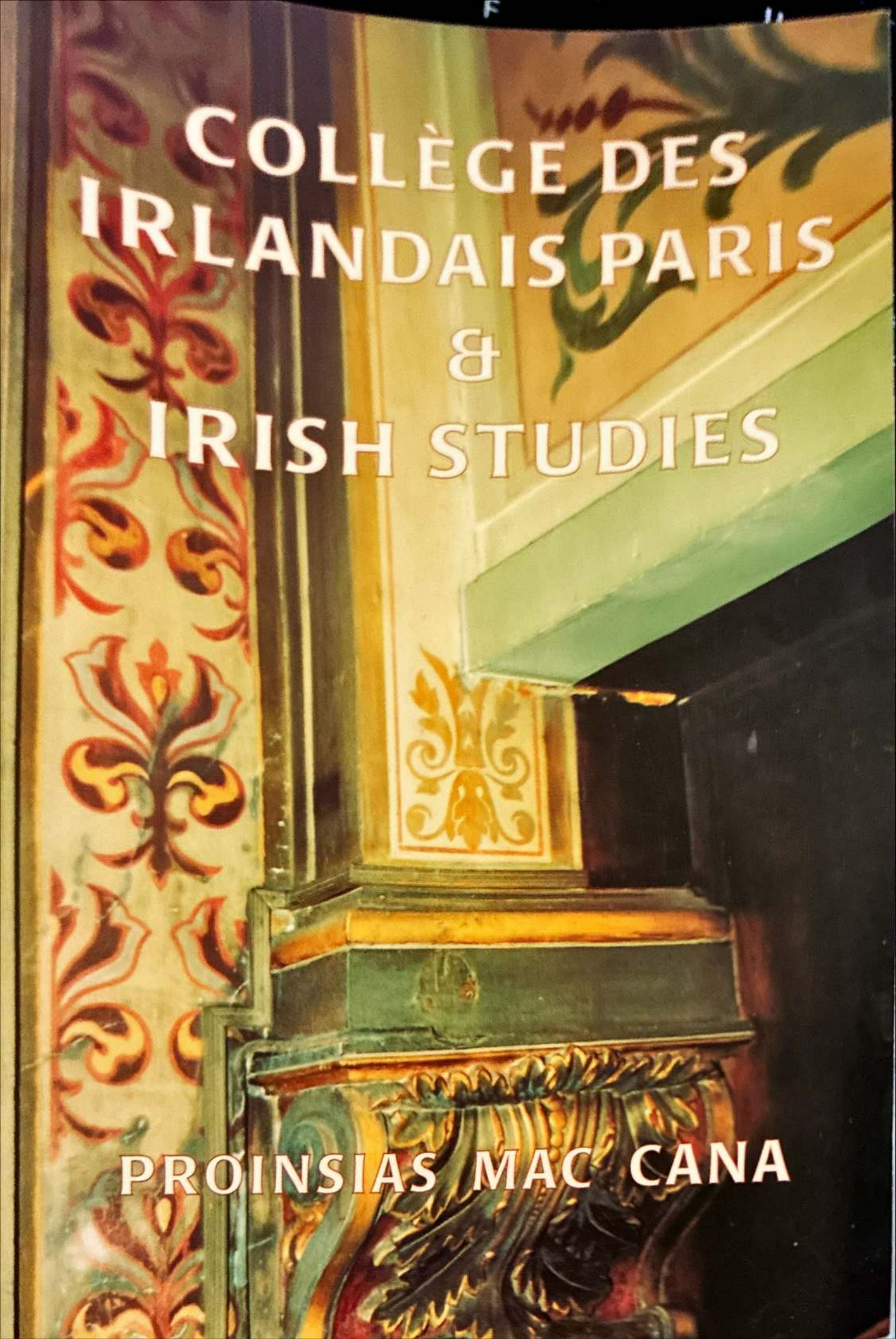
COLLÈGE DES IRLANDAIS PARIS & IRISH STUDIES



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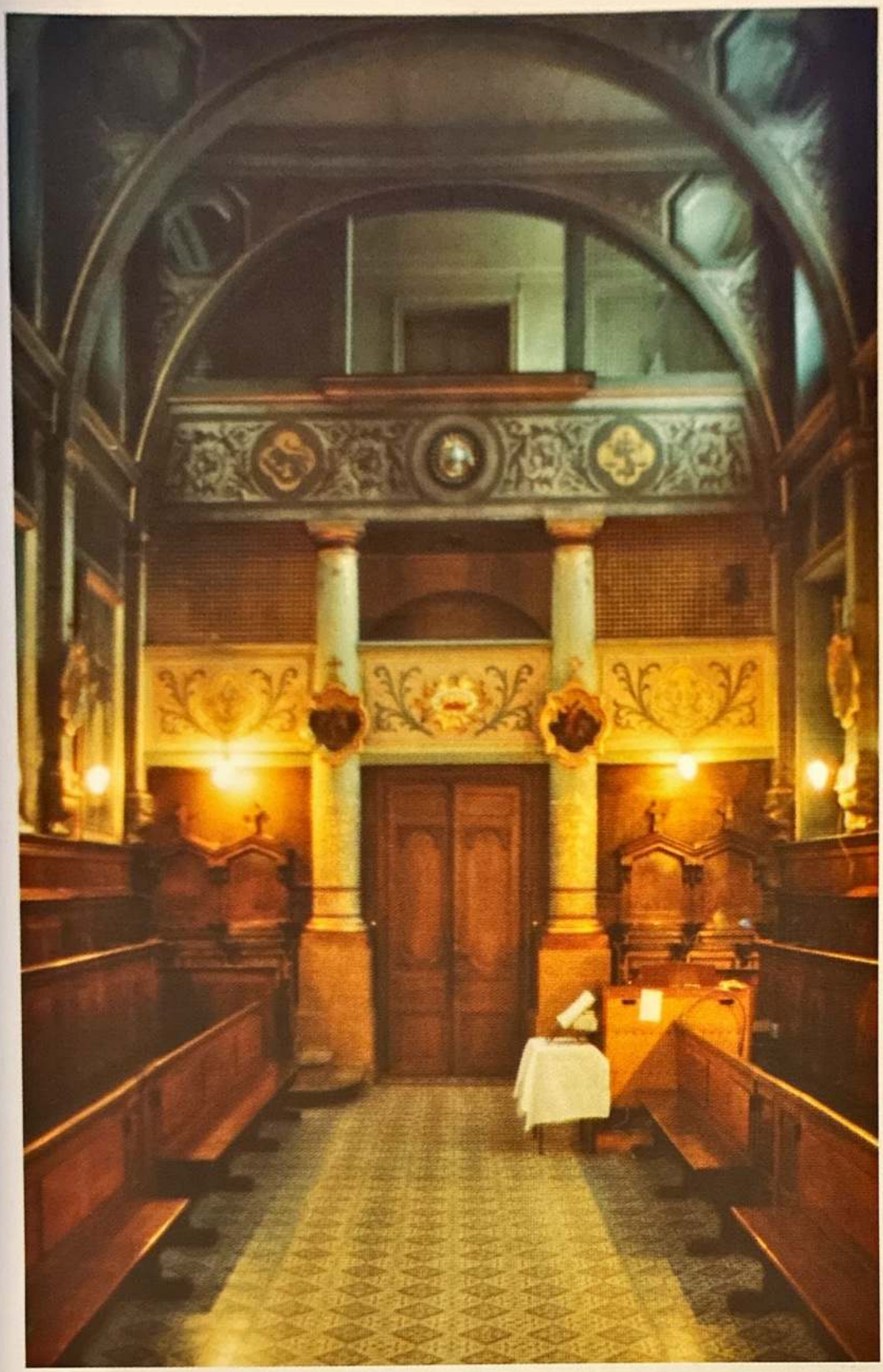

The chapel, Collège des Irlandais.

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COLLÈGE

DES

IRLANDAIS PARIS

AND

IRISH STUDIES

SCHOOL OF CELTIC STUDIES
DUBLIN INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES
2001

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I gcuimhne ar Taidhg Ó Súilleabháin 1926–1999
Ambasadóir na hÉireann chun na Fraince
Iúil 1987-Iúil 1991
a rinne níos mó ná a chion le stádas dlíthiúil Collège des Irlandais mar fhoras Éireannach a fhlánú agus a bhuanú.

One of the most striking features of Irish history as a whole, from the earliest records to the present day, has been the continual stream of emigration which has passed from the shores of the western isle. Whether as warriors, as adventurers, as 'pilgrims', as refugees, or as home-seekers, every age has known its Irish emigrants. The Irish emigrants of the early middle ages were those religious men and women, pilgrims, hermits, missionaries, whose names are found associated with every country, almost every country-side, of western Europe.

J. F. Kenney, *The sources for the early history of Ireland: ecclesiastical* (New York 1929) 487.

Those I have been speaking of debate in the vernacular, and one must distinguish them from another kind of debaters who employ a barbarous language which seems somehow to heighten the fury and stubbornness of the adversaries. There are districts [in Paris] where one sees as it were a dark, dense mêlée of these kinds of people; they feed on distinctions, they live on obscure reasoning and false inferences. This occupation, of which one should really die from hunger, does not fail to provide for them. We have seen an entire nation driven from their country and crossing the seas to settle in France, bringing nothing with them to ensure the necessities of life except a formidable talent for argumentation.

Montesquieu (1689–1755), *Lettres Persanes* (1721) 36.

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Preface

The present essay originated in an invitation from my colleague Professor Rolf Baumgarten to contribute an article on the Irish College in Paris to the annual Newsletter of the School of Celtic Studies: when the resulting text eventually outgrew the space allocated to it, it was suggested it might be issued as a separate publication. Given the context in which the essay was first proposed it seemed natural that it should concern itself with what is known of the College's historical involvement in Irish studies and that it should focus primarily, though not exclusively, on the evidence for the status of the Irish language within the College community, both as a living vernacular among staff and students and as a medium of literary and intellectual expression. This represents only one of a number of valid perspectives from which one may view the history of the College and it is offered as a very minor and provisional contribution to that history when the time is ripe to compile it. Meanwhile I cannot pretend to have exhausted all the possible sources of information even in this more restricted domain, and I would be well content were it to prove necessary in the not too distant future to issue a revised and somewhat expanded version of the present text.

For a work of such modest pretension it has benefited inordinately from the counsel of others. I am indebted to Mgr Brendan Devlin, Rector of Collège des Irlandais and former Professor of French in St Patrick's College Maynooth, who lent it his expert and experienced *imprimatur*, as also to other friends and colleagues who read my text and offered suggestions for its improvement: Fr Liam Swords, who did much service to Collège des Irlandais in his former capacity as archivist and chaplain and whose various publications I have found invaluable; Professor Pierre-Yves Lambert, Ècole Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris; Professor Pádraig A. Breatnach, University College Dublin; Dr Alan Harrison, also of University College Dublin; Ms Bernadette Cunningham, Deputy Librarian of the Royal Irish Academy; and finally I must mention my colleague Dr Michelle O Riordan who gave me much useful advice on sixteenth and seventeenth-century historical sources as well as seeing the finished text through the press. There are still others whom I consulted on specific matters, and I trust that their advice and information are adequately acknowledged in the appropriate contexts. The fact remains, however, that the present review can be no more than a first essay while so much research remains to be carried out on the primary sources for the general history of the College and of its many fascinating personalities from John Lee onwards. There is there a broad and fertile field standing white to harvest.

In any review of the College's history, however summary, it would be amiss not to acknowledge the support of its many French friends and benefactors who helped secure its beginnings and ensure its survival in subsequent times of crisis. I mention several of them in my text and close with the testimony of Canon Ouin-la-Croix who kept watch solicitously over the deserted College during the Franco-German

war and the hazardous days of the Paris Commune. There is one other whose contribution I feel it is particularly appropriate to record at this time. M. Maurice Caillet, a man much respected for his great learning and experience in the world of books and libraries, rendered the College a great service in a difficult period of transition and scant resources. Inspecteur Général des bibliothèques de France since 1963, he retired from the Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale in 1977 and in the following year entered on a long and active, and wholly voluntary, association with the library of Collège des Irlandais. As honorary librarian he has selflessly given his time and energy to classifying and cataloguing the collection, organizing selective exhibitions and publishing the results of his personal research on the history of the library and its holdings. Only on his ninetieth birthday, 9 November 2000, did he finally sever his formal connection with the College and its library, though his interest in both continues undiminished. *Il a bien mérité de nos deux patries.*

Finally, a brief word on a recent event of great moment for the College. This short survey of its associations with Irish studies was inspired by a certain sense of curiosity about the cultural interests and affiliations of some of those who strove to ensure the College's survival over long periods of shifting fortunes and was written in a spirit of hopeful expectation that the necessary resources would be forthcoming to ensure that the potential of the College as an Irish cultural and educational centre would be fully realized. And in the end, as it were between pen and print, that hope has been given substance. In May of last year, the year two thousand, the Irish government announced its decision to provide a subvention of seven million pounds towards the complete renovation of the existing building in rue des Irlandais, the work to be carried out under the direction of

the Office of Public Works. In the absence of the Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern TD, who was detained by urgent talks in 10 Downing Street on the Northern Ireland Agreement, the formal announcement was made in Collège des Irlandais on Wednesay, 3 May 2000, by Mr Martin Cullen TD, Minister of State at the Department of Finance (with special responsibility for the Office of Public Works). Work is due to commence early in 2001 and it is intended that the College will reopen in 2002, not merely to a new year but to a new phase of its history.

1. *The beginnings of Collège des Irlandais*

The establishment of a collegiate community is often a gradual development, difficult to pinpoint in time in the absence of precise material evidence such as a foundation document or a dedicated building. This is true of the Irish collegiate community in Paris. An inevitable consequence of the severe restrictions imposed on Catholic education in Ireland in the middle of the sixteenth century was that young Irishmen, especially but not only those aspiring to the priesthood, began to seek a congenial education where it was more easily accessible, in other words on the Continent, in Spain or the Netherlands or Italy or France. There had of course always been some who, for their own reasons, made their way to continental universities, but repression at home greatly augmented their numbers and in the final decades of the century small groups of such students could be found in a number of towns in France and Spain. Some of them gradually acquired the character of nuclear, embryonic communities which in time gave rise to the first of the Irish colleges abroad. By the year 1700 thirty or so colleges had been established on the Continent, and of these the largest, and by general agreement, the earliest was the Irish College

in Paris. It is not easy to identify precisely when it gained recognition as a separate collegiate community, but its genesis may be traced to the occasion, in 1578, when Fr John Lee arrived in Paris accompanied by six students whom he established in Collège de Montaigu, one of the most ancient and eminent of the colleges of the University of Paris.[1]

As the number of Irish students increased, the majority of them were of necessity dispersed in small groups among various houses and colleges in the city, attending the schools of the University as externs, yet, under the prudent direction of Fr Lee, their guiding figure for over forty years, they were able to develop and maintain a visible corporate identity within the broader academic community of Paris. About the turn of the century their lack of a central location or residence was at least partly supplied when they rented a house in rue St Thomas, and in 1605 they moved from there to a rather more fashionable setting through the generosity of their first great benefactor, John de l'Escalopier, Baron de St-Just, an eminent jurist and president of the parliament of

[1] There are several sources which are referred to particularly frequently in the following pages: P. Boyle, *The Irish College in Paris from 1578 to 1901* (London 1901), henceforth *The Irish College*; id. 'The Irish College in Paris, 1578–1901: gleanings–language', *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* (1902) 193–210, henceforth 'The Irish College'; L. W. B. Brockliss and P. Ferté, 'Irish clerics in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries : a statistical study', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* [*PRIA*] C 87 (1987) 527–72, henceforth 'Irish clerics' (plus a typescript register deposited in the RIA library comprising the names of Irish clerics who studied at the universities of Paris and Toulouse-Cahors); L. Swords, 'Collège des Lombards', *The Irish-French Connection 1578–1970* (Paris 1978), henceforth 'Collège des Lombards'; id. 'History of the Irish College, 1578–1800: calendar of the papers of the Irish College, Paris', *Archivium Hibernicum* [*Archiv. Hib.*] 35 (1980) 3–233, henceforth *Calendar*; id. *The green cockade: the Irish in the French revolution 1789–1815* (Sandycove, Co. Dublin 1989), henceforth *The green cockade*.

Paris, who furnished them with a house in rue de Sèvres in the neighbourhood of St Germain and contributed generously towards the maintenance of those who were accommodated there. Clearly he was a man of uncommon piety and humility:

> Every day that could be spared from public business, he passed with the Irish exiles. ... He was frequently with them in the refectory, where his humility was such, that, forgetful of his rank as first magistrate of France, and as proof of his respect for the exiled clergymen, he always chose the last place at table. According as they had completed their studies, and were prepared to return to their country, their illustrious patron, in order to prove their capability, had them examined by Père Binet, a learned Jesuit of the time; he then himself presented them to Cardinal Retz, bishop of Paris, to receive their mission from him; after which they were furnished with clothes and every thing necessary for the voyage, at his expense.[1]

Soon references are found to the 'Irish Seminary' or 'Irish College' in Paris, and in 1620 Fr Lee was succeeded as superior by his chosen successor Dr Thomas Dease, soon to play a role of considerable significance in religious and political affairs at home in Ireland, and he in turn in 1621 by Dr Thomas Messingham, a scholar cleric who shared the Louvain Franciscans' interest in Irish ecclesiastical history and learning.[2]

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[1] J. MacGeoghegan, *History of Ireland, ancient and modern ...*, Engl. transl. P. O'Kelly, 3 vols (Dublin 1831–2) 480.

[2] Cf. J. Lynch, *De Praesulibus Hiberniae* (written in 1672), (ed. J. F. O'Doherty, Dublin 1944) 167–8.

In the preface to his own *Florilegium* of Irish saints' Lives published in 1624 Messingham qualifies himself as Rector of the Irish seminary. In this capacity he strove to assure the status of the seminary within the University of Paris.[1]

In 1623 a royal permission to receive alms and donations had been granted to the Irish students, and this was notified to the Rector of the University of Paris in the following year. In response he stipulated that the community should bear the title of 'Seminary' and that the superior and students should swear to pay respect to the Rector and observe all the laws and customs of the University of Paris.[2] This intimate connection with the University was a fact already commonly recognized: thus in a document of 1624 proposing the election of Dr Patrick Hanratty, vicar apostolic of Down and Connor, to the see of Clogher, the brief introduction to the written testimony furnished by Thomas Messingham and dated 30 August 1624 describes him as the superior of the College of Irish scholars in the University of Paris (*... superioris collegii Hibernorum studiosorum in universitate Parisiensi*).[3] Evidently the financial circumstances of the college were still precarious and the future far from secure, and in September of that same year five of the Irish bishops addressed a heartfelt appeal to the clergy and laity of the city of Paris, to the University and to the College of the Sorbonne to lend their support to the seminary: it had rendered invaluable service to the Church in Ireland and continued to do so under the wise and assiduous guidance of its superior (*ipsius superi-*

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[1] T. O'Connor, 'Thomas Messingham (*c.*1575–1638?) and the seventeenth-century Church', *Ríocht na Midhe: records of Meath archaeological and historical society* 11 (2000) 88–105 (90).

[2] P. Boyle, *The Irish College*, 5–6 (Lettre Patente of king Louis XIII, dated 16 September 1623, at Saint Germain-en-Laye).

[3] B. Jennings (ed.), *Wadding Papers 1614–38* (Dublin 1953) 75–6.

orem seu Presidem) Thomas Messingham, and, were it to fail, the consequences would be disastrous for the Irish people.[1] That the response was positive would appear from the fact that in 1626 the archbishop of Paris delivered his formal approval to the rules and statutes of the college.[2]

In the course of the seventeenth century the number of Irish students and clergy in Paris increased steadily, largely through the effects of war and oppression at home in Ireland, and by 1676 Collège de Montaigu, which continued to be their main *foyer*, provided accommodation for eighty-four Irish priests. It is said that the house in rue de Sèvres continued to be used until this time, though there is little recorded information in this regard.[3] In the following year, 1677, the Irish secured their first permanent home when Louis XIV assigned to them by letters-patent full possession of Collège des Lombards, an institution in rue des Carmes which had been founded in 1333 to house poor Italian students in Paris. For various reasons the college had long ceased to attract Italian students, and in 1676 the provisors had nominated eleven Irish priests from dioceses throughout Ireland to the vacant bursaries. The building was in ruins but was restored, at their own expense, by two Irish clerics who enjoyed considerable influence at the French court, Malachy Kelly and Patrick Maginn, who were elected provisors of the college for life, with the right to name their successors. In 1685 this system was legally altered to provide for the election of four provisors representing the four provinces, and at

[1] P. F. Moran, *Spicilegium Ossoriense* (Dublin 1874) i, 133–5; Boyle, *The Irish College*, 5.

[2] Boyle, *The Irish College*, 165–9 (document 3); T. J. Walsh, *The Irish continental college movement* (Dublin and Cork 1973) 73.

[3] 'The Irish College, Paris', unsigned article in *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 2 (1866) 180–5, 252–62 (182, 184).

the same time a small number of *écoliers*, unordained or lay students, were admitted to an institution primarily intended to cater for the needs of students who had been previously ordained.

There were however many other lay *écoliers* in Paris who frequently found themselves in dire need of material support to secure their education and accommodation. They found several benefactors of whom one of the most generous was the Abbé Bailly, who not only assisted Drs Maginn and Kelly to gain possession of Collège des Lombards and bequeathed twelve thousand livres to the college in his will, but also secured accommodation for many of the Irish lay students and subsidized a number of them in Collège Sainte Barbe and in Collège de Montaigu. Before his death in 1692 he provided for them a house in rue Traversine adjacent to Collège des Lombards, with the result that there now existed two communities in close proximity: one of priests and one of younger, unordained clerics.

Before long, however, the latter found themselves in a precarious financial situation, and on their appealing to the king the lay *écoliers* were granted admission to Collège des Lombards in 1707 by a decree of the king's council and a part of the college buildings allocated to them separate from that of the priests. In addition to the four provincial provisors there was also to be a prefect of students, a priest responsible for the interests of the clerical students. Not surprisingly, this solution fell short of perfection, and the subsequent history of the establishment is coloured by the inevitable tensions and disputes created by the divergent interests of the *Communauté des Prêtres* and the *Communauté des Clercs et Écoliers*.[1]

[1] Boyle, *The Irish College*, 26–7; L. Swords, 'Collège des Lombards', 44–62; Swords, *A hidden Church : the diocese of Achonry 1689–1818* (Blackrock, Co. Dublin 1997) 209–212.

And yet, whatever its recurrent problems, the College henceforth provided a focus not merely for its own resident community but also for the other Irish groups living in the city — it was here, for example, in Collège des Lombards that James II held a *levée* on his return to France after his defeat at the battle of the Boyne. For the next century or more the College was to play a prominent role in the education and training of young Irishmen for the priesthood, for medicine and the officer corps of the Irish Brigade, as well as for the world of commerce and banking. Among its alumni were to be numbered professors in many of the colleges of the University of Paris and regents of the faculty of medicine, a rector of the University of Paris, early presidents of Maynooth College, and the first Catholic provost of Trinity College Dublin.

However, success created its own exigencies and by the middle of the eighteenth century space was at a premium in Collège des Lombards and the provision of additional accommodation had become a matter of urgency. Through the agency of an Irish banker, John Waters, the prefect of students at the college, Laurence Kelly, in 1769 acquired a townhouse and garden in the rue du Cheval Vert (now rue des Irlandais) in one of the most richly historical areas of Paris, as well as a country-house in the village of Yvry-sur-Seine 'where the sick [students] can regain their health'. Henceforth Yvry was to provide a welcome refuge from the rigours of college life and the heat of a Parisian summer, though evidently there were those who found it hard to relinquish the familiar atmosphere of library and study. Writing from Yvry to the bishop of Meath in August 1779 James Markey, rector of Collège des Irlandais, has a bantering reference to one of his colleagues who could not be enticed away from his books: 'Flood is in a fair way to finish himself, and so intent is he upon it, that he rather choses to stay vegetating and

poring over his books in Paris, than spend the vacation with us at Yvry, where he might certainly read as much as any reasonable pounder would desire; but there is no such thing as reasoning with one that is predetermined to listen to no reason.' And he goes on to make a homely reference to his immediate surroundings: 'Our garden has done its duty this year extremely well. We have a vast plenty of fruit. The melons have succeeded very tolerably, although I have not as yet tasted any so delicious as the little round one we ate last year in Paris. I wish it were in my power to convey one to the diocese of Meath.'[1] The bookish colleague was Dr Peter Flood, Professor of Divinity in Collège de Navarre, who was appointed superior of Collège des Lombards in 1782 and who much later, in the fateful year of 1798, became President of St Patrick's College Maynooth.

The property acquired by Fr Kelly comprised a large house with its entrance on rue du Cheval Vert, a courtyard, stable and large garden planted with fruit trees, together with two little houses on rue des Postes adjoining the garden. After an extensive programme of reconstruction to the design of the distinguished architect François-Joseph Bélanger culminating in the impressive building that was henceforth to be known as Collège des Irlandais, the Irish student community took up residence there in the autumn of 1775.[2] From then on the new college housed the younger

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[1] A. Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath: ancient and modern* ([Dublin 1870]; repr. 1992) III, 16–17.

[2] Swords, *Calendar*, document 583; also documents 482, 483, 487. This repertory of surviving documents is invaluable, though in the main it is concerned with purely financial matters, such as donations and foundations; many other documents which were appropriated during the Revolution have not come to light since. In most instances throughout this essay my quotations and citations are drawn from Fr Swords's very accurate résumés of the contents of the documents; in some others I have also

students, the *clercs et écoliers*, while Collège des Lombards was reserved for priests.[1] Though neither college was ever free from economic constraints, both benefited from donations or foundations provided by bishops and priests in Ireland, by Irish priests, doctors and soldiers in France, as well as by some generous French benefactors. By the late eighteenth century the Irish community in Paris had achieved a position of considerable prestige and influence and the future looked full of promise. Even those perceptive enough to read the signs of social and political change could hardly have foreseen its profound consequences. In the event, the upheaval caused by the Revolution throughout French society did not spare Irish interests or the Irish colleges.

By tradition and association most of the authorities in the Irish colleges in France and in Paris shared, or were deemed to share, the increasing hostility of the Church towards the revolutionary cause, though many of their students openly demonstrated their sympathy with the Revolution and their criticism of their own superiors' attitude towards it.[2] As foreigners the clerics in the Irish colleges were exempted from taking the oath to the new civil constitution, but they came

consulted the originals in the archive of the Irish College.

[1] Swords, *Calendar* doc. 629.

[2] The characteristic conservatism of the Irish clergy was also one of the factors that drew upon them the scorn of some of the philosophical and literary figures of the Enlightenment, who, as in the satiric comment of Montesquieu quoted above pictured them as pedants preoccupied with pointless scholastic argumentation, or, as in the case of the anglophile Voltaire, regarded the Catholic Irish, and their clergy, as feckless and superstitious; see Éamon Ó Cíosáin, '*Voulumous deamboulare*: the wandering Irish in French literature, 1600–1789', in A. Coulson (ed.), *Exiles and migrants: crossing thresholds in European culture and society* (Brighton 1997) 32–42 (35–9); G. Gargett, 'Voltaire's view of the Irish', in G. Gargett and G. Sheridan (ed.), *Ireland and the French Enlightenment 1700–1800* (Houndmills, Hampshire 1999) 152–70.

under suspicion of counter-revolutionary tendencies and the colleges in Paris were attacked by the Paris mobs on several occasions. By a combination of tenacity and diplomacy the college authorities rode out the early crises, but by 1792 more than half the students had returned to Ireland and Collège des Irlandais had almost ceased to function, and finally in 1793 Jean-Baptiste Walsh and Charles Kearney, the *recteurs* of Collège des Lombards and Collège des Irlandais, were placed under arrest and the properties seized.[1] Though they were restored to the Irish in 1795 the changed environment was such that the Irish College never recovered its former vigour and prestige. During the earlier part of the century more than half of the Irish clergy were educated in France and about one third of them at Paris, but now that situation was utterly changed.[2] The most telling fact of all is that the Irish never subsequently resumed their occupancy of Collège des Lombards: as Fr Liam Swords has observed, 'the closure of Collège des Lombards marks the end of the golden age of the Irish in Paris'.[3] Among the key factors which at-

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[1] One of the students who returned to Ireland was John Murphy/Seán Ó Murchú (1772–1847), later bishop of Cork from 1815 to 1847. As bishop he was renowned as a patron of Irish literature and learning and was reputed to have the greatest private collection of books in Ireland. He came to the Irish College in Paris in 1787 but had to return home two years later on the outbreak of the Revolution. In 1791 he set out for the Irish College in Lisbon where he continued his studies until his ordination there in 1796 (B. Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí 1700–1850* (Baile Átha Cliath 1982) 222–4).

[2] Cf. C. Giblin, OFM, 'Irish exiles in Europe', in *A History of Irish Catholicism* IV, 2 (ed. P. J. Corish, Dublin 1971) 64.

[3] Swords, 'Collège des Lombards', 62. For the impact of the Revolution on the Irish in France and Paris see also J. C. Simms, 'The Irish on the Continent, 1691–1800', in *Eighteenth-Century Ireland 1691–1800* (ed. T. W. Moody and W. E. Vaughan, Oxford 1986) [*A New History of Ireland* IV], 629–56, esp. 650–54; also P. Boyle, 'The Irish colleges in Paris during the

tenuated the connection between Ireland and France were the disbandment of the Irish Brigade in 1791 and the establishment of Maynooth College in 1795. As a result two of the major components of professional emigration to France and the Continent were diverted elsewhere, and the subsequent decline of the Irish language at home ensured that from then on the main attraction for Irish emigrants would be towards the English-speaking world.

After its restoration Collège des Irlandais was leased for nine years to an Irish priest, the Abbé MacDermott, who transferred his highly regarded school for French boys from Saint-Germain-en-Laye to rue du Cheval Vert, where it continued to function until 1802. Its pupils included Napoleon's youngest brother, Jérome Bonaparte, who was to become king of Westphalia in 1807, and his stepson Eugène de Beauharnais.[1] However, consequent upon a Consular decree of Napoleon I issued in 1802, Collège des Irlandais was reopened and in 1805 it was formally reconstituted, together with its associated properties, as a *fondation* or trust under a supervisory board subject to the Ministère des Cultes (later de l'Education et des Cultes). This body experienced various vicissitudes over the years but it survived its several crises and mutations until it was finally steered towards its ultimate and felicitous metamorphosis as the outcome of Franco-Irish governmental agreement in 1989.

So far as the Irish hierarchy was concerned one of its main preoccupations in the aftermath of the Revolution was

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French Revolution', *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* (1904) 48–73.

[1] L. Swords, *The green cockade*, 140–41. In the unsigned article on the Irish College already cited from *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 2 (1866) 180–85, 252–62, the author quotes a vivid account of this fashionable academy 'from a work entitled *The Irish Abroad and at Home* written by the late Mr. O'Reilly, the *Times* correspondent in Paris' (pp 254–56).

to seek restoration of property and funds lost through the sequestration of Irish foundations. It was with this aim in view that Dr Peter Flood, President of Maynooth and former superior of Collège des Lombards, proposed on behalf of the hierarchy that all former Irish foundations and their revenues be consolidated in the surviving college in rue du Cheval Vert. The proposal won favour with Napoleon and was brought into effect by decree in 1802. It became increasingly clear, however, that the hierarchy's real purpose was to secure the repatriatation of Irish funds, an objective that was strongly opposed by Franco-Irish groups such as the Irish officers in the French military service and the *émigré* members of the United Irishmen. To the '98 veteran Myles Byrne 'It appeared strange to see the Bishops attempting such a transfer, before they had any hopes of catholic emancipation. To be sure it was one way of shewing their devotion to their taskmasters, to deprive the Irish rebel and exile of the means of having his son well educated in France, in the event of another war between the two countries'.[1] In the actual event the bishops' designs were frustrated by the slow and tortuous nature of the negotiations between Britain and France on the general issue of reparations and between the hierarchy

[1] F. Byrne (ed.), *Memoirs of Myles Byrne, edited by his widow [Fanny Byrne]* (Paris 1863; first ed. in 3 vols; photolithographic facs. repr. with introd. by R. B. McDowell [Shannon, Ireland 1972]) iii, 195. Byrne fought in the 1798 rising, was sent by Robert Emmet to Paris in 1803 to liaise with the leaders of the United Irishmen there and served in the French army from his first commission in 1803 until his retirement in 1834. He subsequently lived in Paris for nearly thirty years until his death in 1862. When he first arrived in Paris the Irish College was, as he says, 'struggling and beginning to recover from the effects of the Revolution', and in the third volume of his *Memoirs* he has some interesting comment and information on its subsequent fortunes and on those associated with it (especially vol. iii, 191–209).

and the British authorities after 1818, when compensation became a British responsibility: in that year the two countries agreed to terminate the earlier joint-commission and the French government allocated a sum producing an annual interest of three and a half million francs to be dispensed by commissioners appointed by the British government. The Irish continued to press their case until 1832, and indeed revisited it in the seventies with the help of Mr Isaac Butt and other legal experts, but to no avail.[1]

Meanwhile the college in rue des Irlandais survived several periods of crisis: the Franco-Prussian war of 1870–71, when it was temporarily vacated by the Irish and converted into a hospital housing three hundred wounded French soldiers; the threat of suppression in 1907 under the Law of Separation of Church and State (1905), and the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, when the College closed and the students left for the duration. It did not, however, survive the onset of the Second World War: when in 1939 the Irish community quit rue des Irlandais for the duration of the conflict, this in fact marked the end of the seminary's history.[2] Even before the outbreak of war the Paris seminary had become redundant to the Irish hierarchy's needs as they perceived them and in the aftermath of the war they agreed to lease all but one small segment of the buildings to the Polish Church, with the result that the Irish College became in effect a Polish institution and continued so for over five decades.

By the mid-seventies the Irish presence in the college had become critically circumscribed and diluted and its future

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[1] T. J. Walsh, *The Irish continental college movement* 168–82; P. Boyle, *The Irish college* 78–84.

[2] For this series of events see Swords, *Calendar* 4, 10–11; Boyle, *The Irish College* 67–71.

looked increasingly uncertain. With growing awareness of the gravity of the situation came the realization that it was absolutely imperative to initiate a sustained process gradually to re-affirm the primary object of the foundation, namely to provide a residence for Irish students and scholars and to provide an Irish cultural and educational centre for the city of Paris and for the whole of France, and in particular to strive with all urgency to enlist the support of the Irish State in achieving this end. Considerations of space preclude our recounting here in any detail the events and developments of subsequent years — that can await another occasion — but in the context of Irish and humanistic studies one might recall in passing the major colloquium held in the college under the auspices of the Royal Irish Academy in June 1981 on the theme 'Rencontre des Religions'. This event is notable for two reasons. Firstly, it was and remains the only occasion on which the Royal Irish Academy has convened such a formal meeting outside the confines of Ireland since its foundation in 1785, and, secondly, the opening lecture on the first evening was delivered by the distinguished French scholar Georges Dumézil on a Celtic topic, 'La quatrième branche du Mabinogi et les trois fonctions indo-européennes'. If I am not mistaken, this was one of the last public lectures given by Dumézil before his death in 1986.

An increasing level of contact and cooperation with the Department of Foreign Affairs was accorded official recognition in June 1985 when the then Minister, Mr Peter Barry TD, hosted a reception in the Department to mark the setting up of a nuclear three-man committee, The Committee for the Irish College in Paris, whose brief was 'to work towards establishing the Irish College as a major centre of Irish social, academic and cultural activity in France'. The membership of the committee was designed to reflect the tripartite inter-

ests of the Church, the State and the academic world (as represented by the Royal Irish Academy). Its first initiative was to propose an extension of the very limited space reserved for Irish use within the College, the second was to establish a second and larger committee, The Committee of Friends of the Irish College, as a body which would also bring together people from the world of business and finance to seek the considerable resources necessary for the structural restoration of the College. This committee, later reconstituted as the Board of Collège des Irlandais Paris, has been working actively throughout the intervening years and the record of the last decade is testimony to its already very substantial achievements. The renovation of part of the south wing, financed by an extensive fund-raising campaign, was completed towards the end of 1989, while at the same time, on the constitutional level, negotiations proceeded between the Irish ambassador in Paris, Mr Tadhg O'Sullivan, and representatives of the French government with the aim of producing an agreed revision of the statutes of the Fondation Irlandaise, the ancient trust charged with the governance of the College. The resulting revised statutes recognize the radically changed environment — social, political and economic — in which the College must now function and the new balance of Irish and French interests in the safeguarding of its future. Appropriately, the restructured council responsible for its administration consists of fourteen members, seven French appointed by the French government and seven Irish nominated by the Irish ambassador (where formerly there had been a sole Irish representative nominated by the Irish hierarchy).

In keeping with the principle of the inevitability of gradualness it was not entirely unexpected that the Polish hierarchy should have decided eventually to relinquish their

tenancy of Collège des Irlandais and to seek a new location for their Paris seminary. After fifty years of friendly cooperation, during most of which time the college was essentially a Polish seminary and the Irish evinced little or no active interest in its fate, the Polish administrators generously accepted the changing circumstances and finally withdrew from rue des Irlandais in the early months of 1997. Their withdrawal presented the administrators with a major opportunity, but also a daunting challenge. The optimal development of the college as a cultural and educational centre as well as a place of residence can only proceed *pari passu* with the phased renovation of the buildings, and here the major if not the only constraining factor has been the availability of adequate funding. The survival of what is arguably the most impressive overseas monument to Irish history and culture, especially in their European dimension, has now been ensured; the challenge of the future is to build prudently and creatively on that achievement. With this in mind plans have been prepared for the comprehensive renovation of the college buildings and their adaptation to the requirements of a modern Irish social, cultural and educational centre for Paris, France and mainland Europe. It is hoped that the work will be undertaken and brought to a close early in the new millennium.

In particular Collège des Irlandais has the potential to play an important role in promoting Franco-Irish cultural relations in the coming years. In doing so, it is envisaged that it will reflect in the range of its activities the cultural pluralism of the Irish people and that it will also maintain continuity with the cultural inheritance of the *communautés des prêtres, des clercs et des écoliers irlandais* who lived, studied and worked in Paris for three hundred years and more. One essential constituent of that cultural plurality and of that in-

heritance is the Irish language and the learning and tradition associated with it and it is proposed in the present context to note some of the evidence for the currency of the language, and for learned interest in it, among the community of priests and students.

2. *The Irish language in the Paris college*

At home in Ireland during the early phase of the history of the Paris community Irish remained the common vernacular among clergy and people throughout most of the country. Writing of the earlier and mid-seventeenth century Fr Donal F. Cregan usefully summarizes the linguistic competence and practice of bishops and priests both at home and abroad:

> It is noteworthy that, however much the bishops differed in their political views, there was no cultural divide between those of Gaelic or Anglo-Irish, or those of northern or southern, origin. If John O'Cullenan of Raphoe or Heber MacMahon of Clogher found themselves eulogised in Gaelic poetry,[1] the Palesman Thomas Dease was a Gaelic poet in his own right, while the southern townsmen Richard Arthur of Limerick and

[1] His reference here is to seven Irish poems composed for Bishop O'Cullenan and edited by J. MacErlean in *Archiv. Hib.* I (1912) 77–121, and to a passage in praise of Bishop MacMahon in the poem 'An Síogaí Romhánach', edited by Cecile O'Rahilly in C. O'Rahilly (ed.), *Five Seventeenth-Century Political Poems* (Dublin 1952) 27.205–15.

William Tirry of Cork and Cloyne also demonstrated their knowledge of Irish antiquities and their ability to translate from English into Irish.

The majority of the people in all the Irish dioceses was Irish speaking and, for pastoral as well as for other reasons, the use of Irish was enjoined on students in the Irish seminaries abroad. Indeed at Douai a spy reported to the English government that the students 'all speak Irish' and he feared that 'these young gentlemen, the offspring of the colonies of the English conquest, may become in language and disposition fermented with the ancient hatred of Irish to English'. His apprehension, however, was excessive since the students also spoke English and, in addition, they were required to learn the language of the country in which the seminary was situated. In effect this meant that all learned Spanish or French, but in Bordeaux students learned both languages. At Bordeaux, also, reading during daily meals was in Latin, French, Irish and English, and no reader was to ascend the rostrum who could not speak these four languages sufficiently well.[1] The policy of the Irish seminaries, the contacts of students within the universities and their travels from one country to another, gave this hierarchy an impressive language equipment . . .[2]

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[1] This information about Bordeaux comes from the constitution and rules of the college there as set out in the bull of Paul V in its favour, see T. J. Walsh, 'Some records of the Irish College at Bordeaux', *Arch. Hib.* 15 (1950) 92–141 (101).

[2] D. F. Cregan, 'The social and cultural background of a counter-

Fr Cregan's reference to the use of Irish 'being enjoined on students in the Irish seminaries abroad' presumably alludes to the directive in this regard issued from Rome in 1650. Following upon a memorandum from Cardinal Carafa to the Holy See urging that a knowledge of the language be required of all students in the continental colleges, the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide decided that competence in Irish should in future be a pre-requisite for entry to any of the colleges. Exemption was granted to students from those areas of Leinster where Irish was not generally spoken.[1] This would have been particularly relevant for the college at Lille, where entry was confined to candidates from Leinster and Meath, but the student body there recognized the importance of the language for the home mission in general and themselves initiated the practice of speaking only Irish on two days of the week.

On the general interrelation between religion and the Irish language in the first half of the seventeenth century — to which the Roman language requirement of 1650 is a not insignificant testimony — historian Nicholas Canny has some relevant comments. Referring to the Counter-Reformation in Ireland he notes 'the greater Gaelic contact with the Continent in the aftermath of the Nine Years' War, 1594–1603', which came about not only through the exodus of members of the native nobility and their soldiery but also in the persons of Gaelic scholars who found refuge in Catholic seminaries on the Continent. There, he says, they encountered Irishmen from the towns and the Pale who had

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reformation episcopate, 1618–60', in *Studies in Irish history presented to R. Dudley Edwards* (ed. A. Cosgrove and D. McCartney, Dublin 1979) 85–117 (116–17).

[1] T. J. Walsh, *The Irish continental college movement* 150 (with reference to Acta S. Cong. 1648–50, vol. 10, no. 23).

already been coming to these seminaries for several decades, and through their interraction with them as well as through their own clerical re-education in their new environment they evolved a fresh approach to the religious and political crisis at home in Ireland:

> Much has been made of the differences that developed between the two groups of Irish students and clergy in the Continental seminaries, but they were united by the conviction that Catholicism in all parts of Ireland was in urgent need of renewal and they were agreed that the Irish language was the obvious vehicle for their proposed missionary endeavour. Thus convinced, those exiles who were ordained as priests set themselves the dual task of strengthening Catholic faith and practice in Ireland, and devising a political formula that would facilitate the survival, or even the consolidation, of Catholicism in Ireland.[1]

One of the more tangible results of this intellectual and ideological regroupment was the considerable body of catechetical literature in Irish produced on the Continent during the first half of the seventeenth century with the aim of creating a greater awareness and understanding of Catholic doctrine among both laity and clergy in Ireland.

Meanwhile, however, the socio-political situation continued to deteriorate, and, inevitably, by the eighteenth century the status of the Irish language at home had been further undermined through the effects of conquest and colonization.

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[1] N. Canny, 'The formation of the Irish mind: religion, politics and Gaelic Irish literature 1580–1750', *Past and Present*, no. 95 (1982) 91–116 (95).

Yet, however uncertain its prospects, it still remained the majority language over much the greater part of Ireland,[1] and as such it continued to be a factor of considerable moment in the awarding of ecclesiastical preferments. One interesting, if incidental, instance has been noted by Fr Liam Swords. When the archdiocese of Dublin became vacant in 1786 both the university and the archbishop of Paris took a lively interest in the succession. The university made representations to Rome on behalf of Dr Peter Flood of Collège des Lombards, while the archbishop lent his support to two potential candidates: the bishop of Meath, Patrick Joseph Plunkett, and the Abbé Henry Edgeworth, who is still remembered as the priest who attended Louis XVI until the moment of his execution. His final preference being for the Abbé Edgeworth, the archbishop asked his vicar-general to communicate this to Rome, which he did in a form summarized by Fr Swords:

> 'One cannot speak too highly of this virtuous priest' the vicar-general wrote, 'who combines irreproachable morals with zeal and talent.' His only reservation was that Edgeworth was 'shy and excessively humble which might affect the strength of character necessary for the government of a church'.[2]

A commendation as unstinting as it was merited, but couched in terms that might appear more apt to promoting his canonization than securing his appointment to an important archbishopric. This impression is hardly dissipated by what follows, with its seeming implication that the Abbé's

[1] See for example B. Ó Cuív, 'Irish language and literature, 1691–1845', in *Eighteenth-Century Ireland 1691–1800* (ed. T. W. Moody and W. E. Vaughan, Oxford 1986) [*A New History of Ireland* IV], 374–423 (383).
[2] L. Swords, *The green cockade* 16–17.

claim on Dublin is the stronger for the fact that he has little chance of preferment elsewhere:

> He [the vicar-general] pointed out that Edgeworth, not knowing Irish, would not be suitable for a diocese in rural Ireland 'where the use of this language is absolutely necessary for a bishop to instruct his people' which was not true of Leinster or Ardagh 'where English was the dominant language.'

In the event Rome decided in favour of Thomas Troy, a Dominican who had been attached to San Clemente in Rome and had been the official agent of the Irish bishops there. It is, however, of interest to note that the crucial importance of linguistic competence was recognized not only by the Irish bishops but also by the continental churchmen, whether in Rome or in Paris, who influenced the final decisions on such matters.

Fr Patrick Boyle, who was himself rector of the Irish College at the beginning of the twentieth century, has pointed out that the Paris college differed from those in other parts of France in that its students came from all four provinces — unlike, for example, the college at Lille just referred to, or that at Bordeaux whose priests and students were drawn predominantly from Munster — and he is doubtless correct in inferring from this — in the context of the eighteenth century — that most of the Paris students would have been Irish speakers.[1]

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[1] Boyle, The Irish College', 193–4, 197–8. Fr Boyle's observations on the nationally representative character of the student body is corroborated by Brockliss and Ferté's statistical analysis of the provenance of Irish clerical students registered at the University of Paris: 'Secondly, a study of

This is somewhat disguised in the extant documentation by the fact that, for a variety of socio-linguistic reasons, English was in this period the normal medium of written correspondence between Irish clerics abroad and their colleagues and superiors at home, while they would only very occasionally have reason to refer specifically to the knowledge of Irish among the priests and students of the Irish colleges in Paris and elsewhere in France. A typical instance is that of two friends who had close associations with the Paris community: Seán Ó Briain, bishop of Cloyne and Ross from 1747 to 1767, and Matthew MacKenna, Munster provisor of Collège des Lombards and Ó Briain's episcopal successor; both were devoted to the Irish language yet they corresponded in English, while Ó Briain arranged that his priests should write their theses for clerical conferences in Latin or English.[1]

The issue of language was in fact one of profound concern for those charged with providing an adequate supply of priests qualified to serve effectively the pastoral needs of the Irish people at home. When Bishop Seán Ó Briain met the nuncio in Brussels in 1764 he advised strongly against appointing Fr Egan, parish priest of Clonmel, to the bishopric of Killaloe on the grounds that he was unable to preach in

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the diocesan origin of Irish students at Paris would suggest that, broadly speaking, recruitment was nation-wide. Quite clearly Irish representation at Paris was very different from that in other parts of France where the intake seems to have been geographically narrow. ...' (L. W. B. Brockliss and P. Ferté, 'Irish clerics', 537–40).

[1] J. Coombes, *A bishop of penal times* (Cork 1981) 76. This is a complex topic which would merit more detailed examination; for instance, many of the individual clerics discussed in the present context had enjoyed some form of formal training in Irish as well as in English and other languages, but there were evidently some among them whose native command of oral Irish was not accompanied by a comparable measure of literacy.

Irish, the only language the country people knew.[1] When Ó Briain wrote to Cardinal-Prefect Castelli on 20 November of the same year in connection with the publication of his Irish-English dictionary, he explained that his motivation in undertaking such a task had been to protect the Catholic faith among the people at large:

> The preservation of the Irish language among the clergy and Catholic population is essentially connected with the preservation of the true Faith. The reason is that the majority of the Catholics of Ireland live in the country, in villages and in small towns and in general speak only the Irish language which is a dialect of Celtic. As a necessary consequence they learn their Catechism and recite their prayers in Irish; moreover, only in Irish can they make the sacramental confession of their sins. As a result the parochial clergy and other missionary priests must be sufficiently well acquainted with Irish in order to administer the Sacraments, to teach the people Christian doctrine, to instruct them in moral truths and in the truths of the Gospel.[2]

As we have seen, much of the history of Collège des Lombards was dogged by persistent dissension between the student body and the ordained clergy, and one notable by-product of this fractiousness was a lengthy memorandum written in the interests of the clergy around 1738.[3] Among

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[1] *Ibid.* 75–6.

[2] *F. M. Jones, 'The Congregation of Propaganda and the publication of Dr. O'Brien's Irish dictionary, 1768', The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 77 (Jan.–June 1952) 29–37 (32). I quote from Fr Jones's translation.

[3] *Swords, Calendar* documents 261, 262; idem., and, on the rivalry between

the several matters at issue to which it referred was the practice of providing for the mission at home by ordaining young men to the priesthood in Ireland before sending them to Paris to complete their theological studies; at that time the *Communauté des Prêtres* in the College consisted entirely of such priests. Part of the document's argument in defence of the procedure was that the younger unordained students spent longer abroad and were obliged to acquire a mastery of the French language in order to gain a living with the result that they tended to forget their home language, Irish, and were therefore less useful for the domestic mission — quite apart from the fact, as it claimed, that the majority of the *écoliers* did not become priests as a result of their education. Of those students who were ordained in the Irish colleges a sizeable proportion remained permanently or semi-permanently in the land of their adoption. This was true not only of France but also of Spain and the Low Countries and in the earlier period it was a matter of deep concern to the Irish bishops whose dioceses were frequently in sore straits for lack of ordained clergy. About 1660 Edmund O'Reilly, archbishop of Armagh, urged that action was required from ecclesiastical authorities on the Continent to counteract this depletion:

> In order that a remedy may be provided for the evils and need of our people (with all due respect for a safer view) it is necessary that the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide should write to the Archbishops of Toledo and Compostela, to the Archbishops of Nantes, St. Malo,

students and priests, 'Collège des Lombards' 46–51; Swords, *A hidden Church: the diocese of Achonry 1689–1818* (Blackrock, Co. Dublin 1997) 209–12.

> Angers, etc. in France, to the Archbishop of Malines and the Bishops of Tournai, Ghent and Antwerp in Belgium, instructing them to order the Irish priests in their respective districts to return to their flocks especially those who in virtue of their studies are bound by vow or oath to return to the vineyard of the Lord. It is necessary that the same thing should first be done in Rome and in all Italy and this under an arbitrary penalty unless they obey.[1]

It has been estimated that in the archdiocese of Bordeaux in the period 1655–1793 some one hundred and twenty Irish priests remained permanently in the region: this produced an Irish connection of considerable duration in some parishes, as for example in the parish of Boyentran which was cared for by a succession of four Irish curés from 1696 to 1766.[2]

The Irish had achieved positions of influence in many areas of French life, and consequently many young men who had come to France to study for the priesthood found themselves through time attracted by the various opportunities to take up a career in the army, in medicine, or in the several branches of business in which the Irish had distinguished themselves. That the question of language was a matter of vital concern for the home mission is underlined by a statement of the Archbishop of Toulouse in 1700: 'Since by the foundation all the seminarists once they have been made priests are obliged to go back to Ireland to preach the Gospel

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[1] T. Ó Fiaich, 'Edmund O'Reilly, Archbishop of Armagh 1657–1669', in *Father Luke Wadding* (ed. The Franciscan Fathers, Dublin 1957) 171–228 (203–4).

[2] T. J. Walsh, *The Irish continental college movement*, 107–10, 129–30.

and administer the sacraments, we forbid them to speak any other language to each other except their own, apart from Latin'.[1] In the circumstances, however, erosion was a fact of life, and according to one report many of those who had come to study in the Irish colleges 'could not be employed on the Irish mission because they had failed to maintain their facility in the Irish language' (*'[Ils ne purent] être employés à la mission d'Irlande, faute d'avoir conservé l'usage de la langue irlandaise'*).[2] On the other hand, the ordained priests, arriving at a more mature age, retained their proficiency in Irish and were less inclined to remain in France beyond the completion of their studies; consequently they were better fitted and more disposed to return to the service of the Church in Ireland.[3]

This was the route followed for example by Geoffrey Keating (Seathrún Céitinn), whose History of Ireland (*Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*) enjoys a unique status in Irish literature both as a valuable synthesis of traditional historical materials and as a model of early modern Irish prose. Keating probably received Holy Orders before leaving to continue his studies in France. It would appear from a reference in Philip O'Sullivan Beare's *Zoilomastix* (written in 1625–6) that he obtained his doctorate in theology at the University of Rheims — *Geofridius Ketinus Rhemis Theologici doctoris insignibus honestatur*.[4] His name appears also in a list of clerics attached to the Irish College in Bordeaux during the period

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[1] As quoted by Brockliss and Ferté, 'Irish clerics', 566.

[2] Archives Nationales M 147; cited by F. Eliot, 'L'émigration irlandaise et les prêtres irlandais en France', in *The Irish-French connection 1578–1978* (Paris 1978) 88–96 (89).

[3] Boyle, 'The Irish College' 198 and n.2; id., *The Irish College* 36–7; Swords, *Calendar*, 69; Brockliss and Ferté, 'Irish clerics' 549–50.

[4] Philip O' Sullivan Beare, *Zoilomastix* (ed. T. J. O'Donnell, Dublin 1960) 8.

between its establishment in 1603 and the year 1619 when the list was compiled by Fr Diarmuid Mac Carthy, the college's founder and first superior: *P. Geofroy Kettring, docteur en theologie, Vatterfor;*[1] he was obviously resident there for some time before his return to Ireland *c.*1610. It was during his years in France that he composed his celebrated message of exile *Mo bheannacht leat, a scríbhinn* and also presumably his moving lament for the downfall and dispersal of the great families of Ireland, composed most likely in the aftermath of the 'Flight of the Earls' in 1607. Doubtless, as has been suggested, it was also during his time abroad that he collected the materials for his prose work *Eochairsciath an Aifrinn* 'The defence of the Mass'[2] and familiarized himself with the early seventeenth-century French sermon literature he used in his *Trí bior-ghaoithe an bháis* 'The three shafts of death'. Of this latter text it has been remarked that 'it can be set confidently within the tradition of baroque preaching which played such a central role in the Catholic revival in France at the beginning of the seventeenth century.'[3] In it Keating made use of material from sermons by the distinguished preacher Pierre de Besse, but in such a way as to suggest that he was not working directly from de Besse's printed text, *Conceptions théologiques sur tous les dimanches de l'année* (first published in 1609), but from his own notes and perhaps from memory.[4]

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[1] *Cal. State Papers, Ireland, 1615–1625* 318; D. O'Donoghue, 'The congregation of Irish priests in Bordeaux', *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* [4th ser.] *(1899 Jan.–June) 507–20 (516).*

[2] *E. C. Mac Giolla Eáin, Dánta amhráin is caointe Sheathrúin Céitinn* (Baile Átha Cliath 1900) 3, 17–20; *P.* de Brún *et al.* (eds.), *Nua-Dhuanaire* I (Baile Átha Cliath 1971) 173–4.

[3] *T. Ó Dúshláine, An Eoraip agus litríocht na Gaeilge 1600–1650* (Baile Átha Cliath 1987) 60.

[4] *Ibid. 50–60, especially 56;* also B. Cunningham, 'The sources of *Trí bior-*

As Bernadette Cunningham comments:

> The possibility that Keating had heard, and taken notes on, rather than read these sermons by Besse is very real. During the years spent at Bordeaux in the opening decade of the seventeenth century Keating would have had many opportunities to hear sermons preached at the cathedral there. Earlier he may have had similar opportunities at Rheims. Pierre de Besse (1567–1639) was a renowned preacher, who held the post of preacher to the King of France in 1611. A preacher of his stature would have drawn large congregations, and once his sermons were available in print, other preachers would have drawn material from his work in their own sermons. ... Whether the sermons were heard or read, however, there seems little doubt that Keating had encountered and subsequently drew material from at least some of the sermons of Pierre de Besse.[1]

In other words, we are concerned here, as in many other instances, with personal experience and assimilation, not mere academic borrowing.

In the middle of the eighteenth century this awareness of the pastoral importance of Irish sparked off a controversy at the Irish College in Lille. The college there was in some ways exceptional among such Irish institutions on the Continent. It was the only one maintained by an order of regular priests, the friars minor Capuchin, for the education of secular clergy, just as it was the only one designed specifically

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ghaoithe an bháis: another French sermon', *Éigse* 31 (1999) 73–8 (74).

[1] Ibid. 77.

to serve the needs of the Pale, which it did consistently from its foundation in 1610 until its suppression in 1793. The pivotal factor here was the personality of its founder, Fr Francis Nugent, son of Sir Edward Nugent of Ballybrenagh (or Walshestown) in Co. Westmeath, a member of the Anglo-Irish family of the Nugents, barons of Delvin, to whom Dr Thomas Dease was so closely linked in friendship and kinship.[1] Given the prominent role of the family in the affairs of the Pale it is hardly surprising that he should have dedicated his foundation exclusively to catering for the pastoral needs of Leinster and Meath. Linguistically this placed it in a separate category from other Irish seminaries on the Continent, a fact acknowledged in the exemption granted it from the Roman directive in 1650 requiring proficiency in Irish for all the Irish colleges.

However, while the college regulations at Lille required only a competence in Latin and French, the practice was introduced by the students on their own initiative of speaking only Irish on two days of the week and this was well established by the middle of the eighteenth century when the language issue became the focus of controversy. The immediate occasion was the appointment in 1763 of a Wexfordman, Fr Peter Furlong, as superior of the college. The objection was raised by the bishops of Leinster — and strongly supported by the students and by officers of the Irish regiments stationed in the neighbourhood — that his lack of Irish left him unfitted to assume responsibility for training priests to minister to Irish-speaking communities. The four Provisors, acting on behalf of the Archbishop of Dublin and the Vicar General of Meath, presented their case against the

[1] Cf. F. X. Martin, OSA, *Friar Nugent : a study of Francis Lavalin Nugent (1569–1635), agent of the counter-revolution* (Rome and London 1962), especially pp 5–9, 163–77.

Capuchins' decision to the magistrates' court at Lille, and when the verdict favoured the Capuchins they lodged an appeal with the supreme court of Flanders. The core issue to be decided by the court, sitting at Douai, was whether a knowledge of Irish was a requisite for pastoral work in the Leinster dioceses. Among those who submitted evidence in support of the proposition were Dr Patrick Fitzsimons, Archbishop of Dublin, Eugene Geoghegan, Vicar General of Meath, and several clerics of standing from Louvain: Bernard Brady, regent of the Irish Dominicans there, Hugh MacMahon, president of the Pastoral College, Stephen Taylor, a Dominican who had been a student at Lille, and Anthony Fitzsimons, rector of St Anthony's College. The testimonies of Fitzsimons and Brady were presented in Irish and translated into French for the court; the archbishop testified that even in Dublin confessors could not discharge their pastoral duties unless proficient in Irish. Among the officers and army chaplains who gave evidence Henry Shee, an officer in Clare's regiment, stated that he had spent twenty-two months in the college at Lille and affirmed that Irish was the common language of the students.

For their part the Capuchins called upon supporting witnesses drawn mainly indeed from the Irish colleges in Paris. Francis Devereux, superior, and David Henegan, Prefect of Studies at Collège des Lombards, stated that English was the common language in Leinster and that in the Paris college itself lectures in theology and scripture were delivered in English.[1] Their testimony to the dominance of English in Lein-

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Capuchins' decision to the magistrates' court at Lille, and when the verdict favoured the Capuchins they lodged an appeal with the supreme court of Flanders. The core issue to be decided by the court, sitting at Douai, was whether a knowledge of Irish was a requisite for pastoral work in the Leinster dioceses. Among those who submitted evidence in support of the proposition were Dr Patrick Fitzsimons, Archbishop of Dublin, Eugene Geoghegan, Vicar General of Meath, and several clerics of standing from Louvain: Bernard Brady, regent of the Irish Dominicans there, Hugh MacMahon, president of the Pastoral College, Stephen Taylor, a Dominican who had been a student at Lille, and Anthony Fitzsimons, rector of St Anthony's College. The testimonies of Fitzsimons and Brady were presented in Irish and translated into French for the court; the archbishop testified that even in Dublin confessors could not discharge their pastoral duties unless proficient in Irish. Among the officers and army chaplains who gave evidence Henry Shee, an officer in Clare's regiment, stated that he had spent twenty-two months in the college at Lille and affirmed that Irish was the common language of the students.

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ster was supported by Randolph MacDonnell, a priest of the Dublin diocese and an examiner at the Irish college in Paris, and by a memorandum signed by eighteen of the Paris students. In the event the Capuchins prevailed: in May 1764 the court gave judgement in their favour and Fr Furlong's appointment was upheld.

The testimonies relating to the role of Irish are interesting in themselves but are so solidly polarized as to suggest a broader conflict of agendas, and in fact it would appear that the real issue was one of clerical politics, not language. There had long been dissatisfaction with the regional exclusiveness maintained by the Lille authorities and for many churchmen this was inextricably bound up with the Capuchin influence. One of their most notable critics in the previous century had been Dr Patrick Maginn, who, with Dr Malachy Kelly secured Collège des Lombards for the use of the Irish community in Paris: in 1678 he addressed a *mémoire* to Louis XIV challenging the Capuchins' control at Lille and claiming that their policy was perpetuating ethnic divisions and antagonisms to the detriment of Ireland and of education. By the middle of the eighteenth century still other issues had come to the fore. The demise of Irish Jacobitism and increasing religious toleration brought important changes in the relationship between the bishops at home and the colleges abroad. The special privileges accorded the college superiors in time of necessity were now perceived to encroach on episcopal authority and jurisdiction. There was particular unease about the continental colleges' right to ordain students to the priesthood solely on the grounds of their commitment to the Irish mission. This problem was especially acute in the case of Lille, for in this instance a regular order based in France selected and trained students for Irish dioceses without reference to the bishops concerned. In the context of the

general improvement in the position of the Church in Ireland such difficulties led to a cooler and more calculating appraisal of the role of the continental colleges. Such was the background of the Furlong dispute. In prosecuting their case with such care and with such an array of witnesses the bishops were not so much concerned with proving their point in regard to the Irish language as with asserting their own canonical authority. The verdict in this instance may have gone against them, but in retrospect, as has been observed by Fr T. J. Walsh, the legal action they initiated 'must be seen as part of the running-down process of the continental college movement'.[1] This inclination of the Church in Ireland to disengage from the European colleges was one which was to increase *pari passu* with the rising graph of religious toleration at home, gaining a quickened momentum towards the end of the eighteenth century with the establishment of Maynooth College and the traumatic experience and consequences of the French Revolution.

Meanwhile in Paris the community of ordained priests continued to regard themselves as specially qualified to serve the needs of the home mission by virtue of their command of the Irish language, not merely as a medium of learning and literary tradition, but also and more particularly as the vernacular of the majority of the people at large. In 1791 when the see of Cashel became vacant through the death of Dr James Butler, the then superior of Collège des Lombards, Jean-Baptiste Walsh, favoured one of his colleagues, Thomas Cooke, for the succession and addressed several letters and

[1] T. J. Walsh, 'Compulsory Irish in France', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 58 (1953) 1–6; id. *The Irish continental college movement* 148–52, 157–61; J. G. Simms, 'The Irish on the Continent, 1691–1800', in *Eighteenth-Century Ireland 1691–1800* (ed. T. W. Moody and W. E. Vaughan, Oxford 1986) [*A New History of Ireland* IV], 629–56 (644–5).

memoranda to the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda in his support. He was particularly concerned that the Irish hierarchy seemed not to accord due recognition to the community of ordained priests in Paris when selecting candidates for preferment at home:

> The Collège des Irlandais, known as 'des Lombards', in Paris, comprising normally a hundred students ordained in Ireland, has since 1676 provided worthy servants to this Church, which is indebted to them for its existence, and yet the services that these students perform unceasingly appear to have been forgotten in recent years. Preferments are granted exclusively to others, and this house no longer counts a single member of its pupils in the episcopal body of the three Ecclesiastical Provinces subject to Dublin, Cashel and Tuam, and so the mission declines day by day because those raised to the episcopacy do not know the Irish language which is the language of three quarters of the inhabitants (*parce que les personnes élevées à l'Episcopat ignorent la langue Irlandaise qui est celle des trois quarts des habitants*).
>
> For the disparity of the languages is the strongest barrier against the heresy that is unwittingly encouraged by substituting English catechisms for those of the country. How fortunate it would be for religion if the French people did not know the language of the journalists and the new legislators!
>
> It is wrong to suggest that students dispatched at a tender age to foreign universities can maintain and develop their knowledge of the

> Irish language there. Experience says otherwise. The vernacular as it exists in books is no longer that of the people among whom one must live in order to grasp their language and instruct them (*Cette langue telle qu'elle est dans les livres n'est plus celle du peuple, parmi lequel il faut vivre pour saisir son langage, et pour l'instruire*).
>
> On the other hand the priests ordained in Ireland have the precious advantage that they still have the language of the country, which is not forgotten through an absence of five or six years. They are familiar with the laws and customs, a fact which contributes much to the success of their mission.[1]

Yet, despite these considerations, Dr Walsh points out again that in recent years prelates had been nominated almost exclusively from among the past members of *la Communauté des Clercs*, in other words from the community of those who had come to Paris as young students to be trained there for ordination, and now resident in Collège des Irlandais, rue du Cheval Vert, and his complaint is that whenever a vacancy occurred in one or other bishopric, these prelates came together and proposed to the Sacred Congregation candidates from among their own fraternity to the total and permanent exclusion of the students of Collège des Lombards, despite the fact that these often enjoyed the almost total backing of the clergy, whose voice went unheeded because it lacked support among the hierarchy.[2]

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[1] P. Boyle, 'Documents relative to the appointment of an archbishop to the see of Cashel in 1791 . . . ', *Arch. Hib.* 7 (1918–21) 1–19 (4–5, also 8–9, 10–11).

[2] Walsh's criticism must be balanced against a factual observation by Fr Liam Swords bearing on this same topic and in the same period, citing the

Obviously Walsh had his own axe to grind in the old conflict of interests between the communities of priests and clerical students, but clearly he was not alone in recognizing its implications for the capacity of those clergy returning to Ireland adequately to discharge their pastoral responsibilities to a predominantly Irish-speaking populace, and in this regard his animadversions on the hierarchy are not without interest, nor, perhaps, without substance.

They relate of course to more recent tendencies and not to the hierarchy as an institution or to its individual members. One of those who would certainly have shared his views on the importance of the Irish language (though he would not have shared his slightly jaundiced attitude towards the *Communauté des Clercs et Écoliers*) was the Bishop of Cloyne, John O'Brien (of whom more presently). Earlier in the century, in 1764, O'Brien bequeathed money for bursaries in the College with the attached condition that candidates be able to speak and read Irish.[1] A decade later when, following the suppression of the Jesuits in France, a decree was in preparation to enable Irish bursaries at Poitiers to be transferred to Paris, but without restricting them to any particular college of the University, the objection was raised that this would frustrate their true purpose and that they should be specifically allocated to the Irish College:

> *As the draft rule has not yet been ratified, it seems proper to observe, that inasmuch as one of the principal motives for which the bursaries*

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relevant documentation in Arch. Prop. Fid. SC Irlanda 1788–1801, folios 85–6: 'On the eve of the revolution the Irish college in Paris had become a virtual nursery of the Irish episcopacy. In 1788 fifteen of the Irish bishops were Paris-trained, about half of them in Collège des Lombards and the other half in Collège des Irlandais' (The green cockade 16).

[1] *Boyle, 'The Irish College' 198; Swords, Calendar* doc. 421.

> have been withdrawn from the Poitiers College, has doubtless been to prevent the bursars from losing the use of the Irish language, a knowledge of which is absolutely necessary for the mission in that country, nothing can be more opposed to that motive than the first article of the aforesaid scheme; which says, that no college or house of the university shall have a particular right to the said funds. From the moment that these bursaries were founded for persons destined for the mission in Ireland, the Irish seminary seems to be the place where they ought to be educated to the exclusion of all others. ... However respectable are the seminaries of St. Nicholas de Chardonnet, and of the Trente-Trois, where several of those bursars have hitherto been placed, they cannot make up for the want of the Irish and English languages, which are indispensable to missioners.[1]

The same argument is presented in somewhat different words in a draft document in the Irish College archive described as a 'Supplement to the *mémoire* for the Community of Irish Clerics'. Making the point that the five bursaries of the College at Poitiers were established to educate young Irishmen for the ministry in their home country and that this was also the primary aim of the Community of Irish Clerics, it goes on to stress the status of Irish within the Paris college:

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[1] Boyle, 'The Irish College' 199, quoting, in his translation, from *Etat des Revenues fait par ordre de l'archevêque de Paris, superieur majeur*, MS 1788; cf. *id.*, *The Irish College* 124–5. Fr Boyle, in common with earlier Irish clerics familiar with France, employs *burse* and *bursar* to represent French *bourse* and *boursier*. According to the Oxford English Dictionary the use of *burse* and *bursar* with these meanings was restricted to Scottish universities and schools.

> the language of the country is spoken constantly there and almost all the exercises are carried out in Irish (*l'on y parle constamment la langue du pays et presque tous les exercices s'y font dans cette langue partout*). Elsewhere this advantage would be lost and the holders of the burses, if residing in a French house, would find it difficult to maintain the English and Irish languages, without which a priest could neither preach, catechize or confess in Ireland.[1]

Irish was not merely known but also taught in the College. One of the most generous of its French benefactors, M. Philippe Joseph Perrottin, made a donation to ensure the teaching of Irish to students of other sciences who could not read or write it, part of the income going to provide for the professor of Irish, part for student prizes to be awarded for excellence in Irish composition and knowledge of the catechism in Irish, and part for printing in Irish.[2] Another

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[1] Cf. Swords, *Calendar*, 145 §530. In a *mémoire* written on behalf of Collège des Lombards and dated 24 November 1762 it is pointed out that it is a seminary rather than a college in the normal sense, that the priests and clerics resident there are destined for the mission in Ireland, and that all their daily exercises are in the Irish or English language (ibid. 105 §408). Elsewhere one of the conditions attaching to a will making provision for two students from Kerry is that they live in the Irish community so as to maintain their command of the Irish language (*ibid.* 102 §403).

[2] Boyle, 'The Irish College' 199–205; Swords, *Calendar* doc. 241; David Henegan, *Grand Dictionnaire de Moreri* (Paris 1759), 'Geoffroi Keating', p. 10. In June 1788 Rev. Charles Kearney, rector of the Irish College from 1783 to 1800, reports on the progress of one of the students in a letter to the bishop of Meath, Dr Plunket: 'He was of a wild disposition, and he is still somewhat odd; but better principles and sentiments no boy can have. He applies close to his duty, of which one proof is that he knew no Irish

benefactor, Barthélemy Murry, doctor-regent of the faculty of medicine of Paris, among his other donations made one in 1764 to encourage skill in preaching. It was to provide

> One hundred *livres* a year also in perpetuity, from the death of the said donor, in the form of prizes, to the deacons and priests of the said community of Irish clerics, who shall have preached best in Irish and in English, to wit: Sixty *livres* to the person who shall have preached the two best sermons of his own composition in Irish; and forty *livres* to whoever shall have preached best two sermons of his own composition in English, and the same person may obtain both prizes if he surpass all others in preaching in both languages.[1]

It is perhaps not unreasonable to suppose that the disparity in the value of the prizes for preaching in Irish and English reflects the perceived relative importance of the two languages for the exercise of the priestly functions on the Irish mission.

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some months ago, he has now got to be able to get the whole Irish Catechism by heart' (Anthony Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath: Ancient and Modern* (Dublin 1870; repr. 1992) III, 125). The notion of learning by rote runs contrary to the intention that guided Andrew Donlevy in compiling his Catechism, but was probably conditioned by the limited linguistic capacity of the student in question. Like other heads of schools and colleges Dr Kearney was not always impressed by the quality of the students entrusted to his care, particularly those on scholarships endowed by Irish families. He comments, again to the bishop of Meath: 'Your plan of founding a burse, to be given *au concours* to boys from your diocese is admirable. Would to God they were all so; we should not have so many logs of wood as we have. When families in Ireland have burses, they seem to choose out for the most unpromising of their flock' (Cogan III, 126–7).

[1] Boyle, 'The Irish College' 200. The donation is that mentioned in Swords, *Calendar* doc. 404 (p. 103) and dated 7 Sept. 1761.

3. *Thomas Dease / Tomás Déis*

It is clear, therefore, that throughout most of the history of the Irish collegiate community in Paris there was not merely widespread knowledge of Irish but also awareness of its vocational, cultural and intellectual significance. This familiarity is already epitomized in the person of Thomas Dease,[1] who was appointed superior of the Irish College in succession to John Lee in 1621, having been summoned to Paris by Lee to continue the work which he himself could no longer carry on because of his advanced years. Dease was born in 1568 at Turbotstown in County Westmeath to a family of landed gentry, and his nephew Richard continued in possession of the family property at the time of the rising in 1641. Through his mother, Lady Eleanor Nugent, he was related to the Nugents of Delvin and to many other of the noble families of the Pale.[2] He spent some time in the Irish College at Douai before going to Paris where he received his M.A. from the University there

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[1] *The family surname is variously written Dease, Deaze, Deece, Deize, Déis, Deis, Desse, and Deys(e).*

[2] *D. F. Cregan, 'The social and cultural background of a counter-reformation episcopate, 1618–60', in Studies in Irish History presented to R. Dudley Edwards* (A. Cosgrove and D. McCartney (ed.), Dublin 1979) 85–117 (95).

in 1601 and his Licence in Theology in 1612, about which time he himself taught as a Professor of Theology at Collège de Navarre.[1] Nominated bishop of Meath in 1621, he was consecrated in 1622 and held that office until his death, in Galway, in 1652.

He had a reputation for learning: he was, says Dr John Lynch, highly skilled in the Irish language and in other sciences (*Hibernicae linguae, sicut aliarum etiam scientarum, peritissimimus fuit*). All the evidence suggests he was diligent and judicious in maintaining good order in the churches of his diocese, and Lynch speaks of the joyful serenity of his expression and the happy good humour that charmed his acquaintances.[2]

Yet in the last decade of his life circumstances conspired to set him at odds with many of his peers within and without the Church. The Ulster insurrection of 1641, energized by the return of Eoghan Rua Ó Néill from Spain in the following year, spread to other areas throughout the country, and gathered in support from the 'Old English', the lords and gentry of the Pale with whom Thomas Dease had so many ties of kinship and association. When at the instigation of the Catholic hierarchy a provisional parliament or General Assembly was set up, otherwise known as the Confederation of Kilkenny, it brought together the native Irish and the Old English in an alliance rooted in their common religion and in the common fear that if the puritan and parliamentary faction were to win out in England they would all, Irish and Old English alike, share the same fate as recusants. However, it

[1] He is included in a list of priests who had been students at Douai in a letter addressed by the President of the college to the Archduke and Archduchess of Austria in 1613 (*Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts* (London 1873) 286.

[2] Lynch, *De Praesulibus Hiberniae* (ed. J. F. O'Doherty, Dublin 1944), I, 169.

was an insecure alliance, lacking the bond of a firm common purpose; the Old English, having less to gain through victory and more to lose in defeat, were more amenable to a tolerable compromise than either the expropriated Irish or the Catholic hierarchy. Cohesive action fell prey to conflicting aims and interests and, when the earl of Ormond, who was charged by king Charles with the responsibility of securing the defence of Dublin and the government, initiated negotiations for a cessation of war, the underlying faults in the unity of the Confederation widened into factional oppositions. While the lords of the Pale favoured acceptance of Ormond's limited concessions, the Irish and the Catholic clergy, strongly supported by the new Papal Nuncio, Giovanni Battista Rinuccini, were united in rejecting them. In the end Irish hopes of an equitable settlement were frustrated and the decisive riposte of a troubled English state came in August 1649 when Oliver Cromwell landed in Dublin as civil and military Governor of Ireland.

The personal significance of these fateful times for Thomas Dease was that he found himself broadly in sympathy in matters of policy with his Old English friends and relatives and therefore at variance with the views of most of his fellow bishops and clerics, not to speak of the Papal Nuncio; he may also have believed, as argued by John Lynch, that the Irish lacked the resources and experience to win the war.[1] On assuming control of his bishopric in 1642 he called upon a synod of his clergy to cooperate with him in reforming prevalent abuses and warned them of the need to prove themselves loyal subjects to the English government in all things compatible with conscience: 'Unqualified loyalty was the fixed and ruling principle of his life, and nothing would

[1] Lynch, *De Praesulibus* 169.

have been more paradoxical in his eyes than an attempt to subvert any government, no matter how despotic or unjust.'[1] He absented himself from a synod of the bishops of the province of Ulster held at Kells in March 1642 and presided over by Dr Hugh O'Reilly, Archbishop of Armagh, where it was declared that the war entered into by the Catholics of Ireland was just and lawful, and it was he, apparently, who prevailed upon his maternal relative Richard Nugent, tenth Baron of Delvin (whose home he resided in from 1622 to 1642) not to join with his fellow gentry in the campaign of insurrection. Clearly there was a wide gulf between the primate and the bishop's perceptions of the Church's role in the contemporary political situation, a difference that cannot have been eased by their awareness that Hugh O'Reilly's father and uncles had lost their lands in east Breifne to the Nugent family of Westmeath who were both friends and relatives of Dease.[2]

Seven years later, on 17 July 1649, when a peace treaty was finally agreed with Ormond in the last phase of the Confederate campaign, Dease was one of nine bishops who appended their signatures.[3] Diocesan historian Fr Anthony Cogan pays due tribute to the sincerity of his motives:

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[1] C. P. Meehan, *The rise and fall of the Irish Franciscan monasteries and memoirs of the Irish hierarchy in the seventeenth century* (Dublin 1872) 165.

[2] This has been adverted to by S. P. Ó Mórdha, 'Hugh O'Reilly (1581?-1653) : a reforming prelate', *Breifne* 4 (1970–75) 1–42, 345–69 (11). According to John Lynch (*De Praesulibus* 142) O'Reilly studied philosophy at Rouen, where Lynch saw him as a young student, and subsequently theology at Paris, but there does not appear to be any evidence that he was attached to the Irish College in Paris (J. O'Boyle, *The Irish colleges on the continent* (Dublin 1935) 206).

[3] A. Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath, ancient and modern* (Dublin [1867] repr. 1992) II, 39–40, 56; J. T. Gilbert (ed.), *A contemporary history of affairs in Ireland from 1641 to 1652* (Dublin 1879–80) I, 34–6.

When the war broke out, in 1641, he was then an old man. He was opposed to the 'rising' as premature, and he took no part in the Synod of Kells, because, in all likelihood, he feared there was no probability of success. When the prelates declared the war to be 'just and meritorious', he joined the Confederation, and, in course of time, became a member of the Supreme Council. Although he took no active part in its proceedings, his nephew, Oliver Dease, who was vicar-general of the diocese, attended the deliberations, and hence may be regarded as his representative. At the Synod of Waterford in 1646, Oliver Dease assisted as V.G. of Meath, and signed the condemnation of the peace with Ormond, with the concurrence, it may be presumed, of his uncle . . .

Dr Dease's politics were diametrically opposed to those of the Nuncio. He seems to have been lukewarm in the cause of the Confederation, and whenever he took any conspicuous part in the councils of the Confederates, it was to oppose and resist the policy of Rinuccini.[1]

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[1] Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath* II, 52–3. Cogan's near-contemporary Fr C. P. Meehan is equally fair and balanced in his treatment of Dease, though he cannot forgo the occasional discreet reminder of the inherited loyalties which informed his conduct, as for example: 'The interests of the prelate and the baron [Richard Baron of Delvin] were in most respects identical, for both were zealous sons of holy Church, and both were in the peaceful enjoyment of a large estate. Religion counselled obedience to higher powers, and prudence suggested that neither of them ought to compromise a fair inheritance by manifesting discontent or sympathy with 'the dispossessed,' whose main object was to recover their forfeited lands' (*The Irish Franciscan Monasteries* 166).

However, in the heat of the struggle the Papal Nuncio found it more difficult to muster up such expressions of sympathy and understanding. When a report reached Rinuccini on 4 July 1648 that Bishop Dease, then extremely ill, had died, he wrote to Rome:

> The Bishop of Meath is dead, at the age of eighty, to the great gain of this kingdom; for he was a man of almost heretical sentiments, and I have been obliged to threaten to send him to Rome, even at his advanced age, . . .

And when the report proved premature and the patient recovered, the Nuncio sent a further message:

> The Bishop of Meath is not dead, but has been spared to try the patience of the good.[1]

Rinuccini's strictures almost pale by comparison with the comments of another contemporary of Bishop Dease: the anonymous author of the tract entitled *An aphorismical discovery of treasonable faction*, thought to have been written between 1652 and 1660, a composition teeming with precious insights and unbridled prejudices. A committed royalist whose admiration of Eoghan Rua Ó Néill was matched by his abhorrence of the Puritans and the 'Treasonable Faction' comprising Ormond and other nobles of the Pale, our author rails against these incessantly in passionate and colourful language, and he is hardly less restrained in dealing with those Catholic prelates and clergy — among them Thomas Dease — whom he represents as allying themselves with the 'faction'. His pen picture of Dease is a characteristic example of his vivid style:

[1] Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath* II, 56; Meehan, *Irish Franciscan monasteries*, 171.

> As for Thomas Deaz, Bishope of Meathe, he is a man that euer yett spent his time in jolitie, composinge of Irish reemes, more like libells than any exemplarie or vertuos myters (as the subiecte now offered), displayinge therin the secret faults or privat miscariadge of either sex, whether right or wronge, to the noe smale discreditt of noble personages of both encumbencie and extraction, was euer yett auerse unto the holy warr of this, an ill affected member unto the chiefe promoters and best seruitors of both kinge and kingdome, bearinge an inueterat hatred and malice unto the ancient Irish, disobedient to both Nuncio, provinciall and nationall congregations, wherby existed seuerally and nominatim excomunicated, and caused all his priests to run the same scene of disobedience, and his Vicar Generall, his owne nephewe Oliuer Deaz. . . . All the rest that signed to the said queres, were of noe better qualitie or stuffe, then the formentioned. Judge then, indifferent reader, what credence should any man of understandinge giue this booke, calified and aproved by such authors? Sure it had been a disgrace to any man of repute (though the subiecte were aliâs reasonable, and by his superiors admitance) to signe unto it, in company of such a rable of men, the scum and froath of religions, in all the kingdome.[1]

That the writer took a jaundiced view of Thomas Dease is something of an understatement, but he does advert — though in a spirit of sarcasm — to a feature of the bishop's

[1] J. T. Gilbert, *A contemporary history* I, 278–9 (see n.30).

life and personality which receives little notice elsewhere. That he was a poet we know from other sources: already in the seventeenth century John Lynch mentions the various verse compositions in Irish he crafted at night by candlelight and which were enjoyed for their charm and style.[1] Four of his poems and a separate quatrain in loose syllabic metre have survived and been published by modern editors. Two of them have a common theme: the transience of women's beauty. The first of them, beginning *Gabh mo theagasc, a inghean óg* 'Listen to my counsel, young girl', entreats the young woman to remember that the attributes of which she is now so proud — her lips, her shining teeth, her languorous eye and her thick golden hair — must end in the dissolution of the grave, and to think instead of hell and repentance. In the three quatrains of the second poem, *A dhuine ó ndeachaidh do bhean* 'O man whose wife has departed', the advice is addressed to the male, but remains essentially the same: not to be seduced by woman's physical charms, which are so short-lived.[2] The other two poems dwell on the topos of contemporary social and moral decadence. One of them, *Mór sochair na h-aimsire* 'Great are the benefits of our time', focuses primarily on the decline of the clergy from the piety and learning of earlier times:

Níl saor ná sodaire,
gion go léigheann a phaidear,
san diadhacht nach iúlmhaire
a-nois ná Pádraig is Peadar

Scrioptúir Dé níor thuigeadar
Augustín, Greaghóir ná Béda,

[1] Lynch, *De Praesulibus* 169–70.
[2] T. Ua Brádaigh (ed.), 'Dhá dhán le Tomás Déis, easbog na Mí', *Ríocht na Midhe* 3 (1963–6) 99–104.

's cách uile do shluigeadar
a-nois ó cuireadh i mBéarla

'There is not a tradesman or clodhopper, even though he does not read his Pater Noster, who is not now more knowledgeable in theology than St Patrick or St Peter. Neither Augustine nor Gregory nor Bede understood God's scripture, while everyone else has swallowed it now that it has been turned into English'.

The other poem, *Rinneas mo thiomna, a Shéamuis* 'Seamus, I have made my testament', takes a wider view of the fall from the older standards of nobility, prosperity and liberality in Irish society as a whole, and briefly echoes the frequent lament of the professional poets of the time for the loss of their traditional patrons: *D'fhágbhas filidh ar fágbháil, gan tárrtháil fán ngréin aca* 'I left the poets bereft, with no refuge under the sun'.[1]

The aphoristic quatrain which is frequently attributed to Dease in manuscript copies has a note of resigned disillusion which would not have been inappropriate to the last phase of his long life:

As mórdheimhniughadh na gcompánach
is tearc a bhfagháil dílis;
tar éis trágha gach tobair
is annsin haithnithear an fíoruisce

'For all the assurances of friends
rarely do they remain constant;

[1] É. Ó Tuathail (ed.), *An t-Ultach* 29, no. 8 (August 1953) 11–12; 31, no. 7 (July 1955) 5–6; no. 8, (August 1953) 6.

when all other wells have run dry,
it is then is revealed the true spring'[1]

Politically Bishop Dease may have been oriented toward the gentry of the Pale and the English connection, but culturally his attachment was to the literary and ideological world mediated through the Irish language. It was a characteristically 'marcher' duality and one he shared with some of his kinsmen the Nugents who, despite the colonial cast of their politics, were known and praised as patrons of the *filidh*, the professional poets, and particularly of the Ó Cobhthaighs of the Westmeath area. There is a vellum manuscript in the National Library of Ireland which is known as *An duanaire Nuinseannach* 'the poem-book of the Nugents' and is dated by a colophon to the year 1577: *Anno domini 1577 ⁊ an ixmadh bliadhain .x. do quuiin Isibél a rígheacht hShaxan ⁊ Éireann* 'the year of the Lord 1577 and the nineteenth year of Queen Elizabeth's being ruler of England and Ireland.' In its extant state — some leaves appear to have been lost — the manuscript contains forty-nine poems of which eighteen are ascribed to Ó Cobhthaigh poets.[2] One of them composed an elegy on Richard Nugent, the eighth baron of Delvin, who died in 1559. Another, Muircheartach Ó Cobhthaigh, composed a poem in praise of Richard's son Christopher,

[1] Printed in Ua Brádaigh, 'Dhá dhán' 101.

[2] B. Ó Cuív describes the manuscript in his R. I. Best Memorial Lecture *The Irish bardic duanaire* (Dublin 1973) 11–14. See also the introductory comments by D. Ó Cróinín to his edition from MS G 992 of a poem to Toirdhealbhach Luineach Ó Néill composed by Muircheartach Ó Cobhthaigh (*Éigse* 16 (1975–6) 50–66 (55)); he suggests that this poem may have been composed in connection with a gathering of the poets of Ireland hosted by Toirdhealbhach Luineach at Christmas 1577, which also sets the theme for Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn's poem 'Nollaig do-chuamar don Chraoibh' in E. Knott (ed.), *The Bardic Poems of Tadhg Dall Ó Huiginn* (London 1922, 1926) I, 50–6, II, 34–7, 222.

in which he urged that he be raised to the rank of earl; it was this Christopher who found favour with Queen Elizabeth while a student at Cambridge and who prepared a short primer of the Irish language for her.[1] Another son of Richard's, William (Uilliam Nuinseann), was himself an accomplished poet in Irish, one of whose compositions, a poem of exile, *Diombáidh triall ó thulchaibh Fáil* 'It is sad to go from the hills of Ireland', is familiar to all readers of classical Irish verse. William was a close friend of the well-known poet Giolla Brighde (Bonaventura) Ó hEodhusa, who entered the Franciscan order in 1607 at the College of St Anthony in Louvain, and we have a poem addressed to him from the Netherlands by Giolla Brighde expressing the sadness of their separation — 'the crown of all grief is that I have lost William Nugent's gay spirit' (*Barr ar gach teidhm mar tá sinn / d'éis meanman Uilliam Nuinnsinn*) — and another to his wife Janet, daughter of Walter Marward of Skreen in Co. Meath on the death of her son Richard.[2]

There was yet another poet of the Nugents, known in Irish as Séamus Dubh Nuinnsionn, of whom little is known except that he seems to have lived in the barony of Delvin. With him we return directly to Thomas Dease, for the two

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[1] Aspects of Christopher's career, and that of other members of the Nugent family, are discussed in Basil Iske, *The green cockatrice* (Tara, Co. Meath 1987).

[2] É. Ó Tuathail, 'Nugentiana', *Éigse* 2 (1940) 4–14; G. Murphy, 'Poems of exile by Uilliam mac Barúin Dealbhna', *Éigse* 6 (1949) 8–15; T. Ua Brádaigh, 'Na Nuinnsionnaigh, mór-theaghlach Gall-Ghaelach, agus an cultúr Gaelach', *Ríocht na Midhe* 3 (1963–66) 211–21; B. Ó Buachalla, 'Diombáidh triall ó thulchaibh Fáil', in *Nua-Dhuanaire : cuid I* (ed. P. de Brún et al. Dublin 1971) 6, 179. For an edition and translation of the two poems by Giolla Brighde Ó hEoghusa see O. Bergin, *Irish bardic poetry: texts and translations* (ed. D. Greene and F. Kelly, Dublin 1970) 139–45, 276–79; C. Mhág Craith (ed.), *Dán na mBráthar Mionúr* I (Dublin 1967) 31–8, II (Dublin 1980) 13–16, 119–26.

were evidently good friends who sometimes exchanged greetings in verse, and it may be presumed that this was the friend addressed in the opening line of the bishop's own poem, *Rinneas mo thiomna, a Shéamuis*.[1]

What remains of Bishop Dease's verse is modest in volume but marked by good wit and an easy, controlled style. As it stands, it would seem much further removed from the disreputable 'reemes, more like libells' his choleric critic of the *Aphorismical discovery* charges him with than from the 'exemplarie or vertuos myters' from which he dissociates him. But on the whole manuscript tradition tends to favour the formal over the ephemeral, and it may well be that there was another, more relaxed dimension to Dease's versifying, for example in the occasional verse correspondence he seems to have carried on with Séamus Dubh Nuinnsionn. After all, John Lynch's thumb-nail sketch suggests a man of spirit and good humour, and indeed of 'jolitie'.

[1] For Séamus Dubh Nuinnsionn see T. Ua Brádaigh, 'Na Nuinnseonnaigh', *Ríocht na Midhe* 3 (1963–6) 211–21 (219–21).

FLORILEGIVM

INSVLÆ SANCTORVM

SEV

VITÆ ET ACTA SANCTORVM

HIBERNIÆ.

Quibus accesserunt non vulgaria monumenta

HOC EST

SANCTI PATRICII Purgatorium,

S. Malachiæ Prophetia de summis Pontificibus,

Aliaque nonnulla quorum ELENCHVS *post Præfationem habetur.*

Omnia nunc primum partim ex M S. codicibus, partim typis editis collegit, & publicabat

THOMAS MESSINGHAMVS Sacerdos Hibernus, S. R. E. Protonotarius, nec non Seminarij Hibernorum Parisijs Moderator.

PARISIIS,

Ex officina SEBASTIANI CRAMOISY, via Iacobæa, sub Ciconijs.

CVM PRIVILEGIO, ET APPROBATIONE.

Title-page of Thomas Messingham's *Florilegium insulæ sanctorum* 1624.

[By kind permission of the Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.]

4. Thomas Messingham

When Dease was named bishop of Meath in 1621 he was succeeded as superior of the Irish College by Dr Thomas Messingham, a priest of that diocese, who, while he did not attain episcopal rank, nonetheless played a very influential role in the ecclesiastical politics of his time, both in Ireland and on the Continent.[1] It is not clear how long he continued in the office, but he is mentioned in 1632 as Procurator of the *Nation d'Allmagne*, one of the four 'Nations' composing the faculty of arts in the University of Paris, and is described as principal or moderator of the College: *Procuratio Magistri Thomæ Messingham, diœcesis Midensis in Hibernia, Presbyteri et Seminarii Hibernorum, Parisiis, moderatoris.*[2] He was still in office in 1634: in August of that year, at a time where there were conflicting opinions as to who should be in control of the recently established Irish College in Rome, Messingham wrote as superior of the Paris college (*seminarii Hibernorum Parisiensi Superior*) urging the Holy See to place the college at Rome in the care

[1] This aspect of his career is brought out clearly by Thomas O'Connor in his essay on 'Thomas Messingham (*c.* 1575–1638?) and the seventeenth-century Church', *Ríocht na Midhe* 11 (2000) 88–105.
[2] P. Boyle, *The Irish College*, 6.

of the Irish secular clergy; in the event it was left with the Jesuits, to whom Cardinal Ludovisi, its founder, had entrusted it in his will, and it remained under their supervision until the suppression of the Jesuits in Italy in 1773.[1] Messingham was a man who shared Dease's scholarly and literary interests, though his extant works are concerned exclusively with the written sources of Irish religious tradition, both in Latin and Irish.

He was a native of Meath where the family name is attested for the early years of the sixteenth century, and was evidently of Old English stock; indeed during his tenure as superior of the College he was accused of showing preference to students of the Meath diocese, leading to a complaint from the rector of the Sorbonne which he sought to rebut by producing documentary evidence that the College was open to students from all the dioceses.[2] After his initial education at home in Ireland he moved to the Continent and to the Irish College at Douai, which had recently (in 1595) been founded by another Meathman, Christopher Cusack, and where a considerable proportion of the students came from established families of the Pale. There he met with several other students from Meath, among them Thomas Dease who was no doubt instrumental in his decision to come to Paris eventually and join Dease in the promotion and management of the young foundation whose future was still less than secure.

In 1617 another and still more distinguished scholar made his appearance in Paris having left Ireland to escape

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[1] *Arch. Hib.* 12 (1946); T. J. Walsh, *The Irish continental college movement*, 85–7.

[2] J. J. Silke, 'The Irish abroad 1534–1691', in *A new history of Ireland* III (ed. F. X. Martin, T. W. Moody, and F. J. Byrne, Oxford 1976) 587–633: 628; T. O'Connor, 'Thomas Messingham', p. 91 and n. 30.

the increasing harrassment of Catholic prelates and senior clerics by the agents of the Lord Deputy. This was David Rothe, vicar-general of Armagh, whom Messingham had known when they were both students at Douai and who was later to become bishop of Ossory and a figure of great influence in Irish affairs over many years until his death in 1650. He brought with him several unfinished studies relating to Irish church history on which he had been engaged for some years, apparently intending to continue working on them during his enforced exile. He was of course already on terms of close friendship with Thomas Dease and Messingham and it is hardly surprising that the young Irish college or seminary would seem to have been his first port of call in Paris. The circumstances of his arrival are conveniently outlined by Fr C. P. Meehan:

> On reaching the French capital, where he was hospitably entertained by a wealthy citizen named Escalopier, he was induced to preach the panegyric of St Brigid, and so eloquently and learnedly did he acquit himself, that his generous patron requested him to give a Latin version of the discourse, enlarged and amply annotated. To this he willingly consented; but as he was actively engaged in completing the third part of the 'Analecta'[1], the former did not appear till after Escalopier's death, when he dedicated it to his

[1] *Analecta* 'Collections' was the title he gave to a work in three parts dealing with the suffering and martyrdom endured by members of the Irish hierarchy, clergy and laity during the reign of Elizabeth and of James I. The first two parts were published in a second edition in 1617; the first edition seem to have been issued in 1611 or earlier. The third and most important part was published in 1619 (Meehan, *The Irish Franciscan monasteries*, 179–80, 184).

> sons, Raymond and Balthazzar, as a grateful tribute to the memory of their father. In the same city he met a kindred spirit, Messingham, rector of the Irish college, who was then compiling the work known as 'Florilegium Insulæ Sanctorum', or Garland of Irish saints; and, at the request of that author, he contributed the dissertation 'De Nominibus Hiberniæ', to prove that Ireland was called *Scotia*, and the Irish *Scoti*, or Scots, from the fourth to the thirteenth century. To his learned liberality, Messingham was also indebted for the Elucidations to Jocelin's 'Life of St. Patrick', which were also inserted in the Florilegium,[1] and gracefully acknowledged by the editor, who tells us that Rothe 'was thoroughly familiar with every department of knowledge, an eloquent orator, acute reasoner, profound theologian, sharp reprover of vice, defender of ecclesiastical liberty, vindicator of his country's rights, and faithful exponent of her terrible wrongs.'[2]

The citizen Escalopier who so warmly and generously welcomed David Rothe was of course the same Baron de l'Escalopier who provided the struggling Irish community with a house of residence early in the century, and who was evidently still active on their behalf when Rothe came there. Messingham appreciated the importance not only of Escalopier's material support for the College but also his influential contacts with highly placed elements of Parisian so-

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[1] For a more detailed account of the contents of Messingham's *Florilegium* see T. O'Connor, 'Towards the invention of the Irish Catholic *natio*: Thomas Messingham's *Florilegium* (1624)', *Irish Theological Quarterly* 64 (1999) 157–77 (169–75).

[2] Meehan, *The Irish Franciscan monasteries*, 182–3.

ciety, both ecclesiastic and lay, and when the Baron himself died in 1620 Messingham sought to maintain the close family association with the College; so it was that he dedicated the *florilegium* of Irish saints mentioned by Meehan, which was published in 1624, to Escalopier's two sons.[1] Meehan's reference to Messingham as rector of the Irish college seems slightly misleading in the context of Rothe's coming to Paris — he did not succeed to the office until 1621 — but the details of the two clerics' collaboration show that Messingham was already deeply involved in his research on the Irish saints by 1617. By late 1618 the Pope had announced Rothe's promotion to the vacant see of Ossory and the new titular bishop returned to Kilkenny soon afterward. A few months later he was consecrated in Paris.[2]

The next notable development comes some six years later. In the spring of 1623 Messingham met with two young Franciscan scholars in Paris, an occasion that was to have momentous significance for Irish historical studies. Fr Hugh Ward (1593–1635), otherwise Aodh Mac an Bhaird, belonged to the distinguished learned family of Mac an Bhaird, poets to the O'Donnells of Tír Chonaill. He had joined the Franciscan order at the Irish college of Salamanca where he had gone as a student in 1612. Ten years later, in 1622, he was appointed by the General of the order to teach philosophy in St Anthony's College in Louvain and was on his way there when the significant meeting took place in Paris, about March 1623. Also in Paris at the time was another young Franciscan scholar, Patrick Fleming (1599–1631), who was accompanying Aodh Mac Cathmhaoil (Hugh MacCagh-

[1] David Rothe had, of course, already expressed his own appreciation and admiration of Escalopier in his *Brigida Thaumaturga*, published in Paris in 1620.

[2] Meehan, *The Irish Franciscan monasteries*, 183.

well), Guardian of the Irish college at Louvain, to a meeting of the General Chapter of the Franciscan order in Rome. A native of Louth, Fleming had been sent abroad at the age of thirteen and received his education at Douai and Louvain, and both he and Ward were willing and ready to participate in the work of documenting the history of the Irish saints. Messingham for his part had already for some time been collecting for publication materials relating to the lives of the Irish saints, and his discussions with the two young Franciscans fired them with enthusiasm for the project of collecting, editing and publishing all the relevant texts wherever they might be found, in Ireland or in continental Europe.

Apart from their more general objective of compiling an ecclesiastical history of Ireland the most immediate aim of this trio and their Irish colleagues was to rebut the unhistorical claims being actively propagated by certain Scottish scholars. By the twelfth century the Latin terms *Scotia* and *Scot(t)us*, which had previously meant simply 'Ireland' and 'Irishman', had by semantic shift come to be used of Scotland and the Scots, a change that presented the patriotic advocates of Scotland's past with an excellent opportunity to lay claim to a number of medieval Irish monastic foundations on the European continent as well as the missionaries who had founded them. The most active of these Scottish propagandists was Thomas Dempster who in his *Menologium Scotticum*, a volume on the saints of Scotland published in Bologna in 1619, had appropriated to the Scottish calendar some of the most famous of the Irish saints. The immediate effect of his work was to spur the Irish clerics, Franciscans and others, to assemble and re-examine more diligently their own ecclesiastical records the better to refute his specious claims. David Rothe wrote his *Hibernia Resurgens* (Rouen, 1621) to refute Dempster's assertions, and Messingham re-

turns repeatedly to the same topic in his *Florilegium*. As Fr Edmund Hogan wrote of the troublesome Scot in 1870:

> His piracy of Irish Saints awakened the energy and zeal of our exile countrymen, and we will have occasion hereafter to refer to the tracts which were published soon after by David Rothe, Messingham, Fitzsimon, and others, refuting Dempster's groundless but attractive statements. Ward enlisted with ardour in this controversy, and thenceforward each hour at his disposal was devoted to explore the records of the past, and search out new monuments illustrative of the history of the Saints of Ireland.[1]

In the event the proposed Paris-Louvain collaboration faltered and petered out for various reasons, but Ward and Fleming went on to play an instrumental role in initiating the great Louvain project that was to lead to the compilation of the Annals of the Four Masters and the production of a wide range of other important historical and hagiological works.[2]

The crucial significance of their meeting with Messingham is brought out clearly by Fr Canice Mooney in his account of these proceedings based upon Fr Fleming's letters,[3]

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[1] Fr E. Hogan, 'Irish historical studies in the seventeenth century: II Hugh Ward', *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 7 (1870–71) 56–77 (56).

[2] B. Jennings, *Michael O Cleirigh: chief of the Four Masters and his associates* (Dublin 1936) 26–40. Two more recent and extremely useful studies deal primarily with the hagiological dimension of this activity: R. Sharpe, *Medieval Irish saints' lives* (Oxford 1991) chapter 2 'The background to *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae*', pp 39–74; P. A. Breatnach, 'An Irish Bollandus: Fr Hugh Ward and the Louvain hagiographical enterprise', *Éigse* 31 (1999) 1–30, which casts new light on Ward's contribution to the whole undertaking.

[3] Edited by Fr B. Jennings, *Analecta Hibernica* 6 (1934) 203–17.

though he acknowledges that not enough of the correspondence of Ward and Messingham has survived to enable us 'to come to any certain conclusions about the details of the collapse of the arrangement they had entered into':

> The hagiographical section of the Louvain school scheme, that section dealing with the lives of the Irish saints, although inspired in part no doubt by the re-awakened interest in history as the result of the work of Baronius [the Counter-Reformation protagonist whose *Annales ecclesiastici* were published in twelve volumes in Rome from 1588 to 1607], can be shown to derive more immediately from another series of events. In 1623 two young Irish Franciscans, Father Patrick Fleming and Father Hugh Ward, the first on his way from Louvain to Rome, the other on his way from Spain and destined for St Anthony's, Louvain, met at Paris the secular priest, Thomas Messingham, rector of the Irish college in that city, who was preparing for publication a volume on the lives of the Irish saints. One could go still farther back and show how Messingham was in turn inspired by the work of David Rothe, Stephen White, Henry Fitzsimons, and Heribert Rosweyde, *but it was this meeting in Paris and the discussions between the three Irishmen on the lives of the Irish saints that really inaugurated the whole Louvain historical and hagiographical scheme* [italics added]. Ward and Fleming promised to transmit to Messingham copies of the lives of the different Irish saints they would find on their travels and he promised to print them for them without

delay and at no cost to them. Hugh MacCaghwell, afterwards archbishop of Armagh, was a witness to the agreement.[1] Ward afterwards accused Messingham of not having kept his part of the bargain. Messingham published, and without mentioning that it was to Ward and Fleming he was indebted, certain items which the two Franciscans hoped to reserve for a work of their own, and he was not willing to publish, as they suggested, a companion volume to his *Florilegium insulae sanctorum* in which the texts of the lives sent by Fleming and Ward would appear. Messingham, on his side, complained of Ward's dilatoriness in sending him material. This complaint was probably not devoid of foundation, because we do know that Ward, like Colgan after him, was a very slow worker. The arrangement made at Paris subsequently fell through. . . .[2]

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[1] Aodh Mac Cathmhaoil OFM (1571–1626), who was also known by the above anglicized form of his name as well as by the familiar soubriquet Aodh Mac Aingil, was Guardian of the college of St Anthony in Louvain and one of the foremost authors of devotional texts in Irish. He succeeded in having a house of study for Irish friars set up in Paris and became superior there on 8 July 1622, but this venture seems to have been short-lived, perhaps because of opposition from other religious in the capital, including the Franciscans of the Grand Couvent (C. Giblin, 'Hugh McCaghwell, OFM, Archbishop of Armagh (+1626): aspects of his life', *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 11 (1983–5) 259–94 [283]). In 1621–2 he played an important role in effecting a reform of the Franciscan friaries in France and especially of the Grand Couvent in Paris, which was seriously troubled by lax discipline and dissension (Giblin, 'Hugh McCaghwell', 276–8).

[2] C. Mooney, 'Father John Colgan, OFM, his work and times and literary milieu', in *Father John Colgan* OFM *1592–1658* (ed. T. O Donnell, Dublin 1959) 7–40 (15–16). Fr Jennings also accepts that Ward's tardiness may have contributed to their disagreement: 'Ward seems to have been rather

The failure of the project may have had the effect of isolating Messingham from the volume of source material which accumulated subsequently through the efforts of the Louvain scholars and their collaborators in Ireland, for there appears to be little tangible evidence of his activities in the hagiographical field after this period; so far as I am aware, there is nothing to suggest that he had anything like the same easy access to the extensive network of traditional Gaelic learning, clerical and lay, enjoyed by the Franciscans of Louvain. His *Florilegium* of Irish saints referred to by Canice Mooney ('the first printed collection of the *acta* of Irish saints'[1]) was published in Paris in 1624.[2] In addition to the various saints' Lives, taken largely from existing printed editions, it also includes an account of St Patrick's Purgatory (*Tractatus de Purgatorio S. Patricii ex diuersis compilatis Authoribus ....*) which relates the story of knight Owein's visit there and his vision of Hell and Paradise as told in the late twelfth century Latin text ascribed to H. of Saltrey.[3]

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remiss in his correspondence with Messingham, as he was with Fleming. Unfortunately much of Fleming's letter of 1st June, 1624, is illegible. Messingham (Thomas Messinghamus, *Florilegium Insulae Sanctorum, Paris* 1624) p. 414, duly acknowledges having received the *Regula S. Columbani* and a hymn in honour of the same saint from Mac Caughwell. There seems to have been an agreement that he would publish a second volume, in collaboration with Fleming and Ward, at his own expense' (B. Jennings, *Michael O Cleirigh: chief of the Four Masters and his associates* (Dublin 1936) 187 n.6).

[1] J. F. Kenney, *The sources for the early history of Ireland: ecclesiastical* ([New York 1929] rev. ed. Dublin 1979) 38.

[2] Or, to give it its title in fuller form, *Florilegium Insulae Sanctorum seu Vitae et Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae quibus accesserunt non vulgaria monumenta....* A sizeable volume of [24+] 442 pages fol., it was published by Sebastien Cramoisy in rue St Jacques.

[3] See J.-M. Picard and Y. de Pontfarcy, *Saint Patrick's Purgatory: a twelfth-century tale of a journey to the other world* (Dublin 1985); M. Herren and Y.

Fr Thomas O'Connor has effectively demonstrated Messingham's deep-set conviction, fuelled no doubt by his 'Old English' conservatism and by his considerable experience of French society, that a comprehensive and properly researched corpus of national hagiography could have a pivotal role in preserving Irish Catholicism and protecting it from heresy, and — what was equally important in the troubled circumstances of the time — that it could have the significant political effect of clearly establishing Ireland's national religious identity in the eyes of the French and the other Catholic peoples of Europe.[1] O'Connor sees this motivation reflected in the content and structure of the *Florilegium*:

> The *Florilegium* is a complex work. At its core is a collection of already published *Vitae* of the Irish saints, to which Messingham adds a selection of writings by the saints and a number of contemporary seventeenth-century historical tracts. The *Vitae* are presented in the order [in which] they appear in the calendar, but pride of place goes to the primary patrons, Patrick, Columba and Brigid. As all-Ireland patrons these three have a special unifying role to play in drawing together the disparate elements of early seventeenth-century Irish Catholicism. They can be realistically presented as commanding the loyalty of all Irish Catholics, and thus help add coherence to the picture of a united Catholic *Natio* which Messingham wishes to present to his

de Pontfarcy, *The medieval pilgrimage to St Patrick's Purgatory Lough Derg and the European tradition* (Enniskillen 1988) 48–57.

[1] O'Connor, 'Towards the invention of the Irish Catholic *natio*', *passim*.

> European readers. All are prefaced by short introductory passages in which Messingham cites sources and also indicates the particular significance of the piece in question in his overall hagiographical scheme. For instance, before presenting the first Life, Jocelin's Patrick, Messingham inserts David Rothe's treatise on the historical names for Ireland in order to refute the claim that Ireland's greatest saints were, in fact, Scots by nation. In other words, the presentation of the Patrician corpus in the *Florilegium* serves to distinguish Ireland from Scotland for European readers.[1]

Some years later Geoffrey Keating, seeking to make the same point in his history of Ireland, *Foras feasa are Éirinn*, had recourse to the *Florilegium* for a number of quotations from earlier authors which he used to confirm that the same *Scotia* originally referred to Ireland, not to Scotland.[2] As Bernadette Cunningham has made clear, Keating evidently read Messingham's recently published work with some care while drafting the *Forus feasa*; she also suggests that his debt to Messingham may extend beyond the question of the ancient nomenclature of Ireland: 'Indeed, Messingham's work on the saints of Ireland may well have been part of the inspiration that prompted Keating to present the story of the kings of Ireland to a wider audience.'[3]

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[1] *Ibid.* 170.

[2] A. Cronin, 'Sources of Keating's Foras Feasa ar Éirinn', *Éigse* (1943–4) 235–79 (263–4, 271); B. Cunningham, *The world of Geoffrey Keating: history, myth and religion in seventeenth-century Ireland* (Dublin 2000) 86, 92.

[3] Cunningham, *The world of Geoffrey Keating*, 92. Cunningham notes that Keating, though he borrows from Messingham, never mentions him by name, but she aptly draws the distinction between established authors,

Prior to the *Florilegium*, Messingham had already in 1620 published the offices of the three patron saints of Ireland, Patrick, Colm Cille and Brigid, together with those of saints Finian and Cainnech,[1] and he there invited his readers, whether in Ireland or in France, to inform him of any manuscripts they might know of relating to the lives of the Irish saints, and this of course well before he met Ward and Fleming. He has also been credited with an Irish translation of the Latin account of St Patrick's Purgatory.[2] Unfortunately he himself lost contact with the visionary plan of research and publication that had drawn such an enthusiastic response from Ward and Fleming and was in time to be developed and expanded so fruitfully and imaginatively by the Franciscan school of Louvain. There are doubtless several reasons for the failure of the proposed collaboration — the inherent difficulty of an extended, complex cooperation between regular and secular clerics in separate locations for example — yet the immediate cause would appear to have

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whom he does name, and his own contemporaries who would not have carried the same aura of authority with his readers.

[1] *Officia S.S. Patricii, Columbae, Brigidae, et aliorum quorundam Hiberniae sanctorum* .... (Paris 1620).

[2] This Irish translation was edited by T. Condún in *Lia Fáil* I (1924) 1–48 from several manuscript copies in the library of the Royal Irish Academy. At the end of the version (p. 538) in MS 23 L 24 (18th cent.) (= p. 39 of the edited text) it is attributed to a Fr Tomás Wellsingham, an Irish priest, who found it among Lives of Irish saints and translated it from French to Irish and who was himself martyred for his faith. This looks like a curiously garbled reference to Messingham. Douglas Hyde evidently thought so (T. Cundún, ibid. 43), and in fasc. I of the *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, p. 89, Thomas F. O'Rahilly similarly suggests that Wellsingham be read as Messingham. There is also a copy of the Irish text in MS TCD H 6 23 (19th cent.), and according to Abbott and Gwynn's catalogue of Irish manuscripts, p. 326, it follows the Latin version that is in Messingham's *Florilegium*.

beem simply a lack of adequate communication between the participants. But for that human failing — it is an intriguing thought, if an idle one — the Irish College in Paris might have continued to play an important role as a partner to the Louvain community in bringing to fruition the ambitious collective project conceived by Thomas Messingham.

5. *Pádraig Ó Donnghaile / Patrick O'Donnelly*

There is a document in the archive of Collège des Irlandais dated 22 January 1681 which relates to Collège des Lombards and has appended to it the names of fourteen holders of bursaries, among them 'Patrice O'Donnelly, priest' and 'Tirente O'Donnelly, priest'.[1] They were two brothers destined in the course of time to play significant roles in the Irish Church: Terence as vicar apostolic of Down and of Connor and subsequently as bishop of Derry from 1720 to 1726, Patrick as the bishop of Dromore who endured the rigours of the Penal system and consequently became a focus of popular legend.

They belonged to the O'Donnellys of Baile Uí Dhonnghaile in Tyrone whose territory lay mainly within the present parish of Donaghmore. The O'Donnellys formed a vital part of the army and inner council of O'Neill to whom they remained staunchly loyal to the end, and inevitably they were largely dispossessed of their lands during the seventeenth-century process of re-settlement. Pádraig Ó Donnghaile was

[1] Swords, *Calendar* doc. 79.

ordained by the archbishop of Armagh, Dr Oliver Plunkett, at Kilbarrack near Dundalk in 1673 and had his first curacy in Armagh. It was presumably from there he went to study in Paris, probably in 1679. Since he acquired a doctorate in civil and canon law, the presumption is that he spent several years in Collège des Lombards, but unfortunately little is known of his life in Paris during that time. When, however, many years later, he was widely promoted as the most worthy candidate to succeed Dominic Maguire, late archbishop of Armagh, the formal statements or postulations on his behalf included strong expressions of support from the superiors and the Armagh students of the Paris seminary; that he was passed over in the end and Hugh MacMahon, bishop of Clogher, appointed instead in 1715, was due to a couple of factors, of which the most immediate appears to have been the lack of endorsement by the Stuart court.[1] Archbishop Maguire, who died at St Germain-en-Laye, was buried in Collège des Lombards but his memorial plaque was later removed to Collège des Irlandais where it may be seen in the entrance to the chapel.

Ó Donnghaile seems to have returned to Ireland about 1685 and subsequently served for a period as parish priest of Keady, during which time he was appointed vicar general, first of Armagh and later also of Dromore. By the beginning of 1697 the Church found itself in a parlous situation throughout Ireland. There was not a single prelate exercising jurisdiction in the whole province of Armagh, and the Primate, Dominic Maguire, was in exile at the court of St Ger-

[1] L. Swords, 'Patrick O'Donnelly, 1649–1719, bishop of Dromore: material in the notarial files in Paris and the Propaganda archives in Rome', *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 15 (1993) 84–97; also Very Rev. M. McRory, P.P., 'Life and times of Doctor Patrick O'Donnelly, 1649–1716', 3–33 (27–8). Fr Swords furnishes documentary evidence for the later obit.

main. It was at this precarious juncture that Pádraig Ó Donnghaile was appointed to the see of Dromore. In defiance of an act passed that year banishing 'all papists exercising ecclesiastic jurisdiction' and aimed specifically at bishops, vicars general and the regular clergy, he remained among his people, but represented himself as a simple parish priest in the 1704 register and lived quietly in a remote spot in south Armagh still known to our own day as 'Doctor's Quarters', exercising his episcopal functions covertly under a cloak of anonymity. Nonetheless, he was apprehended in 1706 on the word of an informer who reported that he was in fact a popish bishop. Despite a prolonged series of examinations extending from September 1706 to May 1708 the case against him remained unproven and he was then finally released from the harsh conditions of the Marshalsea Prison in Dublin.[1]

While he was in prison the poet Seán Ó Neachtain composed a poem in his praise invoking God's protection on him in his tribulation (*Olc an scéal do scaoil indé* . . .)[2], and if this suggests a degree of familiarity between the bishop and the Gaelic poets of his time there is at least some circumstantial evidence to support it. Tradition has it that Ó Donnghaile was able to move around his diocese carrying out his pastoral duties because he did so in the guise of a travelling musician and that he and Felim Brady of the familiar ballad 'The bard of Armagh' were one and the same person.[3]

There is also some reason to believe that the well-known poet Eoghan Ó Donnghaile (*fl. c.*1680–90) may have been

[1] For a fuller account of Ó Donnghaile's life see McRory, 'Life and times'.
[2] Ed. T. Ó Fiaich, *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 2 (1956–57) 323–6; D. Ó Doibhlin (ed.), *Ó Chreagán go Ceann Dubhrann: Aistí le Tomás Ó Fiaich* (Baile Átha Cliath 1992) 116–18.
[3] McRory, 'Life and times', 28–31.

a friend of his. The present bishop of Clogher, Dr Joseph Duffy, has argued that Eoghan Ó Donnghaile the poet is to be identified with a priest of that name who was registered as parish priest of Armagh in 1704, and furthermore that he was the author who lampooned the ignorance and boorishness of some of the clergy of the time, more specifically that faction which had brought accusations against Oliver Plunkett, in his satire *Comhairle Mhic Clamha ó Achadh na Muilleann* 'The Advice of Mac Clave from Aughnamullen'.[1] One of his poems, *Mochion do theacht a Fhelime* 'Your coming is welcome, Felimy', is addressed to a visiting harper, dwelling on the dignity of his bearing and the excellence of his playing, and Bishop Duffy suggests that the harper is in fact Pádraig Ó Donnghaile himself but presented here under the assumed name of his *alter ego*. He notes that Pádraig and Eoghan the cleric had much in common: 'They were born in the same year, 1649, and were ordained in the priesthood within a year of each other, Owen in 1672 and Patrick in 1673, by Primate Oliver Plunkett at Ballybrack near Dundalk. It is extremely likely that they spent some time together in the college that was set up in Drogheda in 1670 when it was forced to close under a fresh wave of persecution', and he surmises that Eoghan may also have been sent abroad, 'probably soon after ordination'.

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[1] S. Ó Dufaigh and B. E. Rainey, *Comhairle Mhic Clamha ó Achadh na Muilleann* (Lille 1981) 24–42.
The possibility that the poet and the cleric were the same person had previously been noted but not pursued further; É. Ó Tuathail, *Éigse* 4 (1943–4) 115.

Indeed once one accepts the identification of the priest and poet namesakes, then the close association of bishop and poet becomes highly plausible. On the present evidence Bishop Duffy's argument is some way short of being conclusive, but it remains persuasive.[1]

[1] This is very much the view expressed by the late Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich in a review of an earlier edition of Dr Duffy's *Comhairle Mhic Clamha* in *Studia Hibernica* 6 (1966) 188–9.

6. *Eoin Baiste Mac Sleighne / John (Johannes) Sleyne*

We know that Eoin Baiste Mac Sleighne, or John Baptist Sleyne (to use the English form most favoured by modern historians),[1] spent some time in Paris in the second half of the seventeenth century, but we have little information about his connection with the Irish seminary there: he arrived in Paris some years before the Irish were granted possession of Collège des Lombards at a time for which the circumstances of the Irish community in the city are poorly documented. Nonetheless it seems inconceivable that he could have spent several years there without forming close associations with the Irish clerical community, and indeed he is in many ways so representative of Irish churchmen who studied in France and in Paris in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and who played an active role in promoting Irish learning that one cannot avoid making some mention of him in the present context. Born in 1638 in the diocese of Cloyne some twelve miles from Limerick city, he was ordained to the priesthood at Rouen on 27 March 1663

[1] Other Anglicized variants of his surname are Sloyne, Slogne, Mac Seleyne.

but was evidently engaged in his studies in Paris both before and after that date: he gained his M.A. there in 1661, sustained the *tentativa* for his B.Theol. in 1665 and was awarded his doctorate by the faculty of theology in the Sorbonne in 1670.[1] He subsequently held the post of vicar general of the diocese of Cork and Cloyne for six years before leaving for Rome where he spent at least twelve years teaching theology. In 1693 he was consecrated bishop of the diocese, an event celebrated in poems by several of the Munster poets. He was arrested in 1698 for ignoring the provisions of the act of the previous year banishing bishops and other senior clerics and spent five years in prison before being deported in 1703. He spent his remaining years until his death in 1712 in Lisbon.

With the displacement and dispossession in the seventeenth century of the vast majority of the native ruling families who had provided sustenance to the learned fraternity of poets, scribes and historians, something of their role as patrons passed — though in drastically straitened circumstances — to senior members of the clergy who had shared interests with the poets and scribes and, in many instances, regarded the Irish language as a bulwark for the Catholic re-

[1] Brockliss and Ferté, 'Irish clerics' 572; B. Ó Conchúir, 'Eoin Baiste Mac Sleighne, easpag (1693–1712), agus patrún ar an léann Gaelach', in *Folia Gadelica* (ed. P. de Brún *et al.*, Cork 1983) 88–94 (89); idem., *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí 1700–1850* (Dublin 1982) 216–18 (I am indebted to Dr Ó Conchúir's publications for much of the detail on Mac Sleighne's career); C. Giblin OFM, 'The "Processus Datariae" and the appointment of Irish bishops in the 17th century', in *Father Luke Wadding: a commemorative volume* (ed., The Franciscan Fathers Dublin 1957) 508–616, on John Baptist Sleyne, pp 598–601 (599). For those students proceeding to the licentiate in theology the course comprised a two-year programme of lectures with four theses to be defended before the faculty: the *tentative*, the *sorbonnique*, the *mineur* and the *majeur* (see T. O'Connor, 'A theology thesis defended by an Irish clerical student in Paris in 1739', *Arch. Hib.* 51 (1997) 3–15 (3).

ligion.[1] Eoin Baiste Mac Sleighne was the first such churchman in Munster to extend patronage to the exponents of native learning. Even while in prison he continued to encourage the work of Irish scribes and, according to a contemporary of his, Fr Conchubhar Mac Cairteáin, 'there was not an Irish book that he got in the south of Ireland that he did not send to be copied at his own expense.' Over a dozen poems composed in his honour have survived, some of them poems of welcome for his return from Rome in 1693, others lamenting his banishment from Ireland.[2]

Though we know very little about Mac Sleighne's career in Paris apart from the formal records of his academic progress, the fact is that he was part of the university community and the Irish student community a few years before the Irish acquired their own *foyer* in rue des Carmes. A glimpse of this social reality emerges many years later when in his testimonies presented in connection with the process of appointing John Moloney and Peter Creagh to the sees of Limerick and Dublin respectively, he recalls that he first met them 'thirty years' earlier when they were together in Paris and that they have known each other since then.[3]

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[1] Ó Conchúir, 'Eoin Baiste Mac Sleighne' 88; M. Ní Úrdail, 'Aistriúcháin ó Chorcaigh i Láimhscríbhinní Déanacha na Gaeilge', in *Übersetzung, Adaptation und Akkulturation im insularen Mittelalter* (ed. E. Poppe and L. C. H. Tristram, Münster 1999) 319–36.

[2] B. Ó Cuív, 'Irish language and literature, 1691–1845', in *Eighteenth-Century Ireland 1691–1800* (ed. T. W. Moody and W. E. Vaughan, Oxford 1986) [*A New History of Ireland* IV], 374–419 (378). Fr Mac Cairteáin's comment is from the preface to *Agallamh na bhfíoraon*, his own translation of a Latin catechism.

[3] *Father Luke Wadding* 594, 596. In both cases he speaks of meeting them thirty years earlier, though the declarations of process are dated 10 December 1688 and 7 December 1692. When the process of validation for Mac Sleighne's own appointment to the see of Cork and Cloyne was instituted on 7 December 1692, one of the testimonies adduced was a state-

7. David Henegan

The continuing interest in Irish learning in the Paris community is reflected in the writings of the Abbé David Henegan, *proviseur* and prefect of students in College des Lombards,[1] who contributed a number of substantial articles to the *Grand Dictionnaire de Moreri* published by Drouet in 1759, including items on Geoffrey Keating and on John Lynch, author of *Cambrensis Eversus* and other significant works,[2] as well as one on Ireland covering thirty folio pages. In his essay on Keating he notes the critical dearth

ment dated 22 October 1677 from the dean and doctors of the Faculty of Theology at the Sorbonne affirming his zeal and religious orthodoxy (*ibid.* 600).

[1] There were four superiors known as *proviseurs* or provisors in the Paris college, one for each province.

[2] John Lynch (*c.*1599-*c.*1677) received his early education in his native Galway and pursued his ecclesiastical studies at several centres on the Continent — Dieppe, Douai and Rouen — before returning to Ireland to be ordained priest in 1625. He was appointed archdeacon of Tuam about 1630, and in 1652, when Galway was surrendered to the Cromwellians, he left Ireland for France, where he remained until his death. Several of his works, including apparently his *Cambrensis Eversus* (1662), were published at Saint-Malo, where he seems to have lived out his days (see A. Gwynn, 'John Lynch's 'De Praesulibus Hiberniae', *Studies* 34 (1945) 37–52; P. J. Corish, 'Two contemporary historians of the confederation of Kilkenny: John Lynch and Richard O'Ferrall', *Irish historical studies* 8

of religious books in Irish to cater for the needs of the people and, significantly, he underlines the pioneering example set by the Irish Franciscans of the Convent of St Anthony in Louvain in providing such material for distribution in Ireland in the seventeenth century.[1] In speaking of the lack of so many of the necessary texts and of the efforts of the Franciscans to supply them he might well have cited a passage by John Lynch writing in the middle of the seventeenth century:

> The labours of the Reverend Fathers of the orders of St. Francis, in the college of Louvain, will, we hope, once more revive the Irish language. They are not only bringing to light every day the more abstruse vernacular documents, but translating them from the rugged obscurity of an obsolete idiom into elegant Latin. In this undertaking, the indefatigable zeal of the Very Rev. Father John Colgan, professor emeritus of Theology, stands nobly pre-eminent among all the writers on the history of our country. We have already seen many books printed in the Irish type, at the press of this college, and we are expecting soon from the same source a copious Irish dictionary, which some of the same fathers are said to be compiling . . .[2]

My former colleague Pádraig de Brún suggested to me some time ago that Lynch may be referring here to the 'New

(1952–3) 217–36; Nollaig Ó Muraíle, *The celebrated antiquary Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh (c.1600–71)* (Maynooth 1996) xviii, 65–6, 214, 227–30).

[1] Boyle, 'The Irish College' 196, 201.

[2] M. Kelly (ed.), *Cambrensis Eversus* (Dublin 1848–52) II, 378–9; I quote from the editor's translation of Lynch's Latin text. Fr Kelly, from the diocese of Ossory, was himself a member of the professorial staff of Collège des Irlandais.

vocabulary or glossary' (*Foclóir nó sanasán nua*) compiled by Míchéal Ó Cléirigh and printed in Louvain in 1643, and this is more or less confirmed by a passage in his *De praesulibus Hiberniae* (II, 294) where he refers specifically to Ó Cléirigh's *Vocabularium Hibernicum*. In reality it was not the copious dictionary of the language that his first comment seems to anticipate, but rather a glossary of old and 'difficult' words addressed mainly to those working with earlier medieval texts and providing scant access to the resources of the contemporary language. His *Cambrensis Eversus* was published in 1662, whereas he did not finish writing his *De Praesulibus* until late 1672. Evidently he had come to learn in the meantime that Ó Cléirigh's glossary was more concerned with obsolete than with current terminology: *Illi* Vocabularium Hibernicum *voces obsoletas ac difficiles Hibernica interpretatione vulgatiori exprimens . . . frater Michael O Clery ordinis minorum, florentibus confoederatis, inscripsit*. However, his remark in the earlier work reflected the wider contemporary consciousness of the importance of lexicography in the literary and intellectual cultivation of a language; in Welsh, for example, John Davies's *Dictionarium Duplex* (Welsh-Latin) was published in 1632. Lynch's words are peculiarly apposite in the present context, since we shall have occasion in the following pages to mention two Irish dictionaries produced in association with, or at least in close proximity to, the Irish College in Paris.

THE

ENGLISH IRISH DICTIONARY.

AN FOCLOIR

BEARLA GAOIDHEILGE

AR NA

CHUR A MEATAR

LE CONCHOBAR O BEAGLAOICH MAR AON LE CONGNAM

Aodh Buidhe mac CUIRTIN agus rós.

A BPAIRIS;

Ap na ćur ačcloḋ le SEAMUS GUERIN, an Bliadhain dhos an Tiaghrina.

M. DCC. XXXII.

Le hIonta an Rígh.

Title-page of Conor O'Begley's *English Irish dictionary* 1732.

[By kind permission of the Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin]

8. O'Begley and Mac Cruitín's dictionary

In the same essay in the *Grand Dictionnaire de Moreri* Henegan mentions an Irish priest, the Abbé Begly, who was resident in Paris and who had Irish type cast there in 1730. It was supplied by the typefoundry of Loyson of Paris, but only two works are known to have used it: Conchobhar Ó Beaglaoich's English-Irish Dictionary and Aindrias Ó Doinnshléibhe's Catechism, both printed in Paris by Jacques Guérin.[1] According to the Abbé Henegan, it was at Begly/O'Begley's invitation that Aodh Buí Mac Cruitín (Hugh Mac Curtain), who had published his *Elements of the Irish language grammatically explained in English* at Louvain in 1728, joined him in the task of editing his dictionary and preparing the text for its publication in 1732. Despite its full title on the fly-leaf, *The English Irish Dictionary : An Focloir Bearla Gaoidheilge ar na chur a neagar le Conchobhar O Beaglaoich mar aon le congnamh Aodh Bhuidhe mac Cuirtin agus fós*, Fr Patrick Boyle refers to it as the '*Anglo-Irish Dictionary*, by Hugh M'Curtin' and says merely that

[1] D. McGuinne, *Irish type design: a history of printing types in the Irish character* (Blackrock, Co. Dublin 1992) 64–9.

O'Begley 'enabled him' (Mac Curtain) to publish it.[1] Similarly Richard Hayes states in his *Biographical Dictionary of Irishmen in France* that 'Abbé Begley enabled him to publish there in 1732 his English-Irish Dictionary'. It has frequently been attributed to them both as co-editors when not simply credited to Mac Cruitín, though recently it has been argued from internal evidence that Mac Cruitín's role was in fact an ancillary one and mainly concerned with preparing O'Begley's work for publication.[2]

The late Professor Tomás de Bhaldraithe suggested that O'Begley may have invited Mac Curtain to associate himself with the dictionary in order to gain it recognition and that his actual contribution to the work was confined to the poem he composed for it by way of preface.[3] In that case it would appear that his idea proved more successful than he might have expected. It evidently convinced many subsequent commentators, and one can only assume that in according authorship to Mac Cruitín against the testimony of the full title Fr Boyle, himself rector of the Irish College, was swayed by his reputation as poet and scholar and perhaps influenced by Henegan's somewhat ambiguous phraseology: '...M. Begly, qui avoit engagé auparavant M. Hugues Mac-Curtin, homme versé dans la langue & les antiquités d'Irlande, à travailler à un *Dictionnaire anglois & irlandois...*'.[4] It is significant that Bishop Seán Ó Briain, writing in the *Journal des Sçavans* in 1764, refers simply to 'le Dictionnaire

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[1] P. Boyle, 'The Irish College', 202.

[2] V. Morley, *An crann os coill : Aodh Buí Mac Cruitín, c.1680–1755* (Baile Átha Cliath 1995) 104–9.

[3] T. de Bhaldraithe, 'Foclóir Uí Bheaglaoich', in *Dán do Oide: Essays in memory of Conn R. Ó Cléirigh*, (ed. A. Ahlqvist and V. Capkova, Dublin 1997) 21–37 (22).

[4] *Dictionnaire de Moreri*, 'Geoffroi Keating', p. 10.

Anglois-Irlandois de M. Begly, Prêtre du Collège des Lombards'.

It is clear from the reference by Henegan and another in a poem by Mac Cruitín published at the beginning of the dictionary that O'Begley was a priest, but beyond that the details remain as yet somewhat uncertain. The title-page of the dictionary and Mac Cruitín in his poem give his name as Conchobhar Ó Beaglaoich, yet Richard Hayes accepts without comment that he is the same as the cleric Thadée (Ir. Tadhg) Begley who is mentioned in other documents. Assuming that this Thadée was the person who collaborated with Mac Cruitín he notes that he had a doctorate from the University of Paris, acted as tutor in the household of Count Daniel O'Mahony in the years 1718–19, and was a chaplain in the parish of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois in the first half of the eighteenth century.[1] Hayes does not cite his sources, and Vincent Morley has pointed out that there is no mention of Begley in the few extant documents for that parish in the period in question.[2] On the other hand, there are several notarial documents as well as one in the archive of Collège des Irlandais which refer to a Thady/Thadée Begly, D.Theol., of the faculty of Poitiers, who was by 1723 Munster provisor of the Collège des Lombards. Apparently his duties did not require him to be permanently in residence there: as stated in the records he was living in the college in 1723, by 1726 he was the only one of the four provincial provisors not resident there, residing instead at the cloister in the parish of St Germain l'Auxerrois, in 1726 he was, like the other provisors, living in the college, and at 1729 he is described as '*prêtre habitué*, St Germain l'Auxerrois', that is to say, a priest ren-

[1] R. Hayes, *Biographical dictionary of Irishmen in France* (Dublin 1949).
[2] V. Morley, *An crann os coill*, 105.

dering service to a parish but not formally responsible to it.[1] Morley rightly surmises that some such references lie behind Hayes's note, though they do not explain why he identified Tadhg/Thadée with Conchobhar Ó Beaglaoich without further comment. Was it a simple matter of confusion on his part, were there two Irish priests with the same surname in the same parish, or was the same priest known under two first names (we are all familiar with cases in which the choice of one or other of a person's first names depends on the circle of friends or acquaintances involved)?

The Abbé Henegan could have resolved the problem had he been a little more expansive in the relevant passage in the *Dictionnaire de Moreri*; unfortunately he did not think it necessary to supply the lexicographer's first name, and, while he must obviously have been closely familiar with Thadée Begley's prominent role in Collège des Lombards, he makes no mention of it in his comment on 'M. Begly': of the latter's provision of Irish type-face he says merely: *'Ils furent faits aux dépens d'un généreux écclésiastique de ce pays, nommé M. Begly...'*. On the other hand, Henegan's lack of detail may be nothing more than a reflex of his own familiarity with Begley's affiliations. It is significant, for example, that Bishop Seán Ó Briain describes our lexicographer as 'Prêtre du Collège des Lombards' (see p. 83).[2] While this of itself

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[1] L. Swords, 'Calendar of Irish material in the files of Jean Fromont, notary at Paris, May 1701–24 Jan. 1730, in the Archives Nationales, Paris: part 2, 1716–30', *Collectanea Hibernica : Sources for Irish History*, nos. 36–37 (1994–5) pp 107 §628, 117 §641, 119 §646, 121 §651, 127 §659. For the last item see also Swords, *Calendar*, 48 §182.

[2] Tomás de Bhaldraithe notes that the dictionary has sometimes variant spellings of the same words which point to spoken or dialect forms and he points out that O'Begley would have had a better opportunity to hear various dialects in the Irish College in Paris than he would have had in any district at home in Ireland ('Foclóir Uí Bheaglaoich', 30).

does not quite resolve Begley's posthumous crisis of identity, it does confirm that both Tadhg/Thadée and Conchobhar belonged to the community of the College and perhaps shifts the balance in favour of accepting them to be one and the same person.

Mac Cruitín was a figure of some significance in the Irish cultural environment of his time. By the early years of the eighteenth century a number of scholars skilled in the Irish language and tradition had established themselves in Dublin and participated actively, from their own cultural perspective, in the growth of historical studies that characterized this period throughout much of Europe; of these Dublin scholars, Brian Ó Cuív has written that none 'made a greater or more varied contribution to Irish learning than Aodh Buidhe Mac Cruitín'.[1] He was born in Kilmacreehy (Cill Mhic Críthe) near Liscannor in Co. Clare, and his forebears had been hereditary historians and poets in Thomond. He himself, despite his very different circumstances, still held to the traditional vocation of poet, scribe and historian; over fifty of his own poems have survived, one of them prefaced to the Paris dictionary. In 1717 he published his *Brief discourse in vindication of the antiquity of Ireland* partly in response to the anti-Irish views expressed by Sir Richard Cox of Cork, chief justice of the queen's bench 1711–14, in his *Hibernia anglicana*. It has been reported by various writers that for his temerity Fox had him committed to Newgate for a

[1] B. Ó Cuív, 'Irish language and literature, 1691–1845', in *Eighteenth-Century Ireland 1691–1800* (ed. T. W. Moody and W. E. Vaughan, Oxford 1986) [*A New History of Ireland* IV] 374–419 (394, 396–7, 467, 645). Also E. MacCarvill, 'Jonathan Swift, Aodh Buí Mac Cruitín, and contemporary Thomond scholars', *North Munster Antiquarian Journal* XI (1968) 36–46 (38–9); for Mac Cruitín's Jacobite sympathies see B. Ó Buachalla, *Aisling ghéar: na Stíobhartaigh agus an t-aos léinn 1603–1788* (Baile Átha Cliath 1996) 311–17.

year, but this is uncertain. What is certain from his own testimony is that he spent some time in prison, though it is not made clear for what reason.[1] It would appear from a note in Irish within the text of *Elements of the Irish Language* that he was working on his grammar while in prison. Correcting an error in his citation of a verbal form, he explains:

> Owing to the disturbance caused by the brawling company that is around me in this prison, I have inserted here, in the imperative Mood, this last example, which belongs to the potential Mood following. Wherefore, dear reader, excuse me, and note that this is the first example of the following Mood.[2]

When the grammar was reprinted in the Paris English-Irish dictionary the error was corrected and the note omitted.

Mac Cruitín appears to have first gone to the Continent, to Louvain, in 1727, when he was already approaching his fiftieth year. In 1728, as we have seen, he left Louvain for Paris to join Fr O'Begley and towards the end of that year he enlisted in the regiment of Lord Clare from which he retired a year later. He returned to Ireland about 1738,[3] died in 1755 and was buried either near his birthplace in Kilmacreehy or in Cill Bhaodáin near Corofin.[4]

As a scholar it is probably true to say that Mac Cruitín is notable more for his energy and the range of his interests

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[1] Ó Buachalla, *Aisling ghéar*, 312–13. For a discussion of the reasons for Mac Cruitín's imprisonment see V. Morley, *An crann os coill*, 35–41.

[2] Cf. O. Bergin, *The native Irish grammarian*, Sir John Rhŷs Mem. Lecture, British Academy (1938) 18–19.

[3] Morley, *An crann os coill*, 83, 101–4.

[4] Morley, *An crann os coill*, 15–16, 140; also T. F. O'Rahilly, *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 1917, July 28, p. 4; Robin Flower, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum* [now 'the British Library'], 195–6.

than for the depth and originality of his scholarship. His grammar has a good deal to recommend it and has been praised by such an exacting critic as Osborn Bergin;[1] unfortunately the most recent author to comment at length on Mac Cruitín, Vincent Morley, has shown that it is little more than a summary of a manuscript grammar in English compiled, probably in 1713, by Fr Francis Walsh (Proinsias Bhailis), a Franciscan who was ordained in Prague and spent some time as a lecturer in the College at Louvain, and who died in Dublin in 1724.[2] In Morley's assessment the importance of Mac Cruitín's writing, including his poems, lies less in its intrinsic quality than in the insight it offers into the politics and ideology — *pro deo, rege et patria* — of those who constituted his main audience, and these are, by Morley's definition, the broad sweep of public opinion in his own county of Clare, the Irish language fraternity of Dublin, the soldiers of the Regiment of Lord Clare, and the community of the Irish College in Paris.[3] His reference to the Irish College is apposite, for, despite there being little tangible evidence to indicate that Mac Cruitín had contacts with the college, it is inconceivable that he could have passed some years in Paris without forming links with the college community and its associates. Indeed Morley notes that while we do not know where Mac Cruitín was employed while in France, it appears

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[1] Bergin, *The native Irish grammarian* (Oxford 1938) 19–20, 26.

[2] Morley, *An crann os coill*, 95–7, 145. Among Walsh's own sources was Bonaventura Ó hEodhusa's *Rudimenta grammaticae hibernicae*, a copy of which was formerly in Prague, where the Franciscans from Louvain founded a college in 1629; see *Graiméir Ghaeilge na mBráthar Mionúr*, ed. Parthalán Mac Aogáin OFM (Dublin, 1968) xvi. Bonaventura, or Giolla Brighde as he was known before entering the Franciscan order in 1607, was the close friend of William Nugent of Delvin; he died in 1613 as Guardian of the college in Louvain.

[3] Ibid. p. 149.

9. Mánus Ó Ruairc / Manus O'Ruorke

In discussing such projects and publications as are brought together in the present context one risks representing them merely as occasional events rather than, as they really were, some of the more tangible instances of a continuing dynamic process within a society, not only in Paris but throughout France, in which numerous Irish people, clerical and lay and of varied professional and social status, enjoyed a sense of cultural and economic security while maintaining close links with their colleagues and communities at home.[1] One notable instance of this network was the amiable and pluricultural Waterfordman Fr Manus O'Ruorke (*c.*1658–1743) who was educated in Paris and spent the greater part of his life in France. Well known

[1] This held true in the domain of Irish literature and learning as in other spheres. In the early seventeenth century, as we saw, Giolla Brighde Ó hEodhusa, Franciscan, scholar and poet, addressed a poem to his friend — another poet — Richard Nugent from the Netherlands. Over a century later when Liam Rua Mac Coitir of Castlelyons composed a verse lament on the death of his brother Éamonn, he sent it to his friend Fr Domhnall Ó Duinnín, superior of the Irish College at Toulouse from 1748 to 1751 (Risteárd Ó Foghludha, ed., *Cois na Cora .i. Liam Ruadh Mac Coitir agus a shaothar fileata* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1937) 15, 28. They were not isolated instances.

relations with the numerous Irish soldiers in the service of France — some of them former students of the College — together with their families: an extremely important component of eighteenth-century Irish society in the French capital. It was evidently traditional among these military men to maintain contact with the priests of the Irish continental colleges, to support them financially where possible, and to entrust them with the education of their sons. When in turn Irish soldiers had need of testimonials or certificates of genealogy, nobility, religion and baptism in connection with their professional careers, it was to the priests of the Irish colleges they had recourse, and it has been remarked that the priests of 'the Irish college in Paris seem to have been asked for these with great regularity'.[1] The wide range of association implicit in this practice alone is self-evident.

Davis (ed.), *Irlande et Bretagne: vingt siècles d'histoire* (Rennes 1994) 153–66 (159 and n. 79).

[1] M. Walsh, 'Irish soldiers and the Irish College in Paris', in *The Irish-French Connection 1578–1978* (ed., L. Swords, Paris 1978) 63–87 (63); also eadem, 'Irish soldiers and Father Charles O Neill of the Irish College in Paris', *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 9 (1978–9) 95–122.

10. Cornelius Nary

As we have seen, Aodh Buí Mac Cruitín was active in Dublin learned circles in the early part of the eighteenth century prior to his departure for the Continent. At approximately the same time another scholar of a very different stamp made something of a name for himself in the capital following his return from a lengthy sojourn in Paris where he had been closely associated with Collège des Lombards. Cornelius Nary (1660–1730) was a native of Kildare who received his early education at Naas and was ordained to the priesthood in 1682.

He subsequently went to Paris where he graduated Doctor in both canon and civil law at the university.[1] In 1693 he was elected Leinster provisor of Collège des Lombards. About 1695[2] he left France for London where he spent some time as tutor to the son of the third earl of Antrim, Alexander MacDonnell, an Irish Catholic peer, before returning to Dublin about 1699. He is said to have been imprisoned there in 1702 for inciting religious controversy, but this does not

[1] On this point see P. Fagan, *Dublin's turbulent priest: Cornelius Nary 1658–1738* (Dublin 1991) 15. Nary's association with the Irish College in Paris is dealt with on pp 12–17.
[2] See Fagan, ibid. 18.

appear to have seriously hindered his activities.[1]

By 1703 he was parish priest of St Michan's, where he remained until his death. He was an able scholar, the author of a number of theological and devotional works, and above all an enthusiastic controversialist who crossed swords with several prominent churchmen and theologians of the established church. It was at his invitation that the sisters of the order of Poor Clares set up in Dublin, having already re-established themselves in Galway, and, though they were promptly arrested, it was found that there was no law under which they could be charged and they were accordingly set free.[2]

Nary was not an Irish scholar, nor is there any evidence that he evinced a particular interest in the language. However, as a member of the Irish community in Paris and an administrator of Collège des Lombards he could scarcely have been totally divorced from Irish studies. It would appear for example that during his residence there he became friendly with Matthew Kennedy, a well-known member of the Irish community at Saint Germain-en-Laye who was an enthusiastic student of the Irish language and Irish history. In 1705 Kennedy published in Paris a genealogical and historical dissertation on the royal family of the Stuarts in which he represented them as the legitimate kings of Ireland. His principal source for evidence to support his argument was the important manuscript compilation known as the Book of Lecan, which was removed from Dublin and brought to Paris some time after the defeat of James II, and which Matthew Kennedy held in his possession for more than two years while preparing his dissertation.

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[1] *Dictionary of national biography* (London 1895); Fagan, ibid. 36.
[2] J. Brady and P. J. Corish, *The Church under the Penal Code* (Dublin 1971) 13.

It is of some interest therefore to find that Cornelius Nary also had a copy or translation of part of the Lecan manuscript. The information comes from Dr Anthony Raymond, vicar of Trim and a noted antiquarian of the time who in the course of his studies availed himself of the services of several scribes and scholars skilled in the Irish language, one of whom was Aodh Buí Mac Cruitín, O'Begley's collaborator in compiling the Paris dictionary. He speaks of 'having likewise procured some extracts from the Authentick Records of *Lecane* collected about 300 years ago, and now in the College of *Lombard* at *Paris*...', to which he adds in a footnote: 'I own my obligations to *Mr Cornelius Nary* of the city of *Dublin*, for procuring those Extracts'.[1]

Nary also figures in the list of subscribers for a work on the history of Ireland to which Raymond devoted much time and thought but which never reached publication,[2] and he himself made a translation of the chapter on St Patrick's Purgatory in Thomas Messingham's *Florilegium* of Irish saints (1624) which, as we have seen, was published in Paris in 1718.[3] It is true that Cornelius Nary remains a peripheral figure in the history of Irish studies, yet his association with Matthew Kennedy and Anthony Raymond is a useful reminder of some less obvious channels of contact and com-

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[1] In Raymond's pamphlet entitled *A letter from Dr Anthony Raymond To my Lord Inchiquin Giving some Account of the Monarchs and Ancient State of Ireland* (Dublin 1723) I, 3, 4. On these various matters relating to Dr Raymond and his interest in Irish history see A. Harrison, *Ag Cruinniú meala : Anthony Raymond (1675–1726), ministéir Protastúnach, agus léann na Gaeilge i mBaile Átha Cliath* (Baile Átha Cliath 1988), esp. 27–8, 57, 62–4.

[2] A. Harrison, *Ag Cruinniú meala*, 64, 82, 146.

[3] *Florilegium Insulae sanctorum: a brief history of St Patrick's Purgatory and its pilgrimage. Collected out of ancient historians, written in Latin by Rev Thomas Messingham and now made English in favour of those curious to know of that famous place* (Paris 1718).

munication that existed between students of Irish learning at home and those resident in Paris.

FOCALÓIR
GAOIDHILGE-SAX-BHÉARLA
OR
AN IRISH-ENGLISH *DICTIONARY.*

Whereof the *Irish* part hath been compiled not only from various *Irish* vocabularies, particularly that of Mr. *Edward Lhuyd*; but alſo from a great variety of the beſt *Irish* manuſcripts now extant; eſpecially thoſe that have been compoſed from the 9th & 10th centuries, down to the 16th: beſides thoſe of the lives of St. *Patrick* & St. *Brigit*, written in the 6th & 7th centuries.

Poſtremò, ad perficiendam, vel certè valdè promovendam litteraturam Celticam, *diligentiùs Linguæ* Hibernicæ *ſtudium adjungendum cenſeo, ut* Lhuydius *egregiè facere cæpit. Nam, uti alibi jam admonui, quemadmodum* Angli *fuere Coloniæ Saxonum, &* Britanni *emiſſio veterum Celtarum, Gallorum, Cimbrorum; ita* Hiberni *ſunt propago antiquiorum Britanniæ habitatorum, Colonis Celticis, Cimbriciſque nonnullis, &, ut ſic dicam, mediis anteriorum. Itaque ut ex Anglicis linguæ veterum Saxonum, & ex Cambricis veterum Gallorum; ita ex* Hibernicis *vetuſtiorum adhuc Celtarum, Germanorumque, &, ut generaliter dicam, accolarum Oceani Britannici Ciſmarinorum antiquitates illuſtrantur. Et ſi ultra* Hiberniam *eſſet aliqua inſula Celtici Sermonis, ejus ſilo in multò adhuc antiquiora duceremur.* Leibnitzius Collectan. Etymol. *vol. 1. p. 153.*

PARIS,

Printed by NICOLAS-FRANCIS VALLEYRE, for the Author.

M. DCC. LXVIII.

BY ROYAL APPROBATION & PRIVILEGE.

Title-page of John O'Brien's *Irish-English dictionary* 1768.

[By kind permission of the Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.]

11. *Seán Ó Briain / John O'Brien, bishop of Cloyne and Ross*

The Abbé Henegan, who has already been cited in connection with O'Begley and Mac Cruitín's dictionary, had himself a hand in the production of a second bilingual dictionary, the *Focaloir Gaoidhilge-Sax-Bhéarla, or an Irish-English Dictionary* compiled by John O'Brien (Seán mac Thomáis Í Bhriain as he was known in Irish), bishop of Cloyne and Ross, who had in his younger days studied at the University of Toulouse and at the Sorbonne in Paris. Apparently the dictionary was got ready in Ireland in 1767 and sent to Paris to be printed. It was examined and formally approved on 12 December 1767 by the Abbé Henegan prior to its publication in 1768.[1] O'Brien had earlier sought sup-

[1] Henegan's *approbation* is printed below a postscript at the end of the dictionary. It was missing from the copy of the first edition to which I had access, and I am grateful to Pádraig A. Breatnach for noting it in his own copy and bringing it to my attention: I have since confirmed that it occurs in several other copies of the dictionary. M. Maurice Caillet (see preface) informs me that this kind of variation, even within the same edition, was not uncommon in printed books of the period. For brief comments on the methodology adopted in these two dictionaries see Tomás de Bhaldraithe, 'Foclóirí agus Foclóireacht na Gaeilge', *The Maynooth Review* vol. 6, no. 1

port from the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda in Rome to defray the cost of publishing the work, which, according to an explanatory 'memorial' he dispatched in November 1764, had been completed for two years but still remained unpublished for lack of funds; his own personal resources were already depleted by his provision of burses for the Irish colleges in Paris and Louvain. His repeated pleas evoked a courteous response but little material assistance.[1] There is, incidentally, full acknowledgement in this correspondence of the substantial contribution made by collaborators in the actual compilation of the lexicographical material: Dr O'Brien speaks of the linguistic and religious considerations which led him 'to arrange for the composition of an Irish dictionary under my supervision by persons learned in the language and antiquities of Ireland' and refers in another letter to the 'Irish dictionary which I *have had composed* for the benefit of this mission' (italics added).[2] Two of the main collaborators seem to have been the well-known scribe Mícheál (mac Peadair) Ó Longáin and Fr Seán

(1980) 3–15 (8, 11).

[1] The relevant correspondence has been translated, from French, Italian and Latin, by F. M. Jones CSSR in 'The Congregation of Propaganda and the Publication of Dr. O'Brien's Irish Dictionary, 1768', *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 77 (Jan.-June 1952) 29–37. My citations refer to Fr Jones's translation of the letters. For details of O'Brien's correspondence with the Vatican regarding the dictionary see also H. Fenning, OP, 'Documents of Irish interest in the *Fondo Missioni* of the Vatican Archives', *Archivium Hibernicum* 49 (1995) 3–47, §§84, 85, 86, 89, 127, 128.

[2] Among the motivating considerations to which he refers is the linguistic effect of long-term exile abroad: 'The necessity, however, under which our young priests are placed of studying in the Catholic schools on the Continent for many years exposes them to the danger of forgetting their mother tongue which is so necessary for them in their work for the preservation of the faith of our poor Catholics' (Fenning, 'Documents of Irish interest', 32).

Ó Conaire (Connery), a priest of the Cloyne diocese and himself a scribe and scholar of note who translated a number of sermons from French in the years 1766–70. We know that Fr Ó Conaire was in France in 1765, presumably in Paris, where he transcribed the manuscript numbered 1281 (H.1.7) in the library of Trinity College Dublin,[1] and again in 1771: one of his manuscripts has attached to it a bill from a certain Carsenac, merchant tailor, for items of clothing he had made for Fr Ó Conaire as well as a receipt for payment dated 21 February 1771 (*quittance a Paris le 21 février 1771 Carsenac*).[2]

Paris and Saint Germain-en-Laye may have been the Mecca of Irish exiles, but the Irish network extended to most regions of the *Hexagone*, and it was a matter of no great moment for clerics and other Irish professionals, particularly those who had received their education in France, to move more or less freely and frequently between the two countries. Our lexicographer, Dr O'Brien of Cloyne, was just one such individual. Born at Ballyvaddy (Béal Átha an Mhadaidh) near Glanworth, county Cork, in 1701, he went to France about 1720 and studied for the priesthood at the Irish college in Toulouse. From 1727 to 1731 he served as a priest in parishes of the Toulouse area, and in the latter year he left for Paris to embark on a more advanced course of studies at the Sorbonne. However circumstances dic-

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[1] Cf. C. Ó Cuileannáin, 'The Dublin Annals of Innisfallen .i. na hannála i MS H.1.17, T.C.D.', *Féilscríbhinn Torna* (ed. S. Pender, Cork 1947) 183–202 (183–93); B. Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí 1700–1850*, 51–53, 218–22, 240; D. Ó Catháin, 'An Irish scholar abroad: Bishop John O'Brien of Cloyne and the Macpherson controversy', in P. O'Flanagan and C. G. Buttimer (ed.), *Cork: History and Society* (Dublin 1993) 499–533 (503). Together with J. A. Coombes, *A bishop of penal times* (Cork 1981) these works are invaluable for any survey of Dr O'Brien's career.

[2] R. Ó hÉanna, 'Alumnus de chuid Choláiste na nGael, Páras', in *Irisleabhar Mhá Nuad* (1989) 103–49 (105).

tated that he take his degrees at Toulouse, and it was there he graduated as doctor in civil and canon law and licentiate in theology. In 1733 he went to Spain as tutor to the young son of a well-connected Irish family, the Connocks, and subsequently served in a similar role with other families of substance, including that of Thomas Geraldino (Fitzgerald), then Spanish ambassador to the Court of St James in London.[1]

He returned to Ireland in late 1737 or early 1738 and in the latter year succeeded his namesake Dr Thady O'Brien as parish priest of Castlelyons and Rathcormac in the diocese of Cloyne, and in January 1748, following the separation of Cork and Cloyne, he was appointed bishop of Cloyne and Ross.[2] But even during his episcopate he seems to have spent considerable time on the Continent. In the years 1756 and 1757, for example, he visited several of the Irish clerical colleges including Louvain. On 5 May 1756 he administered Confirmation in the parish of Gujan in the Gironde, where the curé was Fr William Danahy of Cork. In the same region he spent from 22 September to 31 October 1756 in Toulouse as the guest of the superior of the Irish college there, Dr Francis O'Hea; the purpose of his visit was to discuss the affairs of the seminary with the representative of the Archbishop of Toulouse, particularly in relation to the needs of the Irish mission. In December 1756 and March 1757 he was in Bordeaux to ordain students from the dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Kerry.[3] We also know that he spent some months on the

[1] Coombes, *A bishop of penal times* 15–20, 101–5.
[2] B. Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí*, 218–19; Coombes, *A bishop of penal times*, 21–2; Ó Catháin, 'An Irish scholar abroad', 499–50. Pádraig A. Breatnach informs me that there is also a reference to Dr O'Brien in UCC MS 63, 718 as being 'a curate of Churchtown' in 1738.
[3] T. J. Walsh, 'The Irish college at Toulouse', *J. Cork Hist. and Arch. Soc.* 59

Continent in 1764 and that he met the nuncio in Brussels in June of that year,[1] but it is fairly clear that these do not represent the full extent of his visits to France and the Lowlands.

He was evidently a strong-minded individual who was much concerned to introduce an active policy of reform, to root out cases of clerical laxity and misbehaviour within his diocese and foster a well-trained, dedicated priesthood.[2] His own clergy seem to have regarded him with some trepidation and we are told that the approach to his house was known as *bóithrín an chrá* 'the path of torment'.[3] In the 1750s an acrimonious clash developed over the clerical administration of Mitchelstown, and after one unruly incident in 1758 O'Brien declared a six-month interdict on the Mitchelstown parish. The local landlord and magistrate, Baron Kingston, was absent in England and, receiving reports of what had happened, he condemned the action of 'John O'Bryan of Ballintirry in the County of Cork, assuming the title of Lord Bishop of Cloyne' and offered a reward of twenty pounds for his apprehension and committal to one of his majesty's gaols. It is not clear how this confrontation was resolved.[4] As is obvious from his several publications he evinced a deep

(1954) 22–33 (31); *The Irish continental college movement* (Dublin and Cork, 1973) 23, 134–5 (on p. 135 read '1756' for '1765'); 'Some records of the Irish college at Bordeaux', *Archivium Hibernicum* 15 (1950) 92–151 (129 n.43, 135); J. Coombes, *A Bishop of penal times*... (Cork, 1981) 48–9.

[1] Coombes, *A bishop of penal times* 75, 82, 119 n.12.

[2] For references to his endeavours in this regard in his correspondence with the Vatican see H. Fenning, 'Documents' (see p. 99, n. 1) §§85–88, 90–93, 111, 112, 113, 115, 116, 137.

[3] Coombes, *A bishop of penal times*, 24; Ó Catháin, 'An Irish scholar abroad', 504.

[4] Coombes, *A bishop of penal times*, 65–9. For the text of Baron Kingston's proclamation as published in the *Cork Evening Post*, 11 September 1758 see J. Brady, 'Catholics and Catholicism in the eighteenth-century press', *Archivium Hibernicum* 16 (1951) Appendix, 94–5.

interest in his own distinguished ancestry, for reasons both personal and scholarly, and in the late 1750s he was caught up in a bitter dispute among the expatriate O'Briens over the succession to the title 'Earl of Thomond'; the two factions were headed by Charles O'Brien, 6th Viscount Clare, 'Maréchal de Thomond', who had commanded the Irish infantry at Fontenoy in 1745, and Colonel Daniel O'Brien, whom James III, the Old Pretender, had created Earl of Lismore for his services to the Stuart cause.[1]

He was a man of wide experience and varied talents. He spoke and wrote Irish, English, Latin, French and Italian and presumably had some competence in Spanish. We have three sermons of his in Irish which he wrote in 1739, at least one of them a translation from French.[2] He was a patron to scribes, scholars and poets and he is himself traditionally credited with composing poetry in Irish, though the matter is clouded by the fact that there were at least three priests of the same name associated with Irish learning or poetry of whom one or more were related in one way or another to the well-known scribe and poet Seán na Ráithíneach Ó Murchú (1700–62) who composed a song to mark Dr O'Brien's ordination as bishop in 1748. One of the poems attributed to Fr Seán Ó Briain, to which Seán na Ráithíneach composed a verse in reply, may have been written by the bishop: the poet complains of the discomfort caused him by a bout of ague, and it is known that the bishop suffered from a recurrent illness and that his last visit to the continent was undertaken

[1] Coombes, *A bishop of penal times* 74; Ó Catháin, 'An Irish scholar abroad' 504; R. Hayes, 'A forgotten Irish antiquary', *Studies* 30 (1941) 587–96 (591–2); V. Morley, *An crann os coill*, 113–18; T. J Westropp, 'Carrigogunnell Castle and the O'Briens of Pubblebrian in the County of Limerick', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 38 (1908) 149–53.
[2] Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí*, 222.

partly on his doctor's advice to seek a change of climate and visit a spa near Liège.[1]

We have seen that he was very much at home in the French language and in the French intellectual environment, where he had many influential friends: 'For him,' in the words of a modern commentator, 'France was always a second motherland'.[2] One notable testimony to this rapport is the lengthy *Mémoire* which was published in six parts in the highly reputable *Journal des Sçavans* in 1764 under the initials M. de C. but which was clearly his work.[3] This was at the height of the amazing reaction to the so-called poems of 'Ossian' largely composed by James Macpherson (1736–96) but purporting to be authentic translations from Scottish Gaelic originals drawn from the traditional *fiannaíocht* cycle common to Ireland and Scotland. Many of the greatest names in Europe — authors, painters, musicians, princes and politi-

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[1] Torna (ed.), *Seán na Ráithíneach* (Baile Átha Cliath 1954) xiv–xv and poems nos 164, 175; Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí*, 171, 307 n.235; Ó Catháin, 'An Irish scholar abroad', 501–2. The bishop wrote to Cardinal Castelli at the Vatican on 30 May 1767; the following is part of a summary of his letter from Hugh Fenning, OP, 'Documents' (see n.28), §116: 'His doctors have ordered him to go abroad for a few months to save his life, so he will go to Spa near Liège as he did three years ago. He wishes to found a burse for his diocese either at Louvain or Paris, just as he founded three or four others at Louvain three or four years ago. At a later date he will send Castelli a certificate from the superiors of the Irish College in Paris respecting these foundations.'

[2] Coombes, *A bishop of penal times*, 17.

[3] This is abundantly clear from the internal evidence, but, in addition, it is made explicit in a an article appended at the end of some copies of the 1768 edition of the dictionary and described as having been published in the *Journal des Sçavans* for March 1769 (*Voici l'extrait inséré dans le Journal des Sçavans du mois de mars 1769, concernant ce dictionnaire*). The introductory sentences of the article, which is essentially a summary of the preface to the dictionary, state that the compiler of the dictionary and the author of the Macpherson *mémoire* were one.

clans — were caught up in the tide of adulation. Napoleon himself was a fervid admirer: he is reported to have said that while Alexander had chosen Homer and Augustus had chosen Vergil, he was left with Ossian ('Alexandre a choisi Homère pour son poète... Auguste a choisi Virgile, auteur de l'*Enéide*... Pour moi, je n'ai qu'Ossian : les autres étaient pris'). While on board ship *en route* for Egypt he constantly kept the translation of Ossian in his cabin, on the table by his bed-side.[1] There was however an occasional voice already being raised to query the authenticity of Macpherson's 'translations' and it was in this context that the editors of the *Journal* decided to invite a known authority in the relevant area to offer a rational appraisal of the question:

> Le Mémoire suivant nous a été adressé par un Savant respectable, qui a des connoissances très-étendues dans plus d'un genre, & principalement sur ce qui concerne les antiquités d'Irlande & d'Ecosse. Nous l'avons prié de fixer nos doutes sur cette fameuse découverte de M. Macpherson, dont tant de Journaux ont retenti, & dont le nôtre a déjà parlé plusieurs fois, sans oser rien décider. C'est à la solution de ce problème littéraire que le Mémoire est consacré.

O'Brien responded to the invitation with a broad critical survey of some forty thousand words. It was the first substantial, well-informed contribution to the Ossianic controversy published in France and attracted considerable attention further afield, particularly in Germany, where the lionizing of 'Ossian' had precluded serious questioning of

[1] P. Van Tieghem, *Ossian en France* (Paris 1917) II, 1–12.

Macpherson's sources.[1] O'Brien does not concern himself, except very casually, with the literary quality of Macpherson's poems; his primary purpose is to demonstrate that they are not, as claimed, translations of traditional narratives and that the historical scenario which Macpherson posits to explain and justify them is without foundation. In Macpherson's scheme of things the line of Scottish kings extended back into the pre-Christian era, and Finn (his Fingal) and Cú Chulainn were contemporaries and Scottish in origin; in response to which O'Brien points out that the kingdom of Scottish Dál Riada derived from Ireland and was established by Fergus mac Eirc at the beginning of the sixth century AD. His commentary is wide-ranging and articulate and — allowing for certain misconceptions current in his time — quite perceptive and well-informed, encompassing a wide variety of sources — classical, medieval and modern, Irish, English and continental — though it should be said that many of these had already been invoked by earlier authors seeking to correct certain misrepresentations of historical relations between Ireland and Scotland in the early medieval period. Among Irish authors he cites prominently from Archbishop James Ussher's work and from Roderick O'Flatherty's *Ogygia* and John Lynch's *Cambrensis Eversus*, but he has, as I recall, only two references to Geoffrey Keating and in both he uses the term *fabuleux*: 'Keting & d'autres Ecrivains fabuleux', 'l'Histoire fabuleuse du Docteur Keating', which suggests he regarded Keating, by comparision with the others, as being less a historian than a somewhat credulous compiler of tradition.[2]

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[1] The Mémoire has recently been discussed in some detail by D. Ó Catháin in his excellent essay 'An Irish scholar abroad'.

[2] If so, it was evidently a view shared by some earlier scholars, for example John Roche, bishop of Ferns, writing to Luke Wadding in July 1631: 'One

He makes much play with the topic of 'Hagiocleptisme' as practised by some Scottish historians, in other words their exploitation of the late medieval semantic shift of the term *Scot(t)us, Scot* from 'Irish' to 'Scottish' in order to appropriate to themselves Irish saints and monasteries; like earlier Irish critics O'Brien singles out for special censure Thomas Dempster, whose *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Scotorum* was published posthumously in 1627. This historical misrepresentation had long been a sore issue for Irish clerics and one which provided an extra stimulus to the great hagiological project undertaken by the Franciscans and other clerical scholars in the first half of the seventeenth century.[1] It will be recalled that already in 1617, the year before his elevation to the see of Ossory, David Rothe contributed a commentary on the subject to Thomas Messingham's *Florilegium* of Irish saints during his temporary residence in Paris, and there is evidence that O'Brien had a copy of Messingham's work in his own personal library.[2]. O'Brien refers in particular to the *Schot-*

Doctor Keatinge laboureth much, as I heare say, in compiling Irish notes towards a history in Irish. Ye man is very studious, and yet I fear yt if his worke come ever to light, it will need an amendment of illwarranted narrations; he could help you to many curiosities of which you can make better use than him self. I have no interest in ye man, for I never saw him, for he dwelleth in Mounster' (B. Jennings (ed.), *Wadding Papers 1614–38* (Dublin 1943) 544).

[1] See Fr C. Mooney, 'Father John Colgan, OFM, his work and times and literary milieu', in *Father John Colgan* OFM *1592–1658* (ed. T. O Donnell, Dublin 1959) 7–40 (17–18).

[2] A manuscript written for the bishop by Mícheál (mac Pheadair) Ó Longáin, probably in 1759, and now in the house of the Jesuits, Leeson Street, Dublin, includes a list of books apparently written by the bishop himself as a record of his own library, whether in whole or in part. It contains about fifty titles in Latin (among them Messingham's *Florilegium*), about twenty-five in French and slightly fewer in English, with one or two in Italian and Spanish (Fr Pádraig Ó Fiannachta, *Clár Lámhscríbhinní*

tenklöster or Irish monasteries established in southern Germany in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which furnishes him with the opportunity to recall the story of the founding of the monastery of St James at Ratisbon and the generosity of his revered ancestor Conchobhar Ó Briain (†1142), king of Thomond, in facilitating its establishment. He draws upon John Lynch's *Cambrensis Eversus* for the tale of the four Irish monks who returned to Ireland from Ratisbon seeking material support and were kindly received by king Conchobhar, *cognomento Slaparsalach*, before departing again loaded with presents of gold and silver and other precious gifts.[1]

In the course of his commentary O'Brien cites a number of as yet unpublished sources. He mentions for example that he had copies of the Annals of Tigernach, *Chronicon Scotorum* and the Annals of Inisfallen, and that the texts of the first two were those of the seventeenth-century antiquarian Roderick O'Flaherty. As it happens, there is some reason to believe that he was in France during 1765 while engaged in assembling a collection of Irish annalistic and other historical materials, aided by Seán Ó Conaire (John Connery) as scribe and collaborator.[2] This is the manuscript now catalogued as H.1.7 (/1281) in Trinity College Dublin. He was

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Gaeilge II [Baile Átha Cliath, 1980] 70–1, 72–3; Diarmaid Ó Catháin, 'An Irish scholar abroad', 522–3)

[1] M. Kelly, (ed.), *Cambrensis Eversus* (Dublin 1848–52) II, 394–9. Cf. also Pádraig A. Breatnach's edition of the legend of the Irish monks and their foundation in southern Germany in the late Middle Ages, *Die Regensburger Schottenlegende — Libellus de fundacione ecclesie Consecrati Petri: Untersuchung und Textausgabe* (München 1977) 20, 58–64, 238, 244, 255.

[2] T. K. Abbott and E. G. Gwynn, *Catalogue of the Irish Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin* (Dublin 1921), 16. For a detailed discussion of these materials and O'Brien's responsibility for them see C. Ó Cuilleanáin, 'The Dublin Annals of Inisfallen .i. na hannála i MS H.1.7, T.C.D.', *Féilscríbhinn Torna* (ed., S. Pender, Cork 1947) 183–202 (186–9); see also B. Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí* 218–22, 240.

also responsible for a second compilation of historical texts, now MS H.1.18, (/1292) TCD, which included the Annals of Tigernach and *Chronicon Scotorum*, the texts to which he refers in the Mémoire. O'Brien also wrote a historical treatise which remained unpublished at his death. Subsequently his writings and manuscripts passed into the possession of the antiquarian Charles Vallancey who published the historical treatise without acknowledgement in his own *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis* (no. IV) in 1774, five years after its author's death.[1]

He died in France, at Lyon, in 1769. The event is recorded in the following note at the end of the list of contents in the manuscript already referred to, MS TCD H.1.18:

> *Hæc omnia monumenta zelo ac industria illustrissimi ac reverendissimi Joannis O'Brien, Episcopi Cloynensis et Rossensis in Hibernia qui die xiii^a^ mensis Martii, anno 1769, Lugduni in Gallia obiit, comparata et in unum hunc codicem digesta fuerant*
> 'All these documents were collected and classified in this one manuscript through the zeal and diligence of the most distinguished and most reverend John O'Brien, Bishop of Cloyne and Ross in Ireland, who died on the 13th of March in the year 1769, at Lyon in France'.[2]

He was buried in the church of Ainay — the oldest in Lyon, originally erected on the site of a Gallo-Roman temple — but apparently no trace of his tomb survives, presumably because of the destruction that occurred during the Revolu-

[1] See Ó Cuilleanáin, 'The Dublin Annals of Inisfallen', 189.
[2] T. K. Abbott and E. G. Gwynn, *Catalogue of the Irish Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College Dublin*, 64.

tion.[1] Fortunately his Latin epitaph survives and has been published by an anonymous contributor to the *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* together with translation:

> *Epitaphium Illustrissimi et Reverendissimi Johannis O'Brien, D.D., Episcopi Cloynensis et Rossensis.*
> *Hoc in sacello, pio Canonicorum hujusce nobilis ecclesiæ studio, sepultus jacet Illustrissimus et Reverendissimus D.D. Joannes O'Brien, Epūs Cloynensis et Rossensis in Hibernia, ex regali et antiquissima O'Brienorum stirpe per lineam rectam Conchubari, cognomento* na catharach *vulgo* flaparsalach [r. rl-] *Regis Momoniæ anno* MCIV. *usque ad* MCXLVII., *de quo Sanctus Bernardus in vita Malachiæ. Exul e patria religionis tuendæ causâ, hac in urbe supremum diem obiit* XIII. *mensis Martii, anno salutis* MDCCLXIX, *ætatis autem suæ* LXVIII., *status Pontificatus* XXI, *presbyteratus* XXXV. *Requiescat in Pace. Amen.*
>
> 'In this chapel, by the pious care of the canons of this noble church, lies buried the most illustrious and Most Rev. Lord John O'Brien, Bishop of Cloyne and Ross in Ireland, of the royal and most ancient family of the O'Brien's, a lineal descendant of Conchubar O'Brien, surnamed *na catharach* vulgo *flaparsalach* [*sic*, with initial *f*] king of Munster 1104–1147 (of whom St. Bernard speaks in his 'Life of Malachy').[2] An exile from his native land for defending his religion, he died

[1] See the note by F. Murphy, 'Bishop O'Brien', in *Jrn. Cork Hist. and Arch. Soc.* I, 2nd ser. (1895) 284–5, in which he quotes the entry of the burial from the city archives of Lyons.

[2] Malachy had close associations with Munster, and Bernard's Life records

> in this city March 13th, 1769, the sixty-eighth year of his age, the twenty-first of his episcopate, and the thirty-fifth of his priesthood. May he rest in peace. Amen'[1]

The epitaph had been written on the fly-leaf of the contributor's copy of O'Brien's dictionary and the writer had appended to it a note in which he records that the bishop 'was interred with all the honours due to his rank' and his epitaph placed on one of the columns of the church 'with his arms carved in marble'.

The inscription might almost have been composed by Dr O'Brien himself and was clearly written by someone familiar with his scholarship, his dictionary, his preoccupation with the history of the O'Briens and his claim to descent from Conchobhar mac Diarmada Ua Briain, who died in 1142 having been joint-king of Thomond since 1118.[2] This pride in his origins emerges even in the conditions attached to his endowment of scholarships in Collège des Irlandais, where the priority among his own relatives is set out as follows (in Fr Swords's summary):

> 'paternal to maternal, O Briens to all others, Con-

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that Cellach, the archbishop of Armagh, enjoined on the two Munster kings, Conchobhar Ó Briain of Thomond and Cormac Mac Carthaigh of Desmond, to ensure that Malachy should become his successor in Armagh (see H. J. Lawlor, *St Bernard of Clairvaux's Life of St Malachy of Armagh* (London 1920) lvi–lvii, 40–44).

[1] *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 1 [2nd ser.] (1895) 188.

[2] Cf. Tadhg Ó Donnchadha's comment on MS. H.1.17: *Do cuireadh an cnuasach le chéile don Athair Seán Ó Briain, Easpog Chorcaighe Chluana agus Ruis, toisc suim do bheith aige i seanchas na mBrianach, .i. a chineadh féin* 'This compilation was made for Fr Seán Ó Briain, bishop of Cloyne and Ross, because of his interest in the historical tradition of the O'Briens, his own kinsfolk' (*An Leabhar Muimhneach* (Baile Átha Cliath [1940] xxxii).

> nor O Brien's branch, nicknamed Nacatharach [i.e. na Catharach] King of Two Munsters in 12th century, those of the house of Ballyshihan, Co. Tipperary, dioc. Lismore').[1]

In his own dictionary O'Brien states that Conchobhar was fourth in descent from Brian Bóraimhe and that he was called *na catharach* from the great number of castles and churches he built (s.v. *Concubhar* pp 126–7). He also includes *slapar-salach* under *slapar* 'a loose garment' etc., which for the purpose of his explanation he also takes to mean 'the trail of a King or Nobleman's Robe'; thus Conchobhar Slapar-salach was so named 'from his Regal Robes being often spattered with mortar by mounting on the scaffolds of masons in building his Churches' (p. 439).[2]

As we have seen, the Abbé Henegan examined O'Brien's dictionary and gave his formal approval at the end of 1767 prior to its publication in 1768, and no doubt he would

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[1] Swords, *Calendar* doc. 421, p. 110 (the text has misprint *Macatharach* for manuscript *N-*).

[2] Conchobhar's two epithets are mentioned in a document written by Aodh Buí Mac Cruitín, who, as we have seen, had his own scholarly connections with Paris and no doubt with the Irish college. He speaks of *'Conchubhar Ó Briain, Rí Mumhan, ré ráidhtí* Slapar Salach *agus Conchubhar na Cathrach'* and explains the latter epithet as referring to a castle built by Conchubhar near the border of Dúithche Aradh on the shore of Loch Derg; *slapar salach* he leaves unglossed. Furthermore he goes on to furnish the line of descent from Conchobhar to the grandfather of 'Dr Seán, son of Tomás Ó Briain, Bishop of Cluain and Ross' (T. Ó Donnchadha (ed.), *An Leabhar Muimhneach* (Baile Átha Cliath, [1940]) 386–7: *Dála an tsinnsir, do ghebhaidh an léitheóir annso 'nár ndiaidh ginealach an líne dhírigh shinnseardha dfhan i mBaile Í Shidheacháin iarna tharraing anuas ó Chonchubhar na Cathrach (Rí Mumhan), go Conchubhar, mac Tomáis Í Bhriain fuair bás san mbliadhain 1708 .i. athair Thomáis, agus seanathair an Dochtúra Seaán, mac Tomáis Í Bhriain, Easbog Cluana agus Rois;* the lineage is not printed in the published text).

also have read his *Mèmoire* which appeared in the *Journal des Sçavans* in 1764. But already in the *Grand dictionnaire de Moreri* published in 1759 Henegan had published quite a substantial entry under the head-word 'O'Brien' which reflects his familiarity with the bishop's work in progress and his pride in the distinction of his ancestry; note for example his reference to 'CONNOR O Brien de Catherach, surnommé Strapar Salach, á cause de son zèle infatigable à batir des églises . . .' ('O'Brien', p. 10). Doubtless the two of them had spent many a leisurely hour in the relative tranquillity of Collège des Lombards exploring their shared interest in topics of Irish history and literary tradition.

AN

TEAGASC

CRÍOSDUIDHE

DO RÉIR

CEASDA AGUS FREAGARTA,

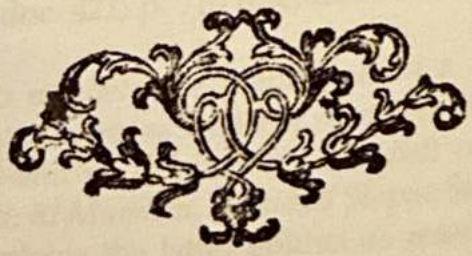
agus na tagairt go brúidhéaghaidh ar

BRÉITHIR NSOILLÉIR DÉ,

agus

AS TOIBREACHAIB FIOR-LANA OILE.

Éisdo ne Comaighle, agus glac Teagasg, cum go mbia tu glic ann do Chuidhe déighdheireadh. Prov. 19. 20.



A BHAILÍS,

Ag na cur a gCló do Seumas Guerin, ag San-Tomás ó Aeirn, a Sráid San-Seum.

M. D. CC. XLII.

Ré Ceadh an Ríogh, agus ne Déighteireadh na nOllamhain ne Dhaighacht.

Title-page of Andrew Donlevy's *An Teagasc críosduidhe* 1742.

[By kind permission of the Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.]

12. *Aindrias Ó Doinnshléibhe / Andrew Donlevy*

Another important publication which shared the religious motivation of O'Brien's dictionary if not its historical dimension had its origins in Collège des Irlandais and benefited from M. Perrottin's financial donation. Andrew Donlevy (Aindrias Ó Doinnshléibhe), author of *An Teagasg Críosduidhe do réir Ceasda agus Freagartha ...: The Catechism, or Christian Doctrine by way of Question and Answer ...* (Paris, 1742; Dublin, 1822, 1848),[1] had a long-standing connection with Collège des Lombards where he was Prefect of the Community of Clerics and Scholars. A substantial volume of lvi + 518 octavo pages with facing Irish and English text (the former in Irish characters), the work comprises, as well as the Catechism itself, the author's preface (*Forfhógra*/Advertisement), the verse synopsis of Christian doctrine by Bonaventúra (*al.* Giolla Brighde) Ó hEodhusa, and an essay on the 'Elements of the Irish Language' (this last in English only). Ó hEodhusa's series of poems, which were part of his own *Teagasg críosdaidhe*, were subsequently reprinted in several other works besides Donlevy's

[1] Printed by Jacques Guérin; cf. D. McGuinne, *Irish type*, 64–9.

and the poem introducing the series has been printed by several modern scholars.[1] Nicholas Williams has shown that Donlevy used Ó Domhnaill's New Testament (1681);[2] otherwise there seems to have been little by way of commentary on his text apart from Fr Brian Ó Ceallaigh's brief discussion of his views on the importance of meditation or mental prayer.[3]

Donlevy was motivated by concern to provide adequate catechetical material accessible to the Irish people in their own language, and, knowing that many of his potential readers could read English but had little experience or facility in reading Irish, provided them with a convenient learning aid in the form of a facing English text. Excusing the length of his book, he explains that it is not another abridgement of doctrine designed for children: much of it has been written, not so as to burden the memory, but to enlighten the understanding and move the will to the practice of virtue (iv, xxv). He professes to have used 'the plainest and most obvious Irish' and to have avoided foreign expressions, except for those which had been introduced by the Faith and which were essential to it (xxii, xxxviii f.). He apologizes for any shortcomings in his use of either Irish or English on the grounds that he has been absent from Ireland for over thirty years (xxiii, xxxix), but he does not hesitate to proffer forthright views on the decline of written Irish in his essay on the 'Elements' of the language:

> ... Poets, not the ancient and skilful, who took pains to render their poems sententious and

[1] For the details see C. Mhág Craith's edition of the poems in his *Dán na mBráthar Mionúr* I (Dublin 1967) 58–70, II (Dublin 1980) 26–32, 134–5.
[2] N. Williams, *I bPrionta i leabhar* (Dublin 1986), 132.
[3] 'An doctúir Ó Duinnshléibhe agus an mhídheamhain', *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 68 5th ser. (July-Dec. 1946), 377–83.

pithy without much clipping, but the modern makers of doggrel rhymes and ballads; to save time and labour, introduced the custom of clipping and joining words together, in order to fit them to the measure of their verses: Others, who wrote in prose, have, either in imitation of the poets, or through ignorance and want of judgement, strangely clipped, and spelled, and huddled them together, as they are pronounced; let the pronunciation be never so irregular and defective; not reflecting, that a poetical licence, even when justifiable, is not imitable in prose; or that writing, as people speak or pronounce, is to maim the language, to destroy the etymology, and confound the propriety and orthography : for, not only the several provinces of Ireland, have a different way of pronouncing, but also the very counties, and even some baronies in one and the same county, do differ in the pronunciation: Nay, some cantons pronounce so odly, that the natural sound of both the vowels and consonants, whereof, even according to themselves, the words consist, is utterly lost in their mouths ...It is no wonder, then, seeing the English tongue, although in the opinion of all, it be otherwise much improved, is thus maimed and confounded, even in prose, that a language of neither court, nor city, nor bar, nor business, ever since the beginning of King James the First's reign, should have suffered vast alterations and corruptions; and be now on the brink of utter decay, as it really is, to the great dishonour and shame of the natives, who shall always

> pass every where for Irishmen: although Irishmen without Irish is an incongruity, and a great bull. . . . (504–507; 3rd ed., 439–441)

The decline in the quality of written Irish was a matter of concern for some seventeenth-century authors. An Dubhaltach Mac Fir Bhisigh, who translated and transcribed several of the texts relating to the Rule of St Clare in MS D.i.2 in the Royal Irish Academy, remarks that the reader may well notice the simplicity and lameness of his rendering, and is at pains to point out that this is not due to any lack in the Irish language but rather to people's defective knowledge of it, with the result that they find it easier to understand foreign words than authentic Irish words (*Da ttugadh an tres ní da aire mar atá simplidhecht no bacuighe na Gaoidhelge do chuires orra so, ní tre ghainne na Gaoidhilge tig sin, acht tre esbaidh a heoluis ar chách, ionnus gurob usa leó focail choimhig[h]thecha do thuigsin ináid focail fíre na Gaoidhelge.*[1]

The author who composed the collection of Ulster sermons edited by Cainneach Ó Maonaigh OFM under the title *Seanmónta Chúige Uladh* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1965) also links linguistic competence with Christian awareness:

> *Is d'easbhuidh cleachtaigh 7 staideara air an teagasg Críosdaidhe, 7 go sbécialta a gceileamhar 7 a gcanamhuin dúchasa ar mathara, eadhon san teanguidh Ghaoidheilg, do bheir air na mílte 7 air na slóite a bheith ainfhiosach aineólach a bhfóghlaim 7 an oideas an Chríosdaidhe . . .*
>
> 'It is through lack of practice and study of Christian doctrine, and especially in the native diction and speech of our mothers, that is the Gaelic

[1] *Ériu* 15 (1948) 154; see also the *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy* pp 3282–6.

tongue, that thousands and multitudes are ignorant in the learning and education of the Christian . . . ' (32–3).

The writer of the preface to the third edition of the Catechism (who is unnamed but was presumably the publisher of the volume, James Duffy) believed that Donlevy was born in 1694 and received his early education near Ballymote in Co. Sligo and the diocese of Achonry, 'but on the confines of Elphin, and not far from the counties of Mayo and Roscommon'.[1] According to Duffy's account he went to France in 1710 (which would be consistent with, and may be based upon, his own comment in the Catechism that he had by then been in exile for over thirty years) and pursued his studies at the Irish College in Paris. He registered in the Faculty of Law at the University of Paris in 1718 when he was already thirty-eight years of age, took his *licence* in 1720 and was appointed Prefect of the community of clerics and scholars of Collège des Lombards in 1722. Duffy states that 'he continued to hold [the office of rector] in 1761, and we believe until his death'. However, he was buried in the vaults of the College chapel, which subsequently became L'Église St Ephraim des Syriens in rue des Carmes, and according to the memorial inscription as recorded by Fr Patrick Boyle he died in 1746 at the age of sixty-six. It follows that he was born in 1680, not 1694 as suggested by James Duffy.[2] More-

[1] *An Teagasg Críosduidhe* (Dublin 1848) xv–xvi.

[2] Boyle, *The Irish college* 227. The tombstone, which remained in Collège des Lombards following the departure of the Irish community, is no longer visible. A number of memorial slabs were removed from the old Collège des Lombards and installed in the present Collège des Irlandais; unfortunately Ó Doinnshléibhe's was not one of them. The Abbé Henegan also gives 1746 as the date of his death: 'André Donlevy, ci-devant préfet de la communauté irlandoise à Paris, dont les travaux & le zèle in-

over, the evidence would suggest that his birthplace was in the vicinity of Bellaghy (modern Charlestown) rather than Ballymote: among the conditions and priorities attaching to a donation for bursaries made by Barthélemy Murry, doctor-regent of the faculty of medicine of Paris, as recorded 7 September 1761, there is mention of the eligibility of students from the Dunlevy family, 'particularly relatives of André Dunlevy, former prefect, who live on the Mayo-Sligo borders near Bellahy'.[1] Duffy also cites the reference to Donlevy by Walter Harris the historiographer (1686–1761) in which he expresses his gratitude 'for many favours I received from him, particularly in his transmitting to me, from time to time, several useful collections out of the King's and other libraries in Paris'.

Dunlevy was an active and dedicated protagonist of the interests of Collège des Lombards, one who did not shun controversy when the occasion presented itself. As Liam Swords recalls, he presided over the College for twenty-four years and was regarded almost as a founding father; in the words of the Abbé Henegan, his work and his zeal 'to establish the College on a firm and solid basis ceased only with his death' (*n'ont fini qu'à sa mort*). He played a prominent role in the bitter contention over the respective status and rights of the communities of priests and students. The reform which he proposed and championed energetically would have had the effect of terminating the practice of ordaining priests in Ireland prior to their being educated abroad, which was hardly conducive to gaining him many friends among the *communauté des prêtres*, but in the end there was no clear

defatigable, pour mettre cet établissement sur pied solide, n'ont fini qu'à sa mort, qui arriva le 6 décembre 1746' (*Grand Dictionnaire de Moreri* (Paris 1759), 'Geoffroi Keating', p. 10).

[1] Swords, *Calendar* doc. 404, p. 104.

victory for either side. Dunlevy's consuming concerns were those of the College, as he perceived them; he declared that he had no possessions, 'not even the bed on which I lie', except those which belonged to the community of students in Collège des Lombards.[1]

1. Swords, *A hidden Church: the diocese of Achonry 1689–1818* (Blackrock, Co Dublin 1997) 196, 209–12, 214.

is doubtless the Jacobus Gallagher who is recorded as graduating MA in Paris on August 2, 1715 and whose diocese of origin is given as Kilmore (which comprised Co. Cavan and north Leitrim).[1] This is corroborated by a later document: in 1750 he and Stephen MacEgan, bishop of Meath, subscribed a petition from Laurence Richardson, bishop of Kilmore, to Cardinal Silvio Valenti, Secretary of State at the Vatican, for permission to reside in Dublin rather than in his diocese, and Ó Gallchobhair mentions that he himself was a native of Kilmore diocese and had formerly been bishop of Raphoe [1725–1737].[2]

He was evidently in Rome by 15 August 1717 when he is recorded as having taken the 'Missionary' and 'Viaticum' oaths, and there is reason to think that he may have acquired his doctorate in Rome.[3] One would wish to be better informed about his associations with the Irish College in Paris between his departure for Rome sometime between August 1715 and August 1717 and his presence in Paris in 1741 when

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past and present 2nd ed., (Dublin 1972) *passim*. Note especially p. 210 and n.1: 'In the combination *cht*, *ch* is silent in S. and S.E. Ulster, e.g. *locht* > *lot*; hence misspellings like *leacht* for *leat*, and *slacht* for *slat*, which are found in writing from this area from the seventeenth century ... Even for Donegal Gallagher writes *creachtur*, as well as *creatur*, for *créatúr*, "creature".' Séamus Ó Néill cites a number of Gallagher's spellings to illustrate his pronunciation of the language, 'for', he comments, 'it is clear that the spellings he favoured represent sounds which are still characteristic of Donegal Irish' ('Bishop Gallagher's Sermons', *Éigse* 17 [1977–8] 209–13.)

[1] Brockliss and Ferté, 'Irish clerics in France', 570.

[2] H. Fenning, 'Documents of Irish interest in the *Fondo Missioni* of the Vatican archives', *Archivium Hibernicum* 49 (1995) 3–47 (11 §37). I am indebted to Diarmaid Ó Doibhlin of the University of Ulster for referring me to this source as first published in *Miscellanea in onore di Monsignor Mártino Giusti* (Rome 1978).

[3] Mac Murchaidh, 'Nótaí beathaisnéise', 169 and n.7, 171; J. Hanly, 'Records of the Irish College, Rome, under Jesuit administration', *Arch. Hib.* 27 (1964) 71 §85.

conferring his approbation on Donlevy's work. In justifying his own enterprise in publishing a collection of his sermons in Irish he comments in his English preface

> It may be objected that the generality of our clergy have sermon books in Latin or French or other languages. I allow they have, but generally in a style not so well adapted to our country. But surely they are not the worse to have some in their mother tongue which may furnish them with thoughts or proper expressions very often wanting to such as gather their discourses from foreign languages[1]

and it may be significant that the only other vernacular to which he makes specific reference is French, reflecting perhaps his own experience as well as the general prestige of French sermon literature among sections of the Irish clergy.[2] In the same graceful preface he explains why he has avoided learned and literary forms of language and opted instead for the more popular style for which his Sermons are so highly prized:

> I have made them in an easy and familiar style, and on purpose omitted cramp expressions

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[1] *Seanmóirí Muighe Nuadhad* IV, *Seacht Seanmóir Déag* (ed., P. Breathnach (Baile Átha Cliath 1911) viii.

[2] For sermons translated into Irish from French authors such as Claude Joli (1610–1678), Bourdaloue (1632–1704) and Massillon (1663–1742) see P. Ó Súilleabháin, OFM, 'Seanmóirí ón bhFraincis', *Éigse* 9 (1958–61) 233–42). For the influence of French sermons, most specifically those of Pierre de Besse (1567–1639), on Geoffrey Keating's *Trí bior-ghaoithe an bháis* see T. Ó Dúshláine, *An Eoraip agus litríocht na Gaeilge 1600–1650* (Baile Átha Cliath 1987) 50–60; B. Cunningham, 'The sources of *Trí bior-ghaoithe an bháis*: another French sermon', *Éigse* 31 (1999) 73–77.

> which might be obscure to both the preacher and hearer. Nay, instead of such, I have sometimes made use of words borrowed from the English, which practice and daily conversation have intermixed with our language, choosing with St. Augustine rather to be censured by the critics than not to be understood by the poor and illiterate, for whose use I have designed them. *Malo ut me reprehendant grammatici quam non intelligant populi...*

a sentiment which is closely echoed in Donlevy's Introduction:

> Is í an Ghaoidheilg is sothuigsighthe, agus is coitchinne do cuireadh síos ann, ag breith do roghuin, air lorg Aibhistín naomhtha, diomoladh na n-eolgach d'fhulang, tar a bheith dorcha air chách 'The plainest and most obvious Irish is used therein, preferring, after the example of S. Augustin, *rather to be censured by grammarians than misunderstood of the people*'[1]

Unless the reference to Augustine is more commonplace than I have noticed in texts of the period, one can assume that Donlevy's echoing of Ó Gallchobhair's apt comparison is a mark of his familiarity with his predecessor's sermons.[2]

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[1] Pp xxii, xxxviii; 3rd ed. xxiii. In quoting from the Irish I have made no changes of substance, merely modernizing the use of capitals and repairing the omission of a mark of length; the italics in the English version of this passage are in the original text.

[2] Flaithrí Ó Maoilchonaire, who was thoroughly familiar with Augustine's writings, does cite him in support of his own choice of a simpler form of language that can be understood by ordinary unlearned people, but the quotation is different: 'Of what profit the golden key unless it opens what

In laying such emphasis on simplicity and intelligibility both authors were of course responding to the serious dearth of doctrinal and catechetical literature in Irish appropriate to the needs of the Catholic clergy and people. It was a problem that had been brought home to them by the harsh reality of their own pastoral experience, but it was one of long standing and their response to it was essentially the same as that of the clerical scholars of the seventeenth century, particularly those centred on Louvain, who in their effort to counter the effects of the Reformation had aimed to produce a body of suitable doctrinal texts in the vernacular. When Bonaventura (Giolla Brighde) Ó hEodhasa joined the Franciscan community in Louvain in 1607 he brought with him all the learning and linguistic expertise of the traditional school poets or *filí* who set the standards of excellence in literary composition whether in prose or in verse, yet in his *An Teagasg Críosdaidhe* or Christian Doctrine published in Antwerp in 1611 (and Louvain in 1614) he expresses his resolve not to obscure the luminous teaching of the Creator by 'gilded speech' (*le hóradh briathar*).[1] Flaithrí Ó Maoilchonaire (Florentius Conrius) also belonged to a family long associated with poetic and historical learning, but in the preface to his *Desiderius / Sgáthán an Chrábhaidh* published in Louvain in 1616 he declares his intention to seek a relative simplicity of style so that his text may be clear and intelligible (*go soilléir sothuigsi*) to all.[2] Two years later, in 1618, Aodh mac Aingil

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we need it to open, when that is the only use we have for it; and why should we grumble at a wooden key if it opens that thing for us', *Créd an tarbha atá san eochair órdha muna osgailtear lé an ní iarmaoid d'osgladh, an tan nách fuil d'fheidhm aguinn ría acht sin; nó créd fá budh ionbhéime eochair mhaide dá n-osgla an ní sin dúinn* (*Desiderius*, ed., T. F. O'Rahilly, Dublin 1941) 2.)

[1] Ed. F. Mac Raghnaill, OFM (Dublin 1976) xxxvii–xxxix, 2–3.

[2] *Desiderius* (ed., T. F. O'Rahilly, Dublin 1941), xxxviii, 1–2.

set himself the same objective in his *Scáthán Shacramuinte na hAithridhe* 'The mirror of the sacrament of penance', also published in Louvain, and achieved it still more successfully and with a greater fluency and sense of spoken idiom, despite his misgivings about the simplicity and imperfection of his writing (*simplídheacht nó droichsgríbhneoireacht an leabhráin*); passages from it continued to be circulated in Irish and Scottish manuscripts well into the eighteenth century.[1]

But the most insistent advocate of a religious prose closer to the popular idiom was a secular priest who had no associations with the literary learning of the 'bardic' schools. In his catechism in Irish and Latin published in Brussels in 1639 Theobald Stapleton criticizes the learned poets and all their ilk who for their own professional reasons cultivate a style that is exclusive and abstruse and beyond the reach of the uninitiated. It is a great pity, he says, that so many of the Irish people have to recite the Pater, the Creed and the other prayers of the Church in broken Latin without understanding what they say, but chattering like parrots or jackdaws trying to speak. And all the while they have to hand in their own native tongue 'a powerful, well-wrought, honourable, learned and subtle language', and he appeals to the Irish people and their clergy to cherish and cultivate it, ... *vt nos Hiberni nostram linguam & idioma retineamus, excolamus & extollamus.*[2]

Like Stapleton and his Franciscan predecessors Séamus Ó Gallchobhair and Aindrias Ó Doinnshléibhe were deeply concerned by the lack of religious literature accessible to the

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[1] Ed., C. Ó Maonaigh, OFM (Dublin 1952) xiii–xiv, 4–5 ll 66–100.

[2] Theobald Stapleton,, reflex reprint, *The 'Catechismus' of Theobald Stapleton* (Dublin 1945) Prologue §§28–33. See also T. Wall, 'Doctrinal instruction in Irish: the work of Theobald Stapleton', *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 2, 5th ser. (1943) 101–12.

people at large and the priests who cared for their spiritual needs and like them they applied themselves to the task of supplying the shortfall in so far as lay within their competence. The remarkable popularity of Bishop Ó Gallchobhair's sermons confirms the rightness of their enterprise and its vital significance for the Church, while at the same time it underlines the glaring disproportion of what they could provide to the real requirements of their Irish-speaking flock.

14. Thomas Cooke

In the wake of the Revolution many collections of books and manuscripts were confiscated in the name of the State and subsequently redistributed to a number of libraries in Paris, a process which no doubt accounts for the presence in the Bibliothèque Mazarine of its sole manuscript in the Irish language. An eighteenth-century document containing a copy of Geoffrey Keating's History of Ireland, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, together with some genealogies and a collection of poems, it would seem to have belonged to the 'T. Cooke' whose bookplate is on the inside front cover and who left various notes in his own hand throughout the manuscript.[1] There can be little doubt that he was the Thomas Cooke a priest of the diocese of Cashel who was associated with Collège des Lombards over a number of years.

Born in 1748 in the parish of Ballingarry in the diocese of Cashel, he was educated at Collège des Lombards and gained his doctorate in theology from the Sorbonne. He was appointed Canon of Saint-Omer and one of the chaplains of Louis XVI, and acted as agent on the Continent for Dr Fran-

[1] For a description of the MS and its contents see C. Mac Giolla Léith, *Études Celtiques* 24 (1987) 239–52.

cis Moylan, bishop of Cork.[1] By all accounts he was comfortably situated: at the outbreak of the revolution, as Fr Liam Swords remarks, 'he was living in some style in Paris, judging by the inventory of his silverware in his residence in the fashionable rue du faubourg St Honoré.' He was evidently notorious for his acerbic wit, and one anonymous correspondent in Collège des Lombards warned him that this might be his undoing, concluding:

> Whilst most that are or would be great
> Must dread your pen, your person hate;
> And you on Draper's-hill must lie,
> And there without a mitre die.[2]

These lines presumably allude to his aspiration for promotion to higher office at home in Ireland. He was in fact one of the candidates for the see of Cashel, left vacant by the death of Archbishop James Butler in 1791, and his claims were actively promoted by the superior of Collège des Lombards, Jean Baptiste Walsh. The supporting documentation included a commendatory letter signed by the Chancellor of the University of Paris, the President of the Collège de Navarre, the superiors of both Irish colleges in Paris, and by the Cashel priests resident in the colleges. The favoured candidate of the provincial bishops at home was, however, Dr Teahen, bishop of Kerry, and, since there was considerable doubt as to whether he would be willing to accept the appointment, they added as their second choice the name of Dr Charles Kearney, Rector of Collège des Irlandais (1783–1800). Undeterred, Walsh continued his advocacy of Cooke

[1] Sr Claude Meagher, 'Calendar of Bray Papers: biographical notes', *Jrnl. of the Cork Hist. and Arch. Society* 75 (1970) 63.
[2] L. Swords, *The green cockade*, 48. Fr Swords's reference for the verse is Archives Nationales Paris T 452. nd.

because of the uncertainty of Teahen's availability and also because he hoped to see Cooke installed in the vacant see of Kerry should Teahen accept nomination to Cashel.[1]

When the Sacred Congregation gathered to choose Dr Butler's successor, they had in all fourteen candidates to consider. Their choice fell on Dr Teahen and, when he eventually declined the appointment, they selected Dr Thomas Bray, parish priest of Cashel and, incidentally, an alumnus of the Paris college. Sr Claude Meagher has furnished a useful summary of Bray's educational and ecclesiastical career, which was not unrepresentative of his period:

> In common with many young Irish boys of the penal days, Thomas Bray received his education at the Propaganda College, Rome, St Guard, Avignon and the Irish College, Paris. An entry on the records of the Irish College Paris states, 'Little Tommy Bray entered the College in July 1764, arrangements having been made by his uncle, Fr James Power with Mr Kelly' ...[that is, Laurence Kelly, prefect of the younger *clercs et écoliers* in Collège des Lombards and rector of the new Collège des Irlandais which he personally procured in 1769]. He received his tonsure and minor orders, 22 Dec. 1770: subdiaconate, 4 April 1772 and diaconate, 13 June 1772, all at Avignon. He received D.D. from Propaganda College, Rome, 26 June 1773. He then proceeded to Paris for the completion of his ecclesiastical studies. A testimonial from Cardinal Marefosci

[1] P. Boyle, 'Documents relative to the appointment of an archbishop to the see of Cashel in 1791', *Archivium Hibernicum* 7 (1918–21) 1–19 (4–5, 8–9, 10–11).

bears witness to the fact that he had completed his theological studies in Avignon and was going *to Paris where he would study Irish and English to prepare him for the sacred ministry in Ireland* [emphasis added]. On 22 May 1774 Thomas was ordained priest in Paris.[1]

One of the fruits of this linguistic formation was perhaps the handbook of Christian piety and doctrine, in English and Irish, which he produced in 1813 under the general title *Regulations, instructions, exhortations, and prayers &c. in English and Irish*, with facing English and Irish texts. Intended as an aid to the local diocesan clergy, the Irish version reflects the dialect usage of south Tipperary where Bray himself was born and reared.[2]

As for Thomas Cooke, he like many other Irish clerics left for home after the outbreak of the Revolution; Fr Swords observes that 'he was probably the last Irish priest to leave Paris'.[3] He was appointed curate at Fethard in Co. Tipperary (the birthplace of Thomas Bray), but later spent some time on missionary work in the London Vicariate. Re-

[1] Meagher, 'Calendar of the Papers of Dr Bray, Archbishop of Cashel and Emly (1792–1820), *Jrnl. of the Cork Hist. and Arch. Society* 73 (1968) 83–4. Sr Meagher describes the note on the young Tommy Bray's introduction to the Irish College as an 'entry on the records of the Irish College Paris', but her immediate source reference is to O'Renehan MS 96. Rcl, St Patrick's College, Maynooth.

[2] The whole compilation forms the second volume of a collection of Cashel and Emly diocesan documents published as the *Statuta synodalia* (Dublin 1813). Whether the Irish text, which is translated from the English, is Bray's own work is not open to proof; chapters 9 and 10 appear to be by someone other than the main translator (Áine Ní Bhlacúil, *Gaeilge Chontae Tiobraid Árann*, unpublished MA thesis, University College Cork 1968, comprising an edition of the Irish text, esp. iv–vii; I am grateful to Dr Malachy McKenna for this reference).

[3] Swords, *The green cockade*, 58.

turning to Ireland again in 1795 he was appointed parish priest of Newport and Killoscully. He died in 1804. Were it not for the survival of the manuscript in the Bibliothèque Mazarine we would have little enough indication of Thomas Cooke's interest in Irish literature and learning, which, on the evidence of the manuscript alone, was very considerable. It has, however, been noted that he is presumably the same person as 'An tAthair Tomás Cook' to whom the scribe Seosamh Ó Diomsaigh attributed the poem beginning *A uain Mhuire chuadh dho do céusa saor* (or, slightly normalized, *A uain Mhuire chuaidh do do chéasadh saor*) in RIA MS. 24C57, a spiritual meditation on the inevitability of death and dissolution.

With regard to the general confiscation of manuscripts at the time of the Revolution, one particular instance may serve to illustrate the nature of the process. In 1846 the antiquarian James Henthorn Todd delivered a paper to the Royal Irish Academy on the contents of MS Ancien Fond no. 8175 in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.[1] It is in fact, as he pointed out, a collection of manuscripts by several different hands bound together in a single volume. A substantial part of it was the work of Uilliam Mac an Leagha, one of the most prolific scribes of the second half of the fifteenth century, many of whose manuscripts are still extant. The collective contents of MS 8175 are preponderantly hagiographic and theological, which may help to explain how the texts came to be in Paris, presumably in a clerical community. Apart from their own intrinsic importance, however, which is considerable, the volume has the added interest that M. Lefebvre de Villebrune, Librarian of the Bibliothèque Royale (subsequently the Bibliothèque Nationale) during the period 1793–

[1] J. H. Todd, *Procs. of the Royal Irish Academy* 1846, no. 53, 223–9.

95, added a note at the beginning referring to its provenance:

> An Irish manuscript that the commissioners of the Beaurepaire section have found on one of their visits. It is a work of piety containing homilies on several passages of sacred scripture, the life of Saint Patrick and that of saint Brigid. Irish manuscripts become the more precious as this language is threatened with total extinction by the predominance of the English language. Moreover the scholars of Ireland and England collect all the Irish manuscripts they can find; they contain little else but works of piety and history.[1]

He refers his readers, whoever they were supposed to be, to the grammars of Mac Curtain and Vallancey,[2] and doubtless it was the latter's bizarre speculations on the origins of the Irish language that prompted Lefebvre's closing comment on its affinities to Hebrew, Arabic and other languages further east.

The manuscript, he tells us, was acquired by the Revolutionary Commissioners of *la section Beaurepaire* in the course of one of their visits of enquiry to various clerical and other suspect institutions. The 'Beaurepaire section' was a subdivision of Paris at the time of the Revolution, but it bore the name of the revolutionary general Beaurepaire for only a short time: from September 1792 to the beginning of 1793. Forming roughly a long rectangle covering part of the fifth

[1] H. Omont, 'Catalogue des MSS. celtiques et basques de la Bibliothèque Nationale', *Revue Celtique* 11 (1890) 389–432; for MS 8175 see pp 391–405, and for Lefebvre's note translated above, p. 404.

[2] C. Vallancey, *A grammar of the Iberno-Celtic, or Irish language* (Dublin [1773], 2nd ed. 1781).

arrondissement it was bounded on the east by rue St Jacques, on the west by rue de la Harpe and Boulevard St Michel, on the south by rue Royer Collard (formerly rue St Dominique), and on the north by rue de la Huchette.[1] Both the present Collège des Irlandais in rue des Irlandais and the Collège des Lombards in rue des Carmes would have stood outside its eastern perimeter, rue St Jacques — presumably within the *section du Panthéon* — but not far distant from it. Future research on the archives of this *section* of the revolutionary period may enable us to identify precisely the institution from which our manuscript was removed by the Commissioners.

[1] E. Mellié, *Les sections de Paris pendant la Revolution française* (Paris 1898) 39.

15. Historians and antiquarians

At home in Ireland scholarly interest in the language in this period often went hand in hand with the study of Irish history and antiquities, and it was only to be expected that this preoccupation with historical writing should extend to the Irish community in Paris and to the Irish College. Two former students of the College who did not proceed to the priesthood published histories of Ireland. In the preface to his *General History of Ireland from the earliest accounts to the close of the twelfth century* (London, 1778) the eminent surgeon Sylvester O'Halloran (1728–1807) expresses his gratitude to the Bishop of Cloyne, Dr James Matthew MacKenna, who had been superior of the College from 1753 to 1762, for furnishing him with a copy of the Book of Lecan, 'faithfully transcribed from the original in the Irish College in Paris' (p. xlii).[1] In the following century another past pupil, Martin Haverty (1809–1887), who entered the Irish College in 1831 and left in 1834, was the author of *The History of Ireland, ancient and modern* (Dublin

[1] Cf. J. C. Beckett, *Eighteenth-Century Ireland 1691–1800* (ed. T. W. Moody and W. E. Vaughan, Oxford 1986) [*A New History of Ireland* IV], lxi, 468, 469; The Marquis MacSwiney of Mashanaglass, 'Notes on the history of the Book of Lecan', *RIA Proc.* 38 (1928–9) 31–50 (47).

[1860], enlarged ed. 1885); he was on the staff or the *Freeman's Journal* newspaper from 1837 to 1850 and was subsequently appointed sub-librarian of the King's Inns. An older contemporary of O'Halloran's and likewise a student of the College was James MacGeoghegan (1702–1764), who served for five years as a *vicaire* in the parish of Poissy in the diocese of Chartres before a brief period as Provisor of Collège des Lombards in 1734. He was later attached to the church of Saint-Merri in Paris, where he died in 1764. His *Histoire de l'Irlande, ancienne et moderne*, which was published in three volumes, the first two in Paris 1758 and 1762, the third in 1763 in Amsterdam, was dedicated to the Irish Brigade, for which he served as a chaplain for some time.[1] Miles Byrne, veteran of the 1798 rebellion, has a casual reference to the *Histoire* which indicates the kind of close and easy relationship that existed between members of the Irish community and the Irish College. He recalls his meetings with Mr William Murphy of Mount Merrion, another veteran of the rising who had fled to Lisbon and eventually returned to Dublin to carve out a prosperous career for himself in commerce, when the latter came to Paris with his family for an extended visit in 1824. Discussing the present condition of Ireland and her future prospects

> Mr Murphy regretted that there was no good history of Ireland, and said that the antiquaries could not agree as to the origin of the pillar towers. He wished to buy Mac Geoghan's [*sic*] history published in french in 1758, but strange to say, we could not get it, although before the

[1] R. Hayes, *Bibliographical Dictionary of Irishmen in France* (Dublin 1949); P. Boyle, *The Irish college*, 48–9. MacGeoghegan's work was translated to English by P. O'Kelly: *History of Ireland, ancient and modern* ..., 3 vols, (Dublin 1831–2).

> restoration of the Bourbons in 1815, it was to be had at many of the old book shops. My friend abbé Lynch who was arranging the library of the irish college, gave me a copy, which I got bound in two volumes, and sent it by my young friend James Power to Mr Murphy in 1826. It was the second edition of Mac Geoghan's history of Ireland.[1]

From the point of view of the history of the College library it would be interesting to know what precisely is implied by the reference to the Abbé Lynch's 'arranging' it.

[1] M. Byrne, *Memoirs* iii, 288.

self, [and] publised in alle the courte of St. Germans that he knew but me alone who would compare whit him.'[1] When Kennedy presented him with a copy of his book on the Stuarts, Fr O'Ruorke responded with a poem in Irish and Latin, which Kennedy in turn acknowledged with an Irish poem of his own (written, as recorded by O'Ruorke, in the same kind of idiosyncratic spelling the cleric used in his compositions).[2] It is also clear that Bishop Seán Ó Briain was familiar with Kennedy's work; in his long *Mémoire* on the Macpherson controversy in the *Journal des Sçavans* of 1764 he cites (p. 543) a passage from Kennedy's 'Traité de la Généalogie du Roi d'Angleterre Jacques II'.

Sir John Fitzgerald, from whom James Terry seemingly acquired the Book of Lecan, was himself no stranger to traditional Irish learning and literature. Son of Éamonn Mac Gearailt, Sir Edmund Fitzgerald, lord of Claonghlais (Clonlish), Co. Limerick, on the borders of Cork and Kerry, he was the principal patron of the great seventeenth-century poet Dáibhidh Ó Bruadair. According to Richard Hayes's *Biographical Dictionary of Irishmen in France* he was born in 1640, and there is a poem commemorating his birth (or infancy) by Cúchonnacht Ó Dálaigh: *A hógaibh éirgheas fine* ... 'The young are the source of [great] families'.[3] At the time of his father's death in 1666 John Fitzgerald was in France, in the city of Nantes,where many young Irish men of the time received their education; Ó Bruadair addressed verses of condolence to him there as well as composing a lengthy elegy to his father.[4]

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1 C. Mooney, 'Manutiana', *Celtica* I (1950) 1–63 (14).
2 Ibid. 10–14.
3 J. C. MacErlean, SJ, (ed.), *Duanaire Dháibhidh Uí Bhruadair: The Poems of David Ó Bruadair*, I (London 1910) 184–95.
4 Mac Erlean, *Duanaire Dháibhidh Uí Bhruadair* I, 180–83, 138–80.

The family had suffered under the Cromwellian confiscations, but some four years after his father's death John Fitzgerald recovered three thousand acres of the family land that had been appropriated. However, following the onset of the 'popish plot' agitation in England there were spurious allegations in 1680 of an Irish 'popish plot' to import arms to enable the Catholics to collaborate with an impending French invasion, and Sir John Fitzgerald was one of those charged with complicity. He was brought to England for trial together with a number of other Irishmen, an event recorded in verse by Ó Bruadair, but the charges against them collapsed for lack of evidence.[1] He was a prominent adherent of James II and participated in the campaign in Ulster and the blockade of Derry.[2] With the defeat of the Jacobite cause and the signing of the Treaty of Limerick Sir John embarked for France from Carrigafoyle at the mouth of the Shannon, but not before composing a quatrain in which he regretted that so few of his friends and associates were ready to accompany him into exile. In his ready verse response Ó Bruadair criticized those who took advantage of the peace terms won for them by their leader in order to avoid following him abroad, while expressing the solemn wish that his patron would eventually return safe and sound:

Athchuingim ar charthanacht an Choimhdhe chóir
gan bhascadh ar bith go dtagairsi don chrích se beo

'I beseech the charity of the Lord of righteousness

[1] *Duanaire Dháibhidh Uí Bhruadair* II (1913) 218–19; J. G. Simms, 'The restoration, 1660–85', in *A New History of Ireland* III (ed. T. W. Moody *et al.*, Oxford 1976) 420–53 (432–3).

[2] J. C. O'Callaghan, *History of the Irish brigades in the service of France* (Glasgow 1870) 116–20; MacErlean, *Duanaire Dháibhidh Uí Bhruadair* III (1917) 124–5.

> That you return to this land alive and unblemished'[1]

In the event he never returned to Ireland. He served in several campaigns with the armies of France, held the command of the Regiment of Limerick, and seems to have particularly distinguished himself in the battle of Landen in Flanders, providing the occasion for a celebratory poem by Ó Bruadair.[2] It has been stated that he died in the battle of Oudenarde in 1708, but some argue that this rests merely on a confusion with Brigadier Nicholas FitzGerald, who was fatally wounded in that battle.[3]

That he had died some time before May 7, 1712, is clear from a testimonial of that date signed by two provisors of Collège des Lombards. The certificate was presented to Louis XIV on behalf of Thomas Fitzgerald, then a youth of little more than sixteen years, whose father Maurice had died in the king's service. In an accompanying petition for a pension his mother stated that she had brought her son to France to ensure that he be educated in the Catholic religion: at Saint Germain-en-Laye he was instructed by the Jesuit chaplain of Queen Mary of Modena. The certificate mentions that Maurice Fitzgerald was head of the second branch of the house of Claonghlais whose late chief was Sir John Fitzgerald:

> *que ce dernier Thomas fitzGerald etoit fils de Maurice fitzGerald, qui etoit le Chef de la seconde branche de la maison et Seigneurie de Clenglish dans la Comté de Limerick en Irlande, laquelle maison a été representée dernierement par Jean fitzGerald Chevalier Barronet*

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[1] MacErlean, *Duanaire* III, 158–9, 160–63

[2] MacErlean, *Duanaire* III, 222–5.

[3] MacSwiney, 'Notes on the history of the Book of Lecan', 38–9 n.41.

> *de son vivant Colonel du dit regiment de Limerick, et qui étoit mort au service de sa majesté tres Chretienne, et etoit heritier de la dite Seigneurie de Clenglish valant environ deux mille livres sterling par an, et descendu de l'Illustre maison des Comtes de Desmond*[1]

Of the four signatories of the certificate the fourth and last is Matthew Kennedy, 'juge de l'amirauty d'Irlands', the very man from whom James Terry sought to recover possession of the Book of Lecan — a nice instance of the network of interrelationships which linked the community of the Irish College and the broader Irish society of Paris and Saint Germain-en-Laye.

As we have seen already, there has been no clear agreement as to how the Book of Lecan came to be removed from Trinity College only to reappear in the possession of Sir John Fitzgerald in Paris. The relevant testimonies are reviewed by MacSwiney in his essay on the history of the manuscript.[2] In the first place there is evidence that it was taken while the College was occupied by King James II and his troops in 1690. According to Eugene O'Curry the tradition was that either the king or one of his retinue 'carried away this book at the time of his precipitate retreat from Ireland, and that previous to his death he deposited [it] in the Irish, or, College of Lombards in that city [Paris]',[3] while the Abbé MacGeoghegan states that James had the manuscript taken from the Trinity College library 'and that it was afterwards, by

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[1] M. Walsh, 'Irish soldiers and the Irish College in Paris 1706–1791', in Swords, *The Irish-French Connection 1578–1978* 63–87 (67–8).

[2] MacSwiney, 'Notes on the history of the Book of Lecan', *RIA Proc.* 38 (1928–9) 31–50.

[3] O'Curry *Catalogue of Manuscripts*, Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Series I, vol. iii, 884.

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[2] MacSwiney, 'Notes on the history of the Book of Lecan', *RIA Proc.* 38 (1928–9) 31–50.

[3] O'Curry *Catalogue of Manuscripts*, Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Series I, vol. iii, 884.

order of the Prince, who had an Act passed before notaries for the purpose, deposited in the archives of the Irish College in Paris, and is carefully preserved.'[1] Already in 1724 Dr William Nicolson, bishop of Derry, discusses the Book of Lecan, of which 'the late [Edward] Lhwyd gives a distinct account, as if he had seen and carefully perused it', but he claims to have been assured by Dr Anthony Raymond 'that it was lodged at Paris by Sir John Fitzgerald in James the Second's Reign.'[2]

In so far as it concerns Fitzgerald, it will be seen that Nicolson's (or Raymond's) account is not seriously at variance with O'Curry and MacGeoghegan. As for Raymond, a Fellow of Trinity College and the Vicar of Trim, he himself is said to have had a curious, perhaps apocryphal, connection with the Book of Lecan. According to Charles Vallancey the antiquarian, 'About 30 years ago Dr Raymond lent a book out of the College Library (supposed to be this Book [*viz.* the Book of Lecan]) to one Thady O'Naghten [the scribe and Gaelic scholar Tadhg Ó Neachtain]. Eogan, servant to Judge Marlay stole this book from Naghten and it was known to be in Judge Marlay's library at his death; by some means it was conveyed to the College of Lombards.'[3] However, as MacSwiney observes, there is no evidence to support this strange and rather vague anecdote; for one thing, we know that the manuscript was in Paris by 1703 and could not have been in Judge Marlay's library at his death in 1756. Thus we are left with the more general tradition that the manuscript's mi-

[1] MacGeoghegan, *History of Ireland ancient and modern* (Dublin 1831–2) I, 93.
[2] William [Nicolson], Lord Bishop of Derry, *The Irish Historical Library* (Dublin 1724) 39.
[3] Royal Irish Academy MS 24.E.4 (*Vallancey's Green Book*) at L: Manuscripts; MacSwiney, 'Notes on the history of the Book of Lecan', 34.

gration was connected with king James's sojourn in Trinity College.

For MacSwiney the crucial element here was the fact that Edward Lhuyd, the pioneering Welsh scholar, who visited Ireland in 1700, gave a short account of the contents of the Book of Lecan, which he found in the College library, in his *Archæologia Britannica*, published in 1707. For MacSwiney this is a matter of capital importance, since it proves that the manuscript, which was missing from the library by 1702, was still there in 1700 and therefore could not have been taken away by king James (or one of his entourage). He is thus compelled to the rather desperate conclusion that 'it was stolen by an unknown hand some time in the course of the two years which elapsed between those dates.'

Such is the tenor of MacSwiney's commentary on this phase of the manuscript's history, at least in so far as the main text of his essay is concerned. However he has one important footnote (n.28) which he would appear to have written at a late stage without taking account of its implications within the body of his article. In the footnote he acknowledges, and fully accepts, E. J. Gwynn's affirmation that Lhuyd's account of Lecan was copied directly from E. Bernard's description published in 1697 and that Bernard's information was itself second-hand.[1] This means in effect that neither Bernard's notes, nor Lhuyd's, have any direct bearing on the date at which the Book of Lecan was removed from Trinity College or are in any way at odds with the tradition that it was taken during the occupation of the College by King James's forces, the version which Anthony Raymond

[1] T. K. Abbott and E. J. Gwynn, *Catalogue of the Irish Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin* (Dublin 1921) vi, and Gwynn's note to MacSwiney quoted in the latter's 'Notes on the history of the Book of Lecan', n.28.

refers to as a familiar fact in a letter to William Nicolson bishop of Derry. Complaining of the difficulty in gaining access to some of the major manuscripts from his home in Trim, and the great expense involved in having them copied, he instances the Book of Lecan:

> & I likewise assure your Lordship I was asked a Thousand Pound for a copy of the Book of Lecan (which is now in the College of Lumbard) which as your Lordship has taken notice was taken out of the College of Dublin in King James the Second's Reign by Sir John Fitzgerald is now in the College of Lumbard. This Book containing six hundred large sheets in vellum was as Lordship expresses the great oracle of Primate Usher & is the most Compleat Collection of our antient Historical accounts that ever was in this Kingdom & yr Lordship laments the great loss of it. I have proposed to the College to go to Paris to reclaim it & to obtain an order from the Secretary of State for that purpose or if they did not think it worth their while to be at a reasonable charge to recover it they would make over their right to a person who would be at the Charge of bringing it back into the Kingdom.[1]

He refers to the taking of the manuscript in another document, and again it is perhaps worth quoting it verbatim because of its extra detail, not to mention the relative inaccessibility of the text in which it occurs[2]:

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[1] From I, 122 in Raymond's papers as comprised in MSS RIA 24 G 11–24 G 14; quoted by A. Harrison, *Ag Cruinniú meala*, 76. I am indebted to Dr Harrison for helpful guidance on the interests and activities of these Dublin scholars of the late seventeenth and the eighteenth century.

[2] It is titled *A Letter from Dr. Anthony Raymond to my Lord Inchiquin giving*

> . . . I cannot but observe, what a reproach it is to the learned Gentlemen of our country, that Pere d'Allmagne should, about thirty years ago, write a *Monasticon Hiberniae*, which was very lately translated in *London* and is just sent over to us; that the above-mention'd Mr. Edward Lhuid, Keeper of the *Musaeum* in *Oxford*, having acquired great skill in the *Irish* language, should come over to get an account of the *Irish* Manuscripts. In the Catalogue he published of the Manuscripts in the Library of the College of *Dublin* from the College Catalogue, he mentions those most valuable Remains of *Irish* Antiquities, contained in the Book of *Lecane*, or *Sligo* Book, so much depended upon by Primate Usher in his Primordiis. But this Book containing 620 large Pages in vellum, and written with Abbreviations (as all the ancient *Irish* Manuscripts are) was taken out of the Library by *Sir John Fitzgerald*, in King *James's* Time, and lodged in great Triumph before several *Notary Publicks*, by the Duke of *Perth*, in the College of *Lombard* in *Paris*. I advertise the Loss of this Book, in hopes that Endeavours may be used to reclaim it.[1]

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some Account of the Monarchs and Ancient State of Ireland and was printed in Dublin in 1723 (our passage is on p. 5). Apparently there is only a single extant copy which is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and which one is not permitted to photocopy. I quote the text from a transcript kindly made available to me by Dr Harrison.

[1] Fr Liam Swords informs me that he has not come upon any record of the deposition of the manuscript in Collège des Lombards in the notarial files he has examined so far; see his 'Calendar of Irish material in the files of Jean Fromont, notary at Paris, May 1701–24 Jan. 1730, in the Archives Nationales, Paris', *Collectanea Hibernica* 34–35 (1992–3) 77–115, 36–37 (1994–5)

The Duke of Perth referred to here is presumably James Drummond, fourth Earl of Perth named Duke by James II in recognition of his loyalty and devotion to the exiled king. He died at Saint Germain-en-Laye in 1716. His son James, the third Duke, died in Paris in 1720.

Bishop Nicolson, in his *Irish Historical Library*, acknowledges the information he had from Raymond, coupling it with a rather dry dismissal of Lhuyd's supposed 'perusal' of the manuscript. Speaking of the contents of Lecan he says: 'Of all these (and others) the late Mr. Lhwyd gives as distinct an Account as if he had seen and carefully perused the Book; whereas the learned Doctor Raymond assures me that it was lodged in Paris by Sir John Fitzgerald in King James the Second's reign.'[1] In fact, there would seem to be no reason to suppose that Raymond's record of the removal of the manuscript from Trinity College is not essentially accurate, as we shall see presently. As for the rest, his account of how it was deposited with great pomp in the Irish College is consistent with the versions given by Eugene O'Curry and the Abbé MacGeoghegan, but all three must somehow be coordinated with the alleged movements of the book in France culminating in James Terry's petition to Queen Mary in 1705. It might be suggested by way of explanation that the only two events in the manuscript's odyssey which were of special personal interest to Raymond were, first, its removal from Trinity College, which he deeply regretted, and secondly, its translation to the Irish College, whence he sincerely hoped it might be retrieved. Consequently his account of its fortunes may, in passing directly from the first event to the last, give the impression that they occurred in close sequence. In point of fact, however, Raymond, unlike O'Curry,

85–139.

[1] Ibid. pp 38–9.

does not say explicitly that the manuscript was deposited in College des Lombards before James II's death (in September 1701).

Nevertheless, even allowing for the disparate interests underlying the Irish and French testimonies there remains a problematic divergence between them. Apart from the fact that we do not yet know the outcome of Terry's petition to Queen Mary, it is not clear how we can reconcile the events leading up to it, and the petition itself, with the ceremonial presentation of the manuscript to the College authorities. One *terminus ante quem* for the deposition of the manuscript is 1723, the date of publication of Anthony Raymond's *A Letter from Dr. Raymond to my Lord Inchiquin*, in which he refers to the Book of Lecan as being 'now in the College of *Lumbard* at *Paris*',[1] and there may yet be others more useful. It is also possible that further research on French archival sources will help to clarify the relevant circumstances of the presentation.

With regard to the circumstances in which the Book of Lecan took its leave of Trinity College, we have seen that they appear to be reasonably well established in their broad outline; it may however be useful in the present context to add some further relevant detail. It is recorded in the College Register that the institution 'was seized on for a garrison' by order of king James on 6 September 1689, 'and Sir John Fitzgerald took possession of it.' It mentions specifically the danger to the library:

[1] Over a hundred years ago the distinguished Celtic scholar d'Arbois de Jubainville published a brief note on a manuscript (no. 8103) in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal which contains an analysis of the contents of the Book of Lecan (*Revue Celtique* 11 (1890) 426). He believed that it might have been written in the Collège des Irlandais while the Book of Lecan was still there. The extant text would appear to date from the eighteenth century, but it is a copy transcribed by several hands of an original by an unknown author.

> October 21 [Old Style]. Several persons, by order of the Government, seized upon the Chappel and broke open the Library. The Chappel was sprinkled and new consecrated and Mass was said in it; but afterwards being turned into a storehouse for powder, it escaped all further damage. The Library and Gardens and the Provost's lodgings were committed to the care of one Macarty, a Priest and Chaplain to ye King, who preserved 'em from the violence of the souldiers, but the Chambers and all other things belonging to ye College were miserably defaced and ruined.'[1]

This confirms, if it were necessary, that Fitzgerald was in charge of the occupying garrison, and it attributes the securing of the library, and presumably its contents, to Fr Mac Carthy the king's chaplain (and, be it said, to the gunpowder stored in the nearby chapel). As guardian of the provost's house as well as the library he doubtless worked in consultation with the provost if not under his direction, and it is hardly surprising that the provost himself should be credited elsewhere with preserving the library. The holder of that office under the occupation was Dr Michael Moore (*c.*1639–1726), a scholar of some distinction who was also a faithful friend and benefactor to the Collège des Lombards, to which he bequeathed his own collection of some twelve hundred books.[2] Moore's role in safeguarding the

[1] Quoted in the Rev. R. H. Murray (ed.), *The journal of John Stevens containing a brief account of the war in Ireland 1689–1691* (Oxford 1912) 90–91 n.1.

[2] As well as the other sources cited below, I am indebted to Mr Liam Chambers of Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, for information on his own continuing research on the life and career of Michael Moore; see now his study of Moore's scholasticsim, 'Defying Descartes: Michael Moore

Trinity library is stated briefly but explicitly by Walter Harris in the mid-eighteenth century. 'To his special care,' he says, 'is owing the conservation of the valuable collection of manuscripts and other books, which now adorn the other library; at a time when that house was turned into a popish garrison, the chapel into a garrison and many of the chambers into prisons for protestants.'[1] His vital contribution is acknowledged by the several historians of Trinity, most recently by R. B. McDowell and D. A. Webb in their authorized history of the College. Recalling king James's departure after his defeat at the Boyne and the subsequent return of the displaced Provost and the majority of the Fellows from England, their text goes on:

> They returned to a College thoroughly wrecked by the senseless vandalism which almost inevitably accompanies a military occupation of fine buildings. Fortunately the determination and presence of mind of two priests, Teigue MacCarthy and Michael Moore, saved the Library and its contents from any substantial damage. Moore had been appointed Head of the College on the advice of the Irish bishops, but some months before the Boyne he fell foul of the Jesuits and was expelled from Ireland by the King. In France his considerable learning was better appreciated and he ended his life as Rector of the University of Paris.[2]

(1639–1726) and Aristotelian philosophy in France and Ireland', in M. Brown and S. H. Harrison (ed.), *The medieval world and the modern mind* (Dublin 2000) 11–26.

[1] Sir James Ware, *The whole works of Sir James Ware concerning Ireland revised and improved* (ed. Walter Harris, 2 vols, Dublin 1939–45) 289.

[2] *Trinity College Dublin 1592–1952: an academic history* (Cambridge 1982) 29.

When a new Reading Room in Trinity College was completed in 1937 and the opening ceremony performed by Mr Éamon de Valera as head of government, a brass tablet was unveiled in memory of Michael Moore, who did some service to the College even if he did not survive in office long enough to make the Provost's formal declaration.[1]

But there are of course other reasons apart from Michael Moore's short-lived custodianship of Trinity College, its library and the Book of Lecan why he should figure in any account of Irish scholars and scholarly institutions in France and more particularly in Paris.

He was a man who enjoyed a considerable reputation among his academic peers. A native of Dublin, he went at an early age to Nantes where he studied at the Oratorian Collège Saint-Clément, and then to Paris, where he continued his studies at the University. In time he was appointed Professor of Philosophy in Collège des Grassins close by Collège des Lombards on the Montagne Sainte-Geneviève, and after ten years there he took up the professorship of Latin and Greek at the prestigious Collège de Navarre. He was elected Procurator of the German Nation (*Nation d'Allemagne*), one of the four 'Nations' constituting the Faculty of Arts, in 1671 and 1673. He maintained a close interest in Irish affairs throughout these years and during the so-called 'Popish Plot' a certain Edmund Everard claimed that he had been present with the Archbishop of Dublin, Peter Talbot, at an audience with Louis XIV in Versailles at which the archbishop sought to enlist royal sup-

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I am obliged to Mr William O'Sullivan, former Keeper of Manuscripts in Trinity College Dublin, for casting his expert eye over this brief account of the exile and return of the Book of Lecan.

[1] K. C. Bailey, *A history of Trinity College Dublin 1592–1945* (Dublin 1947) 65–6.

port for the Irish and 'to propose ways to the King of France, whereby to relieve them in their present extremities and persecutions, and for to undertake their protection; and some of his ways was, to arm some Irish, and to secure some seaport town in Ireland for the French'.[1] In the mid-eighties he was appointed parish priest of St Catherine's in Dublin and vicar general of the archdiocese by the new archbishop, Patrick Russell (1629–92), and subsequently returned to Ireland.[2] When James II seized control in Dublin in 1689 his Lord Deputy, Richard Talbot, Earl of Tyrconnell, had Moore appointed Provost of Trinity College, but his tenure there, as we have seen, was a short one, terminated by the defeat of the Jacobites, or even earlier as reported by some sources when he gave offence to king James in the course of a sermon delivered at Christchurch Cathedral in the king's presence. He was again active in the affairs of the University of Paris in 1691, before leaving for Italy where he served as rector of the seminary of Montefiascone near Viterbo and was highly regarded for his intellect and integrity by popes Innocent XII and Clement XI and by the College of Cardinals. When he returned to Paris in 1701 he was elected Rector of the University, an honour he had declined in 1677, and he was subsequently appointed professor of Philosophy in the Collège de France in place of Elie Dupin who had been dismissed because of his Jansenist tendencies.

There is an interesting letter in Irish addressed to him from Dublin under the date 24 April 1691 (the 1690 of the manuscript is an obvious slip) in reply to a letter he himself

[1] J. Brady, 'Dr. Michael Moore', *Reportorium Novum* 2 (1958–60) 207–8.
[2] C. Connellan, 'Michael Moore (1640–1726)', in *At the heart of the real: philosophical essays in honour of ... Desmond Connell, Archbishop of Dublin* (ed., F. O'Rourke, Blackrock, Co. Dublin 1992) 261–70 (263).

had written on 29 March of that year.[1] The writer, who calls himself *Cormac comharba Ciaráin* 'the successor of St Ciarán' has not been further identified; his assumed title suggests a bishop of Clonmacnois, but the holder of the see at that time was Gregory Fallon who lived abroad, while the letter was apparently written in Dublin. He recounts how the Williamite assault on Limerick had ended in failure on 27 August 1690, commends Michael Moore for his lively interest in the affairs of the country at this critical time, and requests that he and his fellow-Irishmen abroad should aid the struggle at home in whatever way possible. He mentions that Moore had for long been preparing or contemplating a history of Ireland (*. . . go rabhais le sealad fada ag deanamh staire na hÉirionn do réir na dtíolaicibh móra thug Dia dhuit*) and for that reason he promises to send him an account of the events of the Williamite war which he himself had compiled. Unfortunately there appears to be no trace of either work. Apart from the interesting references in the letter to Moore's keen interest in political affairs at home, it is also important as testimony to his command of the Irish language, which might not otherwise be evident from our documentation. In fact, while he assumed responsibility for the education of the children of the sixteenth Baron of Slane, Randall Fleming, who died in 1676,[2] he had also close connections with the O'Moore family of Leix, and it would appear that he was another of those sixteenth and seventeenth century scholar clerics who had deep affiliations with both the Gaelic and the Old English segments of Irish society.

Dr Moore was a good friend of Collège des Lombards — he aided the rector, Dr John Farely, to augment the college

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within the college at his own request,[1] and this would in-
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be buried, simply and poorly, without hangings and bells,
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not wish him to be buried in the chapel of Collège des Lom-
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in the list of commemorative plaques recorded by Fr Boyle
as having been in the College (many of which were subse-
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landais);[3] it is included, however, on a plaque in the nearby
church of St Étienne du Mont which commemorates a num-
ber of distinguished people buried within the confines of the
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the assistance of a reader, who, it is sometimes said, took
advantage of his incapacity to steal several hundred of his
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cordance with his bequest.[5]

[1] Boyle, 'Dr Michael Moore', *Archivium Hibernicum* 5 (1916) 7–16 (12);
Wall, 'The Irish College', 47.
[2] A summary of his will see L. Swords, 'Calendar of Irish material in
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Archives Nationales, Paris', pt 2, *Collectanea Hibernica* 36–37 (1995) 85–
[illegible]: The will and its two codicils are dated 10 April 1721, 1 May
[illegible] December 1723 respectively.
[3] Wall, 'The Irish College', 227–33.
[4] Wall, 'The Irish College', 47.
[5] Wall, 'The Irish on the Continent, 1691–1800', in Eighteenth-century
[illegible] (ed. T. W. Moody and W. E. Vaughan, Oxford 1986)
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buildings — and was always generous with counsel and material support for those, whether staff or students, who had need of them. Fr Patrick Boyle states that he was buried within the college at his own request,[1] and this would indeed seem to have been his wish: in his will he asks that he 'be buried, simply and poorly, without hangings and bells, like a poor person, in the parish cemetery, if his executors do not wish him to be buried in the chapel of Collège des Lombards...'.[2] For whatever reason, his name does not figure in the list of commemorative plaques recorded by Fr Boyle as having been in the College (many of which were subsequently transferred to Collège des Irlandais in rue des Irlandais);[3] it is included, however, on a plaque in the nearby church of St Étienne du Mont which commemorates a number of distinguished people buried within the confines of the parish.[4] In his last years he had become blind and required the assistance of a reader, who, it is sometimes said, took advantage of his incapacity to steal several hundred of his books; the remainder were deposited in the College in accordance with his bequest.[5]

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[3] P. Boyle, *The Irish College*, 227–33.

[4] P. Boyle, *The Irish College*, 47.

[5] J. G. Simms, 'The Irish on the Continent, 1691–1800', in *Eighteenth-century Ireland 1691–1800* (ed. T. W. Moody and W. E. Vaughan, Oxford 1986) [*A New History of Ireland* IV], 645–6. This report of his servant's misdemeanour contrasts curiously with his own expression of high regard for him in his will (as summarized by Fr Swords): 'He confirms the '*donation entre vifs*' which he has already made to Collège des Lombards and fur-

In the course of an elegant eulogy delivered shortly after Michael Moore's death the rector of the University of Paris spoke of him as one of whom 'it was difficult to say which took precedence, learning or religion, simplicity or nobility of mind, love of his country or love of Your University'.[1] Had style and syntax, and the immediate ambiance, permitted, he might equally well have extended his final clausula to include the Collège des Lombards, which had always been inextricably entwined in Moore's love of country and university.

The actual acquisition of the Book of Lecan by Collège des Lombards is not recorded in the extant archives of the college, but it is obvious from all the available testimony that the authorities there were very conscious of the manuscript's importance and accorded every facility to scholars wishing to consult it. The measure of their goodwill was amply demonstrated later in the century. When the Dublin Society authorised the Chevalier Thomas O'Gorman to apply to Collège des Lombards as well as to other similar institutions for copies of documents relating to Irish history and antiquities, the superiors of the college convened a public meeting on 11 March 1773 under the presidency of Arthur Richard Dillon, Archbishop of Narbonne, to which all persons connected with Ireland were invited. Dr Dillon, a person of some influence in French society, was the son of Arthur Dillon, lieutenant general in the French service, and brother of

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ther gives all his books and what belongs to his library, globes and other things, with the library clock. He does not claim to touch the books of his servant, Louis Dammenvalle and he wishes his word to be believed as he has always been very faithful to him.' He also made provision for a life pension of 100 *livres* per annum to Dammenvalle.

[1] The Latin text of the rector's oration is printed by P. Boyle, *Arch. Hib.* 5, 13–16.

James Dillon, colonel of the Dillon regiment, who was killed with many of his men in the battle of Fontenoy in 1745.[1] Subsequently the College undertook to furnish the Dublin Society with a transcript of the Book of Lecan. Whether this came about is unclear; no such transcript has been identified.[2]

In any event these negotiations were but the prelude to the repatriation of the original manuscript. In the minutes of the Council of the Royal Irish Academy for May 7, 1787 it is recorded that a letter had been received from Col. Vallancey, the well known antiquarian, 'recommending an application from the Academy to the Lombards College in Paris for the Liber Lecanus' and that the Secretary of Council was directed to write to Col. Vallancey, then in Paris, 'to request that he will take such steps as he shall think proper to procure the said book'. On August 6 it was agreed 'that Doctor Ussher be desired to draw up a Latin letter of thanks to the Lombards' College for the Liber Lecanus', and finally on September 10 receipt of the manuscript was formally noted: 'Liber Lecanus presented and thanks ordered to Abbé Kearney of the Irish Semenary [sic] for his gift. N.B. Said book lent to Colonel Vallancey.'[3]

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[1] See Swords, *Hidden church* 25; J. Dulon, *Jacques II Stuart: sa Famille et les Jacobites* (Saint Germain-en-Laye 1897) 88–91. Before his transfer to Narbonne Archbishop Dillon had been successively vicar general of Pontoise, near Paris, bishop of Evreux and archbishop of Toulouse. During the Revolution he withdrew to London, where he died in 1804.

[2] See *Proceedings of the Royal Dublin Society* IX, 162 for the letter addressed to the Dublin Society by the Archbishop of Narbonne, Charles O'Neill, Principal of Collège des Lombards, and Laurence Kelly, Prefect of the Irish Community of the College, and read at the meeting of the Society held on 29 April, 1773; also J. T. Gilbert, *A history of the City of Dublin* (Dublin 1861) III, 223; H. F. Berry, *A History of the Royal Dublin Society* (London 1915) 146–7.

[3] Earlier in RIA MS 24 E 4 (*Vallancey's Green Book*) at L: Manuscripts Vallancy had written: 'This book [the Book of Lecan] was once in the Library

Whatevever the precise agency through which the Book of Lecan was first brought to Paris, it is an interesting fact that its stay there coincided neatly with the period in which the Irish in France were numerically most significant, vocationally most varied and socially most integrated. It went there as part of the rising tide of emigration following the Treaty of Limerick in 1691 — a process not all that different from the way in which many of our early Latin manuscripts found sanctuary in continental monasteries in or around the ninth century — while its return to Ireland narrowly forestalled the drastic decline of the Irish presence in France effected by the Revolution.

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of Trinity College Dublin and is now in the College (Irish) of Lombards at Paris. On application to Father Kelly superior of the College, he was so obliging to have a copy made and transmitted to me ...'

17. The Cathach of Colm Cille

It may be recalled that another priceless manuscript now in the custody of the Royal Irish Academy likewise passed from Ireland to France after the Treaty of Limerick. This is the oldest extant Irish manuscript, the psalter known as the *Cathach* (or battle talisman) of Colm Cille, which was traditionally believed to be in the saint's own hand and has been dated by modern authorities to the late sixth or early seventh century.[1] Daniel O'Donnell, representative of the family recognized by tradition as hereditary owners of the *cumhdach* or shrine (plus its manuscript), brought it with him when he joined the numerous other adherents of the Stuart cause who left Ireland for France after the Treaty. He had the shrine repaired in France in 1723 and provided it with a silver case to protect it from injury. He

[1] T. O'Neill, *The Irish hand* (Dublin 1984) 2. See also R. Ó Floinn: 'The manuscript known as the *Cathach* or 'battler' of Columba bears the unique distinction of being the only extant relic which is contemporary with the saint and was therefore possibly even penned by him ('Insignia Columbae I', in *Studies in the cult of Saint Columba* (ed., C. Bourke, Dublin 1997) 136–61: 153). Elsewhere the same author, while restating the likely date of the manuscript, points out that its connection with Colm Cille is not definitely attested before the thirteenth century (in *Donegal, history and society* (ed., W. Nolan, *et al.*, Templeogue, Dublin 1995) 117–26 (117, 124–6).

himself attained the rank of brigadier-general in the French army and died without male heir in 1735. What subsequently happened to the shrine and manuscript is the subject of somewhat conflicting accounts.

H. J. Lawlor, who published an extended study of the Cathach in the Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy for 1916–17, offers the following summary:

> The cumdach [or shrine] remained in France for more than a century. It was found in 1802 in a 'monastery or college in Paris,' was brought to Ireland by Sir Capel Molyneux, and by him was handed over to his father-in-law, Sir Neal O'Donel, Bart., of Newport, County Mayo [who had been created first baronet in 1780].[1] Ten years later his son, Sir Neal O'Donel — the second baronet — employed Sir William Betham, then assistant to the Ulster King of Arms, to compile a pedigree of the O'Donel family. Sir William borrowed the shrine from Dame Mary O'Donel, to whom it had been bequeathed by her husband, the first Sir Neal, with a view to inserting a de-

[1] J. O'Donovan, *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland, by the Four Masters* (*AFM*) 2nd ed. (Dublin 1856) Appendix, 2397. Raghnall Ó Floinn, 'Insignia Columbae I', p. 119, discusses a tradition recorded in the Ordnance Survey Letters, county Mayo (i, 333–5) that a relic called *Cochall Choluim Chille* 'the cowl of Colmcille' was preserved in Ballycroy in the late eighteenth century by two old men named Clery and Freel. When they left Ballycroy they took the relic ('a box with some gems inserted into its cover') with them and 'no one heard of it nor of anything like it until some years ago Lady O'Donnell got a relic somewhere called the Cathach of Columbkille, but that there is no certainty of its being the same, with the Cochall taken away by the two old men about 60 years before'. If it really was the *Cathach*, Ó Floinn observes, it would imply that the shrine had returned to Ireland before 1802.

> scription of it in the pedigree; and while it was in his custody, in 1813, he performed the 'unlawful' act of opening it. He found, contrary to current belief, that it contained a wooden box, 'very much decayed,' in which were some leaves [fifty-eight consecutive leaves] of a Latin Psalter . . .[1]

The reference to a 'monastery or college in Paris' is intriguing, but it is doubtful whether it can be taken at its face value. James F. Kenney's note on the shrine's period of exile is essentially a resumé of what may for convenience be termed the Newport version, though he has one sentence which suggests an attempt to join two discrepant accounts: 'By his will he [Daniel O'Donel] directed that the relic should be given to the head of the O'Donel family: apparently he left it deposited in a monastery in Paris.'[2] The first part of this sentence may relate to a variant version of how the Cathach came into the possession of Sir Neal O'Donel of Newport, Mayo. It is recounted by George Petrie in a letter to John O'Donovan on 11 June 1838 while the latter was in West Mayo:

> One of the O'Donnells who accompanied James II to France brought it with him, and previously

[1] 'The Cathach of St. Columba', *RIA Proc.* 33 C (1916–17) 241–443 (244). For Betham's own account of how he opened the shrine and revealed the manuscript see his *Irish antiquarian researches* (Dublin 1826) 109–116. His initial treatment of the manuscript is perhaps worth quoting: 'It was so much injured by damp, as to appear almost a solid mass; by steeping it in cold water I was enabled to separate the membranes from each other, and by pressing each separately between blotting paper, and frequently renewing the operation, at length succeeded in restoring, what was not actually decayed, to a legible state.'

[2] Kenney, *The sources for the early history of Ireland* (New York 1929) 630. I have not sought to impose any consistency on the variant forms of the surname 'O'Donnell' found in the sources.

to his death deposited it in an Irish monastery in Flanders with a written order that it should be given up to the chief of the name when applied for. Here it remained for a long period till accident brought an Irish priest, Father Prendergast — Abbot of Cong — to visit this monastery, when he was showed the reliquary and informed of the circumstances connected with its locality there.[1] On his return to Ireland, in a few years afterwards, the Priest recollecting the facts, stated them to Sir Neal O'Donnell who was proprietor of Cong; and Sir Neal wrote to his brother Connell O'Donnell who was then on the continent, to apply for the Cathach in his name as chief of the family. But it was not given up to him till Sir William Betham gave a certificate in right of his office, to establish the justness of Sir Neal's claim.[2] How true this certificate was, you can yourself judge, but thus the Cathach was obtained. Sir William got a Thousand guineas from Sir Neal for his genealogy, which made him Chief of his name, and I may add that the late Dr O'Connor [Rev. Charles O'Conor, grandson of Charles O'Conor of Belanagare and librarian at Stowe to Sir Richard Grenville] wrote Sir W. a sharp letter denying his right to do so as con-

[1] Cf. R. S. Ó Cochláin, ' The 'Cathach' battle book of the O'Donnells', *The Irish Sword* (1968) 157–77 (171): 'Fr. Patrick Prendergast, parish priest and last titular Abbot of Cong learned of its existence while attending a Chapter of the Augustinian Order in Belgium.'

[2] It would appear from this and other evidence that Betham was, at the very least, guilty of considerable equivocation when he stated that the *Cathach* 'was left, by the last of the French branch of the O'Donells,' to Sir Neal O'Donell, Baronet (*Irish antiquarian researches*, 189).

> trary to historical truth and the concurrent tradition of all the Irish who were conversant with the history of the family. The facts relative to the Cathach I have given you as detailed to me by the Revd abbot himself, and Sir William Betham acknowledged to me this truth!.[1]

John O'Donovan's own published comments on the matter are very much in accord with and presumably derive substantially from Petrie's. He notes that Colonel Daniel O'Donnell 'mentioned in his will that it [the *Cathach*] should be given to whoever proved himself to be the head of the O'Donnell family',[2] but he also says that, while Sir Neal O'Donnell successfully pressed his claim, in fact 'Lewis O'Donnell of Ross [in Mayo] was unquestionably senior to Sir Neal.'[3] It is clear that for O'Donovan as well as for Petrie the legitimacy of Sir Neal O'Donnell's acquisition of the *Cathach* — and by implication Betham's role in it — was open to serious question. It was also a matter of some contention between the different branches of the O'Donnell family: O'Donovan mentions that Con O'Donnell of Larkfield, Co. Leitrim, who died in 1825, 'published several let-

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[1] Ordnance Survey Letters Mayo, vol. I, 216–17. This account appears to suggest that it was the second baronet, Sir Neal brother of Connell, who gained possession of the *Cathach*, therefore subsequent to his father's death in 1811. Brigadier O'Donnell's custodianship of the *Cathach* and its appropriation by Sir Neal O'Donnell of Newport are recounted by J. C. O'Callaghan, *History of the Irish brigades in the service of France* (Glasgow 1870) in terms which correspond broadly to Petrie's version.

[2] According to R. S. Ó Cochláin, 'The "Cathach"' 170, no such will has been found among the civil records of Saint Germain-en-Laye or in the Military Archives, Paris. He doubts that one ever existed and suggests that O'Donel delivered his instructions directly to the Order to whom he entrusted the *Cathach*.

[3] J. O'Donovan, *AFM*, Appendix, 2400.

ters in the *Dublin Evening Post*, to prove that his own father was "The O'Donnell", and, therefore, was the true owner of this relic.'[1] In 1843 Sir Richard Annesley O'Donel, fourth baronet, deposited the *Cathach* in the Royal Irish Academy, and in 1929 the Academy deposited the shrine containing the manuscript in the National Museum of Ireland. The manuscript itself, having suffered and miraculously survived the ravages of time and occasional gross misuse, was sent to the British Museum for urgent repair in 1920. A half-century later it was decided to complete the work of conservation: the *Cathach* was entrusted to the distinguished English craftsman Roger Powell in March 1980 and it finally returned to the Academy, immaculately restored, in February 1982.

In the context of the present essay the one thing about which there is general agreement is that Colonel O'Donnell brought the *Cathach* to France after the Treaty of Limerick in 1691. Subsequently its fortunes become part of the intricate web of history linking Ireland and France between the late seventeenth and the early nineteenth centuries. The story of its long sojourn in a 'monastery or college in Paris' after O'Donnell's death until its recovery in 1802 appears to be more figment than fact, designed to obscure the actual circumstances in which Sir Neal O'Donel came to acquire the shrine. The testimony given by Petrie is not only more disinterested but also more objectively convincing and one cannot but accept his statement that O'Donnell entrusted the *Cathach* to the custody of 'an Irish monastery in Flanders'. He does not name the monastery, but Professor Michael Herity has recently argued that it was in fact the convent of the Irish Benedictine nuns at Ypres/Ieper in Flanders (modern

[1] O'Donovan, *AFM*, 2400.

Belgium), which appears to have been one of the few religious foundations to survive the suppressions of the Emperor Joseph II and the French Revolution.[1] Its community had close associations with the royal court at Saint Germain-en-Laye and was accorded special favour and occasional financial support by James III and Mary of Modena, the Dowager Queen,[2] which may have been a factor in Daniel O'Donnell's decision to leave the shrine in their custody.[3] Professor Herity suggests that it is likely he became acquainted with the convent while serving in the army of Flanders between 1707 and 1712, and equally likely that, many years later, Fr Patrick Prendergast also visited there while studying at the seminary of St Omer, some fifty kilometres from Ypres.[4] The presumption is that it was only

[1] M. Herity, 'The return of the Cathach to Ireland: conflicting accounts of the repatriation of the Cathach from the continent', in *Seanchas: studies in early and medieval Irish archaeology, history and literature in honour of Francis J. Byrne* (ed., A. P. Smyth (Dublin 1999)) 454–64; his article deals with the several relevant sources in greater detail than is appropriate in the present context and should be consulted by those particularly interested in the later history of the *Cathach*. I am indebted to Professor Herity for permitting me to use an earlier version of his paper while revising my own initial discussion of the *Cathach*'s sojourn abroad.

[2] J. G. Simms, 'The Irish on the continent, 1691–1800', 646.

[3] Ó Cochláin, 'The Cathach' 171, finds it a problem that Colonel O'Donnell should have deposited the shrine in Flanders while he himself was resident near Paris. He accepts Fr Prendergast's role in the proceedings, but cannot see why the shrine should ever have gone to Belgium and tends therefore to the view that it remained in Paris throughout: 'While the Cathach was probably in Paris, news of its being there possibly reached him [Fr Prendergast] in Belgium and he having returned from that country led to the belief that it was also there.' All things considered, it is hardly a compelling explanation.

[4] Fr Prendergast was born in 1741, studied as a seminarian at St Omer and graduated as Bachelor in canon and civil law at the University of Paris in 1783 (Brockliss and Ferté, typescript list, RIA, no. 1177.

when Fr Prendergast was appointed parish priest of Cong in 1795 that Sir Neal O'Donel of Newport learned of the whereabouts of the *Cathach*, and that subsequently Sir Capel Molyneux, son-in-law of Sir Neal, did 'find' the shrine during the short peace following the Treaty of Amiens, but at Ypres in Flanders, not in France as Sir William Betham and the O'Donels of Newport would have others believe.[1]

This reading of the evidence suggests that Colonel Daniel O'Donnell handed the *Cathach* into the care of the community at Ypres at some time between 1723, when he had the shrine refurbished, and the time of his death in 1735. This prompts a peripheral question, one which is perhaps now impossible of solution. O'Donnell was assigned to the Irish Regiment of the Marine following his arrival in France in 1692, and subsequently he served at different periods in the Armies of Germany (twice), of the Meuse, of Italy, of Flanders, before retiring in 1719 to St Germain-en-Laye near Paris.[2] Where, one might ask, did he keep the *Cathach* shrine during these years so as to ensure its security? Given that the Betham-Newport version of events, though counterfeit as a whole, is patently not fictitious in all its parts, is it just possible that it exploited for its own ends a genuine reminiscence that Daniel O'Donnell had indeed lodged the shrine in a 'monastery or college in Paris' for safe-keeping while pursuing his army career? If such were indeed true, one might then suppose that his later decision to transfer the *Cathach* to the convent at Ypres was influenced in the first place by his awareness in retirement of the need to ensure that it passed safely to his legitimate successor as Chief of the family, and secondly by his close attachment to the royal court of Saint

[1] See Herity, ibid., especially 462–3.
[2] M. Herity, ibid., 454; J. C. O'Callaghan, *History of the Irish brigades in the service of France*, 113.

Germain-en-Laye where he could not but be conscious of the royal couple's special esteem and affection for the nuns of Ypres.[1] In the absence of further testimony, however, such a squaring of the circle must remain quite speculative.

[1] Their community had moved to Dublin in 1689 at the invitation of James II, but they returned to Ypres after his defeat and were re-established there with the help of Mary of Modena, the king of France and the pope (J. G. Simms, 'The Irish on the continent, 1691–1800', 629–56 (646)).

Epilogue

Undoubtedly a more sustained and more fully documented enquiry than I have been able to attempt at this time will throw new light on the various topics touched upon in this brief survey of the associations of the Irish language and Irish studies with Paris and more especially with the Irish College there. But it should be clear from even this preliminary survey how important a role the Paris college (as indeed the other Irish colleges in France) played during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in recreating the old continental dimension to Irish thought and experience while at the same time fostering the study of the Irish language and its related traditions. This is not to suggest that interest in Irish ended with the Revolution. While I have not been able to compile a list of those who taught the language during the nineteenth century, there are a few relevant names which come to the fore about mid-century. For instance Dr Thomas McHale, nephew of the famous John McHale, archbishop of Tuam, was appointed Professor of Scripture and Canon Law in 1849, and Dr Michael (later Cardinal) Logue, became Professor of Dogmatic Theology in 1866, and, according to Patrick Boyle, himself Rector of the college from 1889 onward, both of them also taught Irish

there 'after 1850'.[1]

It is noteworthy that Fr Boyle omits to mention here another cleric of some renown in his own time who also taught Irish in the college in this mid-century period. When Fr Patrick Lavelle was appointed Professor of Philosophy in 1854 the establishment was already passing through one of the more difficult phases of its history. Poor management within and the contagion of political ferment from without combined to create an atmosphere of turbulence and disaffection among the student body which in turn led to frustration and dissension among the members of the hierarchy at home. Dr John Miley, who was appointed rector in 1850, was not equipped to control the situation and frequently found himself sorely at odds not only with elements of his own staff and students but also with the board of bishops in Ireland; and still worse was to follow.

Patrick Lavelle, who was reputed to be one of the most able students of his time in Maynooth, was also notoriously impulsive, hot-tempered and stubborn,[2] and from the outset his relations with the rector were marked by a mutual unremitting antagonism that threatened to compromise the good standing of the college. This reached its dramatic culmination when, in 1858, he and a colleague, Fr John Rice, were refused re-entry to the building by Miley's order and were subsequently expelled from the country by the French authorities at the rector's request. For the college itself the main consequence of these few years of mismanagement and unrest was that it was transferred into the charge of the Vincentian order in 1858. For Fr Lavelle, however, it was but the prelude to a new lease of life and a new role more suited

[1] P. Boyle, 'The Irish College', 210.
[2] See for example E. D'Alton, *History of the archdiocese of Tuam* (Dublin 1928) 69–73.

to his many undoubted talents. Appointed parish priest of Partry, Co. Mayo, by Archbishop McHale, he carried on a tireless campaign to oppose the excesses of landlordism and protect his people against the evil of arbitrary eviction. In doing so, he did not conceal his sympathy with the aims and ideology of Fenianism, drawing upon himself the sharp censure of most of the Irish hierarchy and occasionally of Rome; but, shielded by the redoubtable John McHale, he carried his campaign throughout Ireland and to the United States, thereby assuring himself a place of some significance in the history of the Irish Church and Irish society during the nineteenth century.[1]

In the present context it is of interest to note that it was Lavelle himself who, at the beginning of the academic year 1855–56, proposed that he should teach the Irish language to students from the Irish-speaking dioceses for at least two hours a week on such terms as might be decided by the board of the Irish bishops responsible for the affairs of the College; this was in addition to his duties as Professor of Philosophy.[2] The proposal was accepted by the board and the additional salary fixed at 400 FF per annum. In the event, as we have seen, this arrangement was to be short-lived. It

[1] See G. Moran, *A radical priest in Mayo. Fr Patrick Lavelle: the rise and fall of an Irish nationalist, 1825–86* (Dublin 1994), esp. ch. 2; F. Ó Fearghail, 'A stormy decade in the Irish College, Paris, 1849–59', in *The Irish-French connection 1578–1978* (ed. L. Swords, Paris 1978) 108–118; T. Ó Fiaich, ' "The patriot priest of Partry" Patrick Lavelle: 1825–1886', *Journal of the Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc.* 35 (1976) 129–48; E. Larkin, *The consolidation of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, 1860–1870* (Chapel Hill and London 1987) 237–74 *et passim*. The events of Dr Miley's troubled rectorship and his skirmishes with Patrick Lavelle are discussed in detail by G. Moran, 'John Miley and the crisis at the Irish College, Paris, in the 1850s', *Archivium Hibernicum* 50 (1996) 113–26.

[2] Moran, *A radical priest*, 8; Ó Fiaich, ' "The patriot priest of Partry" Patrick Lavelle: 1825–1886', 132.

is not clear from Fr Boyle's account when exactly Dr Thomas McHale taught Irish in the College, but presumably it was after Lavelle's departure in 1858; Dr Michael Logue's contribution could not have come before the late sixties.

Meanwhile, despite the prominence accorded the distractions of these years in contemporary records, the academic activities of the College continued without interruption. One interesting sidelight on this is the publication in Dublin in 1867 of John H. Molloy's *A Grammar of the Irish Language*, in which the author addresses his preface as from 'Paris, *June*, 1867'. He himself was a native of the parish of Cummer in Co. Galway (*fad béice (or an taobh ó dheas) ó shean teampull an chumair*) and based his grammar largely on his own dialect. However he also mentions (on p. 157) eighteen of his fellow-students from Munster and Ulster, but mainly from Munster, who provided him with dialect features cited in the subsequent section of the grammar. This exercise evidently took place some years before the publication of the book, for he remarks that most of these informants were by now priests (*Tá a mbunáite n-a sagart* [sic] *a-nis*). Professor Tomás de Bhaldraithe has remarked on the use Molloy made of the human dialect resource available to him in the College, and at a time when the linguistic term 'dialectology' had not yet come into being.[1] T. F. O'Rahilly, while noting one of the more obvious defects of Molloy's work, was also struck by its innovational approach:

> J. H. Molloy, a native of the parish of Cummer, near Tuam, is worthy of special mention as being the author of the first Grammar of Irish (1867) based for the most part on the language of the

[1] T. de Bhaldraithe, 'Foclóir Uí Bheaglaoich', in *Dán do Oide: essays in memory of Conn R. Ó Cléirigh*, 21–37 (30).

> people. It was, however, a weakness of his to regard any deviation from the Irish of his native district as 'incorrect', and indeed he appears to have been unaware that, but a few miles away, in other districts of his native county, a number of such deviations were to be found. While he was a student in the Irish College in Paris he made a praiseworthy attempt to note down the dialect characteristics of a number of his fellow-students (mostly from Munster), and he devotes a special chapter to the results of this investigation. This part of his book makes us think of the splendid work, on a much more extensive scale, that might have been done in Maynooth College at any time within fifty years of its foundation, if only there had been an earlier O'Growney[1] or two on its staff.[2]

It would be interesting to know in what precise circumstances Molloy carried out his linguistic enquiries at the Irish College, and in this regard his dedication is suggestive rather than informative: 'To the Rev. Patrick J. MacKenna, C. M., Professor of the Celtic [= Irish] language, etc., at the Irish

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[1] Fr Eugene O'Growney (1863–1899) was one of the leading figures of the Irish language revival movement towards the end of the nineteenth century. He was appointed Professor of Irish in Maynooth College in 1891 and his *Simple lessons in Irish* became the favourite handbook of thousands of students of the language. Incidentally, it has been reported that O'Growneys abiding interest in the Irish language was first awakened when he was shown a copy of Andrew Donlevy's Cathechism (pp 115–119 above) by a neighbour in Co. Meath (M. Ní Chonmhidhe, 'An tAthair Eoghan Ó Gramhnaigh', *Irisleabhar Mhaigh Nuad* (1963) 84–92 (85, 92).

[2] T. F. O'Rahilly, *Irish dialects past and present* (Dublin [1932] 2nd ed. 1972) 13–14.

College, Paris, in token of his invaluable service to the author.'[1] That the Irish language continued to have a role in the college curriculum seems clear, but inevitably its status among the staff and student community reflected its steady decline at home in Ireland. Of course students for the priesthood continued to repair to Paris to pursue their studies and return as priests to serve their home dioceses, and no doubt future research in diocesan and other archives will produce a rich yield of relevant information on some of the individuals in question. For example Fr Mícheál Ó Mainín in a short survey of the priests who served in the parish of Baile an Fheirtéaraigh notes that several of them in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were ordained in France and a number of them studied in Paris or, more specifically, at the Irish College. One of the latter was Pádraig Ó Mongáin, who was parish priest in Baile an Fheirtéaraigh from 1854 to 1870 in the aftermath of the Great Famine. It was he who established the first Catholic school on the Blasket Island in 1864, and among its first pupils was Tomás Ó Criomhthain (1856–1937), author of *An tOileánach* 'The Islandman'.[2]

In a still later phase, indeed the final phase, of Collège des Irlandais's history as a clerical seminary, one of the most notable names linked to it was that of Mgr Pádraig de Brún

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[1] Molloy's use of 'Celtic' as a synonym for 'Irish' was not uncommon in this period. His contemporary, Fr C. P. Meehan, *The rise and fall of the Irish Franciscan monasteries and memoirs of the Irish hierarchy in the seventeenth century* (Dublin 1872) 165, uses it in reference to Thomas Dease, second superior of the Irish college in Paris: 'Having completed his studies at home, where he earned a reputation as a poet in the Celtic tongue, and made himself thoroughly master of classical literature, he was ordained priest, and then proceeded to Paris.'

[2] M. Ó Mainín, 'Na sagairt agus a mbeatha i bparóiste an Fheirtéaraigh', *Céad bliain: 1871–1971* (eag. M. Ó Cíosáin, Baile an Fheirtéaraigh 1973) 1–35.

(1889–1960), a man of whom it could be said that, more than most, he embodied in his own career and achievement the deep sense of Ireland's traditional involvement in the cultural diversity of mainland Europe. The College was his *foyer* when he went to Paris in November 1910 to study mathematics and prepare to present for the Doctorat-ès-Sciences at the University of Paris. While attending lectures in mathematics at the University he also pursued the course of divinity studies at the College, where he is recorded as a prize-winner in the several component subjects of the course during his third year. On completing his studies and acquiring his doctorate he returned to Dublin where he was ordained on 20 September 1913 in the Pro-Cathedral, before leaving for the University of Göttingen where he continued his mathematical studies for the following year.[1]

It was presumably during those three years in Paris that Pádraig de Brún developed the close empathy with French literature and learning that was to last throughout his life. Mathematician and scholar at large, priest, poet, Francophile, administrator, translator of Racine and Corneille into Irish along with Homer, Sophocles, Euripides and Dante, Pádraig de Brún was in a very real sense a modern Renaissance man, and one of whom it might be said that his twin sources of intellectual comfort and inspiration were Paris, France and Dún Chaoin, west Kerry. In his professional life Mgr de Brún was of course, among other things, President of University College Galway, Chairman of the Arts Council of Ireland, and first Chairman of the Council of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.

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[1] J. N. Flavin, 'Monsignor Pádraig de Brún (1889–1960)', in *Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, School of Theoretical Physics: 50 year report* (1990) 10–29; also D. Breathnach and M. Ní Mhurchú, *1882–1982: Beathaisnéis IV* (Baile Átha Cliath 1994) 23–6.

Yet, however individuals like Pádraig Ó Mongáin and Pádraig de Brún contributed in their various capacities to the shaping of their own society, local or national, and however they may have been influenced in doing so by their experience of the collegiate community in Paris, the fact is that by their life-time that community no longer constituted a living extension of vernacular literary and scholarly activity at home as in many respects it had done during the eighteenth century. Henceforth Irish studies in Paris, in so far as they related to the vernacular language, literature and tradition, were to figure as part of the new comparative discipline of Celtic studies that came to academic prominence on the Continent in the second half of the nineteenth century, and within a couple of decades of men like Molloy, Lavelle, MacKenna, McHale and Logue came the beginning of a long and still unbroken catalogue of distinguished French Celticists, many of whom applied themselves with particular dedication to the study of the Irish language and culture, present and past: Henry d'Arbois de Jubainville (1827–1910), Henri Gaidoz (1842–1932), Joseph Loth (1847–1934), Georges Dottin (1863–1928), Joseph Vendryes (1875–1960), Marie-Louise Sjoestedt (1900–1940), Édouard Bachellery (1907–1988), Georges Dumézil (1898–1986), Léon Fleuriot (1923–1987), Pierre-Yves Lambert (1949-).

Nowadays, however, when decisions on cultural matters may sometimes depend as much on politico-administrative as on intellectual priorities, the future of Irish studies in Paris (and in France) may in the end be decided largely by factors other than their intrinsic value. In this regard it may be of interest to note that the following provision was included in Article 1 of the Cultural Agreement between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the French Republic which came into force in December 1967:

> ... Similarly, the Government of the French Republic shall encourage the study of early, middle and modern Irish in universities or establishments of higher studies in France.

At the beginning of the nineteen-eighties the present writer presented a memorandum to the Governing Board of the School of Celtic Studies of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies pointing out that this undertaking had never been implemented and suggesting that we raise the matter with the Department of Foreign Affairs. Subsequently I accompanied the then Director of the School, Professor Brian Ó Cuív, to a meeting with the Minister of State at the Department, who was at that time Mr David Andrews. We had a very helpful discussion and as a result the Minister and his officials arranged for the matter to be included as first item on the agenda of the next meeting of the Commission Mixte, the joint-committee responsible for overseeing the working of the Agreement. Subsequently, in May 1982, at the invitation of the French Ministère de l'Education Nationale, I submitted to them a memorandum showing that provisions for studies relating to the Irish language had not improved since the Cultural Agreement, that they had in fact marginally disimproved. In view of the economic constraints of the time the proposals I set out in this document were expressed in very modest terms. With specific reference to Paris the emphasis was on the necessity to supplement the non-curricular seminar courses at the École Pratique des Hautes Études by introducing Irish studies and especially the teaching of modern Irish to the third-level *cursus* at one or other of the several universities, possibly in the context of Linguistics or Anglo-Irish studies or Modern Literature.

The officials in the International Relations section of the French Ministry of Education accepted the facts as presented and acknowledged that there was room for improvement; their problem, they claimed, was the then familiar one of a government embargo on new appointments, but they promised to study 'les moyens d'améliorer les structures existantes'. Eighteen years on it may be possible to revisit this question in a somewhat different setting. The situation of Collège des Irlandais has been transformed in the meantime and there is now the prospect, as resources and facilities become available, of realizing the original objectives of the Irish foundation by recreating its cultural and educational role in a way that will reflect the rich social and artistic diversity of modern Ireland together with the cultural and intellectual heritage of its past. If, as one hopes, the Irish language and the cultural context which shaped it and was shaped by it becomes a meaningful component of that programme, it would not seem unreasonable once more to test the actual as well as the aspirational value of the Cultural Agreement. Is it unrealistic for example to envisage an arrangement by which the Université de Paris and the Collège des Irlandais would cooperate in formulating a creative and attractive course of lectures and seminars on the Irish language and Irish cultural tradition as part of a broader programme of Irish studies? Whatever the prospects for such a collaborative initiative, and there are many and various ways in which it might be realized, one can now reflect with satisfaction and a sense of expectation that, after periods of indifference, uncertainty and danger, the constitutional status of the College is now more assured and its socio-cultural potential more unconstricted than at any time since the French Revolution.

In 1870, on the outbreak of the Franco-German war, the

teaching staff and students of the Irish College withdrew to Ireland when, in common with other foreign nationals, they were ordered to leave Paris. However, the French administrator of the *Fondations Irlandaises*, Charles Ouin-la-Croix, canon of St Denis, who remained in Paris, spared no effort to protect the rights and property of the College. In two long letters addressed to the Irish in their temporary exile, dated 20 February 1871 and 30 May 1871, he gives a graphic account of the havoc and devastation that afflicted Paris and the environs of the College during the Prussian siege of the city and the depredation and repression that followed during the brief reign of the Paris Commune when the College came close to sharing the fate of a number of public buildings the Communards set fire to before they were overwhelmed by Government forces. Drawing inspiration from the resourcefulness of his predecessors during the turmoil of the Revolution he looks towards the future with hope and confidence:

> *Les labeurs de ces temps-ci seront payés par les fruits d'un autre âge: car je crois que ce noble Collège, vieux déjà de trois cents ans, verra encore bien d'autres centaines d'années et qu'il les traversera toutes avec un égal bonheur. On a droit de lui appliquer la devise même de Paris: il pourra être agité par la tempête, mais il ne sombrera jamais:* Fluctuat nec mergitur.'[1]
>
> 'The labours of our own time will be rewarded by the gains of another era: for I believe that this noble College, already three hundred years old, will see many more centuries and will live through them no less successfully. One

[1] B. Ó Doibhlin, 'The siege of Paris seen from Collège des Irlandais', in *The Irish-French Connection 1578/1978* (ed. L. Swords, Paris 1978) 119–29 (126).

> might well apply to it the motto of the city of Paris itself: it may be buffeted by storms, but it will never be submerged. *Fluctuat nec mergitur.*

Circumstances have changed radically during the intervening years. Ireland's historical involvement with mainland Europe, weakened in the aftermath of the French Revolution, has been considerably restored in recent years, if in a different guise, by its active participation in the European Union, while the traditional role of Collège des Irlandais, sole survivor of the old network of Irish colleges in France, has been altered inexorably by the gradual reorientation of the Catholic Church in Ireland during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In one essential, however, the function of the College remains unchanged: from the outset its primary commitment has been educational and cultural, and this twin objective is still enunciated clearly in the Statutes of its present governing body, La Fondation Irlandaise, wherein the function and status of the College is formally underwritten by the two sovereign governments. Its future now secure, this seems a propitious time to reaffirm Canon Ouin-La-Croix's prediction for Collège des Irlandais as it faces into a new millennium ready to enhance and expand its traditional role as a centre of cultural and social communication between Ireland and Europe, and more immediately between Ireland and France, the spiritual and intellectual refuge of so many of its exiles in times past.

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