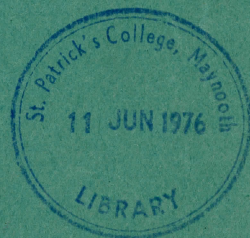


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Two contemporary historians of the
confederation of Kilkenny: John Lynch
and Richard O'Ferrall

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Two contemporary historians of the confederation of Kilkenny: John Lynch and Richard O'Ferrall

I

In the decade of the 1650's, many of the Irish confederate leaders, lay and ecclesiastical, found themselves exiles in Europe. In exile, they naturally turned again to the disputes which had disrupted the confederation and had helped to make Cromwell's campaign easier than it might otherwise have been. These disputes grew more and more bitter in the disappointment of defeat; and no matter what point they started from, they had a way of returning to the censures which the papal nuncio, Rinuccini, had pronounced on 27 May 1648. These censures had divided the confederation beyond hope of reunion; even after ten years, they were still regarded by one party as having been justly inflicted, necessary for the preservation of the Catholic religion, while the other considered them to have been unjust and invalid, and the real cause of the subsequent overthrow of the confederation.¹

Since 1648, each party had been seeking a favourable decision in Rome. This agitation had begun in the autumn of 1648, when John Rowe, a Carmelite, had been sent to Rome to prosecute the appeal against the censures which had been lodged by the supreme council of the confederation in June. Some months later, he was followed there by two representatives of the nuncio, Joseph Arcamoni, his confessor, and Richard O'Ferrall, O.F.M. CAP. It soon became clear that the point at issue was whether general absolution *ad cautelam* should be given, or whether those who had been affected by the censures should be required to petition and receive absolution individually.

¹ For the controversial circumstances in which the censures were invoked, see my article, 'Rinuccini's censure of 27 May 1648', in *Ir. Theol. Quart.*, xviii. 322-37 (October 1951).

This latter course of action implied that the censures had been valid and that Rinuccini had acted rightly in imposing them, while the former gave a very strong presumption that they had been invalid, and in practice condemned his action. The case for Rinuccini was in many ways the easier to sustain. Innocent X was by nature slow to take decisions, and although he may have doubted the prudence of the censures, he naturally inclined to support the action taken by his subordinate. In addition, Richard O'Ferrall proved himself a much more capable advocate than John Rowe, while Cromwell's rapid successes in Ireland further weakened the prestige of Rinuccini's opponents, and could be appealed to as striking confirmation of how right the nuncio had been. It seemed that the appeal against the censures had little hope of success.

The hope increased, however, when Alexander VII became pope in 1655. The new pope was Fabio Chigi, who had been nuncio at Cologne during the negotiations leading up to the peace of Westphalia. He had refrained from the use of ecclesiastical censures on that occasion, and he considered that he had at least been more prudent than Rinuccini had been in rather similar circumstances in Ireland.² Largely, it seems, because of the influence of Richard O'Ferrall, the newly-aroused hopes of a reversal of policy were disappointed when a papal brief of 27 August 1655 empowered four Irish bishops to grant absolution, as before, in individual cases.³ This document, though introducing no change in practice, was publicized by Rinuccini's supporters as a decision in their favour, as in fact it was. It might have been better if they had been less obviously triumphant, for their opponents were stung into a violent attack on the brief, claiming it had been obtained by fraud and misrepresentation. Resentment was particularly strong among the many Irish in Brittany. Their dissatisfaction resulted in Oliver Walsh, a Carmelite friar, being sent to Rome. He brought with him a letter of recommendation from the archbishop of Tuam and the bishops of Ferns, Killala and Ardagh, and had instructions to seek a general absolution. On his arrival, the old arguments for and against the censures sprang to life again. However, the issue seems to have been decided less by the arguments at Rome than by the collapse of Walsh's

² *Comment. Rinucc.*, v. 277.

³ *Ibid.*, v. 246 ff.

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³ Ibid., v. 246 ff.

support in Brittany. The archbishop of Tuam and the bishop of Killala asked for absolution and received it; the bishop of Ferns departed to Compostella. Walsh must have felt that his task was too great, and in 1658 he left Rome.⁴

When this stage of the controversy was coming to an end, Richard O'Ferrall, who had again taken a leading part, drew up a memorandum, addressed to the congregation *de propaganda fide*, which was to be the cause of much further argument.⁵ When an official of the congregation disclosed its contents to his opponents, and it proved to be the most sweeping attack which had yet been made on them, there was an immediate and angry reaction. O'Ferrall found that he had provoked more enemies than he might have anticipated. Ultimately, it led to his losing his influence with the pope, and to his virtual banishment from Rome.⁶ It caused him trouble in his own order, where he seems to have made a number of enemies;⁷ King Charles II protested against the treasonable language the document contained;⁸ in Rome, Oliver Plunkett flew to the defence of his kinsman, the bishop of Ardagh, who had also been attacked.⁹ All over Europe O'Ferrall's memorandum was the subject of angry discussion in Irish circles. In at least two cases formal replies to it were written. By far the more detailed of these was that written by John Lynch, the archdeacon of Tuam, which appeared in print under the title *Alithinologia*.¹⁰

⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, v. 244-77.

⁵ 'Ad Sacram Congregationem de Propaganda Fide. Modus et authores eversionis Catholicae religionis et regni Iberniae et nonnulla remedia ad conservandum ibi utriusque reliquias. 5 Martii 1658.'

⁶ *Comment. Rinucc.*, v. 297 ff.

⁷ *Ibid.*, v. 301 ff., 422 ff.

⁸ *Ibid.*, v. 288.

⁹ *Ibid.*, v. 289 ff.

¹⁰ The other was by Nicholas French, bishop of Ferns. It was never printed. A copy, entitled 'Apologia pro se et aliis catholicis', is to be found in T.C.D. MS 652 (F.4.20), 2. Lynch knew of it at least in 1667. Cf. *Alithinologiae supplementum*, p. 94. Cf. also Peter Walsh, *Irish remonstrance, first treatise*, pp. 13 f.: 'the contents of which book [O'Ferrall's memorandum] did so estrange Ferns that he sent to London several papers and books of his own study written against that book, though not yet come to public view from the print. As Father John Lynch, a priest of Galway at St Malos, hath already published his *Alithinologia* dedicated to the same Congregation *de propaganda* against it'.

II

The *Alithinologia* contains almost all that John Lynch has to say concerning the history of the confederation of Kilkenny, and though it runs to over three hundred and fifty printed pages (*Alithinologia*, St Malo, 1664, pp. 144; *Alithinologiae supplementum*, St Malo, 1667, pp. 228), it has not received the attention it merits. It is the only one of his writings which is not available in a modern edition,¹¹ and is in consequence a very rare work, to be found only in the largest libraries. Richard O'Ferrall's memorandum is on a much more modest scale, as it runs to only about six pages. This brief document is nevertheless important in that it appears to contain in germ the argument of the *Commentarius Rinuccinianus*. A comparison between the two suggests very strongly that Richard O'Ferrall was responsible for the general plan of the *Commentarius*, and that the plan has taken fairly definite shape in his mind in 1658. The greater moderation which is to be found in the *Commentarius* is due partly to its greater scale, but partly also to the influence of Robert O'Connell, who was his assistant for two years, and who completed the work after O'Ferrall died in 1663.

A comparison of the views expressed in the controversy between John Lynch and Richard O'Ferrall is of great importance for an understanding of the tensions which were so marked in the confederation of Kilkenny. In this comparison, the personality and background of the two men must be weighed almost equally with what they actually wrote. In the case of Richard O'Ferrall, we are fortunate because his friend and co-worker, Robert O'Connell, who must have known him very intimately, has left us a most interesting sketch of his life and character. Richard O'Ferrall, he tells us, was of the noble family of Annaly, which had lost all its possessions in the plantation of James I.¹² In 1630 he had gone to the Low

¹¹ *Cambrensis eversus*, ed. Rev. Matthew Kelly (3 vols, Dublin, Ir. Arch. & Celt. Soc., 1848-52); *Pii Antistitis icon*, ed. Rev. C. P. Meehan (Dublin, Duffy, 1848; facsimile edition, Dublin, Ir. MSS Comm., 1952); *De praesulibus Hiberniae*, ed. Rev. J. F. O'Doherty (2 vols, Dublin, Ir. MSS. Comm., 1944).

¹² *Comment. Rinucc.*, v. 418: 'nobilissima familia natus'; *ibid.*, pp. 430-1: 'familia citra controversiam antiquissima et nobilissima . . . parentibus nobilissimis licet haereticorum persecutione patrimonio spoliatis'.

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Countries under the tutelage of Francis Nugent, founder of the Irish Capuchins. Here he studied at Lille and Douai, and received the habit of the order at the Irish Capuchin convent of Charleville in 1634. Ten years later he returned to Ireland, and, after a short visit to his family, he was sent to Dublin to assist Barnabas Barnwall, a fellow-Capuchin. Like so many ecclesiastics of the time, he gradually became involved in the politics of the confederation. The nuncio relied on him so much that, as has been seen, he sent him to Rome as Arcamoni's companion in 1648. Here he proved himself a very capable advocate, but the memorandum of 1658 was the turning point in his fortunes. The many enemies he had made took full advantage of his indiscretions. To add to his worries, his health began to fail, and for the remaining five years of his life he was an ailing man. In 1658 he settled in Florence, where, with the assistance of Robert O'Connell, he began another task which the nuncio had entrusted to him—the compilation of the history of Rinuccini's mission to Ireland. The task was more than he was able to undertake, and he died at Florence while it was still unfinished, on 13 August 1663.¹³

'It is fair to say that, while the faith was his motive in supporting the nuncio, he was also concerned with the interests of the O'Ferralls and of the Old Irish', comments Robert O'Connell.¹⁴ It is indeed very obvious that the Capuchin habit had not lessened his attachment to his family and his burning conviction of their wrongs; and, as events developed in Ireland to the point where all was lost in 1652, he grew more convinced that the disaster was due to the half-hearted Catholicism and political and worldly interests of the Anglo-Irish. Their efforts to make the best of both worlds had lost everything, and had dragged down the Old Irish in a common ruin. The ten years of controversy in Rome only hardened his outlook and simplified it further, and in the memorandum of 1658 he commits himself to it without reservation.

III

First, however, it is necessary to prove that the text of the memorandum as we have it is substantially as Richard O'Ferrall

¹³ *Comment. Rinucc.*, v. 418–31.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 420.

wrote it. On at least two occasions, a search for the original has been made in the archives of Propaganda, but it cannot be found.¹⁵ Richard O'Ferrall suspected that his own manuscript had been handed over to his enemies.¹⁶ Copies are almost as elusive as the original. Fr Stanislaus Kavanagh prints as an appendix to *Commentarius Rinuccinianus* a copy which has been preserved in the British Museum.¹⁷ The text of any copy is suspect because of O'Ferrall's complaints that his enemies were expanding and distorting what he had written. In particular, he claims that his document grew, in a very brief time, from six leaves to twelve.¹⁸ The British Museum manuscript contains nine large leaves.

On the other hand, a number of considerations suggest that the British Museum copy is substantially what he wrote. Attention has been called already to the similarity in general plan with the *Commentarius*. This similarity is so striking that the only possible conclusion seems to be that the same person is responsible for both. As has been seen, the general plan of the *Commentarius* may with reasonable certainty be attributed to Richard O'Ferrall, for Robert O'Connell was only his assistant, and in addition he did not arrive in Florence until 1661, when O'Ferrall had already been working for three years.

O'Connell's influence was certainly in the direction of moderation, and his prudent and cautious mind was convinced that O'Ferrall's memorandum exaggerated on some points. On one point of importance, the charge that the bishops of Ferns, Ardagh and Dromore, together with Robert Nugent, S.J., and Nicholas Plunkett, betrayed secrets entrusted to them by the nuncio, he pressed O'Ferrall for the source of his information, and did not, he tells us, get satisfaction.¹⁹ He himself advanced the hypothesis that this charge may have been based on nothing more specific than the fact that the nuncio had referred to them as traitors.

The most cogent argument is, however, that provided by Lynch's text. When he was composing the *Alithinologia*

¹⁵ Cf. McNeill, *Publications of Irish interest published by Irish authors on the continent of Europe prior to the eighteenth century*, pp. 37-8, and Kavanagh, in *Comment. Rinucc.*, v. 485.

¹⁶ *Comment. Rinucc.*, v. 299.

¹⁸ *Comment. Rinucc.*, v. 297.

¹⁷ Add. MS 33744.

¹⁹ *Comment. Rinucc.*, v. 429.

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(c. 1660) he had before him only excerpts from O'Ferrall's memorandum, but later, apparently in 1666, he received a copy of the full text.²⁰ In both *Alithinologia* and *Alithinologiae supplementum* he quotes very extensively from O'Ferrall, and in no case have I been able to discover more than unimportant verbal divergencies between his text and that of British Museum Add. MS 33744.

It seems that it may be taken as certain that anyone interested in altering the document had promising material to work on. It also seems reasonable to conclude, pending the possible discovery of the lost original, that the text we have may be accepted as representing substantially what O'Ferrall wrote in 1658.

IV

The document which aroused such resentment may be described as Richard O'Ferrall's summary of the history of Ireland, with special reference to the confederation of Kilkenny. He begins by drawing a sharp distinction between the diverse elements of the population. First there are the native Irish, ruled over from time immemorial by their ancient nobility. Then various peoples came, and settled as traders in the towns. These, together with the Norman and Welsh colonists, have built their fortunes by acting as the agents of the English in the conquest of the native race. Even when the third group arrived, the heretics of the plantations, the Anglo-Irish, as they call themselves, though retaining the Catholic religion, made common cause with them against the Old-Irish.

These latter have never temporized in their loyalty to the church. Henry II came to 'reform' them; though they were conscious of no need of reform, they nevertheless received him in accordance with the terms of the papal bull. Whatever authenticity or authority that bull possessed, the kings of England have forfeited their rights by their subsequent behaviour, especially since they lapsed into heresy, since when they have tried by every means to force heresy on the Irish also. In this they were assisted by the Anglo-Irish who, under the pretext of the duty of loyalty, agreed to the passing of laws

²⁰ *Alithinologiae supplementum*: Admonitio ad lectorem.



against the Catholic religion, and even fought for a heretical ruler against the efforts of the Catholics.

By these means the Catholic cause was defeated in the reign of Elizabeth. The struggle had now become one of endurance, until new hope came when heresy turned against the monarchy. The Old-Irish seized the opportunity to attempt the restoration of the Catholic religion. They invited the help of the Anglo-Irish, who, however, refused, and instead offered their services to the puritans. Only when this offer had been insultingly rejected did they join the Catholic cause.

They proved its destruction. Their selfish interests led them to prefer the friendship of heretics to the triumph of the faith. They were continually plotting to regain the friendship of the heretics, always, in the midst of victories, working for a peace which, though incompatible with the restoration of religion, would secure them their possessions, much of it confiscated ecclesiastical property. They resented Scarampi's arrival, as later they resented Rinuccini's. This resentment increased when their seemingly successful effort in 1646 was frustrated by the nuncio's intervention. They continued to plot, and were successful in 1648, when Ormond returned and they made peace with him. The nuncio was forced to leave, the genuine Catholics were persecuted; but in the end God's vengeance brought the plotters to utter defeat.

Now, all over Europe, they are using their influence to defend themselves by attacking the sincere Catholics, especially in Rome, where they are only continuing a policy which they have been pursuing for four hundred years. Unless care is taken, they will succeed, and there will be no possibility of restoring the faith and the influence of the Holy See in Ireland. As their past history clearly shows, these people are not to be trusted.

V

A simplified version of the history of Ireland, no doubt, but there is no questioning Richard O'Ferrall's sincerity and conviction. He was soon to learn that many of his fellow-countrymen disagreed with him violently. The *Alithinologia*, in particular, showed that a man who had been a citizen of Galway saw the history of his country very differently from a

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member of the one-time ruling family of Annaly. It was here that John Lynch was born, probably in the year 1599,²¹ and there can be little doubt that he came of the family which had been so long associated with the city.²² Here he spent his youth, receiving, possibly in his father's school,²³ the classical education which is apparent on every page of his writings. Then his ecclesiastical studies took him to the continent, to Dieppe, Douai and Rouen. He returned to Ireland, and was ordained priest in 1625. He acted as chaplain to Sir Richard Blake in his native Galway until the city was captured in 1652, when he went into exile.²⁴ He had been appointed archdeacon of Tuam about 1630, and held this office until he resigned it shortly before his

²¹ Cf. the following biographical notices: (i) Rev. M. Kelly's introduction to *Cambrensis everus*; (ii) the entry in *D.N.B.* by Thompson Cooper; (iii) Rev. P. Boyle, 'Lynch's MS *De praesulibus Hiberniae*', in *I.E.R.*, series 4, xii. 233-49 (Sept. 1902); (iv) Rev. J. F. O'Doherty's introduction to *De praesulibus Hiberniae*; (v) Rev. A. Gwynn, 'John Lynch's "*De praesulibus Hiberniae*"', in *Studies*, xxxiv. 37-52 (1945).

²² McNeill's hypothesis (*Publications*, etc., p. 37) that he was of the family of Lynch of Staple in Kent would imply that his family had identified themselves very closely with Galway in one generation. Cf. especially Lynch's Latin poem, ed. Hardiman in *Ir. Arch. & Celt. Soc., Miscellany*, i. 90 ff. (1846), where he speaks of his wish to return from exile and

post fata, sepulchro

inferri, ante meum quod genus omne tegit

and also his description of Francis Bermingham, O.F.M., as 'a near relative' ('Documents from the archives of St Isidore's college, Rome', ed. Rev. B. Jennings, in *Anal. Hib.*, vi. 246 (1934)).

On the other hand, the hypothesis that he was the nephew of Francis Kirwan, bishop of Killala, seems unlikely. To the best of my knowledge, Lynch never mentions the relationship, and a careful reading of the document 'The pedigree of Dr Dominick Lynch', ed. Hardiman in *Ir. Arch. & Celt. Soc., Miscellany*, i. 44 ff. (1846) seems to exclude so close a relationship at any rate. Certain statements in *Pii Antistitis icon* tend to support this conclusion; e.g., p. 8, where he says that Bishop Kirwan was born in Galway in 1589, but *diem eius natalem nondum comperi*, which seems extraordinary ignorance in a nephew born in 1599. Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 35.

²³ 'The intimate description he gives of Alexander Lynch's school in Galway (*De praesulibus Hiberniae*, ii. 184) provides some support for the view that the master was also our author's father' (O'Doherty, loc. cit.). Cf., however, Gwynn, loc. cit., pp. 38-9.

²⁴ Cf. *Comment. Rinucc.*, v. 181.

death. His twenty-odd years of exile were spent in France, almost exclusively, it would seem, in St Malo in Brittany,²⁵ and here, in all probability, he died in 1673.²⁶

We know fewer details of his life than we do of many ecclesiastics of the time, principally because he kept himself aloof from politics, at least until the great crisis of the confederation in 1648, when there is evidence that he associated himself with the party opposed to the nuncio.²⁷ Again, in 1652, he appears among a group who advised that Galway should make the best terms it could with parliament, rather than continue the fight to the last.²⁸ These two incidents are the only references we have to his political activity, and he leaves a definite impression that he considered them two incidents too many. John Lynch was by temperament a scholar who preferred a quiet and orderly society to wars *a l'outrance* for any cause. In the earlier years of his life he had hoped that such a society might be stabilized in Ireland. When these hopes disappeared, he preferred to ignore the new situation as far as possible, and where he could not ignore it, he regretted it.

After 1652, the scholar's life was possible only in exile. He seems to have had little real inclination to return to Ireland, and while his writings reflect his continued interest in his country—

In patria scriptis mea tota industria sudat
ornanda, hic meus est nocte dieque labor²⁹

—it is nevertheless clear that he is anxious to avoid any

²⁵ In the Latin poem already cited, written probably in 1667, he says:

Quindenae hiemes dulcis me Gallia nutrit
tamque diu patriae finibus exul ago.

Every time a check is available, we find him in St Malo: 1661 (cf. 'Instructions for William Burgat', in 'Miscellaneous documents III', ed. Rev. B. Jennings in *Archiv. Hib.* xv. (1950) 39; c. 1666 (cf. Walsh, *Irish remonstrance*, preface to the reader, p. xliii with *First treatise*, pp. 13-14); after 1667 (John Lynch to Francis Harold, O.F.M., in 'Documents from the archives of St Isidore's college, Rome', as above); 1669 (publication of *Pii Antistitis icon* in St Malo in that year).

²⁶ *De praesulibus Hiberniae* was completed 'late in 1672' (O'Boyle, loc. cit.). 'The pedigree of Dr Dominick Lynch' gives the impression that he was dead in 1674.

²⁷ *Comment. Rinucc.*, iii. 355.

²⁸ *Comment. Rinucc.*, v. 19.

²⁹ Hardiman, as above.

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h to Francis Harold, O.F.M., in

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²⁸ *Comment. Rinucc.*, v. 19.

discussion of the 'miserable, fatal war'.³⁰ Richard O'Ferrall's memorandum, however, with its sweeping condemnation of the Anglo-Irish, forced him into controversial writing. The result is of absorbing interest, for in it we get a striking picture, not merely of the writer himself, but of the society which bred him, their views on the history of their country, especially since the reformation, when the great strain of divided loyalty was imposed which ultimately broke that society, their continuing bewilderment at the blow which had fallen on them in the Cromwellian settlement, and their conviction that the impossible demands of both Rinuccini and the Old-Irish had been the principal cause of the calamity.³¹

VI

The first thing to be noticed about that society was the learning which flourished in it—the learning of the renaissance, as modified by the counter-reformation. John Lynch has all the renaissance scholar's fastidiousness for purity and elegance of Latin style; bad Latin is, in his eyes, a sign of the uncivilized man; indeed, in the *Alithinologiae supplementum* the frequency with which he returns to the theme of the barbarisms in Richard

³⁰ It is especially noteworthy how he tries to avoid controversial issues in the lives of contemporary bishops in *De praesulibus Hiberniae*; while *Pii Antistitis icon* passes over almost entirely Bishop Kirwan's activities in the confederation.

³¹ The fact that both *Alithinologia* and *Alithinologiae supplementum* carry neither place of publication nor author's name (apart from the pseudonym 'Eudoxius Alithinologus') raises no great difficulty. Lynch was naturally anxious to avoid any proof that he was the author, but he hints at it, e.g., *Alithinologiae supplementum*, Praefatio ad Hibernos and p. 216; and in any case it must have been clear to many, from the style and content, that the author was the person who had written *Cambrensis eversus*. In the private letter to Francis Harold already referred to (*Anal. Hib.*, vi. 246), he enquires how his books against O'Ferrall were received in Rome. Peter Walsh, we have seen, knew that John Lynch was the author; so, for that matter, did Robert O'Connell (*Comment. Rinucc.*, v. 432). The place of publication can hardly be other than St Malo, in view of the fact that Lynch's exile was so closely associated with it. A typographical comparison with *Pii Antistitis icon*, which is imprinted 'Maclovii apud Antonium de la Mare', suggests that both came from the same printing-house.

O'Ferrall's style must seem a trifle heavy-handed at times, to the modern reader at any rate. He moves freely in the literature of the classics—the apt allusion to Cicero or Plutarch, or the apt parallel from Greek or Roman history, is always ready to hand. He is also well-versed in the Catholic literature of the counter-reformation, and most particularly in the historical writings of the Irish literary revival of the seventeenth century. The controversial writings of the confederate wars are also, of course, well known to him, and for this period in particular he is able to supplement written records by his own recollections. He was, then, amply provided with material for his reply to Richard O'Ferrall.³²

In the first part of his reply, which deals with the general charges against the Anglo-Irish, he does little more than summarize what he had already developed at greater length in *Cambrensis eversus*. Seeing that in this work he had devoted a long chapter³³ to proving that the Anglo-Irish were entitled to be regarded as Irishmen in every respect, it is not surprising that he objects strongly to the distinction which had been the basis of O'Ferrall's argument. He rejects even the title 'Anglo-Irish', as recently invented to serve factious interests; in Ireland there is only one people, the Irish.³⁴ To refuse this name to people who have been in the country for five hundred years, and who are in fact the most numerous and influential section of the population, is absurd.³⁵ As in all countries, time has fused many diverse elements.³⁶ The only claim which the Old-Irish can advance is that of greater antiquity; but the Anglo-Irish families were not nobodies when they came to Ireland,

³² For a full account of Lynch's historical formation, cf. Gwynn, as above, pp. 48 ff.

³³ Chapter xvii.

³⁴ This is, of course, exaggerated. The frequency with which this title was used is shown from the fact that he himself slips into the usage once, *Alithinologia*, p. 40. There are, however, indications that it was sometimes used to denote those Irish who supported the English religious and political interest, and that O'Ferrall was not the first to make the suggestion that in this sense it included all who were not of the Old-Irish stock. For a striking example, cf. *H.M.C. Franciscan MSS*, pp. 87 ff.

³⁵ *Alithinologia*, pp. 3, 4, 8-10, 55, 64, 138.

³⁶ *Alithinologia*, pp. 7, 9, 47; *Supplementum*, p. 35.

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³⁷ *Alithinologia*

³⁸ Cf. *Alithinologia*

³⁹ Cf. *Alithinologia* 25 ff., 40, 59.

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⁴⁰ Cf. *Alithinologia* 209.

⁴¹ *Alithinologia*

⁴² *Alithinologia*

and in any case nobility does not consist altogether in endless genealogies. Each has made its contribution to the one nation, and the Anglo-Irish contribution is no slight one.³⁷

Although Lynch discounts long genealogies, he is at one with O'Ferrall in accepting as natural the aristocratic framework of the society in which he lived.³⁸ The pillars of his world are the great landowners and the wealthy merchants of the cities—a society loyal to church and king. Loyalty is due to the king, not in so far as he has observed the terms of any papal bull—Lynch is frankly weary of the endless arguments concerning *Laudabiliter*—not because his right originated in a papal grant, for Ireland was not the pope's to give, but simply because the Irish have repeatedly acknowledged the king's authority over hundreds of years, and a prescriptive right has been established.³⁹

The loyalty due to the church has also been given by the Irish, in spite of the difficulties of the last century. Some, it is true, have temporized and have accepted heresy, but these have come from both sections of the nation.⁴⁰ The various parliaments which introduced legislation in favour of heresy were attended by Old-Irish as well as Anglo-Irish, and at all these parliaments the proposed legislation was first resisted, and, in so far as it was enacted, was passed by either force or guile.⁴¹ Neither has war in defence of religion been attempted by the Old-Irish alone. Baltinglass was the first to raise a hand against Elizabeth; the Desmond war is the outstanding example of a war for purely religious interests.⁴² In fine, represen-

³⁷ *Alithinologia*, pp. 15–22.

³⁸ Cf. *Alithinologia*, pp. 6, 14, 136.

³⁹ Cf. *Alithinologia* pp. 26 ff., 50 ff., 137; *Supplementum*, pp. 7, 17, 25 ff., 40, 59. This question is treated at much greater length in *Cambrensis eversus*, ch. xxii–xxvii. It cannot be said that Lynch is committed to any particular theory concerning the king's rights. He is normally content to appeal to the fact that these rights exist and have been repeatedly accepted. The influence of current theories can be seen, however, in that he will not admit that authority, once accepted, can be repudiated.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Alithinologia*, pp. 12, 40 ff.; *Supplementum*, pp. 31 ff., 184–209.

⁴¹ *Alithinologia*, pp. 23 ff., 44 ff.; *Supplementum*, p. 35.

⁴² *Alithinologia*, pp. 23, 38 ff.; *Supplementum*, pp. 195 ff.

tatives of both sections have prejudiced the religious cause, representatives of both have risked and lost all for it. If comparison must be made, there can be little doubt that the most vital Catholicism is to be found among the Anglo-Irish, especially in the towns. There, persecution has been most constant, but faith has been most fervent.⁴³

That John Lynch did not, even after the restoration, appreciate the real nature of what had happened in Ireland becomes clear from his attitude to the plantations. He cannot do other than approve of them in so far as they represent the extension of the king's authority to the whole of Ireland. Of course, the Cromwellian settlement—in which, incidentally, his own people had suffered their first great loss—is in a different category. It is a barbarous and unlawful uprooting of an ordered world, and contrasts very strikingly, he thinks, with the mild treatment of rebellious Ulster by James I, who planned to civilize a backward people by a leaven of new inhabitants. While Lynch is without doubt convinced of the truth of these opinions, many of his remarks, for example that the new settlers have now gained the right to be considered Irishmen, or the smug observation that the Old-Irish nobility is very much decayed in comparison with the Anglo-Irish, must have been exasperating beyond measure to those who had lost their lands in the earlier plantations—such as the O'Ferralls of Annaly.⁴⁴

From time to time there is admittedly a hint that John Lynch is beginning to see the plantations in a different light, beginning to suspect that the acts of James I and Cromwell might have more in common than he had thought.⁴⁵ Yet he cannot forget the connexion between the plantation of Ulster and the 'fatal war'. The rising of 1641, he is certain, was no war for religion, but a war to destroy the plantation. And even if it had been a war for religion, the attitude of the Anglo-Irish was only common prudence. They had been a long time attempting, not without hope of success, a peaceful solution of

⁴³ *Alithinologia*, pp. 12 ff.

⁴⁴ *Alithinologia*, pp. 17 ff., 25, 136, 140; *Supplementum*, Praefatio ad Hibernos.

⁴⁵ One passage in particular, *Alithinologia*, pp. 11 ff., does seem to suggest that the plantation in Ulster was beginning to cause him some searching of conscience.

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the religious problem; and in any case a resort to war, apart from extreme necessity, was madness in view of the lack of all means of making war.⁴⁶ Their first reaction was to fulfil their civic duty by offering the king's representatives help in suppressing the rebellion. They took up arms only when the reception given to this offer convinced them that the puritan lords justices were not interested in allowing Catholics to live at peace in Ireland. The Anglo-Irish were, in fact, the real founders of the confederation, because they alone were fighting for an exclusively religious interest.⁴⁷

The Old-Irish, though a party to the confederation, proved a grave embarrassment to it in the course of the war. They were not able to gain control of the province of Ulster, and were a continual burden on the resources of the other provinces, where, especially during the later years of the war, they lived mainly by pillaging their Catholic fellow-countrymen. The military contribution which they made did not compensate for the burden they were; they were too badly organized and equipped to be an effective military force. Even the victory of Benburb was wasted by the inexplicable failure of Owen Roe O'Neill to follow it up by securing control of Ulster. In fine, they always sought their own advantage; the war which they had begun with murder and plunder they ended by making a peace with heretics and regicides, in which very scant provision was made for the Catholic religion.⁴⁸

The Anglo-Irish, on the other hand, were always guided by their loyalty to religion and the king. They sought an agreement with the king simply because they were his subjects, not because of any secret sympathy with heresy. They had no interest in perpetuating the plantation settlement, because none of them had benefited personally from it. The ecclesiastical property they admittedly possessed was secured to them by the bull of Julius III and the parliament of 1557, and if this property could not be returned to the church it was better that it should be in the hands of Catholic laymen, who had, in fact, made provision for the support of ecclesiastics out of the revenue

⁴⁶ *Alithinologia*, pp. 47 ff., 66; *Supplementum*, pp. 5 ff.

⁴⁷ *Alithinologia*, pp. 49–53, 66.

⁴⁸ *Alithinologia*, pp. 57, 62 f., 66–9, 77, 119; *Supplementum*, pp. 5 f., 60–63, 74, 95, 138–45.

they derived from it. While they were determined to secure freedom for their religion as laid down in the oath of association of the confederation, they were nevertheless realists, and knew they must take account of the fact that the king was not a Catholic. They tried, then, to get the best terms they could. There was nothing of conspiracy or secrecy about their negotiations, which were carried on by the supreme council, the elected executive of the confederation.⁴⁹

The difficulty was that the Old-Irish did not seem to want peace. They seemed to think that the war should go on for ever, whereas it was obviously the wisest course to negotiate with a powerful opponent while they were still in a strong position.⁵⁰ Rinuccini's arrival increased these differences. Although everyone had welcomed his coming—the fact that a few did not was only to be expected, as was the fact that some were worried by the consequences of receiving a papal nuncio without the king's consent⁵¹—he soon began to listen to those who told him that the Old-Irish were the better Catholics, and that the Anglo-Irish were primarily interested in safeguarding their possessions. In consequence, every attempt to reach an agreement with the king had now to count on his opposition, as well as that of the Old-Irish. He was encouraged in his attitude by the greedy ecclesiastics who surrounded him, who still dreamt of the complete restoration of ecclesiastical property, and who flattered him in the hope of receiving bishoprics through his influence.

Too many did receive bishoprics in this way, and the men who should have been Rinuccini's most trusted councillors were slighted. The older bishops, who had long experience of practical problems in Ireland, such as the bishops of Ossory and Meath, were not consulted. The result was an attempt to put the Catholic religion in Ireland on the same footing as in Italy, France, or Spain. It did not succeed, and, in the circumstances, it could not have succeeded.⁵²

⁴⁹ *Alithinologia*, pp. 34 f., 61, 68, 73, 122-7; *Supplementum*, pp. 39, 63, 97.

⁵⁰ *Alithinologia*, pp. 61, 74, 94 f., 112; *Supplementum*, pp. 39-41.

⁵¹ *Supplementum*, pp. 39-41.

⁵² *Alithinologia*, pp. 73 f., 89 ff., 94, 102; *Supplementum*, pp. 72, 75, 212-6.

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It did, however, wreck the reasonable peace which the supreme council, after long negotiations, had succeeded in reaching with Ormond. This peace, far from being a betrayal of Catholic interests or a breach of the oath of association, removed very onerous penal laws and enabled Catholics to profess their faith publicly and freely. If it had been honoured, the puritans would have been driven from Ireland. When it was rejected, they toasted the nuncio as their ally and best friend.⁵³

For the nuncio and his supporters succeeded in having it rejected. The old stories began to circulate—the Anglo-Irish are descendants of Englishmen, naturally inclined to heresy—and the nuncio believed them. His action, both during and after the crisis, especially the imprisonment of the supreme council and the setting up of a new one, was completely illegal. His promises of papal subsidies and talk of a more favourable peace which was to be negotiated in Rome came to nothing. The hollowness of these hopes was demonstrated by the reception given to the bishop of Ferns and Nicholas Plunkett when they visited Rome in 1648. The attack on Dublin, which he had proclaimed as an alternative to the peace, failed completely, not because of treachery, as was alleged, but because no one had any heart for it and because O'Neill's army was inadequate. Finally, the system of collecting taxes broke down in the general confusion, and the Ulster army was forced to live off the land—off the land of Catholics. Their exactions became so unbearable that Rinuccini himself was forced to protest.⁵⁴

He was now faced with a desperate military situation, and he found it impossible to resist the demand for the restoration of lawful government. He continued, however, to resist this lawful government, and he finally destroyed the unity of the confederation when the supreme council made a truce with Inchiquin, who had just declared his adherence to the royal cause.

In the circumstances, the truce was both advantageous and necessary, for the confederation was reduced almost to impotence. O'Neill's army was as great a menace as the

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-74.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 74-83.

enemy. The other armies were mainly composed of raw recruits after the disasters of the previous year, and provisions were so scarce that for lack of food alone the armies could not be brought into action. Again, there was no conspiracy. All was done openly by the recently restored lawful authority. Adequate provision was made for church and clergy. Rinuccini was kept informed, and the only objections he could raise concerned purely temporal matters. Yet he conducted himself as if he were defending the church against her enemies, although he had the support of fourteen bishops only, and six of these disagreed with him in private. Though every effort was made to meet his wishes, he proved completely obdurate, and finally fled in secret from Kilkenny, claiming that he had discovered a plot to assassinate him. The charge was beneath contempt, and the treatment he had hitherto received should have given him no reason to believe it.⁵⁵

The censures which followed are a painful subject, which it would be more pleasant to forget, but certain charges are made and must be answered. Many are convinced that these censures were utterly invalid. It is difficult to believe that the nuncio had personally been given authority to take such action, for no such powers had ever been given to a nuncio before, and, in fact, when pressed on the matter, he refused to disclose his authority. Nor could he be said to have acted as a delegate of the bishops of Ireland, for his delegation had come from fourteen bishops only, and he had not observed the term of that delegation. Further, excommunication presupposes guilt, but where was the guilt in a lawful and necessary truce? Ecclesiastical censures are meant to be medicinal, but these were punitive. Only respect for the Holy See saved the nuncio from imprisonment or expulsion from the country. The supreme council acted with great restraint in deciding to respect the censure and to appeal against it.⁵⁶

The peace with Ormond which followed the Inchiquin truce was in every way conformable to the oath of association of the confederation. Due loyalty was given to the king, and adequate provision was made for the Catholic religion. It could now be practised openly, and bishops, priests, and religious could

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⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 84-100, 129 ff.

⁵⁶ *Alithinologia*, pp. 74-83.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.
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It is ridiculous to say that the disasters which followed were God's vengeance for the treatment of the nuncio. The truth is that the disasters were caused by the divisions among the confederates, and these could not be healed once the censures had been invoked. And even now, when all is lost, there are some who, true to their previous conduct, wish to remain at war for ever. All that the exiled Irish now want is to see the authority of the Holy See and the Catholic faith restored in Ireland. As for the censures, any decision which will end the dissensions will be welcome. The authority to absolve recently given to four bishops was a mistake, for it was immediately publicized by one party as a decision in their favour. To adopt milder measures now will not detract from the pope's authority, nor from the memory of Rinuccini. It will merely admit that he made a mistake, and, after all, he was human. In spite of differences, we admired him in life, and respect him in death. Rumour has it that when he came to die he regretted the censures as a great mistake. ⁵⁸

VII

Even from this brief summary, it will be clear that John Lynch has presented the case for one considerable interest in the Irish confederation with power and skill. A quality which is more difficult to convey in a summary is the restraint with which his case is presented. This, together with the ease and attractiveness of his writing, makes it easy to give him a sympathetic hearing. Yet no sympathy can blind the reader to the fact that he writes with all the limitations of the interest he represents. In particular, there are two notable and connected limitations in his outlook. In spite of the examples he adduces, the Old-Irish and Anglo-Irish had not fused into one people. Ireland had not grown into a nation with the other nations of Europe. The two strains remained aloof and

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 109-112.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 74, 130-5; *Supplementum*, pp. 148-60.

mutually suspicious. Their common loyalty to the Catholic religion did undoubtedly produce a common interest, which should naturally develop and grow stronger. Yet the different experiences of the two peoples in the sixteenth century produced a divergence of interest which made a common policy impossible. While Lynch is right in maintaining that the division was not altogether clear-cut, it is nevertheless true, firstly, that the Old-Irish as a body had lost their lands in the plantations, a disaster which the Anglo-Irish had almost altogether escaped; and secondly, that the Anglo-Irish had a century's schooling in the subterfuges necessary to reconcile profession of the Catholic faith with loyalty to the king; to the Old-Irish, this was a much more recent experience, and was resented in proportion to its novelty and the lesser attractions of loyalty. In brief, the Anglo-Irish were inclined to welcome a settlement which confirmed them in their estates and gave legal guarantee of religious toleration; to the Old-Irish, if the fight was to be worth while it must continue until the plantation settlement was reversed and in consequence the Catholic religion fully restored.

It cannot be expected, then, that John Lynch and Richard O'Ferrall could fully appreciate each other's viewpoint. Each presented the truth honestly as he saw it; O'Ferrall's passion and Lynch's restraint reflect personal temperaments rather than more or less reason in the case which each is arguing. These are of absorbing interest for an understanding of the stresses which helped so much to destroy their world. They are two rather pathetic figures as they pursue the argument in defeat and exile; all the more because of a fact which neither really accepted, that the world in which each of them still lived, Annaly O'Ferrall and Galway of the Lynches, had been destroyed and would not return.

PATRICK J. CORISH