Flynt as controller during pleasure only.⁵⁰

The final phase of the late-medieval Irish mint saw the almost complete triumph of the king's interests over those of the colonists. Following Yorkist policy, Henry VII had by 1490 succeeded in wresting control of key appointments in the mint from the Irish administration, and in the period of renewed military activity by the crown in Ireland culminating in Poyning's expedition, the king was able to expand his control more generally over the administration. One consequence, probably incidental, of the direct control over parliamentary legislation acquired by the king in virtue of Poyning's Law was that the deputy

⁴⁶ Dolley, *Medieval Anglo-Irish coins*, pp. 31-3. Cf. *Ormond deeds, 1413-1509*, no. 272.

⁴⁷ *Cal. pat. rolls, 1485-94*, pp. 19, 124, 158, 169. Cf. Memoranda roll, 1 Henry VII m. 11 (P.R.O.L., Ferguson repertory, iv, 75), indicating that Newall was still in office. So far as it treats of the Irish mint under Henry VII, C. E. Challis, "The Tudor coinage for Ireland" in *British Numismatic Journal*, xl (1971), pp. 97-119, may be ignored. Though it is purportedly "a fresh look at English and Irish documentary sources" (p. 100), the author admits in a footnote that the first section relies largely on Professor Quinn's unpublished doctoral thesis of 1933 (see above, n. 2).

⁴⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 64, 158, 169.

⁴⁹ Dolley, *Medieval Anglo-Irish coins*, p. 33.

⁵⁰ *Cal. pat. rolls, 1485-94*, p. 299.

could no longer obtain subsequent ratification by parliament for new issues of coinage which he had authorised without consulting the king. Though parliamentary confirmation was not strictly necessary, even a governor as powerful as Kildare would hesitate to abandon previous practice and authorise a coinage without express instructions or the theoretically independent endorsement of parliament. Successive kings had showed themselves increasingly touchy about control of the coinage, and by 1510 were even excepting from the deputy's powers that of pardoning coiners of counterfeit money.⁵¹ Thus after 1490, Henry VII allowed only three issues from the Dublin mint of a purely English type.

As with Edward IV's strategy in 1467, the first issue followed the decision in favour of military intervention in Ireland against the threat from Perkin Warbeck. Perhaps fearing a repetition of the events of 1487, Henry VII appointed a staunch Lancastrian, Thomas Garth, as master of the mint on 19 August 1492 and about the same time as constable of Dublin castle with a retinue of twenty men. Garth was, however, primarily a military commander (he had been captain of the king's army in Ireland in winter 1491-2) and though the mint was certainly in production by Easter 1495, it cannot have been treated too seriously.⁵² Garth's supersession by Richard White, constable of the Castle, on 25 July 1495 followed a decision by the king to try to offset his expenses in maintaining an army in the lordship by a more determined attempt to capitalise on the revenue potential of Ireland. In connection with this, an unique survival of evidence, the weekly receipts by the under-treasurer of profits of the mint for the period from July 1495 until September 1496, is set out in tabular form and discussed more fully in an appendix. While the attempt lasted, until about April 1496, the mint was perhaps running fairly close to capacity; thereafter production tailed off considerably until the conclusion of the run, probably on 4 March 1497. Upon his account during Trinity term following, White was charged with £125 5s. 1*d.* for the profits of 4*d.* an ounce owing to the king since he came into office.⁵³

Though the king insisted on conformity with English types after his experiences with the three-crown coinage, he was less concerned about the fabric of the coins. Henry VII's last Irish coinage has usually associated with the restoration of Kildare as lord deputy from 1496, so it has seemed logical to attribute the inferior workmanship which characterises the coinage to an underhand attempt by Kildare to discourage its export. If the coinage could no longer be kept in Ireland by the use of distinctive types, a reduction in quality would serve just

⁵¹ *L. & P., Hen. VIII*, i (2nd ed.), no. 632 (22). On Poynings' law, see D. B. Quinn, "The early interpretation of Poynings' law, 1494-1534" in *I.H.S.*, ii (1940-41), pp. 241-54; and more generally on the 1490s, Agnes Conway, *Henry VII's relations with Ireland and Scotland, 1485-98* (Cambridge, 1932), chs. 3-5.

⁵² *Cal. pat. rolls, 1485-94*, p. 367; Patent roll, 7 Henry VII (B.L., Add. MS 4787, f.53); Memoranda roll, 12 Henry VII m. 24 (R.I.A., MS 24 H 17, p. 209); B.L. Royal MS 18C XIV, ff 135v, 143v (fee of Richard Nangle, controller of the mint in Dublin castle, for Easter 1495); Conway, *Henry VII's relations*, pp. 48-51; Quinn, "Guide to English financial records", pp. 63-4. Garth's account for the profits of the mint up to July 1495 was enrolled on Pipe roll, 12 Henry VII (R.I.A., MS 24 H 17, p. 209). In winter 1492-3, Garth was captured and imprisoned by Kildare (Quinn, loc. cit., p. 63; Conway, *Henry VII's relations*, p. 53); on being reappointed constable in March 1494, he was granted a fee of £20 and an annuity of £46 13s. 4*d.* out of the profits of the mint (*Cal. pat. rolls, 1485-94*, p. 461).

⁵³ Memoranda roll, 12 Henry VII m. 24 (R.I.A., MS 24 H 17, p. 209). See also appendix.

as well.⁵⁴ The meagre documentary evidence suggests, however, that the policy was more official and less popular than has been considered. Since the first run of the issue coincides with the period of direct rule by Henry VII over Ireland, it is hardly likely that he would have tolerated an unofficial tampering with the lordship's coinage. The successive royal proclamations, in 1491, 1497 and 1499,⁵⁵ against the importation and circulation in England of Irish coin would not of course support the argument that the restoration of England types was envisaged as a prelude to a further attempt at restoring monetary parity, but the deterioration in quality could nonetheless have been official policy, and in fact this view best accords with the evidence.

The colonists soon took exception to the inferior quality of the new issue, and there are occasional allusions from the later 1490s onwards in the surviving papers of the absentee seventh earl of Ormond to the difficulty of his receivers in obtaining good coin to send to him.⁵⁶ By about 1501, the position was so bad that the recorder of Waterford lamented the "noon ordre sett vpon the coigne" in Ireland and roundly asserted that "the mynts haue vtterly vndoon this land, and it shalbe nevir wele ordred while any mynte shalbe kept here".⁵⁷ The explanation for this apparent *volte-face* in colonial views on monetary policy is probably contained in a letter of November 1497 to the earl from the abbot of St Mary's, Dublin. Already by then the deputy and council were recommending action to the king against the new issue and the abbot asked Ormond to lend his support to a bill sent over in connection with a request for a licence to hold a parliament. The council complained that "now half oure siluer is copir and tyn", and proposed an act, presumably in connection with a projected new issue of Irish coin, "that ye coyne of Irland shold be as gode siluer as the coyne of England, but not of so grete peise and value".⁵⁸ Henry's disapproval of the measure is clear from the fact that it was not included in the transmiss of bills authorised by the king for enactment in the 1499 parliament. That the reduction in quality was from Henry's point of view a less risky alternative device authorised by him to keep the coins out of the realm would appear, therefore, fairly certain.⁵⁹ The device was clearly successful: the abbot also informed Ormond that the coin collected for his rents was "so bad that I mote [?] wote] not shall

⁵⁴ Michael Dolley, "Anglo-Irish monetary policies, 1172-1637" in *Hist. Studies*, vii (1969), 55-6.

⁵⁵ P. L. Hughes and J. F. Larkin, *Tudor royal proclamations* (London, 1964), nos 25, 38, 43, 44.

⁵⁶ *Ormond deeds, 1509-47*, app. nos 32, 57, 84.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, app. no. 57.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, app. no. 32. See also Quinn, "Early interpretation of Poyning's law", pp. 248-9. Until the content of the various issues has been subjected to a thorough scientific analysis, a full discussion of the question of debasement of the coinage would be out of place: there is no doubt, however, about the implication of the abbot's letter that the new issues were debased. Probably Henry authorised a debasement of the Irish coinage about 1494 partly in order to introduce an element of control and uniformity over a process which had begun illicitly and erratically under Edward IV (see for example, *Liber primus Kilkenniensis*, p. 90; Parliament rolls, 15 & 16 Edward IV, c. 43 (*Stat. Ire., Edw. IV*, ii, 350), 1 Richard III, c. 7 (P.R.O.I. MS RC 13/8)). I am grateful to Mr Colm Gallagher for his help on this point.

⁵⁹ Transmiss of bills for parliament, 14 & 15 Henry VII (*Stat. Ire., Hen. VII & VIII*, pp. 96-7).

I send hit to you or will ye haue chefare therfor".⁶⁰ Thus, confronted with a choice between bad coin or no mint, the colonists were within a few years opting for a good supply of silver. Whether the recorder of Waterford conceived of maintaining a dual standard with production centred on the Tower, thus anticipating royal policy of the 1530s, or whether he envisaged the restoration of parity, as successive kings had aimed at, does not appear. The fate of a bill in the 1536-7 parliament which highlighted a further attempt to abolish the separate standard for Ireland reveals, however, that the colonists were still very conscious of the economic consequences of parity. Councillors reported that the Commons "did stike veray sore to passe it, for feare that having ther Irishe coyne damned and no mynte here, thei shuld have no coyne amongis them".⁶¹

In 1497, the king's response to the Irish council's proposal seems to have been confined to the authorisation of a second issue of the English types.⁶² This would meet complaints of a shortage of coin, but the only significant difference from the earlier issue seems to have been a slight reduction in the standard from 32 grains to 29; and this reduction probably had more to do with a desire for increased profits, perhaps on Kildare's part, than any attempt by the king to meet the real grievances of the colonists. The motive of profit, unsupported by the demand for a plentiful supply of good coinage, was nevertheless probably insufficient of itself to justify the striking of an Irish coinage. Though Galmole was appointed master for a third run of coins in 1506,⁶³ we should probably look to the failure of the Dublin mint to meet the monetary needs of the lordship for the explanation for its abandonment.

The survival of the Irish mint in the later fifteenth century depended on an uneasy compromise between royal control of the coinage and the economic interests of the lordship: on the one hand the king was reluctant to delegate control and concerned that a distinctive Irish coinage should not become a political risk, on the other a coinage which was not minted to a separate lower standard was of no use to the colonists. The possibility of the Irish mint, like the Irish parliament, being utilised in the interests of a pretender was clearly demonstrated in 1460, 1470 and 1485-c. 1490, but this was probably more a symptom of dynastic strife in England than a cause of its closure: there was no reason why a strong king should mistrust his Irish mint any more than his Irish deputy. A more constant cause for concern by the king was the weakness of the central government in the lordship which made it difficult to control the activity of the mint. Though Edward IV was able to re-establish direct royal control over the mint by c. 1463 and Henry VII by c. 1490, it was not sufficient simply to give orders and leave the Dublin administration to implement them. This was one case where the interests of the king and the colonists did not coincide: and since the mint-master's desire for increased profits and the administrative difficulties

⁶⁰ *Ormond deeds, 1509-47*, app. no. 32.

⁶¹ *S.P. Hen. VIII*, ii, 439.

⁶² The proposed legislation was probably debated in the king's council, where the making of a mould for the new issue was authorised on 11 Feb. 1499 (C. G. Bayne and W. H. Dunham Jr. (ed.), *Select cases in the council of Henry VII* (Selden Soc. 75, London, 1968), p. 31).

⁶³ *Rot. pat. cal. Hib.*, p. 272.

involved in a revaluation of the coinage coincided with the interests of the colonists in a lower Irish standard *vis-à-vis* that in England, it is not difficult to detect collusion between the administration and a mint-master such as Barby or Lynch.

The real answer to the problem, so far as the king was concerned, was to close down the mint altogether; but this was clearly unacceptable to the colonists and it is significant that only a strong king, as Edward IV and Henry VII were in their later years, was prepared to run the gauntlet of colonial criticism in this way. For most of the time the Yorkists temporised, trying to find some acceptable compromise. Instructions to coin in accordance with the English standard met with tacit evasion or led to a temporary suspension of the mint until a favourable opportunity should arise to resume coining to the old standard. The appointment of English officials to supervise the Irish mint also seems to have been unsuccessful, probably because they could not be persuaded to remain permanently in Ireland and were in any case open to the same temptations as Irish officials. The attempt to limit the mint to towns easily controlled by the central administration, though it curbed the spate of forgeries, was irrelevant to the main problem. And the king, for his part, disliked the principle of a dual standard and was dissatisfied with the device of separate designs as an effective means of keeping the Irish issues out of England. The English populace was not generally literate and probably found it difficult to judge between different designs of English-looking coins.

The solution to the king's problem, like so many others that bedevilled relations between the crown and the Anglo-Irish administration in the later fifteenth century, lay in a reformation of the central government. This Henry VII carried out under Poynings, 1494-6, and after his restoration Kildare dared not flout royal authority as Anglo-Irish deputies had done under the Yorkists. Like Edward IV in 1467, Henry VII tried briefly to exploit the mint to cut the costs of direct intervention in Ireland, but instead of distinctive designs to keep the coins out of England, the lightweight Irish issues were, from 1494, made distinguishable from their English counterparts by their crude workmanship. This solution of Henry VII to the problem of the Irish mint was regarded by the colonists as tantamount to debasement: by making the conditions on which he was prepared to authorise a dual standard unacceptable to the colonists, the king was able to secure their consent to the closure of the mint.

Appendix

The following table is based on entries in the day-book of the under-treasurer, William Hattecliffe (B.L., Royal MS 18C XIV), and relates to sums paid into the exchequer. (Sample entries, including ones relating to the mint, are reproduced in James Gairdner (ed.), *Letters and papers illustrative of the reigns of Richard III and Henry VII* (Rolls series, London, 1861-3), ii, 297-318.) In most cases, both the weekly profit from the mint and the amount of silver coined are available, although some of the dates for which payment was made are conjectural. Within the period covered by the day-book, the exchequer received a total of £94 5s. 7d.⁶⁴ in profits of the mint representing 4d. per ounce on the coinage of 471 lb. 4¾ oz. of silver. The amounts received week by week vary considerably, from as little as 6s. 4d. to as much as £5 2s. 8d., but the average was almost £1 12s. per week. Probably the efficiency of the mint depended chiefly on the availability of silver: up to 12 March 1496, profits averaged £2 2s. 2½d. per week, but from then until 3 September they dropped sharply to an average of 18s. 0½d. Correlating these figures with the account on the pipe roll, it appears that they recovered slightly from then until 4 March 1497 to an average of almost £1 3s. 10d. per week.

| <i>Week ending</i> | <i>Value</i> | <i>Weight</i> | |
|--------------------|--|---------------|--|
| 18 July 1495 | | | |
| 25 | | | |
| 1 Aug. | | | |
| 8 | weekly average £1 7 1 (total £6 15 5) | | |
| 15 | | | |
| 22 | | | |
| 29 | | £1 2 8 | |
| 5 Sept. | | £2 1 10 | |
| 12 | 13 10 | | |
| 19 | £2 14 0 | | |
| 26 | £3 10 8 | 212 oz. | |
| 3 Oct. | £3 4 0 | 192 oz. | |
| 10 | £1 8 0 | 84 oz. | |
| 17 | £3 19 4 | 238 oz. | |
| 24 | £3 4 4 | 192 oz. | |
| 31 | £2 18 0 | 170 oz. | |
| 7 Nov. | £2 18 4 | 175 oz. | |
| 14 | £1 6 0 | 81 oz. | |
| 21 | £3 7 8 | 203 oz. | |
| 28 | £1 16 0 | 108 oz. | |
| 5 Dec. | £2 11 4 | 154 oz. | |
| 12 | [£2 19 0] (total | 177 oz. | |
| 19 | [£2 7 0] £5 6 0) | 141 oz. | |
| 26 | £1 2 0 | 66 oz. | |

⁶⁴ I have excluded a late entry (f. 70) of £2 profits: this is undated, but cannot be earlier than 3 September 1496.

| <i>Week ending</i> | <i>Value</i> | <i>Weight</i> | |
|----------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-----------|
| 2 Jan. | — | | |
| 9 | — | | |
| 16 | £2 16 0 | 166 oz. | |
| 23 | £2 2 0 | 126 oz. | |
| 30 | £1 12 4 | 96 oz. | |
| 6 Feb. | £2 2 0 | 126 oz. | |
| 13 | £5 2 8 | 308 oz. | |
| 20 | £4 1 4 | 244 oz. | |
| 27 | £1 14 4 | 123 oz. | |
| 5 Mar. | — | | |
| 12 | £4 4 8 | 284 oz. | |
| 19 | } weekly average £1 16 8 (total £3 3 4) | } 190 oz. | |
| 26 | | | |
| 2 Apr. | | | |
| 9 | | | |
| 16 | } weekly average £1 1 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ for 8 weeks (total £8 9 2) | } 508 oz. | |
| 23 | | | |
| 30 | | | |
| 7 May | | | |
| 14 | | | |
| 21 | | | |
| [28] (w/e 1 June in MS) | 10 4 | 31 oz. | |
| [4] June | [6 4] | 19 oz. | |
| [11] | [£1 14 4] | 103 oz. | |
| [18] (3 w/e 17 June in MS) | [£1 14 8] | 104 oz. | |
| 25 | | | |
| 2 July | } weekly average | } (total £1 8 0) | } 84 oz. |
| 9 | | | |
| 16 | | | |
| 23 | } weekly average | } total for | } 45 oz. |
| 30 | | | |
| 6 Aug. | 15 0 | 23 July to | |
| 13 | } weekly average | } 3 Sept., | } 149 oz. |
| 20 | | | |
| 27 | | | |
| 3 Sept. 1496 | 8 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ | excluding w/e 6 Aug., £2 9 8 | |