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The roles and representations of women in religious change and conflict in Leinster and south-east Munster, *c*.1560-*c*.1641

by

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CONTENTS

Contents i

Dedication ii

Acknowledgments iii

Abbreviations v

List of illustrations vi

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER ONE:

THE ROLES AND REPRESENTATIONS OF CATHOLIC LAY WOMEN IN RELIGIOUS CHANGE AND CONFLICT, *c*.1560-*c*.1641 32

CHAPTER TWO:

NEGOTIATING RELIGIOUS CHANGE AND CONFLICT: FEMALE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES, *c*.1560-*c*.1641 94

CHAPTER THREE:

THE ROLES AND REPRESENTATIONS OF PROTESTANT WOMEN IN RELIGIOUS CHANGE AND CONFLICT, *c*.1560-*c*.1641 159

CHAPTER FOUR:

'LEWD VIRAGOES': THE ROLES AND REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN IN THE 1641 UPRISING 241

CONCLUSION 310

APPENDIX 325

BIBLIOGRAPHY 347

DEDICATION

Dedicated to the memory of my grandmothers;

Annie McShane née Carron (1925-2008) and Mary McCabe née Earley (1919-70)

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ABBREVIATIONS

Anal. Hib.	*Analecta Hibernica*
Archiv. Hib.	*Archivium Hibernicum*
Bréifne	*Breifne: Jounral of Cumann Seanchais Bhréifne*
Cal. S.P. Ire.	*Calendar of State papers relating to Ireland* (24 vols, London, 1860-1911)
Clogher Rec.	*Clogher Record*
Collect. Hib.	*Collectanea Hibernica*
Decies	*Old Waterford Society: Decies*
O.D.N.B.	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
D.I.B.	*Dictionary of Irish Biography*
H.M.C.	*Historical Manuscripts Commission*
Hist. Studies	*Historical Studies*
I. E. R.	*Irish Ecclesiastical Record*
I.H.S.	*Irish Historical Studies*
Ir. Geneal.	*The Irish Genealogist*
Ir. Theol. Quart.	*Irish Theological Quarterly*
Jn. Brit. Studies	*Journal of British Studies*
Kildare Arch. Soc. Jn.	*Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society*
Louth Arch. Soc. Jn.	*Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society*
NLI	National Library of Ireland
RIA	Royal Irish Academy
R.I.A. Proc.	*Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*
Rí. na Midhe	*Ríocht na Midhe*
R.S.A.I. Jn.	*Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*
TCD	Library of Trinity College, Dublin
TNA	The National Archives, Kew

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1.1 Mural tablet commemorating Margaret Wale (d. 1623), St Canice's Cathedral, Co. Kilkenny

Fig. 1.2 Aylmer monument, Donadea, Co. Kildare (1626)

Fig. 1.3 Effigy of Grace Cantwell, Cantwell tomb, Kilcooley Abbey, Co. Tipperary (1608)

Fig. 1.4 Rubbing of side panel of altar tomb commemorating Nicholas Walsh and Helen Lawless, St Mary's Church, Co. Kilkenny (1599)

Fig. 1.5 Tomb commemorating Honorina Grace (d. 1596), St Canice's Cathedral, Co. Kilkenny

Fig. 1.6 Chalice donated to the Jesuits by Elizabeth Fitzgerald née Nugent (d. 1645), Countess of Kildare (1634)

Fig. 1.7 John Howlin, 'Perbreve compendium' (*fl. c.*1589-99)

Fig. 2.1 Chronicle of Mother Mary Bonaventure Browne, Monastery of the Poor Clares, Co. Galway (*fl. c.*1669-71)

Fig. 2.2 Profession of Sr Catherine of St Francis [Browne], given at Bethlehem, 29 January 1631/2, Monastery of the Poor Clares, Co. Galway

Fig. 3.1 Portrait of Phoebe Ussher née Challoner (d. 1654), wife of James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh (1625-56)

Fig. 3.2 Portrait of Lettice Digby née Fitzgerald (*c.*1580-1658), Lady Offaly, wife of Sir Robert Digby (d. 1618) of Coleshill, Warwickshire, England

Fig. 3.3 Boyle and Fenton monument, St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin (1632)

Fig. 3.4 Agard monument, Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin (1584)

Fig. 3.5 Roper monument, St John the Evangelist Church, Dublin (1634)

Fig. 3.6 Chichester monument, St Nicholas' Church, Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim (1620)

Fig 3.7 Effigy of Joan Apsley (d. 1599), Boyle monument, Youghal, Co. Cork (1620)

Fig. 3.8 *Musarum Lachrymae* (Dublin, 1630)

Fig. 4.1 Portrait of Mary Colley (d. 1654), wife of Garrett Moore (*c*.1566-1627), first Viscount Drogheda

Fig. 4.2 Images from James Cranford, *The teares of Ireland* (London, 1640)

Fig. 4.3 Images from Samuel Clarke, *A generall martyrologie* (London, 1651)

INTRODUCTION

I – Context

In 1536 the Irish parliament legislated for a Church of Ireland to replace the Roman Catholic Church as the established ecclesiastical authority within the lordship. Until 1547, however, the Catholic orthodoxy of King Henry VIII, supreme head of the Church, determined that no theological or doctrinal changes be introduced under the auspices of the early Reformation, and the Protestant regime of his son Edward VI's reign (1547-53) proved too short-lived for any widespread reform to be undertaken.[1] After a brief reversion to Roman Catholicism during Queen Mary I's reign (1553-58), when the traditional liturgy and priesthood were consolidated, the Church of Ireland was re-established by statute as the state church under Queen Elizabeth I in 1560, and Protestantism was affirmed as the religion of the church and state, to which all the queen's subjects were required to adhere.[2] Thereafter, the drive for the widespread adoption of religious reform in Ireland, as in England, began in earnest. However, hopes on the part of the Elizabethan reformers to secure substantial numbers of converts to Protestantism faded as initial uneasiness about royal supremacy among the laity soon evolved into dissent over the doctrinal orthodoxy of the Church of Ireland. Led by a wealthy and influential élite cohort in Dublin and other urban centres in Leinster and south-east Munster, such as Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford, and Limerick, lay dissent initially took the form of church papistry – public conformity to the liturgy masking private practice of Catholicism – in circumstances of minimal enforcement of the Reformation statutes and relative leniency during the early years of Elizabeth's reign.[3] By the late 1570s and early 1580s, in the aftermath of the Desmond rebellion in Munster and the Baltinglass rebellion in Leinster, efforts on the part of the Elizabethan authorities to enforce more stringently conformity to the Established Church intensified (a process inextricably linked with attempts to subdue the country and bring it under royal writ),

[1] Brendan Bradshaw, 'The Edwardian Reformation in Ireland, 1547-53' in *Achiv. Hib.*, xxxiv (1977), pp 83-99.
[2] Henry A. Jefferies, 'The Irish parliament of 1560: the Anglican reforms authorised' in *I.H.S.*, xxvi (1988), pp 128-41; idem, 'Primate George Dowdall and the Marian Restoration' in *Seanchas Ardmhacha: Journal of the Armagh Diocesan Historical Society*, xvii, no. 2 (1998), pp 1-18.
[3] Colm Lennon, 'Recusancy and Counter-Reformation' in John R. Bartlett and Stuart D. Kinsella (eds), *Two thousand years of Christianity in Ireland: Lectures delivered in Christ Church Cathedral Dublin, 2001-2002* (Dublin, 2006), pp 119-32.

taking the form of coercive measures, including the imposition of fines, imprisonments and on occasion, executions. This phase of religious coercion served to crystallise confessional allegiances so that tentative dissent was galvanised into a more active and ideologically driven form of recusancy.[4] Bolstered by the return from the Continent to Ireland of outlawed seminary trained clergy (both secular and regular), imbued in the zeal and doctrines of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, by the 1590s Catholic survivalism and nominal conformity were supplanted by a forthright, ideologically-driven recusancy among the laity who were defining their religious positions with a growing certitude.[5] By the early years of the seventeenth century this had developed into a fully articulated and exigent Counter-Reformation faith, as Catholicism in Ireland supported by the wealthy lay élite among mercantile and gentry families in the major towns and surrounding hinterland enjoyed a period of resurgence and revival.[6] At the same time, however, the Stuart authorities, anxious at the growing strength and influence of the Catholic mission in Ireland, initiated a series of intermittent spells of severe religious coercion.[7] These intervals of harsh coercion caused the confessional divide between adherents of Catholicism and the Established Church to grow progressively deeper and more intractable as the decades of the early seventeenth century passed: that process was expedited by the arrival of New English settlers from the late sixteenth century onwards. Thus, there emerged within both Catholic and Protestant confessional communities distinct religious identities, *mentalités* and ideologies, together with decidedly separate institutions and associated customs and traditions.[8] However, whereas the first four decades of the seventeenth century were punctuated by phases of intermittent conflict between the two communities, the outbreak of sectarian violence in autumn 1641 initiated a sudden and unexpected transition from what was at times uneasy coexistence to

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[4] Lennon notes that by the later 1570s there were signs 'that recusancy was becoming a defining state for Catholics not just as dissidents from the religion of the regime but also as upholders of an alternative creedal system': see Colm Lennon, 'Taking sides: the emergence of Irish Catholic ideology' in Vincent P. Carey and Ute Lotz-Heumann (eds), *Taking sides?: colonial and confessional mentalités in early modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2003), p. 81: see also Lennon, 'Recusancy & Counter-Reformation', pp 119-32; idem, 'The rise of recusancy among the Dublin patricians, 1580-1613' in W. J. Shiels and Diana Wood (eds), *The churches, Ireland and the Irish: Studies in Church History*, xxv (Oxford, 1989), pp 123-32.

[5] Lennon, 'Recusancy & Counter-Reformation', pp 119-32.

[6] Brian Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival in the north of Ireland, 1603-41* (Dublin, 2007), pp 167-202.

[7] For an account of the anti-recusant campaigns initiated during the deputyship of Sir Arthur Chichester see Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, pp 167-202.

[8] Alan Ford, 'Living together, living apart: sectarianism in early modern Ireland' in idem and John McCafferty (eds), *The origins of sectarianism in early modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2005), pp 1-23.

outright brutal hostility: its consequences for both confessional communities was catastrophic. The 1641 uprising facilitated a rapid and cataclysmic change in the confessional landscape in Ireland, creating a 'vortex' of religious antagonism which in turn impacted profoundly and irrevocably the lives, identities and relationships of Catholic and Protestant men and women, lay and religious alike.[9]

II – Focus of this study

Anne Laurence has observed that, whereas the male experience of religious change in early modern Ireland has been the subject of considerable scholarly analysis and debate, the female experience is relatively less well known.[10] This thesis aims to address that lacuna in existing scholarship by elucidating how women, in a multiplicity of ways, negotiated and reacted to the religious changes and conflicts which impacted their lives to varying degrees and with varying regularity and intensity during the period *c*.1560-*c*.1641. The geographical area under consideration in this study is the greater Pale and the larger port-towns of Leinster and south-east Munster, including but not limited to Waterford, Wexford, Kilkenny and Limerick, the heartland of the original Anglo-Irish colonial presence. With very few exceptions, the experiences of Gaelic women – even of those living in this region – do not feature, owing to a dearth of surviving sources for the lower ranking Gaelic Irish as a whole. Rather, the focus is overwhelmingly, although not exclusively, on aristocratic and gentle women of Old English and New English descent as it is a handful of these élite women who left their imprint on the surviving documentary and monumental record from which the following insights into their beliefs, practices, attitudes, actions and reactions have been gleaned and reconstructed. This study also adopts a multi-layered comparative approach. Firstly, it features a cross-denominational analysis: women within both emerging confessional communities, Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland, are considered. In the case of members of the Established Church, the study analyses the experiences of both Old English converts to

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[9] Ibid., p. 12.

[10] As Laurence observes, 'The political, confessional and economic communities which historians have examined both for historical change and for marks of identity have been largely male ones and studies of Irish identity have taken little account of the work of women's historians who have attempted to explore the gendered impact of cultural change': see Anne Laurence, 'Real and imagined communities in the lives of women in seventeenth century Ireland: identity and gender' in Stephanie Tarbin and Susan Broomhall (eds), *Women, identities and communities in early modern Europe* (Ashgate, 2008), pp 13-28.

Protestantism and the newly arrived adherents of the reformed religion – the New English. Secondly, this study considers the experiences of women across a wide social spectrum and from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds: aristocratic, gentlewomen, and women from lower social ranks all feature, although owing to the nature of the source material, the treatment is necessarily biased in favour of women from the upper ranks, for whom more extensive documentation is extant. Thirdly, the impact of religious change and conflict on women is considered, where feasible and appropriate, in tandem with assessing their impact on men in order to construct an original and nuanced analysis of the gendered experience of religious change and conflict in Elizabethan and Stuart Ireland. Finally, the experiences of women in Ireland are frequently contextualised through reference to their contemporaries in the wider Tudor and Stuart realm in particular and, to a lesser extent, on the Continent. During a period characterised by oscillation between interludes of peaceful, albeit uneasy co-existence and religious toleration during phases of stability on the one hand, and sporadic clashes between Catholics and the Protestant authorities and/or communities as a result of the vigorous imposition of coercive religious measures by church and state authorities at times of political crisis on the other, this thesis illuminates how Catholic and Protestant women, lay and religious alike, devised various strategies to give expression to their religious beliefs and practices. A double-stranded conceptual approach is adopted, with the themes of 'roles' and 'representations' at the heart of the analysis of women's experiences of religious change and conflict. As a consequence, this study marries literary and historical analytical techniques within an interdisciplinary framework.

Roles

This thesis examines the various 'roles' played by women in the processes of religious change and conflict. Women's roles as active agents in the promotion and perpetuation of their respective faiths within their distinct yet connected confessional communities are, therefore, the subject of close examination. In the case of Catholic women, their role as maintainers and shelters of clergy, especially in the context of the domestic and illegal nature of the Catholic Church, is explored. Here, the gendered nature of punishment for non-conformity and recusant activity is considered, with particular attention to gauging the willingness – or otherwise – of both church and state authorities to interfere in the domain of the household, viewed

as the private preserve of patriarchy. The role of female religious is also examined to explore the nature of their resistance and survival in the aftermath of the Henrician dissolutions of the 1530s and 1540s. The strategies devised by female religious – ranging from clandestine survivalism to migration to the Continent – in order to circumvent the state's proscription of vocational living are revealed, as is their subsequent (often unrecognised) contribution to the rehabilitation and propagation of Tridentine ideology, culture and devotion during the 1620s and 1630s (compared with that of their male counterparts). In the case of the Church of Ireland community, this thesis considers the role played by women as educators in the propagation of Protestant belief and doctrine, not only within the household but in the public sphere too. The significance of marriage alliances in consolidating links between Old English and New English Protestant families is assessed with special attention afforded the importance of securing a 'good' Protestant wife in securing the Protestant lineage of a socially ascendant family. Furthermore, the obscure and ambiguous emergent role of the clergyman's wife is examined, revealing a new and hitherto overlooked dimension of the female experience of religious change and conflict in Elizabethan and Stuart Ireland. Finally, this study presents an in-depth exploration of the nature of women's involvement in episodes of religious unrest which broke out sporadically and with varying degrees of intensity in the decades after 1560. Here, special emphasis is on the role of women as active agents in the sectarian violence that unfolded on an unprecedented scale after October 1641.

Representations

As noted above, there is throughout this thesis a heavy reliance on literary analysis in order to facilitate interpretation and analysis of 'representations' of women in a wide variety of sources from religious treatises, conduct books and devotional literature to colonial commentaries, martryologies, ephemeral pamphlet literature, depositions, funerary sermons and eulogies and tomb sculpture. A comparative analysis of definitions of 'ideal' Catholic and Protestant womanhood as prescribed by largely English and European clerical and literary commentators, in conduct books and devotional literature, is undertaken to elucidate the parameters and paradigms underpinning early modern representations of womanhood and thereby position these women in this region of Ireland within their English and European contexts. How these definitions were similar or differed across the confessional divide is

examined in detail, thereby highlighting the nuances and variations that characterised definitions of 'ideal' womanhood within both confessional traditions. In particular, notions of 'ideal' womanhood versus its 'antithesis' as represented in colonial commentaries on Ireland are analysed for what they reveal about the extent and nature of inter-confessional enmity during the later Elizabethan and early Stuart eras. The emergence of an Irish Catholic martyrological tradition on the Continent in the last twenty years of the sixteenth century, sparked by the vigorous wave of religious coercion enacted by the Elizabethan regime in the aftermath of the Baltinglass and Desmond rebellions in Leinster and Munster, is charted and the representations of female Catholic martyrs in that growing corpus of material is traced. In a closely associated genre, the chronicle of the Irish Poor Clare nuns, written by Mother Mary Bonaventure Browne (see below), is analysed for what it reveals about representations of female religious and how her representation conformed to a dichotomy emerging within a burgeoning Catholic literary tradition on the Continent which construed experiences of religious in Ireland as victims of heretical persecutors. In the case of the Church of Ireland community, representations and memorialisations of deceased Protestant women in print as well as in plaster are highlighted. Representations of violence, including sexual violence, against female victims as depicted in 1641 pamphlet literature and official treatises on the uprising are the subject of in-depth study and finally the emergence of a parallel Irish Protestant martyrological tradition in the aftermath of 1641 is traced and the representation of female victims of 1641 as religious martyrs analysed.

Through an extended, longitudinal and comparative exploration of the roles and representations of women in religious change and conflict during the period *c*.1560-*c*.1641 this study seeks to answer the following research questions: What were women's experiences of religious change and conflict during this period? What were the parameters and paradigms underpinning early modern representations of Catholic and Protestant women in Ireland as set down by religious commentators and polemicists, and did these differ across the confessional divide? What roles did female martyrs play in cultivating religious allegiance among their respective denominational communities? What roles did female religious play in sustaining Catholic survivalism in the aftermath of the Henrician dissolutions and later in the

perpetuation of Counter-Reformation ideology, devotion and culture? To what extent did religious activism, militancy and sectarianism play a part in the lives of women in Ireland during this period? How were their roles in religious conflicts represented? How representative were the experiences of women in Ireland when compared with those of their contemporaries in the Tudor and Stuart realm and on Continental Europe? Throughout the analysis is heavily illustrated by case studies of individual women, including for example, the Meath-native and recusant Margaret Ball née Bermingham (*fl.* *c.*1515-84), Lady Frances Butler née Touchet (b. 1617), Lady Ursula White née Moore (b. *c.*1594) Elizabeth Fitzgerald née Nugent, Countess of Kildare (d. 1645) and Catherine Boyle née Fenton (*c.*1588-1630), Countess of Cork. Through close analysis of their particular personal circumstances, beliefs, practices, actions and reactions, insights into their specific experiences, and those of women in general, are revealed. Insofar as sources have permitted, this study has endeavoured to convey the humanity of these individual women along with something of the complex reality of their lives.

III – Literature review

This thesis aims to contribute significantly to the historiography of women in early modern Ireland. Although that historiography had its genesis in the early twentieth century,[11] Mary O'Dowd has observed that the focus up until the 1970s was overwhelmingly biographical, with particular categories of women selected for attention; 'the interest' up to that point, O'Dowd contended, was mainly in 'notable' or 'notorious' rather than 'ordinary' women.[12] Since then, however, a growing coterie of historians set about normalising the incorporation of the history of women into mainstream interpretative analysis of early modern Ireland. But it was during the early 1990s that the study of women and gender in this era received a decisive boost through the scholarly endeavours of Margaret Mac Curtain and Mary O'Dowd. Their pioneering volume, *Women in early modern Ireland* (Edinburgh, 1991) featuring twenty-one scholarly essays by historians from a variety of specialist fields, explores

[11] For a review of the historiography of women in Ireland see Maria Luddy, Margaret Mac Curtain and Mary O'Dowd, 'An agenda for women's history in Ireland, 1500-1900' in *I.H.S.*, xxviii, no. 109 (1992), pp 1-19.

[12] Mary O'Dowd, *A history of women in Ireland*, *1500-1800* (Harlow, 2005), p. 2; see, for example, Anne Chambers, *Eleanor Countess of Desmond, c.1545-1638* (Dublin, 1986); eadem, *Granuaile. The life and times of Grace O'Malley c.1530-1603* (Dublin, new edn., 1988); Esther S. Cope, *Handmaid of the Holy Spirit. Dame Eleanor Davies, never soe mad a ladie* (Michigan, 1992).

the experiences of women in diverse contexts ranging from law, politics, war and crime to religion, education and family and in different eras from the early sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century.[13] The publication of this volume was significant in establishing women's history as a credible field of research in Irish historiography; indeed, the impetus for the present study came largely from a number of insights and suggestions for fruitful avenues of research presented by contributors to the collection. Of particular relevance to the present study was ecclesiastical historian Patrick J. Corish's seminal essay, 'Women and religious practice'[14] in which he both highlighted the influential role played by women within their domestic spheres in ensuring the success of the Counter-Reformation movement in Ireland, and also pointed to the absence of scholarly exploration or recognition of their contribution.[15] Corish stressed the especially important role played by Catholic women in maintaining priests in their homes and highlighted it as a promising line of inquiry for further research. Many of the restrictions that curtailed women's engagement in religious observance and expression of their religious belief as a result of increased church and state regulation, together with tighter control of familial and church structures in line with Tridentine regulations in late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century Ireland, were also brought to light for the first time in that volume. Particularly revealing is the pioneering exploration of gender relations and the repercussions of increasing patriarchy in Old and New English households alike featured in essays by Phil Kilroy and Margaret Mac Curtain. Indeed the latter's examination of the impact of this increased patriarchy on female religious in the post-Trent era established an important conceptual foundation for further study of a hitherto neglected aspect of early modern Irish history which the present study explores.[16] Ciarán Brady's examination of political and social roles played by New English women in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries brought to light various expressions of female agency in early modern Ireland: Brady's approach and the concept of agency have been adopted in the present study to explore the roles and conduct of women from Old and New English communities in reaction to religious

[13] Margaret Mac Curtain and Mary O'Dowd (eds), *Women in early modern Ireland* (Edinburgh, 1991).
[14] Patrick J. Corish, 'Women and religious practice' in ibid., pp 212-22.
[15] Ibid., pp 213-4.
[16] Phil Kilroy, 'Women and the Reformation in seventeenth century Ireland' in ibid., pp 179-98; Margaret Mac Curtain, 'Women, education and learning in early modern Ireland' in ibid., pp 160-78.

change.[17] Scholarly study of the roles played by women in the wars of the mid-seventeenth century, and the impact of the attendant political and social upheavals on women's lives in particular, also had its genesis in this volume. Mary O'Dowd uncovered how women were involved as both perpetrators and victims in sectarian crime and violence: like Corish, she identified this as a promising avenue for future research. [18] Since then, there has been a significant amount of scholarly analysis of female involvement in the 1641 uprising, but certain lacunae in this specific field exist, which this study aims to address.

In 1992 Mac Curtain and O'Dowd made a second influential intervention which again advanced the scholarly study of women in early modern Ireland when they published their 'Agenda for women's history in Ireland'. Among the topics suggested for future research were the social role of women married to Protestant clergy and the significance of marriage alliances in consolidating ties between New English settler families and facilitating upward social mobility: both are explored in considerable detail in the present study. They also highlighted literary representations of women as a potentially rich vein for future research, arguing that as 'reflection[s] of society's attitudes to women' these could prove particularly apposite in illuminating a greater understanding of women's lives and the roles and attributes to which they were expected to conform. This approach has also been embraced, with the representation of women in various roles being a central element of this thesis. Furthermore their emphasis on the value of adopting a comparative approach when examining attitudes of religious commentators within both denominational traditions – Catholic and Protestant – towards women in late Elizabethan and Stuart Ireland has shaped the methodological approach that underpins this study.[19]

Following on from Mac Curtain and O'Dowd's seminal contributions, further significant advances have been made in terms of the historiography of women in late medieval and early modern Ireland. A major impetus for research on women's history in Ireland came with the Women's History Project (WHP)'s identification of

[17] Ciarán Brady, 'Political women and reform in Tudor Ireland' in ibid., pp 69-90.
[18] Mary O'Dowd, 'Women and war in Ireland in the 1640s' in ibid., pp 91-111.
[19] Mac Curtain, O'Dowd & Luddy, 'Agenda', pp 1-19.

an array of unpublished sources relating to women in public libraries and archival institutions.[20] This was followed soon after by publication of the fourth and fifth volumes of the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* which featured a selection of edited primary source material relating to women in Ireland from early antiquity to the contemporary period.[21] Since the 1990s scholars such as Christine E. Meek, Catherine Lawless, Katherine Simms, Dianne Hall, Mary Ann Lyons, Tadhg Ó hÁnnracháin, Bernadette Cunningham, Bernadette Whelan and Clodagh Tait have also published studies of select aspects of the historical experiences of women in late medieval and early modern Ireland.[22] Christine E. Meek and Catherine Lawless' co-edited volume, *Pawns or players?: studies on medieval and early modern women* (Dublin, 2003), featuring eleven scholarly essays by historians from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds, is especially valuable to the present study in a number of respects. Firstly, its adoption of a comparative approach – both temporal and geographical – to studying women in Ireland revealed new and illuminating insights into their experiences, as well as facilitating contextualisation with European contemporaries and with women across a wide chronological timeframe: hence, when appropriate, a similar approach is adopted in this thesis. Secondly, the volume broke new ground in terms of its attempt to view the experiences of women from a variety of social, cultural and denominational backgrounds through the lens of

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[20] Maria Luddy *et al.* (eds), *A directory of sources for women's history in Ireland* (CD-rom produced by the Irish Manuscripts Commission, Dublin, 1999).

[21] Angela Bourke *et al.* (eds), *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, *vols iv-v* (Cork, 2002).

[22] Christine E. Meek and Katherine Simms (eds), *'The fragility of her sex'. Medieval Irish women in their European context* (Dublin, 1996); Christine E. Meek (ed.), *Women in renaissance and early modern Europe* (Dublin, 2000); eadem and Catherine Lawless (eds), *Pawns or players?: studies on medieval and early modern women* (Dublin, 2003); eaedem (eds), *Victims or viragos? Studies on medieval and early modern women* (Dublin, 2005); Dianne Hall, 'Towards a prosopography of nuns in medieval Ireland' in *Achiv. Hib.*, liii (1999), pp 3-15; 'The nuns of the medieval convent of Lismullin, County Meath, and their secular connections' in *Ri. na Mí.*, x (1999), pp 58-70; eadem, *Women and the church in medieval Ireland, c. 1140-1540* (Dublin, 2003); eadem, 'Women and violence in late medieval Ireland' in Meek & Lawless (eds), *Pawns or players*, pp 131-40; Mary Ann Lyons, 'Lay female piety and church patronage in late medieval Ireland' in Brendan Bradshaw and Dáire Keogh (eds), *Christianity in Ireland: revisiting the story* (Dublin, 2002), pp 57-75; eadem,'The wives of Hugh O'Neill, second earl of Tyrone' in *Dúiche Néill*, xvi (2007), pp 41-61; Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, 'Theory in the absence of fact: Irish women and the Catholic Reformation' in Meek & Lawless (eds), *Pawns or players?*, pp 141-54; Bernadette Cunningham, 'The Poor Clare order in Ireland' in Edel Bhreathnach, Joseph Mac Mahon and John McCafferty (eds), *The Irish Franciscans, 1534-1990* (Dublin, 2009), pp 159-74; Bernadette Whelan, 'Women and warfare, 1641-91' in Pádraig Lenihan (ed.), *Conquest and resistance: war in seventeenth-century Ireland* (Leiden, 2011), pp 317-43; eadem, 'The weaker vessel'? the impact of warfare on women in seventeenth-century Ireland' in Meek & Lawless (eds), *Victims or viragos?*, pp 120-41; Clodagh Tait, 'Colonising memory: manipulations of death, burial and commemoration in the career of Richard Boyle, first Earl of Cork (1566-1643) in *R.I.A. Proc.*, ci, section c, no. 4 (2001), pp 107-34; eadem *Death, burial and commemoration in Ireland, 1550-1650* (Basingstoke, 2002).

female agency. No longer content simply to discover anecdotal information about women which was previously overlooked or to present women as passive victims of patriarchal society (which Meek and Lawless claimed had been the prevailing trend within the emerging historiography of women in early modern Ireland), the authors attempted to progress that historiography in new directions. Highlighting instances of female agency and activism, and emphasising how women could be empowered by the laws and institutions of the society in which they lived, their approach produced a more 'nuanced' portrayal of women's lives.[23] This concept of female agency has been especially useful in the context of the present study. So too has the third innovative feature of the Meek and Lawless volume – the adoption of a gendered approach which explores the respective roles and societal expectations of both men and women, and which in turn underpins much of this thesis. Lastly, the notion of the 'public' and 'private' spheres, often distinguished by modern theorists, was applied to women in this volume. Especially valuable in this regard is Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin's essay, 'Theory in the absence of fact: Irish women and the Catholic Reformation'. Drawing on Corish's idea of the importance of women as agents within the domestic or 'private' sphere and Meek *et al.*'s notion about female agency, Ó hAnnracháin challenged what he viewed as a traditional master narrative of 'a quiet female colonisation of religion in domesticity'. Instead, he pointed to the existence of 'a surprising level of public and collective organisation by [Catholic] women' which, he contended, 'seems to have been based on the notion of a strong reciprocal relationship with the Catholic clergy'.[24] Female agency in the public sphere was also explored in an essay by Dianne Hall which highlighted the prominent role played by certain aristocratic women, notably Elicia Butler, abbess of Kilculliheen convent in County Waterford, in warfare and violence, both as perpetrators and as leading figures inciting male relations to action.[25] In short, this volume contributed significantly to the present study in terms of concepts, approaches and themes.

More recently, Mary O'Dowd's *A history of women in Ireland, 1500-1800* (Harlow, 2005), has offered a valuable additional contribution to knowledge of the lived

[23] Meek & Lawless (eds), *Pawns or players?*, p. 7.
[24] Ó hAnnracháin, 'Theory in the absence of fact', pp 141-54
[25] Hall, 'Women & violence', pp 131-40.

experiences of women in Ireland. In addition to providing a useful chronological and longitudinal exploration of the changing experiences of women in early modern Ireland, O'Dowd's book has been especially pertinent to the present study in two important respects. Firstly, her model of a multi-layered comparative framework is directly adopted in this thesis. O'Dowd examines the experiences of women across a wide social spectrum and from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, incorporates an analysis of the experiences of both lay and religious women and reviews women's experiences across a broad denominational spectrum. Furthermore, she frequently contextualises the experiences of women in Ireland through reference to their contemporaries in England in particular and, to a lesser extent, on the Continent: as indicated above, these are all features which underpin this study.[26] A second feature of O'Dowd's work – her brief yet tantalising survey of the underlying principles, theological precepts, legal parameters and paradigms that informed and shaped society's understanding of women – has proved invaluable in proffering many of the concepts that are central to the present study. O'Dowd (herself a specialist on early modern Ireland) offers a brief but useful discussion on Ireland's 'colonial context' which, she argued, distinguished it from other European countries.[27] In her brief analysis of literary representations of Irish (invariably Catholic) women, O'Dowd contends that they 'were portrayed as guileful and licentious creatures capable of destroying the colonial ideal', the fundamental 'antithesis' of 'English' (invariably Protestant), women, who 'were hailed as a positive force on whom the future of the colony depended'.[28] Her analysis of the dichotomy that characterised representations of 'ideal' Protestant women versus their Catholic 'antitheses' within colonial discourse on early modern Ireland is taken up and significantly elaborated upon in the present study.

Following O'Dowd's 2005 study the historiography of women in early modern Ireland developed still further with contributions by Marie Louise Coolahan, Naomi McAreavey (notably both literary scholars), Barbara Fennell, Nicci Mac Leod and Carol O'Connor in particular enriching our understanding of women and society

[26] O'Dowd, *A history of women.*
[27] Ibid., pp 250-2.
[28] Ibid., p. 251.

during the Elizabethan and Stuart era.[29] Coolahan's *Women, writing and language in early modern Europe* (Oxford, 2010) has been very influential in shaping this thesis in a number of respects. Firstly, her in-depth and comprehensive analysis of representations of women and gender in the varying and disparate forms of religious polemical literature which emanated from literary circles on both sides of the confessional divide within the Tudor and Stuart realm and in Continental Europe has provided a model for this study's analysis of material not covered by Coolahan or other scholars. Similarly, her demonstrating how these representations shaped emerging religious allegiances has influenced the approach to analysing representations by hitherto overlooked authors featured in this thesis. Secondly, building on O'Dowd's earlier observations, Coolahan, in her detailed textual analysis of the specific ways in which Protestant women articulated their experiences of the 1641 rising in the depositions, proffered further evidence of the dynamic nature of female involvement: on that basis she contends that any assessment of women's roles and actions must take into account the heterogeneous nature of their involvement.[30] Coolahan's forensic examination of the language of female victimisation and vulnerability has proved invaluable to the present study, serving as a useful counter-balance to Meek, Lawless and Ó hAnnracháin's emphasis on female agency. In a closely associated area, and building upon Coolahan's exploration of female victimisation, Naomi McAreavey has examined representations of what she has identified as 'troped' violence against women in ephemeral pamphlet literature published *en masse* in the aftermath of the 1641 uprising. Indeed the roles and experiences of women during the 1641 uprising has proven to be one of the most fruitful areas for research on women's history during the early modern period in the past five years, aided in no small part by the recent digitisation of the 1641 depositions, which are now available to view and browse online (discussed in more detail below). However, this recent scholarship has tended to focus largely on female

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[29] Marie Louise Coolahan, *Women, writing and language in early modern Ireland* (Oxford, 2010); eadem, ''And this deponent further sayeth': orality, print and the 1641 Depositions' in Marc Caball and Andrew Carpenter (eds), *Oral and print cultures in Ireland, 1600-1900* (Dublin, 2010), pp 69-84; Naomi McAreavey, 'Re(-)membering women: Protestant women's victim testimonies during the Irish rising of 1641' in *Journal of the Northern Renaissance*, ii, no. 1 (2010), pp 72-92; Nicci MacLeod and Barbara Fennell, 'Lexico-Grammatical Portraits' in *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, xiii, no. 2 (2012), pp 259-90; Barbara Fennell, 'Routine appropriation: Women's voices and women's experiences in the 1641 depositions' in *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*, vi, no. 2 (Spring, 2013), pp 53-70; Carol Helen O'Connor, 'The 'Kildare women': family, life, marriage and politics' (PhD thesis, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2008).

[30] Coolahan, *Women, writing & language*, p. 179.

victimisation and traumatisation, thereby skewing our understanding of the full extent of women's roles as perpetrators of crime and violence during the sectarian unrest. By examining the roles and representations of women as both victims and perpetrators of sectarian violence in the Leinster and south-east Munster regions, this study makes a significant contribution to this growing corpus of scholarship, furthering our understanding of the diversity and 'heterogeneity' of female experiences of war and violence in mid-seventeenth-century Ireland.[31]

Notwithstanding the significant advances in women's history over the past twenty-five years, the historiography of women in early modern Ireland still remains relatively underdeveloped, especially when one compares the breadth and scope of literature available on women in England or in Continental Europe. This is in no small part a reflection of the fact that Irish social history, the traditional foundation upon which women's history is built, remains, especially for the early modern period, underdeveloped.[32] The consequences of this as it relates to the study of women in early modern Ireland have recently been highlighted by Anne Laurence: she has pointed out that even though the study of community and identity has been central to early modern Irish social history in recent years, 'rarely have women's identities or their place in the variety of different communities that existed' been the subject of consideration.[33] Nevertheless, since the late 1990s historians including Raymond Gillespie, Colm Lennon, Nicholas Canny, Clodagh Tait, Brian Mac Cuarta, Susan Flavin, Jane Ohlmeyer, James Murray and Mary Ann Lyons, have been addressing this historiographical lacuna and the social history of early modern Ireland has

[31] Ibid., p. 179.
[32] Laurence, 'Real & imagined communities', pp 13-28.
[33] Ibid., p. 26.

grown apace.[34] The present study draws upon this growing pool of scholarship to contextualise the diverse experience of women during the later Elizabethan and Stuart eras within the wider political, social and religious upheavals of the period, to gain an understanding of the world in which they lived and the factors that shaped what were often ambiguous and multifaceted notions of collective identity within two emerging confessional communities. Colm Lennon's *The lords of Dublin in the age of Reformation* (Dublin, 1989), Raymond Gillespie's *Devoted people: belief and religion in early modern Ireland* (Manchester, 1997), and his co-edited volume (with W. G. Neely), *The laity and the Church of Ireland, 1000-2000: all sorts and conditions* (Dublin, 2002), together with Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin and Robert Armstrong's *Community in early modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2006), have provided useful interpretive frameworks within which the present study is located. This thesis aims to contribute significantly to that field of historiography by presenting a pioneering exploration of the roles of women in the relationship between two increasingly polarised confessional communities.[35] Mac Cuarta's periodization of phases of intensifying religious conflict at a broad societal level in the early to mid-Stuart period has also been crucial to this study. His discussion of the parameters of religious tolerance and the state's often ambiguous attitude towards the imposition of religious conformity is particularly pertinent to this analysis of women's experience

[34] Raymond Gillespie, *Devoted people: belief and religion in early modern Ireland* (Manchester, 1997); idem, 'Popular and unpopular religion a view from early modern Ireland' in James S. Donnelly and Kerby A. Miller (eds), *Irish popular culture, 1650-1850* (Dublin, 1998), pp 30-49; idem & W.G. Neely (eds), *The laity and the Church of Ireland, 1000-2000: all sorts and conditions* (Dublin, 2002); Raymond Gillespie, 'The religion of the Protestant laity in early modern Ireland' in Bradshaw & Keogh (eds), *Christianity in Ireland*, pp 109-23; Colm Lennon, *The lords of Dublin in the age of Reformation* (Dublin, 1989); idem, 'Mass in the manor house: the Counter-Reformation in Dublin, 1560-1630' in James Kelly and Dáire Keogh (eds), *History of the Catholic diocese of Dublin* (Dublin, 2000), pp 112-26; idem, 'The shaping of a lay community in the Church of Ireland, 1558-1640' in Gillespie & W.G. Neely (eds), *The laity and the Church of Ireland,* pp 49-69; idem, 'Religious and social change in early moder Limerick: the testimony of the Sextons family papers' in Liam Irwin and Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh (eds), *Limerick, history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 2009), pp 113-28; Nicholas Canny, *The upstart earl: a study of the social and mental world of Richard Boyle, first earl of Cork, 1566-1643* (Cambridge, 1982); idem, *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650* (Oxford, 2001); Tait, 'Colonising memory', pp 107-34; eadem, *Death, burial & commemoration*; Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*; idem, 'A Catholic funeral in County Down, 1617' in *Achiv. Hib.*, lx (2006-7), pp 320-5; Susan Flavin, *Consumption and culture in sixteenth-century Ireland: saffron, stockings and silk* (Woodbridge, 2014); Jane Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English: the Irish aristocracy in the seventeenth century* (London, 2012); James Murray, *Enforcing the English Reformation in Ireland: clerical resistance and political conflict in the diocese of Dublin, 1534-1590* (Dublin, 2009); Mary Ann Lyons, *Church and society in County Kildare,* c.*1480-1547* (Dublin, 2000); eadem, 'Lay female piety & church patronage', pp 57-75; eadem, 'The wives of Hugh O'Neill', pp 41-61.

[35] Murray, *Enforcing the English Reformation*; Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*; Raymond Gillespie, *Seventeenth century Ireland: making Ireland modern* (Dublin, 2006).

of and reactions to religious change and their attempts to circumvent the enforcement of religious conformity.[36] Vincent P. Carey and Ute Lotz-Heumann's volume, *Taking sides? Colonial and confessional mentalités in early modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2003) has been useful in terms of the conceptualisation and periodisation of religious change, offering novel insights into the concept of confessional *mentalités* (from the French *Annales* school) while the theme of 'taking sides' has been valuable in framing this study's analysis of the emergence, formation and consolidation of distinct religious beliefs, ideologies and identities – processes precipitated by colonization and confessional conflicts of early modern Ireland. This thesis builds upon that approach, making a fresh contribution by adopting a gendered approach to confessional division which highlights the many and often distinctive ways in which women 'took sides'.[37] A theoretical framework for interpreting early modern Irish martyrdom, developed in recent decades by Patrick J. Corish, Benignus Millett, Ciarán Brady, Colm Lennon and Alan Ford, has aided the contextualisation of this study's analysis of representations of female martyrs within the frame of wider literary and martyrological developments during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[38] The nature and extent of sectarianism in early modern Ireland has also been the subject of increasing scholarly attention. In this study, Alan Ford's tentative interpretation and periodization of sectarianism[39] is embraced, and episodes of religious conflict interpreted with Raymond Gillespie's warning regarding the multifaceted and complex nature of that task in mind. In this context, Gillespie's notion of 'channels of the holy' (for example, Bibles and ecclesiastical infrastructure as especially potent expressions of sectarian antagonism) has provided a useful conceptual focus for this study's exploration of women's involvement in religious

[36] Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*.
[37] Mary Ann Lyons, 'Review article: Taking sides? Colonial and confessional mentalités in early modern Ireland: essays in honour of Karl. S Bottigheimer by Vincent P. Carey; Ute Lotz-Heumann' in *Renaissance Quarterly*, lvii, no. 4 (Winter, 2004), p. 1546.
[38] Patrick J. Corish, 'The Irish martyrs in Irish history' in *Achiv. Hib.*, xlvii (1993), pp 89-3; idem (ed.), *The Irish martyrs* (Dublin, 2005); Benignus Millett, 'Appendix: the historiography of the martyrs' in Corish (ed.), *Irish martyrs*, pp 184-201; Ciarán Brady, 'The beatified martyrs of Ireland (4): Margaret Ball (née Bermingham)' in *Ir. Theol. Quart.*, lxiv, no. 4 (1999), pp 379-84; Lennon, 'Taking sides', pp 78-93; idem, 'Political thought of Irish Counter-Reformation churchmen: the testimony of the 'Analecta' of David Rothe' in Hiram Morgan (ed.), *Political ideology in Ireland, 1541-1641* (Dublin, 1999), pp 181-202; idem, 'Religious wars in Ireland: plantations and martyrs of the Catholic Church' in Bradshaw & Keogh (eds), *Christianity in Ireland*, pp 86-95; Alan Ford, 'Martyrdom, history and memory in early modern Ireland' in Ian McBride (ed.), *History and memory in modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2001), pp 43-66.
[39] Ford, 'Living together, living apart', pp 1-23.

conflict, especially during the 1641 uprising.[40] The work of Mary Ann Lyons, Thomas O'Connor and Gráinne Henry which has reconstructed the close familial and institutional connections that existed between the Catholic community in Ireland and the Irish émigré community on the Continent, notably in France, Spain and Spanish Flanders during the early modern period, provides a vital base on which this thesis builds by highlighting how vital these ties were in facilitating the education and vocational formation of not only men (who have been studied extensively) but also women from Ireland, several of whom returned from Europe to serve in the Irish mission, thereby making a distinctive (and until now largely unrecognised) contribution to the rehabilitation of Catholicism and the Catholic Church in Ireland from the late 1620s onwards.[41]

The study of religion and religious change in early modern Ireland has been a field of lively scholarly endeavour and debate in which a number of notable contributors have expanded considerably our knowledge of the nature and rate of religious change in the later Tudor and Stuart eras. Colm Lennon's work on popular religion, religious guilds and chantries has been invaluable. In particular his charting of the transition from nominal conformity and Catholic survivalism in the 1560s and 1570s, to church papistry and forceful recusancy in the 1580s and 1590s, and finally to a fully articulated Counter-Reformation faith (notably by the Dublin and Limerick patriciate by the first decade of the seventeenth century) has shaped the interpretive framework for this thesis.[42] Similarly, Brendan Bradshaw and Mary Ann Lyons's examinations of the fallout from the dissolution of the monasteries during the Henrician reformation of the 1530s and 1540s have been useful in setting a contextual framework.[43] Adding a gendered dimension to analysis of the fallout from the dissolution campaign through focusing on how communities of female religious in Leinster and south-east Munster navigated their survival in the aftermath of the closures, this thesis makes a significant contribution to deepening our understanding

[40] Gillespie, 'Popular & unpopular religion', pp 30-49.
[41] Mary Ann Lyons and Thomas O'Connor (eds), *Irish migrants in Europe after Kinsale, 1602-1820* (Dublin, 2003); idem (eds), *Irish communities in early modern Europe* (Dublin, 2006); idem (eds), *The Ulster earls and baroque Europe: refashioning Irish identities, 1600-1800* (Dublin, 2009); Gráinne Henry, *The Irish military community in Spanish Flanders, 1586-1621* (Dublin, 1992).
[42] Lennon, *The lords of Dublin*; idem, 'The rise of recusancy', pp 123-32.
[43] Brendan Bradshaw, *The dissolution of the religious orders in Ireland under Henry VIII* (Cambridge, 1974); Lyons, *Church & society*.

of survivalism, recusancy, female education and the relationship between pre-Henrician religious foundations and those established in Ireland under the influence of the Counter-Reformation movement from the late 1620s. In so doing this study also builds upon the scholarship of Henry Jefferies, James Murray and Brendan Scott.[44] More specific studies of the Church of Ireland institution and its personnel by Alan Ford, John McCafferty and Áine Hensey have informed the analysis of the nature and progress of the Elizabethan and Stuart religious reform programmes, while the work of Brian Mac Cuarta and Tadhg Ó hÁnnracháin, shedding light on the nature of Catholic reform and revival as well as connections between Catholics and Catholicism in Ireland and Continental Europe during the Stuart era, has provided a useful framework in which to interpret the roles played by women.[45]

Owing to the limited body of Irish secondary literature pertaining to women during the early modern era, the thesis draws extensively on paradigms and frameworks from the more developed and advanced field of women's history in the English and European historiographical traditions in order to contextualise and interpret the experiences and reactions of women in Ireland. The broad overview of the status of women in early modern English society featured in works such as Mary Prior's *Women in English society, 1500-1800* (London, 1985), Patricia Crawford's *Women and religion in England, 1500-1720* (London, 1993) and Anne Laurence's *Women in England, 1500-1760: a social history* (London, 1994) has shaped the construction of the interpretive framework for this study. In particular, Laurence's emphasis on considering women's experiences within the context of the political, economic and religious changes and related cultural transformations of the period, her advocacy of adopting a gendered approach to the study of women's experiences, and her highlighting lacunae in the conceptual frameworks for studying the female experience of confessional division in Ireland have shaped this author's approach

[44] Henry A. Jefferies, *The Irish Church and the Tudor Reformations* (Dublin, 2010); Murray, *Enforcing the English Reformation*; Brendan Scott, *Religion and reformation in the Tudor diocese of Meath* (Dublin, 2006).

[45] Alan Ford, *The Protestant Reformation in Ireland, 1590-1641*(Frankfurt, 1995); John McCafferty, *The reconstruction of the Church of Ireland: Bishop Bramhall and the Laudian reforms, 1633-1641* (Cambridge, 2007); Áine Hensey, 'A comparative study of the lives of Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic clergy in the south-eastern dioceses of Ireland from 1550-1650' (PhD thesis, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2012); Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*; Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic Reformation in Ireland: The mission of Rinuccini, 1645-49* (Oxford, 2002).

both to researching and writing the history of women.[46] Consequently, this thesis endeavours to adopt and complement existing explorations of the dynamics of inter and intra communal relations in this period.[47] More recently, historians of early modern England such as Alexandra Walsham and Frances E. Dolan have made considerable progress in integrating the study of gender into more general interpretations of religious change and conflict in this era. Dolan's innovative conceptual approach, collapsing distinctions between the real and the imagined, between facts and their representations, in order better to reveal the complicated nature of relations between religion and gender in the Catholic (even more than in the Protestant) imagination, has been adopted in the following analysis of representations of women.[48] Dolan, Walsham and Marie B. Rowland's explorations of the gendered nature of conviction for non-conformity in England have paved the way for a similar analysis featured in this study.[49] In the case of continental Europe, the scholarship of authors including Merry Wiesner-Hanks, Sharon T. Strocchia, Silvia Evangelisti, Caroline Bowden and Claire Walker has provided useful

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[46] Anne Laurence, *Women in England, 1500-1760: a social history* (London, 1994); eadem, 'Daniel's practice: the daily round of godly women in seventeenth century England' in R. N. Swanson (ed.), *The use and abuse of time in Christian history. Studies in church history, vol. 37* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp 173-83; eadem, 'Women, godliness and personal appearance in seventeenth-century England' in *Women's History Review*, vxv, no. 1 (2006), pp 69-81; eadem, 'Real & imagined communities', pp 13-28; eadem, 'Women in the British Isles in the sixteenth century' in Robert Tittler and Norman Jones (eds), *A companion of Tudor Britain* (Oxford, 2009), pp 381-402.

[47] Gillespie, *Devoted people*; idem and Elizabeth Fitzpatrick (eds), *The parish in medieval and early modern Ireland: community, territory and building* (Dublin, 2006); Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin and Robert Armstrong (eds), *Community in early modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2006).

[48] Frances E. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, gender and seventeenth century print culture* (Ithaca, 1999); eadem, 'Gender and the 'lost' spaces of Catholicism' in *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, xxxii, no. 4 (Spring, 2002), pp 641-65; eadem, 'Reading, work and Catholic women's biographies' in *English Literary Renaissance*, xxxiii, no. 3 (Autumn, 2003), pp 328-57;

[49] Marie B. Rowland, 'Recusant women, 1560-1640' in Mary Prior (ed.), *Women in English society* (London, 1985), pp 149-80; Alexandra Walsham, *Church papists: Catholicism, conformity and confessional polemic in early modern England* (Woodbridge, 1993), pp 78-81; eadem, *Catholic reformation in Protestant Britain* (Cambridge, 2014); Dolan, 'Gender & the 'lost' spaces', p. 654: see also Laurence Lux-Sterritt, '"Virgo becomes Virago": women in the accounts of seventeenth century English Catholic missionaries' in *Recusant History*, xxx, no. 4 (2011), pp 537-53.

contextual frameworks within which to locate this study's analysis of women's roles and representations.[50]

IV – Primary sources/Methodology

Sources for the study of women and religious change and conflict in late Tudor and Stuart Ireland are scarce and those that have survived offer limited insights. The nature of the historical record means that documentation is almost exclusively generated about (and more occasionally by) women from the middle and upper ranks of early modern society (gentry and aristocracy). As a result, the experiences of women of lower socio-economic rank are often more difficult to elucidate. However, attempts have been made where possible to bring to light their experiences, thus creating a more nuanced picture of women's lives. Furthermore, explicit and direct references to women's involvement in religious practice, devotion and conflict in the sources are rare. The nature of the source material therefore imposes various demands on the historian, who, for the most part is constantly compelled to read against the grain, to look to unearth the subtext and to elucidate shadowy, fleeting allusions featured in a variety of sources. As O'Dowd has remarked, researching the history of women certainly involves 'taking the time to identify the presence of women in the sources'. But as she has also noted, and as this study shows, while 'men may dominate the foreground, women are frequently to be found in the background'.[51]

The fragmentary nature of the surviving evidence relating to the study of women and religious change and conflict in early modern Ireland has, inevitably, shaped the structure of this thesis as a series of case studies rather than as a study of the generality of the phenomenon. There are of course certain limitations associated with such an approach; for example, case studies tend to obscure the longer term

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[50] Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and gender in early modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1993); eadem, *Convents confront the Reformation: Catholic and Protestant nuns in Germany* (Milwaukee, 1996); eadem, *Christianity and sexuality in the early modern world: regulating desire, reforming practice* (2nd edn., Abingdon, 2010); Sharon T. Strocchia, *Nuns and nunneries in Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore, 2009); Silvia Evangelisti, *Nuns: a history of convent life, 1450-1700* (Oxford, 2007); Caroline Bowden, 'The English convent in exile and questions of national identity, *c*.1660-1668' in David Worthington (ed.), *British Irish emigrants and exiles in Europe* (Boston, 2010), pp 297-314; Claire Walker, 'Combining Martha and Mary: Gender and work in seventeenth-century cloisters' in *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, xxx, no. 2 (1999), pp 397-418.

[51] O'Dowd, *A history of women in Ireland*, p. 4.

continuities of religious change and belief as they developed during the course of the early modern period. Nonetheless case studies are a valuable qualitative research tool which can help to illuminate how individual women, within designated time periods, geographical locations and from specific socio-economic and denominational backgrounds, negotiated and reacted to the religious changes and conflicts which impacted their lives to varying degrees, allowing us to therefore glean particular insights into their particular experiences. Furthermore, case studies allow for effective comparative analysis which underpins this study's methodological approach.

In order to construct as comprehensive a picture of women's experiences of religious change and conflict during this period as possible, a wide variety of source material has been consulted, including state papers, journals, pamphlets, martyrologies, depositions as well as funerary sermons, funerary monuments and family papers. At appropriate junctures reflections on the strengths and limitations of specific sources are featured. The following is a brief outline of the major sources utilised and the nature of the methodological approach adopted. A systematic trawl of the major early modern collections, for example, the *State Papers*, the *Carew Manuscripts,* the *Patent and Close Rolls of Chancery in Ireland,* the *Extents of Monastic Possessions* and the *Fiants* of the Tudor and early Stuart period was undertaken, anecdotal information on discovery of women's involvement in recusancy, survivalism, riot, etc. was extracted, subjected to in-depth content analysis, and synthesised. The *State Papers* proved a valuable source as at times of heightened political turmoil or a threat to Crown authority, they feature reports on the discovery of those suspected of non-conformity, including women, revealing insights into the state's encounters with and treatment of women found to be engaging in recusancy and survivalism. These papers have their limitations: the correspondence offers a one-sided perspective, and whereas reports of interrogation and discovery of men and particularly clergy frequently occur, corresponding reports concerning women are rare. Nevertheless, when such reports do appear, they not only provide valuable glimpses into female recusancy but also insights into women's encounters with the law and government officials revealing the decidedly gendered nature of conviction for non-conformity. Enquiries and reports generated by officials of the church and state, for example,

Archbishop Thomas Ram's report on the bishopric of Ferns and Leighlin in 1612, the royal visitation of Dublin in 1615, reports of the commission to investigate Irish affairs in 1622, and Archbishop Lancelot Bulkeley's visitation of Dublin in 1630, all of which feature evidence of the extent and nature of female non-conformity in Leinster and south-east Munster and official reactions to it, are used in this study.[52]

As was the case for the state papers and other reports of church and state consulted, a systematic trawl of the major journal collections was undertaken particularly with a view to locating valuable primary source material found therein. Several of these journals pre-date the destruction of the Public Records Office, Dublin in 1922 (some range as far back as the 1840s): as such they are especially valuable for this study as they published transcriptions of primary source material that is no longer extant. The most useful of these include *The Irish Genealogist*, *Ríocht na Midhe*, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries*, *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society*, *Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society*, *Old Kilkenny Review*, *Archivium Hibernicum*, *Analecta Hibernica* and *Collectanea Hibernica*.

A central theme in the thesis is how women are represented in the emerging Irish Catholic and Irish Protestant traditions of martyrology. The Catholic martyrological tradition is considered first as this was the first to emerge, not in Ireland but on the Continent where it was part an Irish Catholic literary tradition developing there in the 1580s and 1590s. Particularly pertinent is the manuscript martyrology entitled 'Perbreve compendium', penned by the Irish Jesuit John Howlin (*c*.1543/4-99) while he was living at Lisbon between *c*.1589 and 1599 and now preserved in the Russell Library at Maynooth.[53] While Howlin's martyrology is largely concerned with

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[52] Myles V. Ronan (ed.), 'The royal visitation of Dublin, 1615' in *Achiv. Hib.*, iii (1941), pp 1-55; Robert J. Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath, *c*.1622' in *Collect. Hib.*, xiv (1971), pp 7-12; Myles V. Ronan (ed.), 'Archbishop Bulkeley's visitation of Dublin, 1630' in *Achiv. Hib.*, iii (1941), pp 56-98; 'A true accompt of the bishop of Ferns and Leighlin, how he hath performed those duties … made the 1st September 1612' (TCD, MS 1066).

[53] John Howlin, 'Perbreve compendium, in quo continentur nonnullorum nomina, qui in Hybernia regnante impia Elizabetha, vincula, martirium et exilium perpessi sunt' (henceforth 'Perbreve compendium'): the manuscript version was preserved in the Irish college at Salamanca until the 1950s when it was taken to Maynooth where it is now classified as Maynooth, Salamanca MSS, SP/11/6/1, legajo xi, no. 4. It is printed in P.F. Moran (ed.), *Spicilegium Ossoriense: being a collection of original letters and papers illustrative of the history of the Irish church from the reformation to 1800* (4 vols, Dublin, 1874), i, 82-109. An English translation of Howlin's account of Margaret Ball is printed in Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 472-3.

recounting the martyrdoms of male (mostly clerical) figures, his work contains the earliest record of the life and death of the first two early modern Irish female martyrs, Meath-native and widow, Margaret Ball, and Dublin resident and religious woman, Margery Barnewall (b. *c*.1547).[54] Significant too in the context of the emerging Irish Catholic martyrological tradition and the representation of female martyrs therein are David Rothe's *De processu martyriali* (Cologne, 1619), John Mullan's *Epitome tripartite martyrum* (Paris, 1629), John Lynch's, *Alithinologia* (St Malo, 1664) and Arthur Monstier's *Sacrum gynecaeum seu martyrologium* (Paris, 1657).[55] While by definition these sources are biased favour of publicising the male experience of religious conflict and martyrdom (the female experience features only very briefly), the account composed by Mother Mary Bonaventure Browne (d. *c*.1694), a Galway native and member of the Irish Poor Clare order, is unique because it is written from the perspective of a Catholic religious woman about the female religious experience of sectarian conflict. Now housed in the Galway Monastery of the Poor Clares, the account was originally composed sometime between 1669 and 1671, while Browne was living in Madrid.[56] Her account elucidates the impact that the outbreak of violence in 1641 had on the Poor Clare nuns, an experience which she equates to martyrdom. Unlike the latter martyologies published and/or disseminated in Catholic circles in Europe, Browne's chronicle was not intended for public distribution. Nevertheless it is a unique and valuable source, providing a rare first-hand (albeit retrospective) insight into the impact of the outbreak of sectarian violence in 1641 on the nuns and how they were compelled to

[54] For a discussion of the development of the Irish martyrological tradition see Ford, 'Martyrdom, history & memory', pp 43-66.

[55] David Rothe's *De processu martyriali*, published at Cologne in 1619, was the third part of a larger work entitled *Analecta sacra nova et mira de rebus Catholicorum in Hibernia, pro fide et religion gestis*, which was first published at Paris in 1616. The projected work was to have three parts but the Paris edition contained part one only. Another edition, containing parts one and two appeared at Cologne in 1617. In 1619, *De processu martyriali*, was published as the promised third part. The entire work was edited and published in Dublin by Patrick F. Moran in 1884 as the *Analecta of David Rothe, bishop of* Ossory. An English translation of Rothe's account of Margaret Ball is printed in Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 473-5. For a discussion on the *Analecta* see Lennon, 'Political thought of Irish Counter-Reformation churchmen', pp 181-202 and Thomas O'Connor, 'Custom, authority and tolerance in Irish political thought: David Rothe's *Analecta sacra et mira* (1616)' in *Ir. Theo. Quart.*, lxvi (2000), pp 133-56.

[56] Chronicle of Mother Mary Bonaventure Browne, MS, Galway Monastery of the Poor Clares, fol. 3v (henceforth Galway chronicle). For a modernised edition see Celsus O'Brien (ed.), *Recollections of an Irish Poor Clare in the seventeenth century* (Galway, 1993). Browne's chronicle is followed in the manuscript by the anonymous 'Additional Material Following the Narrative of Mother Mary Bonaventure Browne's "Narrative"', dated 1694. The surviving manuscript, whose watermark dates from the late seventeenth century, is a contemporary translation into English – the original perished during the Williamite wars in 1691: see Coolahan, *Women, writing & language*, pp 78-101

adapt their spiritual way of life in order to cope with the major upheavals which the conflict precipitated. In the case of the emerging Irish Protestant martyrological tradition, which had its roots in the English Foxean martyrological tradition, but which developed in earnest in the aftermath of the 1641 uprising, John Temple's *The Irish rebellion* (London, 1646) and Samuel Clarke's *A generall martyrologie* (London, 1655) are important.[57] Their representations of female victims of the 1641 rising, who in the case of Clarke's representation were deliberately styled 'martyrs' for the faith and admitted to the pantheon of Protestant martyrs, have been useful in facilitating comparative analysis of female martyrdom on both sides of the confessional divide in this study. Thus, an analysis of what commentators on both sides of the confessional divide deemed worthy attributes of exceptional female sacrifice and martyrdom within the context of what they construed as hostile sectarian strife has been central to the methodological approach underpinning this thesis. Taken collectively, these martyrologies shed light on the processes by which distinct confessional *mentalités*, ideologies and cultures emerged and the role of women therein.

Funerary sermons and elegies too have been useful to the present study's identification of paradigms and parameters underpinning representations of 'ideal' womanhood in the Elizabethan and Stuart periods. As one might expect, funerary sermons and elegies published in Ireland, as in England, commemorated adherents of the Established Church considered to be 'godly'. Whereas, in the case of seventeenth-century England, the publication of sermons and elegies extolling the virtues of 'godly' Protestant women proliferated from the early seventeenth century onwards, in Ireland published sermons and elegies were less common, reflecting the under-developed nature of the Irish print trade.[58] Furthermore, the publication of funerary sermons was the preserve of the upper ranks, the aristocracy and gentry, who possessed the requisite financial resources to fund the printing. Indeed, during the period under consideration, only one published funerary sermon dedicated to the memory of an individual woman is extant: the *Musarum*, an elegy scribed by a group

[57] John Foxe, *Actes and monuments of these latter and perilous days, touching matters of the church* (London, 1563); John Temple, *The Irish rebellion* (London, 1646); Samuel Clarke, *A generall martyrologie* (London, 1651).
[58] Raymond Gillespie, *Reading Ireland: print, reading and social change in early modern Ireland* (Manchester, 2005).

of scholars from Trinity College, Dublin in 1630, on the occasion of the death of Catherine Boyle née Fenton, Countess of Cork.[59] However, while the publication of the *Musarum* was unique in an Irish context, reflecting the Boyle family's exceptional wealth, it nonetheless offers insights into the position and status of women among the New English Protestant community. Tomb sculpture and funerary monuments were another valuable source drawn upon for this study. Again, the number that survives is limited and those that do are biased in terms of the socio-economic status and the confessional denomination of those whom they commemorate. By and large these monuments commemorate members of the gentry, aristocracy and urban patriciate, the majority of them Church of Ireland adherents. By contrast, the relatively scant survival of Catholic funerary monuments and tombs reflects that church's enforced operation as an underground and clandestine organisation. While, as will be discussed later, further limitations arise in relation to a gendered analysis of funerary monuments and tomb sculpture Notwithstanding these limitations, they represent a rich source for the study of women and religion in Tudor and Stuart Ireland, featuring telling indicators of the confessional *mentalité* and beliefs of individual women at the end of their lives and providing vignettes into the personal religious beliefs and convictions of individuals for whom quite often no documentary record exists.

Personal records, including diaries, memoirs, biographies, family correspondence and wills constitute another valuable corpus of material, albeit that they tend to feature references to women in documentation largely generated by and about the upper ranks of the Protestant lay and religious male élite. Material concerning women has been garnered from the letterbook of George Fitzgerald (1612-60), sixteenth Earl of Kildare, the diary of Richard Boyle (1566-1643), first Earl of Cork, biographies of William Bedell (1571-1642), Church of Ireland Bishop of Kilmore and Ardagh and John Atherton (1598-1640), Church of Ireland bishop of Waterford and Lismore, the *Ussher memoirs*, the *Ball family records*, the *Hamilton manuscripts*

[59] *Musarum Lachrymae: siue Elegia Collegii Sanctae et Indiuiduae Trinitatis iuxta Dublin in obitum illustrissimae et religiosissimae heroinae, Catharinae, comitissae Corcagiae* (Dublin, 1630).

and the *Montgomery manuscripts*.[60] While these sources are limited in terms of their insights into women's lives, occasionally intimate vignettes on the nature of family life can be gleaned, providing rare glimpses into the daily lived experiences of individual women, among these their freedom in choosing marriage partners or the extent to which this was governed by male relatives, the influence of certain aristocratic women in directing the marriages of their offspring, the role of women as educators, as godparents and as widows. Furthermore, these sources provide a valuable perspective on male perceptions of female family members, thereby permitting a valuable gendered analysis of the circumstances of certain individual women at a micro level.

The online reference sources that have been especially useful in researching the female experience of religious change and conflict consulted over the course of this study include the 'Who were the Nuns?' online database, Early English Books Online (EBBO), Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO) and Medieval and Early Modern Sources Online (MEMSO).[61]

While a large and diverse range of source material has been examined in researching this study, one particular body of evidence – the 1641 depositions – requires special comment. Held at Trinity College, Dublin, this collection of over 3,000 witness

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[60] Aidan Clarke and Brid McGrath (eds), *Letterbook of George, sixteenth earl of Kildare* (Dublin, 2013); Alexander B. Grosart, *The Lismore papers: autobiographical notes, remembrances and diaries of Sir Richard Boyle, first and 'Great' Earl of Cork* (1st ser., 5 vols; 2nd ser., 5 vols, London, 1886); William Ball Wright (ed.), *The Ussher memoirs or genealogical memoirs of the Ussher family in Ireland (with appendix, pedigree and index of names), compiled from public and private sources* (Dublin, 1889); *The Ball family records: genealogical memoirs of some Ball families of Great Britain, Ireland and America* (York, 1908); E.S. Shuckburgh (ed.), *Two biographies of William Bedell, bishop of Kilmore, with a selection of his letters and an unpublished treatise* (Cambridge, 1902); Nicholas Bernard, *The penitent death of a woeful sinner. Or, the penitent death of John Atherton executed at Dublin the 5 of December 1640* (London, 1641); T.K Lowry (ed.), *The Hamilton manuscripts: containing some account of the settlement of the territories of the upper Clandeboye, Great Ardes, and Dufferin, in the county of Down, by Sir James Hamilton, Knight (afterwards created Viscount Claneboye) in the reigns of James I and Charles* (Belfast, 1867); George Hill (ed.), *The Montgomery manuscripts: 1603-1706. Compiled from family papers by William Montgomery of Rosemount* (Belfast, 1869).

[61] Dictionary of Irish Biography at http://dib.cambridge.org/; *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* at http://www.oxforddnb.com/; the 'Who were the Nuns? A prosopographical study of the English Convents in exile 1600-1800' at http://wwtn.history.qmul.ac.uk/; Early English Books Online (EBBO) at http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home; Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO) at http://find.galegroup.com.jproxy.nuim.ie/ecco/start.do?prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=nuim and Medieval and Early Modern Sources Online (MEMSO) available via Maynooth University Library at http://sources.tannerritchie.com/browser.php?

testimonies, made mainly by Protestants, records their alleged experiences during the 1641 uprising.[62] Originating as sworn oral testimony spoken before at least two commissioners and recorded by a scribe, mainly in Dublin, the depositions contain answers to a series of pre-determined questions.[63] Yet, despite their rich contents, they have serious limitations, particularly for this study. Firstly, the proportion of female depositions is small: of the 3,000 plus witness testimonies gathered, women's depositions comprise less than a third. Secondly, the depositions were made mainly by Protestant victims, largely settlers of English and Scottish descent.[64] The motives, actions and reactions of rebels and victims alike are, therefore, viewed, interpreted and represented through a Protestant lens.[65] Thirdly, although the depositions follow a standard formula, they vary enormously, ranging from brief statements featuring an inventory of goods and basic information on the circumstances of robbery and deprivation to extensive and detailed accounts of rebel cruelty and victim suffering. Furthermore, the admission of rumour and hearsay as evidence, a practice generally frowned upon in seventeenth-century legal practice, added to scepticism about their reliability.[66] Thus, ever since their creation the 1641 depositions as a source have been the subject of intense debate. As such, they must be (and are in this thesis)

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[62] Long accessible only by microfilm, as a result of a two-year research project undertaken collaboratively between Trinity College, Dublin, the University of Aberden and the Univeristy of Cambridge, the depositions have been transcribed and digitised and are now available to access and browse online: see the 1641 Depositions project website, available at www.1641.tcd

[63] Typically, they begin with the deponent's name, place of residence and social status; they then list financial losses incurred, in varying degrees of detail and the names of those who robbed them. Finally, they list any crimes carried out, including assault, imprisonment and murder and the perpetrators involved: see Aidan Clarke, 'The 1641 Depositions' in P. Fox (ed.), *Treasures of the Library, Trinity College Dublin* (Dublin, 1986), pp 111-22.

[64] The depositions were collected initially by a government-appointed committee of eight Church of Ireland clergymen, headed by Henry Jones (1605-82), dean of Kilmore and later bishop of Meath, between December 1641 and June 1642, and subsequently by a series of committees comprising ministers, judges and privy councillors: see Clarke, 'The 1641 Depositions', pp 111-22.

[65] During the 1650s further records were gathered with the primary purpose of ascertaining the identity those guilty of crimes. Thus, while the intent of the initial commissions was to document the material losses sustained by Protestant settlers, later commissions were convened to gather evidence on violent and other serious crimes including murders, massacres and apostasy: see Clarke, 'The 1641 Depositions', pp 111-122.

[66] Barbara Fennell, 'Dodgy dossiers: hearsay and the 1641 Depositions' in *History Ireland*, xix (2011), pp 26-9.

interpreted with circumspection and discrimination.[67] With these caveats in mind, however, the depositions offer invaluable insights into the nature and impact of the rising on individuals and communities who lived through it and, as will be discussed in chapter four, offer a unique potential for revealing aspects of women's lives which otherwise rarely appear in other official records.[68]

V – Structure

This thesis comprises four chapters. The first discusses lay Catholic women, with a view to exploring the world in which they lived, the ideals to which they were expected to conform, and the ways in which they negotiated the religious changes and varying degrees of conflict arising from confessional division in Ireland during that era. The chapter begins with an examination of the definition of the 'ideal' Catholic woman as prescribed by contemporary clerical and literary commentators in religious treatises, conduct books and devotional literature before considering how, in an environment of enforced conformity, tension and at times open and brutal conflict, Catholic women like their Protestant counterparts, devised various strategies in order to give expression to their religious beliefs and practices. Specifically, their roles as maintainers and protectors of Catholic clergy are highlighted to demonstrate how women played an active role and exerted considerable influence in directing religious change in Ireland during the decades after 1560. This chapter also shows that whereas for much of the period between 1560 and 1640 recusant women remained undiscovered or unimpeded in continuing to maintain priests and religious in their households, occasionally in Ireland, as in England, a crisis or escalated threat to the security of the realm, or a challenge to

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[67] However, while acknowledging their partisan nature, the determination of the deposition commissioners (all Protestant clergymen) to represent Irish Catholics in the worst possible light in order to secure lucrative compensation for Protestant victims, and the considerable difficulties they present in terms of interpretation, recently historians have reappraised the value of the depositions, arguing that they cannot be entirely dismissed as historical evidence. Foremost amongst them, Canny has argued that, 'the depositions have a unique importance because they constitute the only detailed information we have of what happened in Ireland during and immediately subsequent to October 1641'. Coolahan too concurs arguing that as 'the sole primary source they are, at the very least, important evidence of contemporary anxieties': see Canny, *Making Ireland British*, p. 468; Coolahan, *Women, writing & language*, p. 144.

[68] As Fennell and MacLeod have observed, the process of deposing was a uniquely gendered experience as reflected in the fact that unlike male deponents, females' marital status was invariably cited after their name, often by way of explanation for why they were testifying at all. Thus, for women featured in the depositions 'marital status was pivotal to the construction of their identities, while for men alternative resources such as occupation and social standing were available and preferred': see MacLeod & Fennell, 'Lexico-Grammatical Portraits', p. 263.

Crown authority, resulted in particularly severe punishment being meted out to militant Catholics, with no exemptions granted to women discovered to be recusant. The case of Meath woman, Margaret Ball née Bermingham and her representation as a Catholic martyr, is analysed in this context.

Chapter two focuses on the role of female religious, exploring the nature of their resistance and survival in the aftermath of the Henrician dissolutions of the 1530s and 1540s. It considers the various strategies devised by certain women to circumvent the state's proscription of vocational living. These ranged from clandestine survivalism, as in the case of the Grace Dieu nuns at Portrane in north County Dublin, to migration to continental Europe. The the importance of familial support to the survival of these communities in the decades down to 1570 and from the 1590s onwards is emphasised and their subsequent contribution to the propagation of Tridentine ideology, culture and devotion in Ireland during the 1620s and 1630s – in contrast to their male counterparts – is charted and analysed.

Chapter three presents a comparative analysis of the experiences and roles of Protestant women. Firstly, the definition of the 'ideal' Protestant woman as prescribed by contemporary clerical and literary commentators in religious treatises, conduct books and devotional literature is examined in order to elucidate the parameters and paradigms underpinning early modern representations of Protestant as distinct from Catholic women, thereby locating Protestant women in Ireland within a comparative European context. The importance of Protestant women as educators, both in the private sphere, as inculcators of Protestant doctrine and belief among young children and household servants, and in the public realm, through their involvement in educational reform initiatives, is then explored. Marriage alliances established within Protestant communities are examined to highlight common patterns and practices and to highlight the lengths to which certain Church of Ireland families went to arrange endogamous unions for their offspring. While securing a 'good' Protestant wife for sons was important for families seeking to copper-fasten their Protestant lineage, propitious marriage arrangements for daughters too could be equally important and, as will be demonstrated through a selection of case studies, strong patriarchal control over a daughter's betrothal was a feature of certain marriage alliances. Exogamy or inter-marriage between members of rival

confessions is also considered. The role of the clergyman's wife is examined in order to highlight how institutional changes, wrought as a result of the Elizabethan Reformation (in this case clerical marriage), impacted the lives of women. Finally, the potency of the representation and memorialisation of certain deceased Protestant women in print (funerary sermons and eulogies) as well as in plaster (funerary monuments) for the wider membership of their confessional communities is assessed.

Whereas the first three chapters explore and elucidate the roles and representations of women within both Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland confessional groups, during what was on the whole a period of relative peace and stability in this region of Ireland down to the autumn of 1641, the focus shifts in the fourth and final chapter to reflect the dramatic outbreak of the most sectarian conflict in early modern Ireland during the last quarter of that year. Chapter four presents an in-depth exploration of the roles and representations of women involved in the 1641 uprising. Drawing on a selection of discrete examples extracted from depositions relating to Leinster and south-east Munster, this chapter examines the involvement of women as active agents in the sectarian violence that unfolded in autumn 1641, both directly as instigators and perpetrators of crime and violence, and indirectly as abettors and harbourers of Catholic rebels, including Catholic clergy, within their localities. Thereafter representations of violence, including sexual violence, against women as depicted in ephemeral pamphlet accounts published during the first six months of the rising are examined, with specific attention on the utilisation and manipulation of the trope of violence against women, generally considered non-combatants, by pamphleteers in order to highlight the depravity and ferocity of the Irish 'popish' and 'romish' rebels. This is followed by an exploration of representations of women involved in 1641 in a separate genre of contemporary commentary on the rising – two official treatises on the conflict, both of which drew upon official deposition testimonies and were commissioned at the behest of the English parliament, namely Henry Jones's *Remonstrance* (London, 1642) and John Temple's *The Irish rebellion* (London, 1646). The appropriation by these authors of the deposition material in order to highlight instances of female victimhood is scrutinised. Finally, the dissemination of representations of female victims of 1641 as Protestant 'martyrs' in contemporary martyrologies, notably Samuel Clarke's *A generall martyrologie*,

(London, 1651), is examined with a view to considering how this was part of a burgeoning Irish Protestant martyrological tradition which developed during the final three decades of the seventeenth century. To conclude, a brief consideration of the parallel yet rival Catholic martyrological tradition which found expression on the Continent in the works of exiled Irish scholars, with specific reference to the Irish Poor Clare order is presented.

During the period *c*.1560 to *c*.1641, two distinct and competing movements for religious reform emerged simultaneously in Ireland, leading in turn to a polarisation of communities along religious lines. This thesis illuminates how these developments were to have a profound impact on women across a diverse social and denominational spectrum in the Leinster and south-east Munster region, and how in turn women responded in a variety and multiplicity of ways to the religious changes and episodes of religious conflict which erupted intermittently during that period. Incorporating a double-stranded conceptual approach which marries the themes of 'roles' and 'representation', this thesis therefore aims to present a unique and pioneering exploration of a hitherto largely neglected aspect of the history of early modern Ireland.

CHAPTER ONE

The roles and representations of Catholic lay women in religious change and conflict, *c*. 1560-*c*.1641

This chapter focuses on one particular cohort within the Roman Catholic Church laity in the period 1560-1641, namely lay Catholic women, with a view to exploring the world in which they lived, the ideals to which they were expected to conform, and the ways in which they negotiated the religious changes and varying degrees of conflict arising from confessional division in Ireland during that era. While the role and experiences of the Catholic clergy, both secular and regular, in the religious changes of early modern Ireland have been the subject of significant scholarly attention, those of women have received much less consideration.[1] Meagre sources render it difficult to reconstruct the experiences of lay women who left few traces in the historical record. Consequently the following discussion necessarily concentrates on lay women from the upper and middle ranks of society for whom there is more extensive documentation, although attempts are made where possible to elucidate the comparative experience of women from lower social ranks. In a changing and a hostile environment in which tensions between adherents of the Established Church and a recalcitrant, increasingly recusant Catholic majority intermittently escalated into crises, the experiences of lay Catholic women within their confessional community and in comparison with their Protestant counterparts (discussed in chapter three) are examined. This is aimed at deepening our understanding of the roles and representations of women in Leinster and south-east Munster in a context of ongoing religious change, oscillation between toleration and suppression, and sporadic conflict, with particular focus on highlighting aspects of these women's religious beliefs, practices and experiences which resembled and/or differed from those of their Protestant contemporaries. Firstly, the definition of the 'ideal' Catholic woman as prescribed by contemporary clerical and literary commentators in religious treatises, conduct books and devotional literature will be examined. Secondly, this chapter will examine how in the milieu described above, Catholic women like their Protestant counterparts, devised various strategies in order to give

[1] For a discussion on the role of the Catholic clergy see Hensey, 'A comparative study of the lives of Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic clergy'.

expression to their religious beliefs and practices. Specifically, their roles as maintainers and protectors of Catholic clergy will be highlighted to demonstrate how women exerted considerable influence in shaping religious change in Ireland after 1560. In the face of hostile authorities and intermittently harsh spells of state action against recusancy, women played a significant role in the maintenance of Catholic practice and devotion, both in their own households and in their wider communities, through their patronage and ardent support for Catholic clergy, setting themselves in direct (if largely unchallenged) defiance of the state's attempts to secure conformity to the Established Church. In the context of England, Alexandra Walsham has shown that because the penal system focused upon the prosecution of men, it left housewives virtually undisturbed.[2] This chapter shows how a similar pattern is to be found in Ireland, where Catholic women often capitalised on gender bias in circumventing Elizabethan and Jacobean statutes regarding non-conformity, particularly concerning the maintenance of illegal Catholic clergy, thereby often sparing themselves the full rigours of judicial punishment. Finally, this chapter shows that whereas for much of the period *c*.1560-*c*.1641 recusant women affording protection to priests remained undiscovered, or unimpeded, occasionally in Ireland (as in England), a crisis precipitated by a threat to the security of the realm or a challenge to Crown authority, resulted in exceptionally severe punishment being meted out to militant Catholics, with no exemptions on gender grounds. The case of Meath native, Margaret Ball née Bermingham (*fl*. *c*.1515-84), will be considered in this context as will her subsequent representation as an exemplary Catholic woman and martyr, and the dissemination of her *fama martyrii* within the context of European Catholic devotional and martyrological literature.

I

In the proliferation of print media in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries numerous domestic conduct books, catechisms, sermons and eulogies written by clerics, commentators and theorists – Catholic and Protestant alike – set down prescribed forms of behaviour for men and women.[3] While authority, dominance and leadership were traits to be celebrated in men, by contrast submission,

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[2] Walsham, *Church papists*, pp 78-81.
[3] Margaret R. Sommerville, *Sex and subjection: attitudes to women in early modern society* (London, 1995).

dutiful adherence and obedience were advocated for women.[4] Perceived as the 'weaker vessel' emotionally, physically and intellectually and restricted in the public realm in matters civic, social and religious, women were to operate under the ultimate restraint of male authority. This outlook was articulated in the Irish context by Thomas Leverous (*c*.1490-1577), Bishop of Kildare, who in 1560 refused to subscribe to the Elizabethan oath of supremacy on the grounds that women were by nature excluded from any authority in matters of church organisation. In an account of Leverous's stance David Rothe (d. 1650), Catholic Bishop of Ossory (1620-50), writing in the early seventeenth century, claimed the bishop had declared that:

> Since the Divine Founder of the church did not deem it fit to confer ecclesiastical authority even on the most privileged of women, His own blessed Mother, how could it be believed that supremacy and primacy of ecclesiastical authority should, in future ages, be delegated to anyone of that sex?[5]

Leverous's views were echoed two decades later by James Eustace, Viscount Baltinglass (1530-85) who justified his rebellion in 1580 on the grounds that 'a woman uncapax of all holy orders could not be governor of the church': Eustace also cited the increasingly unjust nature of Elizabethan rule in Ireland.[6] While subordination was expected of women in public matters, it was also expected in the private realm, in the domain of the household, which was viewed at that time as a microcosm of the kingdom and a 'little church'.[7] Early modern theorists insisted that a woman's place was in the home and that her proper role was as a wife and mother. It was the responsibility of the husband and father to maintain order in his household (the primary building block of early modern society) and to exercise ultimate authority over his wife and children. Women were to remain submissive, loyal and

[4] According to Rich, 'silence' was among the 'best ornaments' of a 'good' woman: see Barnaby Rich, *My ladies looking glasse Wherein may be discerned a wise man from a foole, a good woman from a bad: and the true resemblance of vice, masked under the vizard of vertue* (London, 1616), p. 44. For a general discussion on attitudes to women in early modern Europe see Sommerville, *Sex & subjection* and Wiesner-Hanks, *Women & gender*. For the English context see Prior (ed.) *Women in English society*; Laurence, *Women in England 1500-1760*; Jacqueline Eales, *Women in early modern England, 1500-1700* (London, 1998); Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, sex and subordination in England, 1500-1800* (New Haven, 1996); Diane Willen, 'Godly Women in Early Modem England: Puritanism and Gender' in *Journal of Ecclessiastical History*, xliii (1992), pp 561-80; eadem, '"Communion of the saints": spiritual reciprocity and the godly community in early modern England' in *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, xxvii, no. 1 (Spring, 1995), pp 19-40.
[5] Rothe, *Analecta*, pp 447-55; Patrick F. Moran, *A history of the Catholic archbishops of Dublin since the Reformation*, i, pp 58-9.
[6] Rothe, *Analecta*, pp 447-55; Moran, *A history of the Catholic archbishops of Dublin*, i, pp 58-9.
[7] Alec Ryrie, *Being a Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford, 2013).

orderly.[8] Evoking the doctrines of the Greek philosopher Socrates (d. 339 B.C.) and the Biblical mandates of St Paul, the directive of the Spanish humanist, Juan Luis Vives (d. 1540), in his influential treatise, *The office and duetie of an husband*, that wives 'ought to love and honour' their husbands and obey their will 'as the lawe of God', captured the essence of contemporary outlooks on gender relations. These were outlooks which traversed the confessional divide.[9] Both Catholic and Protestant commentators of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries largely accepted ancient and medieval constructs of feminine inferiority and subordination, stressing the importance of female obedience to male authority.[10]

As well as submission and dutiful adherence, other virtues most commonly prescribed for women included modesty, chastity, piety and hospitality. While these were traits which commentators on both sides of the confessional frontier prescribed for women, each tradition, reflecting the theological precepts of its church, had its own unique notions about women. As Mary O'Dowd and Sabine Wichert have shown, within the Catholic Church tradition, dominant paternalism was juxtaposed with notions of the 'ideal' Catholic woman. The construction of the role model of the Virgin Mary was used to support Catholic commentators' image of the ideal, female, wife and mother while in the Protestant tradition, the concept of the Virgin Mary, reflecting the theological precepts of the evangelical Church, was relegated to a less important status, although not rendered entirely obsolete.[11] While Mary still provided an example of faith, purity, and the dutiful role of a wife, in the Protestant tradition she was not to be an intercessor.[12]

Within the Roman Catholic tradition, modesty was prescribed as a necessary attribute of a 'good' Christian woman, particularly a married woman. The Spanish

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[8] See for example, Juan Luis Vives, *The office and duetie of an husband* (London, 1555), *A very fruteful and pleasant boke called the Instruction of a Christian woman* (London, 1577); Fray Luis de León, *La perfecta casada* (Salamanca, 1583); Jacques Du Bosc, *The accomplished woman. Written originally in French, since made English, by the Honourable Walter Montague, esq* (London, 1655); Francesco Barbaro, *Directions for love and marriage in two books, written originally by Franciscus Barbarus, a Venetian senator; and now translated into English by a person of quality* (London, 1677).
[9] Vives, *The office and duetie of an husband*, pp 118-20.
[10] Sommerville, *Sex & subjection*.
[11] Protestantism also lost the benefits of female saints: see Mary O'Dowd and Sabine Wichert (eds), *Chattell, servant or citizen: women's status in church, state and society* (Belfast, 1995), xi.
[12] Wiesner-Hanks, *Christianity & sexuality*, p. 79.

Augustinian friar, Fray Luis de León (1527-91), in his 1583 publication *La perfecta casada* (*The perfect wife*), for example, advocated that a 'good' wife must dress modestly, avoiding unnecessarily elaborate clothing that might attract unwanted attention, while according to the seventeenth-century French Franciscan, Jacques Du Bosc (1600-69), modesty in a woman was 'a powerful charm' without which 'beauty is soul-lesse'.[13] These chimed with the sentiments of another seventeenth-century Catholic author, François de Sales, Bishop of Geneva (1602-22), who in his text, *An Introduction to a Devout Life* (Douai, 1613), evoked the Biblical dictates of St Paul, advocating that women should dress in 'decent apparrall, clothing themselves with shamefastness and sobrietie'. A modest outward appearance, argued De Sales, signified an 'inward cleannesse of the soul'. Amongst widows, in particular, he claimed, 'no ornament better becommeth them' than modesty.[14] Reflecting these commonly held ideals concerning the modest and respectable appearance of Catholic women, Kilkenny-native and Bishop of Ossory, David Rothe in his martyrological representation of the Dublin recusant and widow, Margaret Ball, wife of Bartholomew Ball (d. *c*.1568), a leading figure in Dublin's merchant community who served as mayor of the city between 1553 and 1554, emphasised how she had been an 'example' of 'modesty', for 'her servants, for strangers [and] for those near and for those far away'.[15]

Modesty was intertwined with 'chastity', another trait lauded as a marker of feminine virtue by sixteenth and seventeenth-century Catholic and Protestant commentators alike.[16] In a society preoccupied with controlling women's sexual behaviour and securing continuity of family lineages, or *limpieza de sangre*, chastity was perceived as a woman's quintessential attribute and was regarded by men and

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[13] Du Bosc, *The accomplished woman*, p. 116. For a discussion of the original French text see Sharon Diane Nell and Aurora Wolfgang (eds), *Jacques Du Bosc, L'Honnête Femme: The Respectable Woman in Society and the New Collection of Letters and responses by contemporary women* (Toronto, 2014); de León, *La perfecta casada*, p. 476. In his *L'honnête femme* (The accomplished woman), Du Bosc argued that women should follow a 'respectable' Christian moral code of conduct which included the observation of 'a certain discretion' or 'modesty' in clothing. Women, he argued, were to be 'carefull of [their] appearances' and 'Excessive ornaments' and 'rich cloathes', which he contended, 'add not to beauty, nor diminish inferiority' but merely 'abuse our eyes, as those old images as are hallowed with the rottenness': see Du Bosc, *The accomplished woman*, pp 24, 119, 120.

[14] François de Sales, *An introduction to a devout life composed in Frenche by the R. Father in God Francis Sales, Bishop of Geneva. And translated into English [sic] by I.Y* (Douai, 1613), pp 390-1.

[15] Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 474.

[16] Sommerville, *Sex & subjection*.

women alike as the summit of feminine virtue.[17] It was an essential feature of a 'good' Catholic woman, one that was especially relevant for wives. Indeed many early modern commentators insisted that a wife's greatest duty to her husband was to remain sexually chaste in order that the couple's union might fulfil its function of establishing the paternity of children and securing continuity of lineage. Thus the integrity of a household, the transmission of property and the continuation of the family line were all intimately connected with female chastity.[18] In their religious literature, martyrology and hagiography, in line with their Continental European counterparts, Irish Catholic commentators subscribed to the notion of chastity as a paradigm of female behaviour. Among these was the Irish Friar Minor and native of Munster, Maurice Conry (pseudonym Maurice Morison). In his short martyrological account of the life and death of Lady Ellen Roche née Power (d. 1654), wife of the Munster lord, Maurice Roche, third Viscount of Fermoy and Roche (d. 1670), described her as 'a chaste and holy matron'.[19] Similarly, according to David Rothe, Margaret Ball was an 'example' of 'chastity' for both young women and widows alike; for 'young women' she was an 'example of celibacy' while 'for widows' she was an example of 'vidual continence'.[20] Rothe's emphasis on the chaste nature of the Widow Ball reflected the particular preoccupation of Catholic moralists and theologians with the chastity of widows. Vives, for example, advocated that in widowhood women should live chastely and not seek a new husband but 'turn to the holy spouse of all women, Jesus Christ', sentiments reiterated by De Sales who contended that widows 'must have a courageous and strong chastity'.[21] In contrast to attempts by Catholic commentators to promote the chastity and sexual morality of Catholic women, in the polemical discourses of early seventeenth-century colonial Ireland, conversely, the vitriolic Protestant commentator, Barnaby Rich (1542-1617), denounced the alleged lasciviousness and sexual immorality of Catholic wives which he equated with the disloyalty of Ireland's Catholic recusant community to Crown authority. In his 1610 publication, *A new description of Ireland*, Rich drew a parallel between the failure of one married Catholic woman to keep her vow of sexual

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[17] Ibid.

[18] For a more detailed discussion see ibid., pp 143-50 and Wiesner-Hanks, *Christianity & sexuality*, pp 96-7.

[19] Maurice Morison, *Threnodia* (Innsbruck, 1659), pp 71-2: see also Anthony Broudin, *Propugnaculum Catholicae Veritatis* (Prague, 1669), p. 707.

[20] Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 474.

[21] de Sales, *An introduction to a devout life*, p. 309.

fidelity to her husband with the recusant community's failure to maintain political allegiance to the king:

> That at my marriage day, this mouth of mine made inviolable promise to my husbande of continencie; and therefore with the other parts of my bodie, for my lips are onely vowed to my husband, and for him I will reserve them ... this Woman was as firme in the promise she made to her husband, as a number of Papists in their oaths they do make to the king.[22]

The allegedly sexually dubious nature of Catholic women was a trope employed by other seventeenth-century Protestant colonial commentators on Ireland too, among them Sir John Davies (1597-1621), who in 1612 characterised Irish women as alien temptresses and a source of corruption for New English colonial settlers.[23] In the confessionally acrimonious environment of the 1641 uprising accusations of sexual impropriety were levelled against Catholic women in depositions made by Protestant victims of the uprising who portrayed Irish female rebels as 'base trulls', 'whores' and 'lewd women'.[24] Kilkenny woman, Alice Butler, daughter of Richard Butler (*c*.1578-1651), Viscount Mountgarret, for example, was denounced as 'a reputed house whore' and a 'mother of severall bastards' while the wife of rebel Barnaby Dempsey from Queen's County was derided as 'a common seducer'.[25] Rich and Davies's parallel between the sexually suspect nature of Irish Catholic women and political subversion was echoed in an English context too where, as Frances E. Dolan has shown, English Catholic women were commonly characterised as disorderly and labelled with offensive and defamatory terminology such as 'whores of Babylon' and 'viragoes'.[26]

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[22] Rich, *A new description of Ireland wherein is described the disposition of the Irish whereunto they are inclined* (London, 1610), p. 31.
[23] John Davies, 'A discovery of the true causes why Ireland was never entirely subdued' in *Ireland under Elizabeth and James the first*, ed. Henry Morley (London, 1890), p. 297.
[24] See chapter four. English commentators often labelled Gaelic women 'whores' because of the uncertainty of the nature of Gaelic marriage. See Anne Laurence, 'Cradle to the grave: English observations of Irish social customs in the seventeenth century' in *The Seventeenth Century*, iii, pp 63-84.
[25] Deposition of Joseph Wheeler, Elizabeth Gilbert, Rebecca Hill, Thomas Lewis, Jonas Wheeler, Patrick Maxwell, John Kevan, 5 July 1643 (TCD, MS 812, fol. 203); Deposition of Morgan Couraghie, 12 Apr. 1642 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 46); James Cranford refers to Irish female rebels as 'dirty whores' in his vitriolic account of Catholic atrocity during the 1641 uprising. See James Cranford, *The teares of Ireland* (London, 1642), p. 32.
[26] Dolan, *Whores of Babylon.*

Like obedience and modesty, chastity was a virtue extolled by both Catholics and Protestants.[27] In addition, within the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, chastity, or more specifically virginity, retained an explicitly exalted status for one cohort of women – female religious. For them, abstention from marital bonds, or celibacy, in turn implied a particular marital status, that of 'the bride of Christ', and observance of sexual abstinence or chastity.[28] As Silvia Evangelisti has shown in the case of early modern Italian religious literature, hagiography and iconography, 'the concept and image of the bride of Christ, the *sponsa Christi*, assumed particular relevance' in the definition of the identity of female religious.[29] As will be discussed in chapter two, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries an increasing concern for the preservation of the chastity of the *sponsa Christi* on the part of the church authorities in Rome, reflected by the implementation of Tridentine decrees enforcing strict enclosure, or *clausura*, for all female religious communities (1563), prevailed.[30] This was in turn manifest in the representation of female religious by Irish Catholic commentators who in their writings emphasised how Irish nuns sought to defend their chastity when threatened by the actions of heretical and demonic Protestant adversaries. For example, the Wexford-born Jesuit, John Howlin, described how in *c*.1580, having escaped imprisonment, a Dublin nun, Margery Barnewall, whom he styled as 'a noble virgin ... dedicated from her earliest years to God' and her servant who was 'also dedicated to God as a virgin', when accosted by two sailors 'afflicted by devilish desires [who] attempted to violate the women', implored the Blessed Virgin 'to repel the men' and insisted that it was better to be 'devoured by dogs' than to be 'violated by enemies'.[31] According to the Dominican priest, Felix O'Connor, when Honoria Magaen, a professed nun of the Dominican Third Order was pursued in 1653 by Cromwellian troops who held a 'diabolical hatred of the Catholic religion which her habit symbolised', she feared more 'for her

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[27] See chapter three.
[28] Galway chronicle.
[29] Silvia Evangelisti, 'Wives, widows, and Brides of Christ: marriage and the convent in the historiography of early modern Italy' in *The Historical Journal*, xliii, no. 1 (Mar. 2000), p. 246.
[30] See chapter two. For an extended discussion concerning Tridentine decrees relating to enforced enclosure, or clausura, of female religious communities see Francesca Medioli, 'An unequal law: the enforcement of *clausura* before and after the Council of Trent' in Meek (ed.), *Women in Renaissance & early modern Europe*, pp 136-47.
[31] Howlin, 'Perbreve compendium' in Moran (ed.), *Spicilegium Ossoriense*, i, 106-9: I wish to thank Professor Colm Lennon for this translation.

chastity than for her life'.[32] In a similar expression of concern to uphold chastity among female religious, Mother Mary Bonaventure Browne, abbess of the Irish Poor Clare order at Bethlehem convent, near Athlone in the Midlands, described how, in June 1642, threatened by the imminent arrival of a party of English soldiers, the 'holy virgins' prayed to God 'for deliverance from that peril, especially that they should never lose the precious jewel of virginity, something that would grieve them more than any kind of death which could be inflicted'.[33] In another attempt to exemplify the fervent chastity of Irish female religious at a time of heightened religious conflict and tension, the funerary monument erected to the memory of Margaret Archer, a Franciscan tertiary, at St Patrick's Church in Kilkenny in 1649, the eve of the Cromwellian invasion, described her as a 'pious virgin'.[34] The preservation of chastity was not a uniquely female virtue within the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, however. Male religious too sought to promote the defence of their celibate and chaste status: as Salvador Ryan has shown, 'the practice of contrasting the lives of ascetical and chaste Irish saints with indulgent and uxorious Reformed clergymen' was common in seventeenth-century Irish hagiographical accounts. For example, the Franciscan Robert Rochford, in his 1625 edition of the lives of SS. Patrick, Brigid, and Columcille, contrasted the life of a 'chast monke' with the 'libidinous ministers' of the Reformed Church who 'lie immersed in beds of downe, not alone, but embracing their sweet h[e]arts with greater devotion than ever any Gen[e]va Bible'.[35] Conversely, Protestant commentators habitually portrayed members of Catholic religious orders, male and female, as sexually subversive and morally scandalous. In the case of female religious, one Protestant commentator, writing in 1567, commented that prior to its dissolution the abbey of Kilfenora in County Clare was, 'in times past, when it was possessed by a nun or abbess, ...

[32] Writing from Brussels on 17 May 1653, Fr Felix O'Connor, OP, recorded the events he witnessed at Burishoole Abbey, of which he was prior at the time of the attack: see Pádraig Ó Moráin, *A short account of the history of Burrishoole parish* (Westport, 2004), p. 32.
[33] Galway chronicle, fol. 5.
[34] The transcription on the tomb, originally in Latin reads 'Hic jacet devote virgo Margareta Archer Tertii Ordinis Minor Que Obit Die 13 Martii 1649 et Revd Pater Martinus Archer qui obit Novbr. Ye 18th 1722'. Translation: 'Here lies the pious virgin, Margaret Archer, Franciscan tertiary, who died March 13th 1649. Also Rev. Martin Archer who died Nov. 18th 1722' in William Carrigan, *The history and antiquities of the diocese of Ossory* (4 vols, Dublin, 1905), iii, 216.
[35] Robert Rochford (B.B), *The life of the glorious bishop S. Patricke apostle and primate together with the lives of the holy virgin Bridgit and of the glorious abbot S. Columb patrons of Ireland* (St. Omer, 1625), epistle dedicatory, p. ix; Salvador Ryan, 'Steadfast saints or malleable models? Seventeenth-century Irish hagiography revisited' in *The Catholic Historical Review*, xci, no. 2 (Apr., 2005), pp 251-77.

converted for the most part to whoredom, gluttony and other kinds of excesses and dissolute living'.[36] In 1601 John Rider (1562-1632), dean of St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin and later Church of Ireland Bishop of Killaloe (1612-32), denounced Catholicism as characterised by chantries 'of priests to pray for the dead … and damnable pestiferous Stewes of Nunnes and Whores'.[37] This was a feature of Protestant polemic in Reformation Europe too where monasteries and convents were widely criticised as 'hotbeds of vice'.[38] However, charges of sexual misconduct against members of religious orders were not only levied during inter-confessional conflicts. In 1634, in the midst of a bitter dispute with the Irish Franciscan order, the English Catholic priest and Dublin resident, Paul Harris (*c*.1572/3-1642), denounced that order's convents, both male and female, as 'the dens of theeves, the ha[u]nt[s] of devils, and the shops of vices'.[39] In yet another expression of intra-confessional antagonism – in this case within the Church of Ireland – in 1592 the government reporter Patrick O'Kearnery condemned Meiler Magath, Archbishop of Cashel (1571-1622), as an individual who embraced no 'other qualities so much as whoredom ... and other filthy crimes' and therefore embodied the antithesis of St Paul's dictate that bishops should be 'chaste husband[s] of one wife'.[40]

Piety too was lauded by both Catholic and Protestant commentators as an important virtue of an 'ideal' woman. Indeed, it was commonly accepted that, whatever talents women as the 'weaker sex' lacked, they were, in the main, more profoundly religious than men, their emotional nature leaving them particularly inclined to piety and devotion.[41] In Europe Catholic clerics, like their Protestant counterparts, admitted to few areas where the whole female sex outshone the male, but a significant number of scholars on both sides of the confessional divide acknowledged that devotion and piety was one.[42] In Ireland, the virulent Protestant polemicist Barnaby Rich asserted

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[36] Anon, 'A commentary on the nobility and gentry of Thomond, *c*.1567' in *Ir. Geneal*, iv, no. 2 (1969), pp 70-1.
[37] John Rider, *The coppie of a letter sent from M Rider, deane of Saint Patricks, concerning the newes out of Ireland* (London, 1601), sig. A2r-v.
[38] Wiesner-Hanks, *Christianity & sexuality in the early modern world*, p. 150.
[39] Paul Harris, *Fratres sobrii estote ... Or, an admonition to the friars of this kingdome of Ireland* ([Dublin], 1634), p. 46.
[40] L. Marron, (ed.), 'Documents from state papers concerning Miler McGrath' in *Achiv. Hib.*, xi (1958), p. 149.
[41] Sommerville, *Sex & subjection*, pp 42-3.
[42] Ibid., pp 42-3.

that, 'women are by nature of a more excellent metal, their hearts are more soft and yielding, and themselves more pliable to all virtue and goodness'.[43] Those sentiments were reiterated four decades later by the Dublin-born Discalced Carmelite, Stephen Browne (b. 1599), who contended that women were 'as capable and apt according to their natural disposition for [the] exercise of prayer, and receiving divine impressions'.[44] Indeed, Browne elaborated on this point, claiming that women 'come sooner to be in God's favour, and receive supernaturall gifts, than men'.[45] In the late Elizabethan and Stuart eras Catholic and Protestant clerics in England and Ireland frequently singled out piety and devotion as among the most praiseworthy female virtues. In Ireland, Genet Stanihurst (d. 1579), daughter of Sir Christopher Barnewall of Turvey in County Dublin and his wife Marion Barnewall, who died while giving birth at the age of nineteen, was remembered by her husband, the Catholic historian, Richard Stanihurst (1547-1618) as a woman who was 'kindly in [her] holy ways'.[46] Similarly, upon her death in 1597 Lady Helen Butler, daughter of Sir Piers Butler, eighth Earl of Ormond (d. 1539), was remembered as the 'pious wife' of Donough O'Brien (d. 1553), second Earl of Thomond on a tomb stone dedicated to her honour and richly decorated with instruments of the Passion in St Canice's Cathedral in Killkenny.[47] Joan Roche, from New Ross in County Wexford, for example, mother of John Roche, Catholic Bishop of Ferns (1624-36), was likewise remembered in 1623 by the cleric William Barry, a Kildare-native, as a

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[43] Rich, *My ladies looking glasse*, p. 14.

[44] Stephen Browne, *The soul's delight, composed by the R. F. Paul of St. Vbald, religious of the Holy Reformed Order, of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, of the Mount Carmell* (Antwerp, 1654), preface, no pagination; Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, *Female pre-eminence or the dignity and excellency of that sex above the male* ed. Henry Care, (1529, English translation, London, 1670), p. 24.

[45] Browne, *The soul's delight*, preface, no pagination. On Fr Stephen Browne see Paul Browne, Marcellus Glynn and F.X. Martin (eds), 'The 'Brevis Relatio' of the Irish Discalced Carmelites, 1625-1670' in *Achiv. Hib.*, xxv (1962), pp 137-40.

[46] Richard Stanihurst, *The four books of Virgil's Aeneis translated into English heroical verse* (Leyden, 1582): ed. Edward Arber, London, 1880, p. 104.

[47] The tombstone inscription, originally in Latin reads, 'Here lies the most illustrious Lady Ellena Butler, daughter of the most noble Peter Butler, Earl of Ormond, and pious wife of the most illustrious Donald O'Brien, Earl of Thomond, who died July 2nd 1597': Carrigan, *History & antiquities*, iii, 163. Lady Helen Butler was the youngest daughter of Piers Butler, eighth Earl of Ormond and first Earl of Ossory and Lady Margaret née Fitzgerald (d. 1542). Lady Helen Butler married Donough O'Brien in *c.* 1533. The couple had four children, two sons, Conor O'Brien (*c.*1535-81), later third Earl of Thomond and Donal, and two daughters, Margaret (d. 1568) who married Dermot O'Brien (d. 1557), second Baron Inchiquin and Honora who married Teige MacNamara: George E. Cokayne, *The complete peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom* (8 vols, Exeter, 1887), xii, pt. 1, 703-4; vii, 50. On Lady Margaret Butler née Fitzgerald see Imelda Kehoe, 'Margaret Fitzgerald, wife of Piers Butler, 8th earl of Ormond and 1st earl of Ossory' in *Old Kilkenny Review*, iv (1991), pp 826–41. Lady Helen Butler's aunt was Elicia Butler, last abbess of Kilculiheen convent, County Kilkenny. Elicia was her father's sister.

'very devout Catholic' while according to the recollections of the Irish Franciscan and scholar, Luke Wadding (1588-1657), Waterford woman Anastasia Strong, the wife of Robert Walsh, mayor of Waterford (1601-2) and mother of Thomas Walsh, Catholic Archbishop of Cashel (1626-54), was a 'holy woman'.[48] Lady Ursula White née Moore (b. *c*.1594), wife of Sir Nicholas White of Leixlip in County Kildare, who, against the wishes of her mother, was converted to Catholicism by a priest named Edward Bath, was praised by the Irish Capuchin Nicholas Archbold in 1643 for her 'constancie' to her Roman Catholic faith.[49] Similarly, Ellen Roche, daughter of John Power, Lord Power and wife of Maurice, third Viscount of Fermoy and Roche, was remembered in 1659 by the Franciscan priest, Maurice Conry, as a 'holy matron', whose 'mind was solely occupied with prayer and piety'.[50] Another testimony to Catholic female piety survives in respect of Lady Frances Butler née Touchet (b. 1617), youngest daughter of Mervin, Earl of Castlehaven (1593-1631) and wife of Sir Richard Butler of Kilcash, County Tipperary (d. 1701): she was described by Fr Stephen Browne as a pious woman who possessed a 'great fervour' for 'loving and serving God' which she expressed through her daily 'observance' of 'prayer'.[51] Indeed Browne dedicated his publication entitled *The soul's delight* (Antwerp, 1654), a discourse on mental prayer published at Antwerp in 1654, to Lady Butler on account of her great 'piety and devotion', which he had observed while visiting her home at Kilcash Castle in County Tipperary.[52] As will be discussed in chapter three, for their part, Protestant commentators were equally concerned to promote the piety and devotion of 'their' Protestant women who were presented as paragons of the English civilising and reform mission in Ireland.[53]

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[48] 'Thomas Walsh, Processus Datariae, 11 March 1626' in Giblin (ed.), The 'Processus Datariae' and the appointment of Irish bishops in the seventeenth century' in Franciscan fathers (eds), *Luke Wadding: a commemorative volume* (Dublin, 1957), pp 542-3; 'John Roche, Processus Datariae, 11 May 1623' in Giblin (ed.), 'The 'Processus Datariae', p. 524.

[49] Nicholas Archbold, 'The Historie of the Irish Capucins' [undated, *c*. 1643], Bibliothéque de Troyes (MS 1103), ff 98-99. I am grateful to Professor John McCafferty for sending me a digital copy of this MS.

[50] Morison, *Threnodia*, pp 71-2: see also Broudin, *Propugnaculum Catholicae Veritatis*, p. 707.

[51] Browne, *The soul's delight*, preface, no pagination. Lady Frances Butler's mother was Elizabeth Barnham (d. *c*.1622), the earl's first wife and a daughter of London alderman Benedict Barnham and his wife Dorothea Smith. Lady Butler's grandson, Christopher Butler, later became archbishop of Cashel (1711-57): see John Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland; or, A genealogical history of the present nobility of that kingdom. Rev., enlarged and continued to the present time by Mervyn Archdall* (7 vols, Dublin, 1789), iv, 40.

[52] Browne, *The soul's delight*, preface, no pagination.

[53] See chapter three.

Definitions of what precisely constituted 'pious' practices often differed between the confessions. Although women from both denominations were praised for their adherence to private religious devotions and daily prayer rituals, other aspects of 'pious' activity were exclusive to each particular denomination and thus served to differentiate Protestant and Catholic women. For example, whereas the former might be praised for their scrupulous study of Scripture or vigilant sermon attendance, endeavours which reflected the theological precepts of the Church of Ireland (discussed in chapter three), Catholic women, on the other hand, were lauded for their diligent observance of the sacraments and feast days, their engagement with the penitential psalms and Litanies, recitation of the book of hours and their good works, activities which corresponded to Catholic theological canons and were thus regarded as manifestations of distinctly Catholic female religiosity and piety. A case in point is that of Meath-native Margaret Ball née Bermingham. Margaret was remembered by her clerical biographers, John Howlin and David Rothe as a 'pious' and 'virtuous' woman who was 'vigilant at her devotions and other pious exercises' and 'gave herself to prayer and supplication'.[54] According to Rothe's account, which as will be discussed later presented a distinctly Counter-Reformation representation of Catholic female piety, Margaret 'never neglected' her 'morning and evening' devotions which included 'the penitential psalms, with Litanies and other prayers'.[55] Another woman, Margaret (d. 1647) (surname unknown), a Dominican tertiary active at Cashel, County Tipperary in the 1640s, was remembered in Dominican sources for her 'practice of good works, especially the charity that she [extended] to Catholics and

[54] Bourke *et al*. (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 473-4.
[55] Ibid., 473.

religious from Ireland'.[56] In another manifestly Catholic expression of female piety, Fr Brown described how at her home in Kilcash, Lady Frances Butler maintained 'an orderly composition of [her] chappell, with those devout pictures of the Altar, decent vestments [and] fine and clean altar clothes' for Mass.[57]

Apart from anecdotal references to women in print literature another important testament to exemplary female virtue within the Catholic tradition are the few surviving Catholic tombs and funerary monuments in Ireland. Tomb sculpture and funerary monuments offered perhaps the most tangible representation of a person's faith, devotion and creedal contentions in early modern society. During a period of deepening confessional discord between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland funerary monuments were increasingly designed to promote the religious beliefs of the deceased or the patron of the monument through the incorporation of religious symbolism and iconographic features distinctive to his/her faith, which in turn served to publicly and for posterity demarcate the deceased from those of a different denomination.[58] The few surviving tombs commemorating Catholic women depict their exemplary virtues, either verbally on funerary epitaphs which recounted in verse the laudable characteristics of the deceased, or visually, through funerary effigies which provided a materially robust and visually effective representation of exemplary female behaviour, usually highlighting above all features, their immense piety. In a predominantly illiterate society, visual representations in the form of funerary effigies were a particularly effective medium through which the

[56] 'La B. Marguerite de Cassel, professe du tiers ordre en Ibernie, menoit une vie tres saints, par la pratique de toutes les bonnes œuvres, particulièrement de la charité qu'elle exerçoit envers les Catholiques et les religieux d'Ibernie, durant la persecution; elle aimoit la solitude, elle estoit fort unie a Dieu par le moyen de l'oraison et elle n'avoit point de plus grand plaisir que de penser au ciel, et de s'entretenir avec son saint agne. Ayant appris que les heretiques venoient de tuer les religeux de S. Dominique, entre lesquels etoit son confesseur, elle sut pour le chercher, et elle y trouva la couronne du martyre, aussi bien que son directeur, entre les mains des heretiques, qui luy osterent la view à coups d'epée'. Translation: 'The B. Marguerie of Cashel, professed in the tertiary order in Hibernia [Ireland], living a very holy life, through the practice of good works, especially the charity that she was extending to Catholics and religious from Ireland, during the persecution she loved solitude, she was strongly united with God through prayer and she never had greater pleasure than to think of the sky and to converse with her holy angel. Having learning that the heretics [i.e. Protestants] had just killed the religious of St Dominic [i.e. the Dominicans], among whom were her confessor, she knew to look for him and there she found the martyr's crown [i.e. lyrical phrase which means she was martyred], along with her director, at the hands of heretics [i.e. Protestants] who took her life with a blow of a sword'. I wish to thank Professor Marian Lyons for this translation. [Abbé de Vienne], *L'année dominicaine, ou sentences pour tous les jours jours de l'année* (4 vols, Paris, 1679), iv, 253.
[57] Browne, *The soul's delight*, preface, no pagination.
[58] Tait, *Death, burial & commemoration*, p. 107.

transmission of ideas regarding distinctly Catholic forms of female piety could be achieved, although as Rolf Loeber has shown, effigies were a defining characteristic of Irish Protestant rather than Catholic funerary sculpture, hence the comparatively small numbers extant.[59] Of course the relatively scant survival of Catholic funerary monuments and tombs reflects the clandestine operation of the Roman Catholic Church during much of the period under review which in turn limits the insights into women's religious beliefs that can be garnered. As Clodagh Tait has shown in her study of Irish funerary sculpture, women commemorated on funerary monuments are typically represented according to their relationship with significant male figures, usually their husbands, but also their fathers and sons, with little or no reference to their own personal lives or characteristics.[60] Notwithstanding these disadvantages, however, those few surviving Irish Catholic funerary monuments which commemorate women offer a valuable glimpse into contemporary Catholic perspectives on the virtue and traits associated with 'ideal' Catholic womanhood.

As Tait has cautioned, women commemorated on funerary monuments are 'to a greater extent' than men 'presented as paragons, a convention which suited the moralising nature of funerary architecture'.[61] This convention also served in turn to reinforce contemporary ideals about women's behaviour found in literary representations. The monument erected to the memory of Kilkenny woman Margaret Wale (d. 1623), is a rare example in which the individual virtues of one Catholic woman are expressly commemorated and extolled on a funerary epitaph (see Fig. 1.1). The monument, in the form of a wall plaque, commemorates Margaret as an 'honourable and modest lady'. The remaining inscription consists of six lines in Latin verse, composed by Margaret's Gaelic Irish husband, John O'Kelly, a 'gentleman of Connacht', in which he celebrates his wife's virtues, among them her 'piety and faith':

> Here is her husband's triple distich–[This woman], agreeable to God, chosen for the bier, beloved of her husband/ revered for her uprightness

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[59] As Loeber discusses, symbols, such as signs of the passions, crosses and saints, rather than effigies were used on Catholic memorials. Loeber suggests that tombs for Catholic patrons were erected as homage to the Catholic faith rather than to honour the patron: see Rolf Loeber, 'Sculptured memorials to the dead in early seventeenth century Ireland: a survey from 'Monumenta Eblanae' and other sources' in *R.I.A Proc.*, lxxxi, section c (1981), p. 277.
[60] Tait, *Death, burial & commemoration*, p. 126.
[61] Ibid., p. 127.

and her life, lies here buried./ Her noble spirit, her piety and faith/were gifts, were–oh!–ample dowry to her husband./ Albeit according to its law the Earth may reclaim it bodies, / Yet is the ground hardly worth of such a great guest.[62]

Funerary effigies were another medium through which public expressions of female Catholic devotion were articulated. The Aylmer family monument at Donadea in County Kildare, for example, features a rare representation of Catholic female piety (see Fig. 1.2). It commemorates Sir Gerald Aylmer (d. 1634) and his wife Julia née Nugent (d. 1617), daughter of Sir Christopher Nugent, Baron of Delvin.[63] Built by Sir Gerald in 1626, the overtly Catholic monument takes the form of an altar tomb and includes standing effigies of Saints Jerome, Augustine, Gregory and Ambrose which occupy niches along the sides of the tomb. Images of the Blessed Virgin and the crucifixion adorn the end sides while the inscription includes invocations to pray for the souls of Julia Nugent and Gerald Aylmer.[64] Over the sarcophagus are two niches containing the effigies of Sir Gerald and Lady Julia, with their son Andrew and their daughter, also named Julia. Lady Julia is attired in the kirtle and mantle and from her collar hangs a chain and cross; another cross from her girdle reinforced an image of her intense piety and devotion.[65] The religious message conveyed by the Aylmer tomb therefore is a distinctly Catholic one, namely that the passage of the deceased's soul beyond purgatory could be hastened through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints. This message is echoed on another tomb which, like the Aylmer's tomb, displays distinctly Catholic religious iconography. The Cantwell altar tomb at Kilcooley Abbey in County Tipperary (1608) commemorates Richard Cantwell and his wife, Grace. It incorporates Passion symbols including a Pieta (symbolic of the popular cult of the Virgin Mary) represented blatantly on the tomb frontals, while the tomb ends are recumbent with effigies of saints along with heraldry and family emblems, representative of continuity with the pre-Reformation religious symbolism of their ancestors. Effigies of Grace Cantwell and her husband,

[62] 'Ipsius Mariti funebre – Hexastichon – Grata deo delecta toro dilecta marito /Moribus et vita hic culta sepulta jacet / Illius Ingenium Ingenuum pietasq(ue) fidesq(ue)/ Dona fuere suo dos satis ampla viro/ Quanquam jure suo sua corpora Terra reposcat/ Tant vir digna est Hospite Terra Tamen': Paul Cockerham, ''My body to be buried in my owne monument': the social and religious context of Co. Kilkenny funeral monuments, 1600-1700' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, cix, section c (2009), p. 249. John O'Kelly lived at Creagh, near Ballinasloe, County Galway: see Carrigan, *History & antiquities*, iii, 167.

[63] Hans Hendrick Aylmer, 'The Aylmer family' in *Kildare Arch. Soc. Jn.*, i (1893), pp 305-7: on the Aylward family see also Julian C. Walton, 'The family of Aylward' in *Ir. Geneal.*, iv, no. 6 (Nov. 1973), pp 51-72.

[64] Aylmer, 'The Aylmer family', pp 305-7.

[65] Ibid.

Richard kneel at the foot of a cross bearing the IHS motif, a feature commonly employed on Catholic monuments from the beginning of the seventeenth century onwards (see Fig. 1.3).[66] At St Mary's Church, also in Kilkenny, on a tomb dated 1599 dedicated to Helen Lawless and her husband Nicholas Walsh of County Kilkenny, Helen is depicted kneeling facing her husband, holding a cross and rosary, an unambiguous testament to her exemplary and distinctly Catholic form of religious piety and devotion (see Fig. 1.4).[67] In yet another expression of female religious piety the tomb commemorating Honorina Grace (d. 1596), daughter of John Grace and Honoria Walsh of Courtstown, and wife of Oliver Shortall, lord of Ballylarkin at St Canice's Cathedral in Kilkenny, depicts the recumbent effigy of Honorina with her hands joined in prayer (see Fig. 1.5).[68]

While literary representations reinforced notions of 'ideal' or exemplary Catholic female behaviour, in Elizabethan and Stuart Ireland they could also serve as a powerful weapon of censure and propaganda used by Catholic clergy to castigate women who fell short of that 'ideal'. In particular, women who married Protestant clergymen and converted were very often targeted and subjected to intense mockery and derision at the hands of Catholic commentators.[69] This is demonstrated in the vitriolic poem composed by the Gaelic Ulster Franciscan friar and renowned preacher Eoghan Ó Dubhthaigh (d. 1590) in *c*.1578.[70] Ó Dubhthaigh's poem, originally written in Irish, interweaves a eulogy of the Virgin Mary with a coarse and caustic attack on three Church of Ireland bishops and their wives, among them Anna O'Meara of Lisany, County Tipperary, the wife of Meiler Magrath (m. *c*.1576), Church of Ireland Archbishop of Cashel.[71] According to Ó Dubhthaigh's poem (discussed in more detail in chapter three) clerical marriage was derided as 'no aid to

[66] The combination of the IHS motif was a characteristic device employed on monuments at the start of the seventeenth century and rapidly became an icon of Catholicism; for instance it is found on the title page of Rothe's *Analeta*; Cockerham ''My body to be buried in my owne monument', p. 270.
[67] Paul Cockerham and Amy Louise Harris, 'Kilkenny funeral monuments, 1500-1600: a statistical and analytical account' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, ci, section c, no. 5 (2001), p. 171.
[68] Honoria's grandson, Sir Oliver Shortall, knighted 1615, appears on a list of Kilkenny gentlemen who harboured priests in 1610. Sir Oliver Shortall's first wife was Ellen, daughter of Richard, first Viscount Mountgarret. His second wife was Lady Ellen Butler, sister of Walter Butler (d. 1633), eleventh Earl of Ormond: see Carrigan, *History & antiquities*, iii, 162.
[69] See chapter three.
[70] Cuthbert Mhág Craith (ed. and trans.), *Dán na mBráthar Mionúr* (2 vols, Dublin, 1967; 1980): printed in Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 157-9.
[71] L. Ó Mearáin, 'Miler McGrath, Archbishop of Cashel (1571-1622)' in *Clogher Rec.*, ii, no. 3 (1959), p. 445-57.

piety'; the clerics were adjudged to be 'blind' and 'unclean' while their wives were represented as 'deformed' and 'frantic' women (the direct antithesis of the Blessed Virgin), destined for eternal damnation.[72] Ó Dubhthaigh declared provocatively that; 'The bishops and their wives shall be reciting vespers, heavily, lustily and discordantly in the pit of hell'.[73] His condemnation of women on account of their marriage to Protestant clergymen was echoed in the early seventeenth century by the Irish Franciscan Robert Rochford. In his 1625 hagiographical account of the life of St Patrick, Rochford contrasted the lives of the ascetical and 'sacred virgins' of the Catholic Church with the wives of the Protestant reformers who, he claimed, 'lie immersed in beds of downe' together with their clerical husbands, whom he characterised as 'libidinous ministers'. The message was clear: because the women's sexual morality has been compromised, they represented the antithesis of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the paradigm of 'ideal' womanhood, praised for her purity and chastity. [74] Both Ó Dubhthaigh's poem and Rochford's account typified the polemical condemnation and prolific criticism voiced by Catholic commentators associated with an emerging Counter Reformation movement that questioned the supposed authority and reputability of Protestant bishops (and by extension, their wives) in Ireland. By ridiculing women whose behaviour was deemed unacceptable owing to their being on the opposing 'side', these Catholic polemicists reinforced confessional ideals about the nature and qualities of exemplary female virtue in each denominational tradition, which in turn defined and sustained emerging confessional identities and *mentalités* in post-Reformation Ireland.

While modesty, chastity and piety were ideals to which both Catholic and Protestant women were expected to embrace, affording hospitality to priests became a new and distinct feature of exemplary behaviour for Catholic women in particular throughout post-Reformation Europe. The especially challenging position of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, which according to Walsham was 'a Church under the cross', meant that from the early Elizabethan period Catholic priests were obliged to rely on the hospitality of a sympathetic laity in order to carry out their ministry.[75] In

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[72] Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 157-9.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Rochford (B.B), *The life of the glorious bishop S. Patricke*, epistle dedicatory, ix.
[75] For quote see Walsham, *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain*, p. 40.

England, John Bossy has highlighted how because anti-Catholic laws forced Catholic religious practice to retreat into the sphere of the household, women acquired an influential role as supporters and maintainers of Catholic clergy.[76] This was an activity for which women were habitually lauded in clerical memoirs as active and valuable contributors to the Catholic mission in seventeenth-century England.[77] In Ireland too, women, as matriarchal figureheads, played a vital role in maintaining a network of domestic refuge and domicile for priests and clerics, both regular and secular, actions which, on account of the significant risk associated with this activity (discussed in more detail below) were regarded as particularly commendable and regularly praised by Catholic clerics.[78] For example, Meath-native, Margaret Ball was praised by her biographers, John Howlin and David Rothe, for the hospitality she afforded Catholic priests during the 1570s and 1580s. Both biographers recorded how Margaret offered her home, at Ballygall, located in the parish of Finglas, on the outskirts of Dublin city, as a place of relief and domicile for several Catholic clergymen, including bishops, whom she furnished with vestments and other sacral objects necessary for the celebration of Mass (see below).[79] In 1623 Wexford woman, Joan Roche, mother of John Roche, Bishop of Ferns, was praised by the cleric William Barry, a Kildare-native and dean of Dublin as a 'very devout Catholic', who, during her lifetime, was 'accustomed to receive and give hospitality to Catholic priests in her house', located in the port-town of New Ross.[80] Similarly, Waterford woman, Anastasia Strong, sister of Thomas Strong, Bishop of Ossory (1582-1602), was commended by the Franciscan Fr Luke Wadding in 1626 as a 'holy woman' who not only sheltered members of the clergy but kept her house in Waterford city 'continuously open for clerics, poor students and pilgrims, to whom she gave lodging and charity'.[81] In the dedicatory epistle to his 1654 publication, *The soul's delight*, the discalced Carmelite, Stephen Browne implicitly praised Lady Frances Butler's hospitality to Catholic clerics detailing how at her County Tipperary home (where Fr Brown had himself been a guest) she conducted an 'orderly ... chappell' with 'devout pictures [at] the Altar' and was in possession of

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[76] John Bossy, *The English Catholic community, 1570-1850* (London, 1976), p. 158.
[77] Dolan, 'Reading, work & Catholic women's biographies', p. 336: see also Lux-Sterritt, '"Virgo becomes Virago"', pp 537-53.
[78] TNA SP 63/217/49.
[79] Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 473.
[80]'John Roche, Processus Datariae, 11 May 1623' in Giblin (ed.), 'The 'Processus Datariae', p. 524.
[81] 'Thomas Walsh, Processus Datariae, 11 March 1626' in ibid., pp 542-3.

‘decent vestments’ and ‘fine and clean altar clothes’, presumably for use by Catholic clerics under her patronage.[82] Such intimate connections between Catholic clerics and their female patrons as a feature of Catholic devotion provided anti-Catholic polemicists with material to speculate in pejorative terms about the feminised nature of the ‘Romish’ faith and to imply that these women’s relations with clerics involved sexual or other impropriety.[83]

II

‘They [seminary priests] have so gained the women that they are in a manner all of them absolute recusants’.[84]

What emerges quite clearly from contemporary sources such as Lord Deputy Sir Arthur Chichester’s report in October 1607 quoted above is that women exerted a stronger influence in directing confessional preferences within local communities than their traditional role, confined to the private family domain, might at first suggest. One of the most important contributions to the Catholic mission was their protection of priests. From the 1560s, a small but steady stream of students left Ireland for Catholic colleges on mainland Europe. From the 1580s onwards large numbers of priests and religious, having being inculcated in the practices of Tridentine Catholicism, were returning from overseas, as illustrated by frequent complaints from Elizabethan officials about the ‘swarms’ of them in the cities and towns.[85] The informal and clandestine infrastructure that enabled these returning missionaries to minister in Ireland was both extensive and effective by the turn of the century to the point that they had recourse to a network of refuges in private residences of the gentry and merchant élites in the towns and countryside of Dublin

[82] Browne, *The soul’s delight*, preface, no pagination; Lady Butler’s sister, Lady Lucy (d. 1662), kept a mass priest at her residence at Ballinakill Castle in Queen’s County in the early 1640s. See Deposition of Captain Richard Steele *et. al*. (TCD, MS 815). Their brother was George Touchet (d. *c*.1689) who became a Benedictine monk at Douai in 1643 and later served as chaplain of Queen Catherine of Braganza, the wife of King Charles II after the Restoration. For more details see: Thompson Cooper, ‘Touchet, George (d. before 1689?)’, rev. Dom Aidan Bellenger, *O.D.N.B.* (Oxford University Press, 2004) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27575, accessed 5 Nov. 2013].

[83] According to one commentator, ‘The Emissaries of Rome ... steal away the hearts of the weaker sort; and secretly they do creep into houses, leading captive simple women lade with sins, and led away with diverse lusts’: quoted Dolan, *Whores of Babylon*, p. 90: see also Wiesner-Hanks, *Christianity & sexuality in the early modern world*, p. 148.

[84] TNA SP 63/222/159.

[85] TNA SP 63/218/34.

and other urban centres such as Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford, and Limerick. In these, the returning seminary-trained priests (regular and secular) found shelter in the households of sympathetic women and their families which proved conducive environments for cultivating an intense and precocious brand of Catholic devotion both within the immediate household and the wider community. From their places of refuge Catholic priests could circulate frequently in the vicinity, proselytising, administering sacraments, hearing confessions, visiting the sick, and engendering devotion to the Catholic faith among the Catholic community. The activities of Nicholas French, son of Wexford-native Christina Rossiter, who became Bishop of Ferns in 1645, testify to the range of pastoral activities made possible by such support. Before his appointment to the Ferns bishopric Fr French was parish priest of St Patrick's in Wexford where he was offered shelter 'in a private house'. From there 'he carried out his duties ... with great zeal, hearing confessions for six or seven hours without a break, and visiting the sick'.[86]

The types of households which sheltered priests varied. In some cases, the head of the household was a widow, usually supported by daughters and servants. Others were headed by a married couple in which the wife was the dominant party on matters of religious belief and practice, with or without the connivance and support of her husband. As Marie B. Rowlands has suggested in the context of early modern England, in circumstances where a married couple provided a priest with shelter, it was usually the wife, rather than the husband, who made the necessary accommodation arrangements.[87] Of course, providing medium or long-term shelter to one or more resident clerics or religious was a costly business and few households were wealthy enough to provide them with permanent lodgings. Consequently, in Ireland as in England, the onus largely fell on wealthy families from the aristocratic, gentry and mercantile classes with the requisite financial resources, a fact acknowledged by Monsignor Bentivoglio, the nuncio in Brussels who, in his report to the Vatican on affairs in Ireland in 1613, wrote that 'the nobility and gentry [are]

[86] Hensey, 'A comparative study of the lives of Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic clergy', pp 8, 25.
[87] Rowlands, 'Recusant women' in Prior (ed.), *Women in English society*, p. 156.

nearly all Catholic'.[88] Women who harboured clergy were therefore often the wives (or widows) of influential men, many of whom held prominent public office, as lawyers, merchants, aldermen and mayors. As Brian Mac Cuarta has argued, the alliance between élite women and Tridentine clergy was 'of utmost significance in determining the religious culture of households, which in turn helped greatly in establishing a clear Catholic identity in the parishes'.[89] Yet, as Walsham has noted, this domestic-centred form of Catholicism was 'quite inimical to the entrenchment of Tridentine ideal ... which sought to shift the focus of devotion from the family and voluntary fraternal societies towards the well-ordered parish'.[90] That said, in an Irish context, support garnered by returning seminary-trained priests and religious from women of means ensured that Counter-Reformation influences permeated not only their own households but also their local communities. This in turn led to the fashioning of a distinct Catholic identity and culture within parishes and towns of south-east Leinster, pointing to the accuracy of Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin's contention that Counter-Reformation Catholicism introduced to Ireland by returning Irish clerics and religious adapted to the vagaries of local contexts.[91]

The roles of élite women (and men) in maintaining networks of support for priests were noteworthy given the significant risk associated with such subversive activity. This was especially true after the 1605 proclamation (repeated in 1611) which decreed banishment and exile for seminary priests and clergy in religious orders, measures which had considerable impact on the laity who harboured them since these decrees also included sanctions against those guilty of sheltering the proscribed clerics.[92] However, the risks associated with sheltering fugitive clergy were generally greater for men than for women. This is demonstrated in the case of the Dublin recusant Mary Browne née Sedgrave, wife of a well-to-do baker Nicholas Browne.

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[88] 'Report from the Brussels Internuncio, Mgr. Bentivoglio, 6 April 1613, on the state of Catholicity in the countries subject to his supervision' in *Achiv. Hib.*, iii (1914), p. 300.
[89] Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, p. 166.
[90] Walsham, *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain*, p. 351.
[91] Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, 'Early modern Catholicism in the northern Netherlands, England and Ireland', unpublished paper delivered at the Tudor and Stuart Ireland Conference, Maynooth University, August 2014: a podcast of the paper is available at https://soundcloud.com/history-hub/tadhg-o-hannrachain-early-modern-catholicism-northern-netherlands-england-ireland?in=history-hub/sets/tudor-stuart-ireland-conference-2014.
[92] TNA SP 63/217/49; Proclamation of lord deputy and council, 13 July 1611, Lambeth Palace Library, Carew MS 629.

Mary was a well-known maintainer of Catholic priests in early to mid-seventeenth-century Dublin and in *c*.1620 she sponsored her son Stephen Browne's entrance into the order of discalced Carmelites at Brussels. On his return to Ireland in 1625 Fr Browne and his companion, Fr Edward Sherlock (d. 1629), a Kildare-native and first superior of the Irish Discalced Carmelites, resided at Mary's Dublin city home in Cook Street.[93] By 1630 Fr Browne was the celebrant of Mass in St Michan's parish where, according to Archbishop Lancelot Bulkeley (d. 1650), the parishioners were all 'recusants'.[94] However, while the 1620s and 1630s was a period which witnessed abatement in recent government pressure against recusants, Fr Brown recalled how during his childhood in the first two decades of the seventeenth century – a period of particularly severe and systematic state coercion against Catholicism, especially in Leinster – his home was raided on several occasions, when soldiers entered the house and ransacked the premises in search of fugitive clerics. According to Fr Brown, more than once, it was his father, not his mother, who was imprisoned on suspicion of harbouring priests.[95]

As the case of Fr Stephen Browne's father demonstrates, men who were discovered to be illegally harbouring fugitive priests or engaging in activities which the state regarded as religiously subversive were often subjected to the full rigours of the law and associated penalties (usually fines or spells of imprisonments). Their wives, however, appear to have rarely incurred full legal penalties for their often equally active defiance of the law. In the context of early modern England, Rowlands has noted that:

> The state had been hampered in controlling them [i.e. recusant wives] by the countervailing need to maintain the co-operation of the gentry and burgesses who were not prepared to allow the state to invade the integrity and unity of the family or to override their rights as husbands and fathers. To make a wife as an individual responsible for her own conscientious resistance was to go beyond the bounds of acceptable public policy.[96]

[93] The house was described in 1692 as an old 'decayed timber house, two stories high, and two rooms of a floore … on the north side of Cook Street': see Brocard Mansfield (ed.), 'Father Paul Browne ODC, 1598-1671' in *Dublin Historical Record*, xxxvii, no. 2 (Mar., 1984), p. 58.
[94] Ronan (ed.), 'Archbishop Bulkeley's visitation', p. 58.
[95] Browne, Glynn & Martin (eds), 'The 'Brevis Relatio'', pp 137-8.
[96] Rowlands, 'Recusant women' in Prior (ed.), *Women in English society*, p. 160.

Walsham too has highlighted how in England, malfunctions in a penal system which concentrated mostly on attacks against property and office holding males in order to punish non-conformity meant that convictions against women were comparatively infrequent while Dolan too has observed that laws governing recusancy 'exacerbated gender inversion by leaving married women relatively unmolested'.[97] In Ireland, as in England, convictions against women on charges of harbouring clergy were equally rare (although documentation in the Irish case is less extensive). A combination of the state's ambiguous policy towards non-conformity, and social anxieties regarding state intrusion in the private affairs of a household, may go some way towards explaining why convictions against women on charges of recusancy were significantly less common than against men. The home was a private realm in early modern society, viewed as the preserve of the family, with the woman as mistress of the household. In cases of subversive religious activities, such as sheltering illegal clergy, a woman's social position apparently allowed her more leverage than men who as the recognised wielders of authority in the domestic sphere were expected to enforce conformity in their households; consequently, they bore the brunt of the law. Many women took full advantage of this leverage and latitude (sometimes with their husbands' active or covert support, sometimes without either) in order to take practical steps to maintain Catholicism as the confession of their household and, in some instances, of their wider community.

Typical of the broader pattern is the case of Marion Barnewall (d. 1607) who, in her capacity as a wife, made several contributions to the maintenance of Catholicism in her immediate domestic sphere. Marion, the daughter of Patrick Sherle of Shallon in County Meath, was married to Sir Christopher Barnewall (d. 1575), son of Sir Patrick Barnewall, master of the rolls, and his wife, Anne, daughter of Sir Thomas Luttrell, chief justice of the common pleas.[98] The Barnewall family were among the most influential Old English gentry families in the Pale with a long record of service and loyalty to the Tudor state. As a result they had benefited considerably following the dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530s and 1540s; in 1550

[97] Walsham, *Church papists*, pp 78-81; Dolan, 'Gender & the 'lost' spaces', p. 654: see also Lux-Sterritt, '"Virgo becomes Virago"', pp 537-53.
[98] C.J. Woods, 'Barnewall, Sir Christopher' in *D.I.B.* (Cambridge, 2009), [http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a0384, accessed 13 Jan. 2013].

Christopher inherited from his father the convent property of Grace Dieu in north County Dublin.[99] Notwithstanding their public show of loyalty, some early indications of the religious inclinations of the family can be detected. Sir Christopher's involvement in leading opposition to the legality of the Reformation parliament in 1560 represented a very public display of the family's open opposition to the Tudor state's religious policy.[100] In the private sphere, two strong indications of their non-conformity was the family's continued maintenance of the displaced community of Grace Dieu nuns in a house at nearby Portrane where until 1577 they resided with a chaplain (this will be discussed in more detail in chapter two), and the shelter Christopher and Marion afforded the exiled English cleric Edmund Campion (1540-81) at their home in Turvey during spring 1571.[101] Although not yet an ordained Catholic priest, at the time of his stay in the Barnewall household, at Turvey near Swords in north County Dublin, Campion was viewed with intense suspicion by the English government: he had been forced to withdraw from his academic position at Oxford and flee to Ireland on account of his increasing adherence to Catholicism.[102] He resided at the Barnewall's home for a period of ten weeks where according to his own testimony, he was furnished with a fine library and an annexed room.[103] According to Colm Lennon, Campion's Dublin sojourn 'proved to be critical in [his] spiritual development', since he travelled to the Continent to train as a priest at the English College at Douai a few months after his departure from the family and from Ireland.[104]

Clearly an ethos of Catholic hospitality permeated the Barnewall household, and Sir Christopher's generosity to the exiled cleric was later eulogised in the writings of the Catholic scholar Richard Stanihurst, who married the Barnewall's third daughter,

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[99] The Grace Dieu convent will be discussed in more detail in chapter two.

[100] Woods, 'Barnewall, Sir Christopher'.

[101] John Kingston, 'Catholic families of the Pale' in *Reportorium novum*, i, no. 2 (1956), pp 336-41; Colm Lennon, *Richard Stanihust: the Dubliner, 1547-1618* (Dublin, 1981), p. 32.

[102] Michael A. R. Graves, 'Campion, Edmund [St Edmund Campion] (1540-1581)' in *O.D.N.B.* (Oxford University Press, 2004); online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4539, accessed 17 Oct. 2013].

[103] Campion recorded that he 'had entered into such familiar society and daily table-talk with the worshipful Esquire James Stanihurst … Who beside all courtesy of Hospitality, and a thousand loving turns … both by word and written monuments, and by the benefit of his own Library, nourished most effectually mine endeavour'. Edmund Campion, *Two Histories of Ireland, the one written by Edmund Campion the other by Meredith Hanmer Dr of Divinity* (Dublin, 1633), no pagination.

[104] Lennon, *Richard Stanihust*, p. 30.

Genet.[105] Although Stanihurst does not refer to Barnewall's wife (his focus being confined, as was customary, to lauding the virtues of the accomplished men of Ireland), that receptive domestic environment was undoubtedly cultivated in no small part by Marion Barnewall, who ran the household. No explicit evidence of Marion's personal piety survives; yet insights into her attachment to Catholicism may be gleaned in other ways. Her continued alignment with the Catholic Old English community of the Pale, for example, is evident in her choice of marriage partner following the death of her first husband, Sir Christopher in 1575. In *c.*1578 Marion remarried as his second wife Sir Lucas Dillon (d. 1592) of Newtown and Moymet, County Meath, eldest son and heir of Sir Robert Dillon (1500?-80) of Newtown Trim, County Meath, chief justice of common pleas, and his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Edward Barnewall of Crickstown, County Meath.[106] Despite his status as one of the most loyal and trusted Old English privy councillors (he was knighted at Drogheda in 1575 by Sir Henry Sidney who called him '*meus fidelis Lucas*') Sir Lucas appears to have remained Catholic throughout his career. Whereas in the 1560s and 1570s Dillon's religious affiliation does not appear to have been an impediment to his career advancement, by the 1580s (after his marriage to Marion) he had gained a reputation among Elizabethan church and state officials for his increasingly recusant stance. In 1583 Dillon failed to secure a nomination as chief justice of the Queen's bench on account of accusations that he was a 'catholick at hart'. These allegations were levelled by an Irish exile who claimed that Dillon kept a Catholic priest named Charles at his home (presumably at his Meath residence located at Moymet Castle, three miles north-west of Trim). In 1590 Archbishop Adam Loftus of Dublin (1533/4-1605) condemned Dillon for his 'notorious

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[105] *Holinshed's Irish chronicle: The Historie of Irelande from the first inhabitation thereof, unto the yeare 1509. Collected by Raphaell Holinshed, & continued till the yeare 1547 by Richarde Stanyhurst*, Liam Miller and Eileen Power (eds) (Dublin, 1979), p. 93.

[106] Sir Lucas Dillon's first wife was Jane, daughter of James Bathe of Athcarne, chief baron of the exchequer from 1535 to 1570. Lucas and Jane had seven sons and five daughters, including their eldest son, James (d. 1642), who was created Baron Dillon in 1620 and earl of Roscommon in 1622. Another son, John, married the daughter of Sir William Sarsfield of Lucan, County Dublin. Their daughter, Thomasina Dillon, was the mother of Oliver Plunkett (1625-81) future Catholic archbishop of Armagh. Lucas Dillon's wife Jane died sometime before 1578 and on his death in 1592 Lucas was buried in the parish church at Newtown Trim, where an altar tomb, with effigies of Lucas and Jane, is still extant: see Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, iv, 156; James Jocelyn, 'The Renaissance tombs at Lusk and Newtown Trim' in *R.S.A.I Jn.*, ciii (1973), p. 166: on Thomasina Dillon see Gerald Dillon, 'The Dillon peerages' in *Ir. Geneal.*, iii, no. 3 (1957), p. 93.

recusancy'.[107] Clearly then, the ethos of Catholic hospitality engendered by Marion Barnewall which made the Barnewall household at Turvey a desirable refuge for the exiled English cleric Edmund Campion in the early 1570s, continued to prevail at the Meath home of her second husband during the 1590s.

As well as her own choice of marriage partner, the marriage alliances of Marion and Christopher's numerous offspring, which included at least two sons and eleven daughters, also point to Marion's Catholicism.[108] The Barnewall daughters married Catholic men of significant standing. Margaret Barnewall, for example, married *c.*1570, Sir Nicholas St Lawrence, Lord Howth (d. 1607), who in 1605 campaigned against the imprisonment of Catholic dissidents during a spell of vigorous religious coercion enacted under the deputyship of Sir Arthur Chichester (1604-15).[109] Among those imprisoned was James Dillon, later first Earl of Roscommon (d. 1641/2), who was married to Eleanor (d. 1628), Marion and Christopher's second eldest daughter. Eleanor's husband, James was the son and heir of Sir Lucas Dillon, her mother Marion's second husband.[110] The couple had seven sons and six daughters, among them Jane, who later married Sir Christopher Dillon, brother to Cecily and Eleanor, among the first nuns of the Order of Poor Clare to arrive in Ireland in the late 1620s.[111] Genet, who was Marion and Christopher's third daughter, married (in May 1571) Richard Stanihurst, who later became a Jesuit and one of the most prolific Catholic scholars of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[112] Other Catholic marriages contracted by the Barnewall daughters affirmed their connections with leading Catholic families of the Pale: Alison married Sir John Plunket, Lord

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[107] G. Crawford, 'Dillon, Sir Lucas (*d.* 1592)' in ***O.D.N.B.*** (Oxford University Press, 2004); online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7659, accessed 17 Oct. 2013].
[108] They were John, Patrick, Laurence, James, John, Alison, Elizabeth, Mary, Anne, Mabel, Katherine, Ismay, Margaret, Genet, Eleanor: Jocelyn, 'The Renaissance tombs at Lusk & Newtown Trim', p. 158.
[109] The couple had three sons, Christopher, Thomas and Richard, and one daughter Mary. The marriage, however, ended in divorce, about 1575: Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, vi, 607; Lennon, 'St Lawrence, Christopher, seventh Baron Howth (*d.* 1589)' in ***O.D.N.B.*** (Oxford University Press, 2004) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24507, accessed 17 Oct. 2013].
[110] Dillon, 'The Dillon peerages', pp 57-100.
[111] The arrival of the Poor Clare order in Ireland will be discussed in more detail in chapter two. Eleanor and James had several sons, including, Robert, Lucas, Thomas, Christopher, George, John and Patrick and six daughters, including Jane, Elizabeth, Frances, Margaret, Mary and Alison: Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, xi, 124-5; Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, iv, 160.
[112] Richard Stanihurst was the eldest son of James Stanihurst (1521-73) and his first wife, Anne Fitzsimon: Lennon, *Richard Stanihurst*; *Holinshed's Irish chronicle*, ed. Miller & Power.

Dunsany of Bewley (d. 1594)[113], Anne married Sir John Draycott (b. 1558), two other daughters married Sir Richard Masterson and Richard Delahyde of Moyglare in County Kildare respectively while another two married into the Catholic Finglas family of Westpalston, north County Dublin.[114] Such endogamous marriage among these major Catholic families of the Pale and surrounding districts was vital to the consolidation of that community throughout this period and, in the later decades of the sixteenth and the opening decades of the seventeenth century, strategic marriage arrangements within their confessional communities both reinforced and were reinforced by a reviving Catholic sentiment.

Another Dublin woman who offered her home for the protection of Catholic priests was Cecily Finglas née Cusack (d. 1638), daughter of Henry Cusack of Dublin, merchant and alderman and sheriff of Dublin between 1573 and 1574, and his wife, Margaret Brandon.[115] Indicative of the prevailing endogamous marriage tendencies among leading Catholic families of the Pale, Cecily was herself related to the Barnewalls of Turvey through the marriage of her first husband, Sir Christopher St Lawrence (d. 1589), seventh Baron of Howth, whose son and heir, Nicholas, had married the Barnewall's daughter, Margaret (see above). Cecily later married into the Barnewall family herself (although a different branch): her second husband was John Barnewall of Monkton, County Meath, her first having died in October 1589.[116] Cecily lived with her third husband, John Finglas, at their home in Westpalstown. It was there, after his return from studying at the Jesuit College at Tournai in Spanish Flanders in 1611, that Cecily sheltered her brother, the renowned preacher and Jesuit Henry Cusack (1579-1647).[117] Cecily and her brother appear to have maintained a close relationship which permitted Cusack to carry out his ministry in Dublin city and its environs. It is likely that Cusack continued to reside at the Westpalstown abode of his sister throughout the 1610s, 1620s and 1630s, and possibly until her death in July 1638.[118] Undoubtedly, the support afforded Henry Cusack by his sister

[113] Sir John Plunkett was married to Alison Barnewall who afterwards married Sir Edward Fitzgerald: see Lodge, *The Irish peerage*, vi, 162-3.
[114] Kingston, 'Catholic families of the Pale', i, no. 2, pp 336-41.
[115] Margaret Brandon was still alive in September 1605: see Hubert. D. Gallwey, 'The Cusack family of Counties Meath and Dublin, continued' in *Ir. Geneal.*, v, no. 4 (Nov. 1977), pp 464-5.
[116] Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, iii, 197.
[117] Gallwey, 'The Cusack family', pp 464-5.
[118] Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, iii, 197.

contributed to the cultivation of a Catholic community in the local Westpalstown area. The strength of that community is attested to in the visitation report compiled by Lancelot Bulkeley, Archbishop of Dublin who in 1630 declared that the parish of Westpalstown was inhabited entirely by 'recusants'.[119] Indeed according to Bulkeley's report, another woman, a relative of Cecily, was also to the fore in providing the requisite support to priests to service the spiritual and devotional needs of the Catholic parishioners of Westpalstown, who, he claimed, all 'resort to Mass to the house of the Lady Dowager of Howth'.[120]

The 'Lady Dowager' referred to in Bulkeley's report was Cecily's granddaughter-in-law, Elizabeth, wife of Christopher St Lawrence (d. 1619), ninth baron of Howth, a grandson and namesake of Cecily's first husband.[121] Elizabeth was originally from Essex in England, the daughter of John Wentworth and his wife, Dorothy Southwell.[122] She had presumably come to Ireland following her marriage to Sir Christopher, sometime before 1597. According to Bulkeley's report Elizabeth maintained a priest named Roger Begg who said Mass at Howth Castle, and may have been the same Roger Begg who in 1654 was sentenced to transportation by the Cromwellian authorities.[123] Clearly a well organised and well financed nexus of support for Catholic clergymen operated in the locality of Westpalstown and its operation was in no small measure attributable to the sponsorship and patronage afforded by both Cecily Finglas and her granddaughter-in-law, Elizabeth St Lawrence. That close and enduring family ties were the basis for Cecily Finglas's assistance to her brother is evidenced by the the stipulation in her will, dated 1 August 1635, that her body be buried wherever her brother Henry Cusack 'should think fit, but in a decent manner'.[124] However, while her will attests to strong sibling solidarity between the two, it also affords a tantalising insight into Cecily's own personal faith and beliefs, demonstrating that her motivation for affording protection and support to her brother went beyond a sense of familial duty; it was a demonstration of her dedication to Catholicism. In her will she directed that

[119] Ronan (ed.), 'Archbishop Bulkeley's visitation of Dublin', pp 68-9.
[120] Ibid., pp 68-9.
[121] Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, vi, 607-8.
[122] Ibid., 608.
[123] 'Commonwealth Records' in *Achiv. Hib.*, vi (1917), p. 198.
[124] Paraphrased in Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, iii, 197.

mourning gowns be provided to the poor at the time of her burial, that other alms be dispersed among the poor at the time of her death, and that 'some part of her goods be kept and reserved to defray that charge'.[125] She also stipulated that a number of requiem Masses be said in her memory, directing the executrix of her will to 'keep her months-mind and a years-mind, according to the usual custom of the country'. Further testimony to her avid dedication to Catholicism and in particular to her role as a supporter of the Jesuit order in Ireland is evident in January 1638 when just before her death, the aged widow, together with Thomas Dease, Bishop of Meath and Cecily's niece, Margaret Hoare (described as 'a holy virgin who has given all of hers to God and the Society') were confirmed as 'participants in the merits of the Society [of Jesus]'.[126] According to Vera Orschel this process was undertaken 'for the survival of the [Jesuit] mission [in Ireland]' and that 'other orders no doubt took similar steps to safeguard their own'.[127]

The dedication of influential English women such as Elizabeth St Lawrence to Catholicism was key to what David Edwards has highlighted as the orchestration of 'traninsular marital links [which] existed between English Catholic families and their Irish counterparts'. Notable among these were the Butlers of Ormond, the Fitzgeralds of Kildare, the Flemings of Slane and the St Lawrences of Howth. That process, Edwards has argued, contradicts 'the orthodox assumption' that English settlement in Ireland in the late Tudor and early Stuart periods was somehow 'inextricably bound up with' English Protestantism.[128] We find another example of these traninsular marital links joining English Catholic families and their Irish peers in the Mountgarrets of Kilkenny. In *c*.1612 Richard Butler, third Viscount Mountgarret, married as his second wife, Thomasine (also called Elizabeth) (d.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Calendar of documents at the Archivium Romanum, SJ. Copy letters by Superior General SJ Muzio Vitelleschi (1563-1645), Rome (or his secretary), to the then superior of the Irish mission, Fr Richard Nugent, dated 9 January 1638, fol. 45r: see also letter dated 26 April 1636, fol. 37rv. I am grateful to Damien Burke, Assistant Archivist, Irish Jesuit Archives and Vera Orschel, Archivist and Editor at the Irish Jesuit Archives for their assistance in locating these references and for their insights. According to Orschel, 'the phenomenon of becoming a 'participator' occurs a few other times [in the Irish Jesuit documents archive], but not involving women': email correspondence with Vera Orschel, October 2014.

[127] Vera Orschel, 'Irish Jesuit Documents in Rome: Part 8' available at: http://sjarchives.tumblr.com/page/2.

[128] David Edwards, 'A haven of popery: English Catholic migration to Ireland in the age of the plantations' in Ford & Mc Cafferty (eds), *The origins of sectarianism*, pp 104, 109.

1625), widow of Sir Francis Freeman of Billing, Northamptonshire and daughter of Sir William Andrews of Lathbury, Buckinghamshire.[129] By 1619 Walter Sheppard, a seminary priest born and reared near Tamworth, Staffordshire, and referred to by Edward Mottram, customer of Waterford as 'a mass priest, and a seducing fellow', was being maintained at the Mountgarret household at Baleen Castle in north Kilkenny, undoubtedly under the patronage of the English-born Lady Mountgarret.[130] In 1620 Thomasine's household also harboured other Catholic ecclesiasts, including David Rothe, recently appointed Bishop of Ossory. The cases of the St Lawrences of Howth and the Mountgarrets of Kilkenny demonstrates not only the importance of marriage alliances in fostering religious links between English Catholic recusant families and their Irish counterparts but also the pivotal role of women as wives in shaping the religious orientation of their families and cultivating connections which could in turn reinforce the propogation of Tridentine religiosity within the households of the Old English upper classes.[131] As will be discussed in chapter three, the same was true for the English Protestant community in Ireland. For example, Edward Brabazon (d. 1675), second Earl of Meath, a descendent of Leicestershire-native Sir William Brabazon (d. 1552), one of the most staunch advocates of religious reform in Tudor Ireland, married in 1632, Mary (d. 1685) a daughter of Calcot Chambre of Denbigh in Wales, who in *c.*1663 maintained the English-born Presbyterian minister, Daniel Williams as her chaplain at Kilruddery House, near Bray in north County Wicklow.[132]

As well as Elizabeth St Lawrence at Howth and Thomasine Butler at Kilkenny, another woman of aristocratic status who sheltered clergy was Margaret Preston (d. 1637), wife of Jenico Preston (d. 1630), fifth Viscount Gormanstown of Meath, who according to Barnaby Rich was one of six noblemen that 'doth entertain priests and giveth support and countenance to popery in Ireland'.[133] Indeed Margaret, who was

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[129] Mac Cuarta, 'Old English Catholicism in Chester documents, 1609-19' in *Achiv. Hib.*, lvii (2003), pp 5-6.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Dermot Foley, 'Presbyterianism in Drogheda, 1652-1827' in *Louth Arch. Soc.*, xxv, no. 2 (2002), p. 179; Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, viii, 612-3.
[133] Rich named Gormanstown along with Sir Richard Nugent, Lord Delvin, Sir John Plunkett, Sir Patrick Barnewall, Sir Thomas Fitzwilliams and Sir Garret Aylmer as leading supporters of Catholicism: see 'Barnaby Rich's 'Remembrances of the state of Ireland, 1612'' ed. C. Litton Falkiner in *R.I.A. Proc*., xxvi, section c (1906), pp 140-1.

the daughter of Nicholas St Lawrence, eighth Baron of Howth and his second wife Mary (d. 1607), daughter of Sir Nicholas White of Leixlip, was related to Elizabeth St Lawerence through marriage.[134] According to the 1615 regal visitation, a priest named Fr William Verdon was maintained at the Gormanstown household in County Meath by Margaret and her husband Jenico.[135] Fr Verdon had served as the Preston family's chaplain since the early 1590s and was referred to in the will (dated 21 January 1599) of Sir Christopher Preston (d. 1599), Jenico's father: another priest James Hussey was also mentioned in Christopher's will and in that of his wife, Catherine Fitzgerald (dated 22 February 1602-3).[136] The Gormanstown women appear to have maintained a long tradition of sheltering priests: according to John Kingston, following the suppression of the monasteries in the 1530s and 1540s, those who lived in the locality 'were dependent for religious life on the little chapel in Gormanstown Castle and the chaplain attending it'.[137] In 1622 a government report claimed that Fr Verdon continued to reside at the Gormanstown residence along with another another secular priest, named James Delane while John Plunket, a Jesuit (ordained in 1618), was residing at the Meath home of Lady Mary O'Doherty née Preston, widow of Sir Cahir O'Doherty and Margaret Preston's sister-in-law.[138] In his will, dated 1635, Fr Hussey bequeathed 'to my ladie of Gormanstowne [Margaret Preston] a small piece of an unicorne's horne bound in goulde w[hi]ch she gave me', who at the time he made his will was living at Smarmore, the residence of Lady Ismay Bellew, widow of Sir William Taaffe and the burial place of Margaret Preston, Lady Gormanstown.[139] However, as will be discussed in chapter two, not only did the Gormanstown family afford shelter to clergy, they also protected nuns, among them Elinor Preston, Margaret Preston's sister-in-law. Along with Fr Verdon, Elinor resided at Gormanstown Castle for a period of at least seven years between

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[134] Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, vi, 23.

[135] The visitation report cites that, 'Wm Verdon, priest, [is] kept by the Viscount Gormanstown whose sister is a professed nun and the two lodge together'. The visitation included the diocese of Meath and Ardagh: see Ronan (ed.), 'Royal visitation of Dublin', pp 1-55.

[136] John Brady, 'Keeping the faith at Gormanstown, 1569-1629' in Franciscan Fathers (eds), *Father Luke Wadding*, pp 407-8.

[137] Kingston, 'Catholic families of the Pale', p. 238.

[138] The government report is printed in Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath', pp 7-12. In an introduction Hunter tells us that the document from the papers of Sir Nathaniel Rich in the National Library of Ireland and that Rich was one of a group of Englishmen who were joined with officials of the Irish government in a commission to investigate Irish affairs in 1622. Hunter further states that the document on Meath is unsigned and that none of it is in Rich's hand.

[139] L.P., Murray, 'The will of James Hussey of Smarmore, Co. Louth, "Priest" (A.D. 1635)' in *Louth Arch. Soc. Jn.*, viii, no. 4 (1936), p. 304.

1615 and 1622, during which time spells of severe, if interrupted, religious coercion in wealthier anglicised areas of Dublin, Meath and Louth were especially frequent.[140] Furthermore, two of Margaret's daughters, Elizabeth and Jane, were among the first nuns of the Order of Poor Clare to arrive in Ireland in the late 1620s. Also among that cohort was a daughter of Luke Plunket (d. 1637), first Earl of Fingall, who became Margaret's second husband following Jenico's death in 1630.[141]

Arguably the best known supporter of the Catholic clergy among the ranks of the aristocracy, however, was Elizabeth Fitzgerald née Nugent (d. 1645), Countess of Kildare. Elizabeth was the second eldest among six daughters and six sons of Christopher Nugent (1544-1602), third Baron Delvin, and his wife Mary (1556-1610), daughter of Gerald Fitzgerald, eleventh Earl of Kildare.[142] Raised at Cloneen in County Westmeath, the principal seat of the Nugents, she married, after 1600, the Protestant Gerald Fitzgerald (d. 1612), fourteenth Earl of Kildare (her cousin) with whom she had one son, Gerald.[143] Notwithstanding her marriage into the Protestant family of Kildare, Elizabeth remained a fervent Catholic and offered her home as a place of domicile to priests and religious, in particular members of the Jesuit order. Indeed Elizabeth was a major patron of the Jesuit mission in Ireland with whom she had close familial connections: her cousin was Fr Robert Nugent (d. 1652), superior of the Jesuit mission in Ireland (1627-46 and 1651-52), who normally resided at Elizabeth's residence at Kilkea Castle near Castledermot, County Kildare.[144] However, her support of the order went beyond affording domestic shelter and maintenance to religious at her private residence. Publicly Elizabeth was recognised among contemporaries as one of the order's most influential and wealthy patrons. Indeed following the death of her husband in 1612 and that of her son eight years later, the widowed and financially well-off countess readily poured her acquired

[140] Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, p. 168.

[141] Report of Richard Boyle to Viscount Dorchester, 9 Jan. 1630 in *H.M.C. 12th report, append., pt. 1* (London, 1888), 398-9; Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, vi, 23.

[142] Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, iv, 174; vii, 241.

[143] Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, vii, 241.

[144] Fr Robert Nugent was himself a nephew of the Protestant Earl of Inchiquin. He was the son of Oliver Nugent and Catherine née Plunkett. Born at Balena in County Meath on 20 July 1597 he studied at Douai and was ordained a priest at Tournai in Septembet 1601. He entered the Socity of Jesus there the same year. In 1608 he returned to Ireland where he gained a reputation as an able preacher, both in English and in Irish. See Proinsias Ó Fionnagáin, 'Irish Jesuits, 1598-1773' available at: http://www.jesuitarchives.ie/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/%C3%93-Fionnag%C3%A1in-Prionsias-S.J.-Irish-Jesuits-1598-1773-smaller.pdf

wealth into the Jesuit mission, most prominently into the foundation of Kildare Hall in Dublin, a Catholic college and chapel founded by her in 1628.[145] The Hall was established at Back Lane in the parish of St Audoen's, in the heart of the capital city and within close proximity of Dublin Castle, on property that she leased 'from the chapter of Christ Church Cathedral for forty years at a rent of £12 per annum'.[146] As Loeber has noted, 'aside from financing the construction of buildings, [the countess] supported the yearly operating budget of the establishment'.[147]The building complex at Kildare Hall was considerable in size, suggesting the financial and public liberty the countess exerted in the management of her assets. The building included a 'college, a novitiate, a sodality, the main chapel (called Kildare Hall), and the countess of Kildare's private residence'.[148] The scope of Kildare Hall as a centre of Jesuit activity was impressive, with the celebration of Mass, sermons and confessions taking place in the main chapel: the college served as a school of higher learning for both lay students and seminarians, the novitiate trained students for the priesthood of the Jesuit order and was the largest of the religious orders that founded houses in Dublin in the 1620s, and the sodality was for selected and devout members of the local community, perhaps among them Cecily Cusack (d. 1638) and provided confessions and regular sermons.[149] Despite the suppression of Kildare Hall in 1629, following a backlash on the part of the state authorities against Catholic practice (discussed in more detail below), Elizabeth remained a steadfast patron of the Jeusit mission and in 1634, in expression of her continued support, dedicated a silver chalice to the order (see Fig. 1.6). The chalice features Catholic iconography, including a figural representation of the Crucifixion, and an engraving at the base which reads '[The property] of the Society of Jesus. The gift of the most noble Elizabeth, Countess of Kildare, 1634'.[150] The significance of Elizabeth's support for the Jesuit mission was attested to by her cousin, the Jesuit superior, Fr Richard

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[145] The earl of Cork described Kildare Hall as 'one of the houses erected by the Countess Dowager of Kildare and by her richly adorned and furnished for the Jesuits': see *H.M.C. 12th report, append. pt. 1*, 398-9.
[146] Rolf Loeber and Magda Stouthamer-Loeber, 'Kildare Hall, the countess of Kildare's patronage of the Jesuits, and the liturgical setting of Catholic worship in early seventeenth-century Dublin' in Gillespie & Fitzpatrick (eds), *The parish in medieval & early modern Ireland*, p. 247.
[147] Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 'Kildare Hall' in Gillespie & Fitzpatrick (eds), *The parish in medieval & early modern Ireland*, p. 247.
[148] Ibid., pp 249-51.
[149] Ibid., pp 249-53.
[150] Walter Fitzgerald, 'Miscellanae: a chalice presented to the Jesuits in 1634 by the Countess of Kildare' in *Kildare Arch. Soc. Jn.*, v (1906-8), pp 60-2.

Nugent, who upon her death in 1645 described the countess as ‘truly the mother of our society in this realm [Ireland]’.[151] In a final testimony of her dedication and willingness to propagate the Counter-Reformation mission in Ireland, Elizabeth’s will (dated 1634) stipulated that her assets, including Kilkea Castle and its estates, were to be left in their entirety to the Jesuits in order to fund a novitiate.[152]

As well as women from aristocratic and gentry households, several women among the leading patricians and mercantile élites were also prominent supporters of clergy and religious during the Elizabethan and early Stuart eras. Notable among these was Anastasia Strong, the wife of Robert Walsh who held the mayoralty of Waterford city, where the couple resided, in 1601 and 1602.[153] Both the Walsh and the Strong families were members of a distinctively Catholic and closely connected coterie of families in late sixteenth and early to mid-seventeenth-century Waterford, which was disparagingly referred to in 1596 by William Lyon (d. 1617), Church of Ireland Bishop of Cork and Cloyne, as ‘the sink of all filthy superstition and idolatry’.[154] Anastasia’s family, the Strongs, had particularly sterling Catholic credentials and could list among their members, Thomas Strong, Anastasia’s brother, who was appointed Catholic bishop of Ossory in 1582, a position he held until his death in 1602. Among the Walsh family, five of Anastasia’s nephews, all sons of Mary Walsh (her husband Robert’s sister) were members of the Society of Jesus which, according to Julian C. Walton, ‘held a particular attraction for Waterford men’ in Elizabethan and early Stuart Ireland.[155] Like the sons of her sister-in-law, Mary Walsh, Anastasia’s son, Thomas, also entered the priesthood, travelling in 1600 to Compostela in Spain, where his uncle, the bishop of Ossory, was residing at the time. In 1602 he entered the Irish college at Salamanca where he was ordained a priest.[156] By about 1608 Thomas had returned to Waterford, where his mother opened her

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[151] ‘hovec vere erate mater Societatis nostrae in hoc Regno’: quoted in Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, ‘Kildare Hall’, p. 242.
[152] Ibid., p. 263.
[153] R. Lincoln, ‘A list of mayors and bailiffs of Waterford from 1365 to 1649’ in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, v, no. 2 (Dec. 1935), p. 318.
[154] Walton, ‘Church, crown and corporation in Waterford city, 1520-1620’ in William Nolan and Thomas Power (eds) *Waterford: history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1992), p. 190.
[155] Walton, ‘Church, crown & corporation’ in Nolan & Power (eds) *Waterford: history & society*, p. 189.
[156] Hensey, ‘A comparative study of the lives of Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic clergy’, p. 142.

home as a place of domicile for high-ranking members of the Catholic mission, among them James White, a Dominican who served as vicar-general of Waterford and Lismore from 1600 to 1629, who according to one report made by an anonymous government informer was residing at Anastasia's home in the city in 1610.[157] By this point Anastasia's husband Robert had presumably died as the report refers to her as 'widow'.[158] Intriguingly, however, the same informant reported that her son, Thomas, was not living with his mother, but was staying in the house of Thomas Harrold, 'relieved by his friends and by a stipend he receaves for ministering sacraments and preaching' in the cathedral.[159] Clearly Anastasia belonged to a wider nexus of Waterford women who provided Catholic clerics with the shelter and support they needed to minister to the wider community which in turn perpetuated the dedication of that community to Catholicism.[160] Along with Anastasia Strong, several other women protecting priests in Waterford city in 1610, including Katherine and Ellin Sherlock who sheltered Franciscan priests, William Fagan and James Dalton, respectively, Austace Devereux who sheltered Fr Denis Purcell while William English (Eines) and the Capuchin Fr James Walsh, lived with Sisley Walsh, a widow. Anne Walshe, Beale Lombard and Anne White were listed as providing refuge for John Kelly, William Beale and David Launder, respectively while Mary Power sheltered the Franciscan Thomas Woodlock at her home.[161]

The role played by Anastasia in the maintenance of Catholic priests in Waterford city and its environs gained her prestige and reverence in her own lifetime among the Catholic clerical émigré community abroad. In his evidence to the 'Processus Datariae' that considered the appointment of Thomas Walsh to the see of Cashel at Rome in March 1626, Waterford native and Franciscan, Luke Wadding, described Anastasia as a 'holy woman' who was 'well known' to him and who at the time of

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[157] 'The names of such preests as are resident in Waterford and the houses they lodge in' [1613] (TCD, MS 567).
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Among them was Paul Strong, possibly Anastasia's brother, who sheltered the priest David John at his house: see Carrigan, *History & antiquities*, i, 73; 'The names of such preests' (TCD, MS 567).
[161] 'The names of such preests' (TCD, MS 567); 'A note of the names of such priests, commissaries, friars and Jesuits, together with their relievers and maintainers in the city and county of Kilkenny, 1613' (TCD, MS 567); Carrigan, *History & antiquities*, i, 78.

his testimony was still alive.[162] According to Wadding, Anastasia not only sheltered members of the clergy, but 'kept her house continuously open for clerics, poor students and pilgrims, to whom she gave lodging and charity'.[163] Another cleric, Patrick Sinnott, who had known the Walsh family since childhood, testified at the same hearing that Anastasia was a generous host to 'all Catholics' whom she sheltered 'in her house ... at the risk of losing all that she possesses'.[164] Sinnott's comments highlight the very real risks associated with harbouring clergy. In Anastasia's case, her religious convictions appear to have been shared and supported by her husband Robert, who, in 1580, according to evidence given to the 'Processus', was arrested and imprisoned on charges of recusancy.[165] Despite his apparent recusancy, however, Robert subsequently served as mayor of Waterford city on two separate occasions, in 1601 and again in 1602.[166] Whether he conformed during the twenty-year period between his imprisonment for recusancy and the year of his first mayoralty is uncertain. What is clear, however, it that by 1626, he was remembered as having suffered 'persecution' due to his recusant activities by 'non-Catholics', on account of which, according to Sinnott, he died prematurely.[167] Whatever Robert's own religious position, Anastasia's activities as a known harbourer of illegal clergy clearly did not impede her husband's career advancement. Conversely, her husband's status as a leading member of Waterford's municipal élite may in fact have shielded his wife from the ire of the authorities. However, it is important to keep in mind that even after the death of her husband (sometime before 1610) Anastasia remained unimpeded by the authorities of church and state, continuing to shelter clergy, including high-ranking clerics, at her Waterford city home and thereby aid in the propagation and diffusion of Catholicism in the city and its environs.[168] Anastasia's case therefore highlights not only the Crown authorities' ambiguous approach to

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[162] The 'Processus Datariae' was the review process which considered the candidacy of persons seeking promotion to bishoprics within the Roman Catholic Church. For a discussion see Giblin (ed.), 'The *Processus Datariae* and the appointment of Irish bishops in the seventeenth century' in Franciscan Fathers (eds), *Father Luke Wadding*, pp 508-616; 'Thomas Walsh, Processus Datariae, 11 March 1626' in Giblin (ed.), 'The Processus Datariae', pp 542-3.
[163] 'Thomas Walsh, Processus Datariae, 11 March 1626' in Giblin (ed.), 'The Processus Datariae', pp 542-3.
[164] Ibid., p. 544.
[165] Terry Clavin, 'Walsh, Thomas', in *D.I.B.* (Cambridge, 2009) [http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a8898, accessed 14 Jan. 2013].
[166] Lincoln (ed.), 'A list of the mayors and bailiffs of Waterford from 1365 to 1649', p. 318.
[167] 'Thomas Walsh, Processus Datariae, 11 March 1626' in Giblin (ed.), 'The Processus Datariae', p. 544.
[168] 'The names of such preests' (TCD, MS 567).

countering religious non-conformity in the late Elizabethan and early Stuart period among the populace in general but also their reluctance to target individual and high-ranking women who were known harbourers of clergy.

In County Wexford too a number of women among the leading patricians and mercantile élites lent support to Catholic clergy during the Elizabethan and early Stuart eras. According to a report compiled by Thomas Ram (d. 1634), Church of Ireland Bishop of Ferns and Leighlin, in September 1612, in which he laments the failure of his endeavours 'to sow the seed of true religion in the hearts of all the people committed [to my] charge', Catherine Stafford and her husband, Patrick Furlong, a wealthy and influential alderman in Wexford town, who held the mayoralty in 1593, were harbouring their son, William Furlong, a Cistercian priest at their home in Ferns.[169] Another couple protected priests in the Wexford area were Susanna Rossiter and her husband William who were named by a government informer as among those who maintained priests in the county in 1610.[170] According to the Wexford historian Nicholas Furlong the Rossiter family were a 'powerhouse' of seventeenth-century Wexford Catholic culture.[171] Christina Rossiter, possibly Susanna's sister, was the mother of Nicholas French (d. 1678), who became Bishop of Ferns in 1645.[172] Susanna was the daughter of Thomas Rossiter of Rathmacknee (d. 1592) and his wife, Anastasia Synott. Upon the death of her husband in 1592, Anastasia lost the guardianship of her four-year-old son, her husband's heir, John, whose wardship was by order of Lord Deputy William Fitzwilliam (1588-94), granted to Richard Chichester, presumably on account of Anastasia's recusant status (wardship will be discussed in more detail in chapter three).[173] Margaret Archer, a widow, was supporting the priest Denis Roghan, and possibly also Teige O'Hillane, in the New Ross area in 1590 while Thomas Ram also names her as one of those who offered shelter to the priest 'Sir Loghlin' at Carlow in 1612.[174] Joan Roche of

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[169] 'A true accompt of the bishop of Ferns and Leighlin' (TCD, MS 1066).
[170] 'Letters concerning the church, 1620-3' (TCD, MS 580); 'Priests in Wexford and their maintainers', n.d (TCD, MS 580).
[171] 'Priests in Wexford and their maintainers', n.d (TCD, MS 580); Nicholas Furlong, 'Life in Wexford port, 1600-1800' in William Nolan and Kevin Whelan (eds), *Wexford history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1987), p. 156.
[172] F.X. Martin, 'The Rosseters of Rathmacknee Castle' in *The Past: The Organ of the Uí Cinsealaigh Historical Society*, no. 5 (1949), p. 110.
[173] Ibid., p. 110; *CSPI 1592-6*, p. 243.
[174] 'A true accompt of the bishop of Ferns and Leighlin' (TCD, MS 1066).

New Ross was remembered in contemporary Catholic sources as a 'very devout Catholic', who, in the opening decades of the seventeenth-century, had offered her home for the protection of priests. [175] The cleric William Barry, a Kildare native and dean of the Dublin diocese, giving evidence to the 'Processus Datariae' in May 1623, described how Joan was 'accustomed to receive and give hospitality to Catholic priests in her house'.[176] Indeed Barry, along with another cleric had himself been a beneficiary of Joan's hospitality and dined at the Roche family home.[177] According to Áine Hensey, the Roche family 'were renowned as one of the strongest recusant families in New Ross', this despite the fact that the male members of the Roche family held prominent positions within Wexford's municipal government: Joan's husband was a well-respected lawyer while her son served as sheriff of Wexford.[178] The Catholic ethos fostered in the home of Joan Roche is further attested to by the fact that two of her sons were ordained priests: Matthew Roche later became vicar-apostolic of Leighlin while her son John (d. 1636), after a period spent abroad in the Catholic seminaries of Continental Europe, returned to Ireland in 1629 as bishop of Ferns, by which time Joan had died.[179]

In the city and county of Kilkenny, Margaret Shee, née Fagan, daughter of Alderman Christopher Fagan, a well-known Dublin recusant and wife of Sir Richard Shee of Uppercourt and Bonnetstown, County Kilkenny (d. 1608), played a similarly pivotal role in the protection of priests.[180] Originally of Gaelic extraction, the Shees were one of the most prominent and socially influential families in Ossory barony. Richard held the post of seneschal of Irishtown in 1568, deputy to the lord treasurer of Ireland in 1576, and served as High Sheriff of Kilkenny in 1588.[181] The power and influence exerted by the Shee family in Kilkenny and its surrounds was thus significant, a fact reflected in the number of plaques bearing the family's coat-of-

[175] 'John Roche, Processus Datariae, 11 May 1623' in Giblin (ed.), 'The 'Processus Datariae', p. 524.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Hensey, 'A comparative study of the lives of Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic clergy', p. 145.
[179] HMC, *Report on Franciscan manuscripts preserved at the convent, Merchants Quay* (London, 1906), p. 9.
[180] William Healy, *History and antiquities of Kilkenny county and city, vol i* (Kilkenny, 1893), 140-1.
[181] Ibid., 128-30.

arms still extant in the Kilkenny area.[182] Through a number of advantageous marriage alliances, the Shees also established links with some of the most powerful families in Ossory, especially the Butlers, Earls of Ormond and the Viscounts Mountgarrets, who as discussed above sheltered David Rothe, later Bishop of Ossory in 1613.[183] These fortuitous links gave public expression to the Shees' Catholic leanings which also became manifest in Margaret Shee's involvement in concealing and maintaining clergy. In 1613, five years after the death of her husband, it was reported that Fr Brian O'Kearney, a Jesuit, was being 'kept and maintained by the Lady Shee' at the Shee family home in Bonnetstown.[184] Interestingly, the same Fr O'Kearney was credited with the conversion of Sir Richard to Catholicism and it is possible that the close relationship between Margaret and the priest was significant in bringing about her husband's conversion.[185] However, this reported conversion seems unlikely to have occurred as all indicators suggest that even before his marriage to his second wife, Margaret Fagan, Sir Richard had adhered to the Catholic faith of his parents and family kin. His marriage to his first wife, Margaret Sherlock, daughter of John Sherlock of Mothel, County Waterford, and the fact that their son became a Jesuit points to the couple's adherence to Catholicism and Margaret's role in raising their children in a strongly Catholic household. Their son, John, became a Jesuit and in 1609, at the age of twenty-eight, was a member of the Society of Jesus at Rome. Sir Richard clearly approved of his son's career choice as in his will, dated 31 December 1604, he stipulated that John, 'being an ecclesiastic', was to have a life provision.[186] This strident adherence to Catholicism was not only fostered in the male offspring of Richard Shee and Margaret Sherlock, however. The tradition of supporting networks of Catholic priests was continued in the female line by the couple's daughter, Lettice Shee, who was married to John Grace of Courtstown, County Kilkenny.[187] According to the 1613 report referred to above, Lattice sheltered a priest named Patrick Bolger at her Courtstown home where he reportedly celebrated Mass regularly.[188] Another priest, Teig Ó Duigein, formerly

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[182] Ann Tierney, 'Notes on some members of the extended Rothe family' in *Old Kilkenny Review*, lxiv, (2012), p. 41.
[183] 'A note of the names of such priests' (TCD, MS 567).
[184] Ibid.
[185] Ibid.
[186] By his first wife, Margaret Sherlock, Richard had nine children, five sons and four daughters: Healy, *History & antiquities of Kilkenny*, i, 140-1: for Sir Richard Shee's will, see i, 139.
[187] Healy, *History & antiquities*, i, 140.
[188] 'A note of the names of such priests' (TCD, MS 567).

chaplain to Richard Shee, was also sheltered at the Grace's Courtstown residence in 1613.[189] According to the report of John Rider, Church of Ireland Bishop of Killaloe (who in 1622 complained bitterly about the failure of the reformed religion in the Ormond baronies), another Grace woman, Margaret, née Butler, wife of Oliver Grace (d. 1626), was sheltering a priest named James Harty at the family home in Carney, County Kilkenny.[190]

Lattice Shee's husband, John had evidently died by 1613 when she was styled a 'widow'. Her stepmother, Margaret Fagan, was also a widow at the time she was reportedly sheltering priests.[191] Similarly, as discussed above, Anastasia Strong and Sisley Walsh of Waterford city and county respectively along with Joan Roche of Wexford, Cecily Finglas, Elizabeth St Lawrence in County Dublin and Elizabeth Nugent in County Kildare all supported priests and religious during their widowhood. In Bray, County Wicklow, according to the report of Archbishop Bulkeley, the widow Joanna Eustace was a 'determined abettor' of priests and did 'abbett and releeve one Dermot Byrne, a mass-priest, who doth celebrate Mass in her mansion house at Ouldcourt'.[192] Indeed what emerges clearly from contemporary sources is the very significant role played by wealthy widows in supporting Catholic clergy, both secular and religious. Of course this is not surprising considering that widows, particularly wealthy ones from the gentry and mercantile classes, were often especially well placed to harbour priests. Having their own homes and incomes largely at their disposal, they were in a particularly propitious position to direct funds to the maintenance of Catholic clergy. Indeed, this was a fact acknowledged by the English secular priest and resident of Dublin, Paul Harris who in the midst of a bitter dispute with the Irish regular clergy, especially the Franciscans, criticised the influence of the regulars among wealthy widows, commenting that they often managed the 'affayres of rich widowes', but seldom helped 'them to husbands' in case 'they [the regulars] might be debarred from estates, legacyes and executorships'.[193]

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[189] Ibid.
[190] Dermot F. Gleeson, 'The priory of St John at Nenagh' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, viii, no. 2 (Dec. 1938), p. 215.
[191] 'A note of the names of such priests' (TCD, MS 567).
[192] Ronan (ed.), 'Archbishop Bulkeley's visitation of Dublin', pp 81-3, note 29.
[193] Harris, *Fratres sobrii estote*, p. 13.

Whereas for much of the period *c*.1560-*c*.1640 recusant women remained undiscovered, or unimpeded in maintaining priests and religious, occasionally in Ireland (as in England), a crisis or period of heightened insecurity on the part of state and church officials resulted in particularly severe punishment being invoked against women discovered to be recusant. During this period this was comparatively rare as it was mainly men and most often clergy who were singled out and subjected to the full rigours of the law.[194] However, during the late 1570s and early 1580s, two women, Dublin widow, Margaret Ball and a nun, Margery Barnewall (whose case will be discussed in the next chapter) were singled out for exemplary punishment. Whereas some women such as Margaret Fagan of Kilkenny and Anastasia Walsh of Waterford continued to afford protection and support to priests, unimpeded by the state authorities, by contrast, the case of Margaret Ball demonstrates how when confessional tensions were sufficiently heightened, the state authorities were not averse to targeting in a public way women whose subversive religious activities came under their radar and subjecting them to severe penalties.

III

Margaret Ball née Bermingham, was born in Corballis in the barony of Skreen, County Meath, daughter of Nicholas Bermingham and his wife Katherine, daughter of Richard de la Hide of Drogheda, County Louth.[195] She married *c*.1530 Bartholomew Ball, a native of Balrothery, north County Dublin, and a leading figure in Dublin's merchant community: Bartholomew served as bailiff of Dublin from October 1541 to October 1542 and was mayor of the city from 1553 to 1554.[196] The couple had twenty children, of whom five, three sons and two daughters, appear to have survived.[197] Margaret lived with her husband and children at Ballygall, in the parish of Finglas, on the outskirts of Dublin city: Bartholomew also owned a property on Merchant's Quay in the city centre, a popular residential thoroughfare

[194] A noteable case was that of the Archbishop of Cashel, Dermot O'Hurley (*c*.1530-84), executed at Dublin in June 1584 on charges of treason: see J.J. Meagher, 'The beatified martyrs of Ireland (3): Dermot O'Hurley, archbishop of Cashel', *Ir. Theol. Quart.*, lxiv (1999), pp 285-98.
[195] Richard de la Hide of Drogheda was married to Margery, daughter of Robert de la Feld of Corduff, County Dublin: see Ball Wright (ed.), *Ball family records*, p. 10.
[196] *Calendar of Ancient Records of Dublin, in the Possession of the Municipal Corporation*, ed. Sir J. T. Gilbert and Lady Gilbert (19 vols, Dublin, 1889-1944), i, 409, 433.
[197] Walter (b. *c*.1538), Nicholas (b. *c*.1540), Thomas, Katherine and Eleanor: Ball Wright (ed.), *Ball family records*, pp 10-11.

which housed a preponderance of the city's sixteenth-century civic élite.[198] The onset of the Elizabethan religious regime sparked division within the Ball family. Although the religious convictions of her husband Bartholomew remain largely obscure (he may, like so many of Dublin's aldermanic coterie, have at least nominally subscribed to the Elizabethan reforms), Margaret was committed to the 'old' Catholic faith. According to John Howlin, the Jesuit priest and author of the martyrological account which is the principal source for her life, Margaret was openly engaging in recusant activity, including attending Mass, maintaining daily prayers and devotions, and harbouring Catholic clergy at her Dublin home.[199] Her adherence to Catholicism was continued in the next generation by her second eldest son, Nicholas (*c*.1540-1610), who married into the Catholic Luttrell family of County Dublin, and in his will, dated 1610, bequeathed funds to the maintenance of Catholic priests.[200] However, in contrast, by the 1560s, Walter (*c*.1538-98), Margaret's eldest son, who married Eleanor Ussher, daughter of Robert Ussher of Santry, north County Dublin, was among the most vociferous proponents of Protestantism in Dublin. In 1577 he was appointed a commissioner for ecclesiastical causes to the court of High Commission, a body established in 1564 to seek out and punish all forms of disobedience to the Elizabethan religious settlement. In 1591, by then a well-established and leading member of the city's Protestant patrician élite, Walter assiduously supported the foundation of Trinity College Dublin in his role as collector for the building fund and was congratulated by Queen Elizabeth for his efforts in this capacity.[201] The Balls were not the only prominent Dublin family for whom the onset of the Elizabethan religious regime sparked internal familial divergence, however. As Lennon has shown in his study of Dublin's patrician élite in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, conflicting religious allegiances occurred among members of the Ussher and Challoner families too. For example, the offspring of Thomas Ussher included Henry Ussher (1560-1613), founding fellow of

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[198] Walter Ball (b. *c*.1538), Nicholas Ball (b. *c*.1540). Thomas Ball: M.J. McEnery and Raymond Refaussé (eds), *Christ Church Deeds* (Dublin, 2000), no. 1317.
[199] Bourke *et. al* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 472-5
[200] Ball Wright (ed.), *Ball family records*, p. 12.
[201] In his will Walter bequeathed £26 13s 4d for the maintenance of four scholars at the college while two of his sons were among the first students to attend the new college: Wright (ed.), *Ball family records*, p. 21.

Trinity College, Dublin and later Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh (1595-1613), while his nephew, Richard Ussher, was a convinced Catholic.[202]

In *c*.1568 Margaret's husband died and was buried in the church of St Audoen's, located in the parish of the same name on High Street, described in the 1570s, as 'the best in Dublin, for that the greater number of the aldermen and the worships of the city are demurrant within that parish'.[203] In his will Bartholomew bequeathed to Margaret the farms of 'Balligalle' in the parish of Finglas, containing sixty acres for her lifetime.[204] It was presumably at the family's Ballygall residence that Margaret lived for the duration of her widowhood, throughout the course of which she continued to adhere to the practices of the 'old' faith, maintaining a personal chaplain and regularly affording domicile to members of the Catholic clergy. As a result of these activities, at some point in the late 1570s (the precise date is not clear) Margaret's house was raided and she, in the company of her chaplain, was arrested and subsequently imprisoned. Several chalices and vestments were confiscated from her home at the time of the raid.[205] The duration of Margaret's spell of incarceration in the late 1570s is unknown, though on this occasion she was released soon after her arrest. Margaret, however, remained recalcitrant. She quickly procured more vestments and resumed her recusant activities for which she was once again arrested and imprisoned in 1581. However, this time Margaret was not released: she died in confinement three years later, in 1584, aged about seventy years and was buried next to her husband at St Audoen's church.[206] No clear indication survives as to the statute under which Margaret Ball was imprisoned. It seems unlikely that the oath of supremacy was proffered to her as this only applied to men (women were not qualified to be office-holders).[207] Possibly the act of uniformity was invoked against her, but, as Ciarán Brady has remarked, 'even this unusual step' could not have been taken against such a prominent and well-respected citizen without at least 'the passive collaboration of the Mayor'.[208] Crucially Margaret's arrest and imprisonment

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[202] Lennon, *The lords of Dublin*, pp 135-4.
[203] For quote see Richard Stanihurst, 'A pleine and perfect description of Dublin' in, *Holinshed's Irish chronicle*, ed. Miller & Power, p. 44.
[204] Ball Wright (ed.), *Ball family records*, append. 8, pp xx-xxi.
[205] Bourke *et. al* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 472-5
[206] Wright (ed.), *Ball family records*, p. 10.
[207] Brady, 'The beatified martyrs of Ireland', p. 381.
[208] Ibid.

in 1581 coincided with the advancement of her Protestant son, Walter, to the mayoralty in 1580. According to Patrick J. Corish, Walter Ball had, 'at least connived at her imprisonment'.[209] His involvement – at least passively – in Margaret's imprisonment is at the very least plausible. As a leading proponent of the reform movement in Dublin (and therefore probably susceptible to acute embarrassment at the behaviour of his mother) Walter clearly found it expedient to take public action to end his mother's blatant non-conformity. Indeed it is probably no coincidence either that the occasion of Margaret's first imprisonment, sometime in the late 1570s, coincided with Walter's appointment, in 1577, as a commissioner for ecclesiastical causes to the court of High Commission.[210]

While Margaret's imprisonment must be interpreted in the context of a bitter family dispute arising from a disgruntled son's vengeance against his non-conformist mother, family politics does not fully explain Walter's punitive actions against his elderly mother. Margaret remained imprisoned throughout the duration of the mayoralty of her second son, Nicholas, who served as mayor between 1582 and 1583 and who, like his mother, was a steadfast Catholic.[211] Consideration of external circumstances help to explain the situation. The late 1570s and early 1580s was a period of crisis and political instability in Ireland as the Crown was forced to contend with a number of serious challenges to its authority. The second Desmond rebellion of 1579 in Munster, initiated by the return of James Fitzmaurice (d. 1579) from Europe, followed soon after by the outbreak of the Baltinglass rebellion in the heart of loyalist English Ireland in the summer of 1580, an insurrection motivated, according to James Murray, 'almost exclusively by religious concerns'[212], caused Crown officials, notably Lord Deputy Henry Sidney (1575-8), to become increasingly nervous with regard to manifestations of wilful non-conformity on the

[209] Patrick J. Corish, 'The Irish martyrs and Irish history' in *Achiv. Hib.*, xlvii (1993), p. 92.
[210] Ball was a member of the commission for ecclesiastical causes from 1577; Wright (ed.), *Ball family records*, p. 21.
[211] Ball Wright (ed.), *Ball family records*, p. 11.
[212] Murray, *Enforcing the English Reformation*, p. 310.

island.[213] The Baltinglass revolt and related Nugent conspiracy reflected the deteriorating relations between the Crown authorities in Dublin Castle and the Old English community in Ireland, a decline which was directly attributable to Lord Deputy Sidney's pursuit of a tough coercive religious policy during the late 1570s. As Murray has discussed in the case of the Baltinglass rebellion led by James Eustace, third Viscount Baltinglass, 'one of the main consequences of the revolt was that it created an indelible link in the minds of the officials of church and state between religious dissidence and treason, and thus added a new dimension of fear and suspicion to their perceptions of papistry'.[214] In the short term, under the deputyship of Lord Grey de Wilton (1580-2), this had the effect of ushering in a period of ferocious religious repression as the authorities of church and state, fearful of traitorous papistry, sought to impose conformity to the Established Church through the implementation of coercive anti-recusant measures, which took the form of sanctions against public figures, among them Dermot O'Hurley, Catholic Archbishop of Cashel (1581-4), and private practitioners of Catholicism. These particularly hostile circumstances may have caused Walter to take such strongly repressive action against so obvious a non-conformist within his own family.

In an indication of the major clampdown initiated by the Elizabethan authorities against non-conformity during the early 1580s, in October 1584, following the apprehension and examination of three 'notorious massing priests', Lord Deputy John Perrot (1584-8), reported to the Privy Council that there was 'a great nest discovered of massmongers, and amongst them diverse gentlemen, whereof some lawyers in places of credit, merchants, ladies and gentlewomen of good sort, with whom I mean to take a fit time, and to deal as shall be meet'.[215] While no record survives of the outcome of the case against the 'massmongers' apprehended by

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[213] Baltinglass and his band of supporters rose up in the summer of 1580 in radical defiance of the state religion and in an attempt to assert a new militant brand of Catholicism imported from the Continent. For an account of the rebellion see Christopher Maginn, 'The Baltinglass rebellion, 1580: English dissent or a Gaelic uprising?' in *Historical Journal*, xlvii, no. 2 (2004), pp 205-32; Elizabeth Ann O'Connor, 'The rebellion of James Eustace, Viscount Baltinglass III, 1580-81' (M.A. thesis, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, 1989). For an account of the Desmond rebellion of 1579 see Brady, 'Faction and the origins of the Desmond rebellion of 1579' in *I.H.S.*, xxii, no. 88 (Sep. 1981), pp 289-312; Anthony McCormack, 'The social and economic consequences of the Desmond Rebellion of 1579-83' in *I.H.S.*, xxxiv, no. 133 (May 2004), pp 1-15.

[214] Murray, *Enforcing the English Reformation*, p. 311.

[215] TNA SP 63/112/45.

Perrot (or whether they were ultimately punished for their offence), his comments demonstrate that Margaret's recusancy by no means unique. Her activities formed part of a wide network of recusant activity developing within the Pale community during the late 1570s and early 1580s in which many of Dublin's civic and corporate élite, both men and women, 'of good sort' alike, were involved.[216] What differentiated Margaret Ball from other women discovered to be recusant in Elizabethan Dublin, however, was her exemplary punishment. Although the Elizabethan government had been quick to encourage the formulation of practical reformist policy, including the establishment of the court of High Commission in 1564, in general the queen and her councillors maintained an equivocal attitude towards securing religious uniformity and were, in general, extremely tentative about supporting rigorous attempts to implement religious conformity in Ireland.[217] Not only was Elizabeth I unwilling to make windows into 'men's souls'; she was also particularly uneasy about the punishment of women.[218] For example, she objected to the cruel treatment of Margaret Clitherow (b. 1552/3), executed at York for harbouring clergy in 1586, just two years after Margaret Ball's death in Dublin.[219] Indeed as Peter Lake and Michael Questier have discussed in the case of female recusancy more generally in York, while recusant women were sometimes imprisoned, often for extended periods, the authorities in York were 'generally reluctant to resort to this step'.[220] While the particularly hostile circumstances of the early 1580s – the Baltinglass revolt, the related Nugent conspiracy, the arrest and execution of Archbishop O'Hurley – may help to explain why the authorities acted with such rigour against Margaret Ball, a noted dissident whose son was a leading Protestant, the fact that she was allowed to die in confinement was particularly harsh. However, her case bears striking similarities to the treatment afforded Limerick-native, Richard Creagh (*c.*1523-*c.*1586), Catholic Archbishop of Armagh.[221] After a period of confinement in a Dublin gaol in February 1575, Lord Deputy William Fitzwilliam (1588-94) requested that Creagh be transferred to London because, as he

[216] TNA SP 63/112/45.
[217] Murray, *Enforcing the English Reformation*, pp 261-316.
[218] Email correspondence with Professor Colm Lennon, Sept. 2014.
[219] Claire Walker, 'Clitherow, Margaret [St Margaret Clitherow] (1552/3–1586)' in *D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5692, accessed, 29 Sept. 2013].
[220] Peter Lake and Michael Questier, 'Margaret Clitherow, Catholic nonconformity, martyrology and the politics of religious change in Elizabethan England' in *Past & Present*, no. 185 (Nov. 2004), p. 46.
[221] On Archbishop Creagh see Lennon, *Archbishop Richard Creagh of Armagh, 1523-86: an Irish prisoner of conscience of the Tudor era* (Dublin, 2000).

stated, the progress of religious reform was being hindered by the presence of such a revered Catholic in the city. Creagh's pleas to the Privy Council for his release were denied because the authorities concluded that he was deemed a 'dangerous man to be among the Irish' and he died in confinement in the Tower of London before the end of 1586.[222] Evidently Margaret Ball too was deemed by the authorities as a threat – hence her harsh treatment and continued imprisonment. The exemplary punishment of Margaret Ball meant that within just six years of her death, her case was taken up by the Wexford-born Jesuit and clerical scholar, John Howlin, who included an account of her life and death in his manuscript list of Irish martyrs, entitled, 'Perbreve compendium', the foundational contribution to Irish martyrology in the early modern period. Thereafter, Margaret's reputation as a Catholic martyr would be enshrined in the *fama martyrii* or cult of the Irish martyrs which developed on the Continent in the early seventeenth century. As one of only two officially recognised female Irish Catholic martyrs in the period 1560-1650, Margaret Ball's reputation as one of Ireland's first female martyrs is particularly relevant to this study of women and religious conflict, and will be considered presently.

IV

Howlin compiled his martyrology of Irish martyrs whilst living in Lisbon between *c*.1589 and 1599, the year of his death (see Fig. 1.7). The immediate circumstances which inspired him to compile his martyrology were the escalation of anti-Catholic measures by the Elizabethan government in the wake of the Desmond rebellions in Munster and the Baltinglass insurrection and related Nugent conspiracy in Leinster. His manuscript list contains, in total, forty-five instances of an individual or group whose profession of their religion caused them to suffer some form of deprivation, including exile, torture or spells of imprisonment from the mid-1570s to the late 1580s. Whether or not they had died on the scaffold, all were regarded as martyrs for Catholicism.[223] The importance of Howlin's work lies not only in its being the first early modern Irish martyrology; it also provided the first record of the life and death of the 'martyr' Margaret Ball, one of only two women included in Howlin's compendium (the other was Dublin native and religious woman Margery Barnewall

[222] Ibid.
[223] Lennon, 'Taking sides', pp 78-93.

who will be discussed in chapter two).[224] Howlin was an eye-witness to some of the events that he described in his martyrology. Indeed he claimed to have spent time at the Dublin home of Margaret Ball on at least one occasion.[225] According to Lennon, Howlin was a 'reliable and well-informed' source.[226] Apart from his own eye-witness recollections, Howlin had other excellent sources of information that included eye-witness accounts of the trials, imprisonments and executions which took place in Ireland during the 1570s and early 1580s.[227] His martyrology formed part of what Lennon has identified as an 'Irish Catholic literary effusion', developing on the Continent in the 1580s and 1590s, which involved an 'organised, systematic deployment of hagiography and martyrology, genres that were to canalize so much of the devotion and zeal of the European Counter-Reformation', and which were to prove vital to the formation of Irish Catholic religious 'identity', both on the Continent and in Ireland.[228] Although, in the short-term, the manuscript account of the life and death of Margaret Ball penned by Howlin would have reached a relatively limited audience, his work was to have an enduring impact, and set the tone for Irish Counter-Reformation martyrologists writing in the seventeenth century, among them the Kilkenny-born cleric and later bishop of Ossory, David Rothe, who, in his printed martyrology published at Cologne in 1619, also included an account of Margaret Ball's martyrdom.[229]

Regarded as the 'definitive study of the Irish martyrs'[230] in the early modern period, Rothe's *De processu martyriali* (Cologne, 1619) would propel the account of the martyr Margaret Ball to a much larger Continental European audience. Furthermore, Rothe, as a prominent intellectual within the Irish émigré community in France during his term at the Irish college in Paris, lent a new authority to the emerging Irish martyrological tradition gaining pace on the Continent in the early seventeenth

[224] For a discussion of the development of the Irish martyrological tradition see Ford, 'Martyrdom, history & memory' in McBride (ed.), *History & memory*, pp 43-66.
[225] Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 472.
[226] Lennon, 'Taking sides', pp 78-93.
[227] Among them may have been James Eustace, third Viscount Baltinglass, who lived on the Continent after his flight from Ireland in 1580 and who, according to Lennon, may have been for Howlin 'a valuable source' of information: see Lennon, 'Taking sides', p. 87.
[228] Ibid., p. 79.
[229] Patrick J. Corish, 'David Rothe, Bishop of Ossory, 1618-50' in *Journal of the Butler Society*, ii (1980-84), pp 315-23.
[230] Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 478.

century.[231] Combining Howlin's manuscript list of Irish martyrs with works of other Irish Catholic martyrologists, and adding evidence from his own sources, Rothe's martyrology was the most comprehensive catalogue to date, containing biographical accounts of eighty-seven martyrs, from the reign of Queen Elizabeth onwards. As had been the case with the composition of Howlin's list of Irish martyrs in the late 1580s and early 1590s, the publication of Rothe's martyrology in 1619 coincided with a period of heightened religious tension in Ireland. The programmes of rigorous religious coercion initiated by Sir Arthur Chichester at intermittent intervals during his deputyship, especially in the years 1605-7 and 1611-15, meant that the hope of toleration of Catholic religious worship which had gained momentum at certain times since 1602 had, by 1615, been dashed as anti-recusant activity intensified, taking the form of increasingly punitive sanctions against Catholics, including the imposition of heavy recusancy fines, sporadic imprisonments and executions.[232] Although, like Howlin, Rothe's martyrology is largely concerned with recounting the martyrdoms of male (mostly clerical) figures (a trend reflected in other early modern European martyrologies), his inclusion of the sacrifice of Margaret Ball demonstrated how her reputation as a martyr had, within thirty-five years of her death, assumed the proportions of *fama martyrii*, or cult of the Irish martyrs, enshrined in the martyrological writings of the seventeenth century. Both Howlin's and Rothe's representations of the martyr Margaret Ball served not only to inspire Irish Catholics in Ireland and on the Continent to remain steadfast in their religious allegiance but also, by highlighting a clear and edifying instance of entrenched female devotion and sacrifice, helped to gain public recognition for Irish Catholic female lay piety and devotion at a time of intensifying religious conflict both in Ireland and in Europe.[233]

Howlin's manuscript functioned as Rothe's primary source of evidence for Margaret's case, and both accounts bear the customary hallmarks of the

[231] Ford, 'Martyrdom, history & memory', pp 43-66.
[232] For an account of Chichester's deputyship see John McCavitt, *Sir Arthur Chichester: lord deputy of Ireland 1605–16* (Belfast, 1998). For an account of the anti-recusant campaign initiated intermittently during his deputyship see Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, pp 167-202.
[233] The timing of Rothe's publication in 1619 coincided with the outbreak of the Thirty Years War in Europe, just one year previously.

martyrological literary genre.[234] For example, the language deployed in both, shaped by the generic requirements of traditional martyrology, is replete with sectarian polemic (particularly Rothe's) which construes events in terms of a conflict between the 'pious', 'noble' and 'devout' exemplar of Catholic female zeal and constancy – personified by Margaret Ball – and the structures and agents of a persecutory state and heretical church – personified by her son, Walter Ball. Rothe, however, expanded greatly on Howlin's account giving a more detailed and vivid description of the martyrdom of Margaret Ball. Reflecting his own agenda to promote Tridentine norms of piety and devotion, Rothe's account seeks to represent the martyr Margaret Ball according to a more distinctly Counter-Reformation model of Catholic piety, emphasising her prodigious enthusiasm for religious observance and spiritual exertion. This was part of a wider movement among Irish scholars on the Continent which, as Salvador Ryan has shown in the case of Irish hagiography, involved 'a certain remodelling of saints' lives in an effort to render them more acceptable to Tridentine standards and to allow them to compete favourably with other European saints for recognition within the universal Church'.[235] The same was true in the case of Irish martyrologies. Rothe's account is thus loaded with symbolic metaphor, biblical citation and allegory (to a greater extent than Howlin's), conventions habitually disseminated in European Counter-Reformation devotional literature and thus recognisable to a wider audience thereby conveying the account of Margaret Ball's martyrdom to a wider European audience.[236] In his account, therefore, the Elizabethan recusant martyr Margaret Ball is transformed into a European model of Counter-Reformation piety and devotion, an exemplary Catholic and woman. In the following discussion both Howlin and Rothe's representations of Margaret Ball as a martyr are explored with a view to considering how, in a society in which women were prescribed a domestic role, their martyrdoms could secure for them public recognition and inspire adherence to the faith in subsequent generations of Irish Catholics.

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[234] For a detailed discussion see Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at stake: Christian martyrdom in early modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1999). For a discussion in an English context see Anne Dillon, *The construction of martyrdom in the English Catholic community, 1535-1603* (Aldershot, 2002).

[235] Ryan, 'Steadfast saints', p. 265.

[236] For a discussion of the conventions employed in the biographies of Catholic women in the seventeenth century see Dolan, 'Reading, work & Catholic women's biographies', pp 328-57.

V

John Howlin's description of Margaret Ball makes immediate reference to her commitment to the Catholic faith. He writes, 'There was a noble widow in Dublin by the name of Matron Ball, a mother, hostess and receiver of Catholics, and also an instructress of Christian doctrine'.[237] Therefore, three characteristics which defined her as a martyr are ascribed to Margaret Ball by Howlin; a mother, a maintainer of clergy and an educator. Howlin presents Margaret Ball as a mother devoted to securing the conversion of her 'heretical' son. According to his account, Walter's commitment to the Protestant faith was a cause of major concern to his mother who unfailingly endeavoured to secure her son's conversion to the Roman Catholic Church. Comparing Margaret to the early Christian saint, St Monica (331-387 A.D.), who during her widowhood tirelessly attempted to convert her son, Augustine (354-430 A.D.) to Christianity, Howlin related how Margaret 'poured forth tearful prayers almost continuously' for the conversion of her 'heretical' son.[238] In addition to her private prayers, Margaret's attempts to secure Walter's renunciation of the Protestant faith included the establishment of meetings at her home, so that her house became a type of clerical conventicle. According to Howlin, Margaret, drawing on her well-established connections among Dublin's Catholic community, invited numerous members of the Catholic clergy, including 'bishops, priests and other learned men', to her home in the hope that they might dine with her son and 'by their company, prayers, and especially by their discussions ... she might recall her son from heresy'.[239] (It was at one of these intercessory engagements that Howlin claims to have himself been present). However, unlike St Monica, whose son Augustine was successfully converted to Christianity and became one of the most celebrated saints in the early Christian Church, Margaret's efforts proved futile and Walter refused to renounce his Protestant faith, remaining 'incapable of instruction'.[240] Margaret's attempts to secure her son's conversion are also recounted by Rothe who, in his customary allegorical mode of expression, juxtaposed the piety of this 'afflicted' Catholic mother with the inherent 'wickedness' of her son, 'who from associations

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[237] Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 472.
[238] One of the earliest post-Reformation religious houses established in France and the Low Countries for English women was named after St Monica: see Walker, 'Combining Martha and Mary', p. 405; Bourke *et al.*. (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 397-418.
[239] Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 472.
[240] Ibid.

with the Reformers drank deeply the faeces of new teachings'.[241] Margaret, Rothe claimed, 'strove in every way to cleanse him from the yeast of wickedness' praying 'secretly' and 'publicly' for the 'cleansing of his iniquity'.[242] Rothe also made reference to the meetings of Catholic clergymen organised by Margaret, claiming that 'there was no Priest either regular or secular, no Bishop, no other man distinguished by title for sound doctrine and piety, whom she when the opportunity arose did not beseech to assist and aid in the matter of his conversion'.[243] Like Howlin, Rothe invoked the Biblical metaphor of St Monica and her son, St Augustine, contrasting St Monica's successful conversion of St Augustine, 'who became a vigorous preacher and defender of the true faith', with Margaret's fruitless attempts to convert her son, owing to the intractable nature of Walter, the 'wicked son of our good mother', who 'hardened his heart and in his blindness died obstinately'.[244] Notwithstanding her failure to convert Walter, Rothe contends that Margaret was successful in securing the conversion of 'many others [who] turned from their errors through the labour of this matron'.[245] The widespread influence of Margaret's conversion efforts, a feature not mentioned in Howlin's account, was perhaps included by Rothe to acknowledge Margaret's effectiveness in securing converts for the Roman Catholic Church despite her failings with her son, thereby emphasising the inverse, that Walter's obstinate and wicked nature was the reason for his failed conversion rather than the ability of his 'good' and 'pious' mother to secure converts.[246] In this context Rothe was conforming entirely to conventions utilised by biographers of English Catholic women who recorded the many conversions they facilitated, and thus, as Dolan has argued, depicted them 'as reproducing not only bodily but spiritual life'.[247]

The second criterion for Margaret's martyrdom was her role as a hostess and maintainer of Catholic clergymen. According to both accounts, Margaret's house was a centre of overt Catholic activity, a place of relief and domicile for members of the Catholic clergy. Howlin contended that Margaret 'always had a Catholic priest in

[241] Ibid., 474.
[242] Ibid.
[243] Ibid, 474-5.
[244] Ibid., 475.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Ibid., 472, 475.
[247] Dolan, 'Reading, work & Catholic women's biographies', p. 347.

her house'.[248] That priest, who according to Howlin's account, effectively served as a domestic chaplain, celebrated Mass daily in the Ball household and was furnished with vestments and other sacral objects necessary to conduct the ceremony, demonstrating not only Margaret's wealth and her willingness to expend it in the promotion of her Catholic faith, but also her valuable connections among Dublin's recusant population. [249] Like Howlin, Rothe made reference to Margaret's maintenance of Catholic clergy. However, he elaborated on Howlin's account by emphasising the perilous nature of Margaret's activities, stating that, 'the times were hostile since those who persecuted Catholics were in power', and thereby reinforcing the exemplary nature of her sacrifice for the sake of the Roman Catholic Church.[250] As well as highlighting the hazards associated with her role as a maintainer of Catholic clergy, Rothe offered more specific information regarding the nature of Margaret's material support for priests, recounting how she supplied 'food, clothing and a room' to one chaplain and in addition 'supplied an annual stipend to another priest so that she would always have one [a priest] who would celebrate and administer the sacraments and who would offer prayers to God for herself and for her son and for her family'.[251] Rothe's contention about Margaret's willingness to employ an additional priest in order to safeguard her observance of the religious sacraments (not mentioned in Howlin's account) reflected his concern to promote compliance with the Tridentine decrees of the reformed Catholic Church.[252] It was also indicative of his enthusiasm to endorse the importance and spiritual authority of the Catholic ministry in directing religious observance and devotional culture at a time when their authority was constantly proscribed and undermined by the hostile authorities of church and state in Ireland. According to Rothe's account, therefore, the rigours of Margaret's dedicated piety were reliant on access to both the edificational and sacramental services of Catholic priests, who, through the efficacy of their ministry served to safeguard the demands of a distinctly Tridentine pattern of piety and observance. Emphasis on the spiritual authority and efficacy of the Catholic ministry was a feature mirrored in the manuscript account of the life and death of the English Catholic martyr Margaret Clitherow written by the Yorkshire

[248] Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 472.
[249] Ibid, 472-3.
[250] Ibid., 474.
[251] Ibid., 474.
[252] On Tridentine reform and the church sacraments see R. Po-chia Hsia, *The world of Catholic renewal, 1540-1770* (Cambridge, 1998), pp 161-63.

born-cleric, John Mush (1552-1612).[253] As Lake and Questier have discussed in relation to Mush's account, emphasis on the spiritual authority of the priesthood was deployed in order to 'underpin and legitimate' Margaret Clitherow's 'disobedience' to the 'patriarchal authority of ... the Protestant state', observations that can be extended to Rothe's representation of Margaret Ball.[254]

As well as emphasising the value and importance of the Catholic ministry, Rothe was keen to highlight the intense personal piety and devotion of Margaret Ball, describing in detail her exacting and rigorous daily spiritual regimen, which he juxtaposed with her meticulous management of household duties. Incorporating the Biblical figure of St Martha[255], who, as Claire Walker has shown in the context of the literary output of female religious communities in seventeenth-century Continental English cloisters, was commonly invoked by English nuns as a metaphor to describe the domestic labour associated with female monastic life (in contrast to St Mary who represented the contemplative dimension of cloistered life), Margaret is portrayed as a dedicated and conscientious household mistress, who, 'never neglected' the 'occupations of Martha'.[256] Pre-empting the language used in the 1685 obituary of a Paris Benedictine lay sister, Sr Margaret Greene, who, 'in her many imployment[s] of Martha ... did not [omit] the chief affairs of Mary, for she was ... very serious at her prayers & devotions', according to Rothe's account, laywoman Margaret Ball too encompassed the perfections of both Martha and Mary: she 'willingly spent the other hours she had free ... from the occupations of Martha in Prayer cards, the penitential psalms, with Litanies and other prayers'.[257] As Tanya J. Tiffany has shown in the context of early seventeenth-century Seville, 'the combination of Martha and Mary' was a popular metaphor used in Catholic devotional works to represent an 'ideal' or archetypal form of Catholic female piety, one that combined the demands of housekeeping and devotion, and was the subject

[253] William Joseph Sheils, 'Mush , John (1552-1612)' in *O.D.N.B.* (Oxford University Press, 2004) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19669, accessed 30 Sept. 2013].
[254] Lake & Questier, 'Margaret Clitherow', p. 53.
[255] A biblical figure described in the Gospels of Luke and John who was praised for the hospitality she offered to Christ. Luke 10: 38-42 and John 12: 1-8.
[256] Walker argues that 'within the monastic context, manual labour was imbued with a distinctive spiritual significance which aimed to lift toil beyond the mere financial necessity, and into the realm of religious devotion', Walker, 'Combining Martha & Mary', pp 399, 405; Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 473.
[257] Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 473.

of numerous Counter-Reformation works including devotional literature, religious iconography, artwork and engravings.[258] In England, Dolan has emphasised how in accounts of English Catholic women in the seventeenth century, authors routinely characterised women as proficient in meeting the demands of housekeeping and devotion, of both Mary and Martha, or as Dolan remarks, in resolving 'the conflict between heavenly and earthly' duties.[259] Conversely, as Laurence has highlighted, this was also feature of 'godly' female Protestant piety as depicted in funerary sermons and moralising tracts (discussed in more detail in chapter three).[260] Rothe's conscious incorporation of this easily identifiable and popular biblical metaphor meant that his account could penetrate a wider Continental European audience which in turn served to further bolster the *fama martyrii* of the martyr Margaret Ball.

John Howlin presented Margaret Ball as a prominent figure in the educational network of the wider Pale community. As the matriarchal head of her household, which Howlin described as 'the finest school', he contended that Margaret exercised considerable influence over the devotional practices and religious edification of her domestic staff, in whom, according to Howlin, she actively inculcated the doctrine and piety of the Catholic faith.[261] While Howlin did not specify the nature of Margaret's catechising practices, his contention raises important questions about the influence and effectiveness of women as educators in the domestic sphere which is echoed in Corish's contention regarding the domestic nature of early modern Irish Catholicism as a religion 'very much influenced by women and especially wives', or in this case widows.[262] However, while Margaret Ball's educational initiatives were concentrated within the 'domestic' or 'private' sphere, according to Howlin's account Margaret Ball's teaching had an impact not only within her own household but also among the wider Pale community. He asserted that the servants and maids who left Margaret Ball's house 'went out like expert scholars from the finest school and won for Christ not only their fellow servants and maids but also sometimes and

[258] Tanya J. Tiffany, 'Visualizing devotion in early modern Seville: Velázquez's 'Christ in the house of Martha and Mary' in *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, xxxvi, no. 2 (2005), pp 433-53. On Counter-Reformation art see R Hsia, *The world of Catholic renewal*, pp 152-79.
[259] Dolan, 'Reading, work & Catholic women's biographies', pp 339-42.
[260] Laurence, 'Daniel's practice': the daily round of godly women in seventeenth century England' in R. N. Swanson (ed.), *The use & abuse of time in Christian history*, pp 173-83.
[261] Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 472.
[262] Corish, 'Women and religious practice', pp 213-4.

indeed very often their masters and mistresses'.[263] In Howlin's representation, therefore, Margaret Ball presided over a household which was a centre of explicit Catholic training and inculcation, essentially a form of lay seminary, from which Catholic influences – through the persons of domestic servants – infiltrated the 'public' sphere, that is the wider Pale community, and 'won' adherents to the Roman Catholic Church. Consequently, although here activities were conducted in the 'private' sphere, they represented a serious and 'public' affront to the Protestant authorities at Dublin Castle in their efforts to secure conformity to the Established Church. Her proselytising endeavours were the antithesis of those of her son Walter, who, as discussed, would later become a prominent advocate for the establishment of the Trinity College, Dublin in the early 1590s. The representation of Margaret Ball as an educator also featured in Rothe's work: he referred to her household as 'a house of piety and workshop of virtue'.[264] However, while Howlin emphasised Margaret's inculcation of domestic household servants, according to Rothe, the beneficiaries of Margaret's teaching were the daughters of noble women. Rothe stated that:

> To her house it was that the more noble women desired to send their daughters from near and far alike to be educated by her, women for whom care was great about obtaining a holy and noble instruction for their daughters. These girls given into her hands and training she so disposed to virtue.[265]

Rothe's account created an impression of a widespread, well connected and pervasive educational network, which comprised the highest ranking members of Dublin's élite society, and which emanated from Margaret's household. Keen to impress upon his readers the widespread impact of Margaret's teaching, Rothe yet again resorted to biblical allegory, comparing Margaret to the early Christian saint, St Macrina (270-*c*.340 A.D.), and claimed that 'many in Ireland could say without pretence' that the 'brave matron had instilled [in them through education] the dew of piety'.[266] While biblical allegory was a literary feature which served to locate Rothe's account within the wider genre of Counter-Reformation devotional literature, the representation of women as effective educators was a motif used

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[263] Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 478.
[264] Ibid., 474.
[265] Ibid.
[266] Ibid.

habitually by clerical authors on both sides of the confessional divide. As will be discussed in chapter three, in Protestant funerary eulogies and sermons in which Protestant divines extolled the traits of deceased women, the promotion of education initiatives was represented as a necessary and laudatory element of a pious and godly lifestyle for élite Protestant women.[267] Conversely, in the account of her life written by her daughter, the Catholic convert, Elizabeth Cary, Viscountess Falkland (1585-1639) and wife of Sir Henry Cary, Lord Deputy of Ireland (1622-9), is depicted as an influential educationalist who 'would work hard, together with her women and her maids ... teaching them [students of her vocational school] and directing them herself' (discussed further in chapter three).[268]

Ultimately, however, it was the harsh treatment and exemplary punishment afforded Margaret Ball on account of her devotion to Catholicism which was highlighted by both authors as the primary basis for her status as a Catholic martyr. Her case was represented as a struggle between a 'noble', 'pious' and 'innocent' Catholic woman, the epitome of Christian virtue and righteousness and true professor of the faith, and the 'heretical' and 'fanatical' agents of the Elizabethan state administration and church, personified by her Protestant son, Walter. According to Howlin, on the occasion of her first arrest and imprisonment, Margaret was 'seized' by the 'heretics' at her home where she was arrested in the company of her chaplain, who at the time of the arrest, was celebrating Mass and was vested 'in priestly robes'.[269] Margaret was subsequently publicly humiliated being led 'publicly through the streets to prison' where she was detained for an unspecified period.[270] Rothe's account concurred with Howlin's regarding the circumstances surrounding Margaret's initial arrest and imprisonment. However, Rothe elaborated further on Howlin's version providing an altogether more dramatic account and detailing, in language replete with sectarian and polemical connotations, the ordeal endured by the 'old', 'weak' and 'pious matron' at the hands of 'fanatical' officers of the Crown. According to

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[267] See chapter three.
[268] A manuscript life of Elizabeth Cary, Viscountess Falkland was written between 1643 and 1645 by one of her daughters, Lucy, then a nun at Cambrai. However, it was not published until the nineteenth century. For a discussion see Dolan, 'Reading, work & Catholic women's biographies', pp 346-55.
[269] Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 473.
[270] Ibid.

Rothe's account, 'public guards and attendants' arrived at her home where both Margaret and her chaplain, who was 'celebrating Mass at the altar', were:

> ... seized by force ... by an armed division of soldiers ... to appear before the Viceroy[271] [the Irish lord deputy] and the Chancellor[272] [the Irish lord chancellor] and others from the inner Senate [the Irish privy council]; and this with such speed and force so that assistance might not be given to the Priest to lay aside the sacred vestments.[273]

Likening their experiences to that of the early Christian martyrs, Marius, Martha and Audifax who were 'tied at their neck and led through the centre of the city [Rome]', before being executed in *c*.260 A.D., Rothe described how Margaret, 'weakened by old age', and her chaplain, were publicly humiliated by being 'dragged off violently by waggon to prison'.[274]

Whereas Howlin's account focused largely on Margaret's experience, Rothe was keen to emphasise the particularly humiliating nature of the ordeal endured by Margaret's chaplain, who, he contended, was 'brought through the streets in his vestments as a public spectacle', an action which made his 'arrest and abduction' all the more 'opprobrious'.[275] Rothe's preoccupation with recounting the particularly harrowing ordeal experienced by Margaret's chaplain reflected his own agenda. As a cleric leading the drive to revive and reform the Catholic Church hierarchy and structure in Ireland from the 1620s onwards, he was intent on rendering the Catholic ministry sensitive to the fortitude of their predecessors in the face of persecution, thereby inspiring them to remain steadfast in their vocation and to continue to ministering to Catholic recusants. Although the public deputation of Margaret Ball and her chaplain became the subject of the Dublin Protestant community's mockery and derision – 'the spectacle caused the Protestants to laugh' – according to Rothe, the scene served to reinforce and foster confessional fidelity and commitment among the city's Catholic populace, and 'moved the Roman Catholics to piety and

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[271] Sir Henry Sidney (d. 1586) served as Irish Lord Deputy from 1575-8. For an account of Sidney's deputyship see Brady and James Murray, 'Sir Henry Sidney and the reformation in Ireland' in Crawford Gribben and Elizabethanne Boran (eds), *Enforcing reformation in Ireland and Scotland* (Aldershot, 2006), pp 14-39.

[272] Sir William Gerrard (d. 1581) served as Irish Lord Chancellor from 1576-81: see Murray, *Enforcing the English Reformation*, pp 306-9.

[273] Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 474.

[274] Ibid.

[275] Ibid.

constancy'.[276] The actions of the heretical officers did not stop at the public humiliation of Margaret and her chaplain, however, and following her arrest her house, once a bastion of Catholic piety and devotion, was searched and plundered. The vestments and religious apparatus discovered therein were confiscated, an incident which is depicted by Rothe as one of blasphemous sacrilege. Mirroring Protestant deponents' descriptions of the sacrilegious destruction of objects of Protestant veneration by Catholic rebels during the 1641 uprising, which Gillespie terms the 'destruction' of 'channels of the holy' (discussed in chapter four), according to Rothe's account, a 'chalice' and 'all the priestly vestments with other appendages' were seized by those 'fanatical officers' and 'plunderers of sacred things' and turned to 'profane use'.[277] Such imagery served to reinforce a view of Catholicism as a confession, and more specifically, the Catholic martyr Margaret Ball, under severe assault at the hands of heretics, concomitantly bolstering awareness on the part of members of the Catholic community of a collective sense of a persecuted and martyred faith.

Following her release, secured 'by money and the help of noble persons', Howlin reported that Margaret immediately obtained other vestments and continued to 'secretly hear Mass every day'.[278] However, she was once again arrested and this time was not released. The circumstances surrounding her final imprisonment were framed by both commentators as arising solely from her refusal to conform to the Established Church. The participation of Margaret's son, Walter in bringing about the imprisonment of his mother was highlighted and both authors emphasised how her arrest coincided with his advancement to the mayoralty thereby representing him as the sole culprit behind the imprisonment of his mother. According to Howlin, Walter had his mother 'infirm, weak with old age and unable to walk' dragged from her house and 'shamefully carried to prison on a device like a bier by the attendants of the heretics'.[279] This description was reiterated by Rothe who unleashed a tirade of pejorative terminology in his scathing description of Walter, who, Rothe contended, was 'heartless' and 'viperish' and not being content 'to soil himself in the

[276] Ibid.
[277] Ibid.
[278] Ibid., 473.
[279] Ibid.

filth of his errors' pursued 'with hostility his mother so as to cover her with the same filth'.[280] After withstanding an extended period of confinement in 'the squalor of prison', a confinement which 'fortified with faith and hope in Jesus Christ' she 'patiently endured', Margaret Ball died in 1584 'leaving an example of a truly Christian and Catholic woman'.[281]

VI

This chapter has shown that the women of the aristocracy, gentry and urban patriciate of Leinster and south-east Munster were aware of, and in many cases embraced the parameters and paradigms underpinning early modern representations of Catholic lay women featured in domestic conduct books, catechisms, sermons and eulogies written by Catholic clerics, commentators and theorists. In Ireland, as in England, Catholic women, as matriarchal figureheads, played a particularly vital role in maintaining a network of domestic refuge and domicile for priests and clerics, both regular and secular, actions which, on account of the significant risk associated with this activity, were regarded as a particularly commendable trait and worthy of frequent praise by Catholic clerics. By the early years of the seventeenth century a wide support network clustered in the major urban centres and port towns such as Dublin, Wexford, Waterford and Kilkenny, and in the outlying countryside, in counties Meath, Kildare and Louth, supported by mercantile, gentry and aristocratic families, provided shelter, hospitality and patronage to proscribed clerics, both religious and secular, in the Leinster and south-east Munster region. In the countryside too, the residences of aristocratic and gentle women, notably Elizabeth Nugent, Countess of Kildare, became safe havens for clerics, many of whom were often prominent members of the Catholic mission hierarchy. Such arrangements were further reinforced by the familial connections between these women and the clerics they sheltered. In Ireland, as in England, whereas men who were discovered to be illegally harbouring proscribed clerics or engaging in activities which the state regarded as religiously subversive were often subjected to the full rigours of the law and associated penalties, women appear to have rarely incurred full legal penalties for their often equally active defiance of the law. However, the case of Margaret Ball demonstrates how if confessional tensions were sufficiently heightened, the state

[280] Ibid., 475.
[281] Ibid., 473.

authorities were not averse to targeting in a public way women whose subversive religious activities came under their radar and subjecting them to the full rigours of the law. The case of Margaret Ball is unique in the context of early modern Ireland. While her treatment may be seen as exemplary in an Irish context, her subsequent representation and memorialisation in the martyrological compilations of John Howlin and David Rothe conformed entirely to martyrological and hagiographical tropes and metaphors deployed by Catholic authors in late sixteenth and seventeenth-century Europe, in which pious recusant women were praised for their stalwart commitment to the Catholic cause and transformed into edifying exempla. The second woman to gain martyr status in the period was Margery Barnewall, a Dublin nun. Her case and how communities of female religious navigated their survival, firstly in the aftermath of the Henrician Reformation and the dissolution campaigns of the 1530s and 1540s, and later in the Elizabethan and early Stuart era, in an arena characterised by hardening confessional divisions and escalating religious conflicts, is a central element in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

Negotiating religious change and conflict: Female religious communities, *c*.1560-*c*.1641

> ... the King, (having resolved to resume into his hands all the monasteries and religious houses, for their better reformation, to remove from them the religious men and women, and to cause them to return to some honest mode of living, and to the true religion) directs the commissioners to signify this his intention to the heads of the religious houses; to receive their resignations and surrenders willingly tendered.[1]

During the early phase of Henrician reform, within the sphere of influence of the English administration in Ireland (greater Leinster and south-east Munster) where attempts at enforcing the early Reformation measures were made, resistance was minimal. The secular élite, inured in the habit of obedience to the Crown, largely acquiesced to the reforms with the result that there was a reasonable (albeit largely nominal) adherence to the state church. Integral to that programme in Ireland, as in England, was the dissolution of religious houses.[2] In Ireland, the majority of monasteries within the orbit of English government influence were suppressed during the late 1530s and early 1540s and their properties secularised. A systematic visitation of religious houses resulted in the resignation of heads and communities (who were pensioned off) and confiscation of their real estate and chattels. The subsequent distribution of properties and rights to tithes and advowsons among the lay élite ensured that the dissolutions and concomitant legislative reforms in respect of religion were met with relative equanimity. As the sixteenth century progressed, however, and attempts by the Tudor regime to enforce conformity to the Established Church intensified in tandem with the accelerated drive to subjugate the whole of Ireland, fissures of division between Catholics and reformers widened. From the 1570s, the two became increasingly polarised: confessional positions crystallised and hardened as the Elizabethan authorities sought to enforce conformity to the state and church while a growing number of Catholics, under the advancing influence of Tridentine Catholicism, gradually abandoned their former nominally conformist and

[1] James Morris (ed.), *Calendar of the patent and close rolls of chancery in Ireland in the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth*, i (Dublin, 1861), 55.
[2] For a comprehensive account of the dissolution campaign in Ireland see Bradshaw, *Dissolution of the religious orders in Ireland* and Lyons, *Church & society*.

Catholic survivalist religious positions in favour of a more defiant recusant stance. This chapter explores how communities of female religious in Ireland navigated their survival in the immediate aftermath of the Henrician Reformation and dissolution campaigns of the 1530s and 1540s and subsequently in this arena of hardening confessional division and escalating religious antagonism. This discussion necessarily begins somewhat outside the defined period of this study as these women's experiences of and reactions to religious reform in the Elizabethan and Stuart eras were fundamentally determined by the Henrician dissolution of Ireland's medieval convents and nunneries.

Henry VIII conferred ownership of dissolved monastic properties on military personnel, government officials or members of the local gentry, particularly those who had distinguished themselves in quashing the Geraldine rebellion (1534-5), by way of reward: in turn, the recipients were expected to show loyalty to the king's government.[3] While the impact of the dissolution campaign on Pale society has received significant scholarly attention, the experience of those religious most affected by the dissolutions remains under researched. For women religious in particular, the suppression of the monasteries in Ireland (as elsewhere in Europe) was especially momentous, marking an abrupt end to a formal, organised, cloistered and exclusively female way of religious life which traced its origins back to the early Christian Church. As Merry Wiesner-Hanks has observed in the context of Reformation Europe, 'by closing the convents ... they [Protestant reformers] cut off women's opportunities for expressing their spirituality in an all-female context'.[4] Unlike their male counterparts, many of whom were appointed to positions within the hierarchy of the Tudor state church, female religious in Ireland, as in England and Europe, were deprived of their lifestyle and left without any alternatives for living a vocational life. That possibility did not reappear in any formal sense until the early decades of the seventeenth century.

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[3] As such, the distribution of monastic property can be viewed in the wider context of, what Lyons has identified as a drive in the early 1540s to consolidate and extend effective royal control beyond the four English shires in the aftermath of the Kildare revolt: see Lyons, *Church & society*, pp 112-3.
[4] Wiesner-Hanks, *Convents confront the Reformation*, pp 11-2. For the English context see Patricia Crawford, *Women and religion in England, 1500-1702* (London, 1993); Laurence, *Women in England, 1500-1760*; eadem, 'Women in the British isles in the sixteenth century' in Robert Tittler and Norman Jones (eds), *A companion of Tudor Britain* (2009), pp 392-3.

Whereas the impact of dissolutions on women has been a fruitful topic for historians of the European and English Reformations, by contrast, the experiences of women religious in post-dissolution Ireland is comparatively under-researched, largely owing to the paucity of source material. Hence, it is difficult to assess the size and state of the communities of nuns on the eve of the Henrician dissolution, by which time several had already become extinct or were failing.[5] The post-dissolution fate of female religious in Ireland is largely ambiguous with few individual women emerging from the collective obscurity which conceals religious women generally in sixteenth-century Ireland from the view of historians. Nonetheless, fleeting references in contemporary records to the existence of women religious, as either professed nuns, less formal communities of women living under 'simple' religious vows, or those sheltered on their families' estates or homes, suggest that despite the closure of their houses, a handful of female religious communities were not wholly eradicated but rather continued – albeit clandestinely – in Ireland throughout the Tudor period. As was the case for their English and continental European counterparts, the patronage and protection afforded them by members of the laity proved vital to their survival.[6] The experience of a number of these surviving female religious communities in post-dissolution Ireland is explored against the backdrop of decades of escalating political and confessional tensions and conflict down to the end of the Tudor era and into the largely peaceful early decades of the 1600s which heralded the revival of formal monastic life for women on the island, in line with the directives of the Council of Trent (1545-63). The focus then shifts to exploring the strategies utilised by communities of women religious as well as individual religious women to negotiate the various challenges associated with their pursuit of vocational lifestyle in Elizabethan and Stuart Ireland, highlighting the ways in which they sought to withstand the encroachments of church and state authorities who viewed their way of life as particularly suspect and as a subversive manifestation of Catholic resistance.

[5] For a discussion see Hall, *Women & the church*.

[6] As Wiesner-Hanks has shown in the case of early modern Germany, local support and patronage was central to the survival of German nuns in the aftermath of the Reformation: see Wiesner-Hanks, *Convents confront the Reformation*, p. 18.

I

As Dianne Hall in her investigation of medieval nunneries in Ireland has revealed, women's religious institutions, like those of their male counterparts, were not autonomous entities; rather they played a very full and active part in the political, cultural and social life of the English Pale in the later Middle Ages.[7] Challenging misconceptions about the relative obscurity of enclosed communities of nuns, Hall demonstrates that, in spite of enforced claustration within physical and ideological boundaries, the interactions between nunneries and the lay community were multiple and diverse. The nunneries in both the English controlled Pale and Gaelic Ireland provided important services to their local communities, including education and alms-giving. As Murray has shown, within the Pale heartland, schools attached to religious institutions, among them nunneries, were very actively involved in preserving and propagating English cultural mores.[8] For example, on the eve of its dissolution, in May 1539, the nunnery of Grace Dieu in north County Dublin was one of six monastic houses commended to Thomas Cromwell (d. 1540), Henry VIII's chief secretary, by the lord deputy, Lord Leonard Grey (d. 1541) to be spared because of their 'value in educating the men, women and children of the Englishry'.[9] The nunnery at Odder in County Meath fulfilled a similar function and maintained, as late as 1530, a boarding school for young boys, for which service it received a pension from the crown.[10] As Mary Ann Lyons has demonstrated in her study of the monastic dissolutions, nunneries such as the houses at Timolin in County Kildare and Graney on the Kildare-Carlow border also served as valuable defence fortresses for their local communities, particularly in the Pale marches.[11] Post-dissolution, these were to acquire importance as outposts from which the Dublin administration could penetrate and colonise outlying territories. In common with male religious houses, nunneries performed important spiritual services, contributing to a vibrant late medieval piety; indeed in some cases their premises were the epicentre of

[7] Hall, *Women & the church*: see also eadem, 'The nuns of the medieval convent of Lismullin', pp 58-70 and eadem, 'Towards a prosopography of nuns in medieval Ireland', pp 3-15.
[8] Murray, *Enforcing the English Reformation*, p 67.
[9] Charles McNeill, 'Accounts of sums realised by sales of chattels of some suppressed Irish monasteries' in *R.S.A.I Jn.*, sixth ser., xii, no. 1 (June, 1922), p. 17: Moran, *History of the Catholic archbishops of Dublin*, p. 18
[10] Newport B.White (ed.), *Extents of Irish monastic possessions, 1540-41* (Dublin, 1943), pp 73, 261.
[11] Lyons, *Church & society*, pp 112-20.

parochial religious observance.[12] The relationship was often a reciprocal one, with female religious, like their male counterparts, relying on generous donations of money and/or land by pious lay patrons, many of them women.[13]

Within the Pale maghery or heartland, nunneries were typically patronised by the lesser nobility, and drew their novices, abbesses and prioresses from families of that rank. Indeed the wealth and status of the nunnery chosen by a woman from such a background was usually commensurate with her family's socio-economic standing. Thus, Margaret Cusack, 'a gentle woman of good and auncient house' and last abbess of the priory of Augustinian nuns at Lismullen, County Meath (the second wealthiest convent in Ireland at the time of the suppression) was sister to Sir Thomas Cusack (d. 1571), alderman of Dublin and later chancellor of Ireland.[14] Similarly the wealthy Kilculliheen convent, located on the border between County Kilkenny and County Waterford, was home to the Abbess Elicia Butler (deposed 1531), sister to Piers Butler, later, eighth Earl of Ormond and effective controller of the vast Ormond territories after the death of their father, Sir James Butler, in 1487.[15] As the daughter of Sir James, the powerful seneschal of the Earls of Ormond and patrons of Kilculliheen convent, Elicia's swift accession to the position of abbess of Kilculliheen was clearly facilitated by the family's powerful influence and fortuitous political connections.[16] It is not possible to ascertain the precise proximity of the relationships that existed between most members of female religious institutions – especially novices for whom even sparser records survive – and the lay communities. However, in cases where surnames are known, it is clear that the religious were

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[12] The church of St Mary Grace Dieu was described as been the parish church 'from time immemorial'. The monastery church of Odder was also the parochial church while the chapel of the nunnery of Lismullen performed the function of parish church: see White (ed.), *Extents of Irish monastic possessions*, pp 73, 261.

[13] In 1473 Cecily Langan stipulated in her will that she wished to be buried in the church of St Mary Grace Dieu, and bequeathed livestock to the community. However, women's patronage does not appear to have particularly favoured female institutions over men's: see Hall, *Women & the church*, p. 42.

[14] Gallwey, 'The Cusack family', pp 591-600.

[15] For a full discussion of Elicia Butler see Hall, *Women & the church*, pp 191-200. See also John Mulholland, 'The trial of Alice Butler, abbess of Kilculliheen' in *Decies*, xxv (Jan. 1984), pp 45-6. Piers Butler's wife was Margaret Fitzgerald, second daughter of Gerald Fitzgerald, eight earl of Kildare (1456-1513 and Alice Eustace or FitzEustace, daughter of Roland FitzEustace, Kt., lord chancellor of Ireland, created baron Portlester in 1462. For a discussion see Kehoe, 'Margaret FitzGerald, wife of Piers Butler', pp 826-40.

[16] The Butlers intermarried with the Plunketts. Sometime after the death of his first wife in 1485 Sir Alexander Plunkett, later lord of Rathmore, married a sister of Sir Piers Butler.

drawn from families of significant social standing, many of whom also had clergy serving in the same diocese. For example, the novices at Lismullen in County Meath, were, like their abbess, drawn from prominent Dublin and Meath gentry families. Jenetta Barnewall was most likely related to the Barnewall family based at Kilbrew in the county while Alison Eustace was likely one of the Meath Eustaces.[17] In County Louth, Alison Plunkett (d. 1535), abbess of Termonfeckin, was undoubtedly a member of the prominent Plunkett family of Loughcrew in Meath (or the Plunketts of Fingall, one of whom Thomas Plunkett was chief justice of the common pleas in the late fifteenth century).[18] In County Kilkenny, Anastasia Cantwell was a member of an influential local family, many of whom were prominent members of the clergy in the diocese of Ossory, including Oliver Cantwell, Bishop of Ossory (1487-1527).[19] Katherine Mothing, from Kilculliheen convent, who is thought to have succeeded Elicia Butler as abbess sometime before 1541, was from the prominent Mothing family of whom Nicholas Mothing (d. 1568), chancellor of St. Canice's Cathedral, was a member.[20] In County Dublin, the novice Katherine Eustace of the Grace Dieu community was from an influential family with strong connections to the Dublin municipality.[21] In this way, women who did not marry made their

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[17] Patrick Barnewall of Kilbrew is listed among the landowners in Meath (*c.*1510) by Christopher Cusack. Patrick's son John (d. 1537) married Margaret Plunkett. John had no sons and was succeeded by his nephew, Simon, son of Patrick Barnewall of Shankill. Their decendent, Patrick Barnewall held lands at Irishtown and Duleek and was later among those who signed the Oath of Association of the Irish confederates at Kilkenny in May 1642 and was one of forty-one Roman Catholic members of the House of Commons to be expelled for 'open rebellion' in June that year: see Stephen B. Barnwell, 'Barnewall of Kilbrew, Co. Meath' in *Ir. Geneal.*, vi, no. 1 (1980), pp 9-17.

[18] The Plunketts of Co. Meath produced members of the city's office-holding class who were intermarried with the families of the Dublin aldermen and had acquired property as well as trading interests around Dublin: see Lennon, *The lords of Dublin*, p. 72. The Plunketts intermarried with members of the Cusack and Barnewall families. Thomas Plunkett of Loughcrew received a pardon in May 1602 apparently for alienating property without a licence. He was the recusant patron of Loughcrew parish in 1622, traditionally the advowson of the proprietor of Loughcrew, and in 1632 he was charged with the repair of Loughcrew parish church. The name of his wife is unknown but there was a Katherine Plunkett, alias Nugent, who died 6 June 1604 and was buried in the Loughcrew church. St Oliver Plunkett (d. 1681) was a possible descendent of this branch of the Meath Plunketts: see Stephen B. Barnwell, 'Plunkett of Loughcrew' in *Ir. Geneal.*, v, no. 4 (Nov. 1977), pp 422-7. The Plunkett residence was located at Dunsoghly castle in North Dublin. The Plunketts adhered to the Geraldine influence. Sir John Plunkett had a chapel built adjoining the castle over the doorway of which were carved instruments of the Passion with initial letters J.P.M.D.D.S and the date 1573; these stand for John Plunkett, Miles de Dunsoghly, with the final S his wife's surname, Sarsfield: see Michael J. Tutty, 'West Fingall' in Pat Hurley and Tom Moore (eds), *Old tales of Fingall* (Dublin, 1984), p. 95.

[19] Patrick Cantwell was archbishop of Cashel in 1455 and John Cantwell was precentor of Cashel around 1483: see Hall, *Women & the church*, pp 197-8.

[20] Nicholas Mothing was buried in St Canice's Cathedral: see ibid., p 197.

[21] Up to the mid-sixteenth century members of the Eustace family had been appointed to the position of 'recorder' of the city: see Lennon, *The lords of Dublin*, p. 69.

contribution towards augmenting their family's fortunes and political fortitude by occupying often powerful and lucrative positions in local religious houses. These familial connections were significant in consolidating the authority and influence of individual families in terms of property ownership and religious practice in their localities, and conferred on them presentation rights to positions in these religious houses. In the post-dissolution era, these ties were essential in enabling families to retain possession of property formerly owned by their nunneries, under the supervision of their female relatives, and perpetuate traditional religious practice in their communities.

These relationships determined how some families reacted to the Henrician schism and suppression campaign as in certain instances, dissolved monastic property was leased or granted to relatives of the abbesses who was best placed to negotiate such deals. Certainly, a high proportion of the jurors and commissioners who carried out surveys and confiscations of monastic lands had family interests in the lands attached to the nunneries that pre-dated the suppression.[22] For example, Simon Gaydon, one of the jurors who oversaw the dissolution of the abbey of St Mary de Hogges, outside the east wall of Dublin in 1537 was related to the abbess, Margaret Gaydon. In other cases familial links may be inferred. In County Kilkenny, for example, the juror Walter FitzJohn and Egida FitzJohn, novice at Kilculliheen convent on the Kilkenny/Waterford boarder were undoubtedly related: the same is true of juror Richard Plunkett and Alison Plunkett, who had been abbess of Termonfeckin in County Louth until her death in 1535.[23]

Post-dissolution, the options for female religious in Ireland, as elsewhere, were limited. They either re-entered secular society and married (although according to Patricia Crawford and Anne Laurence, this was not the prevailing trend among women religious following the closure of the monasteries in England), or they returned to their relatives and continued to live their religious vocations secretly in

[22] For a discussion see Margaret Mac Curtain, 'Late medieval nunneries of the Irish Pale' in Howard B. Clarke, Jacinta Prunty and Mark Hennessy (eds), *Surveying Ireland's past: multidisciplinary essays in honour of Anngret Simms* (Dublin, 2004), pp 129-44.

[23] White (ed.), *Extents of Irish Monastic Possessions*, p. 69; Mac Curtain, 'Late medieval nunneries' of the Irish Pale', pp 129-44.

the homes of family members.[24] At least one Irish female religious, Margaret Cusack, former abbess of Lismullen, was still living as late as 1570. The daughter of John Cusack of Cushinstown near Drogheda and his first wife Alison Wellesley, Margaret had come from the nunnery of Odder in 1535 to assume the position of abbess of Lismullen, no doubt at the behest of her influential family. Following the closure of Lismullen, she was granted a pension of £16 per annum, making her the highest paid member of a female religious community in Ireland and placing her pension well above the average amount granted to nuns, including abbesses, in England at the dissolution.[25] Three other nuns, Genet Barnewall, Alison Eustace and Anne Weldon, were granted pensions of 40*s*. per annum each and the lands of the nunnery passed intact to a grantee who also received the tithes.[26] That grantee was Thomas Cusack, Margaret's brother, eldest son of John Cusack.[27] Thomas belonged to the 'reform' group of Pale administrators, a position which aided his remarkable career success within the Tudor administration.[28] Appointed a commissioner for dissolving and leasing monastic houses within the Crown's jurisdiction in Ireland, Thomas was effective in dissolving and dismantling religious houses in the Pale. It has been suggested that Margaret was complicit in arranging affairs so that, in exchange for her unusually high pension, her brother, Thomas, received favourable access to the property of the convent.[29] Certainly the close relationship between Margaret and Thomas was an important factor in the favourable arrangements granted to both parties at the suppression. Thomas established his main residence at Lismullen

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[24] In England where marriage was legal for nuns after 1549, only 19 per cent of former nuns in the city of Lincoln married: see Crawford, *Women & religion in* England, p. 30. According to Laurence, by 1554 only 15-20 per cent of former nuns had married: see Laurence, *Women in England, 1500-1760*, p. 185. In Germany in the 1520s Sophia Buchner, a former nun from Eisleben was reported to be a living a celibate life in Leipzig with her elderly mother and a female servant. See Marjorie Elizabeth Plummer, *From priest's whore to pastor's wife: clerical marriage and the process of reform in the early German Reformation* (Surrey, 2012), p. 142: see also Amy Leonard, *Nails in the wall: Catholic nuns in Reformation Germany* (Chicago, 2005), pp 4-5.

[25] According to Laurence, in post-dissolution England, most nuns received pensions of between £2-3 per annum while only 2 per cent were granted pensions above £10: see Laurence, *Women in England, 1500-1760*, p. 186.

[26] *Cal. pat. rolls Ire., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, p. 61.

[27] Gallwey, 'The Cusack family', pp 591-600.

[28] He represented Meath as a member of parliament in the 1536 Irish parliament and assisted in the preparation of legislation for the Act of Supremacy which gave Henry VIII headship of the Irish church. Indeed he was one of the first to file divorce proceedings after the 1536 parliament, marrying as his second wife, Maud, the widow of Richard Fitzgerald, uncle of Lord Thomas Fitzgerald who was executed for his part in the rebellion of Silken Thomas. Sir Thomas married four times. His first wife was Johanna Hussey: see Gallwey, 'The Cusack family', pp 591-600.

[29] Scott, 'The dissolution of the religious houses in the Tudor diocese of Meath' in *Achiv. Hib.*, lix (2005), pp 260-76.

which in turn became the residence of one branch of his descendants for a further two generations.[30] But while Thomas's receipt of monastic lands, including the property of Lismullen, clearly incentivized him to embrace the reform programme of the Tudor regime (during the remainder of his life he continued to take an active part in the government of Ireland as a vigorous promoter of the state's religious policy), the fate of Margaret Cusack and the three novices is less certain. (It is possible that Margaret continued to reside at Lismullen along with her brother.) What is clear, however, is that she remained a woman of means. On his death in 1570 Thomas, despite his vast acquisitions of monastic property, was in debt to his sister Margaret to the tune of £72. In his will he directed that £8 of his rent from Curraghtown and £6 of his rent from Floyne be paid to Margaret annually until the sum owing was paid off.[31] It is possible that the properties mentioned in Thomas's will were in fact former monastic lands belonging to the nunnery of Lismullen and that Margaret continued to claim ownership of these properties following the dissolution of Lismullen, while her brother rented them and in turn transferred the rental dividends to her. If so, this would reveal one means by which former abbesses like Margaret managed to maintain a living post- dissolution. As a result of the suppression campaigns, responsibility for the upkeep of these nuns devolved onto government administration. The case of Margaret Cusack demonstrates that even though senior-ranking women associated with the nunneries were from families who enjoyed considerable wealth, success, the favour of the Crown administration and the spoils of the dissolution campaigns, ultimately these women could not rely on financial support from their families indefinitely. This is reflected in Margaret's petition to the Lords Justice and Council in November 1574 in which she explained that 'although she be a gentle woman of good and ancuient house', her 'pencyon is in effect all her staye of lyvinge'.[32]

At least one nunnery, the Grace Dieu convent, a Norman establishment run by canonesses of St Augustine in Lusk, north County Dublin, appears to have successfully resisted official suppression: the nuns remained as late as 1577 at

[30] Gallwey, 'The Cusack family', pp 591-600.
[31] Gallwey, 'The Cusack family' in *Ir. Geneal.*, v (1976), pp 312-3.
[32] Quoted in Brady, 'Keeping the faith in Gormanstown' in Franciscan fathers (eds), *Father Luke Wadding*, p. 408.

Portrane rectory, one of the properties belonging to the Grace Dieu manor, where they continued to observe traditional modes of religious practice, saying divine office in the parish church there.[33] A number of factors facilitated their survival, notably the convent's favourable geographical location within the Pale maghery which was insulated from the depredation caused by Gaelic raiding in outlying areas.[34] The Grace Dieu convent was viewed as a bastion of English civility in Ireland, which performed wide-ranging and important social roles, including educating the young as evidenced by a letter from the Irish council to the government in England on the eve of the dissolution campaign in 1539. The council requested that six houses be allowed to stand, including Grace Dieu, because 'in them young men and childer, both gentlemen childer and other, both of man kind and women kind, be brought up in virtue, learning and in the English tongue and behaviour'.[35] The favourable location of the Grace Dieu community, coupled with the nunnery's apparently eminent position as a bastion of English civility and learning, meant that there was significant competition among members of the lay and ecclesiastical élite for a share in its lands and properties. Among those keen to petition for the lucrative holdings of Grace Dieu was Archbishop George Browne (d. *c*.1556), a keen advocate of the government's reform programme and himself a member of the ecclesiastical commission for the suppression of the monasteries.[36] However, the archbishop's petitions were unsuccessful and the convent was ultimately suppressed in October 1539, when the abbess, Alison White, surrendered it with the consent of the nuns. In March 1540 she was granted a pension of £6 annually. Four other nuns, Margaret Cestre, Thomasina Dermen, Katherine Eustace and Alison Fitzsimon, received pensions of 50*s*. each per annum.[37] In July 1543 the lands and manors of Grace Dieu were granted to Sir Patrick Barnewall (d. 1552), the king's sergeant-at-law and one of the commissioners for the dissolution of the

[33] Mervyn Archdall, *Monasticon Hibernicum, or, A history of the abbies priories and other religious houses in Ireland* (2 vols. Dublin, 1873-6), ii, 84-5.
[34] This was in stark contrast to the nunneries in the boarder marches such as Timolin and Graney in Kildare, described as lying in waste by extent jurors in 1541: White (ed.), White (ed.), *Extents of Irish Monastic Possessions*, pp 124, 171.
[35] Murray, *Enforcing the English Reformation*, p. 67.
[36] Bradshaw, 'George Browne, first Reformation archbishop of Dublin, 1536-54' in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, xxi (1970), pp 301-26.
[37] Aubrey Gwynn and R. N. Hadcock (eds), *Medieval religious houses Ireland* (Dublin, 1970), p. 317.

monasteries.[38] In a clear case of orchestrated survivalism, and in collusion with the lessee Patrick Barnewall of Turvey, the Grace Dieu community retired to the rectory of Portrane, part of the manor of Grace Dieu, bringing their chaplain with them.

In 1575, over thirty years after the convent's official suppression, and possibly with the support of Patrick's son, Sir Christopher Barnewall and his wife Marion, daughter of Patrick Sherle of Shallon, County Meath, the Grace Dieu nuns, having resisted official attempts at suppression, were still residing at Portrane.[39] In this, they appear to have been supported by a number of lay women. In October 1577 Alison White was seized of 'a messuage and eighteen acres of land and a castle in Portrane, parcel of the appropriated rectory of Portrane, and divers buildings thereon'.[40] The land and properties were then held, 'by demise from the prioress before the dissolution', by Isabelle Walshe while another woman, Beale White, a widow, undoubtedly a relative of Alison White, former prioress, 'enjoyed ye said rectory and mansion [of Portrane], by a demise from ye prioress'.[41] Furthermore, not only did Marion Barnewall together with her husband ensure that the economic viability of the community remained intact; the nuns continued to observe traditional devotional practices and continued to assert their right to celebrate divine office in the church at Portrane which, according to the 1541 extents was, 'from time immemorial the centre of parochial observance'.[42] Thus, in comparison to the role played by their female lay counterparts who, as discussed in chapter one, sheltered Catholic priests and religious in their homes, and in turn contributed to the perpetuation of Catholic religious influences within their local communities, the community of Grace Dieu nuns performed important, though separate spiritual functions, not alone for the benefit of their own community and that of their patrons, but for the wider parish community at Portrane as well. Embodying a tangible and important link with traditional forms of late medieval piety, their continued presence and activities in their original locality contributed to the survival of Catholicism and Catholic practices during the vital interval between the Henrician dissolutions and the onset of

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[38] C.J. Woods, 'Barnewall, Sir Patrick', in *D.I.B.* (Cambridge, 2009) [http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a0388#, accessed 7 Jan. 2013].
[39] Archdall, *Monasticon Hibernicum*, ii, 84-5. For an account of the Barnewall family see Kingston, 'Catholic families of the Pale', pp 336-41.
[40] Archdall, *Monasticon Hibernicum*, ii, p. 87.
[41] Ibid., p. 86.
[42] Newport B. White (ed.), *Extents of Irish Monastic Possessions*, p. 73.

the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Their clandestine survival was therefore important in readying the ground for the future success of the Counter-Reformation and the Catholic mission within the Pale and beyond in Ireland. The support afforded the Grace Dieu nuns is indicative of a strong commitment to maintain the 'old' faith on the part of not only the Barnewall family but also the wider community at Portrane, notably women. Other indicators certainly intimate that the Barnewalls' support of the disbanded Grace Dieu community was part of a self-conscious identification with practices of the 'old' faith on the part of Christopher and his wife, Marion, an identification which was inextricably linked to a sense of Englishness and loyalty to the Tudor Crown. The marriage alliances orchestrated by the couple for their many offspring serve as unambiguous indications of what would become in later decades very firm and overt Catholic sympathies of the family.[43] This is most evident in the case of Patrick Barnewall (*c*.1531-1622), Christopher and Marion's son, described by the Protestant polemicist Barnaby Rich in 1612 as one of the main supporters of 'popery in Ireland'. [44]

From the late 1570s onwards, however, as political tensions heightened and the pace of religious reform under the Elizabethan regime accelerated, the feasibility of continuing a traditional cloistered life in clandestine circumstances was undermined and the Grace Dieu community at Portrane appears to have finally ceased to exist. The exact time of the sisters' ultimate disbandment is unknown but it clearly occurred soon after 1577, the date of the last record of the community.[45] Whether members of the Grace Dieu community simply died or the group was formerly suppressed by the authorities is unclear. The timing of their demise is revealing, however. As emphasised elsewhere in this study, in contrast to an atmosphere of leniency that prevailed during the early years of Elizabeth I's reign, the late 1570s and 1580s witnessed a more vigorous push for religious conformity on the part of the state authorities. Against a backdrop of intensified conflict and political uncertainty (specifically the Desmond rebellions and the Baltinglass and Nugent revolts, all staged under the guise of religious crusades), the government was on high alert about the security of Ireland and by extension England, and for a period of approximately

[43] Kingston, 'Catholic families of the Pale', pp 336-41.
[44] 'Barnaby Rich's 'Remembrances of the state of Ireland, 1612' ed. C. Litton, pp 140-1.
[45] Gwynn & Hadcock (eds), *Medieval religious houses Ireland*, p. 317.

four years (1577-81) adopted a hardline approach to religious non-conformity.[46] During that time, such was the Dublin government's anxiety regarding the prevailing unrest and their exceptionally intense monitoring of those among the Pale community known to be supporting Catholic priests and religious, that they targeted women (both lay and religious) in their crackdown on recusancy, Margaret Ball being the most high profile woman singled out for exemplary punishment. Less well known is the fact that four years previously, in 1577, the Grace Dieu community had their property seized from their prioress, Alison White, by the government.

It was also during this period of crisis that at least one woman suspected of being a religious was singled out for punishment by the state authorities and for valorisation by Ireland's first martyrologist. In 1580, one year prior to the arrest and imprisonment of Margaret Ball, Margery Barnewall, a member of a religious community in Dublin, was arrested and brought before ecclesiastical commissioners, including Adam Loftus, Lord Chancellor of Ireland and Church of Ireland archbishop of Armagh, who questioned her on her style of living.[47] After a spell of incarceration in the capital, Margery fled Ireland and following a sojourn in France she travelled onwards to Compostella in northern Spain and then to Rome, where she arrived in October 1583. It was while in Rome that Margery met the Irish Jesuit priest John Howlin, who, as emphasised in chapter one, was a personal acquaintance of Margaret Ball. Howlin 'questioned' Margery 'diligently' about her experiences in Dublin, the circumstances surrounding her escape to the Continent, and the ordeals she endured in attempting to adhere to a religious way of life. According to Howlin, Margery related her account to him 'faithfully' for 'the glory of God'. In this way, the experiences of Margery Barnewall were recorded in the earliest Irish Catholic martyrology.[48] The cluster of cases of Catholic martyrs from this short period of acute political crisis and associated severe clamp down on recusants, including women, is symptomatic of how gravely the Dublin government viewed the attacks against Crown authority in Ireland, how suspicious they were of Old English

[46] Maginn, 'The Baltinglass rebellion, 1580', pp 205-32; Brady 'Faction and the origins of the Desmond rebellion', pp 289-312.
[47] Howlin,'Perbreve compendium' in Moran (ed.), *Spicilegium Ossoriense*, i, 106-9.
[48] See chapter one.

Catholics in particular, and how, when the need arose, they were prepared to adopt draconian measures in attempts to secure conformity, even in the case of women.

As discussed in chapter one, the immediate circumstances which led to the composition of Howlin's martyrology was the enforcement of vigorous anti-Catholic measures by the Elizabethan government in the 1580s.[49] Consequently, language deployed in Howlin's account, shaped as it was by the generic requirements of traditional martyrology, is replete with sectarian polemic which construes events in Ireland as a conflict between exemplars of Catholic zeal and constancy – in this case the religious woman, Margery Barnewall – and the structures and agents of a persecutory state and heretical church. Unlike Margaret Ball who was defined by her status as a mother, a maintainer of clergy and an educator, central to Howlin's construction of Margery Barnewall's identity as a martyr was her status as a virgin, highlighting her explicitly exalted status within the Roman Catholic Chrurch tradition. He described her as a 'noble virgin' who 'dedicated her virginity from her earliest years to God'. Professed at the age of thirty by a Catholic bishop Margery 'joined a company of chaste and honest women, and devout virgins'. Three years later, in 1580 she was apprehended and imprisoned by Archbishop Loftus and his 'heretic ministers' who questioned her about her age, family background and whether she was 'married or a virgin'. When Margery replied that she was the latter, the archbishop 'blaspheming and swearing' retorted that 'it was impossible that such a noble woman, strong and beautiful should be a virgin at thirty-three'. Margery responded with a lengthy defence of her celibate status, proclaiming that 'I wonder at your authority and jurisdiction to assert that. For men cannot do impossible things. But I, as a woman, from my youth until today have always preserved my virginity, and dedicated it to God, which if it were impossible, I should not have been able to accomplished it'. Thereafter, the archbishop, 'defeated' by her arguments, interrogated her about her faith. In responding, Margery asserted that she 'professed the religion and faith that the Holy Mother Roman Catholic Church upheld, and in that faith she hoped to die'. The archbishop then 'full or anger and fury' and realising that the woman 'had no fear of torture or the bitterness of imprisonment nor could she be persuaded from her position by the power of words', ordered that

[49] See chapter one.

Margery be returned to prison, where during a spell of incarceration, which lasted 'many days', repeated attempts were made 'to test her constancy'. However, according to Howlin, Margery withstood the advances of the 'heretics' and instead 'persevered in that [Catholic] faith, remaining ready to suffer all kinds of torment for the faith of Christ'.[50]

With the help of her parents and friends – 'noble and wealthy' individuals who bribed the prison warden – Margery escaped (she was allowed by the prison warder to 'slip out secretly'). In the company of another religious, styled a servant who was also 'dedicated to God as a virgin', Margery fled Ireland aboard a ship docked in Dublin port and sailed to Saint-Malo. Upon arrival at the walled French port, which was guarded by 'fierce and ferocious dogs', Margery and her servant were accosted by two sailors (crew members of the ship) who, 'afflicted by devilish desires attempted to violate the women'. Howlin recounts how immediately the women, 'crying out at the top of their voices for help', implored 'the Blessed Virgin to repel the men'.[51] The men proved obstinate, however, becoming 'more importunate the more the women expressed their refusal'. The sailors continued to 'seduce' the women 'with words' for a period of two hours, but this prompted them to 'commend themselves all the more strongly to God and the Blessed Virgin'. Their deliverance from the advances of the 'evil men' is represented by Howlin as an act of divine intervention who recounted how 'they grew tired and retreated to their cabins and immediately fell asleep'. However, fearing that they would once again be 'violated and attacked' by those 'devilish men', the women, imploring the intercession of 'God, [the] Blessed Mary and all the saints' and 'arming themselves with the sign of the cross' jumped into the sea and were 'miraculously kept ... afloat'. On reaching the shore the women were confronted by the pack of vicious dogs which guarded the town gates. The servant grew fearful but Margery asserted that it was better to be 'devoured by dogs' than to be 'violated by enemies'.[52] At that point the dogs charged at the women and once again divine intervention secured their delivery with Margery 'commending herself to God' and reciting a psalm so that 'miraculously' the dogs 'left the virgin'. The women were guarded at the town gates for the rest of the night.

[50] Howlin,'Perbreve compendium' in Moran (ed.), *Spicilegium Ossoriense*, i, 106-9.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.

In the morning, when the citizens discovered the two women, they were 'astounded by the sight' and marvelled 'that the dogs had not devoured them'. Their preservation was 'taken as an outstanding miracle for the church'. The women travelled from Saint-Malo to Compostella where Margery's servant, having visited 'the shrine of St James' and 'other holy places', died, 'worn out from fever and exhaustion'. Margery, 'although affected by her travails during the journey, nevertheless visited all the votive sites associated with the apostle James'.[53]

While not mentioned explicitly by Howlin, it is almost certain that Margery Barnewall was a member of the Grace Dieu community and that her arrest in 1580 was part of a wider campaign against Catholic recusancy which targeted men and women suspected of engaging in illegal activity. While it is not possible to ascertain the precise proximity of the relationship that existed between Margery Barnewall and the Barnewalls of Turvey, patrons of Grace Dieu, Margery's family were clearly wealthy since they had the means to fund the young nun's hastened escape abroad. The reference made by the Irish Jesuit Henry Fitzsimon (1566-1643) in 1598 to a group of women living in Dublin who had 'consecrated themselves to God in a vow of perpetual virginity' and who then waited in Dublin 'an opportunity of sailing, to join a religious order on the Continent' suggests that the Barnewall family's provision of funds to women to enable them travel abroad to pursue religious vocations was not unique but rather part of a wider support network that existed among Dublin's recusant élite in the 1580s and 1590s.[54]

The survival of the Grace Dieu community at Portrane was one of several manifestations of long-term covert resistance to the state's enforcement of religious reforms in the decades after 1540. The continuation of the Grace Dieu community at Portrane was representative of a wider movement of Catholic survivalism, one which was crucial to maintaining the ethos and structure of the monastic order in Ireland during the generation after the suppression campaign. The continued existence of the Grace Dieu community demonstrates that the opportunity for women to fulfil a conventual vocation in Ireland, while severely limited, was not entirely eradicated

[53] Ibid.
[54] Edmund Hogan, *Distinguished Irishmen of the sixteenth century* (London, 1894), p. 209.

thanks to the patronage of at least one influential gentry family in the Pale region. Of course the women's position as members of the élite, and their connections to members of the government administration, were crucial to their continued survival. Whereas the survival of the Grace Dieu nuns as a religious community was, in an Irish context at least, unique, within a wider European context, their case was less exceptional. Indeed the Grace Dieu community's resistance to suppression bears striking similarities to that of Dominican convents in the German city of Strasbourg. As Amy Leonard has shown, in spite of attempts at their suppression by civil authorities, owing to the nuns' connections with prominent members of the city's administration, the convents in Strasbourg avoided secularisation and remained lively institutions of Catholic devotional practice throughout the sixteenth century.[55] The resistance of the Grace Dieu and Strasbourg nuns was also paralleled by the defiance of nuns in other German cities, including Augsburg, Magdeburg, Halberstadt and Nuremberg.[56]

Although the Grace Dieu community managed to retain its original style of cloistered life, other women sought a mode of living that was alternative to the conventional monastic model. Scattered evidence suggests the existence of small groups of female (and male) communities based in towns and cities such as Drogheda, Dublin, Limerick and Galway, who lived communally under 'simple' vows from the 1560s onwards. Unlike the solemn vows taken by professed nuns, 'simple' vows allowed women to retain a form of secular status. Although they sometimes joined a religious order and embraced vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, this active apostolate did not take formal religious vows that would have subjected them to the rules of the cloister. Instead, they practised what Silvia Evangelisti has described as 'a socially orientated form of commitment, fostering an active spirituality in direct contact with the world, rather than pure contemplation'.[57] In Ireland, the observant mendicant reforms of the mid-fifteenth century heralded the foundation of dozens of houses of lay tertiaries, or Third Order, both male and

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[55] Following the onset of the Protestant Reformation from 1524 convents in the German city of Strasbourg, despite the city council ruling for their closure survived and persisted in Catholic religious practices throughout the sixteenth century: see Leonard, *Nails in the wall*, pp 5-10.
[56] For the resistance of the Nuremberg nuns see Helga Robinson-Hammerstein, 'Women's prospects in early sixteenth-century Germany. Did Martin Luther's teaching make a difference?' in Meek & Lawless (eds), *Victims or viragos?*, pp 102-19.
[57] Evangelisti, *Nuns: a history of convent* life, p. 201.

female, under the auspices of orders such as the Franciscans and the Dominicans in line with developments on the Continent.[58] The female communities of lay tertiaries which existed in Irish towns and cities from the 1560s onwards represented remnants of these late medieval institutions and therefore served as an important element of continuity in the interstices between late medieval piety and the apostolate of the Catholic revival.

While prayer was integral to the work of female tertiaries, this uncloistered, active female apostolate also performed important social functions, and were dedicated to charitable works among the sick and poor, as well possibly as education initiatives. Despite the Catholic Church's progressive attempts to enforce claustration and strict enclosure for female religious – strengthened in the mid-sixteenth century by the Council of Trent – active orders of female tertiaries, or *beatas* as they were referred to on the Iberian peninsula, flourished in late sixteenth and seventeenth-century Europe, particularly in France where intense religious warfare and famine facilitated (and indeed promoted) their development.[59] In Ireland, where the traditional mode of cloistered contemplative living for women was by then no longer available, communal living as tertiaries offered women an alternative form of religious vocation and pious expression. The expansion of these types of communities from the mid-sixteenth century can thus be seen as part of a wider pan-European phenomenon. In Ireland, this uncloistered female apostolate was first adumbrated in Limerick during the 1560s when a woman named Helen Stackpole established a group called the *Mena Bochta* (Poor Women) in the city. The Stackpoles were one of the leading patrician families in Limerick whose patronage of educative and pious initiatives, such as the foundation of chantries and confraternities, was to prove vital to the success of the Counter-Reformation in the city in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century.[60] While evidence for the activities of the *Mena Bochta* is scarce, they were clearly involved in charitable endeavours and administering to the poor of

[58] Reaching Ireland from the Continent, the movement first gained momentum in the Gaelic territories in the mid-fifteenth century, winning the support of an increasing number of existing communities and leading to a proliferation in new foundations. As the century progressed the reform began to infiltrate the colonial area where it continued to make substantial gains until repulsed by the crown's campaign for the dissolution of the religious orders in the 1530s and 1540s: see Bradshaw, *Dissolution of the religious orders in Ireland*, pp 8-16.
[59] Susan E. Dinan, *Women and poor relief in seventeenth-century France* (Aldershot, 2006), p. 31.
[60] Colm Lennon, *The urban patriciates of early modern Ireland: a case study of Limerick*, (NUI O'Donnell Lecture, Dublin, 1999), p. 16.

Limerick city. The active apostolate of the *Mena Bochta* in that city appears to have been supported by the Jesuits, who from the 1560s onwards were developing a significant presence there; this was the case in early modern France too where the Jesuits supported Ursuline nuns and other congregations of religious women who pursued a more active and lively apostolate.[61]

In County Louth, a group of female tertiaries were living in the town of Drogheda from at least the early years of the seventeenth century. The group consisted of two or three unmarried women, who belonged to the Third Order of St Francis. Having taken simple vows they lived together under the rule and care of the Franciscans in a house with a small chapel attached. Regarded as devout and highly esteemed by the local community, the women were drawn from élite families in the surrounding area.[62] As had been the case with the discovery and suppression of the Grace Dieu nuns during the late 1570s, another phase of intensified and deliberate state action to unearth and eradicate recusancy in the Pale occurred during 1605-7 (termed the mandate campaigns): this resulted in the discovery of this clandestine community at Drogheda, along with several priests by the authorities. About 1606 their house and chapel was raided by the state primate, Henry Ussher, Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh, whilst he was searching for priests. The report that the archbishop discovered the community of women suggests that their whereabouts was unknown to the authorities prior to the raid. The report stated that 'by chance he [the archbishop] broke up a door wherein two or three nuns did dwell [at the back]; there was a little chapel where the friars did say mass'.[63] In spite of the government's short-lived repressive campaign, however, the Drogheda tertiaries appear to have remained living communally in the town. As late as 1623, according to one papal report, 'virgins' who had taken simple vows had been living there for some years under the special care of the Franciscans.[64] Another account claims that, as late as 1641, there remained at Drogheda 'a well-known house of devout ladies, very

[61] Dinan, *Women & poor relief*, p. 31.

[62] Reginald Walsh (ed.), 'Persecution of Catholics in Drogheda, in 1606, 1607 and 1611. From a contemporary manuscript preserved in the Irish College Salamanca, Carton 40.' in *Achiv. Hib.*, vi (1917), pp 67-8; Brendan Jennings (ed.), *Wadding papers, 1614-38* (Dublin, 1953), p. 35.

[63] Walsh (ed.), 'Persecution of Catholics in Drogheda', pp 67-8.

[64] 'Answers of the Franciscans at Drogheda to charges of the Vicar-general (1623)' in Jennings (ed.), *Wadding papers*, pp 34-5.

virtuous and retired gentlewomen of good birth' who 'wore ye habitt of the third order of our holy father Saint Francis'.[65]

But the Drogheda tertiaries experienced more than external threats and conflict with the Church of Ireland authorities. They also had to contend with challenges and conflicts within their own confessional community. Indeed during the early 1620s the Drogheda women appear to have become involved in a serious dispute which erupted between members of the Franciscan and Dominican communities in the town and Balthasar Delahyde (*c*.1564-1623), the leading diocesan priest of the town and vicar-general of the Armagh diocese.[66] The dispute related to the recent establishment of a Jesuit lay sodality or confraternity in Drogheda. Its establishment, which was supported by Delahyde, involved an intensive canvass for new members on the part of the Jesuit order who targeted influential members of the local community, many of whom had only recently been approached by the Franciscans to join their confraternity. The Jesuit sodality thus posed a major threat to the recently restored confraternities of the older orders such as the Franciscans and the Dominicans, which were only beginning to flourish after a period of abeyance due to several rounds of religious persecutions. Rivalry over confraternity membership which entailed competition for financial, as well as spiritual loyalty, of the laity meant that tensions between the Jesuits, under the nominal leadership of Delahyde, and the older mendicant orders, particularly the Franciscans, in the town became increasingly acrimonious during the early 1620s. These tensions found expression in acts of vandalism carried out against property by members of the rival religious factions. For example, in October 1624, Christopher Delahyde, Balthasar Delahyde's nephew, and a leading member of the new sodality, reportedly broke into the Dominican oratory chapel (whose facilities the Franciscans had been sharing), destroyed the altar, stole the vessels and broke up the pulpit.[67] However, it was not only male members of the various religious orders that articulated their frustrations through such acts of vandalism. At some point in 1623, the female tertiaries were also drawn into the escalating conflict, although curiously their antagonism was

[65] Galway chronicle, fol. 4.
[66] For an extended discussion of the dispute see Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, pp 218-25.
[67] Brian Jackson, 'Sectarianism: division and dissent in Irish Catholicism' in Ford & McCafferty (eds), *The origins of sectarianism*, p. 204.

directed against their religious brethren, the Franciscans rather than the Jesuits. The allegiance of the female tertiaries to the Jesuit faction can be explained by the close ties of kinship which existed between Delahyde, a native of the town, and the local women.[68] By 1619, when the dispute with the Franciscans erupted, the women were living in the household of the prelate, who reportedly treated them merely as his domestic servants.[69] Undoubtedly incited to action by Delahyde, and taking advantage of the temporary absence of their guardian, Donatus Mooney (1577-1624), the women allegedly entered the friars' chapel and threw the wooden altar to the ground; they had reportedly attempted to carry out such acts of vandalism on a previous occasion but Mooney physically restrained them and prevented them from reaching the altar.[70] As Brian Jackson has remarked, the Drogheda dispute was emblematic of 'the tide of internal dispute, tension and intermittent persecution which characterised Catholicism' in Ireland during the early Stuart period.[71] In the context of this study the Drogheda dispute offers an important insight into how, at a time when new, more militant strands of Catholicism co-existed uneasily with persistent 'older' forms, tensions which contributed to fraught relations and 'fissiparous tendencies'[72] between the two traditions found expression in the actions of both male and female members of rival religious orders. Furthermore, it illustrates how in closely knit communities in parts of early seventeenth-century Ireland, even at times of strife within the same confessional community, links of friendship and kinship could take precedence over religious affiliations.

Drogheda was not the only urban centre in which communities of female tertiaries existed post-dissolution. In Galway city, for example, a community of Franciscan tertiaries appears to have been active, its members possibly including Elizabeth Lynch (d. 1626) and Caet Daly (d. 1638), although evidence for this is not conclusive.[73] At Limerick too, Anastasia Rice and Honora McCormack were both members of the Third Order of Franciscans during the 1620s and 1630s.[74] The Dominicans also had women working as tertiaries and performing 'good works'

[68] Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, p. 222.
[69] Jennings (ed.), *Wadding papers*, p. 40.
[70] Ibid, pp 35, 637-41.
[71] Jackson, 'Sectarianism: division & dissent', p. 204.
[72] Ford, 'Living together, living apart', p. 15.
[73] Helen Concannon, *The Poor Clares in Ireland, A.D.1629-A.D.1929* (Dublin, 1929), p. 40.
[74] J.J. Buckley, *Some Irish altar plate* (Dublin, 1943), pp 48-9.

there during the early seventeenth century. Eleanor Burke, daughter of the martyred Sir John Burke of Brittas (d. 1607) and his wife, Grace Thornton, was living in her mother's house as a Dominican tertiary in Limerick city. She later travelled to Lisbon where she was the first member to profess at the Dominican convent of Bom Sucesso at Belém, the first continental foundation expressly for Irish female religious, where she died in 1648.[75] Margaret (surname unknown), a Dominican tertiary active at Cashel, County Tipperary in the 1640s, was remembered in Dominican sources for her 'practice of good works, especially the charity that she [extended] to Catholics and religious from Ireland'.[76] In the aftermath of the Henrician dissolutions, therefore, becoming tertiaries of Third Orders was another strategy deployed by religious women (and men) to navigate the religious changes arising from the Henrician reforms and monastic dissolutions of the 1530s and 1540s. As tertiaries, unimpeded by the confines of formal claustration, these women had more options for negotiating alternative ways of leading a vocational life post-dissolution. This was a strategy utilised by their German counterparts, too, some of whom, when forced to leave their convents in the 1520s, continued to live communally as lay tertiaries.[77] Conversely, this phenomenon was less common in England where, owing to the absence of a strong mendicant tradition of communities of tertiaries and more stringent enforcement of conformity, exile to the Continent was the main alternative for English women religious following the closure of their houses.[78]

Another strategy utilised by women wishing to maintain a religious lifestyle in the aftermath of the Henrician dissolutions was to live their religious vocation in the privacy and comparative safety of a domestic setting, sheltered within the confines of the family home. This is best seen in the case of the Prestons of County Meath who lent significant support to female religious in the aftermath of the suppression. Already wealthy and well established landowners in the north Leinster area by the early sixteenth century, the Prestons, like their neighbours the Barnewalls of Turvey,

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[75] Concannon, *Irish nuns in penal days* (London, 1931), p. 23; Honour Mc Cabe, *A light undimmed: the story of the convent of Our Lady of Bom Sucesso Lisbon, 1639-2000* (Dublin, 2007).
[76] [de Vienne] *L'année dominicaine*, p. 253.
[77] Leonard, *Nails in the wall*, p. 4.
[78] According to Crawford, unlike Europe, there was no strong medieval tradition of communities of tertiaries in pre-Reformation England; before the dissolutions Norwich seems to have been the only city where a community of lay women lived together under vows of chastity and devotion to God: see Crawford, *Women & religion in England*, pp 22-3.

were major beneficiaries of the dissolution campaign and ranked among the most influential Pale gentry families.[79] By the early seventeenth century, notwithstanding his long history of service and loyalty to the state, the Catholic sympathies of Christopher Preston (d. 1599), fourth Viscount Gormanstown, were well known to contemporaries. As early as the 1590s both he and his wife Catherine, daughter of Sir Thomas Fitzwilliam of Merrion, maintained a household which had become the centre of religious life in the family's native parish of Stamullen, north County Meath.[80] A large proportion of the family's wealth was directed towards harbouring and maintaining Catholic clerics, a fact acknowledged by the Protestant commentator Barnaby Rich. According to Rich, Jenico Preston (d. 1630), fifth Viscount Gormanstown and Christopher's son and heir, was one of six noblemen that 'doth entertain priests and giveth support and countenance to popery in Ireland'.[81] Indeed, Christopher's nephew was the renowned Jesuit William Bathe (b. 1564), eldest son of John Bathe of Drumcondra, County Dublin and his wife, Eleanor née Preston, daughter of the third Viscount Gormanstown.[82] Support for Catholic clergy was not only provided by male members of the Preston family. As discussed in chapter one, Lady Mary O'Doherty, Christopher's daughter and widow of Sir Cahir O'Doherty, also afforded support to Catholic priests and in 1622 according to a government report, the Jesuit John Plunkett, was resident at her Meath home.[83] Thus, female as well as male members of the Gormanstown family participated in a wide network of Catholic patronage through which, during the early decades of the seventeenth century, Catholic revival was facilitated and propagated.

Furthermore, the patronage of the Gormanstown family reached beyond support for priests. It is clear that the family also supported female members in their endeavours to lead a vowed or holy life. This is evident from Sir Christopher's will, dated 21

[79] Kingston, 'Catholic families of the Pale', pp 236-43.

[80] In his will, made on 21 January 1599, Christopher bequeathed to 'David Verdonne yearly during life £6 English money to pray for his soul, £5 to the poor, and 100 marcs for his soul, as his overseers should think fit, … to Doctor Caddle £10 to Edward Orpie, and James Hussey, 40s. A year, each to pray for his soul': printed in John Brady, 'Keeping the faith at Gormanstown' in Franciscan fathers (eds), *Father Luke Wadding*, p. 407.

[81] 'Barnaby Rich's 'Remembrances of the state of Ireland, 1612' ed. C. Litton , pp 140-1.

[82] Ó Fionnagáin, 'Irish Jesuits, 1598-1773' available at: http://www.jesuitarchives.ie/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/%C3%93-Fionnag%C3%A1in-Prionsias-S.J.-Irish-Jesuits-1598-1773-smaller.pdf.

[83] Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath', pp 7-12.

January 1599, in which he directed that if any of his daughters 'shall profess chastity and refuse to marry' she should be paid £15 yearly.[84] Christopher and his wife, Catherine, had five daughters, of whom at least one, Eleanor (Elinor) Preston, was a 'professed nun': in 1615, she was living in the chaplain's house which was situated on her brother, Jenico's estate in Meath.[85] The chaplain was Fr William Verdon: he had served the Preston family in that capacity since the early 1590s and was referred to in Christopher's will. It appears that Eleanor continued to reside with Fr Verdon on the Gormanstown family's estate for a period of at least seven years as in 1622, according to the same government report referred to above, both were still living there along with another secular priest, named James Delane.[86] The fact that Eleanor was able to continue living in her family's Meath home, unimpeded by the government even after her discovery in 1615 is all the more remarkable given that during the first two decades of the seventeenth century, episodes of severe religious coercion were, according to Mac Cuarta, 'especially pronounced and systematic in the wealthier anglicised areas, including much of north Leinster', the precise location of the Gormantown's family home.[87] That Eleanor was resident in the private property of her family evidently shielded her from the censure of the government authorities. As discussed in chapter one, while the authorities were willing to prosecute public acts of recusancy, such as non-attendance at divine service, by contrast they were far less inclined to interfere in affairs of private households, which, in early modern society, was viewed as the preserve of patriarchal control. In cases of subversive religious activities, such as sheltering clergy, or in this case, maintaining women who had taken religious vows, state officials were generally very reluctant to intrude on familial homes. Furthermore, substantial landed estate owners such as the Prestons and the Barnewalls were accustomed to being afforded very considerable autonomy by both church and state officials, and reserved the right of admission to their private property.

[84] Brady, 'Keeping the faith at Gormanstown', p. 408.
[85] Christopher Preston, fourth Viscount Gormanstown married twice into the wealthy family of Fitzwilliam, lords of Merion, firstly to Katherine, daughter of Sir William Fitzwilliam. Christopher's sister married Richard Nugent, baron of Delvin. The visitation report cited that, 'Wm Verdon, priest, [is] kept by the Viscount Gormanstown whose sister is a professed nun and the two lodge together'. The visitation included the diocese of Meath and Ardagh: see Kingston, 'Catholic families of the Pale', p. 239.
[86] Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath', pp 7-12.
[87] Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, p. 168.

The Prestons were by no means exceptional in sheltering religious women in their household. As mentioned already, Eleanor Burke, daughter of Sir John Burke of Brittas in south County Dublin (d. 1607) and his wife Grace Thornton, was living in her mother's house as a Dominican tertiary throughout much of the early seventeenth century.[88] It is almost certain that Eleanor (Elinor) Malone, daughter of Edmund Malone (d. 1635), a Dublin alderman and his wife Margaret Ussher of Santry in County Dublin, who was reportedly a nun, was sheltered at the house of her parents: by the early seventeenth century the Malones were well known recusants among Dublin's patrician population. Indeed their family tomb at St Audoen's Church in the same parish was noted for its Catholic iconography.[89]

While the lives of religious women is a poorly documented and therefore little understood aspect of Catholicism in the Pale during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the cases of Eleanor Preston in County Meath, and Eleanor Burke and Eleanor Malone in County Dublin, demonstrates that a number of influential families successfully supported and protected their female members in their endeavours to live out their religious vocation, albeit in a less formalised, structured and visible manner. This informal, domestic mode of the vowed life was clearly an enforced response to the episodic drives to eradicate survivalism, papistry and recusancy, and to enforce conformity to the Church of Ireland. However, these unregulated living arrangements for women religion were a cause of major concern for the Catholic Church authorities in Ireland as they were in direct contravention of Tridentine directives concerning enclosure for religious women. The Council of Trent, through its preoccupation with reforming the behaviour of the religious and the laity, signified, according to R. Po-Chia Hsia, 'a turning point for the history of religious women'.[90] The Tridentine view of women as potential sources of social and sexual disorder shaped their decrees regarding women in religious orders; they were to be brought more firmly under the moral control of the church by removing them from the public sphere and enforcing strict control on their movements. The 1563

[88] Mc Cabe, *A light undimmed*.
[89] In November 1605 Edmund Malone was convicted of a breach of uniformity before the Castle Chamber. Edmund served as master of the guild of St Anne between 1626 and 1634, when it came into open conflict with Strafford. Two other Malone daughters, Joan and Bridget, were unmarried and it is possible that the two had taken vows of chastity: Lennon, *The lords of Dublin*, p. 260.
[90] The council met in three sessions, 1545-7, 1551-2 and 1561-3: see Hsia, *The world of Catholic renewal,* p. 33.

reform decrees thus called for the enclosure of all female religious communities, including Third Order and hitherto exempted convents.[91] Female religious were not to interact with the world, where they could find themselves personally compromised; instead they were to remain permanently within their cloisters after taking solemn vows. Furthermore, the Council imposed a set of strict punishments, which were vigorously implemented, for those found to be in breach of enclosure.[92] Reflecting the concern among members of the Catholic hierarchy in Ireland to promote and enforce Tridentine decrees governing enclosure of female religious set down in Europe, officials gathered at Dublin for the 1614 synod ruled that only with the consent of the ordinary (bishop or diocesan vicar) were priests to accept women's vows of chastity. Reflecting the Catholic reformers' concern to protect and uphold clerical celibacy and their intense unease at women sharing houses with priests to whom they were not related by family bonds, the decree reiterated the traditional teaching against such arrangements:

> Statuimus ut de caetero non habeant sacerdotes in suis domibus, aut mensis, ullas mulieres (etiam virginitatis aut castitatis voto adstrictas) aut ullas alias, de quibus suspicio esse posset: Nec hujusmodi foeminarum curam quamvis spiritualem suscipiant absque ulterior facultate. [93]

The reformers viewed the practice of female being accommodated within informal domestic settings as a dangerous 'occasion to sin', however; their evident concern to limit and control its perpetuation demonstrates that this arrangement was not an uncommon feature of early seventeenth century Catholic practice in Ireland.

While the Tridentine decrees endeavoured to enforce stricter enclosure or *clausura* of nuns to protect them (and their chastity) from the evils of the world, they also sought to counter the potent and often vicious accusations of European Protestant propagandists, who in an attempt to expose 'popery' as the epitome of evil and falsehood, represented members of Catholic religious orders, both male and female,

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[91] Ibid., p. 33.

[92] Wiesner-Hanks, *Christianity & sexuality in the early modern world*, p. 150.

[93] 'For reasons of prudence we decree that priests shall not have in their houses as guests at meals any women – even more those who have made a vow of virginity or chastity, or any others, since they might cause a scandal: and they are not to undertake the care of such women, even as a spiritual ministry, without further authorisation'. 'De votis mulierum' [On the vows of women], Dublin synod 1614, in Patrick F. Moran, *History of the Catholic archbishops of Dublin since the Reformation* (Dublin, 1864), p. 455. Translation in Kilroy, 'Women & the Reformation', p. 189.

as sexually subversive and morally scandalous.[94] In Ireland (as in England and Scotland), such representations found expression as potent weapons of religious propaganda for Protestant polemicists who sought to justify and legitimise the Tudor reforms, including the dissolution of the monasteries, while simultaneously denouncing the evils and subversive nature of Catholicism. Thus, one unidentified Protestant commentator, writing in 1567, commented that prior to its dissolution, the abbey of Kilfenora in County Clare was: '... in times past, when it was possessed by a nun or abbess ... [it was] converted for the most part to whoredom, gluttony and other kinds of excesses and dissolute living'.[95] Writing in 1601, John Rider, dean of St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, denounced Catholicism as a religion characterised by chantries 'of priests to pray for the dead … and damnable pestiferous Stewes of Nunnes and Whores'.[96] This was a feature of Protestant polemic in Reformation Europe too where accusations of alleged sexual transgressions by women religious and ambiguous liaisons with confessors proliferated.[97] During the 1610s and 1620s when an atmosphere of relative peace and stability prevailed in Ireland and a Catholic revival was initiated, Catholic clergy, returning to Ireland from the Continent imbued with the zeal of Counter-Reformation doctrine, sought to implement more forcefully the directives of Trent, including the practice of enforced claustration for communities of female religious. However, this process was impeded by the fact that the clergy did not have the assistance of the state, unlike in Catholic Europe. Lamenting the lack of traditional forms of enclosed living for female religious on the island in 1624, a Franciscan report described how 'enclosed properties which are the normal safeguard for the preservation of religious virtue are not to be found in this country [that is, Ireland]'.[98] The Church authorities' increasing concern with the preservation of female 'virtue' in Ireland reflected wider social anxieties regarding both female agency and sexuality which were prevalent in early modern European society generally and among the clerical hierarchy of the

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[94] Plummer, *From priest's whore to pastor's wife*, pp 141-2: see also Medioli, 'An unequal law' in Meek (ed.), *Women in Renaissance and early modern Europe*, pp 136-47.
[95] Anon, 'A commentary on the nobility and gentry of Thomond', pp 70-1.
[96] Rider, *The coppie of a letter sent from M Rider, deane of Saint Patricks*, sig. A2r-v.
[97] 'In the sixteenth century the most lurid of these told of babies born, killed and buried in the convent after wild encounters when nuns met there lovers': see Wiesner-Hanks, *Christianity & sexuality in the early modern world*, p. 150.
[98] C. Giblin (ed.), *Liber Lovaniensis, a collection of Irish Franciscan documents, 1629-1717* (Dublin, 1956), p. 13; quoted in Kilroy, 'Women and the Reformation', p. 189.

Catholic Church in particular.[99] These anxieties also underpinned the Tridentine clergy's drive to instil discipline in congregations attending Mass, by insisting, for example, on the separation of men and women.[100]

In the absence of conventional modes of conventual living on the island, it is not surprising that for some Catholic families, placing female family members in religious houses on the Continent was a desirable alternative aimed at providing them with an effective means to escape the sporadic and often intense bouts of religious coercion which occurred during the early decades of the seventeenth century, and allowing them to pursue a traditional religious vocation within the confines of the convent cloister. As Mac Cuarta has shown, since the 1560s and 1570s, the families of gentry and mercantile stock in north Leinster were directing their male offspring towards religious training and education in continental colleges. That movement was encouraged and facilitated by members of the religious orders, in particular the Jesuits who, upon returning to Ireland, canvassed gentry families to send their young sons abroad to study for the priesthood at the major continental universities in Paris, Bordeaux, Douai, Bruges and Antwerp.[101] Less well known is the fact that young women of gentry and mercantile backgrounds too were part of this wider recruitment drive. Although the earliest official record of an Irish nun on the Continent does not occur until 1620, when Martha Cheevers joined the English order of the Poor Clares at Gravelines (discussed in more detail below), scattered anecdotal evidence suggests that women – either by their own choice or as a result of a family decision – travelled abroad to pursue religious vocations from at least the 1590s onwards.[102] As already noted, the Jesuit Henry Fitzsimon's reference to the presence of a group of women who had taken vows 'of perpetual virginity' and who awaited an 'an opportunity of sailing, to join a religious order on the Continent' indicates the operation of a wide support network among Dublin's recusant community by the late 1590s. Indeed, Margery Barnewall's hastened escape to the Continent in the early 1580s, secured by funds from her family suggests that this

[99] Strocchia, *Nuns & Nunneries*, p. xv.
[100] Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, p. 163.
[101] Ibid., pp 153-4.
[102] Hogan, *Distinguished Irishmen of the sixteenth century*, pp 209, 273: Howlin, 'Perbreve compendium' in Moran (ed.), *Spicilegium Ossoriense*, i, 106-9.

support network may have been in place even earlier.[103] Further evidence of the existence of these support networks may be gleaned from a letter sent in May 1607 to Fr Fitzsimon, then in exile in Spanish Flanders, by a group of unnamed clerics in Ireland, among them a bishop.[104] The writers recounted the harrowing ordeals endured by the Catholic community in Ireland, both lay and religious, who, in the midst of the vigorous coercion campaigns initiated under the deputyship of Sir Arthur Chichester that year, were treated in a 'wanton manner'. They went on to implore the exiled Jesuit to safeguard those 'virgins bound by the vow of chastity' so that by his 'care' they might 'have assistance in those parts [that is Spanish Flanders] lest the frail sex' became 'destitute of helps to piety'.[105] Evidently, the 'virgins' referred to by the correspondents had only recently departed Ireland for the Continent.

As with educational provisions for young men, families drew on existing and established Irish émigré networks to find suitable convents for their young female relatives. Thus, Irish clergymen in positions of prominence in Catholic colleges abroad received a stream of such requests. In 1605 William Aves of Dublin wrote to Thomas Dease, future Bishop of Meath (1622-52), at Paris, where he was undertaking clerical studies at the Irish College, requesting places in a suitable convent for his sister, Thomasine and another for a woman named Besse Stanihurst;

> I pray you and beseech you most earnestlie instantly to write ... your best advys to me where to send him and also for the two maides and moniales [the nuns] befor mentioned wher to send them or direct them and if place were gotten fit convenient ... I would be content to walk with them there my self and have them there together with my boy and nephe the next spring.[106]

Later, Aves reported that Mr Stanihurst's two daughters were placed in Louvain convents; 'We know not how, nor how cheap'.[107] While little is known about Thomasine Aves, Besse Stanihurst was a member of the prominent recusant Dublin Stanihurst family who were connected to the Barnewalls of Turvey through the marriage of Richard Stanihurst and Genet Barnewall, daughter of Sir Christopher

[103] Hogan, *Distinguished Irishmen of the sixteenth century*, p. 209.
[104] Ibid., p. 273.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Quoted in Brady, 'Keeping the faith at Gormanstown', p. 409.
[107] Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, p. 164.

and Marion Barnewall, patrons of the Grace Dieu. Interestingly, the Stanihurst family were granted possession of the nunnery of Odder in County Meath upon its dissolution in 1539.[108] The attachment of the Stanihurst family to the 'old' Catholic faith throughout the later decades of the sixteenth century onwards is well documented and best illustrated in the case of the Catholic scholar, Richard Stanihurst, who himself became a member of the Society of Jesus in 1600, as did his two sons, Peter and Walter.[109] The cases of Thomasine Aves and Besse Stanihurst show that from the later decades of the sixteenth century onwards, certain Catholic families were directing their female offspring towards pursing a religious vocation on the Continent. However, the significant expense involved in travelling to the Continent and payment of a dowry required for admission to continental convents, meant that a conventual training abroad was a viable option for only a small number of women from élite backgrounds. For others, the cost proved prohibitive. This was true in the case of two sisters, Ismay and Alison Barnewall, who were living in Drogheda during the early 1600s. In 1608 they wrote to their brother, Patrick Barnewall of Bremore Castle, Balrothery in north County Dublin, who was then studying for the priesthood in Paris, requesting that he arrange suitable accommodation for them in a convent. The death of their father in February 1606 entitled them to their portions. However, the substantial dowry required (£120) on entering a convent meant that the young women were unable to make the journey abroad and were consequently forced to remain in Drogheda where they continued to live a vowed life (perhaps in the community of Franciscan tertiaries discussed above). Later, in the 1620s, after Patrick was appointed titular bishop of the Cistercian abbey of Mellifont, County Louth, he received Ismay and Alison into the Cistercian order, probably as tertiaries.[110]

Of course, while some young women travelled abroad to convents with the intention of pursuing a religious vocation, not all did so. For others, travel to convents overseas served practical purposes, providing basic tuition in reading and writing, as

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[108] White (ed.), *Extents of Irish Monastic Possessions*, p. 262.

[109] In 1601, another Dublin Stanihurst, Walter, son of James Stanihurst and Anne was ordained at Rome: see Hugh Fenning (ed.), 'Irishmen ordained at Rome, 1572-1697' in *Achiv. Hib.*, lix (2005), p. 9.

[110] Malachy Hartry, *Triumphalia Monasterii Sanctae Crucis*, ed. & trans. Denis Murphy (Dublin, 1891), pp 283-5.

well as more practical and domestic skills. For example, the Sepulchrine nuns at Liége in Spanish Flanders promoted the education they offered for young girls and women thus: 'These [girls] they bring up until they be ripe enough to choose some state of life. They teach them all qualities befitting their sex, as writing, reading, needle-work, French, Musick'.[111] Catholic families of gentry and aristocratic status who could afford to send their daughters abroad to be educated – either with or without the intention of pursuing religious vocations afterwards – clearly recognized and valued the importance of inculcating orthodox Catholic Counter-Reformation principles and ideologies in their female offspring, who would in turn play an important role in passing the faith on to the next generation. The Nugents, Earls of Westmeath, are a case in point. Sir Richard (1583-1642), fifteenth Baron of Delvin and first Earl of Westmeath, was the eldest son of Christopher Nugent, Lord Delvin, and his wife Marie, daughter of Gerald Fitzgerald (1528-85), eleventh Earl of Kildare. The Delvin family's recusancy was well known: one hostile government source described the earl in 1632 as 'a vehement papist and of popular carriage among the Irish'.[112] They were well known harbourers of Catholic clergy during the Elizabethan and early Stuart eras and several family members joined the priesthood. Thus, in 1622, according to the government report referred to above, Fr Nicholas Nugent, SJ, was staying at the home of the earl, while Fr Charles O'Colla ('Cale McColl') was boarding with the earl's brother, Christopher Nugent, at his Meath home.[113] Sir Richard was patron to Thomas Dease, a distant cousin and future Bishop of Meath (1622-52), who established his headquarters at the earl's home during the first twenty years of his episcopacy.[114] Richard's wife Jane (d. *c*.1648), Countess of Westmeath, daughter of Christopher Plunkett, Lord Killeen, was also an influential patron of Catholic clerics in her own right. In 1635 she was instrumental in arranging accommodation for Fr Neil Fearnan at the London home of Randall MacDonnell (1609-83), second Earl of Antrim, with whom the Nugents were connected through marriage.[115] Thus, Jane was part of a wide network which

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[111] Quoted in Walker, 'Combining Martha & Mary' p. 409.
[112] Quoted in Aidan Clarke, *The Old English in Ireland, 1625–42* (1966), p. 36.
[113] Patrick Fagan, 'Thomas Dease, Bishop of Meath, 1622-1651: his life and times' in *Rí. na Mí.*, xvii (2006), pp 81, 4: Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath', pp 7-12.
[114] According to John Roche, Bishop of Ferns, Thomas Dease was 'an exemplary man and full of energy in the discharge of his duties': see Moran, *History of the Catholic Archbishops of Dublin*, p. 397.
[115] *H.M.C. 12th report, append., pt. 2*, 80. The earl's son had married a daughter of the earl of Antrim, himself an influential recusant: see Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English*, p. 139.

consolidated links between leading Catholic titled families both in Ireland and in England. She also made provision for priests in her will and bequeathed £100 to the Jesuit priest, Nicholas Nugent, who had previously resided at the Nugent family residence, as well as the considerable sum of £1,700 (bequeathed jointly with Walter Nugent of Rathaspuck, County Westmeath) to Nicholas Plunket of Balrath, County Meath in order that he might 'maintain such youths at his house as shall follow learning and become good clergymen'.[116] This was a tradition continued by her granddaughter, Anne, daughter of the second earl of Westmeath, who in 1682 requested that her nephew distribute £100 'to such poor Priests, poor Gentlemen and Gentlewomen of her relations, and such other objects of charity as he should think best, for the good of her soul'.[117]

Sir Richard and Jane had two daughters, Bridget and Mary, for whom the family harnessed their connections on the Continent in order to send their girls abroad for a Catholic education. In 1624 Richard requested that Fr Francis Nugent (d. 1635), a close relative of the earl and founder of the Irish Capuchins (a reformed branch of the Franciscans, which emerged in the early sixteenth century), assist in transporting his two young daughters to the Continent in order that they might join a suitable convent and continue their education.[118] The young Nugent women were part of a cohort of Irish youths – which included one other woman, also a Nugent, named Elizabeth and two or three young boys, destined for the college at Douai – who arrived at Charleville in April 1625, accompanied by Fr Nugent, a Capuchin missionary. Upon arrival, and as befitted their family's high social rank and significant continental connections, the young women were accommodated for a week as guests of the baroness of Chaumont, wife of the governor of Charleville. The Sepulchrine nuns at Charleville undertook the girls' education, and Fr Francis Nugent acted as their guardian. One of the two, Mary, appears to have ultimately joined a community of English Poor Clare nuns in Flanders where she was

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[116] See will of Thomas Dease, Roman Catholic Bishop, 23 June 1648 in John F. Ainsworth and Edward MacLysaght (eds), 'Survey of documents in private keeping' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 20 (1958), p. 146.
[117] Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, i, 245.
[118] The Capuchins were a reformed branch of the Franciscans which emerged in the early sixteenth century: see F.X. Martin, *Friar Nugent: a study of Francis Lavalin Nugent (1569-1635) agent of the Counter-Reformation* (London, 1962), p. 265.

reportedly professed in 1629.[119] The fate of the second girl, Bridget, was less straightforward, however: it was reported that Fr Nugent fell out of favour with the earl of Westmeath after she eloped with an Irishman of dubious character whilst under the priest's care.[120]

In contrast to a phase of relatively limited religious coercion during the early 1620s in Ireland, the late 1620s, thanks to the stance assumed by the lords justice Richard Boyle (1566-1643), Earl of Cork and Adam Loftus, first Viscount Loftus of Ely (1568-1643), witnessed a revived backlash on the part of the state authorities against Catholic practice. In January 1630, in the midst of a vigorous coercion campaign aimed at suppressing the religious houses in Dublin city the Earl of Cork, reported to Viscount Dorchester (d. 1632), that:

> ... in another of the nunneries there was a governor brought from Dunkirk with one nun, the daughter of the Earl of Westmeath, another of the Earl of Fingal, two of the Viscount Gormanstown, two of the Lord Viscount Dillon, and divers young professed nuns being the daughters of divers prime gentlemen.[121]

As the earl's report illustrates, the resources and finances of at least four influential Old English Catholic families were being directed towards conventual training for their female offspring in the convents of Catholic Europe.[122] The group referred to by Cork belonged to the order of the Poor Clares.[123] They had travelled along with some Irish Franciscans from Nieuport in France to Dublin in June 1629. Conventually trained and imbued with the doctrines of Tridentine Catholicism their return to the island in 1629 was a significant turning point, heralding as it did, the revival of formal religious vocations for women in Ireland, in line with the doctrines of the Council of Trent. Their presence in Dublin contributed to and strengthened the perpetuation of a Catholic 'side' in Ireland. The female religious thus positioned themselves on a recalcitrant, albeit peaceful, Catholic flank in the religious frontiers of early seventeenth-century Stuart Ireland. Before considering the nature of their

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[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] *H.M.C. 12th report, append., pt. 1*, 398-9.
[122] Most prominent of the surviving Old English were the Burkes, earls of Clanricarde, followed by the lords of the Pale, Nugents, Earls of Westmeath, Plunketts, Earl of Fingall, and Prestons, Viscount Gormanstons: see Clarke, *The Old English in Ireland*.
[123] John Moorman, *A history of the Franciscan Order: from its origins to the year 1517* (Oxford, 1968).

contribution in the Irish context, however, it is necessary to consider both their familial and continental origins.

II

The Irish Poor Clares on the Continent, 1620-29

While we have a good overall picture of the activities and locations of Irish male religious in continental Europe during the early modern period, we lack an equivalent account of Irish nuns.[124] Because no official Irish conventual foundation for women existed on the Continent until 1639 – when the Dominican convent of Bom Sucesso at Belém, Lisbon, was established by Fr Dominic O'Daly (1595-1662) – exiled Irish women who travelled to the Continent in pursuit of a formal religious lifestyle were accommodated in fledgling English continental convents. As already mentioned, the earliest official record of an Irish nun in a continental convent was of Martha Cheevers who, in 1620 joined the order of the Poor Clares at Gravelines, in the diocese of Ypres, Spanish Flanders, where an English convent had been founded by Yorkshire native, Mary Ward (1585-1645) in 1607.[125] Between 1620 and 1626, at least five Irish women, including Cheevers, were professed there, the highest recorded concentration of Irish women in any continental convent during that period.[126] At Gravelines, the Irish nuns, along with their exiled English co-religionists, formed a distinct cohort of religious émigrés for whom the shared experience of religious coercion, under an uncongenial and hostile Protestant regime, fostered a sense of solidarity. Although mutuality in religious experience was an important element of conventual life for members of the Gravelines community, as Caroline Bowden has shown in her recent study of English continental convents, expressions of separate 'national' identities was also significant and the English convents accepted women of other 'nationalities', including Irish, Scottish and

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[124] Bhreathnach, MacMahon & McCafferty (eds), *The Irish Franciscans*; Patricia O Connell, *The Irish College at Lisbon, 1590-1834* (Dublin, 2001); eadem, *The Irish College at Santiago de Compostela, 1605-1769* (Dublin, 2007); O'Connor (ed.), *The Irish in Europe, 1580-1815*; idem & Lyons (eds), *Irish migrants in Europe after Kinsale*; idem (eds), *Irish communities in early modern Europe*; idem (eds), *Strangers to citizens: the Irish in Europe*.

[125] Bowden, 'The English convents in exile', p. 301.

[126] 'Who were the nuns? A Prosopographical study of the English Convents in exile 1600-1800', online database, available at http://wwtn.history.qmul.ac.uk/

Welsh, as members only in exceptional circumstances.[127] In the same way as the major European universities divided their students into distinct nations, the Gravelines Poor Clares categorised its members into nations with Irish members consistently differentiated from their English counterparts by use of the prefix, 'of ye Irish nation'.[128] 'National' identity was clearly important to the Irish nuns too: in 1626, rather than remain at the English convent, these sisters established their own 'Irish' convent at Dunkirk. From there, in 1627 the Irish nuns moved to Nieuport in France. In 1629 they ended their continental exile with the intention of founding a convent in Ireland. In this venture they were successful, establishing at Dublin the first convent of women religious in Ireland since the Henrician dissolution. From this first house at Dublin sprang further establishments, at Athlone, during the 1630s, and at Drogheda, Galway, Loughrea and Wexford in the 1640s. Thus the Irish Poor Clare order, the sister branch of the male Franciscan order, contributed alongside their religious brethren, to the revival of Catholicism from the 1620s onwards (although their input came later than that of the male orders, owing to the time lag in establishing dedicated convents for Irish women on the Continent).

Of the five Irish nuns who professed at Gravelines between 1620 and 1626, at least three were similar in terms of social status to those of their English counterparts, many of whom were linked to senior political figures within the Stuart administration.[129] The Tridentine requirement that women who entered monastic life should observe strict enclosure meant that convent life was generally the preserve of an economic and social élite, whose families were sufficiently wealthy to provide dowries to support them.[130] Thus, these Irish women were all of Old English origin (though they were from different parts of the country) and belonged to prominent, wealthy and socially influential families. In the case of those whose family backgrounds can be traced, not surprisingly one finds a tradition of Catholic recusant activity among their relatives. Through the dispatch of their daughters to conventual

[127] For a discussion see David Finnegan, 'Old English views of Gaelic Irish history and the emergence of an Irish Catholic nation, *c*.1569-1640', in Brian Mac Cuarta (ed.), *Reshaping Ireland 1550-1700: Colonisation and its consequences* (Dublin, 2011), pp 188-90; Coolahan, 'Archipelagic identities in Europe: Irish nuns in English convents', p. 215, Bowden, 'The English convents in exile', p. 297.
[128] W.M. Hunnybun (ed.), 'Registers of the English Poor Clares at Gravelines, including those who founded filiations at Aire, Dunkirk and Rouen, 1608-1837' in *Catholic Record Society*, Miscellanea IX (London, 1914), pp 34-5.
[129] Bowden, 'The English convents in exile', p. 307.
[130] Walker, 'Combining Martha & Mary', p. 403.

institutions in Europe, these Catholic Old English élite families were extending their orbit beyond the confines of a domesticated Catholic network in Ireland to the wider realm of Counter-Reformation Europe in dedicated communities of female religious. Like their male counterparts, these women formed part of a burgeoning self-confident Counter-Reformation European movement from the early decades of the seventeenth century.

According to the surviving register of the English Poor Clares at Gravelines, Martha Cheveers (Sister Martha Marianna), was the first Irish woman to be professed there on 25 December 1620, at the age of twenty-one. Her family originated from County Meath, her father being one of the 'Chevers of Ballyhaly and Macetown'.[131] While details of her mother's background are not recorded, the family had strong Catholic sympathies and were related to the influential and overtly recusant Nugents, Lords Delvin, through marriage.[132] The family made provision for religious training for their male offspring too: Martha's brother, Walter, a Franciscan friar, was a member of the Irish province.[133] By September 1622 two more Irish girls had joined the community of English nuns. These two sisters, Ellen (Sister Mary Joseph) and Cecily (Sister Cecily Francis) Dillon, from another influential Old English family with close ties to the landed aristocracy and gentry of Meath, were professed on 8 September, aged twenty-one and nineteen respectively. Their parents were Sir Theobold Dillon (d. *c.*1625), first Viscount Dillon of Costello-Gallen, County Mayo and his wife, Eleanor (d. 1638), daughter of Sir Edward Tuite of Tuitestown, County Westmeath, both devout Catholics.[134] During the early 1620s, according to one government report, the couple maintained several Catholic priests at the family

[131] Her father was a relative of Edward Cheevers of Macetown Co. Meath, created Viscount Mount-Leinster by King James II in 1689: Hunnybun (ed.), 'Registers of the English Poor Clares at Gravelines', pp 34-5.
[132] TNA SP 63/223/14; Edmund Curtis, 'Extracts out of Heralds' Books in Trinity College, Dublin, Relating to Ireland in the 16th Century' in *R.S.A.I Jn.*, seventh ser., ii, no.1 (June 1932), p. 43.
[133] Concannon, *The Poor Clares in Ireland*, p. 7.
[134] Hunnybun (ed.), 'Registers of the English Poor Clares at Gravelines', pp 34-5. Their father, Theobald Dillon (d. 1624), originally from the barony of Kilkenny West, in Westmeath, enjoyed considerable prosperity as a political magnate and land holder in late sixteenth-century Connacht, and by the early seventeenth century owned vast tracts of land in Roscommon and Mayo. In 1622 Theobald purchased the title Viscount Dillon of Costello Gallen, an acquisition which consolidated his enhanced social status within Connacht society and among the wider Anglo-Irish élite: see Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, iv, 182.

residence at Kilfaghny Castle, some miles north-east of Athlone.[135] The family's commitment to the maintenance of Catholicism extended to the education of their children, too. The couple had a large family of eight sons and eleven daughters and they organised religious training for their sons as well as for their daughters, two of whom, Edward (d. 1641) and George, entered St Anthony's College, Louvain in 1616 and 1620 and became Franciscans.[136] Indeed the family maintained a close affinity to the Franciscan order, whose significant presence and prestige in County Westmeath owed much to the Dillons' powerful patronage during the early decades of the seventeenth century.[137] In an expression of her affinity with the friars, Eleanor Dillon, who died at an advanced age on 8 April 1638 at Killinure friary in County Westmeath, was buried in the Franciscan monastery at Athlone.[138] The special relationship that existed between the wealthy Dillon family and the Franciscan friars evidently explains why the couple chose the Poor Clares, the sister branch of the Franciscans, for their daughters. Although details of the young women's journey to Flanders are unknown it is likely that they were escorted by their Franciscan brothers, Edward and George, whose admittance to Louvain, in 1616 and 1620 respectively, corresponded roughly with the women's profession at the Gravelines convent, located close by. It is likely too that the women travelled to the Continent via Drogheda, a port which had thriving trade links with Europe and which, according to Mac Cuarta, 'served as the hub linking the northern ecclesiastical province with the Continent', one utilised extensively by the Franciscans.[139]

In 1625 two more girls of Irish origin, again with connections to the Old English gentry of the Pale, were professed at Gravelines. On 6 May 1625 Alice Nugent (Sister Magdalene Clare) made her profession, at the age of twenty-four, and Mary Dowdall (Sister Mary Peter), aged nineteen, professed on the same day.[140] Mary Dowdall was a Dublin native; Alice Nugent was the 'daughter of an important

[135] Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath', p. 9.
[136] Fergal Grannell, *The Franciscans in Athlone* (Athlone, 1978), pp 36-7.
[137] According to a 1613 report, the greatest concentration of friars was in Westmeath with seven Franciscans: see Raymond Gillespie, 'The Irish Franciscans, 1600-1700' in Bhreathnach, MacMahon & McCafferty (eds), *The Irish Franciscans*, p. 47.
[138] Cunningham, 'The Poor Clare Order in Ireland', p. 161: see also Cunningham, ''Bethlehem': the Dillons and the Poor Clare convent at Ballinacliffey, Co. Westmeath' in *Áitreabh: Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement Newsletter*, xvii (2012-13), p. 7.
[139] Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, p. 212.
[140] Hunnybun (ed.), 'Registers of the English Poor Clares at Gravelines', p. 35.

gentleman (daughter to a prime gentleman of the Nugents)'.[141] Alice was related to Sir Richard Nugent (d. 1642), Lord Delvin and first Earl of Westmeath and his wife Jane née Plunkett.[142] As discussed above, the Nugents, like the Dillons (with whom they were connected through marriage) were well known for their Catholic sympathies.[143] The family maintained prominent Catholic clerics, including Thomas Dease, Bishop of Meath (1622-52), a distant cousin of the earl's who resided at the Nugent family residence during the first twenty years of his episcopacy, down to 1641.[144] Indeed the Nugents also had a strong tradition of association with the Franciscans: Christopher Nugent (d. 1602), Sir Richard's father, who was brought to the attention of the Elizabethan authorities in 1580 for his 'obstinate affection to popery', acted as patron to the community of Franciscan friars at Multyfarnham, located just twelve miles from the castle of the barons of Delvin at Clonyn, throughout the closing decades of the sixteenth century.[145] The family's affinity with the order was manifest in the female as well as the male line; Katherine Nugent, a daughter of Sir Christopher Nugent, was the mother of the renowned Franciscan Christopher Cusack, founder of the Franciscan college at Douai.[146] The significance of their support was such that, by 1613, according to one report, there were 130 friars

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[141] Ibid.

[142] Jane was a sister of Luke Plunket, first Earl of Fingall and the fourth daughter of Christopher Plunkett, Lord Killeen and his wife Jane Dillon, a sister of the Earl of Roscommon: see Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, vi, 527.

[143] During the later seventeenth century, the Earl of Westmeath's daughter Anne married Lucas Dillon, sixth Viscount Costello-Gallen: see Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English*, p. 194.

[144] Thomas Dease was related to the Nugents through his mother, Lady Eleanor Nugent of Carlanstown, County Meath, wife to Richard Dease of Turbotstown, County Westmeath. Eoin Mac Cárthaigh, 'Dease, Thomas' in *D.I.B.* (Cambridge, 2009), [http://dib.cambridge.org/quicksearch.do# 14 Jan. 2013]. Sir Richard was patron to Thomas Dease, Bishop of Meath (1622-51), who established his headquarters at the earl's home during the first twenty years of his episcopacy from where he presided over a Catholic resurgence in the diocese. In 1622, Fr Nicolas Nugent, a Jesuit, was reported to be living at the earl's home while another priest, Fr Cale McColl, was staying at the home of the earl's brother, Christopher Nugent: see Fagan, 'Thomas Dease, Bishop of Meath', pp 7-12.

[145] Quoted in Martin, *Friar Nugen*t, p. 6. In the same year Christopher Nugent was imprisoned for his alleged complicity in the rebellion of his brother-in-law, James Eustace, Viscount Baltinglass. William Nugent, Christopher's brother a militant recusant, lead a rebellion of disaffected Old English and Gaelic against the crown in 1581 and later campaigned on the continent for assistance for the Catholic cause: see Helen Coburn Walshe, 'The rebellion of William Nugent, 1581' in R.V. Comerford, Mary Cullen, Jacqueline R. Hill and Colm Lennon (eds), *Religion, conflict and co-existence in Ireland: essays presented to Monsignor Patrick J. Corish* (Dublin, 1990), pp 26-52.

[146] Christopher Cusack's sister was Elizabeth who married Captain Gerald Fleming of Ballylagan, County Louth. They were parents of the friar Fr Patrick Fleming (d. 1630): see Gallwey, 'The Cusack family of counties Meath and Dublin', pp 595-8. For Fr Patrick Fleming see Ignatius Fennessy 'A select prosopography of some Irish Franciscans' in Bhreathnach, MacMahon & McCafferty (eds), *The Irish Franciscans*, p. 337.

in Ireland, the greatest concentration of whom in the Leinster region was to be found in the Nugent's native Westmeath.[147]

By early 1627 the Irish nuns had settled at Nieuport where, under the guidance of Ellen Dillon, in her role as abbess, they accepted two more Irish women into their community, Mary Power and Bridget Eustace.[148] Details of their backgrounds are unknown, but their surnames indicate that they too were from prominent Old English families of the Pale. This close association between the Irish Poor Clares and the Franciscans at familial, communal and institutional levels remained a feature of the female order's experience throughout the seventeenth century. The Irish women's foundation at Dunkirk in 1626 was the first dedicated Irish convent established on the Continent.[149] The close connection of the Irish nuns to the Franciscans was also maintained at Nieuport, where their confessor was the Irish Franciscan and hagiographer Robert Rochford who in June 1627 was granted a passport to 'pass freely' between Ireland, England and France in order to attend to the 'discalced Irish nuns of St Clare at Nieuport'.[150]

The Irish Poor Clare nuns who professed at Gravelines and later established a separate foundation at Nieuport belonged to one of the most austere contemplative orders in the Roman Catholic Church.[151] The fundamental rule of the Poor Clares, like that of the Franciscan friars, their religious brethren, was poverty. They lived by alms alone, in the 'manner of holy unity and highest poverty', accepting no endowments whether of property or money.[152] The Poor Clares were also bound by the solemn vows of chastity and obedience, professed before their ecclesiastic superiors. The order was strictly enclosed and lived a life of austerity which included the observation of penance, silent contemplation, and prayer. They remained within

[147] Gillespie, 'The Irish Franciscans', p. 46; John Hagan (ed.), 'Miscellanae Vaticano-Hibernica, 1580-1631' in *Achiv. Hib.*, iii (1914), pp 227-365.
[148] Hunnybun (ed.), 'Registers of the English Poor Clares at Gravelines', p. 35.
[149] The other foundations were Aire, established in 1629, Rouen in 1644 and Dunkirk in 1652.
[150] Rochford (B.B), *The life of the glorious bishop S. Patrick*; Concannon, *The Irish Poor Clares*, pp 8-9.
[151] The order's rules were laid down initially by their thirteenth century founder, Saint Clare, for her Order of the Poor Ladies, later known as the Order of Poor Clare. Her rules were reformulated by Saint Collette (1381-1447) in the fifteenth century. The Irish Poor Clares belong to this reform branch and are sometimes known as the Colettines.
[152] Bowden, 'The English convents in exile', p. 303.

the cloister walls where a cyclical routine of praying, penitence, attendance at daily Masses and choir recitation of the divine office or canonical hours, dominated the daily agenda.[153] Unlike their male brethren, the Franciscans, the female order had no exterior mission in the form of education or preaching duties. However, as Caroline Bowden has shown in the case of enclosed convents on the Continent, prayer formed an important element of the 'mission' of contemplative orders such as the Poor Clares. According to Bowden, for communities of English nuns abroad, a distinct 'sense of mission to preserve Catholicism' through dedicated prayer recitals and devotional practices prevailed. Praying for their 'poor distressed country of England', the nuns played an important role in the preservation of identifiable Catholicism from within the confines of their outer walls and, in doing so, claimed continuity with an idyllic past. In the case of the English Poor Clares, they devoted their lives, in prayer, 'as a sacrifice to bring England back to the Catholic faith'.[154] Their 'mission' through prayer was also recognised by the English Franciscan writer Christopher Davenport (1598-1680) who ascribed to the English Poor Clares an altogether more radical role when he wished them, as ensign bearers, a 'victorious triumph'.[155]

Although not active missionaries in the traditional sense, the Poor Clares were part of a wider Counter-Reformation mission, which was gaining significant momentum on the Continent from the late sixteenth century onwards, and the Irish contingent at Gravelines and Nieuport was part of this. While members of male orders such as the Franciscans, Jesuits and Dominicans, having benefited from the establishment of dedicated networks of Irish colleges abroad, returned to Ireland as dedicated missionaries from the late 1590s, the women's arrival and influence occurred much later, owing to the later establishment of the first dedicated Irish convent abroad. Thus, as discussed above, it was not until much later, in 1629, when conditions were conducive to a return home, that the founders of the Irish branch of the Poor Clares undertook the journey to Dublin. In this endeavour they were assisted by the Franciscans who clearly viewed the female order as a necessary (and for them)

[153] Jane Martyn, 'The Poor Clares in Ireland: from their early annals preserved in their convent of Galway' in *Catholic Truth Society of Ireland* (Dublin, 1907), pp 1-28.
[154] Bowden, 'The English convents in exile', p. 303.
[155] Ibid., p. 304.

complimentary element of the Catholic mission and perpetuation of Counter-Reformation ideology and culture in Ireland.

III

'Sweet savour of their vertues': The Irish Poor Clare order in Ireland, 1629-41.[156]

The informal suspension of measures against recusancy in Ireland from 1619 (as a result of Stuart dynastic policies and considerations) set the 1620s and 1630s apart from preceding decades in the experience of the Catholic community. This development provided the context for a remarkable flowering of Catholicism, especially in the Pale counties of Dublin, Louth, Meath and Westmeath, and a growing confidence characterised Irish Catholics, lay and clerical, during this period.[157] The vacillating religious policies of the government coincided with an upsurge in public displays of Catholic practice and devotion, including Masses and processions. In August 1622, for example, at the ruined church of Gallen in County Westmeath, of which Sir James Dillon, first Earl of Roscommon was patron, a large public Mass took place. The fact that it incited the fury of the local Protestant vicar of Athlone, John Ankers, showed that this was recognised as signalling the growing Catholic revival that was afoot in the wider Pale region.[158] Furthermore, the ostentatious gatherings which took place in the vicinity of Clonyn Castle, the Nugent family residence, located within close proximity of the Franciscan friary at Multyfarnham, County Westmeath during Easter 1624, at which two diocesan ordinaries termed Catholic bishops presided, also reflected the new era of official toleration of the 'old' Catholic faith, and was a manifestation that the policy of state repression against Catholicism had eased, albeit temporarily.[159] Although there continued to be intermittent spells of renewed repression, this prevailing environment of Catholic resurgence from the early 1620s allowed male religious orders in Ireland to aspire to a more stable existence than was hitherto possible. Thus, Dominican communities were re-established in Mullingar about 1622 and in Trim by 1630, while between 1626 and 1629 Franciscan houses opened again in Dundalk,

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[156] Galway chronicle, fol. 1.
[157] Mac Curta, *Catholic revival*.
[158] Sir James Dillon was created Lord Dillon, baron of Kilkenny West in 1620, and Earl of Roscommon in 1622; Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, i, 157.
[159] Mac Curta, *Catholic revival*, p. 209.

Trim and Athlone.[160] In Dublin, Catholic resurgence was no less visible: one Dublin Castle official, Sir John Bingley, complained in 1629 that there were fourteen Mass houses in the city catered for by the religious orders, while there were eighty Jesuits, benefitting from the generous patronage of Elizabeth Nugent (d. 1645), Countess Dowager of Kildare, who reportedly 'adorned' their 'altars ... with images and other idolatrous popish trash as fully as in Rome if not more'.[161] Notwithstanding a period of uncertainty among Old English Catholics during the Graces controversy of 1626-8, the eventual granting of the Graces (a deal arranged by Old English leaders whereby set sums were raised for the Crown, who in return promised a series of concessions) by the king in May 1628 served to further bolster Catholic confidence, particularly among the Old English élite (although both the deal and Old English confidence would prove to be short-lived).[162]

Against this backdrop of waning religious coercion, new-found Catholic confidence and greater stability for religious orders, in 1629 seven Poor Clare nuns, under Franciscan aegis, left their Nieuport house for Dublin. They arrived in the city in mid-June of that year and successfully established the first convent of female religious on the island since the Henrician dissolution, a development which, according to Mac Cuarta, 'symbolised the normalisation of Irish Catholic life at this time'.[163] The women no doubt benefited from the support of Sir Lucas Dillon, brother of two of the nuns and then a member of the Irish Privy Council. Their arrival in Dublin was noted in a Provincial Chapter of the Irish Franciscans held at Limerick on 15 August that year, and a decree was formulated whereby the female order was accepted and incorporated into the Irish Province. Fr Bonaventure Dillon, a nephew of the Dillon sisters, was appointed as confessor to the nuns while Cecily Dillon, the younger of the two Dillon siblings, was appointed abbess.[164] The seven nuns established themselves in Dublin where a cloister appears to have been erected

[160] Ibid., p. 234.
[161] '[Sir John Bingley's] account of the state of the Church of Ireland, [21 March] 1629', *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1625-32*, p. 442. Intriguingly, Bingley also claimed that the Jesuits did 'cheat the nuns egregiously'.
[162] For an extended discussion on the Graces see Aidan Clarke, 'The Graces, 1625-41' in *Dublin Historical Association, Irish History Ser., 8* (Dundalk, 1968), pp 3-33.
[163] Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, p. 239.
[164] Concannon, *The Poor Clares in Ireland*, p. 10. Fr Bonaventure Dillon was the son of Sir James Dillon and grandson of the first Viscount.

for them at Merchants Quay on the south side of the River Liffey.[165] Their premises was located close to that of the Franciscan friars at Cook Street since the order required ready access to their male brethren as their chaplains and confessors. This proximity was also reflective of the close links between the friars and the Poor Clares at a familial and a communal level, links which were to prove essential to the community's viability in Ireland. While the arrival of the Poor Clares in Dublin appears to have been greeted optimistically by the Franciscans (as signified by their successful incorporation into the Irish Province), an air of pessimistic caution is discernible in the correspondence of Thomas Strange, guardian of the Franciscan order in Ireland. Writing to Luke Wadding, the Irish Franciscan friar and historian then resident at Rome, from Waterford on 4 August 1629, Strange reported that: 'Our nuns that were at Newport, are arrived at Dublin, and propose to build a cloister there. What the times will say to it I know not'.[166]

If the arrival of the Poor Clares at Dublin in June 1629 signalled an atmosphere of greater religious toleration for religious orders generally in Ireland, more specifically it testified to the significant support that residents of the Pale, especially families of the wealthy gentry and patrician classes, with whom many of the nuns had family connections, afforded the nascent community. Indeed one family, the Gormanstowns, appear to have been particularly supportive in providing financial assistance to the Poor Clares. In his will, dated 2 November 1629, less than six months before his death, Jenico Preston, fifth Viscount Gormanstown, directed that £300, a very significant sum, should be provided to his daughters, Elizabeth, 'Besse' and Jane, 'to be given to them with speed to build a house for them'.[167] Clearly it was Gormanstown's intention that the finances provided should be used to establish a convent or cloistered home for the young women. While it is uncertain if this was the premises at Merchants Quay where the Poor Clare community later resided, given the timing of the bequest, just five months after the nuns' arrival in Dublin, it is likely that the order's premises in Dublin was erected using funds provided by Gormanstown. His bequest was not unqualified, however, as he directed that once the house was completed, the young nuns were to 'cause *daily prayers to be said for*

[165] Cunningham, 'The Poor Clare order in Ireland', pp 159-74.
[166] *Report on Franciscan Manuscripts*, p. 14.
[167] Brady, 'Keeping the faith at Gormanstown', p. 411.

me and some Masses [author's italics]'. Gormanstown's will offers a valuable and unique insight into the role of the contemplative order of Irish Poor Clares as valuable intercessory agents through which traditional Catholic devotional practices, such as bequests and Masses, could be preserved. As Walker has discussed in the case of English continental convents, through prayer, nuns became intercessors for benefactors who endowed their communities with land, property and goods, and for those patrons who continued to provide alms. In this 'functional reciprocity', the 'spiritual labour' of the cloister repaid the material assistance of their generous benefactors.[168] In the case of the Poor Clare convent at Dublin, a system of 'functional reciprocity' appears to have operated between the nuns and their generous benefactor, Gormanstown. Indeed such was Gormanstown's confidence in the intercessory power of nuns' prayers that he left an additional sum of money to his remaining daughters in the event that they might in the future 'take a religious life'; 'I leave as a legacy with the house they or either of them, shall enter into *to pray for me* [authors' italics]'.[169] Gormanstown's substantial personal investment reflected not only his strong commitment to the Catholic faith but also his genuine support and endorsement of the enterprise of female religious as a worthy and necessary element within an emerging vibrant and spiritually fulfilling Tridentine reform movement.

It is difficult to gauge the impact of the Poor Clare order's presence on the Catholic community in the environs of Dublin city and on the Catholic community more generally as, owing to the cloistered and private nature of their vocation, evidence for this is at best impressionistic. Certainly, Jenico Preston's will offers solid evidence that the nuns' contemplative living was well regarded by at least one prominent recusant family. However, the fact that the order's membership comprised women from families such as the Dillons, Nugents, Cheevers and Eustaces demonstrates the popularity and esteem in which the Poor Clares were held among Leinster's recusant élite more generally. Indeed the community's rapid expansion during the foundation's early phase further supports this point. Between the arrival of the nuns at Dublin in June 1629 and their departure from the city in either 1630 or

[168] Walker, 'Combining Martha & Mary', p. 405.
[169] Brady, 'Keeping the faith at Gormanstown', p. 412.

1631, twelve new postulants joined the community at Merchants Quay.[170] While the names of the new members are not recorded, they were all daughters of noble and wealthy families, and six of the twelve were 'natives of ye same cittie and bordering villages'.[171] It is possible that Mary Barnewall, who in 1630, was reportedly being sheltered by her brother, Robert Barnewall, son of Patrick Barnewall (d. 1627), at his Shankill home, in south County Dublin, was among these, given the family's long standing recusancy and previous patronage of communities of female religious.[172] The fondness of the Catholic élite for supporting their female offspring in pursuit of religious professions was also acknowledged by the government official, Sir Thomas Dutton who, in a letter to the king, dated 4 April 1630, lamented that 'the noble families make their sons priests and their daughters nuns'.[173] The chief source of evidence for the activities and popularity of the Poor Clares in Ireland during the period 1629-41, however, is the chronicle of the order written by Mary Bonaventure Browne (d. *c*.1694), a native of Galway, who joined the Irish Poor Clares in 1632 and later became abbess of the Galway convent (1647-50).[174] Compiled retrospectively sometime between 1669 and 1671, while Browne was living in exile in the convent of El Cavallero de Garcia in Madrid (she was forced to flee Ireland following the Cromwellian conquests in the 1650s), the chronicle charts the experiences of the Irish order from their initial foundation at Dublin in 1629 to their subsequent exile to the Continent in the 1650s and 1660s.[175] Notwithstanding its inherent bias and retrospective nature, Brown's account is a valuable source, providing the only detailed account of the Irish Poor Clare nuns' activities during this initial phase in the order's history.

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[170] Galway chronicle, fol. 1v.
[171] Galway chronicle, fol. 2.
[172] Robert Barnewall was the son of Patrick Barnewall (d. 1627). Robert Barewall married before 1627 Mary (b. 1612) daughter of Robert Barnewall, seventh baron of Trimlestown and Jane Talbot. Mass was celebrated secretly at Shankill Castle. The Barnewall's also sheltered Teig O'Murroghowe, a friar who 'doth say Mass in the Castle of Shankill': see Ronan, 'Archbishop Bulkeley's visitation of Dublin', pp 81-3. Robert's daughter Eleanor (b. 1637) was still living unmarried in 1673 and may possibly have been a nun: see Barnwell 'The Barnewall family during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' in *Ir. Geneal.*, iii, no. 5, pp 176-8
[173] *Cal S.P. Ire., 1625-32*, p. 528.
[174] Born into a prominent Galway family, Mary Browne entered Bethlehem with her sister in 1632, professing as Sr Bonaventure. She was the daughter of merchant Andrew Browne and Catherine Bodkin: her grandfather had been mayor of Galway in 1609. Her cousin, Sr Catherine Francis Browne, had entered Bethlehem in 1631. For more details see: Marie-Louise Coolahan, 'Browne, Mary (*d.* in or before 1694)' in *O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, May 2014) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/105827, accessed 28 Jan. 2013].
[175] Galway chronicle.

According to Browne's account the presence of the Poor Clare sisters at Merchants Quay inspired respect among Dublin city residents. She claimed that their communal and spiritual manner of life, a feature of Catholic daily life that was hitherto non-existent, engendered their virtuous 'fame'. It was Browne's contention that this 'fame' was a product of their vocational pursuit, their spiritual honour and adherence to an exclusively female cloistered mode of living which could trace its origins back to the early Christian Church. However, in spite of the nuns' enclosure within physical and ideological boundaries, their presence in the city was, according to Browne, a spectacle that stimulated interest and excitement among the local lay community:

> ... the sweet savour of their vertues extended it selfe, and the manner of their life was much admired, and the more that because by peoples memory there were none cloistered in that Kingdome, and soe every body was desirous to see and heare them.[176]

Writing about contemplative orders in Renaissance Florence, Sharon Strocchia has remarked how 'as consecrated virgins, nuns not only stewarded religiously charged spaces and objects but embodied aspects of the holy in their very persons'.[177] As Browne's account demonstrates, in the case of the Irish Poor Clares, although strictly enclosed, the impact of their presence in the city clearly percolated beyond the convent walls, sparking the laity's interest, fascination and reverence. The Poor Clares' cloistered house signified a sacred place, a focal point for Catholic laity, and the nuns themselves offered a religious exemplum that clearly appealed to popular Catholic culture in Ireland. Leading exemplary religious lives behind the walls of the enclosure by partaking in intensive cycles of devout and ritualistic prayer, the Poor Clares represented for the Dublin lay community, conduits and touchstones of the sacred. Manifesting the virtues of humility, piety, chastity and poverty the nuns represented the perpetuation of the temporarily interrupted conventual tradition in Ireland and thus their community was an important emblem of continuity with the 'old' post-dissolution monastic order that many Old English families had been instrumental in preserving during the Elizabethan and early Stuart eras.

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[176] Ibid., fol. 1v.
[177] Strocchia, *Nuns & nunneries.*

The period of religious toleration and Catholic resurgence which prevailed to a large extent during the 1620s and which facilitated the arrival of the Irish Poor Clare order at Dublin in 1629, was, however, interspersed with bouts of repression. Occasionally these were particularly severe, initiated as a result of heightened Protestant anxieties about the growing strength of Catholicism in the cities and towns of the Pale. In Dublin, in response to the recent proliferation of religious houses in the heart of the metropolis, a vigorous coercion campaign was undertaken in late 1629 under the direction of lords justice Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork and Adam Loftus, first Viscount Loftus of Ely.[178] Acting under the directions of Loftus and Cork, on 26 December (St Stephen's Day) that year, Lancelot Bulkeley, Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin and Christopher Foster, Mayor of Dublin, together with a party of soldiers, instigated a major clampdown on the Dublin Catholic community, targeting initially the Franciscan chapel in Cook Street. A contemporary eye-witness account of the events of that day and the riot which ensued was penned by the Catholic Dublin Alderman, William Bellew. In his account, a letter written on 4 January 1630 to an unidentified recipient, Bellew highlighted the prominent role played by the female members of the congregation then gathered at the chapel in the riot which ensued:

> …about eleven of the clock in to the chapel [and] the doors being fast, broke open them; the chapel being full and ready to go to Mass; on their coming in the people were in uproar; with that the mayor had the picture pulled down and the lord archbishop pulled down the pulpit; the soldiers and the people were by the hairs one with another, and the pictures were all broken and defaced and they took within five suits of vestments and one chalice. There were two of the young friars taken and put in the custody of Bentley the pursuviant (Edward and one Barnewall) and they were rescued by the women.[179]

An account of the riot was also featured in a letter written by John Roche, Bishop of Ferns to Luke Wadding at St Isidore's in Rome in January 1630. In his letter Roche described the women responsible for rescuing the friars as 'devout women'. He claimed that these 'devout women, which were in the oratory, together with [some] young men ... did so play on the mayor with stones and clubs, that they were forced

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[178] Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 1st ser., iii, 13.
[179] William Bellew to ______, 4 Jan. 1630 in Jennings (ed.), *Wadding papers*, pp 330-2. For an analysis of the riot see, Mark Empey, ''We are not yet safe, for they threaten us with more violence': a study of the Cook Street riot, 1629' in William Sheehan and Maura Cronin (eds), *Riotous assemblies: rebels, riots and revolts in Ireland* (Cork, 2011), pp 64-79.

to take house'.[180] Whether the group of 'devout women' referred to by Roche were similar in formation to the group of Franciscan tertiaries assembled at Drogheda in the early 1620s, or whether Roche used the term 'devout' in laudatory description of the women's actions, is uncertain. Regardless of whether they were lay or religious, the prominent role played by the female mob during the Cook Street riots adds new depths to our understanding of both gender and religious conflict in this period.

In the stream of dispatches sent to Whitehall in the aftermath of the riot, Protestant officials, eager to highlight the seditious and subversive nature of Catholicism to the London government, portrayed the riot as a 'papist' rebellion and a serious threat to Ireland's security. Sir Thomas Dutton, for example, in a report to Lord Dorchester written on 30 December 1629, argued that 'had not the Justices and others come from Church for their rescue it would have been a bloody business', although interestingly he does not make reference to the gender of the mob members involved.[181] Following the Cook Street riot, the dismantling of religious houses in the city continued into the early weeks and months of 1630, inspiring widespread panic and fear among Dublin's Catholic lay and religious populations alike.[182] By November 1630, so effective was the government's repressive campaign that Thomas Strange, guardian of the Irish Franciscans, complained that none of the laity would rent a house to the Franciscans for fear of being reported to the administration.[183] While according to reports from both Catholic and Protestant commentators, several nunneries had been seized during this initial round of confiscations in early 1630, the Poor Clare convent at Merchants Quay appears to have been preserved, owing perhaps to the protection of Sir Luke Dillon who, as mentioned above, was a member of the Privy Council and brother to two of the nuns.[184] However, the Poor Clare nuns were not immune to spells of harassment and indicative of the hostility and antagonism that characterised this period, the sister were, according to Browne, subjected to 'search and threatnings in such manner, as it

[180] John Roche, bishop of Ferns to Wadding, Jan (?) 1630, in Jennings (ed.), *Wadding papers*, p. 333.
[181] Sir Thomas Dutton to Lord Dorchester, 30 Dec. 1629, *Cal S.P. Ire., 1625-32*, pp 500-1.
[182] Houses belonging to the Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites and Capuchins were confiscated. The Jesuit buildings at Back Lane were handed over to Trinity College: see Empey, ''We are not yet safe, for they threaten us with more violence'', pp 64-79.
[183] *Report on Franciscan manuscripts*, p. 54.
[184] Sir Thomas Dutton to Lord Dorchester, 30 Dec. 1629, *Cal S.P. Ire.,1625-32*, pp 500-1; John Roche, Bishop of Ferns to Wadding, (?) Jan. 1630, in Jennings (ed.), *Wadding papers*, p. 333.

was needful for them sometimes to hide themselues, and to send their ornaments to be kept to some chatolicke houses'.[185] On 22 October 1630 their convent was finally seized: according to the Earl of Cork's report, the mayor arrested 'sixteen prime noblemen and gentlemen's daughters therein'.[186]

The Dublin convent's discovery and ultimate suppression by the government authorities in October 1630 is recounted in detail in Browne's account.[187] According to her, it was complaints made by the 'Lady Deputy' that led to the seizure of the convent. The 'Lady Deputy' referred to by Browne was Sarah Loftus née Bathow (d. 1650), wife of Adam, Viscount Loftus of Ely (m. 1597), who, along with Cork, was driving the repressive campaign.[188] Browne claimed that, at some point prior to its seizure, Sarah had visited the convent in disguise: she viewed the nuns through the 'high grate' as they recited 'Divine Office' and was 'amazed to see their grille, turn and chapel'.[189] Afterwards she returned home and expressed her concerns about what she had witnessed to her husband and other 'peers' among the Dublin administration, complaining that, 'if prists [priests] and fryers were persecuted for preaching and instructing the people, that ye manner of life of the nuns, was a more forcible motive to withdraw them [that is, the Catholic community], than any preaching'.[190] In her estimation, therefore, the nuns' influence emanated from their manner of life, the visibility of their vocational and cloistered mode of living within the Pale. The nuns' convent and their lifestyle were visible signs of their faith, a visibility that, according to Sarah, encouraged the faith of others. The admiration and respect accorded the nuns' 'manner' of life by Dublin's Catholic laity was for her, a matter of serious concern as she perceived the nuns' exemplary and devout lives to be more seditious than the proselytising activities of priests and friars. At a time when the state was actively engaged in securing conversions from Catholicism to the Established

[185] Galway chronicle, fol. 1v.
[186] Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 1st ser., iii, 160.
[187] Galway chronicle, fol. 1v.
[188] Although Browne identified the wife of the lord deputy, there was in fact no lord deputy at the time. Lord Falkland had been recalled to England in April 1629 and was not replaced until the arrival of Thomas Wentworth in July 1633. In the interim, Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork, and Adam Loftus, Viscount Ely, were appointed lords justices. It is therefore likely that she was referring to Lady Loftus, Sarah née Bathow, widow of Richard Meredith (d. 1597), Church of Ireland Bishop of Leighlin: see Coolahan, *Women, writing & language*, p. 82.
[189] Galway chronicle, fol. 1v.
[190] Galway chronicle, fol. 2.

Church, particularly among the gentry and aristocracy – a process facilitated through initiatives such as court of wards – the nuns' ability to 'withdraw' the populace from adherence to Protestantism represented a significant threat to the state. According to Browne's inevitably partisan account, therefore, the nuns were viewed by Lady Loftus as subversive religious agents while their convent, located in the heart of the city centre, was a site of female occupation, Catholic persistence and controversy that required immediate suppression.[191] Sarah's demand that her husband and members of the Irish Privy Council act immediately to suppress what were in her opinion, dangerous agents of religious subversion, provides an intriguing insight into the role of New English Protestant women as active agents in upholding conformity to the Established Church (discussed in chapter three). Although, Sarah, as the widow of Richard Meredith (*c.*1550-97), dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin and Church of Ireland Bishop of Leighlin (1589-97), may have been more zealous than most in seeking to affect religious conformity in the city.[192]

Following seizure of the convent, which was placed under armed guard, five of the sisters (represented by Browne as revered, admired and inoffensive characters) were compelled to walk barefoot from of their convent to appear before the Privy Council court at Dublin Castle. However, the arrest of the religious, styled 'mild lambes' by Browne, provoked an outpouring of solidarity among the Dublin populace. Enraged by what they perceived as the maltreatment of innocent and vulnerable women, who were the epitome of Christian virtue, and fearful for their safety, Browne described how disorder and chaos quickly broke out as the city's Catholic community endeavoured to protect the sisters. She recounted how:

> … as he [the mayor] passed the streets with these mild lambes there assembled [a] great concourse of people, who tooke compassion to see them goeing abroad barefoot, and feared much they should suffer greater harme, they raised such tumult as ye mayor feared to be stoned.[193]

Through this outpouring of compassion and solidarity on the part of city's Catholic community, the authority and power of the Dublin administration in the person of

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[191] For a discussion on wardships and conversion among the Irish peerage see Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English*, pp 157-67.

[192] Helen Coburn Walshe, 'Meredith, Richard (*d.* 1597)' in *O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18578, accessed 10 Nov. 2013].

[193] Galway chronicle, fol. 2.

the mayor was very publicly undermined. In contrast to the compromised and uneasy position of the authorities, who, in such a fraught and tense environment, were fearful of the unruly mob and the outburst of violence that threatened to erupt, the agency and influence of the nuns in quelling the aggravated crowd was emphasised by Browne. She described how the mayor was obliged to plead with Sir Lucas Dillon 'for God's love to appease the people' which he did 'by ye persuasions of ye said Abbess and the other Sisters'.[194]

Once inside the castle, in the presence of her brother Sir Lucas Dillon, Cecily Dillon, the abbess, was interrogated by the 'Lord Deputy', presumably Lord Justice Loftus, who demanded to know how the nuns, 'did ... *dare* [author's italics] to put up their grille, and settle themselves in cloister ... before the state'.[195] In contrast to the 'mild lambes' depicted in Browne's earlier rendition of the nuns journey through the streets of Dublin, Cecily Dillon's response to the lord deputy's questioning was 'so prudent and wyse that with her discreet answers ... shee convinced him and moved both him withall that were present to compassion'.[196] Having heard the abbess's testimony, the lord deputy agreed to a more lenient sentence: rather than banishment from the country altogether, the nuns were to be banished from Dublin and were ordered to leave the city within a month.[197] Considering the political forces that Cecily Dillion confronted at Dublin Castle, her address before the lord deputy and the Irish peers does not fully explain their final decision to reduce the sentence. The influence of Sir Lucas Dillon no doubt was key in securing the more favourable compromise. However, Lord Deputy Loftus's decision to agree to a more lenient sentence may also have been an attempt to appease the aggravated Dublin mob. Indeed, Loftus, perhaps pressurised by popular opinion, even arranged transportation for the women's return journey: Browne claimed that, 'seeing that they were barefoot, he begged their pardon and sent them by coach to their convent'.[198] The symbolic resonance of this acquiescence was later recognised by Cork who – absent from the Dublin Castle hearing – disassociated himself from it in his diary. From Cork's perspective, the Poor Clares represented the threatening 'other' – in this case

[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Ibid.

the unyielding Catholic recusant – which the Established Church and state vigorously endeavoured to repress. Cork viewed the nuns not as harmless or vulnerable figures but as subversive 'delinquents'. Wistfully he wrote that: ' … as those 5 nonnnes were brought to the castle on foot, soe it was without my consent or privity that they were sent thence in a coach, whereby too much grace and countencance was given to such delinquents, and contempners of aucthorety'.[199] In spite of Cork's obvious disdain for the nuns, evidently the Poor Clare sisters had made an impact on the population. Furthermore, their residence and visibility in Dublin for a period of at least a year without significant interference from the government or Church of Ireland authorities raises important questions about the nature and intensity of religious repression, the ambivalence in official attitudes to repression of non-conformity, the limits of authority in Ireland, and the layers of complex motivations behind decisions to turn a 'blind eye' on occasions and to take repressive steps on others during the 1620s and 1630s.

Apart from expressing his contempt for the nuns, Cork's diary entry reveals further insights about the sentence handed down to the Poor Clare sisters by Lord Justice Adam Loftus and the privy councillors in October 1630. Not only were the sisters banished from the city outright, they were also compelled to 'put in good security never to assemble conventually together in the kingdom', a fact not mentioned in Browne's chronicle.[200] Despite this solemn undertaking, however, the community was quickly re-established, although this time away from the prying eyes of the Dublin administration. As was the case for the male religious orders affected by the coercion campaigns of 1629-30, family ties and community support was vital to the women's survival in the immediate aftermath of their banishment from Dublin. In November 1630, a month after the Dublin Castle hearing, the Poor Clare sisters departed their residence at Merchants Quay and 'divided themselves in 3 companies among some noble country friends of theirs who charitably harboured them until a poore house was built for their habitation'.[201] The Dillon family were particularly prominent in ensuring the community's survival in the aftermath of their banishment. By 1631 the Poor Clares had relocated to the secluded rural location of Ballinacliffey,

[199] Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 1st ser., iii, 160.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Galway chronicle, fol. 3.

near Athlone in County Westmeath, where, on land owned by the Dillons, a convent named Bethlehem was constructed for them off the shores of Lough Rea, in either 1630 or 1631.[202] Bernadette Cunningham has highlighted the 'undoubtedly significant' role played by Lady Eleanor Dillon née Tuite of Costello-Gallen, mother to sisters Cecily and Ellen, in arranging matters so that community could re-establish themselves in the quiet and peaceful seclusion of Lough Rea.[203] Patronage of convents and monasteries by lay women was governed by their legal entitlement to property and, as Jane Ohlmeyer has observed, the extant testaments of Lady Dillon of Costello-Gallen suggest that she enjoyed considerable wealth and independence which she deployed in affording patronage to the Poor Clares.[204] As Bernadette Cunningham has highlighted, at the time of the sisters' arrival at Lough Rea in either late 1630 or early 1631, Eleanor was a widow. Her husband, Theobald had died in 1625 and during the intervening years the succession of the Dillon viscountcy was complicated by the deaths of three successive heirs male between 1625 and 1630.[205] By 1630 the viscountcy had fallen to Thomas, Theobald's grandson who, at the age of fifteen, became fourth Viscount Dillon only to abandon the Catholic faith and declare himself a Protestant (he converted back to Catholicism in 1646).[206] Thus, during this period, it was the matriarchal Eleanor Dillon who evidently played a vital role in maintaining the family's adherence to Catholicism. Eleanor's close affinity to the Athlone Franciscans has been highlighted above and after the death of her husband she continued her close relationship with the Athlone friars. Indeed in 1629, prior to the establishment of the Bethlehem convent at Lough Rea, the friars, forced to leave their convent as result of the religious coercion campaigns incited by Loftus and Cork, were accommodated at the property of the elderly viscountess at

[202] According to O'Brien the convent was named Bethlehem after the fifteenth century convent of the same name founded at Ghent by Saint Colette in 1442. The name may also be connected to the Gravelines convent, which was named Nazareth: see Celsus O'Brien, *The Poor Clares Galway, 1642-1992* (Galway, 1992), p. 11.

[203] Cunningham, ''Bethlehem': the Dillons & the Poor Clare convent', pp 5-9.

[204] Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English*, p. 181.

[205] Cunningham, ''Bethlehem': the Dillons and the Poor Clare convent', p. 7; at the time of Theobald Dillon's death the estate was valued at £1,500 per annum, but it was encumbered with three jointures (a young widow, a mother and a grandmother): see Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English*, p. 161.

[206] On 6 December 1646 in the church of the Blessed Virgin in Kilkenny the papal nuncio 'reconciled him to the Catholic Church by the Pontifical Roman Rite, in the presence of a great number of people'. The nuncio then invited him to a feast to celebrate very publicly his rebirth and encouraged him to secure the conversions of his wife and children. Sir Richard Bellings noted in his history that God brought the viscount 'back to the flock of St Peter and the fold of the Roman Catholic Church (out of which the severity of the laws against wards, when he was yet very young, had drawn him)'. Dillon lived the rest of his life a committed Catholic: see Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English*, p. 167.

Kilfaghny Castle, some miles north-east of Athlone. The nomination of George Dillon, Eleanor's son, as guardian of the Athlone Franciscans the same year, is further evidence of the considerable influence exerted by Eleanor in upholding the family's Catholic faith during the turbulence and religious coercion of the period.

Eleanor Dillon was, as Cunningham contends, key in 'ensuring the viability of the Poor Clare convent at Bethlehem'.[207] As a widow with her own income at her disposal and as nominal head of the Dillon household, a landed family which exercised considerable authority in the wider Westmeath area, she exerted a decisive influence over the religious orientation of her family. Through her support and patronage of religious orders, both the Franciscans and the Poor Clares, Eleanor ensured that, in spite of the conversion to Protestantism of her grandson Thomas, heir apparent to the Dillon viscountcy, the family remained Catholic. Her part in the revival and development of the Poor Clare community at Bethlehem in the early 1630s is evidenced by the high number of new postulants admitted to the convent in the early years of its foundation who were related, either by blood or marriage, to the wealthy viscountess. No less than six Dillon women, all granddaughters of the viscountess, were admitted, including Eleanor, Cecily, Anne and Bridget Dillon, all daughters of Thomas Fitzgerald of Creevagh or Newcastle and his wife Elizabeth Dillon, Eleanor's daughter.[208] Eleanor Taaffe, another granddaughter, was also 'a nun of the order of St Clare', presumably at Bethlehem. Her sister, Anne Taaffe, was reportedly a 'nun of the order of St Dominick', and may have belonged to the Dominican convent established at Galway in 1646.[209] Another woman, Clare Tuite, who later joined the English Poor Clares at Rouen in 1664, was also among the early

[207] Cunningham, ''Bethlehem': the Dillons & the Poor Clare convent', p. 7.

[208] Four of the women, Eleanor, Cecily, Anne and Bridget were daughters of Thomas Fitzgerald of Creevagh or Newcastle and his wife Elizabeth, third daughter of Theobald and Eleanor Dillon. The Fitzgeralds of Creevagh also held close connections with the Franciscans. Thomas Fitzgerald's brother, Gerald was himself a Franciscan while in his will Maurice Fitzgerald (d. 1634), Thomas's father directed that he be buried in the Franciscan friary of Athlone where his executors were to erect a monument to his honour: see K.W. Nicholls, 'The descendants of Oliver Fitzgerald of Belagh' in *Ir. Geneal.*, iv, no. 1 (1968), p. 5. The other two women were Elizabeth and Mary, daughter of Sir Christopher Dillon and Lady Jane Dillon, daughter of the first earl of Roscommon.

[209] Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, iv, 292-6. Eleanor Taaffe was the daughter of Sir John Taaffe and his wife Anne Dillon. Anne and John had seventeen children; fourteen sons and three daughters. Six of the sons took up religious lives while two of their three daughters became nuns.

postulants at Bethlehem.[210] It is possible that Rose Fitzgerald, daughter of Gerald Fitzgerald, Lord of Drumraney and his wife Ismay née Tuite, was affiliated to that convent. Ismay Tuite was the daughter of William Tuite of Monilea, County Westmeath, Eleanor Dillon's first husband. Rose was, therefore, possibly her granddaughter.[211] Several members of the strongly recusant Browne family from Galway, to whom the Dillons were connected through marriage also joined the community.[212] These included Catherine Browne (d. 1668), daughter of James Browne of Galway (the signed record of whose profession at the Bethlehem convent on 29 January 1631/2 still survives (see Fig. 2.2)).[213] A year later, in 1632 two more Browne women (Catherine Browne's cousins) entered Bethlehem; Catherine (d. 1669) and Mary (the order's chronicler), daughters of Galway Alderman Andrew Browne, a well known recusant, and his wife Catherine Bodkin (d. 1640).[214] The Browne family had a long tradition of affiliation to the Franciscan order, Catherine and Mary Browne's brother, Francis being a Franciscan friar while Father Valentine Browne, OFM, was probably a relative.[215]

The period 1631-41 represented for the Poor Clare community at Bethlehem a 'golden age'.[216] By the late 1630s the community had expanded to number about sixty members.[217] The order's expansion, fuelled largely by élite patronage derived from close family ties, also formed part of a wider development of communities of various religious orders across the Pale. Benefiting from the relaxation of the government's coercion measures as part of Wentworth's rapprochement with the Old English from about 1632 onwards, the period witnessed a profound expansion of the Catholic infrastructure in the northern Pale so that by 1641 the area covering north Leinster had one of the highest concentrations of religious houses in the kingdom.

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[210] She later joined the English Poor Clares at Rouen where she arrived in May 1664. For an account of Clare Tuite on the Continent see Coolahan, 'Archipelagic identities in Europe', p. 215.
[211] Liam Cox, 'The Dillons, Lords of Kilkenny West: part one' in *Rí. na Mí.*, xi (2000), p. 75.
[212] Concannon, *The Irish Poor Clares*.
[213] Galway, Poor Clare convent, MS A1. Profession of Sr Catherine of St Francis [Browne], 29 January 1631/2. She died at the convent of St Clare in Bilbao in 1668.
[214] In 1632 Andrew Brown was appointed sheriff of Galway. In September that year Browne, refusing to take the Oath of Supremacy, publicly affirmed his Roman Catholic faith and refused to take his office.
[215] One of the daughters of her father's cousin, Sir Dominick Browne, was married to Richard Dillon of Clonbrocke: see Concannon, *The Poor Clares in Ireland*, xxiii.
[216] Galway chronicle, fol. 3.
[217] Ibid.

Thus, the male orders such as the Dominicans, Capuchins and Franciscans opened or re-opened houses in the major towns and cities such as Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Slane, Mullingar and Drogheda.[218] The Poor Clares too formed part of this rapidly expanding Catholic infrastructure and by about 1640, owing to increasing numbers of postulants, it was incumbent to establish a new convent. Led by Sister Magdalene Clare Nugent, an original Gravelines' member, seventeen 'very perfect nunns' were relocated from Bethlehem to the north Leinster town of Drogheda, among them two daughters of General Thomas Preston (d. 1655), both nieces of Jenico Preston, fifth Viscount Gormanstown.[219] The Drogheda convent was apparently well-endowed as a spacious building was under construction; in June 1641 the Irish council reported that at Drogheda there were 'many hundreds of Jesuits, friars and priests' in the town and among them, 'there is a house for a nunnery of late erected, with great charge, which is so spacious as it contains four score windows of a side, and is not yet thoroughly finished, but great expectations there is of it'.[220] It is possible that the construction of the building at Drogheda was funded through a bequest made by Viscountess Eleanor Dillon whose death in 1638 coincided roughly with the construction of the convent. It is also likely that the Gormanstowns were influential in patronising the new establishment given that at least four female of that family belonged to the order. At Drogheda, the nuns followed the first rule of 'holy mother Clare' and maintained the same regular observance as they had in Bethlehem.[221]

The decision of the Bethlehem community to establish a convent at Drogheda is not surprising. Not only had the town's wealthy merchant oligarchy, including the Peppards and the landed élite (notably the Plunketts and Taaffes) shown itself to be recusant, it also had a tradition of supporting communities of female religious, as demonstrated in the case of the Franciscan tertiaries, discussed above. The Poor Clares inspired the Drogheda Third Order to lead a stricter form of religious life,

[218] Estimates suggest that around 300 members of religious orders (larely Dominicans, Franciscans and Jesuits) were active in Ireland by 1623. In line with the general flourishing of Catholicism at the time by 1641 this number had risen to about 1,600 friars (around 1,000 Franciscans and 400 Dominicans plus other smaller orders: see Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, p. 128.
[219] Galway chronicle, fol. 4; John T. Gilbert (ed.), *A contemporary history of affairs in Ireland, from 1641 to 1652* (3 vols, Dublin, 1879), ii, 146-7, iv, 242.
[220] TNA SP 63/259/44.
[221] Galway chronicle, fol. 4.

which was in line with Counter-Reformation practice.[222] Taking their lead from the strict enclosure of the Bethlehem nuns, the Drogheda tertiaries later established Third Order convents in other parts of the country, and the existence of communities at Waterford, Wexford, Kilkenny and Limerick, can be traced in the records of Franciscan Chapters up until 1650.[223] This movement towards stricter enclosure was part of a wider development towards regularisation and claustration among members (both men and women) of the Third Order which influenced by the directives of Trent, was developing in Europe from the late sixteenth century onwards.[224] The close familial ties that united members of the Poor Clares, the Franciscans and their lay supporters in the greater Drogheda area are perhaps best exemplified by the Plunkett and Preston families. Fr Christopher Plunkett, son of Sir Christopher Plunkett of Dunsoghly and his wife, Dame Margaret Plunkett, a daughter of Sir Nicholas Bagenal (d. 1590/91), was confessor to the Drogheda community. In 1622 Fr Christopher's brother, John Plunkett SJ (ordained 1618) was residing at the Meath home of Lady Mary O'Doherty née Preston, sister of Jenico Preston, fifth Viscount Gormanstown.[225]

According to Browne, such was the Poor Clare nuns' reputation for sanctity and holiness that the 'fame of their vertuous life ... spread abroad' (that is, beyond the immediate confines of the convent walls) and 'many great personages came to see them from far off '.[226] Among the visitors to Bethlehem were two prominent women; Lady Elizabeth Wentworth née Rodes, third wife of the recently appointed lord deputy, Thomas Wentworth (1593-1641), first Earl of Strafford, and the duchess of Buckingham, Katherine Mac Donnell née Manners, wife of Randal Mac Donnell (1609-83), second Earl of Antrim.[227] Significantly both women had connections through marriage to the Dillon family while Katherine MacDonnell (*c*. 1603-49) was

[222] Benignus Millett, *The Irish Franciscans, 1651-1665* (Rome, 1964), p. 234.
[223] Concannon, *The Poor Clares in Ireland*, p. 26.
[224] Hsia, *The world of Catholic renewal*, pp 33-4.
[225] Mac Cuarta, 'Old English Catholicism in Chester', pp 2-4.
[226] Galway chronicle, fol. 3.
[227] Ibid.

also linked through marital ties with the Nugents of Delvin, Earls of Westmeath.[228] According to Browne, both women elected to undertake the journey from Dublin to visit the Poor Clare convent, where they were 'edified by their [the nuns'] holy conversation'.[229] The visit of both the duchess and the lady deputy represented a very strong and public endorsement of the order's prestige, enhancing their collective status among the Catholic aristocratic élite. Both women were influential members of the aristocracy; according to Ohlmeyer, next to Queen Henrietta Maria, Katherine MacDonnell 'was probably the most important and influential woman at the Caroline court'.[230] Having renounced her Catholicism upon her marriage to her first husband, the duke of Buckingham, George Villiers, Katherine reconverted after his assassination in 1628, and remained a devout Catholic for the rest of her life. Her strong religious convictions are vividly captured in her 'Meditations', a series of intimate religious reflections scribed by the duchess in 1646 wherein she described how she 'would pour out my life in defence of [Catholicism]'.[231] Her second marriage in April 1635 to Randal Mac Donnell brought the duchess into the Irish Catholic milieu and she lived permanently in Ireland at Dunluce Castle, County Antrim from September 1638 until the outbreak of the 1641 rising.[232] The duchess's experience at the Bethlehem convent, where she was 'edified by their [the nuns'] holy conversation', was to prove formative and lasting.[233] In the mid-1640s when she accompanied her husband to Spanish Flanders (where he was engaged in

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[228] The duchess of Buckingham, Katherine MacDonnell, was related to the Dillons through her sister-in-law, Lady Mary MacDonnell who married Lucas, second Viscount Dillon, Cecily and Ellen's nephew and Sir Theobald Dillon's grandson. Lady Wentworth, Elizabeth Rodes was connected to the Dillons by the marriage of James Dillon, third Earl of Roscommon who married the lord deputy's sister, Elizabeth Wentworth (who may well have accompanied the nuns to Bethlehem following their departure from Dublin). James Dillon's aunt Jane was married to the Dillons' eldest brother, Sir Christopher Dillon. Sir Richard Nugent's son, Christopher married Sir Randall Mac Donnell's eldest daughter Anne: see Benjamin Hazard, ''An Ark in the Deluge': Multyfarnham abbey and the Nugents of Delvin, 1607-41' in *Rí. na Mí.*, xxii (2011), p. 115. For more details see: Jane Ohlmeyer, 'MacDonnell, Katherine, duchess of Buckingham and marchioness of Antrim (1603?–1649)' in *O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/69581, accessed 19 Oct. 2013].

[229] Galway chronicle. Although the precise timing of their visit is not recorded, in the case of Katherine MacDonnell it must have been sometime after 1638, when the duchess came to live in Ireland and before 1642, when the Bethlehem community was dispersed.

[230] Jane Ohlmeyer, 'MacDonnell, Katherine, duchess of Buckingham and marchioness of Antrim (1603?–1649)' in *O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/69581, accessed 19 Oct. 2013].

[231] Hector McDonnell and Ohlmeyer, 'Meditations by Katherine Manners, Duchess of Buckingham, 1646' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 41 (2009), pp 69-82.

[232] Jane Ohlmeyer, 'MacDonnell, Katherine, duchess of Buckingham and marchioness of Antrim (1603?–1649)' in *O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/69581, accessed 19 Oct. 2013].

[233] Galway chronicle, fol. 4v.

negotiations with the Spanish authorities) she elected to reside for a period of fifteen months in the English Benedictine convent in Ghent, where she lived 'with much piety in a solitary life, taking so much content in ye monastery, yt had not ye necessity of her maryed condition forst her away she wold ther have ended her dayes'.[234] Further testimony to her enduring sense of attachment to the Bethlehem convent and her dedication to preserving female religious establishments in Ireland is demonstrated by a discussion she reportedly had with the Jesuit, George Duckett, about the possibility of founding, together with some nuns from Ghent, a convent in Ireland.[235] Clearly, in the expansion of the enterprise of female religious in Ireland, the duchess saw merit in maintaining close links with Continental Europe, building on the alliances initiated first by the Irish Poor Clares who had professed initially at Gravelines in the early 1620s.

Not long after their establishment at Bethlehem, and within seven years of their return from the Continent, the Irish Poor Clares made a further contribution to the Irish mission by complementing the scholarly endeavours of their Franciscan compatriots in generating material relevant to their order and to the Catholic mission through the medium of Irish. Flaithrí Ó Maoil Chonaire OFM (d. 1629), Bonaventure Ó hEodhasa OFM (d. 1614) and Aodh Mac Aingil OFM (d. 1626) produced in print at St Anthony's College, Louvain a series of Irish language spiritual works designed for the Counter-Reformation mission in Ireland and abroad. [236] As such the Irish friars spearheaded a highly politicised and religious linguistic project producing a substantial corpus of religious and devotional texts, some of which were in Gaelic.[237] In October 1636 the Bethlehem nuns, under the direction of their abbess, joined the Franciscan scholarly enterprise, commissioning the Franciscan scholar and chief of the 'Annals of the Four Masters', Mícheál Ó Cléirigh (d. 1643), to produce a transcript of the Irish version of the Rule of St Clare, the text

[234] McDonnell and Jane Ohlmeyer, 'Meditations by Katherine Manners, Duchess of Buckingham, 1646' in *Analecta Hibernica*, no. 41 (2009), pp 69-82.
[235] McDonnell & Ohlmeyer, 'Meditations by Katherine Manners', pp 69-82.
[236] Mary Ann Lyons, 'The role of St Anthony's College, Louvain in establishing the Irish Franciscan college network' in in Bhreathnach, MacMahon & McCafferty (eds), *The Irish Franciscans*, pp 27-44.
[237] Ibid.

recited by novices at profession.[238] Ó Cléirigh visited the convent over a period of about three days. During that time he completed the Irish transcription, which he signed and dated 19 and 21 October 1636.[239] In his dedication Ó Cléirigh wrote; 'For the love of Jesus and his sweet Mother, the Virgin holy Mary for the love of St Francis and St Clare and her Rule which is here begun, remember, Sisters, in your prayers each day your poor brother Michel O Cleirigh', an indication of his esteem and reverence for the order of nuns, the sister branch of the Franciscan friars.[240] The nuns' recruitment of the eminent Donegal friar gave them added legitimacy by positioning their order within the wider sphere of the Franciscan scholarly enterprise and bringing them into direct contact with the network of scholars and patrons formed by the Franciscans in the Athlone region.[241] No doubt the Dillon family's connections (through which the matriarchal Eleanor Dillon exerted considerable influence) were important in fostering this relationship between the nuns and the Donegal friar.[242] George Dillon, Lady Dillon's son, was host to Ó Cléirigh while the latter completed *Genealogiae Regum et Sanctorum Hiberniae* at Killinure house, located close to Kilfaghny Castle, Lady Dillon's primary residence until her death in 1638.[243]

As Marie Louise Coolahan has highlighted, the Bethlehem Poor Clares' production of an Irish version of the Rule of St Clare aligned the community with the broader Counter-Reformation movement to 'fashion a national, Catholic Irish identity'.[244] Their generating foundation documents in the vernacular was also consistent with the activities of female religious orders on the Continent, including the Poor Clares at Gravelines, who undertook to translate St Clare's thirteenth-century Rule into their

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[238] The initial translation had been made by two priests, Aodh Ó Raghallaigh and Séamus Ó Siaghail, both relatively obscure characters. The manuscript can be viewed on the Irish Script on Screen website (www.isos.dias.ie). For an edition see Eleanor Knott (ed.), 'An Irish seventeenth-century translation of the Rule of St Clare', *Éiru*, xv (1948), pp 1-187.
[239] Irish Script on Screen available at: www.isos.dias.ie
[240] Quoted in O'Brien, *The Poor Clares, Galway*, p. 15.
[241] Cunningham, 'The Poor Clare order in Ireland', p. 162.
[242] Between 1630 and 1637, when he returned to Louvain, Ó Cléirigh made repeated visits to the Franciscan house at Killinure near Athlone, patronised by the Dillon family.
[243] George Dillon, Lady Dillon's son, was host to Ó Cléirigh while the latter completed *Genealogiae Regum et Sanctorum Hiberniae* at Killinure house, located close to Kilfaghny Castle, Eleanor Tuite's primary residence until her death in 1638: Coolahan, *Women, writing & language*, p. 66.
[244] Coolahan, *Women, writing & language*, p. 67.

native English in 1621.[245] On a domestic level, the Irish Poor Clares were addressing the needs of their own community, too. As Coolahan contends, the community's translation project may have been part of a wider recruitment drive by the order among the Gaelic Irish; the provision of the Rule of St Clare through the medium of Irish – the text recited at profession – enabled the recruitment of Gaelic Irish women.[246] According to Coolahan, 'these texts' facilitation of new professions from the native Irish community' highlights the emerging 'cooperation between both ethnic groups on the basis of shared religion' and confessional identity.[247] This position was to be reinforced six years later following the establishment of the Confederation of Kilkenny in 1642. As Gillespie states, the confederacy redefined the political 'nation' in religious rather than ethnic terms, by resolving to avoid 'national distinctions between the subjects of His Majesty's dominions'.[248]

By 1641 Catholicism in the northern Pale was in expansionary mode.[249] The revival of religious life on the island was an important part of this expansion and reflected the growing stability and prosperity characteristic of the Catholic revival in the decades of peace down to 1641, a trend which was all the more remarkable given the unfavourable position of the Catholic Church throughout this period. The establishment of the Poor Clare convents was part of this wider Catholic expansion and on the eve of the 1641 rising, an impression of a lively and active network of female religious communities, which traversed a wide geographical area, from Drogheda in the north and radiating west to Athlone, may be adumbrated. According to Browne, the convents, both at Bethlehem and Drogheda, were, 'flourishing ... in the admission of good perfect members' while the sisters were venerated on account of their 'virtue and fame of a good life'.[250] This was a sentiment echoed in 1646 by the papal nuncio GianBattista Rinuccini (1592-1653), who considered the nuns of

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[245] Ibid., pp 61-2.
[246] Ibid., p. 66
[247] Ibid., p. 78.
[248] Gillespie, *Seventeenth century Ireland*, p. 156. As Pádraig Lenihan discusses, increasingly assertive anti-Catholic policies blurred any residual political differences between Old English and Irish by the 1620s while according to Ó Siochrú intermarriage and a common interest in land meant that by the 1640s ethnicity was less important than social status in determining and indvidual's outlook: see Pádraig Lenihan, *Confederate Catholics at war, 1642-49* (Cork, 2001), p. 8; Micheál Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland, 1642-1649: a constitutional and political analysis* (Dublin, 1998), p. 17.
[249] Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, p. 240.
[250] Galway chronicle.

the island a shining example to the male, and from his perspective, distressingly lax, regular clergy.[251] The exacting archbishop's fulsome commendation of the Irish nuns offers an indication of what was by then a strongly established tradition of female Catholic devotion.[252] In contrast to Rinncini's effusive praise, however, Richard Boyle, Church of Ireland Archbishop of Tuam (1638-45), and cousin to the Earl of Cork, in a list of grievances presented to the government in June 1641, lamented the presence of the 'conspicuous' Bethlehem convent, complaining that:

> ... not far from [Kilconnell abbey] there [is a] conspicuous ... nunnery called Bethlehem, wherein are reclused many young gentlewomen, daughters to lords, knights and the best of the country. They pay great sums on entry, and are absolutely under the authority of the Abbess as the nuns are in that much spoken-of nunnery in Lisbon.[253]

The 'much spoken-of nunnery' referred to in the archbishop's report was the Dominican convent of Bom Sucesso at Belém, Lisbon, founded by the Irish Dominican Fr Dominic O'Daly just two years previously, a further indication of the growing strength and zeal of the enterprise of Irish female religious both in Ireland and abroad.[254] Boyle's recognition – albeit begrudgingly – of the orderly and disciplined nature of the Bethlehem convent contrasted starkly with earlier Protestant condemnations of Catholic nunneries as hives of 'whoredom, gluttony and other kinds of excesses and dissolute living' and bares testimony to recognition of the status and respect they commanded, even among members of the Church of Ireland hierarchy.[255]

Although the fledgling convents lagged behind in terms of development and number in comparison to religious houses for men, they nonetheless performed an important and distinct function in the Catholic revival in Stuart Ireland. While the nuns, unlike their male contemporaries, were not involved in external missionary activities such as preaching or education, they nonetheless fulfilled important spiritual functions, notably as intercessory agents. The Poor Clares, committed to perpetual dedication to God and in common with their Continental contemporaries, served the Catholic lay community and interceded with God on their behalf. They prayed and performed

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[251] Quoted in Ó hAnnracháin, 'Theory in the absence of fact', p. 149.
[252] Ibid.
[253] TNA SP 63/259/44.
[254] McCabe, *A light undimmed*.
[255] Anon, 'A commentary on the nobility and gentry of Thomond', pp 70-1.

rituals for the benefit of pious male and female acquaintances, sought grace from saints on behalf of their patrons and devout supporters, and invoked God's divine protection. At the same time the nuns offered a religious example that appealed to popular Catholic culture, as demonstrated by the public acts of protest following their departure from Dublin in late 1630. Living vocations of humility, chastity and poverty, the nuns represented the epitome of Christian virtue. Their cloister signified a sacred place, a focal point for Catholic lay devotion, particularly for members of the élite and especially women, as attested in the visit by two high-profile women, Katherine MacDonnell, duchess of Buckingham and Lady Elizabeth Wentworth.[256] For Catholic laywomen in particular the re-establishment of conventual life on the island was a significant development as it offered an alternative mode of expressing their religious devotion. A vocational lifestyle afforded women an alternative to marriage and offered an opportunity to give expression to their faith within the confines of a female-led institution, albeit one under the governance and authority of male superiors. Indeed by the mid-seventeenth century conventual life was, according to some accounts, emerging for some women, as a more desirable option than marriage. One contemporary report claimed that during her sojourn at the English Benedictine convent in Ghent, Katherine MacDonnell lamented her married state which 'forst her away' from a life of solitary piety; 'taking so much content in ye monastery, yt had not ye necessity of her maryed condition forst her away she wold ther have ended her dayes'.[257] It was reported about 1641 that a daughter of Rory O'More (d. 1655) declined marriage to the son of Sir Henry Colley, in order to live a professed vocation as a nun.[258] O'More's wife was a daughter of Sir Patrick Barnewall of Kilbrew (d. 1622), a noted lawyer and eldest son of Sir Christopher Barnewall and his wife, Marion Sherle, protectors of the Grace Dieu community at Portrane up to the late 1570s.[259] Indeed such was the attraction to conventual life among the Barnewall women that later in the century, in 1686, Robert Barnewall,

[256] Galway chronicle.
[257] McDonnell & Ohlmeyer, 'Meditations by Katherine Manners, Duchess of Buckingham', pp 69-82.
[258] Walter Fitzgerald, 'The O'More family of Balyna in the County Kildare, by James More of Balyna, circa 1774' in *Kildare Arch. Soc. Jn.*, ix (1919), pp 278-80.
[259] Ibid. Sir Patrick Barnewall had five daughters: see Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English*, p. 191. See also Barnwell, 'Barnewall of Kilbrew, Co. Meath', pp 9-17.

ninth baron Trimbleston (d. 1689), threatened to reduce the dowries of his daughters 'if they profess or become religious'.[260]

IV

Female religious in Ireland were among the first to experience in a direct and material way the impact of the earliest religious reforms introduced by the Tudor regime. The suppression of the monasteries in Ireland (as elsewhere in Europe) marked an abrupt end to a formal, organised, cloistered and exclusively female way of religious life which traced its origins back to the early Christian Church. Yet, as demonstrated in this study, during the aftermath of the Henrician Reformation and dissolution campaign of the 1530s and 1540, communities of female religious were not wholly eradicated. Rather, they navigated their survival in various ways, drawing on close links with members of the élite gentry to ensure the survival and the perpetuation of their way of life, albeit in a clandestine manner. The survival of the Grace Dieu community at Portrane in north County Dublin until 1577 exemplifies how female religious effectively harnessed close links with and patronage from influential members of the gentry and aristocratic élite in the greater Leinster and south-eastern regions to continue living as communities for several decades post-dissolution. Acting as a tangible and important link with traditional forms of late medieval piety and communal religious life, their long-term covert resistance to the Tudor authorities' efforts to enforce conformity to the Church of Ireland ensured the survival of Catholicism and of distinctly Catholic modes of religious practice and observance which were to prove vital to the future success of the Counter-Reformation and the Catholic mission within the Pale and beyond in late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century Ireland. Maintenance of traditional modes of conventual living was just one (albeit an apparently unique) form of clandestinity adopted by women to enable them to live a religious lifestyle in an uncongenial environment. Other options were to live out one's religious vocation within a domestic setting, sheltered within the confines of the family home, or to join religious communities as tertiaries (remnants of late medieval mendicant institutions). All of these made possible the survival of a female vocational lifestyle in the

[260] Quoted in Kilroy, 'Women and the Reformation', p. 195, note 67. Robert had five daughters who all married, except Jane who died young. For Robert Barnewall see Barnwell, 'The Barnewall family during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', p. 321.

interstices between the late medieval period and the apostolate of the Catholic revival. However, such informal and uncloistered modes of living for women religious, a reflection of the turbulent state of Catholicism as result of repressive policies initiated by the state during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, was in direct contravention to the Tridentine reformers' efforts to enforce strict enclosure for all female religious. Nonetheless, in the absence of traditional conventual modes of living in Ireland, these unconventional alternative arrangements were important in the perpetuation of a religious lifestyle for women down to the 1620s and 1630s. As this chapter has shown, from the early seventeenth century onwards, young women from socially prominent and politically influential families of the Catholic Old English élite travelled to the Continent in pursuit of a formal religious lifestyle, were accommodated in fledgling English convents and then in 1629 established the first Poor Clare convent in Dublin. On the eve of the 1641 uprising, Ireland had a lively and active network of female religious communities, which traversed a wide geographical area, from Drogheda in the north and radiating west to Athlone. Their community was an important ensign bearer of continuity with the 'old' post-dissolution monastic order that many Old English families, such as the Barnewalls, Gormanstowns and Nugents, were instrumental in preserving during the Elizabethan and early Stuart periods. However, their presence also represented the growing strength and confidence of the Catholic mission in Ireland and the propagation of a fresh Counter-Reformation ideology and culture – one in which the enterprise of female religious was welcomed and supported by the Catholic community during the decades down to 1641. As Margaret Mac Curtain has contended, the order of Irish Poor Clares represented 'a substantial presence among the forces of recusancy' in early to mid-Stuart Ireland.[261] As will be discussed in chapter four, however, the outbreak of hostilities in October 1641 would seriously challenge the strength and resilience of the nuns' presence in the country.

[261] Mac Curtain, 'Women, education & learning', p. 169.

CHAPTER THREE

The roles and representations of Protestant women in religious change and conflict, c.1560-c.1641

The Church of Ireland was re-established by statute as the State Church under Queen Elizabeth I in 1560.[1] However, as Colm Lennon has shown in his study of the Church of Ireland lay community, until the opening decades of the seventeenth century, apart from a small cohort at Dublin and in the newly-planted areas of the southern and northern provinces, there was a very thin dispersal of members of the Protestant state church throughout the country, and few signs of a cohesive community of lay believers.[2] Rigorous enforcement of the Reformation statute of uniformity during the early decades of the Elizabethan regime increased the number of adherents to the Established Church intermittently. Yet, the majority of these coerced attendees lapsed in their conformity once the legal strictures were relaxed and state coercion campaigns engendered hostility and resentment among the laity, particularly the Old English, who became increasingly alienated as the drive for Anglicisation, evangelisation and colonisation accelerated during the Elizabethan period.[3] During the first four decades of the seventeenth century, down to 1641, while the position of the Church of Ireland improved institutionally owing to the implementation of reform initiatives, and adherents of the Established Church increased in number, the Church of Ireland community nonetheless remained a minority.[4]

This chapter focuses on one particular cohort within the Church of Ireland community in the period 1560-1641, namely Protestant women, with a view to exploring the world in which they lived, the ideals to which they were expected to conform, and the ways in which they negotiated the religious changes and varying degrees of conflict arising from confessional division in Ireland during that era. While the role of the Church of Ireland ministry and leading officials within the

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[1] Jefferies, 'The Irish parliament of 1560', pp 128-41.
[2] Lennon, 'The shaping of a lay community in the Church of Ireland', p. 49. For an extended discussion see Ford, *The Protestant Reformation in Ireland*.
[3] Ford, *The Protestant Reformation in Ireland*, p. 29.
[4] Lennon, 'The shaping of a lay community in the Church of Ireland', p. 49.

Dublin administration in promoting (or in certain cases, stifling) the progress of the Protestant Reformation in Ireland has been the subject of significant scholarly attention in the historiography of early modern Ireland, the role of women – both Old English converts to Protestantism and the newly arrived adherents of the Established Church, or the 'New English' – has received much less consideration.[5] Set in the context of an intermittently turbulent and confessionally divided society, this chapter considers the experiences of Protestant women within their confessional community and in comparison with their Catholic counterparts (discussed in chapter one). It aims to illuminate understanding of the roles and representations of these women in Leinster and south-east Munster of ongoing religious change, oscillation between toleration and suppression, and sporadic conflict, with particular focus on highlighting aspects of these women's religious beliefs, practices and experiences which both resembled and differed from those of their Catholic counterparts. At the outset, the definition of the 'ideal' Protestant woman (as distinct from Catholic women), prescribed by contemporary clerical and literary commentators in religious treatises, conduct books and devotional literature will be examined thereby locating Protestant women in Tudor and Stuart Ireland within their wider European context. The importance of Protestant lay women as educators, both in the private sphere, as inculcators of Protestant doctrine and belief among young children and household servants, and in the public realm, through their involvement in educational reform initiatives is then explored. The role of marriage alliances fostered within Protestant communities in order to highlight common patterns and practices is highlighted and the lengths to which Church of Ireland families went in arranging endogamous unions for their offspring is illustrated through select case studies, notably that of the exceptionally ambitious Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork. While securing a 'good' Protestant wife for sons was important for families seeking to affirm their Protestant lineage, propitious marriage arrangements for daughters too could be equally important. This chapter will show how strong patriarchal control over a daughter's betrothal often proved a decisive factor in arranging marriage alliances within confessional communities. Exogamy or inter-marriage between members of rival confessions will also be considered. This chapter will also devote particular attention to the largely ignored role of clergyman's wife, showing how institutional changes,

[5] Clarke, *The Old English in Ireland*.

consolidated during the Elizabethan Reformation – in this case, clerical marriage – impacted the lives of this small but slowly growing number of Protestant women in Ireland. Finally, representations and memorialisations of deceased individual Protestant women in print (funerary sermons and eulogies) as well as in plaster (funerary monuments) will be examined, firstly, to reveal insights into their beliefs, values and conformity to the prescribed ideals for Protestant women and secondly, to highlight the potency of these commemorative media in reinforcing communal bonds and beliefs among the wider membership of their confessional communities.

I

As discussed in chapter one, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries numerous domestic conduct books, catechisms, sermons and eulogies written by Protestant and Catholic clerics, commentators and theorists prescribed appropriate behaviours and conduct for men and women. In both traditions authority, dominance and leadership were traits reserved for men, while submission, dutiful adherence and obedience were advocated for women. This is evident from the writings of several English Protestant clergymen of this period. John Lyster exhorted in his 1588 treatise, 'even as the congregation is in subjection onto Christ, likewise let the wives be in subjection unto their husbands in all thinges'[6] and in 1622, William Gouge (d. 1653) argued in his widely read *Of domesticall duties*, that the husband 'is as a priest unto his wife and ought to be her mouth to God when they two are together'.[7] This view was echoed in an Irish context by John Maxwell (d. 1647), Church of Ireland bishop of Killala and Achonry (1640-45) and later archbishop of Tuam (1645-47), who in a lengthy politico-religious treatise, readily linked Aristotelian notions of natural inequality and divine ordinance with female subordination and wifely obedience:

> Is not the female sex by the ordinance of God and nature inferior and subordinate to the male? Doth not nature teach that the wife by the law of nature is subject to the husband? If you believe Aristotle in his *Politics*, he telleth you that a man of weak understanding is subject to him who is

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[6] John Lyster, *A rule how to bring up children. A treatise wherein is declared, how the father apposeth his sonne in the holy Scripture, whereby all parents may be taught a rule how to bring up their children* (London, 1588), sig. 27v.

[7] William Gouge, *Of domesticall duties, eight treatises* (London, 1622), p. 235: on William Gouge see Brett Usher, 'Gouge, William (1575–1653)' in *O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11133, accessed 16 Aug. 2012].

more intelligent and prudent and ... that he is a *natura servus* [by nature a slave].[8]

Wifely obedience as a feature of ideal femininity was not advocated by Protestant clerical commentators alone, however. The virulent Protestant polemicist Barnaby Rich claimed that it was 'the infallible marke of a vertuous woman' to be 'tractable to her husband'.[9] Similarly, in his *Discourses and essays useful for the vain modish ladies* Francis Boyle (1623-99), Viscount Shannon, son of Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork, emphasised the importance of female subordination and wifely deference, underlining the Scriptural basis for such precepts, which he stressed were derived from 'Adam's time'. It was, Boyle wrote, 'God's positive command' that the 'woman ... be in subjection to the man' and 'that the wife ... be in subjection to her husband'.[10] Thus, both Protestant clerical and lay commentators assumed women's subordination to male authority and advocated the traditional female virtue of obedience as a necessary trait of 'ideal' Protestant womanhood.

However, as shown in chapter one, this was not a uniquely Protestant dictate; sixteenth and seventeenth century Protestant commentators subscribed to ancient and medieval constructs of feminine inferiority and subordination also utilised by Catholic commentators who likewise stressed the importance of female subordination and obedience to male authority.[11] In the context of Protestant religious discourses of the Tudor and Stuart period, however, female subordination and wifely obedience took on a new and significant meaning as it was argued that subordination was necessary for the maintenance of 'true' religion and could serve as

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[8] John Maxwell, *Sacro-sancta regum majestas, or, the sacred and royall prerogative of Christian kings* (Oxford, 1644), pp 112, 122. John Maxwell was himself married to Elizabeth Innes (date unknown); they had four sons, John, David, James, and Robert, and five daughters, Anne, Janet, Elizabeth, Rachel, and Bethia. On Maxwell see A.S. Wayne Pearce, 'Maxwell, John (*d.* 1647)' in *O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18406, accessed 19 Aug. 2012].

[9] Rich, *The excellency of good women, the honour and estimation that belongeth unto them, the infallible markes whereby to know them* (London, 1613), p. 32.

[10] Francis Boyle, *Discourses and essays useful for the vain modish ladies and the gallant as also upon several subjects moral and divine* (London, 1696), 'The sixth discourse of marriage, and wives who usurp a governing power over their husbands, which is now so common, as it's become almost the general grievance of the nation', pp 30, 36, 62 (irregular pagination). Boyle invoked a number of scriptural references to emphasise the necessity of wifely obedience including Timothy 12 that 'the young women are to be sober, discreet and obedient to their husbands' and that 'S. Paul orders the wife to subject to her husband, and gives this reason for it, for first Adam was made, then Eve' 'The sixth discourse of marriage, and wives who usurp a governing power over their husbands, which is now so common, as it's become almost the general grievance of the nation': see pp 36, 57.

[11] See chapter one.

a bulwark to the advances of the 'popish' and 'idolatrous' Roman Catholic Church in the kingdom. According to both James Ussher (1581-1656), Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh, and Ezekiel Hopkins (1634-90), Church of Ireland Bishop of Derry, by virtue of being the 'weaker sex', women were more susceptible to heresy.[12] The most secure safeguard against the ensnarement of 'weak' women, argued Ussher and Hopkins, was the protection of authoritative male figures capable of safe-guarding their wives, daughters and households from the dangers represented by Catholicism and non-conformity. Hopkins recommended that a husband 'should be well-grounded and principled with knowledge, that he may help his wife from being led away by the crafty subtlety of those who lie in wait to deceive'.[13] In the confessionally acrimonious environment of late sixteenth and seventeenth-century Ireland in which accounts of seditious conversions of 'weak' women carried out by troops of 'Romish' clergy ('the instruments of sin') abounded, there was clearly a need for strong clerical direction along the lines provided by Ussher and Hopkins. In *c*.1629, for example, the Carmelite Fr Stephen Browne was brought before an ecclesiastical court for his alleged conversion of the daughter of the former Lord Chancellor, Archbishop Thomas Jones (*c*.1550-1619), while at some point before 1643 the Capuchin Nicholas Archbold reported that Ursula White née Moore, wife of Sir Nicholas White of Leixlip in County Kildare, who had previously been 'black with heresie', was converted to Catholicism by a priest named Edward Bath.[14] Indeed, Archbishop Ussher's own mother, Margaret Stanihurst (d. 1609), daughter of Dublin native James Stanihurst (d. 1573), was allegedly converted to Catholicism by a faction of Catholic clergy while Ussher was absent in England.[15] As O'Dowd has suggested, Ussher's account of the Fall of Adam in his catechism may have been composed with women like his mother in mind.[16] Eve's downfall happened, according to Ussher, when she was 'some space removed from her husband'.[17] Conversely, however, the church and state also acknowledged the effectiveness of

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[12]James Ussher, *A body of divinities, or the sum and substance of Christian religion, catechistically propounded and explained, by way of question and answer* (London, 1657), pp 94-5, 114-5; Ezekiel Hopkins, *The works of the right reverend and learned Ezekiel Hopkins, late Lord Bishop of London-Derry in Ireland* (London, 1701), p. 165.
[13] Hopkins, *The works of the right reverend and learned Ezekiel Hopkins*, p. 165.
[14] Browne, Glynn & Martin (eds), 'The 'Brevis Relatio', p. 137; Archbold, 'The Historie of the Irish Capucins', ff 98-9.
[15] Nicholas Bernard, *The life and death of the most reverend and learned father of our church, Dr James Ussher* (London, 1656), pp 19-20.
[16] O'Dowd, *A history of women in Ireland*, p. 167.
[17] Ussher, *A body of divinities*, p. 129.

women – and especially wives – as instruments for achieving conversion to the 'English Protestant religion'.[18] A case in point is Elizabeth Fitzgerald, daughter of George Fitzgerald (1612-60), sixteenth Earl of Kildare and his wife, Joan née Boyle, daughter of the Earl of Cork, who was described as 'a very good young woman, and ... well settled in her religion'. After her marriage to Callaghan MacCarthy (d. 1676), formerly a monk in France, and later third Earl of Clancarty, Elizabeth was expected to 'bring' her newlywed husband 'to our church'.[19]

Other virtues repeatedly lauded and promoted by Protestant commentators as desirable traits of the 'ideal' Protestant woman – like their Catholic counterparts – included modesty, chastity and piety (see chapter one).[20] However, while modesty was undoubtedly an important feature of exemplary Catholic femininity, it perhaps held greater importance for the Protestant community who, as Anne Laurence has highlighted in the context of seventeenth-century England, regarded 'excessive concern for personal appearance' as reprehensible and decried extravagance and manifestations of vanity as 'inconsistent with leading a godly life'.[21] These sentiments were given expression in the self-reflexive comments of Mary Rich née Boyle, Countess of Warwick (1624-78), who in her autobiography denounced her youthful extravagance and 'exquisite and curious dressing'.[22] In contrast to the 'exquisite' attire criticised by Mary, modesty or 'simplicity' in outward appearance and behaviour was regarded as a manifestation of godliness and one which, according to some Protestant commentators, could distinguish 'godly' women, those who were professors of 'true' religion, from their idolatrous, sinful and 'heretical' Catholic counterparts.[23] According to the English Puritan Robert Cleaver (d. 1614), women who were 'true professors of Christ and his religion' would 'attire and dresse

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[18] For a discussion of marriage as a tool for conversion see Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English*, pp 157-67.
[19] *H.M.C.*, *Report 13. append. 5* (London, 1892), 236-7. The couple had one son, Donogh, who was reared a Protestant although as a result of the influence of his father's Catholic relatives, in particular his paternal uncle Justin MacCarthy, Donough reverted to Catholicism. According to one source Elizabeth MacCarthy died at Dublin in February 1697/98 as a result of sickness caused by 'a deep melancholy for the condition of her son and family' (presumably his conversion to Catholicism): see Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, iii, 216.
[20] See chapter one.
[21] Laurence, 'Women, godliness & personal appearance', pp 72, 73.
[22] Mary Rich, *Autobiography of Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick*, ed. Thomas Crofton Corker (London, 1848), p. 4.
[23] According to Boyle a 'good wife' is bound to be 'purely modest in all her looks': see Boyle, *Discourses and essays useful for the vain modish ladies*, p. 56.

[themselves] so decently' and be 'sober in outward apparell'.[24] In Ireland, Barnaby Rich reiterated Cleaver's contention, explaining in his didactic treatise, published in 1616 and aptly entitled, *My ladies looking glasse wherein may be discerned a wise man from a foole, a good woman from a bad*, that 'there is a decency to be followed in fashion', 'especially amongst women'.[25] Referring to his experiences in 'the cittie of Dublin', Rich, in his characteristically invective style, contrasted that 'Hagge of Hell' and 'Lady Sinne' who he claimed had 'forsaken God', to cloth herself 'in the excrement of wormes [that is, silk]' (possibly in reference to the women that constituted Dublin's 'papist' population) with the 'good' Protestant woman who maintained a 'bashfulnesse in her countenance' and attired 'herself with such a fashion as may add comeliness to her own proportion'.[26] This was a theme elaborated upon elsewhere by Rich who, in an earlier publication entitled *The excellency of good women* (London, 1613), claimed that 'modestie' was the 'true marke of every good woman'.[27] Emphasis on proper attire was a theme expanded upon on later in the century by Francis Boyle who propounded the importance of suitable and modest clothing for women, a belief, which he claimed, was upheld in Scripture. Women, Boyle determined, should never 'wear such rich clothes' which are 'not only unsuitable' to 'their gravity and decency' but which are also 'very contradictory to the Apostle Paul's doctrine, who orders in general all women ... not to adorn themselves with rich, but modest apparel'.[28] Margaret Howard, wife of Robert Boyle (d. 1679), first Baron Broghill and later first Earl of Orrery, was exemplary in this regard and was commended by Boyle's chaplain as a woman who was 'very moderate in her expenses, and plain in her garb'.[29] Similarly, following her death during childbirth in April 1651 Dublin-native, Margaret Boate née Dungan, daughter of Thomas Dungan (d. 1663), justice of the common pleas, was remembered by her Dutch husband, the biblical scholar Arnold Boate (1606-53), as a

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[24] Robert Cleaver, *A godlie forme of householde government for the ordering of priuate families, according to the direction of Gods word* (London, 1598), pp 244-5.
[25] Rich, *My ladies looking glasse*, pp 21, 41.
[26] Ibid., pp 18, 21, 30, 44.
[27] Rich, *The excellency of good women*, pp 13, 16, 30.
[28] Boyle, *Discourses and essays useful for the vain modish ladies*, p. 58.
[29] Quoted in Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English*, p. 173.

woman of ‘a most sweet and a most perfect modestie’.[30] In a more intimate expression of exemplary Protestant femininity, Sir Francis Annesley (d. 1660), Lord Mountnorris, in a letter penned to his daughter, Beatrice Zouche (b. *c*.1615), in February 1642, recommended that among the necessities of a godly lifestyle was proper attire. He therefore advised that his daughter dress herself in ‘a decent habit, which ordinarily should be as far from time, curiosity and riches, as sluttery and beggarliness’.[31] While contemporary directives concerning modest apparel were aimed at the Protestant female population in general, according to Boyle, they had particular resonance for ‘ministers’ wives above all’ since they were expected both to make their households a model of good order and to be themselves paragons of exemplary ‘godly’ female behaviour. Thus Boyle recommended that clerical wives in particular should ‘adorn themselves’ with ‘modest’ rather than ‘rich’ clothing.[32] Reflecting patriarchal concerns to promote the ‘modesty’ of those married to Church of Ireland clergy, Leah Mawe (d. 1638), wife of William Bedell (1571-1642), Bishop of Kilmore and Ardagh, was remembered by Gilbert Burnet (1643-1715), Bishop of Salisbury and one of Bedell’s biographers, as a woman who was ‘humble and modest in her habit’.[33] Jacqueline Eales has argued that in England, public emphasis on the modesty of clerical wives ‘was designed not just to portray them as respectable women, but more importantly to counter accusations of sexual scandal aimed at the Protestant institution of clerical marriage by its Roman Catholic opponents’ who stigmatised women married to clergymen as ‘whores’ while daughters were denounced as ‘bastards’.[34] As will be discussed in more detail below, this was equally true in the Irish context.

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[30] Arnold Boate, *The character of a truelie virtuous and pious woman, as it hath been acted by Mistris Margaret Dungan* (Paris, 1651), p. 52. On Boate see: Elizabethanne Boran, ‘Boate, Arnold (1606–1653)’ *in O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2739, accessed 17 Jan. 2012].

[31] Beatrice Zouche was married to James Zouche (1613-1643) from Surrey in England: see Patrick Little, ‘Providence and posterity: a letter from Lord Mountnorris to his daughter, 1642’ *I.H.S*, xxxii, no. 128 (Nov. 2001), p. 565. I am grateful to Dr Eamon Darcy for this reference.

[32] Boyle, *Discourses and essays useful for the vain modish ladies*, p. 58.

[33] Gilbert Burnet, *The life of William Bedell, D.D., Bishop of Kilmore in Ireland* (London, 1685), p. 230.

[34] Jacqueline Eales, ‘Female literacy and social identity of the clergy family in the seventeenth century’ in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, cxxxiii (2013), pp 67-82. I am grateful to Professor Eales for sending me a copy of her article. For clerical wives in the English context see also Eric Josef Carlson, ‘Clerical marriage and the English Reformation’ in *Jn. Brit. Studies*, xxxi, no. 1 (Jan., 1992), pp 1-31.

As already stated in chapter one, simplicity and modesty were intertwined with 'chastity' as markers of godliness by sixteenth and seventeenth-century in the minds of both Catholic and Protestant divines and commentators. According to the English literary author Gervase Markham (*c*.1568-1637), for example, chastity was a prerequisite of a good 'housewife'.[35] This outlook was also reflected in an Irish context in the will, dated 28 July 1587, of Richard Meredith, Church of Ireland Bishop of Leighlin (1589-97), who bequeathed money to his daughters provided they remained 'chaste' until marriage.[36] Upon her death in 1613 Elizabeth Pilsworth was likewise remembered as the 'chaste' wife of William Pilsworth (d. 1635), Bishop of Kildare.[37] Similarly, in a letter written by William Bedell, Bishop of Kilmore and Ardagh (1629-42), to a married female parishioner named Mrs Dillon whom he described as 'a devout and zealous Protestant', he cited female chastity as among the necessary markers of a good Christian life.[38] In another expression of the importance of female chastity within the Irish Protestant tradition Arnold Boate was keen to emphasise the chastity of his wife Margaret (d. 1651), who was 'bred a Protestant': he claimed that 'her chastity was altogether extraordinarie and as with a singular care she ever kept her reputation most absolutlie unspotted'.[39] Later in the century Frances Jones (d. 1672), eldest daughter of Lady Katherine Jones née Boyle (1615-91) and Sir Arthur Jones (d. 1669), was praised for her 'chaste' life.[40] The recurrence of chastity in the contemporary representations of morally upright Protestant women chimed with sixteenth and seventeenth-century Protestant colonial discourse on Ireland which highlighted the benefits of English intervention and evangelisation in Ireland as a means of 'civilising' allegedly barbarous, morally suspect and sexually dubious Irish Catholic inhabitants, both men and women alike. This *mentalité* is perhaps best exemplified by Sir John Davies's characterisation of Irish women in 1612 as wicked temptresses and a source of corruption for New

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[35] Gervase Markham, *The English housewife: containing the inward and outward vertues which ought to be in a complete woman* (London, 1615), p. 4.

[36] Meredith was married to Sarah Bathow (d. 1650) who later married in 1597, Adam Loftus, first Viscount Loftus of Ely (b. 1568). Richard and Sarah had two sons, Robert (d. 1668) (subsequently chancellor of the Irish exchequer) and Thomas: see Helen Coburn Walshe, 'Meredith, Richard (*d.* 1597)' in *O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18578, accessed 10 Nov. 2012].

[37] Walter Fitzgerald, 'Queries' in *Kildare Arch. Soc. Jn.*, i (1893), p. 342.

[38] Burnet, *The life of William Bedell*, p. 193: see also Shuckburgh (ed.), *Two biographies of William Bedell*, p. 185.

[39] Boate, *The character of a truelie virtuous and pious woman*, pp 5, 46.

[40] Hugh Brogan, 'Marvell's epitaph on' in *Renaissance Quarterly*, xxxii, no. 2 (1979), p. 197.

English colonial settlers, the direct antithesis of their ‘chaste’ English Protestant counterparts.[41]

Piety too was equally lauded by both Catholic and Protestant commentators as an important virtue of a ‘good’ woman (see chapter one).[42] In the late Elizabethan and Stuart eras funeral sermons and eulogies memorialising deceased Protestant women in Ireland, as in England, frequently singled out piety as one of their most praiseworthy characteristics. In contrast to funeral sermons for men which concentrated on detailing the course of their careers, the pious Protestant woman was praised for her adherence to daily prayer rituals and religious protocols such as meditation and observance of the Sabbath, activities regarded as manifestations of ‘godly’ behaviour (discussed in more detail below).[43] For example, after her death in February 1630 Catherine Boyle née Fenton, Countess of Cork, wife of Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork, in a eulogy composed by scholars of Trinity College, Dublin was praised for her ‘religious pietie’ while her mother Alice Fenton (d. 1631) was praised as a woman whose ‘religious’ life was an ‘example to her sex’.[44] Later in the century Elizabeth Butler, Duchess of Ormond, wife of James Butler (1610-88), first Duke of Ormond was, upon her death in 1684 remembered as an ‘exemplary pattern of piety’ while Rose O’Neill, Marchioness of Antrim (1631-95) was lauded by Henry Leslie, archdeacon of Down, as a woman ‘of extraordinary and exemplary piety and devotion’.[45]

Unlike the Catholic Church, however, which stressed the necessity of priests to serve as intercessory agents between the believer and God, the tenets of Protestantism, reflecting the Lutheran doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, elevated the importance of personal devotion and interior faith, which, as some historians have argued, served to enhance the moral autonomy of lay believers, including women, in

[41] Davies, ‘*A discovery of the true causes why Ireland was never entirely subdued*’, p. 297.
[42] See chapter one.
[43] Laurence, ‘Daniel’s practice: the daily round of godly women’, p 173-83.
[44] *Musarum Lachrymae*, unpaginated; Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, i, 163.
[45] Anon, *A funeral elegy upon the much lamented death of the right honourable and eminently virtuous and exemplary pattern of piety, charity and humility, Mary, Dowager Countess of Warwick* (London, 1678); Henry Leslie, *A sermon preached at the funeral of the most honourable Rose, Lady Marchioness of Antrim* (Dublin, 1695), p. 23.

matters of private religious devotion.[46] For female adherents of the Protestant Church this could allow them greater independence in their religious devotion, and as Anthony Fletcher has argued in the case of English Protestant women, it could enable them to 'transcend the negative stereotypes of the weaker vessel'.[47] Coolahan has shown that in the Irish context, 'English Protestant culture provided a theologically sanctioned stimulus to literacy' for both men and women; thus Protestant women – like their male co-religionists – could be praised for their scrupulous study and comprehensive command of Scripture, the core of Protestant doctrine and that 'most inexhaustible fountain of knowledge'. [48] Furthermore knowledge and command of Scripture was regarded as a manifestation of one's being 'godly' and a member of the 'elect' which served to demarcate Protestant women from their Catholic counterparts who were routinely characterised by Protestant detractors as 'superstitious' and credulous individuals. As Alec Ryrie has emphasised in the context of Reformation Britain, 'Protestantism's priority on learning for all Christians was a self-conscious point of separation with Catholicism' and thus Protestant commentators habitually framed the confessional battle as one against the ignorance and idolatry of Catholicism. [49] The same was true in the confessionally divided environment of Elizabethan and Stuart Ireland, where learned, knowledgeable and godly Protestant women were represented by their co-religionists as paragons of civilising English Protestant influence, exemplifying the missionary possibilities in the offing in Ireland. One such woman was Catherine Fenton, Countess of Cork, praised in 1630 by Daniel Spicer, a fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, for her exceptional knowledge of the Bible, which it was alleged she could recite verbatim:

> In lawefull Scriptures: what their depth contain'd, so oft she try'd and had such knowledge gain'd, that I have hear a Reverend man professe, if of the Bible you could but expresse, a sentence as't was wtirr, (such was her skill) she could denote the verse and chapter still.[50]

Similarly Catherine's youngest surviving daughter, Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick, was, on the occasion of her death in 1678, remembered by the anonymous

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[46] Ryrie, *Being a Protestant in Reformation Britain*, pp 452-72.
[47] Fletcher, *Gender, sex & subordination in England*, p. 363.
[48] Hopkins, *An exposition on the Lord's prayer*¸ p. 477; Coolahan, *Women, writing & language*, p. 5.
[49] Ryrie, *Being a Protestant in Reformation Britain*, pp 268-9.
[50] *Musarum Lachrymae* (Dublin, 1630), unpaginated.

author of her funeral elegy as a proficient Bible reader while Rose O'Neill, Marchioness of Antrim was memorialised as 'a diligent and constant reader of the Holy Scripture, obliging herself to read great portions of it every day'.[51] Likewise Margaret Boate was lauded by her husband as a 'wonderfull religious' who read 'everyday from portions of the holy Scripture'.[52] Elizabeth Cary née Tanfield, wife of Henry Cary, first Viscount Falkland and lord deputy of Ireland, was according to Nicholas Archbold, the Irish Capuchin, 'a wonderfull earnest & expert Woman in Protestant disputations: a great Biblist: and reader of histories'.[53] Although learning and knowledge were advocated and praised as desirable in an 'ideal' Protestant woman, the extent of women's learning was the subject of contemporary debate, and as the comments of the English politician and close friend of the Boyle family, Earls of Cork, Sir Ralph Verney (1613-96) demonstrate, divided opinion in both England and Ireland. Horrified by his god-daughter, Nancy Denton's zeal for learning, Verney advised that 'a Bible (with the Common Prayer) and a good plaine cattichisme in your Mother Tongue ... is well worth all the rest and much more suitable to your sex'.[54] The Earl of Cork exhibited a similar lack of concern for the education of his son-in-law George Fitzgerald's sister, Elizabeth, beyond having her 'civilly and religiously bred'.[55]

II

In the hierarchical world view that seemed natural to early modern minds, the household was a microcosm of the kingdom, 'a little church', and ideally, a foreshadowing of God's kingdom, 'a kind of paradise upon earth'.[56] While the male figurehead, usually the husband, was the 'Master of the family' and a 'Priest in his owne house', women too, as wives and widows, the female heads of households, could play an important role in shaping the spiritual environment of their home. As Diane Willen has demonstrated, 'advice books assigned parents responsibility for the religious instruction of their children, and generally assumed that the mother's

[51] Anon, *A funeral elegy upon the much lamented death*.
[52] Boate, *The character of a trulie virtuous and pious woman*, p. 2.
[53] Archbold, 'The Historie of the Irish Capucins', f. 100.
[54] Ryrie, *Being a Protestant in Reformation Britain*, p. 268.
[55] 'The Earl of Cork to Kildare, 25 March 1630' in Clarke & McGrath (eds), *Letterbook of George, sixteenth earl of Kildare*, p. 20; Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, i, 41.
[56] Quoted in Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, p. 363.

special province was the education of the young child'.[57] While women were expected to take instruction from their husbands, they had a spiritual responsibility in the home as mothers to teach the young to read and give them their first lessons in the Scripture, a role acknowledged by the Protestant catechist Thomas Becon (*c*.1511-67) who contended that while 'men alone' were 'appointed to public ministry', women were to 'preach and teach in their own houses' something that was 'not only not forbidden, but also most straitly commanded'.[58] These were teachings reiterated by royal injunctions which stressed the role of mothers as well as fathers in directing the religious education of children.[59] Religious education was, therefore, a means through which women, as mothers, could determine the religious outlook of their children and in turn contribute to the expansion and consolidation of the Protestant community in Ireland. Indicative of the important role played by women in promoting religious education, Dublin-native Margaret Dungan (d. 1651), wife of Arnold Boate, took a very active role in the religious education of her youngest daughter, Maria Anna, born in 1646 in Paris after the Boate family were forced to flee Ireland in the wake of the 1641 uprising.[60] Boate, in an affectionate eulogy to his wife, described her as his 'chiefest joy ... in this world', and recorded how Margaret had vigorously pursued a pedagogical regime with the couple's young daughter:

> ... teaching her to pray, and making her repeat often the Lord's prayer, and severall other good prayers, as likewise the Creed, and the Commandments ... catechising [to] her about the principall points of Christian religion, making her everyday repeat what she had learned before, with some new additions still from time to time.[61]

Indeed Margaret had benefited from the instructions of her own mother, Grace Palmer, described by Boate as 'a woman of a most sanctified mind and conversation' and 'the best mother that ever was' who, together with her husband, Thomas Dungan,

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[57] Willen, '"Communion of the saints"', p. 33.
[58] Thomas Becon, *Catechism of Thomas Becon* ed. John Ayre (Cambridge, 1844), iii, 376.
[59] 'Thomas Cromwell 1536 Royal Injunction: The parsons, vicars and other curates aforesaid shall diligently admonish the fathers and mothers, masters and governors of youth, being within their cure, to teach or cause to be taught their children and servants, even from their infancy': see David Cressy, *Education in Tudor and Stuart England* (New York, 1976), p. 17.
[60] The couple had three children: the elder daughter died on 2 October 1647 aged three and her brother died on 15 May 1649, aged seven months; the younger daughter, Maria Anna Boot, born on 13 September 1646, later married Marcus Beyerman: see Elizabethanne Boran, 'Boate, Arnold (1606–1653)' in *O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2739, accessed 24 July 2012].
[61] Boate, *The character of a trulie vertuous and pious woman*, pp 65-6.

brought her daughter up ‘in the feare of God, and in the true religion’.[62] In Cork, Mary Boyle (d. 1678), later Countess of Warwick, recorded how both her mother and father encouraged Bible reading and discussion of religious literature while her grandmother, Alice Fenton, remembered by Cork as the ‘good lady Fenton’, also played a prominent role in fostering a spiritual atmosphere within the household.[63] Indeed the important part played by both Catherine Fenton and her mother, Alice in educating the children is attested to by Cork: writing to Lord Clifford (to whose daughter, Elizabeth, the earl’s son, Richard was married) in June 1634, he commented that ‘it was ever my care and his deceased mothers and grandmothers to give him [Richard, the couple’s son] a religious, virtuous, and civil education’.[64] Alice Thornton née Wandesford, youngest daughter of Christopher Wandesford (d. 1640), lord deputy of Ireland, and his wife, Alice (d. 1659), daughter of Sir Hewett Osborne, recorded in her autobiography that she received ‘pious, holy and religious instructions’ from both her mother and her father.[65] The influence exerted by mothers through their input into the education of their offspring can be seen in the north of the country too. For example, Rose O’Neill, daughter of Sir Henry O’Neill, from one of the pro-English cadet branches of the O’Neills of Clandeboy, and later Marchioness of Antrim, benefited from the instruction of her mother, Martha Stafford, daughter of the English administrator and governor of Ulster, Sir Francis Stafford (1547-1609).[66]

The education of their children was viewed as of such importance that several eminent men made specific provision for this in their last wills and testaments. For example, in his will dated 1599, Walter Ball, the zealous Protestant son of the Catholic martyr, Margaret Ball and vociferous proponent of the scheme for the foundation of Trinity College in 1591, expressed the wish that his wife, Eleanor,

[62] Ibid., p. 78.
[63] Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 1st ser., ii, 104.
[64] *H.M.C. Cal. Salisbury Mss.*, xxii, 279-80.
[65] During her widowhood, most of which was spent in East Newton in Yorkshire, where she gained a reputation for her charitable and religious activities, Alice herself in turn played a prominent role in directing the education of her own children and her son Robert, who predeceased her in 1692, became an Anglican clergymen: see Charles Jackson (ed.), *The autobiography of Mrs Alice Thornton* (Durham, 1875), p. 8.
[66] According to Leslie, Rose was ‘under the tuition of a careful, kind and religious mother’ and became ‘a diligent and constant reader of the Holy Scripture, obliging herself to read great portions of it every day’: see Leslie, *A sermon preached at the funeral of the most honourable Rose Lady Marchioness*, pp 20, 25.

daughter of alderman, Robert Ussher, of Santry in north County Dublin, and their children should continue 'in that holy religion I have lived and died in' on pain of exclusion from the benefits of the will.[67] Eleanor evidently carried out her husband's wishes. Walter's offspring were all educated in the Protestant religion and subsequently espoused the reformed faith: two sons became aldermen and gave support to the Protestant faction within the early seventeenth-century Dublin Corporation while the couple's daughter, Rose (d. 1604) married Luke Challoner (d. 1613) vice-provost, and vice-chancellor of Trinity College, Dublin.[68] Similarly, in his will dated 1645, Theodore Schouth, a Dublin city merchant, stipulated that during her lifetime his widow, Jane Schouth, was to have direction over their children's tuition. In similar fashion James Hamilton (d. 1644), later Viscount Claneboye, who was among the first fellows of Trinity College Dublin in 1593 and a leading figure in the propagation of Protestant doctrine in early seventeenth-century Dublin, made special provision in his will for his children's education to be left in the care of his wife.[69] Hamilton was married to Jane née Philips (d. 1662), daughter of Sir John Philips, first Baron Pembroke, and the couple had one son, James Hamilton, later first Earl of Clanbrassil (1647). In his will dated 1616 Hamilton entrusted 'the breeding and keeping of my son, under his mother, the said Jane, during the tyme of his tender aige'. In the event of Hamilton's death, it was for Jane, together with two other trusted friends, to select a boarding school for young James, and ensure 'that he be bred to all pietie and virtue, and be chieflie in the keeping of the said Jane, so long as he shall remain unmarried'.[70] As it turned out, Hamilton lived until 1644, by which point his son, James had passed school-going age. However, Jane outlived both her husband and her son and, as a grandmother, continued to exert influence on the instruction and religious education of her grandchildren as evident by the last will and testament of her son. On his deathbed in June 1659 her son, James appointed 'my beloved spouse Anne' as his executor and left his two sons, Henry and Hans, 'to the education and instruction of my mother [Jane] and my wife [Anne] during their minority, earnestly praying that they may be

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[67] Ball Wright (ed.), *Ball family records*, append. 6, x-xii.
[68] For a detailed discussion of Walter Ball see Lennon, *The lords of Dublin*, pp 135-9.
[69] John Ainsworth (ed.), 'Abstracts of 17th century Irish wills in the prerogative court of Canterbury' in *R.S.A.I Jn.*, lxxviii, no. 1 (Jul. 1948), p. 31; Richard Parr, *The life of the Most Reverend Father in God, James Usher, late Lord Arch-bishop of Armagh, primate and metropolitan of all Ireland* (London, 1686), p. 3
[70] Lowry (ed.), *Hamilton manuscripts*, pp 48-59.

brought up in the true Protestant religion'.[71] Upon the death of her daughter-in-law, Sarah Digby née Boyle in 1633, Sarah's children were placed under the care of their paternal grandmother, Lettice Digby, Lady Offaly (*c*.1580-1658) while their father pursued a military career under the patronage of Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork (see Fig. 3.2). Writing to the earl in April 1639, Lettice expressed her desire that 'thes poor motherles children' would be 'well bred' and assured Cork that she would 'doe for them what I am abell and more'.[72]

Aunts too could play a significant role in the early education of relatives. According to his biographers, Nicholas Bernard (*c*.1600-61) and Richard Parr (1616/17-91), James Ussher, future Archbishop of Armagh (1625-56), was first taught to read by two aunts who 'were blind from their cradle' yet knew the Bible by heart. Bernard contended that their 'readiness in the Scripture was marvelous, [they] being able suddenly to have repeated any part of the Bible', a point also elaborated upon by Ussher's near contemporary, Parr, who recounted how the women were;

> Blessed with admirable understanding, and inspection in matters of religion and of such tenacious memories, that whatever they heard read out of the Scriptures, or was preached to them, they always retained, and became such proficients, that they were able to repeat much of the Bible by heart and ... were the first that taught him to read English.[73]

Ussher's aunts were Alice (d. 1607) and Katherine (d. 1613) Ussher, daughters of Thomas and Margery Ussher, both of whom died unmarried and were buried, in accordance with Katherine's will, together in the Lady Chapel of Christ Church Cathedral.[74] According to Parr, Ussher's mother Margaret (d. 1609), daughter of James Stanihurst (d. 1573), and sister of the eminent Catholic scholar Richard Stanihurst, also played a role in the direction of her young son's education. In consultation with her husband, Arland Ussher, clerk of chancery, Margaret arranged for young Ussher to be placed under the tutelage of James Fullerton and James

[71] '... to the education and instruction of my mother [Jane] and my wife [Anne] during their minority, earnestly praying that they may be brought up in the true Protestant religion, and after the best form and manner of civil nurture used in any of the three nations; beseeching God to give them a full measure of his saving knowledge, and of all the requisite graces of his sanctifying spirit': Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, iii, 5.
[72] O'Connor, 'The 'Kildare women', pp 152-3.
[73] Bernard, *The life and death of the most reverend and learned ... Dr James Ussher*, p. 27; Parr, *The life of the Most Reverend Father in God, James Usher*, p. 2.
[74] In her will, made at Termonfeckin in August 1613, Katherine bequeathed to her nephew James, 'the writing whereof I gave unto himself': see Ball Wright (ed.), *Ussher memoirs*, pp 41-2, 87.

Hamilton (d. 1644) at their school in Ship Street established under the guidance of Walter Ball in the late 1580s.[75] As well as immediate family members, foster mothers too could prove influential figures in the education of young children. Indeed, for some families, the ability of a female head of household to provide a child, placed into fosterage, with a satisfactory level of religious education was an important consideration in the selection of suitable foster homes. For example, following her mother's death in 1630, Mary Boyle, Cork's second youngest daughter, was 'fetched from Lismore' to be cared for by Sir Randall and Lady Ann Cleyton, tenants of her father's, at Mallow in County Cork.[76] The Boyle and Cleyton families were closely linked: Ann had previously looked after Mary's eldest sister, Alice in 1615, while her younger sister, Margaret (b. 1629) was also sent to reside with the Cleyton family at Mallow where she died in 1637.[77] Later Mary recounted how Ann, 'neaver haveing had any child of her owne, grew to make as much of me as if she had bene one mother to me, and tooke great care to have me soburly educated'. Her religious education included reading the catechism and the Bible, a copy of which was presented to her by her father when she was just eight years old.[78] The early instruction provided by Ann proved an important element in the formation of the young Mary who, later in life, became renowned for her religious piety. During the 1650s and 1660s Mary's home at Leez Priory, near Felsted in Essex, became a 'sanctuary of religion'. There, Mary, an 'incomparable mother', played a prominent role in the education of not only her son, Charles (d. 1664) but also her three nieces, who under the 'tender care' of their aunt received a 'pious education'.[79] Indeed her educational endeavours extended beyond the confines of her immediate family

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[75] *Calendar of ancient records of Dublin*, ed. Gilbert & Gilbert, ii, 219.

[76] Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 1st ser., ii, 32.

[77] Ann also served as godmother to Cork's son Lewis, born in 1619. His godfathers were John, Bishop of Cork and Cloyne and Cork's elder brother and Sir William Sarsfield: see Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 1st ser., ii, 110; Canny, *The upstart earl*, p. 101.

[78] Sara Mendelson, *The mental world of Stuart women: three studies* (Brighton, 1987), p. 65.

[79] Anthony Walker, *Eureka, eureka, the virtuous woman found, her loss bewailed, and character examined in a sermon preached at Felsted in Essex, April 30, 1678, at the funeral of ... Mary, countess dowager of Warwick* (London, 1678), pp 92-3; idem, *Leez Lachrymans sive Comitis Warwici Justa a sermon delivered at the funeral of the right honourable Charles, Earl of Warwick, Baron Rich of Leez* (London, 1673), epistle dedicatory; idem, *The holy life of Mrs. Elizabeth Walker, late wife of A.W., D.D., rector of Fyfield in Essex. Giving a modest and short account of her exemplary piety and charity* (London, 1690), p. 184; Anon, *A funeral elegy upon the much lamented death of the right honourable ... Mary, Dowager Countess of Warwick*. Her nieces were the daughters of Mary's brother-in-law, the third earl of Warwick: see Sara H. Mendelson, 'Rich , Mary, countess of Warwick (1624–1678)' in *O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23487, accessed 22 July 2012].

members. According to Anthony Walker (d. 1692), her personal chaplain, Mary was keen to promote the religious edification of her servants too, 'persuading them to the frequent participation of the Lord's most holy supper' and 'scattering good books in all the common rooms and places of attendance ... which might catch and take them'.[80]

As the case of Mary Boyle, Countess of Warwick, demonstrates, women's proselytising efforts could extend beyond the realms of their immediate family members and homes. Within her locality Mary supported the foundation of schools and offered educational opportunities to young local children 'which she put to school in the neighbouring towns ... whose schooling she did not only pay for; but gave them both books and often cloathing'.[81] These activities were mirrored in Ireland by Elizabeth Cary née Tranfield, wife of Henry Cary, first Viscount Falkland and lord deputy of Ireland. During her brief sojourn in Dublin between August 1622 and 1625 as wife to the lord deputy, Elizabeth's influence was considerable and she set about directing her energies to development work in the city, including the introduction of a vocational education initiative. As part of that programme, she arranged for 'linnen and wolen weauers, dyers, all sorts of spinners, and knitters, hatters, lace makers and many other trades' to train local children and 'would work hard, together with her women and her maids ... teaching them and directing them herself'.[82] To avail of this schooling, however, the children were obliged to attend Protestant services. An account of her life, written by her daughters between 1645 and 1650, describes the programme promoted by Elizabeth;

> She tooke of beggar children (with which that country swarmes) more than 8 score prentices, refusing none a boue seven years old, and taking some lesse ... they were parted in their severall romes and houses, where they excercised their trades, many romes being filled with little boys or girls, sitting all round att worke.[83]

[80] Walker, *The virtuous woman found*, p. 88.
[81] Ibid., pp 105-6.
[82] A manuscript life written between 1643 and 1645 by one of her daughters, Lucy, then a nun at Cambrai but it was not published until the nineteenth century. For a discussion see Dolan, 'Reading, work & Catholic women's biographies', pp 346-55.
[83] Elizabeth Cary, *Elizabeth Cary Lady Falkland: Life and Letters*, ed. Heather Wolfe (Cambridge, 2001), 120.

The scheme was endorsed by Elizabeth's husband, Lord Deputy Falkland, who wore garments made of cloth produced by the school. It was also supported by a number of influential Protestant families including the Boyles and the Fentons; Richard Boyle and his mother-in-law, Alice Fenton, dispatched both orphans and funds to the project.[84] Upon her return to England in 1625, however, Elizabeth converted to Catholicism, much to the disgust of her staunchly Protestant husband. In reaction to his wife's conversion, Falkland took custody of the children and refused to give his Catholic wife any financial support.[85] Elizabeth's influence ultimately prevailed, however, and after her husband's death, she arranged to have six of her children received into the Catholic faith on the Continent; four of her six daughters, Anne, Lucy, Mary and Elizabeth, entered a convent at Cambrai.[86] Two of these, Lucy (d. 1619) and Mary (b. 1622), were authors of their mother's biography, entitled *The Lady Faulkland: her life*. This depicted the Dublin school initiative's ultimate failure as a judgement of God for the enforced attendance of the pupils at Protestant services, which, according to the Cary's daughters, was instigated at the behest of the 'overseers' of the school rather than Elizabeth herself:

> Yet it [the school] came to nothinge; which she imputed to [be] a judgement of God on her, because the overseers made all those poore children goe to church; and she had great losses by fire and watter (which she judged extraordinary, others but casuall) ... all which when she was a catholicke, she took to be the punishment of God for the childrens going to church.[87]

Undoubtedly the Cary daughters' representation of the school's failure was part of their attempt to present their mother as an exemplary Catholic woman, thereby conforming to tropes ubiquitous in Catholic devotional and literary works in mid-seventeenth-century Europe.[88] Despite the inherent drawbacks of the account, however, it nonetheless provides a unique insight into the activities of English (at least outwardly) Protestant women in Ireland and their role in public education and schooling initiatives. While women played an important role as mothers, grandmothers, aunts and foster-mothers in the provision of education to young

[84] Wolfe, *Life & Letters*, 120.
[85] Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, 'Cary, Elizabeth, Viscountess Falkland (1585–1639)' in *O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4835, accessed 19 Jan. 2012].
[86] Ibid.
[87] Wolfe, *Life & Letters*, 120.
[88] Ibid., pp 63-101.

children within the household, the case of Elizabeth Cary (like that of her Catholic counterpart, Margaret Ball) demonstrates the role of élite women as significant figures in the provision of education within their wider confessional communities.

III

If women as wives and widows were recognised as important figures in guiding the spiritual teaching and religious edification of the household, which in turn was itself a microcosm of wider society, then a 'good' Protestant wife, could be seen as a vital figure in the state's evangelisation campaign, which in Ireland, went hand in hand with the Crown's Anglicisation mission.[89] As Lennon has shown in the context of Elizabethan and early Stuart Ireland, marriage proved an important strategy through which the minority Protestant community sought to foster and solidify confessional bonds of solidarity while Alan Ford has argued that the 'confessional division of society manifested itself in marriage alliances'.[90] The following case studies consider the role of daughters as compared with sons in entering marriage alliances intended to bolster the Protestant community, paying particular attention to the confessional ramifications of their unions for the advancement of their familial and community interests.

As members of the minority Church of Ireland community, both clergy and laity were conscious of the central importance of marriage as a means for promoting Anglicisation and evangelisation, the twined agendas of the Established Church and state. Despite the faltering start to the evangelical campaign during the 1560s and the structural weaknesses in the Church itself, reform leaders hoped that the small but dedicated coterie of native Protestants would have a leavening influence within their communities. In reality, however, the fact that there was insufficient critical mass of Church of Ireland laity in key locations before the later decades of the seventeenth century militated against the early coalescence of a community of Protestant believers. Before 1640 it was only in Dublin that their number was great enough to give rise to an integrated Church of Ireland lay community. Headed by a coterie of substantial patrician families, the native urban Protestant population was greatly expanded by the influx of English officials during the late Tudor and early Stuart

[89] For a full discussion see Ford, *The Protestant Reformation in Ireland*.
[90] Ford, 'Living together, living apart', p. 17.

periods. Among the small number of prominent families which had committed themselves to the Reformation were the Usshers, the Balls and the Challoners.[91] These Dublin-based Church of Ireland families actively endeavoured to ensure the preservation of their faith by arranging unions for their offspring with children of their co-religionists. As Lennon has shown, 'an intricate web of nuptuality enmeshed the older Protestant civic families in the city of Dublin' which in turn produced a tightly knit Dublin Protestant nexus.[92] Marriage alliances between the families of the reformers strengthened the Protestant community within Dublin, and in succeeding generations they also marked their separateness from their Catholic neighbours by contracting unions with New English arrivals. While a family's determination to secure the bloodline and to maximise financial return meant that most sons, especially heirs, had little freedom in choosing a life partner, it was equally true that daughters rarely married against the wishes of their father. As in the case of sons, daughters' marriages were carefully arranged with a view to forging alliances that would benefit the family, increase the capacity of the wider kin group to prosper, and importantly, ensure continued adherence to the reformed religion.

During the Elizabethan era, the Balls and Usshers, for example, were related through the marriage of Alderman Walter Ball, eldest son of Bartholomew Ball and his wife, Margaret née Bermingham, and Eleanor, daughter of Alderman Robert Ussher (b. 1528) of Santry and his wife, Margaret FitzJohn.[93] The couple had six children; four sons and two daughters. The marriage alliances of their sons and their daughters demonstrate in microcosm how Protestant couples sought to arrange unions for their offspring with their co-religionists.[94] Robert (d. *c*.1635), Walter's eldest son and heir and later mayor of Dublin, married around 1600 the daughter of Archbishop Henry Ussher, Janet (d. 1620).[95] Robert's second wife, Margaret was the daughter of Alderman Richard Barry, a Protestant who as M.P. for Dublin in 1613 was a

[91] For a more detailed discussion see Lennon, *The lords of Dublin*, pp 87, 135-8.
[92] Lennon, 'The shaping of a lay community in the Church of Ireland', p. 56.
[93] Ball Wright (ed.), *Ussher memoirs*, p. 12.
[94] Robert (b. 1572), Edward (b. *c*.1579), George (d. b. 1625), John (d. *c*.1650), Rose (d. 1604) and Katherine (d. 1633). Two other sons died in infancy: see Ball Wright (ed.), *Ball family records*, pp 22-4.
[95] The couple had four children, one daughter, Mary Ball (d. 1602) and three sons, Walter (b. 1603), William and George (b. 1608): see Ball Wright (ed.), *Ussher memoirs*, p. 57

replacement for a recusant.[96] Another important Protestant match was that between Walter's daughter, Rose (d. 1604) and Luke Challoner, a Protestant divine who played a prominent part in the foundation of Trinity College.[97] Their daughter, Phoebe (d. 1654) in turn married Archbishop James Ussher, first cousin of her uncle Robert's wife, Janet. This match was apparently instigated at the express request of Phoebe's father, Luke, who on his deathbed in 1613, commanded his daughter to marry no man other than Ussher (see Fig. 3.1).[98] Walter Ball's second son, Edward married Alice Weston, whose father, Alderman Nicholas Weston (d. 1617) roused the ire of his Catholic counterparts by his committed adherence to Protestantism. Katherine Ball, Walter and Margaret's second daughter, married Patrick Sedgrave of Killeglan, head of the Protestant branch of that family.[99] To complete this tight nexus, there was another link between the Ussher and Challoner families too. Thomas Challoner, son and heir of John Alderman Challoner (d. 1581), was married to Rose (d. 1624), daughter of Richard Ussher of Santry and his wife, Jane née Ball (d. 1597), daughter of Alderman Nicholas Ball, Walter Ball's brother.[100] Other important alliances with members of Dublin native Protestant families in the city included the marriage of Isabella Loftus, eldest daughter of Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh and Dublin, Adam Loftus and his wife, Jane (d. 1595), eldest daughter of Adam Purdon of Lurgan Race, County Louth, who married William, son of Alderman John Ussher the elder, singled out in the early Elizabethan period by the reformers for his zealous Protestantism.[101] As Lennon points out, 'it is noticeable that none of these unions involved the children of aldermen who were to profess Catholicism openly after 1603 (and perhaps were identifiable as sympathetic to the older religion by the 1580s)'.[102]

For those aspiring to achieve upward mobility, a 'good' marriage could provide a family with increased status, rank and wealth. In contrast to England, barriers between various ranks were more fluid in the marriage market in Ireland, creating

[96] Lennon, *The lords of Dublin*, p. 88.
[97] Rose died on 26 October 1604 of the plague with all her children, but one, Phoebe, and was buried in the chapel of Trinity College: see Ball Wright (ed.), *Ball family records*, p. 23.
[98] Ball Wright (ed.), *Ussher memoirs*, pp 13. 89, 108.
[99] Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, pp 83, 88.
[100] Ball Wright (ed.), *Ussher memoirs*, p. 10.
[101] Donald Jackson, *Intermarriage in Ireland, 1550-1650* (Montreal, 1970), p. 21.
[102] Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, p. 88.

opportunities for social advancement.[103] This is undoubtedly best exemplified by the Boyle family, later Earls of Cork. Born in Kent in 1566, by 1630 Richard Boyle had become the richest landowner in Munster and was entertaining ambitions to rule Ireland as lord deputy.[104] His marriage to his second wife, Catherine, daughter of Sir Geoffrey Fenton (1539-1608), secretary of state for Ireland, strengthened Boyle's position among the New English planter population. Armed with Catherine's £1,000 dowry, in 1602 Boyle purchased the vast estate that had been granted to Sir Walter Raleigh in the Munster plantation, and which Raleigh had augmented with church property, principally in the vicinity of Youghal, County Cork.[105] This acquisition became the foundation of Boyle's future wealth and status. Over the next forty years Boyle enjoyed increasing influence among the ranks of the Irish and English aristocracy and embarked upon a drive for dynastic aggrandisement which relied to no small degree on the carefully arranged marriages of each of his twelve surviving children, five sons and seven daughters.[106] As Nicholas Canny has shown, Cork regarded his sons and daughters 'as a marketable commodity whose principle usefulness was to advance the political and social position of the paternal family through their marriage connections'.[107] Indeed, Boyle's intense preoccupation with procuring suitable marriage partners for his daughters is evident from their young age at marriage. While the average age at marriage for his four sons who married was sixteen, offers for his daughters in marriage were garnered almost from birth, leading to the remarkably low average age of nine years for the commencement of negotiations.[108] This indicates that much less consideration was given to the choice of marriage partners for the couple's daughters as compared to their sons, who, at a more advanced age, could exercise some degree of choice over the selection of marriage partners. This was true in the case of Boyle's son Richard (b. 1612), Viscount Dungarvan, who was allowed to choose a wife, albeit admittedly within

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[103] Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English*, p. 191.
[104] For a discussion of Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork see Dorothea Townshend, *The life and letters of the great Earl of Cork* (London, 1904); Canny, *The upstart earl*; Terence Ranger, 'Richard Boyle and the making of an Irish fortune' in *I.H.S.*, x, no. 40 (Sept. 1957), pp 257-97; Patrick Little, 'The Earl of Cork and the fall of the Earl of Strafford, 1638-41' in *Historical Journal*, xxxix (1996), pp 619-35; idem, 'The Geraldine ambitions of the first Earl of Cork' in *I.H.S.*, xxxiii, no. 130 (Nov. 2002), pp 151-68.
[105] Canny, *The upstart earl*, p. 6.
[106] Richard Boyle had in total sixteen children. One child, a still born son, from his first marriage died in 1599.Two sons from his second marriage, Roger (d. 1615) and Geoffrey (d. 1617) died in infancy as did a daughter Margaret (d. 1630): see Canny, *The upstart earl*, pp 78, 88.
[107] Canny, *The upstart earl*, p. 87
[108] Ibid., pp 88-9.

extremely limiting constraints.[109] He married in 1635, Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Henry, Lord Clifford (later earl of Cumberland), and the lord deputy, Thomas Wentworth's niece. The marriage, which was arranged through the good offices of the lord deputy, helped Boyle to acquire influence at court, connected the family with an ancient English aristocratic house and brought the prospect of substantial English estates concentrated in Yorkshire, Westmorland, and Cumberland. The alliance would in time transform this branch of the Boyles from Irish to English grandees.[110]

As Patrick Little has argued convincingly, however, Cork's contraction of marriage alliances for his offspring was not solely prompted by concerns to enhance the family's social prestige and status, although this was undoubtedly a significant motivating factor. Nor were his decisions purely financially motivated. Just as important as these objectives was Cork's dedication to the triumph of Protestantism.[111] As one of the most influential members of the New English Protestant population, Cork was a zealous proponent of the reformed faith.[112] For Cork, 'Anglicisation' and 'Protestantisation' were inextricably linked. In his official capacity as lord justice and lord treasurer, he zealously insisted on the need to penalise Catholicism and secure religious conformity by encouraging the conversion of Catholics to Protestantism, thereby bringing 'those barbarous people in some measure to taste the sweetness of God's word, and dista[s]te their original ydolatry and Supersticions'.[113] The drive to propagate Protestantism in Ireland was a major priority of Cork's public office and his efforts to marry his daughters into reverently

[109] Ibid., pp 55-6.
[110] The marriages of his two sons, Francis and Lewis, to Queen Henrietta Maria's maids of honour were arranged as part of Cork's campaign to win favour at Court and among the ranks of the English aristocracy. Francis, later Viscount Shannon, married Elizabeth Killigrew, daughter of Thomas Stafford's wife by her first husband, Sir Robert Killigrew while Lewis married Elizabeth Fielding, the daughter of the Earl of Denbigh and his wife, Lady Denbigh, a close confidante of the queen's. In the autumn of 1639 the weddings were celebrated with great feasts at Court, whose every detail Cork jubilantly recorded in his diary. As a result of these alliances Cork was made a member of the English Privy Council the following June: see Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, iii, 419-21.
[111] Little, 'The Geraldine ambitions of the first Earl of Cork', p. 167.
[112] In 1613 he was commended to the Archbishop of Canterbury by the lord chancellor and Archbishop of Dublin, Thomas Jones (d. 1619), as a 'religious gentleman, [that] hath shewed himself a carefull builder up, of the Churches, uppon his lands, & mainteyner of good preachers, to teach & instruct his tennents'. Evidently he continued to do so as in November 1623 Cork spent a considerable sum refurbishing the chapel at Lismore Castle: see Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 2nd ser., i, 156-7; idem, *The Lismore papers*, 1st ser., ii, 95.
[113] Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 2nd ser., i, 39.

Protestant families was a private manifestation of his public policy. As Little has argued, for Cork, ‘religion was far more important than ethnicity’ when it came to negotiating matrimonial alliances for his daughters.[114] In 1627, for example, the earl broke off his marriage negotiations with the New English Earl of Castlehaven because ‘the young Lord Audley would not be conformable in religion’.[115]

Those with whom Cork arranged marriages for his daughters, namely the Earl of Barrymore, Lord Digby, Sir Arthur Loftus and the Earl of Kildare, were all acceptable husbands because of their avowed Protestantism. David Barry, sixth Viscount Buttevant and afterwards first Earl of Barrymore, for example, who married Cork’s eldest daughter, Alice in July 1621 at Lismore at a ceremony presided over by Michael Boyle (d. 1635), Bishop of Waterford and Lismore, reputedly heard ‘sermons ... twice a day, Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays’ at Castle Lyons and was commended by King Charles I for his ‘constant profession of the true religion’.[116] The couple’s four children were raised at Castle Lyons, the Barrymore’s primary residence, by parents who were according to the English royalist Sir Ralph Verney, ‘eamest Protestants’.[117] Similarly, the marriage of his daughter Sara into the Digby family, determined promoters of the English Protestant interest in Ireland, represented for Cork an ideal alliance in his plans to consolidate his family’s position within the Protestant ascendancy.[118] Lady Offaly, in particular, was a dedicated promoter of the Protestant faith and fostered a spirit of zealous

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[114] Little, ‘The Geraldine ambitions of the first Earl of Cork’, p. 163.

[115] Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 1st ser., iii, 212.

[116] The couple were married at Lismore on 29 July 1621 at Lismore. ‘God ever bless them’ Cork recorded in his diary, ‘The Lo[rd] Barry was married late in the evening this day in my howse at Lismoor, to my eldest daughter, the Lady Alice Boyle’: Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, i, 21; Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, i, 204. Michael Boyle was the son of Richard Boyle (d. 1645) and his wife Martha Wright, daughter of Richard or John Wright of Catherine Hill, Surrey. Richard Boyle was a cousin of the earl of Cork, and successively bishop of Cork and Cloyne and archbishop of Tuam: see Robert Armstrong, ‘Boyle, Richard’, in *D.I.B.* (Cambridge, 2009) [http://dib.cambridge.org.jproxy.nuim.ie/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a0850, accessed 4 Sept. 2012].

[117] Alice and her husband had four children, two sons, James (d. 1664) and Richard and two daughters, Ellen and Catherine. Richard the heir was born at Cork’s residence in Dublin in 1630 and was baptised at St Werburgh’s church, Dublin, in November that year: see Lodge, *Peerage of Ireland*, i, 300.

[118] Lord Robert and Lady Sarah had five children; one son, Kildare Digby and four daughters, Catherine, Mary, Lettice and Catherine. Lady Sarah Digby died in 1633 and was buried in St Patrick’s Cathedral alongside her mother Catherine Boyle née Fenton, her grandfather Sir Geoffrey Fenton and her great-grandfather Robert Weston. Her husband Robert was also buried in St Patrick’s after his death in 1642: see Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, vi, 283; Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 1st ser., iii, 199, 260.

Puritanism at her home in Geashill manor, her principal residence from 1620 onwards.[119] Another Boyle alliance which illustrates Cork's determination to cultivate propitious connections among the Protestant élite was the marriage of his daughter, Dorothy (b. 1617) to Sir Arthur Loftus of Rathfarnham in 1632.[120] Sir Arthur's father, Sir Adam Loftus of Rathfarnham, was the grandson of the eminent Church of Ireland cleric, Adam Loftus, Archbishop of Armagh and Dublin whose role in promoting the reformed religion, particularly in Elizabethan Dublin, is well documented.[121] Like Cork, Loftus too had been careful to establish a network of connections throughout the country, especially through the marriage of his children to leading families among the New English Protestant élite. Undoubtedly the family's reverent Protestantism, coupled with their prestigious status, were decisive factors in negotiating the match between Cork's daughter, Dorothy and Sir Adam. Likewise, the marriage of his daughter, Katherine (b. 1615), to Arthur Jones, son of Roger Jones (d. 1644), first Viscount Ranelagh, was viewed as propitious on account of that family's zealous adherence to the Established Church.[122] Furthermore, Cork's previous connections with the Jones family, coupled with Sir Roger Jones's recent elevation to the peerage, made this a particularly attractive alliance.

The marriage of his daughter, Joan, to George Fitzgerald, sixteenth Earl of Kildare, in 1630, represented the pinnacle of Cork's achievements in terms of the promotion of Protestantism within his own family. As the premier earldom in Ireland, the young earl's marriage was the subject of significant speculation, expectation and opportunity for members of Ireland's aristocracy. George Fitzgerald was the third but only surviving son and heir of Thomas Fitzgerald (d. 1619), second son of

[119] Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, vi, 280-3. Lady Offaly's son, Essex Digby (d. 1683), and grandson, Simon Digby (b. *c.*1645), were both educated at Trinity College, Dublin and later became senior clerics in the Church of Ireland; Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, iv, 101-2; Henry Cotton, *Fasti ecclesiae Hibernicae; the succession of the prelates and members of the cathedral bodies in Ireland* (5 vols, Dublin, 1845-48), i, 329; ii, 238, 26.

[120] Sir Arthur (d. 1659) and Lady Dorothy (d. 1668) had four sons and three daughters and were buried together in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin: see Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, vii, 262-3.

[121] Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, iv, 331-41.

[122] Arthur Jones was the grandson of Thomas Jones (d. 1619), Adam Loftus's protégé with whom he was connected through marriage. Throughout his career Thomas Jones remained a sturdy advocate of a staunchly coercive religious policy. The expulsion of Catholic clergy by proclamation, and the enforcement of a mandatory requirement that Corporation officers should attend the services of the reformed church, coincided with the twin appointments of Jones as archbishop of Dublin and lord chancellor in 1605 on the recommendation of Sir Arthur Chichester, who declared that Jones provided him with his 'best assistance' in both endeavours: see Mc Cavitt, *Sir Arthur Chichester*, p. 57.

William Fitzgerald, thirteenth Earl of Kildare, and his wife, Frances Fitzgerald née Randolph (1576–1618).[123] In 1619, at the age of seven, George was orphaned and just one year later, in 1620, on the death of his cousin Gerald, the fifteenth Earl of Kildare, George, became heir to the house of Kildare.[124] As a minor, the young earl's wardship was held by King James who awarded it to his own kinsman, Esmé, Lord Aungier (later third Duke of Lennox). Following the duke's death in 1624 the wardship passed to his widow, the Duchess of Lennox. In the spring and early summer of 1629 she discussed with Randal MacDonnell (1609-83), Earl of Antrim, a committed Catholic, the possibility of marrying Kildare to one of the earl's daughters.[125] Kildare's aunt, the Countess dowager of Kildare, Elizabeth Nugent, widow of Gerald (d. 1612), fourteenth Earl of Kildare, a fervent Catholic and as mentioned in chapter one, patron of the Jesuit order, who was herself related to the MacDonnells, warmly supported this match.[126] Writing to her nephew from Kilkea on 1 June 1629, Elizabeth expressed her 'motherlike affection' for the young earl and urged that if he were to allow her 'a stroke in your [marriage] choice', she would recommend that the earl marry Lady Anne MacDonnell, widow of Christopher Nugent (d. 1625), son of Sir Richard Nugent, Earl of Westmeath, Elizabeth's brother.[127] Elizabeth recommended Lady Anne, the earl's eldest daughter, on account of her 'virtue, wisdom spirit and comeliness' which the dowager claimed 'far surpass the rest'.[128]

However, the prospect of Kildare, who had been raised a Protestant, being married into a staunchly Catholic family, raised fears at Court, and in July 1629 Charles I ordered the young earl to study at Oxford in order to remove him from the influence of his Catholic Irish relatives and their Catholicism.[129] While the royal intervention

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[123] Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, vii, 241.

[124] For a discussion of the turbulent succession of the Fitzgerald earldom see Clarke & McGrath (eds), *Letterbook of George, sixteenth Earl of Kildare*, i-xiii.

[125] The Earl of Antrim had four daughters including Lady Anne MacDonnell, widow of Christopher Nugent, Viscount Delvin. She later married William Fleming, Lord Slane. Lady Sarah MacDonnell, widow of Neal Oge O'Neill of Killelagh. She later married Donough O'Connor Sligo and Donal McCarthy Moore: see Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, xii, pt. 2, 528.

[126] 'Countess of Kildare to Kildare, 1 June 1629' in Clarke & McGrath (eds), *Letterbook of George, sixteenth Earl of Kildare*, p. 10.

[127] Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, xii, pt. 2, 527-8.

[128] 'Countess of Kildare to Kildare, 1 June 1629' in Clarke & McGrath (eds), *Letterbook of George, sixteenth Earl of Kildare*, p. 10.

[129] Little, 'The Geraldine ambitions of the first Earl of Cork', p. 159.

seems to have put an end to the envisaged Kildare-Antrim match, Cork, who was also determined to protect the young Protestant earl against the encroachments of the Catholic dowager Countess and her Catholic kinsmen, quickly moved to secure the young earl's wardship. Less than one month after the royal order, on 4 August, Cork concluded his own agreement with the duchess of Lennox 'for the wardship of the body and lands of George, earl of Kildare'. In return for a payment of £6,600 Cork would gain custody of the Fitzgerald patrimony, and his daughter, Joan Boyle, would become Countess of Kildare.[130] The purchase of the wardship was completed by October 1629 and the couple were married on 15 August the following year at Cork's Dublin residence where the ceremony was solemnised by the earl's chaplain, Robert Sibthorpe (d. 1649), son of Rev. Robert Sibthorpe of north Carbury, County Kildare and later Bishop of Kilfenora (1638-43) and Limerick (1643-9).[131] The wedding saw a full turn-out of the extended Boyle and Fitzgerald families. Among the attendees were the earl's daughter and son-in-law, Lady Alice Barrymore and David Barry, Earl of Barrymore, Sir Francis Aungier (d. 1632), a privy councillor and brother-in-law of the fourteenth earl of Kildare, Roger Jones, Viscount Ranelagh, whose son, Arthur had married in April that year the Earl of Cork's daughter, Katherine. Sir Adam Loftus, soon to be father-in-law of the earl's daughter, Dorothy Boyle, and his wife, Lady Jane Loftus née Vaughan, were also in attendance. Among other notable guests were Sir William Parsons (*c*.1570-1650), master of the court of wards (a cousin of Cork's wife) and his wife, Lady Elizabeth Parsons, who had acted as foster-mother to the earl's son, Francis (b. 1623).[132] Not insignificantly, Loftus and Parsons were part of the influential coterie of Dublin officials who in the early part of the century had aided Cork in securing his land holdings.[133] Cork was immensely proud of this union and in particular that 'the young earl is to be married

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[130] The grant of the wardship of the 'body and lands' of the earl was formally issued on 10 May 1630: see Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 1st ser., ii, 336.

[131] Robert Sibthorpe was educated at Lincoln College, Oxford, and was treasurer of Killaloe 1633-4; Prebendary of Maynooth, St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, 1634-8 and Bishop of Kilfenora (1638-42) and of Limerick (1642-9). He died in April 1649 and was buried in St Werburgh's, Dublin: see W.J.R. Wallace (ed.), compiled by J.B. Leslie, *Clergy of Dublin and Glendalough: biographical succession lists* (Belfast, 2001), p. 1052.

[132] Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 1st ser., iii, 48-9. Lady Jane Loftus née Vaughan was the daughter of Walter Vaughan of Golden-grove, King's County. Sir Adam and Lady Jane had eight sons and nine daughters: see Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, vii, 260. For Lady Elizabeth Parsons as foster-mother see Nicholas Canny, *The upstart earl*, p. 101. A Lady Anne Parsons was godmother to the earl's son Richard born in 1612: see Eustace Budgell, *Memoirs of the lives and characters of the illustrious family of the Boyles* (Dublin, 1755), p. 23.

[133] Both Sir Adam Loftus and Sir William Parsons had aided Boyle in securing his estates: see Ranger, 'Richard Boyle and the making of an Irish fortune', pp 293-4.

to an English Protestant'.[134] In his diary he expressed a hope that God would bless the couple 'and make them fruitfull in good worcks and vertuous children'.[135] Joan's Protestantism was also celebrated by Randolph Barlow (d. 1638), Church of Ireland Archbishop of Tuam, who when writing to Kildare soon after the marriage, expressed his delight to have 'a Countess of Kildare that [will] come to church', possibly a disparaging allusion to the vehement recusancy of Kildare's aunt, Elizabeth Nugent.[136]

Following the marriage of his daughter, Joan to the earl of Kildare, Cork continued to exert considerable influence over the couple's religious observance.[137] As well as rebuilding the castle at Maynooth, the traditional seat of the Kildare family, for which work he employed the tomb-builder Edmund Tingham in April 1631, Cork set about the 're-edification' of 'the decaied' parish church at Maynooth, in order that his daughter, Joan, together with the earl, and their household could maintain regular attendance at divine service.[138] By October that year the work had been completed and on 1 November 1632 Cork jubilantly recorded that he attended divine service at the church where his chaplain, Minister Floyd, preached the sermon, 'which for ought I could hear was the firste Sermon made by a protestant mynster in any mans memorie Heerin'.[139] As well as the refurbishment of the parish church at Maynooth, Cork ensured that the couple maintained godly chaplains at their home, including Robert Sibthorpe, and in May 1631 he funded a series of lectures at Kildare Hall in Dublin, retaining the Puritan divine Stephen Jerome with Mr Sibthorpe and one Mr Thomas to give the first sermons, towards which the earl's new son-in-law Kildare

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[134] Little, 'The Geraldine ambitions of the first Earl of Cork', p. 159.
[135] Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 1st ser., ii, 109.
[136] 'The Archbishop of Tuam to Kildare, undated [after August 1630]' in Clarke & McGrath (eds), *Letterbook of George, sixteenth Earl of Kildare*, p. 6. Randolph Barlow, originally from Cheshire was married to Elizabeth Wheeler, daughter of Jonas Wheeler, Bishop of Ossory (1613–40); she died in childbirth 3 December 1613. He died at Tuam on 22 February 1638 and was buried in the cathedral there; he left no surviving children: see Robert Armstrong, 'Barlow, Randolph (Randal)', in *D.I.B.* (Cambridge, 2009), [http://dib.cambridge.org/quicksearch.do#, 21 Aug. 2012].
[137] Indeed even prior to the marriage Cork had sought to guide the religious leanings of his daughter's intended husband, advising him 'above all things' to 'serve God devoutly [and] frequent the church daily': see 'The Earl of Cork to Kildare, 25 March 1630' in Clarke & McGrath (eds), *Letterbook of George, sixteenth Earl of Kildare*, p. 20.
[138] Under the earl's patronage the church at Maynooth underwent a comprehensive refurbishment which Cork detailed in his diary: 'to sett fair lightes & glass therein, to cover with slats, plaister & white wash the whole church, to sett up a fair pulpit, and to make faier wainscott pues': see Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 1st ser., iii, 82, 135.
[139] Ibid., 82, 164-5.

was required to submit £20 annually.[140] Indeed Cork's establishment of a lecture series at Kildare Hall was yet another manifestation of the triumph of the Boyle family's Protestantism over the Fitzgerald dynasty's adherent Catholicism. As discussed in chapter one, Kildare Hall had recently been in the possession of Elizabeth Nugent who, as the primary benefactor of the Jesuit order in Ireland, had 'richly adorned and furnished [the Hall] for the Jesuits'.[141] In December 1629 an aggressive clampdown on the Dublin's Catholic community initiated under the direction of Cork in his capacity as joint lord justice (with Sir Adam Loftus), meant that Kildare Hall, along with a number of other religious houses in Dublin, including the Franciscan house in Cook Street, had been confiscated (see chapter two).[142] The subsequent installation of zealous Protestant ministers of Stephen Jerome's ilk at the hall was a blatant and very public display of the triumph of Cork's Protestantism over the Fitzgerald dynasty's zealous Catholicism and one which undoubtedly vexed the usurped Countess dowager. Despite these hostile relations, however, and perhaps in a friendly gesture, upon the birth of Joan's first child, a daughter, in December 1631, Elizabeth Nugent was named as godmother along with the staunchly Catholic Lady Bridget, Countess Dowager of Tyrconnell (d. 1682), widow of Rory O'Donnell (d. 1608), first Earl of Tyrconnell.[143]

Although Cork's attempts at securing marriage alliances for his daughters were undoubtedly motivated by his overwhelming desire to achieve social ascendancy and to improve his family's standing within the ranks of the Irish and English aristocracy, they were also strictly guided by religious motivations and a desire to advance his family's position within the ranks of the Protestant ascendancy in Ireland. These were concerns reiterated by Cork at the end of his life, when in the general charge at the end of his will, he urged all of his children (including his in-laws) 'to be most zealous and constant in that undoubted true Protestant religion now possessed and established in the Churches of England and Ireland ... and that they and each of them

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[140] Ibid., 82, 179.
[141] *H.M.C., 12th rep, append., pt. 1*, 398-9.
[142] Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers,* 1st ser., iii, 13.
[143] Ibid., 116. Lady Bridget O'Donnell was the only surviving daughter and coheir of Henry Fitzgerald, twelfth earl of Kildare and his wife Frances Fitzgerald née Howard. After the earl's death in 1608 the countess remarried in 1617 Nicholas Barnewall, first Viscount Barnewall of Kingsland who died in 1663 at Turvey: see Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, xii, pt. 2, 111-4.

breed up their children in the same'.[144] His daughters did, by and large, continue in the faith of their father. According to Sir John Leeke, for example, Katherine Jones, Viscountess Ranelagh, could hear a sermon and 'goe home and penn itt after dinner verbatim' while Mary, the earl's youngest daughter, as Countess of Warwick gained a reputation as an exemplary puritan lady.[145] Adherence to Protestantism endured in the next generation of Boyle women and their extended family members. Mary Gardiner, for example, wife of Kildare Digby (d. 1661), Cork's grandson, was according to John Hough, Bishop of Worchester, a zealous Protestant who took great care to educate her children in that faith. The couple's three sons, Robert, Simon and William, were all educated in the Protestant ethos at Magdalene College, Oxford.[146]

While the case of the Boyle family is highly instructive for what it reveals about how important marriage alliances for daughters were to social and political advancement and consolidation of confessional identity among the Protestant community in Ireland, it is important to bear in mind that Cork was a particularly politique individual who pursued systematically and strategically self-aggrandisement in a manner that cannot be regarded as typical. For families of less eminent social rank, however, confessional consolidation remained an important element of their marriage strategies. The Parsons family are a case in point. Sir William Parsons, originally from Leicestershire, settled in Ireland about 1590 and under the patronage of his uncle Sir Geoffrey Fenton, surveyor-general of Ireland, succeeded to that office himself in December 1602.[147] Parsons quickly gained a reputation as a firm proponent of the need to entrench Protestantism in Ireland through vigorous plantation.[148] He was quickly promoted to influential government offices, including master of the court of wards and lord justice of Ireland, in which capacities he worked vigorously to consolidate the Protestant interest in Ireland. However, while his public life has been well documented, privately, Parsons, like Cork, sought to

[144] Townshend, *The life and letters of the great Earl of Cork* , p. 505.
[145] Brogan, 'Marvell's epitaph on', p. 198; Charlotte Fell Smith, *Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick, 1625-1678: her family and friends* (London, 1901), p. 37.
[146] Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, iv, 109-10.
[147] William Parsons was the son of James Parsons and his wife Catherine Fenton, Sir Geoffrey Fenton's daughter, Catherine Fenton, the earl of Cork's wife was therefore Sir William Parsons' cousin: see Sean Kelsey, 'Parsons, Sir William, baronet (*c.*1570-1650)' in *O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21476, accessed 19 Mar. 2012].
[148] Ibid.

fulfil his frequently and publicly proclaimed strategy for safeguarding Ireland for the English Protestant interest by exerting strong influence over the marriages of his offspring. Parsons married (date unknown) Elizabeth, daughter of John Lany, alderman of Dublin and his wife Katherine née Bostocke (d. 1640), both of whom were of New English origin.[149] The couple had several children, including at least one son, Richard, and one daughter, Dorothy. In his will, prepared in the summer of 1648 and proved on 17 April 1650, Parsons exerted overt control over his children's choice of spouse and was blatantly prescriptive regarding the confession of any potential marriage partner. He ordered his children 'not to marry Irish papists' and 'to marry only with the consent of their grandmother or any three of my overseers': they were also to incur a penalty if they married without consent.[150] Parsons's explicit direction that his children's grandmother (their mother had died in 1640) was to have direct control over the choice of his children's spouses is strongly suggestive of the important role exerted by women in New English settler families in raising children. Regarding the betrothal of his daughter, Dorothy, Parsons's guidelines were even more stringent. Reminiscent of the Protestant divine, Luke Challoner's deathbed instructions to his daughter, Phoebe in 1613 that she should marry no man other than James Ussher, later Archbishop of Armagh, in his will Parsons decreed that Dorothy was to receive a marriage dowry of £1,500 on condition that 'she marry the man [that] I have chosen'.[151] While it is unclear whether Dorothy complied with her father's unequivocal directions, his son, Richard certainly followed his father's request that he abjure from marriage with 'papists', marry within the Protestant faith and thereby secured the Parsons family's Protestant lineage. He married (date unknown) Lettice Loftus (d. 1633), daughter of Sir Adam Loftus of Rathfarnham, sister-in-law of Dorothy Boyle, the Earl of Cork's second youngest daughter.[152] The Parsons-Loftus connection was further strengthened by the marriage of Anne Loftus, Lettice's sister, to Richard Parsons, son of Sir Laurence Parsons (d. 1628) of Birr in King's County, Sir William Parsons's younger brother.[153] At Birr, Sir Laurence and

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[149] Lennon, 'The shaping of a lay community in the Church of Ireland', p. 81.
[150] Ainsworth (ed.), 'Abstracts of 17th century Irish wills', p. 33.
[151] Ball Wright (ed.), *Ussher memoirs*, pp 3, 89, 108; Ainsworth (ed.), 'Abstracts of 17th century Irish wills', p. 33.
[152] Adam Loftus was the son of Sir Dudley Loftus (d. 1616) and his wife Frances (d. 1691), daughter and heir of Patrick Nangle, baron of Navan: see Jackson, *Intermarriage in Ireland*, pp 21-2. Lettice Loftus died on 26 October 1633 and was buried in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin: see Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, iv, 341.
[153] Jackson, *Intermarriage in Ireland*, p. 22.

his wife Anne Maltham (b. 1578), a Yorkshire native, were active in the establishment of a Protestant settlement and the family contributed funds for the construction of a parish church and established strict protocols for burial in the churchyard according to the rites of the Established Church.[154]

Sir William Parsons's admonitions to his daughter, Dorothy 'not to marry a Papist' were echoed later in the century by Robert Barnewall, ninth Baron Trimleston.[155] In a letter written to his sixteen-year-old son in 1686, Matthias, then living in France, Trimleston cautioned against the perils of inter-confessional marriage, warning Mathias to, 'Never bring a Protestant wife into your family'.[156] However, while heads of families such as Trimleston and Parsons may have deemed inter-confessional marriage unacceptable, marriage across the religious divide did occur and, from the sparse evidence that has survived, they appear to have been remarkably widespread throughout society.[157] Indeed the prevalence of inter-confessional marriage down to the mid-seventeenth century is demonstrated by the fact that in 1651 and 1653 the Cromwellian authorities prohibited intermarriage between Catholics and Protestants, a move emulated in 1658 by the Catholic synod which even conceded that when unions with Protestants occurred, the Catholic spouse should have liberty to practise their faith and that any children resulting from the marriage should be raised as Catholics.[158] However, despite attempts on the part of the state and the Catholic Church to legislate against inter-confessional marriage, repeated clerical fulminations against it suggest that the injunctions may not have always been as effective as the church (on both sides of the confessional divide) would have wished. While inter-confessional marriage may have posed a challenge to the authorities, it could also be problematic for those who chose to marry across

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[154] Sir Laurence also petitioned for the establishment of a free school and the allocation of 200 acres for the support of a schoolmaster. Laurence and Anne Maltham had three sons and three daughters: see Judy Barry, 'Parsons, Sir Lawrence', in *D.I.B.* (Cambridge, 2009), [http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a7213 21 Aug. 2012].

[155] Robert Barnewall was married to Margaret (1668) daughter of Sir John Dungan and sister of William, first earl of Limerick: see Barnwell, 'The Barnewell family during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', pp 320-1.

[156] Terence O'Donnell, 'Lord Trimleston's advice of his son – a fragment' in *Rí. na Mí.*, iii (1964), pp 152-4.

[157] Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English*, pp 171-9: see also MacCurtain, 'Marriage in Tudor Ireland' in Art Cosgrove (ed.) *Marriage in Ireland* (Dublin, 1985), pp 51-66.

[158] Alison Forrestal, *Catholic synods in Ireland, 1600-1690* (Dublin, 1998), pp 105, 171; Ford, 'Living together, living apart', pp 17-9.

the religious divide and the success of these unions depended on a wide-range of factors including personalities and social status. Clearly couples dealt with the challenges of mixed marriages in a range of ways. For some, inter-confessional marriages could be successful and it is evident that certain couples developed particular *modus vivendi* allowing them to enjoy harmonious relationships based on mutual respect despite religious differences. That contemporaries believed inter-confessional unions could be successful is intimated by Randall MacDonnell, the staunchly Catholic Marquis of Antrim, who hoped to secure the marriage of one of his elder daughters to George Fitzgerald, the Protestant heir of the house of Kildare (discussed above). In the lengthy negotiations MacDonnell expressed the hope that the marriage would prove congenial and that both spouses could live 'contentedly' despite their differing religious perspectives:

> Your Lordship need not doubt that any will attempt to alter your opinion in religion, and I hope you Lordship will not seek to force whosoever shall be your wife from hers. You both may live contentedly and each one use their own conscience, for which (thanks be to God) you want not an excellent precedent.[159]

The marriage of Susanna Brabazon and Luke Plunket, Lord Killeen and later first Earl of Fingall (1628) in 1611 proved successful despite the confessional variance of the spouses.[160] Susanna was the sister of William, first Earl of Meath and younger daughter of Edward, Lord Brabazon (d. 1625), son and heir of Sir William Brabazon and his wife, Elizabeth Clifford.[161] By the early seventeenth century the Brabazons had distinguished themselves as one of the most prominent servitor families of Elizabethan and Stuart Ireland and were staunch advocates of religious reform.[162] By contrast, Luke Plunket, son and heir of Christopher Plunket, Lord of Killeen (d. 1612/3), was a well-known recusant: his family often sheltered Catholic clergy, including their kinsman James Plunket, vicar-general, at their Meath residence.[163] His younger brother, Patrick Plunket (d. 1679) became Catholic Bishop of Ardagh (1647-69) and later of Meath (1669-79) while another brother, Nicholas (d. 1680), a

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159 Quoted in Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English*, p. 188.

160 Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, v, 385; vii, 253,

161 Robert Armstrong, 'Brabazon, Edward Baron Brabazon of Ardee', in in *D.I.B.* (Cambridge, 2009), [http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a0867, accessed 23 Aug. 2013].

162 Susanna's father Edward contributed to the foundation of Trinity College, Dublin. Edward was married to Mary, daughter of Sir Thomas Smith of Surrey. Both died in August 1625 and were buried in St Catherine's Church, Dublin, burial place of Sir Edward's father: see Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, i, 269-73.

163 Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath', p. 8.

barrister, later rose to political prominence within the Roman Catholic Confederation.[164] Susanna's marriage into the strongly Catholic Plunket family contrasted sharply with the marriages of her sisters, all of whom contracted unions with members of the Church of Ireland community. For example, Susanna's older sister, Elizabeth (b. 1568) married firstly George Montgomery (d. 1620), first Church of Ireland Bishop of Meath and Clogher while her younger sister, Ursula, married Sir James Hamilton (*c*.1560-1644), first Viscount Claneboye.[165] In spite of their different religious backgrounds, however, Susanna and Luke's marriage appears to have been a successful union. Susanna was permitted by her husband to 'enjoy the full exercise of her religion' and on her death in 1623 was afforded a full Protestant funeral, her husband 'suffering the minister at her death to dispose her soule religiously and Christianly to God'.[166] It is noteworthy, however, that after Susanna's death, the earl (who remarried twice) chose spouses from strongly Catholic backgrounds, including Margaret Preston (d. 1637), the widow of Jenico Preston (d. 1630), fifth Viscount Gormanstown, whose daughters, Elizabeth and Jane Preston, were among the first members of the Irish Poor Clare order (as discussed in chapter two).[167]

While some mixed marriages could engender mutual respect and transcend religious divides, others could spark discord and tension. Sometimes hitherto latent tensions were made public by the occasion of a public demonstration of faith, such as a funeral. For example, as we have seen, the marriage between the Catholic Luke Plunket and his Protestant wife, Susanna, appears to have been a harmonious one. Yet, as will be discussed later in the chapter, Susanna's funeral in 1623, solemnized

[164] Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, v, 120; vi, 179–86.

[165] Elizabeth Brabazon died in 1639 and was interred in St Catherine's Church along with her mother and father and her second husband, Sir John Brereton (d. 1629). Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, i, 274. Ursula's husband Sir James Hamilton divorced her in about 1615 in order to marry Jane (d. 1661), the mother of his son and heir. Jane was the daughter of Sir John Phillips of Picton Castle, Pembrokeshire, and niece of Sir Arthur Chichester's wife, Lettice, herself daughter of Lord Deputy Sir John Perrot: see R. J. Hunter, 'Hamilton, James, first Viscount Claneboye (*c*.1560–1644)' in *O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12086, accessed 19 Mar. 2012].

[166] John Brady, 'Funeral customs of the past' in *I.E.R.*, lxxviii (1952), pp 331-2; *Cal S.P. Ire. 1615-1625*, pp 429-30.

[167] Margaret, widow of Jenico Preston, Viscount Gormanstown was the daughter of Nicholas St Lawerence, Lord Howth, by his second wife Mary, daughter of Sir Nicholas White. Margaret died 16 November 1637 in Dublin and was buried at Stamullen in County Meath: see Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, ii, 385; 'Report of Richard Boyle to Viscount Dorchester 9 January 1930' in *H.M.C., 12th report, appendix, pt. 1* (London, 1888), pp 398-9.

according to the rites of the Protestant Church, became the scene of an outburst of underlying tensions within the Plunket family. In other cases, the birth of a child could spark tensions and lead to feuds between spouses. For example, the birth of a son, Thomas in *c*.1600 to the devoutly Catholic Lady Margaret Esmonde née O'Flaherty (d. 1626), and her husband, Sir Laurence (1570-1645), first Baron Esmonde of Limerick, County Wexford, a zealous proponent of the reformed religion, occasioned a dispute between the couple which ultimately resulted in the breakdown of their marriage. Fearing that her husband would attempt to raise their son in the Protestant faith, Margaret fled with the infant to her family in Galway whereupon she was repudiated by her husband without a formal separation before 1628.[168] Another telling insight into the extent of matrimonial discord that could arise on account of confessional differences between spouses may be gleaned from the case of Mrs Dillon 'a worthy gentlewoman', who in November 1641, at the height of sectarian antagonisms sparked by the outbreak of an uprising the previous month, sought the advice of William Bedell, Church of Ireland Bishop of Kilmore, regarding the difficulties she was experiencing in her marriage on account of her spouse's opposing religious affiliation.[169] Mrs Dillon, described as a 'zealous and devout Protestant', and originally from England, was the wife of Lucas Dillon, son of James Dillon, first Earl of Roscommon and his wife, Eleanor (d. 1628), daughter of Sir Christopher and Marion Barnewall of Turvey.[170] Notwithstanding their confessional differences, however, the couple appear to have maintained an amicable relationship and Mrs Dillon was permitted by her husband to attend divine service at Kilmore parish church. Here, she was a regular attendee and heard Bishop Bedell preach 'many excellent sermons', accompanied by her two daughters (from her previous marriage), both of whom had married into the Bailie family, a Protestant

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[168] The couple remained permanently estranged but never formally separated, even though Sir Laurence later remarried Elizabeth Butler (d. *c*.1645), a granddaughter of James Butler (d. 1546), ninth earl of Ormond. Although Thomas later converted to Protestantism after the death of his mother in 1626 her influence ultimately prevailed and upon the outbreak of the 1641 rising, Thomas defected to the rebels prompting his father to change his will and name his nephew as heir in place of his Catholic son: see Terry Clavin, 'Esmond, Sir Laurence 1st Baron Esmond', in *D.I.B.* (Cambridge, 2009) [http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a2947, 25 Aug. 2012].

[169] Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, i, 158; Terry Clavin, 'Esmond, Sir Laurence 1st Baron Esmond', in *D.I.B.* (Cambridge, 2011) [http://dib.cambridge.org/quicksearch.do#, accessed 21 Aug. 2012].

[170] According to Lodge, however, Lucas Dillon was married to Mary, daughter of Sir John Thorp, of Rutland, by whom he had one son, James and two daughters, the eldest being married to John, son and heir to Philip Reily of Lismore in County Cavan; Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, iv, 160.

settler family, originally from Ayrshire in Scotland.[171] Penelope, Mrs Dillon's eldest daughter, married Robert Bailie, an army officer, while another daughter was married in 1639 to William Bailie, Robert Bailie's older brother, a minister in the Kilmore diocese and later Bishop of Clonfert (1644-64).[172] However, the birth of a son to the couple occasioned the collapse of their marriage, a dramatic account of which features in the biography of Bishop William Bedell written by his son, William Bedell junior, between twenty and thirty years after Bedell's death.[173] The account, replete with sectarian language and idioms, presents the couple's conflict as a battle between a 'popish', 'Jesuited' and 'Antichristian' Catholic father and a 'worthy', 'zealous' and 'Christian' Protestant mother. As John McCafferty has aptly highlighted, the account belongs 'to the ecclesiastical polemics and anxieties of the 1660s and 1670s'.[174] Notwithstanding the polemical nature of the source, however, the account demonstrates that while relations between spouses of diverging confessions may have been amicable, determining the faith of a couple's offspring could precipitate the breakdown of their union. Furthermore, Bedell's advice to Mrs Dillon provides a unique insight into what a high-ranking cleric believed to be an appropriate strategy for a woman to deal with conflict within an exogamous marriage.

According to Bedell's account, no sooner had the child been delivered than a violent altercation erupted between the mother and father concerning the child's baptism, each desiring that the child would be baptised according to the rites of his/her faith. Such was the intensity of their exchange that the midwives present were forced to intervene in order to prevent the 'poore infant' from being:

torne in peeces between the hands of the Christian mother and the Antichristian father; the mother desyring that her cheild might be baptized into Christ by a

[171] Mrs Dillon had previously been married to a wealthy London merchant named Hartlib: see. Shuckburgh (ed.), *Two biographies of William Bedell*, p. 183; The Bailies had been granted lands in Tonergie the barony of Clonkee, County Cavan during the reign of James I: see Leslie McKeague, *Ballieborough: a pictorial past* (Cavan, 2010), p. 12.

[172] William Bailie was nominated bishop of Clonfert and Kilmacduagh in December 1643 and was consecrated at Oxford in May 1644 by James Ussher, archbishop of Armagh, assisted by John Maxwell, bishop of Killala and Achonry and Henry Leslie, bishop of Down and Connor. William and his wife had one daughter, Jane, who married James Hamilton (b. *c*. 1610), third son of John Hamilton (d. 1639) of Coronary Castle, County Cavan and his wife Sarah, daughter of Sir Anthony Brabazon, Governor of Connacht (m. 1617): see Shuckburgh (ed.), *Two biographies of William Bedell*, p. 183; Lowry (ed.), *The Hamilton Manuscripts*, p. 162.

[173] Shuckburgh (ed.), *Two biographies of William Bedell*.

[174] John McCafferty, 'Venice in Cavan: the career of William Bedell, 1572-1642' in Brendan Scott (ed.), *Culture and society in early modern Breifne-Cavan* (Dublin, 2009), p. 175.

minister of the Gospell, and crying out that she would kill herself and her cheild also, [before] she would suffer the fruite of her body to be dedicated to Antichrist by a popish and idolatrous priest.[175]

Despite the mother's 'zeale', however, she ultimately was overpowered by her husband who: 'forced the cheild from her with such popish violence, as if he had intended to have dasht them both in peeces ... and so carryed it [the child] away to the kyte, the priest, that was in the next room waiting for the prey'.[176] In a letter penned to the bishop Mrs Dillon explained that her husband was now raising their child in his 'own superstition' and had since the outbreak of the uprising in October 1641 joined the Catholic rebels so that their home was now 'a den of theeves and murtherers'. In her 'extremity' she implored the bishop, 'her faithful pastor' whose 'neighbour and constant hearer [he] was', to send her 'a word of consolation in her hour of temptation, to asswage her griefe and deliver her from her sorrow'.[177] Bedell responded by penning a letter to her in November 1641 in which he counselled her about how best to overcome this 'sorrowful time'. Addressing her as his 'dear sister in Christ Jesus', Bedell, in a lengthy exposition implored Mrs Dillon to live 'soberly, justly and godly', to pray regularly, to read the Scriptures, and above all to remain steadfast in her Protestant faith.[178]

While determining the religion of a couple's offspring could percipitate disputes between spouses among the ranks of the gentry and aristocracy, conflict could also arise between the state and parents. For example, in cases where a succession appeared to be compromised by a mother's insistence upon the heir apparent being Catholic, the court of wards could and did intervene.[179] In 1618, for example, against the wishes of Elizabeth Nugent, Countess of Kildare, who wanted to raise her son a Catholic, the court interceded and arranged for Gerald to be transferred to the wardship of Esme, Lord Aubigny, and brought to England for his education and instruction in the Protestant faith. Similarly, James Dillon, eldest son and heir of Robert Dillon (d. 1642), second Earl of Roscommon and his wife Margaret, daughter

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[175] Shuckburgh (ed.), *Two biographies of William Bedell*, p. 184.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid., pp 184-8.
[179] The court of wards, in grants of wardship regularly specified that suitable charges should be educated in 'English habit and religion': see H.F. Kearney, 'The court of wards and liveries in Ireland, 1622-41' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, lvii, section c (1955/56), pp 29-68.

of David, Viscount Buttevant (d. 1617), was reclaimed as a youth from 'the superstitions of the Romish Church' by Archbishop James Ussher. About 1628, Ussher arranged for the boy to be sent to England where he was committed to the tuition and care of the Protestant cleric, George Hakewill (d. 1649), a fellow of Exeter College renowned for his fierce anti-Catholicism.[180] James ultimately conformed and married about 1636 Elizabeth Wentworth, sister of Lord Deputy Wentworth. Conversely, in 1657 when Murrough O'Brien (d. 1673), first Earl of Inchiquin, reverted to Catholicism and tried also to convert his children, his Protestant wife, Elizabeth (d. 1685), daughter of Sir William St Leger, president of Munster, was furious and tried to prevent her husband from raising their young sons as Catholics. Crucially, in the case of Inchiquin's heir, William, at least, Elizabeth's influence appears to have prevailed: William conformed and the Inchiquin lineage remained Protestant. However, the couple's other children, two sons and three daughters, appear to have followed their father's religious persuasion and avowed Catholicism.[181]

IV

Whereas Mrs Dillon was, according to William Bedell junior, 'unequally yoked' in an unhappy marriage, the union of his English-born parents, William Bedell and Leah Mawe née L'Estrange was, by contrast, apparently blissful.[182] William and Leah married in Suffolk in 1612 and upon his appointment as provost of Trinity College, Dublin in 1627 Leah travelled to Ireland with her husband, together with the couple's three sons, William junior, John and Ambrose and two of Leah's children from her former marriage, a son, Edward and a daughter, Leah.[183] She was, according to William junior, a constant 'helper' and 'consort' to Bedell.[184] The couple's successful matrimony was later celebrated by Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury (one of Bedell's biographers) who depicted Leah as a 'very fit wife' who led an 'exemplary' life and was 'singular in many excellent qualities, particularly in

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[180] Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, iv, 163.

[181] John A. Murphy, 'The expulsion of the Irish from Cork in 1644' in *Cork Hist. Soc. Jn.*, lxix (1964), 123–31; idem, 'Inchiquin's changes of religion' in *Cork Hist. Soc. Jn.,* lxxii (1967), 58–68;

[182] Shuckburgh (ed.), *Two biographies of William Bedell*, p. 184.

[183] Bedell and Leah also had a daughter, Grace, who had died four years previously in April 1624. Leah had four children with her previous husband, Robert Mawe (d. 1609), town recorded of St Edmonds-bury in Suffolk. They were Nicholas, Leah, Robert and Edward: Shuckburgh (ed.), *Two biographies of William Bedell*, pp xvi, 80.

[184] Shuckburgh (ed.), *Two biographies of William Bedell*, pp 18, 20.

a very extraordinary reverence that she payed him [Bedell]'.[185] This reverence appears to have been reciprocated and on the occasion of her death in 1638 Bedell himself preached his wife's funeral sermon in which he eulogised her reputation for piety and virtue. That sermon, according to Burnet, 'was such a mixture both of tenderness and moderation, that it touched the whole congregation so much ... there were very few dry eyes in the church'.[186] Leah was buried in the churchyard of Kilmore where upon his death in 1642, according to directions stipulated in his will and in public acknowledgement of the couple's happy union, Bedell was interred next to his 'dear wife Leah'.[187] When twenty years earlier George Montgomery, Church of Ireland Bishop of Meath and Clogher, died at Westminster on 15 January 1621 his body was sent to Ireland to be interred, in accordance with his will, alongside his first wife, Susan Steynings (d. 1614), a member of the Somerset gentry family, in the vault he had constructed within the parish church at Ardbraccan in County Meath.[188] The willingness of Bedell and Montgomery, both senior rank clerics within the Church of Ireland episcopate, to publicly pay tribute to their wives was indicative of the recognition, appreciation and respect attributed to the role of clergyman's wife among the Church of Ireland community in Ireland during the early to mid-Stuart period.

But it had not always been so for clerical wives in Ireland. Their relatively revered position in the Stuart era contrasted sharply with the uncertainty and ambiguity that had previously shrouded the role and status of women married to clergymen during the early to mid-Tudor period, many of whom, on account of their marriages to members of the reformed clergy, were publicly castigated, ridiculed and even renounced by their husbands. As Mary Prior has revealed in her study of Tudor bishops' wives in England, because no precedent for the position of clerical wives existed during the early years of the Reformation, their legitimacy was shrouded with uncertainty as the regime continually altered its stance on clerical celibacy and

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[185] Burnet, *The life of William Bedell*, p. 230.

[186] According to Burnet the sermon was subsequently published under the title *A good name is better than ointment*: see ibid.

[187] Shuckburgh (ed.), *Two biographies of William Bedell*, p. 74; Burnet, *The life of William Bedell*, p. 231.

[188] Henry A. Jefferies, 'Montgomery, George (1569/70–1621)' in *O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/58506, accessed 19 Aug. 2012].

the validity of priestly matrimony.[189] Like the Church of England, during the early years of Tudor reform the Church of Ireland was at best ambivalent in its attitude to clerical marriage and was consequently slow to accord clerical wives any official recognition. While the experience of women married to members of the Church of Ireland during this early reform phase is difficult to reconstruct owing to their large-scale absence in the historical record, fragmentary evidence suggests that desertion, poverty, ridicule and exile characterised the lives of many clergymen and their wives. For example, Katherine Miagh (d. *c*.1597), wife of George Browne (d. *c*.1556), the first archbishop to be appointed by the Crown in Ireland, was divorced by her husband in 1541.[190] Dorothy Bale, wife of John Bale (d. 1563), Edwardian Bishop of Ossory (1552-3), was compelled, together with her husband, to flee the episcopal residence at Kilkenny to the safety of the exiled Protestant domicile at Wesel in north-west Germany in September 1553 on account of the severe hostility they

[189] Whereas on the Continent the practice of clerical marriage was popularised and perpetuated by leading Protestant reformers, notably Martin Luther (1483-1546) who in 1525 married Katharina von Bora (1499-1552), a former nun, in the Tudor realm, the tradition of clerical celibacy continued to be vigorously upheld by the Henrician regime which viewed priestly matrimony with intense hostility and suspicion and imposed strict sanctions against it. For example, the English act of six articles came into force in 1539 and declared that all marriages and marriage contracts involving priests were utterly void of none effect'. While the accession of Edward VI in 1547 afforded legal sanction to the institution of sacerdotal marriage, reversion to Catholicism under Queen Mary I rendered it once again obsolete. As a result, women married to members of the reformed clergy had no recognised stable position, either doctrinally or legislatively, during the early years of Tudor reform. In England, it was not until the reign of Elizabeth I, when clerical marriage was formerly recognised (under the Thirty Nine Articles, ratified 1571), that the wives of clergymen began to enjoy greater legislative and doctrinal status. This was a slow and tentative process, however, and it was not until 1603, under the reign of King James I, that clerical marriage was finally made fully legal by which time it was generally accepted in the Church of England: see Mary Prior, 'Reviled and crucified marriages: the position of Tudor bishops' wives' in Prior (ed.), *Women in English society*, pp 118-48. For the English act of six articles see 'Act to take away all positive laws against the marriage of priests (2-3 Edward VI, c.21) in Gerald Lewis Bray (ed.), *Documents of the English Reformation, 1526-1701* (Cambridge, 1994) pp 279-80.

[190] Browne arrived in Dublin in July 1536 and not long after married a young local woman named Katherine Miagh. Relatively little information regarding the background of Katherine is known. However, her family were apparently well connected within Dublin ecclesiastical circles; she was related to Nicholas Miagh, who, according to James Murray, was either Katherine's uncle or her brother and was probably a vicar choral of St Patrick's Cathedral and a serving chaplain in one of the cathedral's city churches on Browne's succession. Katherine was evidently quite young at the time of the marriage as she lived until *c*. 1593, the year in which she made her will. The couple had three sons; Alexander, Anthony and George junior, at least one of whom, Alexander (d. *c*.1578), outlived his father: see Murray, *Enforcing the English Reformation*, pp 141, 154.

encountered from their Catholic parishioners.[191] In Ireland, as in England, it was not until the later Elizabethan and more especially the early Stuart era that the standing of women married to Church of Ireland clerics (and particularly those married to senior ranking clergy) improved, at least within their own confessional communities, a process inextricably linked with the improved institutional position of the Church of Ireland establishment which became more deeply and strongly rooted in Ireland during that time.[192] However, this improved status also meant that women married to clergymen, particularly high-ranking members of the episcopate, as stalwarts of Protestant evangelisation and English conquest in Ireland continued to be regarded as legitimate targets for criticism, derision and ridicule by members of the Catholic community. For example, in the 1590s the wife of a minister living in a village near Drogheda in County Louth was reportedly 'cover[ed] with spits and slavers' by 'children of the district' who 'used to hoot as she walked along the streets' and called her 'the priest's wife'.[193]

Clerical wives could also be the targets of public condemnation by hostile Catholic clergy and religious, who, eager to uphold the Catholic Church's teaching on priestly celibacy and to discredit the Protestant institution of clerical marriage, were particularly scathing in their denunciation of women married to clergy. They remarked upon the doubtful character of women who married priests. Those who abandoned Catholicism and converted in order to marry were particularly vilified and condemned as apostates and heretics. In one unique manifestation of the extent of public denunciation experienced by women married to Church of Ireland

[191] Originally a Carmelite monk from Suffolk in England, upon his conversion to Protestantism in the mid-1530s, John Bale, married a woman named Dorothy (m. *c*.1536). The couple had two sons, John and Paul, and remained married until Bale's death at Canterbury in 1563, when Dorothy was granted a generous pension by the ecclesiastical authorities there. Bale was appointed bishop of Ossory in 1552 and travelled to Ireland in the company of his wife arriving at Waterford in January 1553. He later published an account of his brief Irish sojourn, although he is notably silent in relation to the experiences of his wife. *The vocaycon of Johan Bale to the Bishoprick of Ossorie in Ireland* was published at Wesel in Germany in December 1553. For a discussion of the text in an Irish context see J.A. George, '*The vocacyon of Johan Bale* (1553): a retrospective sermon from Ireland' in Anthony Fletcher and Raymond Gillespie (eds), *Preaching in Ireland, 700-1700* (Dublin, 2001), pp 94-107 and Andrew Hadfield, 'Translating the Reformation: John Bale's Irish Vocacyon' in Brendan Bradshaw, Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley (eds), *Representing Ireland: Literature and the origins of conflict, 1534-1660* (Cambridge, 1993), pp 43-59.

[192] Ford, *The Protestant Reformation in Ireland*.

[193] Philip O'Sullivan Beare, *Historiae Catholicae Iberniae compendium* (Lisbon, 1621) in Matthew Byrne (ed.), *Ireland under Elizabeth, chapters towards a history of Ireland under the reign of Elizabeth* (Dublin, 1903), ch. xii, 45-6.

clergymen, the Gaelic Ulster Franciscan friar and renowned preacher, Eoghan Ó Dubhthaigh composed a poem in *c*.1578 denouncing the wives of three Church of Ireland bishops. The three clerics were William Casey, who served two terms as Church of Ireland Bishop of Limerick (1551-6 and 1571-91), Matthew Sheyne, Bishop of Cork (1571-2) and Meiler Magrath (originally a Franciscan friar), Archbishop of Cashel. While virtually nothing is known about the wives of Casey[194] and Sheyne, Magrath was married to a Gaelic Irish woman named Anne (or Annie) O'Meara from Lisany in County Tipperary with whom he had five sons and four daughters.[195] Composed just a few years after the marriage of Anne to the former Franciscan (married before 1573), the Ulster friar's scathing satire is directed primarily at Magrath and Anne; the recurring refrain of the poem is a pun on Meiler's name (in Irish, *Maolmhuire*, 'the devotee of Mary') which Ó Dubhthaigh transliterated into *Mhaol gan Mhuire* or 'Meiler without Mary'.[196] Undoubtedly Magrath's having formerly being a member of the Franciscan order explains why both he and his wife were singled out for especially derisory comment by the Ulster poet who, according to the virulent Catholic historian, Philip O'Sullivan Beare (1590-1636), was a personal acquaintance of both Anne and Magrath.[197] Indeed O'Sullivan Beare claimed that after her marriage to Magrath which O'Sullivan Beare dismissed as an 'unholy union', Ó Dubhthaigh paid regular visits to Anne's home, urging her to re-convert to Catholicism and endeavouring 'to bring her back to a good life'.[198] Despite Ó Dubthaigh's caustic attack over the question of her conversion, all indicators suggest that Anne in fact remained Catholic throughout her lifetime. Indeed, according to a report dated 1592 by the government informer,

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[194] According to a letter written by Richard Whyte, a Limerick man of Protestant conviction to Lord Burghley in May 1590, Bishop William Casey's wife had been granted absolution by the 'pope's legate' at Youghal, probably Richard Creagh (*c*.1523-*c*.1586), Archbishop of Armagh, 'for an angell of gold' which she 'amid her drunken cups' admitted. Her husband had recanted his Protestant beliefs before the Jesuit David Wolfe (1528-1578/9) and according to Whyte was actively disrupting the preaching of Dionise Campbell, a Scottish Protestant who had been appointed superintendent of Limerick diocese due to Bishop Casey's Catholicism: TNA SP 63/152/15.

[195] The couple had five sons, Terence, Redmond, Brian, Mark and James and four daughters, Mary, Cicely, Anne and Ellis: see L. Ó Mearáin, 'Miler McGrath, archbishop of Cashel (1571-1622)', *Clogher Rec*., ii, no. 3 (1959), pp 454; Marron, (ed.), 'Documents from state papers concerning Miler McGrath', pp 75-189; Patrick J. Ryan, *Archbishop Miler Magrath: the enigma of Cashel* (Roscrea, 2014).

[196] Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 156.

[197] Philip O'Sullivan Beare, *Compendium of the Catholic History of Ireland*, Lisbon, 1621, in Matthew Byrne (ed.), *Ireland under Elizabeth, chapters towards a history of Ireland under the reign of Elizabeth* (Dublin, 1903), ch. xii, pp 16-7.

[198] O'Sullivan Beare, *Compendium of the Catholic History of Ireland*, ch. xii, pp 16-7.

Patrick O'Kearney, she even entertained a number of high-profile seminary priests and bishops, including Niall O'Boyle (1591-1611), Bishop of Raphoe, at her residence, the episcopal manor house in Camas, four kilometres outside Cashel. In his report O'Kearney derided Anne as a 'massmonger' and denounced both her and her children as 'the greatest papists under the heavens'.[199]

Ó Dubhthaigh's poem, apparently written in response to a sermon preached by Bishop Sheyne at Cork in October 1578 in which he repudiated the Virgin birth, runs to over a hundred quatrains, interweaving a eulogy of the Blessed Virgin Mary with a coarse and caustic attack on the three apostate clerics and their wives.[200] Clerical marriage was derided as 'no aid to piety' while 'cohabitation with a woman' was deemed an 'unbecoming observance for an archbishop'. The clerics were adjudged to be 'blind', 'unclean' and 'befogged churchmen' and their wives represented as 'deformed' and 'frantic' women who were the direct antithesis of the 'fair' Blessed Virgin; their offspring were deemed 'illegitimate'. In a revealing insight into the position of clerical wives within the Established Church in Ireland during the early years of the Elizabethan regime, Ó Dubhthaigh claimed that whereas the Virgin Mary, the 'mother of the High-king', would be afforded a hostile reception at Dublin Castle where she would 'receive only a slap on the face', the bishops' wives by contrast were, according to Ó Dubhthaigh, 'respected there'. However, the respect reportedly afforded the women by the Dublin Castle authorities contrasted starkly with the damning fate which Ó Dubhthaigh prophesised for them. According to his poetic prediction, on account of their renunciation of Catholicism and their 'unclean' marriages, the women along with their husbands were destined for eternal damnation as a punishment for their sins.[201] Hand in hand with their husbands, Ó Dubhthaigh predicted that the women, in 'piercing flame', would descend into hell where, confined in a 'putrid prison', they would be 'full of hunger, full of thirst ... without light, without wine [and] without music'.[202] On account of their blasphemous actions, which notwithstanding their sacrilegious marriages included iconoclasm and non-observance of Lent, the women and their husbands would remain 'burning' perpetually in a 'bitter fire'. In another particularly revealing remark Ó Dubhthaigh

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[199] Marron (ed.), 'Documents from state papers concerning Miler McGrath', pp 152, 157, 159-61.
[200] Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 157-9.
[201] Ibid., 157-9.
[202] Ibid.

claimed that whereas the clerics themselves were ‘obsequious’ and steeped in ‘colossal pretentiousness’, their wives had ‘ruined the people’, perhaps attributing greater agency to women than to men in achieving that end.[203]

While it is difficult to assess the impact of his poem on contemporary audiences in late sixteenth-century Ireland, according to Donatus Mooney, historian of the Franciscan order, Ó Dubhthaigh was a ‘renowned preacher’ whose ‘fame extended to most parts of the kingdom’.[204] It therefore seems reasonable to deduce that Anne O’Meara and the two other women castigated heard or were at least aware of the poem. By the early seventeenth century it had certainly gained popular currency among Catholic scholars, including the exiled O’Sullivan Beare. In his *Historiae Catholicae Iberniae compendium*, completed by 1618 and published at Lisbon in 1621, which consisted largely of an assault upon Protestant ‘heresy’ and its adherents in Ireland, O’Sullivan Beare referred to the friar’s ‘rather incisive poems, written in Irish against Meiler and other heretics’, some of which he declared were then ‘extant’.[205] He claimed that Anne O’Meara had herself been aware of the poem and that upon hearing it, she was overcome by fear and wept at the prospect of the fate which Ó Dubhthaigh had prophesied for her. When questioned by her husband about why she wept Anne allegedly replied that ‘Eugene [Eoghan] who was with me today assured by strong proof and many holy testimonies that I would be condemned to hell if I should die in a state of being your wife, and I am frightened and cannot help crying lest this be true’. Shortly afterwards, according to O’Sullivan Beare, Anne, ‘consumed with grief’, died. Following her death O’Sullivan Beare claimed that ‘the wicked Miler married a second wife’ with whom he ‘willingly’ lived in sin.[206]

While O’Sullivan Beare’s comments regarding Magrath’s re-marriage should be treated with caution – he was after all attempting to undermine Protestantism and its adherents whom he castigated as ‘heretical barbarians’ – according to a letter written by the Dublin-native Christopher Holywood (1559-1626), superior of the Jesuit

[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid., 156.
[205] O’Sullivan Beare, *Historiae Catholicae Iberniae compendium*, ch. xii, pp 16-7.
[206] Ibid.

mission in Ireland, Magrath did indeed have a relationship with another woman.[207] However, according to Holywood's account, this relationship was conducted while Anne was still living.[208] The woman involved was therefore castigated by Holywood as a 'concubine', 'because Miler had another woman alive by whom he had children and who was called his wife'.[209] According to the letter penned by Holywood, among several 'public sinners' brought to give 'repentance' was 'the concubine of the Protestant Archbishop of Cashel [Magrath]' who was compelled by two Jesuits to endure 'public penance' during which she was 'covered with a white veil' and forced to hold 'a lighted taper' in her hand.[210] The circumstances surrounding the woman's performance of public penance are unclear. Yet, the fact that she was targeted on account of her relationship with the bishop rather than the bishop himself suggests that in Ireland the Catholic Church authorities' punishment of clerical concubinage was heavily biased against women, a trend mirrored elsewhere in post-Tridentine Europe. As Wiesner-Hanks has shown, despite its best efforts at reform, in Europe where clerical concubinage continued to be a source of public embarrassment for the church, women found to be involved in illicit relationships with priests or bishops were forced to endure public humiliation (and sometimes exile), while the clerics themselves were simply fined and/or at times moved to another parish.[211]

The case of Anne O'Meara demonstrates how women who were married to Church of Ireland clerics, especially bishops, were very often targeted and subjected to intense mockery and derision at the hands of hostile Catholic commentators who represented them as apostates, heretics and warned them of the damning fate that awaited them in the afterlife as a punishment for their sins. Indeed the fact that Anne, a woman of Gaelic-Irish extraction was targeted, demonstrates that it was not English women alone who were treated with hostility by Catholic critics; divisions were firmly entrenched along religious lines, at least from the perspective of certain Catholic commentators. Yet, despite the intense ridicule and derision levelled against

[207] Ibid., ch. xxi, p. 38.
[208] Another report dated 1611 makes reference to Meiler Magrath's wife when she along with her children refused to accompany him to church. His son became a monk: see Ford, *The Protestant Reformation in Ireland*, p. 45.
[209] Hogan, *Distinguished Irishmen of the sixteenth century*, p. 428
[210] Ibid., pp 423, 428; Ó Mearáin, 'Miler McGrath, Archbishop of Cashel (1571-1622)', p. 454.
[211] Wiesner-Hanks, *Christianity & sexuality in the early modern world*, p. 146.

clerical wives by certain Catholic clerics, other indicators suggest that by the late Elizabethan and early Stuart eras the standing and reputation of clerical wives was improving, at least within their own confessional communities. The lauded and exalted position of 'godly' clerical wives in the early Stuart era as demonstrated on several funerary monuments and in funerary sermons served as an alternative narrative to Catholic representations of them as the antithesis of the Virgin Mary. This was true in the case of Elizabeth Pilsworth, wife of William Pilsworth, a native of London who became vicar of St David's Church in Naas and was consecrated Bishop of Kildare in September 1604, a position he retained until his death.[212] The couple had four children, three daughters and one son.[213] When Elizabeth died on 31 December 1613 at the age of forty-four, a tomb to her memory was erected in the Church of Dunfert in the barony of Carbury, presumably by her husband who was buried in the same church, as was the couple's son, Philip (d. 1638).[214] The short inscription (originally in Latin) extolled Elizabeth's laudatory and exemplary attributes and represented her as the epitome of 'ideal' Protestant womanhood. Elizabeth was 'the beloved, chaste and godly wife of Pilsworth' who 'left the world ... seeking a heavenly kingdom'.[215] This confidence in the glorious fate that awaited Elizabeth in God's 'heavenly kingdom' as depicted on her funerary epitaph was diametrically opposed to the damning fate which Ó Dubhthaigh had prophesied for Anne O'Meara and the wives of Casey and Sheyne in the late 1570s. Another example of the respect and status afforded clerical wives was the funerary monument erected to the memory of Jeneta Houston, wife of Archibald Adair (m. 1614), Dean of Raphoe (1617-30), and later Bishop of Waterford and Lismore (1641-47), who died giving birth to twins, a boy and a girl, in January 1618 at the age of twenty. Jeneta is represented as a model of exemplary female godliness, a paragon of piety and virtue which her epitaph exhorted others to imitate.

> Her esteemed memory remaining, she outshone others in virtue, far surpassing them in happy piety, in simplicity. Her breeding, voice, soul,

[212] Fitzgerald, 'Queries', p. 342.
[213] Their son, Philip Pilsworth (d. 1638) married Amy, daughter of George Fitzgerald of Tecroghan in County Meath: see E. O'Leary, 'John Lye of Clonaugh' in *Kildare Arch. Soc. Jn.*, ii (1896), p. 134. Their daughter married, before 1634, Neal Malloy, son of Cosny Malloy who entered Trinity as a scholar in 1612 and was ordained five years later by Bishop Pilsworth: see Ford, *The Protestant Reformation*, p. 95.
[214] Fitzgerald, 'Queries', p. 342.
[215] Ibid.

> look, bearing, the other adjuncts of her life aswell, sing of a praise not likely to pass away.[216]

The respect accorded women such as Elizabeth Pilsworth and Jeneta Housteon was indicative of the greater clarity, appreciation and respect for the role of clerical wives (particularly those of senior-ranking clergy) which had developed among the Church of Ireland community in Ireland during the early to mid-Stuart period, reflecting the increased strength and growing presence of that community there. Conversely, however, the complete absence of any reference to his wife or to his married status on the monument erected to the memory of Bishop Meiler Magrath (d. 1621) at St Patrick's Cathedral in Cashel, highlights how the position of clerical wives, even those married to senior-ranking Church of Ireland bishops, could remain tenuous.[217]

The representations discussed above are valuable for what they reveal about the ideals to which clerical wives in the early Stuart era were expected to conform. Furthermore, as Tait has shown, to contemporaries these representations on funerary monuments functioned as 'cues' which 'unlocked' a variety of meanings relating to the understanding of the roles held by women in general – and in this case the wives of clergymen specifically – in early modern society.[218] However, it is important to remember that the women described on monuments and in funerary sermons are represented as paragons and exemplars, reflecting the moralising nature of funerary architecture and the didactic quality of the funerary sermon genre. The latter are concerned with the 'ideal' rather than the actuality and consequently they do not give us much sense of the reality of the daily lives of the women in question (this is discussed in more detail below). It is certain that the daily life of at least some women married to clergymen was far from ideal. In a large majority of cases the Established Church, in the absence of sufficient numbers of native clergy, recruited suitably trained Protestant clergy and bishops from England, many of whom, upon appointment to benefices within the Irish Church, travelled to Ireland together with their wives and families.[219] For these women, leaving their family, friends and

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[216] *Journal of the Association for the Preservation of the Memorials of the Dead*, iii, no. 3, (1895), p. 419

[217] Walter Harris (ed.), *The works of James Ware concerning Ireland, revised and improved ... vol. i containing the history of the bishops* (Dublin, 1739-46), p. 485.

[218] Tait, *Death, burial & commemoration in Ireland*, p. 127.

[219] Ford, *The Protestant Reformation in Ireland*, p. 27.

familiar surroundings in order to adapt to life in an unfamiliar and remote location was a cause of trepidation. Indeed when in 1563 London-resident Hugh Brady (*c*.1527-84) was appointed Bishop of Meath, his first wife (whose identity is unknown) was reportedly apprehensive about relocating to Ireland.[220] Apprehensions were also expressed by Leah Mawe, Bishop Bedell's wife in the 1620s. In a letter written to James Ussher in March 1626, Bedell related his wife's trepidation about relocating from their comfortable Suffolk abode to Ireland, remarking that she 'had rather continue with her friends in her native countrey, than put her self into the hazzard of the seas, and a foreign land, with many casualties in travel, which she perhaps out of fear, apprehends more than there is cause'.[221] Indeed Leah's concerns with regard to the 'hazzard of the seas' were not unfounded as travel across the Irish Sea could indeed prove treacherous and in some cases, even fatal. The example of Robert Graves, appointed Bishop of Ferns and Leighlin in 1600, is a case in point. In the same year as his appointment to the bishopric Graves, his wife and children all drowned in Dublin Bay as they attempted to travel to his southern diocese.[222] Despite her reservations, however, Leah Mawe, 'resolving as she ought to be contented with whatsoever God shall appoint', departed for Ireland in April 1628 in the company of her husband and children.[223] Bedell clearly shared his wife's reservations about the 'many casualties in travel[ling]' to Ireland as before departing for Dublin, in a precautionary measure, he drew up a will.[224] By July 1628, however, the family were living at Dublin where they were, according to Bedell, 'I thanck God ... all well'.[225]

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[220] Brady to Cecil, 16 May 1565, TNA SP 63/13/39; Brady to Cecil, 10 Jan. 1565, TNA SP 63/12/17.
[221] Burnet, *The life of William Bedell*, pp 34-5.
[222] Cotton, *Fasti ecclesiae Hiberniae*, ii, 335-6. Conversely, at the outbreak of sectarian hostilities in 1641, Anne Synge née Edgeworth, wife of George Synge (b. 1594), bishop of Cloyne (1638-52) was drowned together with her mother and five children, among them her daughter Margaret, as they attempted to sail to England. Anne was the daughter of Francis Edgeworth, clerk of the hanaper in Dublin. The couple were married in 1622. Their daughter Margaret married (probably in the late 1630s) Michael Boyle (1609/10-1702), dean of Cloyne and later Lord Chancellor of Ireland and archbishop of Armagh: see Marie-Louise Legg, 'Synge, George (1594–1652)' in *O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26902, accessed 18 Aug. 2012].
[223] Bedell and Leah also had a daughter, Grace, who had died four years previously in April 1624. Leah had four children with her previous husband, Robert Mawe (d. 1609), town recorded of St Edmonds-bury in Suffolk. They were Nicholas, Leah, Robert and Edward: see Shuckburgh (ed.), *Two biographies of William Bedell*, preface, xvi, p. 80.
[224] Bedell to Ward, 13 May 1628 in Shuckburgh (ed.), *Two biographies of William Bedell*, p. 293.
[225] Bedell to Ward, 16 July 1628 in Shuckburgh (ed.), *Two biographies of William Bedell*, p. 294.

After a turbulent tenure as provost of Trinity College Leah and their family were once again obliged to move. In 1629 Bedell was appointed as bishop of the combined dioceses of Kilmore and Ardagh and the family settled at an episcopal palace in Kilmore. Both of his dioceses were in areas that had been recently settled (Cavan and Longford), but as Bedell observed 'our new plantation is yet raw, the churches ruined' and most of the inhabitants were Irish.[226] Notwithstanding being surrounded in this remote district by a majority Irish and Catholic population, Bedell and his family appear to have been relatively settled at Kilmore, at least until the outbreak of violence in October 1641. Although Bedell's proselytising efforts were largely unsuccessful, he gained a position of respect among his Catholic parishioners, which in turn undoubtedly made life somewhat more tolerable for his wife and children within the local community. Although in their description of the Kilmore bishop's Irish sojourn, his biographers are silent in relation to the experience of Bedell's wife, focusing instead on Bedell's engagement in matters of religious controversy, his attempts to reform the Irish clergy and to evangelise among the laity, Leah does not appear to have suffered stigmatisation as a result of her position as the wife of a Church of Ireland bishop, although of course the absence of documentary evidence does not of itself rule out this possibility. The family appear to have become reasonably well integrated within their local community. Indeed according to Alexander Clogie, Bedell's son-in-law and later biographer, at Christmas the Bedell household became a recognised 'place of great hospitality' for 'the poor Irish to feast ... both men and women ... that scarce had any whole cloathes on their back, or could understand a word of English'.[227] The family's acculturation within the Kilmore community is further highlighted by the fact that Bedell importuned the couple's children to learn the Irish language.[228] In his endeavours to instruct the children, he was aided by his wife. Indeed Leah appears to have taken a central role in this regard, particularly in the religious instruction of

[226] Quoted in Aidan Clarke, 'Bishop William Bedell (1571-1642) and the Irish Reformation' in Ciarán Brady (ed.), *Worsted in the game: losers in Irish history* (Dublin, 1989), p. 66.
[227] Shuckburgh (ed.), *Two biographies of William Bedell*, pp 160-1.
[228] Bedell to Ward, 24 May 1629 in Shuckburgh (ed.), *Two biographies of William Bedell*, p. 297. Bedell was an avid proponent of the Irish language as a means of securing conversions to the Protestant faith, a position which made him unpopular among certain members of the Church of Ireland establishment. For a discussion of Bedell's career in an Irish context see Clarke, 'Bishop William Bedell (1571-1642)', pp 61-70 and McCafferty, 'Venice in Cavan: the career of William Bedell', pp 173-87.

their children. William junior recounted how his mother had 'taught them to read English and give an account of the heads of the catechisms'.[229]

Leah died on 26 March 1638, according to Clogie, of 'lethargy' and her body was interred in 'the remotest part of the south side of the church-yard' of Kilmore Cathedral, next to the couple's son, John who had died four years previously.[230] While her funeral congregation would have largely been composed of the small population that made up the Protestant community at Kilmore, the respect afforded the bishop on the occasion of his own funeral in 1642, during what was a period of extraordinary sectarian tension and hostility, is emblematic of the Bedell family's being more generally well settled within the predominantly Catholic parish. The rebels, out of respect for the bishop, allowed his family to give him a decent burial, although they prudently avoided use of Protestant rites as 'it was not thought advisable to provoke the rable [that is, the rebels] so much'.[231] The dutiful respect afforded Bedell by the Catholic rebels was in stark contrast to the treatment accorded other members of the Church of Ireland episcopate and their wives during the turbulence of 1641-2, many of whom, in an extreme expression of religious antagonism, were ceremoniously disinterred from their graves. For example, at St Munchin's churchyard in County Limerick the remains of George Webb, Bishop of Limerick (1634-42) were disinterred by a mob of rebels, mutilated and re-interred with the body of a dead dog. At Maynooth in County Kildare the wife of Robert Sibthorpe, Bishop of Kilfenora and Limerick and formerly prebendary of Maynooth (and personal chaplain to the earl of Cork) was, together with her husband, disinterred from their grave and thrown 'out of the Churchyard'.[232]

Unlike Leah Mawe who, owing to her husband's active efforts to engage with the local Irish Catholic community, appears to have lived at relative ease among her Catholic neighbours at Kilmore, for other women married to members of the Church of Ireland episcopate, acculturation or even coexistence within Irish society was more problematic since as perceived agents of English conquest and Protestant

[229] Shuckburgh (ed.), *Two biographies of William Bedell*, p 17.
[230] Ibid., pp 150, 151, 337.
[231] Burnet, *The life of William Bedell*, p. 218.
[232] Deposition of William Vowell, 25 June 1642 (TCD, MS 813, fol. 331); Cotton, *Fasti ecclesiae Hiberniae*, i, 327–8.

dominance in Ireland, they could become targets of physical attacks. Susan Steynings, wife of George Montgomery (m. 1597), Bishop of Derry, Clogher and Raphoe from 1605 until his transfer to Meath in 1610, is a case in point. Originally from Somerset in England, Susan moved to Ireland with her husband in *c*.1605.[233] The couple had one daughter, Jane (d. 1678), who in 1615 married Nicholas St Lawrence (d. 1643/4), Lord Howth.[234] By 1614 Susan and her husband had settled in County Meath where Montgomery constructed a new episcopal residence at Ardbraccan, six kilometres outside Navan.[235] By then, however, severe anti-recusancy campaigns, directed by Lord Deputy Arthur Chichester, were aggravating relations between the Catholic community and the personnel of the Church of Ireland. During the period of Chichester's deputyship (1604-15), and especially in the years 1605-7 and 1611-15, increasingly harsh measures against recusancy, including punitive recusancy fines, arrests, imprisonments and summary executions, were enforced.[236] These served to accentuate divisions and increase tensions between Catholic communities and members of the Church of Ireland ministry and their families, who, as standard-bearers of the Protestant elect in Ireland, were often singled out for particularly harsh treatment by disaffected Catholics. Indicative of this hostility, in 1614 Montgomery reportedly received threats to his life, prompting his decision to fortify the family residence at Ardbraccan and demonstrating his growing fear for his family's safety. Montgomery's precautionary measures in 1614 were understandable. The couple had previously been the victims of assaults at the hands of their Catholic neighbours. In 1608 during an attack on the town of Derry led by Cahir O'Doherty (d. 1608), Lord of Inishowen, in which Sir George Paulet, governor of Derry was killed, the couple's home was targeted by a group of rebels.[237] Their house was looted and Montgomery's library destroyed. The incident was particularly harrowing for Montgomery's wife, however. She and another woman, Lady Jane Paulet née Kyme, the English wife of Sir George Paulet, were

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[233] Hill (ed.), *The Montgomery manuscripts*, pp 96-100; James Ware, *The antiquities and history of Ireland* (London, 1705), p. 26; Henry A. Jefferies, 'George Montgomery, first Protestant bishop of Clogher (1605-1621) in *Clogher Rec.*, xvi, no. 3 (1999), pp 127-9.
[234] Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, vi, 608.
[235] Hill (ed.), *The Montgomery manuscripts*, pp 96-100.
[236] Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*.
[237] Hill (ed.), *The Montgomery manuscripts*, pp 96-100.

detained as hostages and endured almost three months imprisonment before being released by their captors.[238]

The deliberate and symbolic attack on the episcopate residence, the destruction of the couple's goods and the imprisonment of Susan Montgomery in 1608 demonstrate the significant risks confronted by wives of the Church of Ireland episcopate by virtue of their association with public figures who were often ridiculed and vilified within their local communities. Women married to clergymen of lesser ranks could also find themselves victims of deliberate acts of violence and hostility. An incident which occurred in the parish of Balrothery, two miles outside the city of Dublin, in November 1607 is a case in point. On 1 June 1608 the Court of Castle Chamber heard the case of Thomas Meredith, an Englishman and minister of Balrothery, against James Barnewall, and other defendants accused of orchestrating a riot. Barnewall was a local landowner whose family were known recusants, with several members having been educated in the seminaries of Catholic Spain.[239] On Sunday 1 November 1607 Barnewall, along with a group of mourners, prepared to attend the funeral of his mother in the local parish church. According to Meredith's testimony, the service was to be held in an 'idoltarous' fashion which the minister strongly opposed, leading some 200 persons assembled at the church to attack him: meanwhile the Book of Common Prayer was symbolically trampled under-foot.[240] Such was the severity of the attack that, according to Barnaby Rich, Meredith was beaten to the point that 'it had lyke to have cost him hys lyfe'.[241] However, not only was the minister himself targeted; his pregnant wife was also set upon by the mob, who according to court records, threw the woman to the ground.[242] James Barnewall and others among the rioting party were found guilty. However, in an expression of Catholic solidarity, those involved were evidently unwilling to testify against Barnewall and his counterparts and the defendants were later dismissed for lack of evidence.[243] While the outcome of the incident for Meredith and his wife is not

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[238] *Cal. S.P. Ire*., *1606*-8, p. 512.

[239] By 1608 Patrick Barnwall of Bremore Castle, Balrothery, was a student in Paris while his brother Robert attended Douai: see P. Barnwall to R. Barnwall, 12 Oct 1608, TNA SP 63/225/222.

[240] John G. Crawford, *A Star Chamber court in Ireland: The court of castle chamber, 1571-1641* (Dublin, 2005), pp 145-6.

[241] 'Barnaby Rich's 'Remembrances of the state of Ireland, 1612' ed. C. Litton, p. 140.

[242] Crawford, *A Star Chamber court in Ireland*, pp 145-6.

[243] *H.M.C. Egmont*, i, pt. 1, 33.

recorded, their case was a salutary precursor to the escalation of violence and hostility experienced by Church of Ireland clerics and their wives, both those of the ranks of the episcopate and lower ranks, following the outbreak of the 1641 uprising (see chapter four).

Not all conflict in which women married to Church of Ireland clergy became embroiled was between rival confessions, however. Sometimes clerical wives found themselves in the midst of conflict and controversy within their own confessional community in which their husbands were involved and in which they (by association) became implicated and, as a consequence suffered. This was true in the case of Joan Atherton née Leakey (b. 1595), wife of John Atherton, Bishop of Waterford and Lismore (1636-40).[244] Originally from Somerset in England the couple married in 1620 and in the summer of 1629 Joan moved to Ireland with her husband and their five young daughters.[245] By August of that year the family had settled in Dublin city and by April 1630 were living at Wood Quay in the predominantly Protestant parish of St John the Evangelist where John was installed as prebendary and enjoyed a generous annual income of £60.[246] Within a few years Atherton, supported by influential patrons in the Irish political and ecclesiastical administration, including the Irish lord deputy, Thomas Wentworth (d. 1641), Earl of Strafford and John Bramhall (d. 1663), Bishop of Derry, enjoyed a period of accelerated advancement within the Irish state church; in 1634 he was appointed chancellor of the Killaloe diocese, rector of Killaban and Ballintubride in Queen's County, chaplain to the lord chancellor and in June 1635 he received an honorary doctorate of divinity from Trinity College, Dublin. By December 1635 Atherton was promoted to chancellor of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin’s diocesan cathedral which provided a round of liturgical services and was the spiritual focal point of the

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[244] James Ware, *The whole works of Sir James Ware concerning Ireland, revised and improved* trans. Walter Harris (2 vols, Dublin, 1764), i, 539-41. For more details see: Aidan Clarke, ‘Atherton, John (1598–1640)’ in *O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/835, accessed 25 Aug. 2012].

[245] Their daughters were Joan, Susan, Sarah, Agnett and Christian.

[246] Although this was substantially less than the annual income of £130 Atherton had enjoyed at his Somerset rectory in the parish of Huish: see Ware, *Whole works*, i, p. 539; Peter Marshall, *Mother Leakey and the bishop: a ghost story* (Oxford, 2007), p. 61; Raymond Gillespie (ed.), *The vestry records of the parish of St John the Evangelist Dublin, 1595-1658* (Dublin, 2002).

English administration housed nearby in Dublin Castle.[247] This position would have confirmed both Atherton and his family as senior-ranking and well respected members of Dublin city's tight knit Protestant élite. In 1636 the family's growing prestige and reputation was further boosted by Atherton's appointment as Bishop of Waterford and Lismore.[248] Yet, Atherton and his family would not hold this privileged position for long. Four years later, in 1640, Atherton found himself at the centre of what was undoubtedly one of the greatest scandals involving a member of the Church of Ireland episcopate in the Tudor and Stuart eras and which in turn propelled Joan Atherton and the couple's five young daughters into the midst of a humiliating public controversy.

On 17 June 1640 the parliament at Dublin received a petition from Atherton's steward and tithe proctor, John Child, accusing him of a capital offence, punishable by death; sodomy with the steward himself.[249] A few days later, as he was reportedly preparing to attend divine service at Christ Church Cathedral, Atherton was arrested and committed to gaol at Dublin Castle, where he remained until the commencement of his trial in November. His arrest in June 1640 unleashed a myriad of sordid and shocking offences committed by the disgraced bishop, including rape, adultery and incest, which circulated widely and rapidly, not only in Ireland but also in England.[250] Atherton went on trial at Dublin in late November 1640 accused of two charges, rape and sodomy: on Thursday 27 November the jury returned a verdict of guilty on both charges and Atherton was sentenced to be hanged. He was returned to his prison cell in Dublin Castle to await punishment, during which time he received a number of visitors, among them Nicholas Bernard, Dean of Ardagh and prebendary

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[247] Kenneth Milne (ed.), *Christ Church Cathedral Dublin: a history* (Dublin, 2000); Raymond Gillespie, *Thomas Howell and his friends: serving Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, 1570-1700* (1997).

[248] Aidan Clarke, 'Atherton, John (1598–1640)' in *O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/835, accessed 25 Aug. 2012].

[249] Marshall, *Mother Leakey & the bishop*, p. 88.

[250] In August that year, for example, John Walley, steward to Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork, reported to the earl that 'each day doth produce more matter against him'. As well as the charge of sodomy, other reports featured accounts of the bishop's numerous 'adulteries with married women, single women and young girls, besides other most shameful and odious abuses to honest women'. Indeed according to Walley the charges against the Church of Ireland bishop were becoming 'so innumerable as the examinations taken thereof will make a large volume'. News of Atherton's misdemeanours also circulated in England where among accounts of copious 'foul offences' committed by the disgraced bishop, the charge of incest was added; according the reports of Edmund Rossingham, a professional news-letter writer and informant to Edward Conway, second Viscount Conway (1594-1655), an English peer with Irish connections, the bishop had 'committed incest with the sister of his wife'. Marshall, *Mother Leakey & the bishop*, pp 92-4.

of Dromore. Bernard acted as Atherton's spiritual counsellor during his final days and later published an account of the bishop's imprisonment and subsequent execution.[251] Entitled *The penitent death of a woeful sinner*, published at London in May 1641, Bernard's account was published at the command of James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh, who, as Aidan Clarke has noted, was more concerned with upholding 'the reputation of the episcopate in a climate of Protestant criticism' than exonerating the condemned bishop.[252] Notwithstanding the wider political and institutional motivations surrounding its publication, Bernard's account offers a unique, albeit brief, insight into the impact of the scandal on Atherton's family, particularly his wife Joan who, according to Bernard, visited her husband during his incarceration at Dublin Castle on at least two occasions. Although the emphasis throughout the narrative is on Atherton's repentance for his sins (making only passing reference to Atherton's wife and daughters), Bernard also included as an appendix to his account two letters written by the disgraced bishop to Joan and their daughters, as evidence of his 'growth in that time'.[253] His letters offer a brief yet tantalising glimpse into the challenges and difficulties faced by Joan Atherton and their five daughters, the eldest of whom was no more than eighteen years old, in the midst of the scandal and spurious rumours that surrounded their family throughout the high-profile controversy.[254]

According to Bernard, during her first visit to see her husband, Joan was visibly distressed. Bernard described how she 'fell into a passion' whereupon Atherton attempted to comfort her, remarking that 'he trusted God, who had forgiven the sin, would also in time abate the scandall, and provide for her also'.[255] Joan visited her husband a second and final time, on Friday 4 December, the night before his execution and on this occasion was accompanied by the couple's five daughters. During this 'last farewell' Atherton gave 'good counsell' to his children and 'affectionate ... counsell' to his wife who was once again 'the more passionate',

[251] Bernard, *The penitent death of a woeful sinner.*
[252] Aidan Clarke, 'A woeful sinner: John Atherton' in Carey & Lotz-Heumann (eds), *Taking sides?*, p. 147.
[253] Bernard, *The penitent death of a woeful sinner*, p. 17.
[254] The Atherton's first daughter, Joan, was born in 1622 so would have been no more than eighteen or perhaps nineteen at the time of her father's death: see Marshall, *Mother Leakey & the bishop*, p. 133.
[255] Bernard, *The penitent death of a woeful sinner*, p. 10.

prompting Atherton to 'comfort' and 'instruct' her.[256] In this, their final encounter as a family, Atherton presented two 'pious' letters, one to his wife and one to his daughters. In the letter to his daughters, he alluded to their financial difficulties and uncertain future as the daughters of a disgraced and convicted bishop stripped of his financial possessions, and wondered 'what share shall come to your lot'? He regretted that he would be unable to see his daughters 'well preferred' as he had hoped but expressed a wish that 'God, who as he hath given you body and soule, so I doubt not but will of his great goodnesse provide for your estate'.[257] Unable to offer them any financial certainty, and in the absence of a 'patrimony' or any 'worldly blessings' to bestow upon them 'by shares and proportions', Atherton instead bequeathed them his spiritual blessing and 'last councell' which he advised 'each [daughter] without wrong to the other, may take and challenge the whole to her selfe'.[258] Atherton's 'last councell' to his daughters comprised six individual instructions, the first to never go to sleep without making peace with God 'for the offences of the day'; the second, reminiscent of William Bedell, Bishop of Kilmore's advice to Mrs Dillon, to always be 'constant in private prayer' and to pray 'twice every day at the least, upon your knees'; to be content with whatever God would afford them, 'poverty or riches'; if they marry to 'preferre an honest man that fears God' above all other qualities, and lastly, to be obedient to their mother, who as a widowed mother was to be responsible for the respectable upbringing of five daughters.[259] To his wife Joan, Atherton also offered advice. He urged his 'deare wife' to 'marke well these last words of him who these twenty yeares and upwards hath been your husband'. Conscious of the devastating consequences of his actions and of the charges against him for his wife and daughters he conceded that 'in my suffering, you suffer both in your credit and estate, and what else soever concernes this world'. Atherton counselled his wife to turn to the Lord: 'I doubt not but that God will have mercy on you, and prove a husband to you, and a father to my children, yea, I doubt not but you shall live with the same happinesse and greater content[ment] then if I were with you'. From this we can infer little about what was evidently a strained and difficult marriage. Yet Atherton begged Joan to 'misconstrue not these my dying advertisements' as they proceeded 'from true

[256] Ibid., p. 17.
[257] Ibid., Appendix 'The letter to his children', unpaginated.
[258] Ibid.
[259] Ibid.

affection', and he trusted that 'though we part in this world, yet we may enjoy a more happy meeting in Heaven. And after all our afflictions be there partakers of endless blisse'. Before that 'happy meeting', however, Atherton offered four points of counsel to his wife for the remainder of her life on earth; firstly to serve God for 'he will not fayle you', to 'bring up your children in the feare of God', to maintain a godly household; 'that household which you keep, let it be the servants of God' and 'above all things be diligent in private prayer, make all your needs knowne unto the Lord'.[260] Atherton appended an instruction to both letters to 'cast not away this loose paper', but to preserve it as a jewel, 'the legacy of him who can now give no other'.[261]

On Saturday 5 December 1640 John Atherton was hanged at Oxmantown Green on the outskirts of Dublin. In his 'last act of death' Atherton 'prayed for a blessing upon his Majestie, and his dominions' and also 'for his wife and children' and 'so commended his soule to God'.[262] His body was interred, at his own request, in a rubbish dump in the corner of the churchyard of St John the Evangelist in Fishamble Street.[263] His funeral ceremony took place in the parish church of St John's which, according to Bernard, was filled to capacity; undoubtedly reports of the bishop's 'scandalous and ignominious death' had occasioned a large-scale turn-out of Dublin residents. Indeed, according the parish vestry records, following Atherton's funeral the churchwardens of St John's were required to pay the considerable sum of nine shillings to repair broken pews, implying a congregation which was expanded beyond capacity and which had perhaps behaved raucously during the ceremony.[264] Joan Atherton did not long outlive her husband, and was buried, in the same churchyard of St John's shortly afterwards, in January 1642. Before her death, however, she took measures to secure the financial interests of her family. In August 1641, on the eve of the outbreak of the uprising, a court order granted her and her daughters 'all the lands, goods and chattels' which Atherton held at the time of his

[260] Ibid., Appendix 'The letter to his wife', unpaginated.
[261] Ibid., Appendix 'The letter to his wife', unpaginated; Appendix 'The letter to his children', unpaginated.
[262] Ibid., p. 29.
[263] Ibid., pp 29-30.
[264] Gillespie (ed.), *The vestry records of the parish of St John the Evangelist Dublin*, p. 145.

death, and which as a result of his conviction had been forfeit to the Crown.[265] Indicative of her capacity and willingness to claim her rightful entitlements and those of her daughters, the court order was apparently secured after Joan travelled to England to petition for her rights.[266] Joan Atherton's case reveals how difficult and uncertain the position and status of clergymen's wives (even those married to senior-ranking figures) remained. However, that her legal entitlements were fully recognised and honoured by the Stuart authorities, despite her husband's conviction and execution, demonstrates the extent to which the status of clerical wives had improved since the 1530s and 1540s.

V

Throughout the early modern period, in Ireland, as in other European societies, there was a complex and ongoing dialogue over the meaning of death, how to die well, the most appropriate way to remember the dead, and how in death, the collective honour of a lineage might be enhanced and celebrated.[267] An examination of death and two closely related issues – funerals and memorialisation – as they related to lay Protestant women is, therefore, central to this study of women and religious change and conflict during the period *c*.1560 to *c*.1641 when deepening confessional divisions further complicated that dialogue. As David Cressy has discussed in the context of early modern England, the rituals, protocols and ceremonies associated with funerals were freighted with social and religious meaning and, like other aspects of religious life, the burial of the dead could 'be subject to principled disagreement', on occasion even providing a forum for open conflict.[268] While funerals could spark conflict between families and parishioners, they also provided an opportunity to display a family's influence and power, particularly New English families, who in a period of increasing upward mobility, sought to publicise their elevated social position through elaborate and public funerary ceremonies. The funeral of Catherine Boyle, Countess of Cork in March 1630 is a case in point. The elaborate funeral cost, according to the Earl of Cork's estimates, more than one thousand marks sterling, most of which was spent on black clothing and drapery for

[265] Marshall, *Mother Leakey & the bishop*, p. 283.
[266] Ibid.
[267] For a discussion on honour see Brendan Kane, *The politics and culture of honour in Britain and Ireland, 1541-1641* (Cambridge, 2010).
[268] David Cressy, *Birth, marriage and death: ritual, religion and the life-cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 1997), p. 1.

the hearse, coach and horses, while over 145 yards of cloth was purchased for black gowns worn by the mourners, chief among them, the earl's eldest daughter, Alice, Countess of Barrymore.[269] As will become apparent, the countess' funeral provided public affirmation of the pre-eminence and supremacy of the Established Church and its adherents at a time of strained relations between Dublin's confessionally-divided inhabitants. As well as the funeral ceremony itself, funerary monuments were another important medium through which members of the Church of Ireland could give expression to their religious beliefs. Indeed such monuments offered the most tangible representation of a person's faith and, for Protestants and Catholics alike, as Tait has highlighted, 'were imbued with religious significance'.[270]In late sixteenth and seventeenth-century Ireland, how a person chose to be memorialised – or s/he was memorialised by the family – was often a telling indicator of the individual's religious beliefs which, in many instances, were kept private during her/his lifetime. Print as well as plaster functioned as a medium through which a person could be memorialised in death. Published funeral sermons and elegies – which gained increasing popularity as the seventeenth century progressed – provided the Church of Ireland with an opportunity to exemplify the virtuous nature of its adherents.[271] Collectively these representations – in print and plaster – contributed to the formation of an idealised image of Irish Protestant female piety. Alison Wall's contention in relation to English Protestant women that these depictions offered 'a paragon rather than a person, the reflection of an ideal rather than a believable body', equally applied to their counterparts in Ireland.[272]

As Mac Cuarta has highlighted, funeral ceremonies often 'crystallised at local level the transition from the old religion to the new dispensation represented by the Established Church', and could in turn spark discord and dispute among communities.[273] For example, in Kilkenny, 'an outrage was committed' against the dean of St Canice's Cathedral regarding the nature of a funeral ceremony to be

[269] Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 1st ser., iii, 19-20.
[270] Tait, *Death, burial & commemoration in Ireland*, p. 107.
[271] For a discussion of published funeral sermons in an English context see Lyndell O'Hara, '"Far beyond her nature and her sex": the creation of a Protestant hagiography, 1590-1640', (PhD thesis, Fordham University, 2006).
[272] Ibid., p. 7.
[273] Mac Cuarta, 'A Catholic funeral in county Down, 1617', p. 320.

conducted there.[274] Perhaps the most revealing example of funerals as theatres of tension between Catholics and Protestants was that of Suzanna Plunket, Countess of Fingall, which took place at Dublin in September 1623. As discussed above, Suzanna, a Protestant was married to a Catholic husband, Luke Plunket, Lord Killeen, later earl of Fingall. Plunket appears to have been tolerant if not supportive of his wife's religion: upon her death he afforded her a full Protestant ceremony, attended by members of the extended Plunket family as well as representatives of Dublin's Protestant élite including Sir Garret Moore (d. 1627), Sir Roger Jones (d. 1644) 'two [privy] Counsellors of that State' together with 'the Sheriffe and diverse other gentlemen of quality well affected'.[275] However, a violent altercation between the Catholic Plunkets, the Protestant congregants, and the minister quickly erupted at the ceremony. An account of the fracas features in a letter written by George Abbot (d. 1633), Archbishop of Canterbury to Sir Edward Conway. According to Abbot's account, as the minister came forward to receive the funeral cortege outside the church:

> ... fowre weomen being the Captainesses and of these two being sisters to the Lord Killeene with about foure score other weomen, imagining that sex to bee lawlesse [beyond the law?] did without the churche dore assault the minister comeing forth to meete the corpse, rent his surplis [surplice], toare out a leafe of the Communion booke [the Book of Common Prayer] and with blowes did offer him such violence that the better disposed people were inforced to reskue him.[276]

The disturbance did not cease outside the church, however, and the minister was ultimately forced to abandon the funeral service, which quickly degenerated into a riotous and frenzied encounter between the adherents of the Established Church, those 'well affected', and the party of irate Catholic women, led by the Plunket sisters. The archbishop related assiduously how:

> The body being brought into the churche, and the minister in the pulpit ready to preache, the weomen with shoutes and outcries interrupted him and made him to desist and when by advise of the better sorte hee came downe and would onely have read the prayers for the buryall of the dead, they made such a hubbub and outcrye that he was forced to leave that also. In breefe the two privy counsellors [Moore and Jones] and other of

[274] *Cal. S. P. Ire., 1603-6*, p. 214.
[275] Brady, 'Funeral customs of the past', pp 331-2.
[276] Ibid.

> the best rank were constrained [compelled] to give blowes and take blowes but without any weapon.[277]

It is interesting in this case that the riotous party was entirely led by four female ringleaders, two of whom were Plunket's sisters.[278] Their involvement in the fracas sheds light on the underlying tensions and antagonisms which existed within the immediate family with regard to Plunket's choice of spouse and in particular her religious affiliation to the Established Church, a fact clearly viewed with open hostility by the women. Interestingly, however, their wrath was levelled not against the body of the dead Lady Killeen, but against the objects, symbols and ceremonies of the Established Church; the 'Communion booke' (the Book of Common Prayer), the person of the minister, his surplice, and the prayers for the burial of the dead. By targeting objects of Protestant veneration, solemnity and ritual, the women's actions were reminiscent of the actions of Catholic rioters in Munster earlier in the century who during the 1603 recusancy revolt mutilated and destroyed Protestant bibles and Books of Common Prayer and presaged the actions of Catholic rebel mobs later in the century following the outbreak of the 1641 rising (discussed in chapter four).[279] However, it is important to bear in mind that unlike the actions of the Munster rioters in 1603 and those of the Catholic rebels in 1641 – which both occurred during periods of particularly heightened sectarian tensions – the disturbance at the Plunket funeral in 1623 occurred at a time when an atmosphere of relative peace and religious toleration prevailed in the country, demonstrating how latent tensions could erupt sporadically in isolated episodes of attacks which involved the targeting of Protestant clergymen, and as discussed above, their wives, along with objects of Protestant veneration, in times of relative peace as well as during periods of heightened sectarian tensions.

The actions of the Plunket sisters and the mob of female rioters demonstrated their resentment of the religious policy of the state and presented a serious affront to the dignity and authority of the Established Church in Ireland, prompting Abbot to report to Conway about the 'outrage committed by fourscore Irish women, Papists, against a clergyman endeavouring to perform the funeral service over Lady

[277] Ibid.
[278] Ibid.
[279] Anthony J. Sheehan, 'The recusancy revolt of 1603: a reinterpretation' in *Archiv. Hib.*, xxxviii (1983), p. 3.

Killeene'.[280] In response to the outrage, Abbot jubilantly reported that the lord deputy, Henry Cary, did 'instantly take care to see it severely punished':

> For the chastisement hereof the Lord Deputy hath fetched up the Pursuevants the foure weomen ring leaders in this outrage, hath imprisoned them and before their delivery taken very good bondes for their appeerance this next Terme in the Castel Chamber, where they are like to bee made examples of iustice and severity.[281]

While it is not known whether the two Plunket sisters and their accomplices were in fact punished as a result of their actions, Abbot's comments raise important questions about the extent to which the state was willing to prosecute women for riotous behaviour and, more generally, about the gendered nature of law and the prosecution of female criminality in early modern society. As Jacqueline Eales has noted in the context of early modern England, 'female offenders were in the minority in the secular courts' and their prosecution for criminal activity in the period can be described as 'atypical'.[282] While men were habitually subject to the full rigours of the law and suffered the requisite retribution as a result of their misdemeanours, women, by contrast, appear to have been less likely to suffer the full legal penalties for their defiance of the law, a phenomenon identified in the Irish context by Gillespie.[283] In cases of riotous behaviour gender could prove an important factor in determining the leniency of the state authorities in dealing with perpetrators. As the English lawyer William Lambarde (d. 1601) noted in his handbook for magistrates, *Eirenarcha, or the office of the justices of the peace* (1582), legislation against riot and unlawful assembly was not applicable in instances where the group was made up only of women (and children); however, if a man caused them to 'assemble to commit an unlawful act, then it is otherwise'.[284] This outlook is reflected in the Irish context by Abbot's comments regarding the women at the Plunket funeral who believed their 'sex to bee lawless', that is by virtue of their gender the female party believed that they were beyond reproach. Because they were less liable to be held criminally responsible, therefore, as Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin has pointed out, women

[280] Brady, 'Funeral customs of the past', pp 331-2.
[281] Ibid.
[282] Eales, *Women in early modern England*, p. 98.
[283] Raymond Gillespie, 'Women and crime in seventeenth century Ireland' in MacCurtain & O'Dowd (eds), *Women in early modern Ireland*, pp 43-52.
[284] William Lambarde, *Eirenarcha, or, the office of the justices of the peace* (London, 1582).

often represented ‘the shock troops of popular sentiment’.[285] However, Abbot’s comments about making the women ‘examples of iustice and severity’ suggests that in instances where women’s behaviour was deemed to be exceptionally scandalous, the authorities could and did seek to intervene and punish those involved. In another episode of all-female riotous action in Dublin (discussed in chapter two) the widowed Dublin native, Elinor Nugent née Handcock, was arrested and imprisoned for her part as leader in inciting the disturbances which took place during the confessionally-charged Cook Street riot of 1629, although Elinor’s widow status may have rendered her more susceptible to the wrath of the authorities than her married counterparts.[286]

The actions of the Plunket women and their female accomplices at Dublin were not a unique instance of female parties causing disruption at funerals in Elizabethan and Stuart Ireland. Similar behaviour was reported at a funeral in County Louth in the 1590s. In a village near Drogheda, a group of women attacked the minister (an Englishman) who was attempting to carry out the funeral ceremony according to the rites of the Established Church. As at the Plunket funeral, these women threw the Protestant celebrant into the open grave and only halted in their attack following the intervention of a Catholic priest.[287] As mentioned above, another mob which included women, assaulted Thomas Meredith, a minister and his pregnant wife, while Meredith was attempting to conduct the funeral ceremony of a female parishioner at Balrothery in north County Dublin in 1608.[288] As these funerals demonstrate, the religiously-charged and confessionally-contested forum of the funeral ceremony afforded women an opportunity to express their resentment at the religious reforms enforced by the state. However, as well as offering a platform for expression of religious tensions, funerals were important markers of social status. As Gillespie has discussed, in seventeenth-century Ireland funerals were an important social institution presenting ‘an opportunity for a tangible manifestation of hierarchy

[285] Ó hAnnracháin, ‘Theory in the absence of fact’, p. 146.
[286] Nicholas Archbold, ‘Evangelical Fruict of the Seraphicall Franciscan order’, BL Harleian MS 3888, ff 211-15. For a modern account of the role of Elinor Nugent and her female accomplices see Maighréad Ní Mhurchadha, ‘Elinor Nugent of Winetavern Street and the women’s riot of 1629’ in *Early modern Dubliners* (Dublin, 2008), pp 81-101.
[287] O’Sullivan Beare, *Historiae Catholicae Iberniae compendium*, ch. xii, pp 45-6.
[288] *H.M.C. Egmont*, i, pt. 1, 33

and status in a rapidly changing social order'.[289] Funeral rituals in Ireland were modelled on English practices. However, whereas funerals in Stuart England were, as Gillespie has stressed, becoming simpler and less extravagant 'moving from manifestations of the whole feudal community to more modest affairs', in the colonial environment of seventeenth-century Ireland, funerals took on a new significance and were deliberately used as occasions for the conspicuous promotion of status, power and prestige, particularly among the New English population.[290] In a country where vast wealth and titles could be accumulated with unusual rapidity, such displays were ideal vehicles for those whose social position was recently acquired to 'demonstrate their new place in a mobile social order and shake of the vestiges of their origins'.[291] This is especially true in the case of heraldic funerals – those of the nobility, whose numbers increased rapidly in the early years of the seventeenth century – and their associated elaborate pomp which was a particularly effective instrument used to impress upon the populace at large the prestige of the family involved, and of the state whose agents controlled the ritual.[292] Mindful of these considerations, the following examination of the funerals of three Protestant women – Lady Elizabeth Moore (d. 1581), Catherine Boyle, Countess of Cork (d. 1630) and Lady Grizel Power (d. 1641) – will show how, through their elaborate pomp and associated ceremony, these funerals, each at a different time in the period under review, bore testimony to the status and influence of the newly-ascendant Protestant community in Elizabethan and Stuart Ireland. The women were all members of the Irish aristocracy – their husbands were lords and earls – and as such their funerals were necessarily elaborate and ostentatious affairs, reflecting the wealth of their respective families. It must, however, be borne in mind that neither these women nor their funerals can be regarded as representing how women of a more modest socio-economic status were commemorated.

Lady Moore née Elizabeth Clifford, died at her residence at Mellifont, County Louth in 1581 and was buried in Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin on 30 December that

[289] Gillespie, 'Funerals and society in early seventeenth century Ireland' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.*, cxv (1985), p. 90.
[290] Ibid., p. 88.
[291] Ibid., p. 86.
[292] In Ireland the officials charged with the organisation and regulation of heraldic funerals were the Ulster King of Arms and his deputy, the Athlone pursuviant. For a detailed discussion of heraldic funerals and their function: see Tait, *Death, burial & commemoration in Ireland*, pp 39-45.

year.[293] As the wife of Sir Edward Moore (d. 1602), a distinguished military officer, and the widow of three husbands, all of whom played important roles in the Edwardian and Elizabethan administrations of Ireland, among them, Sir William Brabazon (d. 1552), lord justice of Ireland, the funeral of Elizabeth Moore was a particularly elaborate affair. The brief account of her funeral demonstrates how her death afforded the Moore family an opportunity to publicly express their status and to reinforce their connections among a prestigious cohort of New English settlers.[294] Elizabeth's family were conscious that her funeral had the potential to have more widespread resonances, particularly in light of its timing. In December 1581 the Elizabethan authorities were still in high alert following the Baltinglass rebellion (July 1580) which, according to Christopher Maginn, was 'the most serious challenge to Tudor authority in Ireland to emerge from within Leinster since the Kildare rebellion'.[295] As already emphasised, the rebellion, seriously unnerved the Elizabethan authorities who initiated a vigorous backlash against religious non-conformity, particularly in Dublin.[296] The funeral of Lady Moore – whose family were staunch supporters of the reformed religion – at Christ Church Cathedral, the centre of Protestant worship in the city (a ceremony which would presumably have been conducted according to the rites of the Established Church), afforded those loyal to the Queen's government an opportunity to publicly re-assert the supremacy of the state – and by extension the Established Church and reform mission – in the face of an increasingly militant and recalcitrant brand of Catholicism.

Lady Moore was the daughter and coheir of Nicholas Clifford of Chart, in Kent, and his wife, Mary Harpur.[297] The precise date of Elizabeth's arrival in Ireland is unknown, however, it seems likely that she travelled there with her first husband, Sir William Brabazon, who settled in Dublin in 1534, following his appointment as

[293] Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, ii, 93.
[294] According to Lodge, the account of Lady Moore's funeral is taken from the manuscripts of the Bishop of Clogher: see Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, ii, 93.
[295] Maginn, 'The Baltinglass rebellion, 1580', p. 205; O'Connor, 'The rebellion of James Eustace, Viscount Baltinglass III'.
[296] See chapter one.
[297] Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, ii, 93.

treasurer-at-war in August that year.[298] By the time of her marriage to Edward Moore (who was originally from Kent and a kinsman of Sir Henry Sidney) in *c*.1563, Elizabeth had been widowed three times.[299] Through his marriage to Elizabeth, Edward (newly-arrived in Ireland since *c*.1561) inherited vast tracts of former monastic property in north Leinster including a twenty-one-year lease to the property of the suppressed Cistercian monastery at Mellifont, County Louth, previously held by Sir William Brabazon.[300] His acquisition of Mellifont, a strategically important site close to the Ulster border, as well as the income of £500 a year which his marriage had brought him, meant that Moore enjoyed significant career advancement, rising quickly within the ranks of the Dublin administration.[301] Indeed in 1579, in recognition of his distinguished services to the Crown, Moore was rewarded with a knighthood.[302] By the time of his wife's death in December 1581 therefore Moore had established himself and his family as one of the most prestigious New English settler families and the occasion of his wife's death afforded Sir Edward an opportunity to publicly showcase the family's growing ascendancy among the newly settled colonial population, an ascendancy further solidified by marriage alliances forged by the family with other leading New English dynasties; for example, Henry, the couple's second son married Mary, daughter of Francis Agard, one of the most prominent government servitors of Elizabethan Ireland.[303]

Following Elizabeth's death at Mellifont, her body was 'worshipfully conducted' to Dublin. Three miles outside the city it was received by the Ulster King of Arms who 'wearing the Queen's coat of arms, brought the said corpse unto St Catherine's Church' where it remained lying in state for two days.[304] Undoubtedly St Catherine's Church was chosen due to its connection with Sir William Brabazon who, after his

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[298] The couple had two sons, Edward and Anthony and two daughters, Anne and Elizabeth. Their eldest son Edward, (b. *c*.1549) later contributed towards the foundation of Trinity College, Dublin and their grandson William (Edwards son) (Edward's son), was created earl of Meath in 1627 on account of 'the long continuance of his ancestors in the service of the crown ... and of his and their constancy in the profession of true religion': see Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, i, 266-278: see also Mary Ann Lyons, 'Brabazon, Sir William (*d.* 1552)' in *O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3154, accessed 21 Aug. 2012].

[299] Her previous husbands, as well as Sir William Brabazon, were Christopher Blunt and Humphrey Warren (d. 1561).

[300] Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, ii, 90-4.

[301] Ibid.

[302] Ibid.

[303] Ibid.

[304] Ibid., 93.

death in 1552, was buried in the chancel of the church where a monument, erected in his memory, also commemorated Lady Moore.[305] On 30 December Elizabeth's body was conveyed by hearse to Christ Church Cathedral for burial. Before departing from the St Catherine's the 'fair' hearse was elaborately decorated with black cloth and escutcheons, which would have presumably processed the short distance from St Catherine's to Christ Church Cathedral:

> [there] was prepared a fair herse, covered with black bayes, and the outer rayles were covered with black cotton, and the said herse was well garnyshed with Scochyons [escutcheons] of her arms, and with the arms of all her four husbands, viz. Sir William Brabazon, Master Warren, Master Blondt, and Sir Edward Moore, and also with a great number of pensels of the several arms.[306]

As the account demonstrates, the funeral of Lady Moore and its associated pageantry, bearing the arms of her four former husbands, was used as a vehicle by the Moore family to position themselves at the centre of a nexus of powerful New English settler families and by extension, to demonstrate the prominent and ascendant status of the Protestant colonial community in Elizabethan Ireland.

Almost fifty years later the funeral of another New English woman served to demonstrate the comparatively greater prestige and power that the Established Church and its adherents had come to enjoy. The Countess of Cork, Catherine Boyle, daughter of Sir Geoffrey Fenton (1539-1608), secretary of state for Ireland and his wife, Alice Fenton, passed away on 16 February 1630, aged about forty-two. Her husband, Richard Boyle, first Earl of Cork, documented his 'unspeakable greef' at the loss of his 'deerest deer wife', a loss he interpreted in the context of divine providence, writing in his diary that:

> It pleased my mercifull god, for my manifold syns, this daye being the xvjth of ffebruary, 1629[30], between three and ffour of the clock in thafternoon ... to translate owt of this mortall world, to his gloriows kingdome of heaven, the sowle of my deerest deer wife ... (to my vnspeakable greef).[307]

[305] Ibid., i, 268-9.
[306] Ibid., ii, 93.
[307] Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 1st ser., iii, 18.

On the night after her death, Catherine was buried 'privately' in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, 'in the same Tombe wherein her worthy grandfather doctor Weston, Lorde Chancellor of Ireland, and her ffather Sir Geffray ffenton, knight, his Majesties principall secretary of this state were entered'.[308] One month later, however, on 11 March 1630, Catherine was afforded a public funeral which was 'honourably and solemnly performed' in St Patrick's Cathedral.[309] As Tait has discussed, while the private burial in February 1630 concerned the 'burial of the woman herself – Catherine Fenton, wife and mother', the funeral and the related pomp and ceremony which took place the following month marked the loss of the countess as a public figure, a position which had come with her husband's investiture as 'Earle of Corke, Visct Dungarvan, Baron of Youghell, and one of the Ld Lieutenents of Ireland'.[310] The first senior member of the Boyle dynasty to die, the countess's funeral was particularly magnificent and elaborate. The funeral cost over one thousand marks sterling (£777), a substantial sum spent on the purchase of black clothing and drapery for the hearse, 'blacks and chardges', a coach and horses and an abundance of fabric among other items.[311] The total amount of fabric for the countess' funeral included over 145 yards of cloth, fifty-six yards of serge (a type of fabric), and fifty-seven yards of braid, which was used for the creation of mourning costumes, a central feature of noble funerals.[312] The funeral cortège processed the short distance from the earl's residence near Dublin Castle to St Patrick's Cathedral and, as was customary, the deceased's eldest daughter, Alice, Countess of Barrymore, performed the duty of chief mourner, alongside her sisters (apart from the countess's infant daughter, Margaret).[313] Once the cortège reached the cathedral a funeral sermon was presumably preached expounding the upright and honourable characteristics of the departed.[314] Catherine's ostentatious funeral ceremony at St Patrick's, the heart of Protestant worship in Dublin, served to position both her and her family at the centre of the New English Protestant élite and sent a strong signal

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[308] Ibid.
[309] Ibid., 19-20.
[310] Tait, 'Colonising memory', p. 127; Walter Fitzgerald (ed.), *Some funeral entries of Ireland from a manuscript version in the British Museum* (Dublin, 1907-9), p. 150.
[311] Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 1st ser., iii, 19-20.
[312] Gillespie, 'Funerals & society in early seventeenth century Ireland', p. 86.
[313] Fitzgerald (ed.), *Some funeral entries of Ireland*, pp 150-1.
[314] As Tait has discussed, in Ireland there are few references to funerary sermons, and, in contrast to other countries, hardly any published or manuscript sermon texts seem to have survived for the period in question. In Ireland, as elsewhere, they served a function as a form of religious propaganda: see Tait, *Death, burial & commemoration in Ireland*, pp 42-3.

of support for the supremacy of the Stuart state, the Church of Ireland and its members.

Another funeral which served to reinforce the power and prestige of the Established Church and its adherents was that of Grizel (or Gressel) Power, née Bulkeley, Lady Valentia, who died at Chapelizod, to the west of Dublin city, on 8 September 1641 and was buried nine days later, on 17 September, in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.[315] Born *c.*1570, in Anglesey on the north-west coast of Wales, by the time of her death, at the age of about seventy, Grizel was among Dublin society's most high-ranking and well-connected members. Her husband, Sir Henry Power (d. 1642), originally from Denbighshire in north-west England, was an Irish privy councillor who in March 1620 was raised to the peerage, gaining the title Viscount Valentia. Grizel's own relatives, the Bulkeleys, were among the most high ranking members of the Church of Ireland, among them her older brother, Lancelot Bulkeley, Archbishop of Dublin (1619-50), and her nephew (the archbishop's son), William Bulkeley (d. 1670), Archdeacon of Dublin.[316] Her niece, also named Grizel (d. 1666) (Lancelot Bulkeley's youngest daughter), was married to Ambrose Aungier (d. 1654), chancellor of St Patrick's Cathedral.[317] In addition, Grizel, Lady Valentia, was

[315] 'The Mss of Philip Bryan Davies Cooke, Esquire, of Owston, co. York, and of Gwansaney, co. Flint, North Wales', *HMC Sixth Report* (London, 1877), pp 424-5.
[316] Grizel Power, née Bulkeley, was the eldest daughter of Sir Richard Bulkeley (d. 1572) and his second wife, Agnes Needham (d. 1623), and the sister of Lancelot Bulkeley (b. 1568/9). The date of her marriage to Sir Henry Power as well as the time of her arrival in Ireland is unknown. Her husband arrived in Ireland in 1598 and settled at Chapelizod. She may have accompanied him at this time. The couple had no children and after Lord Valentia's death in May 1642, his title passed to Sir Francis Annesley, then Lord Mountnorris, to whom he was related. Lord Valentia was buried in St Patrick's Cathedral, next to his wife. The monumental inscription next to his tomb reads 'Here lieth the body of Sir Henry Power of Bersham, Knight, created Viscount Valentia in Ireland by patent dated 1st March 1620, Anno Jacobi Regis decimo octavo, who married Gressel, daughter of Sir Richard Bulkeley of Beaumaris in Anglesey, and desceased without issue 26 May 1642': see J.Y.W Lloyd, *History of the Princes, the Lords Marcher and the Ancient Nobility of Powys Fadog* (3 vols, London, 1885), iii, 26; Arthur Collins and Egerton Brydges, *The peerage of England: genealogical, biographical and historical* (8 vols, London, 1812), viii, 11.
[317] Toby Barnard, 'Aungier, Francis, first earl of Longford (*c.*1632–1700)' in *O.D.N.B* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/58097, accessed 13 Aug. 2012].

connected by marriage to James Spottiswood, Bishop of Clogher (1621-45).[318] As well as her connections with eminent members of the Church of Ireland establishment, Grizel was intimately connected with leading aristocratic Protestant families such as the Barrymores, Viscounts Buttevants and the Boyles, Earls of Cork; she was godmother to Richard Barry (b. 1630), the son of David Barry, first Viscount Buttevant and his wife, Alice, eldest daughter of the earl of Cork.[319] Reflecting her rank and status, Grizel's funeral was an elaborate affair, with the total cost of the funeral amounting to in excess of £300 (considerably less than the £777 spent at the funeral of the countess of Cork, reflecting her lower rank within the Irish nobility and Boyle's desire for conspicuous display).[320] Included in the £300 was over £24 for the 'escutchions' (heraldry emblems) 'used in the pomp' and for the payment of fees to the officers of arms who attended at the funeral, among them Albon Leveret, the Athlone pursuivant.[321] A further £83 was spent on appropriate clothing for the chief mourners, procured from Bartholomew Droape, a merchant draper from Dublin who also served as undertaker for the funeral.[322] According to Droape's accounts, the chief mourning party consisted of ten of Grizel's family members, four men and six women.[323]Among the women for whom clothing was procured, was Lady Spottiswood, the deceased's niece (who may have performed the duty of chief mourner), for whom sixteen yards of 'towers grogram' (a type of fabric) was purchased while twelve yards was bought for both the Alice Bulkeley (d. 1654), Archbishop Bulkeley's wife and her daughter-in-law, Elizabeth Bulkeley née

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[318] Another niece, described by one contemporary as a 'wise and vertuous' woman had married (date unknown) Sir Henry Spottiswood (d. 1644), Bishop Spottiswood's son, reputedly at Grizel's behest, a match which according to Lord James Balfour, a Fermanagh landowner, would 'strengthen' the position of the newly arrived Scottish bishop 'with a better friendship in this kingdom': see George Hill, *An historical account of the plantation in Ulster at the commencement of the seventeenth century, 1608-1620* (Belfast, 1877), p. 476: Raymond Gillespie, 'The trials of Bishop Spottiswood, 1620–40', in *Clogher Rec.*, xii (1987), p. 331.

[319] Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 1st ser., ii, 115.

[320] 'The Mss of Philip Bryan Davies Cooke', p. 425

[321] Ibid.

[322] Ibid.

[323] Fabric was procured for Lady Valentia's husband, Sir Henry, who was attired in a 'cloak', her brother, the archbishop, her nephew, the archdeacon and Sir Henry Spottiswood, her niece's husband. Ibid.

Mainwaring (d. 1679), wife of archdeacon William Bulkeley.[324] A further ten yards of fabric each was purchased for Arabella Eaton,[325] a Mrs Mary[326] and Grisseld Spottiswood.[327] In the absence of more detailed records, it is reasonable to presume that, as was customary, the funeral cortège would have processed through the city to St Patrick's Cathedral where divine service and a funeral sermon would have been performed. Grizel's body was then interred (presumably in a family vault), where after his death less than one year later, her husband, Sir Henry, was also interred.[328] Following the funeral and burial, a sumptuous funeral banquet was attended by the funeral party for which a bill for hospitality, which included items such as 'white wine, wafers [and] cakes', was charged.[329] The highly elaborate and choreographed funeral of Lady Grizel Valentia in September 1641, attended by some of the most distinguished and eminent figures in the Church of Ireland (to whom she was herself closely related) and her interment at St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, the centre of Protestant worship in the city, represented a very public declaration of the prominence and power of the Protestant settler community in Ireland. Lady Valentia was at the centre of a powerful nexus of the Protestant and colonial élite of mid-seventeenth-century Ireland, tightly bound by bonds of kinship, marriage, and importantly, faith. With the outbreak of violence just over one month later, in October 1641, however, the cohesive and closely connected Protestant community would be abruptly fractured.

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[324] Elizabeth Bulkeley (d. 1679) was the daughter of Henry Mainwaring (d. 1635) of Kilkenny, esq. and master in chancery, and his second wife Elizabeth, daughter of Ralph Skipwith of Parkbury in the county of Hertford, esq. Henry Mainwaring died on 1 March 1635 and was buried in St Mary's chapel in the cathedral church of St Canice's. Alice Bulkeley, wife of archbishop Lancelot Bulkeley was the daughter of Rowland Bulkeley of Beaumaris in Anglesey, north-west Wales. She died in 1654 and was buried with her husband who predeceased her (he died in 1650) in St Patrick's Cathedral Dublin: see Collins & Brydges, *The peerage of England*, viii, 11-2; see also Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, v, 21-2.

[325] This was possibly Lady Valentia's niece. Her sister Mary married James Eaton of Dudleston in Shropshire, north-west England, esq: see Collins & Brydges, *The peerage of England*, viii, 11.

[326] This was possibly Lancelot Bulkeley's eldest daughter Mary who was married to William Bulkeley of Porthamel in Wales, esq: see Collins & Brydges, *The peerage of England*, viii, 12.

[327] This was possibly Sir Henry and Lady Spottiswood's daughter.

[328] Lord Valentia died in May 1642, and was buried in St Patrick's Cathedral, next to his wife. The monumental inscription next to his tomb reads 'Here lieth the body of Sir Henry Power of Bersham, Knight, created Viscount Valentia in Ireland by patent dated 1st March 1620, Anno Jacobi Regis decimo octavo, who married Gressel, daughter of Sir Richard Bulkeley of Beaumaris in Anglesey, and desceased without issue 26 May 1642': see Lloyd, *History of the Princes, the Lords Marcher*, iii, 26. When he died in 1650 Archbishop Lancelot Bulkeley was also interred in the cathedral, reputedly under the communion table, as was his wife Alice, who died in 1654. Collins & Brydges, *The peerage of England*, viii, 12.

[329] 'The Mss of Philip Bryan Davies Cooke', p. 425.

Funeral ceremonies were not the only form of memorialisation of the dead. Funerary monuments also served as effective instruments for commemoration in Elizabethan and Stuart Ireland. Like funeral ceremonies, for New English Protestant settlers, funerary monuments served as particularly effective instruments rendered to impress upon the populace at large the prestige of the family involved and to preserve for posterity a powerful visual record of an individual and his or her lineage. Indeed in Ireland, as Loeber has documented, an upsurge in the creation of elaborate sculptured monuments in the years 1604-41 reflects a rise of a new ruling and settler class of New English Protestants.[330] These elaborate monuments often took the form of large architectural structures with figures sculpted in various positions (recumbent, reclining, kneeling), and were often accompanied by lengthy epitaphs, which extolled the status and family lineage of those commemorated.[331] In addition to serving as status symbols, funeral monuments were also powerful visual manifestations of faith and belief and were often heavily imbued with religious significance.[332] Unlike Catholic funerary monuments, which were frequently adorned with religiously charged iconography such as symbols of the passion or images of saints, the tombs of New English Protestants featured a more simple expression of religious devotion.[333] Often they depicted effigies kneeling at prayer or beside a Bible – reflecting the Protestant tenet of *sola scriptura* – while accompanying epitaphs recounted the private virtues of those commemorated. As Loeber has emphasised, in the early seventeenth-century kneeling effigies were a defining feature of Irish Protestant funerary sculpture.[334] The monuments of the New English offered a tangible, permanent and (in an era when literacy levels were low) effective articulation of a distinctly Protestant mode of piety and devotion. While funerary monuments and their associated epitaphs to men often celebrated public service and military achievements, for women their 'virtuous' qualities as well as their dutiful adherence to their roles as wives and mothers were the characteristics

[330] Loeber, 'Sculptured memorials to the dead', p. 267-93.
[331] For a detailed discussion see Tait, *Death, burial & commemoration in Ireland*, pp 97-135.
[332] Ibid., p. 107.
[333] Raymond Gillespie, 'Irish funeral monuments and social change, 1500-1700: perceptions of death' in idem and Brian P. Kennedy (eds), *Ireland: art into history* (Dublin, 1994), pp 155-68.
[334] The exceptions were the tombs of Archbishop Meiler McGrath and Sir Gerald Aylmer and Dame Julia Nugent (1626). As Loeber discusses, symbols, such as signs of the passions, crosses and saints, rather than effigies were used on Catholic memorials. Loeber suggests that tombs for Catholic patrons were erected as homage to the Catholic faith rather than to honour the patron: see Loeber, 'Sculptured memorials to the dead', p. 277.

most often eulogised. These monuments, therefore, contributed to the creation of a uniquely Protestant image of female piety in both Tudor and Stuart Ireland.

According to the Earl of Cork, before her death in February 1630, Catherine Boyle requested that after she died she would be buried with her grandfather and father and that her husband would 'make some memorial over them all'.[335] In accordance with her wishes, the Earl, soon after the public funeral of his wife in March 1630, began making arrangements for the construction of an elaborate alabaster monument to commemorate his 'vertuous' wife.[336] That year Cork paid £11 for a fee farm grant of 'the upper end of the quier of the chancell' of St Patrick's Cathedral, 'whereon my wives Tombe is to be erected'.[337] Designed by the Athlone pursuivant at arms and built by stone-mason, Edmond Tingham, the monument seems to have been completed by December 1632, when Boyle settled outstanding accounts relating to its construction, commenting, 'I value the whole chardg of my wives Tombe, grate, vawlt and pavement, hath stood me at least ffowre hundredth pownds ster'.[338] On 9 January 1633 Catherine's body, along with the remains of her grandfather and father were removed from the old tomb and placed in the new prestigious vault.[339] As Tait has highlighted, the elaborate Boyle monument provides 'an abridged pictorial genealogy of the Countess of Cork, with each figure described according to their relationship with her'.[340] Catherine's grandfather and parents are represented at the top of the monument. The middle section depicts the recumbent effigies of the countess, her husband and her four sons, while the bottom tier bears effigies of the countess's daughters. The coats of arms and heraldry of the families into whom the Boyles married frame the elaborate tomb, adding further splendour to the monument's appearance. While the ornate tomb exemplified the Boyle family's illustrious connections and noble lineage it also promoted, in plaster, accessible to literate and illiterate alike, an image of Protestant female piety and devotion (see Fig.

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[335] *Cal. S.P. Ire. 1633-47*, p. 43.
[336] Ibid.
[337] Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 1st ser.., iii, 70.
[338] Ibid., 171-2.
[339] 'The boanes of my wives grandfather, doctor Weston, sometimes L. Justice and Lo. Chancellor of Ireland, of her ffather Sir Geffray ffenton. Knight, princepall secretary of state in Ireland, and the coffyne wherin my last wives dead body was encloased, were all removed owt of the owld tombe wherin they were all three buried … and all placed in the new vawlt of my wives tombe by me made and erected ... expecting a Joyful resureccon': see ibid., 174-5.
[340] Tait, 'Colonising memory', p. 129.

3.3). While the patriarchal male figureheads of the Boyle family – Robert Weston and Geoffrey Fenton – are described in terms of their renowned careers and dedication to public service, the matriarchs, Catherine Fenton and her mother Alice Fenton, are described in terms of their religious devotion and exemplary pious life. The monumental epitaph represented Catherine as 'virtuous and religious' while Alice is described as a woman whose 'religious and charitable courteous life was an example to her sex'.[341] Alice's effigy is depicted kneeling at prayer before the Bible, signifying her immense piety and wisdom. Beneath her, Catherine lies recumbent, her hands clasped in prayer, while on the bottom tier, the countess's daughters, kneel in reverent prayer, signifying the perpetuation of 'godly' devotion and the 'fair fruits of vertue' in the next generation of Boyle women.[342]

The kneeling effigies of the Boyle women portrayed a markedly Protestant image of female piety which contrasted with monuments constructed to commemorate Catholic women (discussed in chapter one) but which were entirely consistent with other Protestant funerary sculptures which sought to project an image of distinctly Protestant female piety and religion. In Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, for example, the monument erected in 1584 to the memory of Sir Francis Agard, a privy councillor and one of the most prominent government servitors of Elizabethan Ireland (d. 1577), by his son-in-law, Sir Henry Harrington, depicts Francis's wife, Jacoba Agard née de Brett and their daughter, Cecilia Harrington kneeling before a Bible in prayer (see Fig. 3.4).[343] The inscription describes Cecilia as a woman who had lived 'most virtuously' and who dutifully produced two sons, securing the future

[341] Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, i, 163.
[342] *Musarum Lachrymae*, unpaginated.
[343] Loeber, 'Sculptured memorials to the dead', p. 286.

of the dynasty before dying on 8 September 1584.[344] Similarly, in the parish church of St John the Evangelist in Dublin the memorial erected by Sir Thomas Roper, Viscount Baltinglass (d. 1637) in 1634 depicts his wife, Anne Harrington and her eight daughters, kneeling at prayer (see Fig. 3.5).[345] The same motif is featured in the elaborate funeral monument in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin commemorating Thomas Jones, Archbishop of Dublin and his son Roger, Viscount Ranelagh (d. 1644) which depicts Roger's two wives, Frances Jones (d. 1620), daughter of Garret Moore, first Viscount Drogheda, and Catherine Jones (d. 1627), daughter of Sir Edward Longueville of Wolverton, Buckinghamshire, both kneeling in prayer before the recumbent figure of Viscount Ranelagh who lies clad in armour, symbolising his renowned military career.[346] Two additional female effigies are featured, possibly Ranelagh's daughters.[347] The monument, which was erected by Viscount Ranelagh, bears striking similarities to the Boyle tomb (to which it is situated close by) and according to Loeber, Ranelagh may have employed Cork's sculptor Edmund

[344] The inscription reads 'Francis Agard and Lady Cecilia Harrington, his daughter. Here is buried Francis Agard, Esq., at one time commander of a troop of cavalry in Scotland, under Lord Seymour of Dudley, Admiral of England, afterwards appointed Seneschal of the County of Wexford in war against O'Neill. Leader of one hundred horse; Cheif commissioner of the Province of Munster; and Seneschal of the countries of O'Brien and O'Toole. He was a most sagacious councillor of the Kingdom of Ireland for twenty-six years, during the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth, He died the 11th of October 1577, when his right honourable friend, Henry Sidney, was for the second time, viceroy of Ireland. Together with him is interred his very dear wife, Jacoba de la Brett, with their infant son Thomas. Here lyeth entombed Lady Cecilia Harrington daughter and co-heir of Francis Agard esq. Most dear and beloved wife of Sir Henry Harrington, Knight, with whom she have lived 7 years, most virtuously, and had brought forth two sons James and John, She ended this life the 8th of September [1584]; for whose memory and her father's, Sir Henry Harrignton, Knight, her loving husband and his successor in office, erected this monument at his own charge. A drawing of the memorial sculpture to Francis Agard in Christ Church, Dublin by Thomas Dingley, *c*.1681. Francis Agard had another daughter, Mary, who married Henry Moore, son of Sir Edward Moore and his second wife Margery Brabazon, daughter of William Brabazon. After Henry's death Mary married William Makewy of Ballyneskeagh in County Meath, esq: see Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, ii, 91-4.

[345] A drawing of the memorial sculpture to Sir Thomas Roper, Viscount Baltinglass, erected in 1634, formerly in St John's Church, Dublin by Thomas Dingley. For Roper see Gillespie (ed.), *The vestry records of the parish of St John the Evangelist*, p. 68.

[346] Cokayne, *The complete* peerage, x, 730-1; Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, vi, 301-3. Thomas's wife Margaret Jones, daughter of Adam Purdon of Lurgan-Race, county Louth, who died in December 1618 is also memorialised on the monument: see Ware, *The whole works of Sir James Ware*, i, p. 355. The epitapth refers to her as Thomas's 'dearest wife'.

[347] Roger, Viscount Ranelagh had three daughters. By his first wife, Frances Moore, he had, Margaret Jones (d. 1683) who married (before 1642/3) John Clotworthy, first Viscount Massereene and Mary Jones (d. 1673) who married first Col. John Chichester, member of Parliament for Dungannon, 1639, second son of Edward Chichester, first Viscount Chichester, by his first wife Anne Coplestone. The couple had two sons and one daughter, among them Arthur Chichester, later first earl of Donegall. Mary married secondly Col Christopher Copley. Their daughter, Frances Copley, married as his first wife Hon Thomas Coote, of Coote Hill, county Cavan, recorder of Dublin, a justice of the Irish King's Bench 1693 and a Commissioner of the Great Seal of Ireland 1696 (d. 24 Apr 1741). By his second wife Catherine Longueville Roger Jones had one daughter named Elizabeth who married Col. Robert Sandys: see Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, x, 730-1; Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, vi, 301-3.

Tingham to construct the Jones monument.[348] Indeed the links between the Boyle and Jones families were strong and were (as discussed above) recently formalised by the marriage of Katherine Boyle (1615-91), the Earl of Cork's fifth daughter, and Arthur Jones (d. 1669), Ranelagh's son and heir by his first wife Frances, in April 1630.[349] Such depictions of female piety on Dublin Protestant funerary sculpture also featured elsewhere in the country. At Trevet in County Meath, for example, the monument erected to the memory of Sir Thomas Cusack (d. 1571) and his second wife Matilda (Maud) Darcy depicts effigies of Matilda and her eight daughters, among them Margaret Cusack and Catherine Cusack, kneeling in prayer while in the north of the country the elaborate marble vault erected to the memory of Sir Arthur Chichester and his 'vertuous' wife Lettice (d. 1620), daughter of Sir John Perrot, at St Nicholas's Church in Carrickfergus, County Antrim, includes an effigy of Lettice who, along with her husband kneels in prayer in front of a Bible (see Fig. 3.6).[350] Another Boyle monument, built at Youghal by the earl of Cork in 1620 (where he himself was interred following his death in 1642) depicts both his first wife, Joan Apsley (d. 1599), and Catherine Fenton, Countess of Cork, who kneel either side of the earl, who reclines in the central recess of the tomb (see Fig. 3.7). Both Joan and Catherine, who 'wears a countess's robe of state, faced with ermine, with an ermine cap and ruff', kneel at a Bible, signifying their piety and wisdom.[351] This motif was continued in the late seventeenth century; for example, the monument erected at Kinsale to the memory of Catherine Perceval née Dering (d. 1679), by her son, Sir John Perceval (b. 1683), first Earl of Egmont, characterised Catherine in terms of her religious fidelity. She was 'a pious mother' who manifested 'virtues that were most pleasing unto heaven and earth', among them 'meekness', 'humility' and 'devotion to God'. Catherine was represented as an exemplar of Protestant piety and was an 'example unto all'.[352]

[348] Loeber, 'Sculptured memorials to the dead', p. 283.
[349] Cokayne, *The complere peerage*, iii, 418.
[350] Elizabeth Hickey, 'Monument to Sir Thomas Cusack' in *Rí. na Mí.*, v (1971), pp 75-91; Loeber, 'Sculptured monuments'; Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, i, 326-7.
[351] Joan Apsley, the daughter of William Apsley, of Old English descent, died in childbirth at Mallow in 1599. She is depicted along with her stillborn son on the Youghal tomb. Both Joan and her son were buried in Buttevant Church: see Tait, 'Colonising memory', p. 120.
[352] Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, ii, 255.

The Earl of Cork held his wife, Catherine to be 'the crown of all my blessings ... and a most religious ... wife', an image which he publicised through the construction of a large tomb to her honour in which the vestiges of Boyle female piety were emphasised in a series of kneeling effigies and laudatory epitaphs.[353] As well as the memorialisation of his wife in plaster, however, Cork sought to commemorate his wife in print. To do so he commissioned a book entitled *Musarum Lachrymae* in honour of his deceased wife (see Fig. 3.8). The *Musarum*, published at Dublin in 1630, comprised a series of verses in Latin, Hebrew, Greek and English.[354] As befitting Catherine's rank and status the elegies were composed by a group of scholars from Trinity College, Dublin, among them Dudley Boswell (*c*.1608-50), George Brady (*fl*. 1630) and Daniel Spicer (*fl*. 1630), the Boyle's domestic chaplain.[355] Employing conventions and formulaic language typical of funeral sermons and elegies that proliferated in seventeenth-century England, the *Musarum* was part of a wider English literary movement which portrayed the lives and deaths of elect and 'godly' women (and men) as exemplars and models for emulation for the Protestant community.[356] In an Irish context, however, the publication of the *Musarum* in honour of the countess was unique, reflecting the Boyle family's atypical wealth and status. While the *Musarum* provided, on the one hand, a testament to the worthiness of the Boyle family lineage, demonstrating the family's illustrious connections, 'rich in great honours, title [and] place', as well as Cork's wealth and the exercise of his influence and power, more importantly in the context of this study, it also offered its audience an idealised version of Irish Protestant female piety in the person of the countess, who, it was claimed, 'liv[e]d religious[ly] and religious[ly] di[e]d'.[357] The laudatory panegyric verse consisted of an extended

[353] Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, i, 163; Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, iii, 420.
[354] *Musarum Lachrymae*, unpaginated.
[355] Dudley Boswell entered Trinity College as a scholar in 1623 and later became a member of the Church of Ireland ministry, holding several livings in Dublin. George Brady was, according to the *Musarum*, a 'Master of Arts', although his name does not appear in the records of the college. Daniel Spicer was perhaps a relative of Alexander Spicer (*fl*. 1625), a clergyman based in the north of Ireland and active in Coleraine in the 1610s. Alexander Spicer composed *An elegie on the much lamented death of the right honourable Sir Arthur Chichester* (London, 1625): see Andrew Carpenter, *Verse in English from Tudor and Stuart Ireland* (Dublin, 2003), pp 174, 193, 195: Fell Smith, *Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick*, p. 49.
[356] For a discussion of English funerary sermons see Eric Josef Carlson, 'English funeral sermons as sources: the example of female piety in pre-1640 sermons' in *Albion: a quarterly journal concerned with British Studies*, xxxii, no. 4 (2000), pp 567-97; Willen, '"Communion of the saints"', pp 19-40; Laurence, 'Daniel's practice: the daily round of godly women', p 173-83; O'Hara, '"Far beyond her nature and her sex"'.
[357] *Musarum Lachrymae*, unpaginated.

eulogy of the reverent piety, devotion charity that the countess embodied. In keeping with representations of Protestant women in English funerary sermons, Catherine's daily observance of pious practices was eulogised; her diligent devotion to God, profound knowledge of Scripture as well as her dedication to her duties as a wife and mother were also praised.[358] As a model of godliness, Catherine's 'vertuous' life bore testament to the power of God's spirit at work in the human 'vessel' and was presented as a religious pattern for both men and women to emulate.[359]

While the *Musarum* is concerned to a large degree with establishing Catherine's illustrious descent through her association with male family members, most notably her grandfather, Robert Weston (d. 1573), formerly chancellor of Ireland, who was 'so full or merit, so upright in his acts [and] of so sweet spirit', her father Sir Geoffrey Fenton, formerly secretary of state for Ireland, who 'deserv[e]d especiall grace', and of course her husband, Richard Boyle, 'a noble and religious lord ... whose wisdom now fits at the helme of the state', her virtuous and godly inheritance through the female line is also highlighted. Her mother, Alice Fenton, whose first husband was Hugh Brady, Elizabethan Bishop of Meath, was lauded as an exemplar of Protestant female piety whose 'heav[e]nly lustre' and 'vertue' made her a 'wonder of her days and mirror of her sex', a description which vividly echoed her epitaph on the Boyle tomb.[360] She was represented as the matriarchal figurehead of the Boyle family from whose descent Catherine's 'fair fruits of vertue' were derived; 'each drop of blood she gave thy veines to fill, some vertue did into thy soule distill'.[361] Continuing her mother's legacy, Catherine was praised for her capacity to produce godly offspring, her God-given vocation; she was 'blest mother of eight daughters and five soones'. As a mother Catherine diligently carried out her duty to maintain the Protestant tradition of her mother and her distinguished male descendants by raising her own children in the Protestant ethos, thereby solidifying the Boyle's Protestantism for posterity. Accordingly, Catherine is represented as a careful

[358] Laurence, 'Daniel's practice: the daily round of godly women', p 173-83
[359] *Musarum Lachrymae*, unpaginated.
[360] Ibid. Alice had four children from her first marriage, three sons, Luke, Nicholas and Gerald and one daughter, Elizabeth: see Helen Coburn Walshe, 'Enforcing the Elizabethan settlement: the vicissitudes of Hugh Brady, Bishop of Meath, 1563-84' in *I.H.S.*, xxvi, no. 104 (Nov. 1989), pp 352-76. Her epitaph on the Boyle tomb describes her as 'religious and charitable courteous life was an example to her sex': see Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, i, 163.
[361] *Musarum Lachrymae*, unpaginated.

instructor who inculcated her children in the tenets of the reformed faith, reading to them passages from the Bible; '[for] her children ...'twas her care to see [them] walk by that rule, by which her selfe was lead, The Word of God which frequently she read, and had their wish[e]d attention'.[362] As well as her dedication to her duties as a mother, Catherine maintained a consistent devotion to her own spiritual advancement, which included, according to Daniel Spicer, her diligent attendance at public worship where she listened attentively to the preacher's sermons and her keen knowledge of Scripture, which it was claimed she could recount verbatim.

> By the perusal of what God hath wrot In lawefull Scriptures, what their depth contain'd So oft she try'd and had such knowledge gain'd, That I have heard a reverend man professe, if of the Bible you could but expresse A sentence as 'twas writ (such was her skill) she could denote the verse and chapter still.[363]

Indeed Catherine's devotion to her faith is represented as her defining characteristic; she was said to have been 'rich in religion', a 'flower of pure religion' and a 'picture of true pietie'. While the death 'of this deceased angel' was mourned on earth by an 'overflowe of publick teares' the message that the reward for such an upright and devout life is salvation is powerfully conveyed in the pronouncement that Catherine's descent into heaven 'on angels wings' is celebrated by Christ and his Saints.[364]

The *Musarum* was in essence an effective propaganda tool. Indeed the timing of its publication, in 1630, is noteworthy. As discussed in chapter two, violent clashes between members of the English administration and Dublin's Catholic populace in December 1629 meant that religious tensions in the city were heightened.[365] Within this highly charge milieu, the elaborate and ostentatious funeral of the Countess of Cork, coupled with her subsequent memorialisation in the *Musarum*, were deliberately orchestrated public affirmations of the pre-eminence and authority of the Church of Ireland establishment in the face of Catholic hostility and resistance. Just as Catholic martyrologists, most notably John Howlin and David Rothe, sought to eulogise Catholic female piety and virtuousness in order to foster and inspire

[362] Ibid.
[363] Ibid.
[364] Ibid.
[365] Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers*, 1st ser., iii, 13.

confessional identity and solidarity among the Catholic community or *Natio*, both at home and on the Continent, so too the *Musarum*, with its focus on the countess's exemplary piety and godliness served as a form of spiritual edification for the Protestant community in Ireland. Catherine was presented as a model for the that community, her exemplary life and conduct, the direct antithesis of that of the 'idolatrous' and 'popish' Roman Catholics, bearing testimony to the legitimacy and lawfulness of the Protestant evangelical mission in Ireland. Thus, while the publication of the *Musarum* can be viewed within the wider context of literary developments within the Stuart realm, it must also be seen within its own domestic context. Expounding the exalted qualities of 'ideal' Protestant womanhood, the *Musarum* served to inspire and edify members of the Church of Ireland community, both male and female alike, strengthening their resolve to remain steadfast and resolute in their adherence to the reformed faith, in what was, according to Spicer, a 'dangerous and disordered realme'.[366]

VI

This study of Protestant women in Ireland has shown that as in the Catholic tradition, the writings of Protestant reformers highlighted the dominant role of men as heads of the households, stressed the necessity for women to show absolute deference to male authority and placed a high premium on women's roles in performing spiritual duties within the household. Like their Catholic counterparts, in addition to catechising children and servants within the household, the influence of Protestant women – whether as mothers, grandmothers, aunts or foster mothers – percolated beyond the domestic realm, and extended to their involvement in public education and schooling initiatives which contributed to the grander enterprise consolidation and expansion of the Protestant evangelical mission in Ireland. While as wives and widows women were important agents guiding the spiritual teaching and religious edification of their households, from generation to generation, the task of securing a 'good' Protestant wife for their sons was also important to this coalescence of a Protestant community in Ireland. As this discussion has highlighted, daughters as well as sons were a vital component in marital strategies of Protestant families and marriage alliances for daughters were often pursued within the confessional community with the intention of securing the Protestant lineage of the family in the next generation. While

[366] *Musarum Lachrymae*, sig. D2.

endogamy was important, as evident by the exertion of strong patriarchal control over the choice of spouses for daughters, inter-confessional marriage (or exogamy) was also common during this period, with some unions being harmonious; others came under strain owing to quarrels over contentious issues such as the faith in which the children were to be raised. This study has shown that although the position and status of women married to clergymen (particularly senior-ranking clergy) generally improved during the period *c*.1560-*c*.1641 owing to greater clarity regarding their doctrinal and legislative status within the Church of Ireland, which in turn facilitated an improvement in status within their own confessional community, clerical wives nevertheless continued to be regarded by the Catholic community, both lay and religious, as legitimate targets for verbal ridicule and derision and, in some instances, physical attack. Within the at times confessionally acrimonious environment of Elizabethan and Stuart Ireland, members of the New English élite in particular were attuned to the potency of representing Protestant ideals and the twinned authority of the church and state through funeral ceremonies, sermons and eulogies, as well as funerary monuments, all of which could inspire confessional solidarity and loyalty to the political and ecclesiastical establishment among the minority Protestant community. However, while in the period *c*.1560-*c*.1641 prevailing confessional tensions and religious antagonisms were intermittently heightened and occasionally given particularly dramatic expression through the sporadic eruption of violence and riots, the outbreak of sectarian violence on an unprecedented scale in October 1641 initiated a sudden and dramatic breakdown of social order which would in turn impact profoundly the lives, identities and relationships of women, Protestant and Catholic, lay and religious alike.[367]

[367] Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

‘Lewd viragoes’: the roles and representations of women in the 1641 uprising

The outbreak of hostilities in Ulster on 22 October 1641 signalled the beginning of intense and protracted warfare in Ireland which did not cease until 1653.[1] Originating as a failed attempt to seize Dublin Castle, orchestrated by Lord Conor Maguire (1616-45), second Baron of Enniskillen, and a rising in Ulster, led by Sir Phelim O’Neill (*c.*1604-53), a Gaelic Irish land owner and justice of the peace in Ulster, the attempted *coup d’état* quickly degenerated into a series of popular uprisings which spread throughout the country. Mobs of Irish rebels, led by the O’Reillys and the McMahons in the north, the O’Rourkes in the west, and the O’Farrells in the east, moved to dislodge the population of Protestant settlers, who were robbed and/or ejected from their homes and often subjected to vicious and bloody attacks. In the weeks and months following the initial outbreak of hostilities, the violence escalated until the uprising eventually evolved from manifestations of popular resistance into a formal military campaign, following the foundation of the Roman Catholic Confederation in May 1642.[2] The motives which led the Irish rebels to revolt in late October 1641 are complex and multifaceted and have been the subject of intense debate among contemporaries and historians alike.[3] It is, however, incontrovertible that the violence which unfolded between October 1641 and April 1642 had a sectarian dimension, a feature captured graphically in the 1641

[1] Michael Perceval-Maxwell, *The outbreak of the Irish Rebellion of 1641* (Dublin, 1994).
[2] Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland, 1642-1649*.
[3] Traditionally viewed as a predictable response to the injustices of plantation in Ulster during the early decades of the seventeenth century, recent scholarship has reassessed the causes of the rising. Economic and social factors have been investigated by Raymond Gillespie, while Aidan Clarke has stressed the failure of successive governments in Ireland to honour the Graces promised to Catholics by the Stuarts, as the prime reason driving leaders of the Catholic community, first in Ulster, and then throughout the country, to rebel. Michael Perceval-Maxwell concurs but insists that the rising must be interpreted within the wider context of unrest and revolt throughout the three kingdoms, claiming that the Scottish Bishops’ war in 1639 supplied the opportunity, model, and motive for the Irish rising. More recently Nicholas Canny, in a detailed analysis of the regional character of the uprising, has challenged the prevailing tendency among historians of 1641 to view the rising as essentially an Ulster phenomenon, demonstrating that disturbances took place on an ‘extensive scale’ in Leinster and in parts of Munster (albeit on a lesser scale): see Clarke, *The Old English in Ireland*, pp 153-234 and idem, ‘Ireland and the general crisis’ in *Past & Present*, xlvii (1970), pp 79-99; Raymond Gillespie ‘The end of an era: Ulster and the outbreak of the 1641 rising’ in Ciarán Brady & idem (eds), *Natives and newcomers*, pp 191-214, 235-7; Perceval-Maxwell, *The outbreak of the Irish of 1641*; Canny, *Making Ireland British*; Brian Mac Cuarta (ed.), *Ulster 1641: aspects of the rising* (Belfast, 1993); Micheál Ó Siochrú and Jane Ohlmeyer (eds), *Ireland, 1641: contexts and reactions* (Manchester & New York, 2013); Eamon Darcy, *The Irish rebellion of 1641 and the wars of the three kingdoms* (Woodbridge, 2013).

depositions, the most significant and substantial (albeit deeply partisan) source of evidence relating to the uprising (discussed below).[4] As Gillespie has highlighted, 'religious divisions that had been acceptable and accommodated in times of stability came to the fore as social order collapsed in the atmosphere of uncertainty' which characterised the outbreak of hostilities in autumn 1641.[5]

During the three generations since the introduction of the Henrician Reformation in Ireland, but more particularly from the beginning of the Elizabethan era onwards, the confessional divide between adherents of Catholicism and the reformed religion grew progressively deeper and more intractable as both confessional communities developed distinct religious identities, ideologies and *mentalités*, established separate institutions, and embraced associated customs and traditions.[6] This study has charted the emergence and evolution of confessional divisions between Catholic and Protestant communities in Ireland between *c.*1560 and autumn 1641, revealing how women on both sides of the confessional divide, lay and religious alike, negotiated the religious changes and conflicts which impacted their lives to varying degrees and with varying regularity in the intervening decades. As emphasised, that period was characterised by oscillation between interludes of peaceful coexistence and religious toleration during phases of stability on the one hand and sporadic clashes between Catholics and the Protestant authorities and/or communities as a result of the vigorous imposition of coercive religious measures by church and state authorities at times of political crisis on the other. Whereas during the 1560s and early 1570s a relatively conciliatory approach towards enforcing religious conformity was adopted by the Elizabethan authorities, by the late 1570s and early 1580s, with the outbreak of the Desmond revolt in Munster and the Baltinglass rebellion in the Pale, the lord deputies harnessed a coercive line aimed at suppressing insurgency and recusancy. The imposition of punitive recusancy fines, arrests, imprisonments and summary executions by the Elizabethan reformers served to deepen divisions and heighten

[4] Long accessible only by microfilm, as a result of a two year research project between 2008 and 2010 run collaboratively between Trinity College, Dublin, the University of Aberdeen and the University of Cambridge, the depositions have been transcribed and digitised and are now available to access and browse online. See the 1641 Depositions project website at www.1641.tcd.

[5] Gillespie, *Seventeenth-century Ireland*, p. 146.

[6] Ford, 'Living together, living apart', pp 1-23.

tensions between two increasingly polarised religious communities.[7] Furthermore, the brief rencontre between the Old English and Hugh O'Neill (*c*.1550-1616) during the Nine Years War (1594-1603) was seen by the Dublin Castle authorities as further evidence of their disloyalty and religious dissidence.[8] Notwithstanding the relative peace and stability which prevailed during the early decades of the Stuart regime down to 1641, that era was punctuated by spells of heightened religious conflict and tension, notably, the programmes of religious coercion initiated by Sir Arthur Chichester at intermittent intervals during his deputyship (1604-15), especially in the years 1605-07 and 1611-15, which exacerbated underling tensions between Catholic and Protestants.[9] Just over a decade later, the vigorous anti-recusant campaigns implemented under the direction of lords justice Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork and Adam Loftus, first Viscount Loftus of Ely between 1629 and 1632, which occasioned the large-scale dissolution of newly established religious houses throughout the Pale (but predominantly in Dublin) as well as the re-imposition of recusancy fines, led to heightened hostilities between Catholics and adherents of the reformed church, best exemplified by the outbreak of the Cook Street riot at Dublin in December 1629.[10]

But while down to 1641 prevailing confessional tensions and religious antagonisms were intermittently heightened and occasionally given particularly dramatic expression through the episodic outbreak of violence and riots, in general Catholic and Protestant communities and individuals alike appear to have lived alongside each other in a peaceful, if at times uneasy coexistence which was maintained by a web of bonds of family, community, friendship, employment and/or marriage highlighted in previous chapters. Indeed the widespread reality of this normally stable coexistence of Catholic and Protestants was attested to in numerous 1641-2 deposition testimonies and was in turn publicly acknowledged (if perhaps somewhat overstated) by the virulent Protestant polemicist John Temple (1600-77), author of *The Irish Rebellion* (London, 1646), arguably the most controversial account of the

[7] Lennon, *The lords of Dublin*; Murray, *Enforcing the English Reformation*, pp 261-3.
[8] On O'Neill and the Nine Years War see: Hiram Morgan, *Tyrone's rebellion: the outbreak of the Nine Years War in Tudor Ireland* (London, 1993).
[9] Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival.*
[10] Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, pp 167-202; Empey, ''We are not yet safe, for they threaten us with more violence', pp 64-79.

rising. He described how, prior to the rising, the two communities had lived together 'with great security and comfort'.[11] The outbreak of violence in autumn 1641 initiated a sudden and unexpected transition from this broadly peaceful coexistence to outright brutal hostility: its consequences for confessional relations irrevocable. The rising facilitated a rapid and cataclysmic change in the confessional landscape in Ireland, opening a 'vortex' of religious antagonism which in turn impacted profoundly the lives, identities and relationships of Catholic and Protestant men and women, lay and religious alike.[12] The violence which unfolded on an unprecedented scale took on an intensely and decidedly sectarian dimension. Throughout the country Catholic rebel hostility was directed against objects of Protestant veneration and hallmarks of confessional supremacy. Protestant religious symbols including Bibles, catechisms and devotional books were desecrated, Protestant churches were vandalised and set ablaze while members of the Protestant ministry and their families, as standard-bearers of the Protestant elect in Ireland, were singled out by Catholic mobs for particularly harsh treatment.[13] Indeed Catholic rebel hostility even extended beyond targeting living members of the Protestant community, as Protestant corpses, among them Kildare resident Christian Hewetson (*c*.1558-1642), wife of the Elizabethan settler and Yorkshire-native, George Hewetson (b. *c*.1558) and the wife of Robert Sibthorpe (d. 1649), Bishop of Kilfenora (1638-43) and formerly prebendary of Maynooth in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, were disinterred from their graves allegedly at the behest of Catholic clergy.[14] Such destruction of what Gillespie has labelled 'channels of the holy', demonstrated the strong latent religious antagonisms that evidently existed but had been hitherto largely contained

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[11] John Temple, *The Irish rebellion* (London, 1646), p. 14.
[12] Ford, 'Living together, living apart', p. 12.
[13] Deposition of Elizabeth Hooper, 1 Feb. 1643/4 (TCD, MS 820, fol. 50); Deposition of Margery Sharpe, 29 Jan. 1642 (TCD, MS 816, fol. 144); Deposition of Andrew Cammell, 25 Aug. 1642 (TCD, MS 817, fol. 181); Deposition of John Glasse, 8 Apr. 1642 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 197); Deposition of George Syllie, 9 Apr. 1642 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 260); Deposition of Thomas Harris, 11 Apr. 1642 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 240); Deposition of John Wilmott, 11 Apr. 1642 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 295); Deposition of Henry Palmer, 12 Jan. 1642 (TCD, MS 818, fol. 88); Deposition of Donatus Conner, 28 Oct. 1642 (TCD, MS 818, fol. 110); Deposition of Thomas Ricroft, 10 July 1642 (TCD, MS 818, fol. 124).
[14] For Christian Hewetson see the deposition of Thomas Huetsonn, 15 Feb. 1642 (TCD, MS 813, fol. 260): see also John Hewetson, 'The Hewetsons of the County of Kildare' in *R.S.A.I Jn.*, xxxix, no. 2 (June 1909), pp 147-153. For the wife of the bishop of Kilfenora see the deposition of William Vowell, 25 June 1642 (TCD, MS 813, fol. 331). For other instances of disinterment involving female corpses see the deposition of William Collis, 4 May 1643 (TCD, MS 813, fol. 285); Deposition of Laurence Hooper, 31 May 1643 (TCD, MS 820, fol. 312); Deposition of Thomas Scott, 8 Feb. 1644 (TCD, MS 832 fol. 141). For other cases see the deposition of Riccard Bourk, 12 July 1643 (TCD, MS 835, fol. 238); Deposition of John Sharpe, 9 Nov. 1642 (TCD, MS 833, fol. 183).

between the two communities during peacetime.[15] In the chaotic environment of 1641, Catholics and Protestants, men and women, lay and religious alike, were compelled to 'take sides' as the chasm between the two communities ruptured along lines of confessional identity.[16]

The unusually populist nature of the 1641 rising has been emphasised by O'Dowd since it centred on contested religious identity that incorporated a broader and more diverse social grouping, and thus 'widened the potential for women to become involved'.[17] An in-depth exploration of the roles and representations of women in this, the most large-scale sectarian conflict in early modern Ireland, is therefore central to this study. To date the nature and extent of women's involvement in the rising specifically, and in sectarian violence more generally, has been the subject of some historical analysis.[18] O'Dowd has highlighted the involvement of women in war and violence in seventeenth-century Ireland and the various roles they played, noting that; 'women were employed to smuggle arms, collect intelligence, pass on messages and act as decoys' as well as acting as 'she-soldiers', nurses and carers.[19] While the efforts of prominent women from landed and gentry backgrounds in defending their familial castles during the insurgency of 1641 have all been the subject of scholarly attention, O'Dowd among others, has asserted that women's involvement in the rising has been largely underestimated and that women lower down the social scale participated, albeit at a local level, often as members of violent

[15] Gillespie, 'Popular & unpopular religion', p. 41.
[16] Carey & Lotz-Heumann (eds), *Taking sides?*; Canny, *Making Ireland British*, p. 500.
[17] O'Dowd has emphasised that whereas Irish uprisings during the sixteenth century, such as the Desmond and Baltinglass revolts of the late 1570s and early 1580s, were primarily shows of resistance by the aristocracy 'and rarely enjoyed or demanded widespread popular support', the 1641 uprising was 'different in the sense that it was the first Irish rebellion that involved spontaneous risings from below': see O'Dowd, *A history of women in Ireland*, p. 33.
[18] O'Dowd, 'Women and war in Ireland in the 1640s', pp 91-111; eadem, *A history of women in Ireland*, pp 31-33; Whelan, 'Women and warfare, 1641-1691', pp 317-43; eadem, ''The weaker vessel'?', pp 120-141; Andrea Knox, 'Testimonies to history: reassessing women's involvement in the 1641 rising', in Louise Ryan & Margaret Ward (eds), *Irish women and nationalism: soldiers, new women and wicked hags* (Dublin, 2004), pp 14-29; Coolahan, *Women, writing & language*, pp 142-79; McAreavey, 'Re(-)membering women', pp 72-92.
[19] O'Dowd, *A history of women in Ireland*, pp 32-3.

mobs.[20] More recently, Coolahan, in her detailed textual analysis of specific ways in which Protestant women articulated their experiences of the rising in the depositions, has proffered further evidence of the dynamic nature of female involvement; on that basis she contends that any assessment of women's roles and actions must take into account the heterogeneous nature of their involvement.[21] It is worth noting that both O'Dowd and Coolahan's analyses were undertaken prior to the transcription and digitisation of the 1641 depositions, which have enabled a widening pool of scholars (notably Barbara Fennell and Nicci McLeod) to discover further valuable insights into the relationship between gender and experiences of conflict in 1641, and in turn generate a lively and dynamic discourse on the subject.[22] Significantly, however, these scholars have tended to focus largely on female victimisation and traumatisation. By examining the roles and representations of women as both victims and perpetrators of sectarian violence in the Leinster and south-east Munster regions, this chapter aims to make an original contribution to this growing corpus of scholarship.

The depositions had an important formative influence over public opinion. By providing a platform for articulating and publicising anti-Catholic attitudes, they proved useful in mobilising support for suppressing the rising in Ireland. The selective reproduction of the most lurid reports from the depositions by Protestant polemicists, often by reference to dramatic and graphic instances of violence against female victims (discussed below), conveyed an impression to English audiences that the depositions as a whole contained similar accounts of barbaric cruelty on the part of the rebels. However, in reality, according to Clarke, only one in five depositions

[20] For example, the resistance of Lettice Digby (*c*.1580-1658), Baroness Offaly, in the defence of Geashill House in County Offaly, or the attempts of Lady Jane Forbes, Baroness Granard, to defend Castle Forbes in County Longford, besieged by rebels for nine months have been subjects of scholarly research. In her recent analysis Marie Louise Coolahan examined the depositions of Lady Offaly and Lady Dowdall, as well as additional correspondence made between Lady Offaly and her besiegers and has carried out a comprehensive analysis of both women's agency in the defence of their strongholds: see Coolahan, *Women, writing & language*, pp 167-77: see also O'Dowd, 'Women and war in Ireland', p. 92.

[21] Coolahan, *Women, writing & language*, p. 179.

[22] MacLeod & Fennell, 'Lexico-Grammatical Portraits', pp 259-90; Fennell, 'Routine appropriation: Women's voices and women's experiences', pp 53-70.

reported death by violence.[23]Seventeenth-century Catholic apologists condemned the depositions as containing 'fanatique legends ... of treacheries, murders and massacres committed by the Irish'.[24] Among the depositions' most virulent Catholic critics was Galway-native John Lynch (*c*.1599-1677), Archdeacon of Tuam (*c*.1631-71), who in a lengthy diatribe published in 1662 denounced them as gross exaggeration, false reportage and replete with information that was 'black with lies'.[25] Indeed, even Temple acknowledged that they were 'most commonly decried, and held by the Irish as very injurious to their country men'.[26] Furthermore, the admission of rumour and hearsay as evidence, a practice generally frowned upon in seventeenth-century legal practice, added to scepticism about their reliability.[27] Thus, ever since their creation the 1641 depositions as a source have been the subject of intense debate and they must be interpreted with circumspection and discrimination.[28]

Despite these drawbacks, however, the depositions offer invaluable insights into the nature and impact of the rising on individuals and communities who lived through it. Particularly relevant to the present study is Gillespie's emphasis on the unique potential of the depositions for social historians as they allow one to 'chart the human face of the rebellion' and to 'open up the social world of Ireland in the early 1640s revealing aspects of the lives of those who rarely appear in other official records'.[29] In a period when women's voices are ordinarily either absent from or peripheral in contemporary sources, the depositions offer rare insights into the lives

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[23] Clarke, 'The 1641 Depositions', pp 111-2. Despite the obvious propaganda such testimony afforded both the English press and popular opinion, however, Clarke has also emphasised the inherently legal nature of the depositions, being duly sworn on the Bible.
[24] Quoted in Canny, *Making Ireland British*, p. 463.
[25] John Lynch, *Cambrensis eversus, seu potius Historica fides in rebus hibernicis Giraldo Cambrensi abrogata* ... (St Malo? 1662?) ed. and trans. Matthew Kelly, (3 vols, Dublin, 1848-51), iii, 103, 109.
[26] Temple, *The Irish rebellion*, sig A4v.
[27] Barbara Fennell, 'Dodgy dossiers: hearsay and the 1641 depostions' in *History Ireland*, xix (2011), pp 26-9.
[28] However, while acknowledging their partisan nature, the determination of the deposition commissioners (all Protestant clergymen) to represent Irish Catholics in the worst possible light in order to secure lucrative compensation for Protestant victims, and the considerable difficulties they present in terms of interpretation, recently historians have reappraised the value of the depositions, arguing that they cannot be entirely dismissed as historical evidence. Foremost amongst them, Canny has argued that, 'the depositions have a unique importance because they constitute the only detailed information we have of what happened in Ireland during and immediately subsequent to October 1641'. Coolahan too concurs arguing that as 'the sole primary source they are, at the very least, important evidence of contemporary anxieties': see Canny, *Making Ireland British*, p. 468; Coolahan, *Women, writing & language*, p. 144.
[29] Coolahan, *Women, writing & language*, p. 144; Raymond Gillespie, 'The murder of Arthur Champion and the 1641 rising in Fermanagh' in *Clogher Rec.*, xiv, no. 3 (1993), pp 52, 66.

and experiences of individual women in Ireland before, during and immediately subsequent to the 1641 rising. According to O'Dowd they are 'one of the largest sources for women's public voices in seventeenth-century Ireland' while Coolahan views the depositions as a 'medium for self-construction and self-expression' for women (and men).[30] In essence, they provide a range of vignettes, capturing snapshots of the lives and experiences of women as they lived through a traumatic crises, allowing us to interpret something of the world in which they lived.[31] Depositions made by women, for example, offer a rare insight into how female members of a particular religious/ethnic community (in this case, English and Scottish Protestant settlers) who were targeted because of their identity, gave expression (albeit through the intercession of male scribes) to their own individual and specifically gendered experience of the trauma caused by the crisis. Moreover, depositions given by both men and women reveal the various roles played by Irish female rebels during the rising, the types of activities they engaged in, and occasionally offer insights into the motivations which compelled some women to action (albeit from the point of view of Protestant deponents). Furthermore, the depositions can be useful for what they reveal about women's accepted and prescribed roles in early modern society. Indeed deponents' representations of women can illuminate the various characteristics and attributes which deponents, both male and female, identified as most salient for the construction of negative and positive images of womanhood in the seventeenth century.[32] Ultimately, and most importantly, the depositions allow us to explore ways in which female members of two distinct communities negotiated the most violent expression of confessional division in early modern Ireland.

Drawing on a selection of discrete examples extracted from depositions relating to Leinster and south-east Munster, this chapter begins by examining the involvement of women as active agents in the sectarian violence that unfolded in autumn 1641, both directly as instigators and perpetrators of crime and violence, and indirectly as abettors and harbourers of Catholic rebels, including Catholic clergy, within their

[30] Mary O'Dowd, 'The political writings and public voices of women, *c*.1500-1850' in Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, v, 8.
[31] Coolahan, *Women, writing & language*, p. 142.
[32] MacLeod & Fennell, 'Lexico-Grammatical Portraits', pp 259-90.

localities. Thereafter representations of violence, including sexual violence, against women as depicted in ephemeral pamphlet accounts published during the first six months of the rising will be examined with specific attention on the utilisation and manipulation of the trope of violence against women (generally considered non-combatants) by pamphleteers in order to highlight the depravity and ferocity of the Irish 'Popish' and 'Romish' rebels. There follows an exploration of representations of women involved in 1641 in a separate genre of contemporary commentary on the rising – two larger treatises on the conflict, both of which drew upon official deposition testimonies and were commissioned at the behest of the English parliament, namely Henry Jones's *Remonstrance*, published in 1642 and Sir John Temple's *The Irish rebellion*, published in 1646. The appropriation by these authors of the deposition material in order to highlight instances of female victimhood is then scrutinised. Finally, the dissemination of representations of female victims of 1641 as Protestant 'martyrs' in contemporary martyrologies, notably Samuel Clarke's *A generall martyrologie*, published in 1651, will be examined with consideration of how these representations were part of a burgeoning Irish Protestant martyrological tradition which developed during the final three decades of the seventeenth century. The analysis concludes with a brief consideration of the parallel, yet rival Catholic martyrological tradition which blossomed on the Continent in the works of exiled Irish scholars, with special focus on the representation of the experiences female religious during the uprising in that tradition.

I

Among the assemblies of large crowds which attacked and looted the homes of Protestant settlers, women often played a prominent role. In Athy, County Kildare, for example, Temperance Martin reported that a fortnight before Christmas she was robbed by her neighbours who were all 'Irish Papists'. The mob came to her house at night, 'threw her downe, and trod upon h[e]r, and cast clothes over her that she should not see them'. Despite their efforts, Temperance was able to identify three of her assailants, two of whom were women, Katherine Keeray and Margaret Enda 'all of Athy her neighbours'.[33] In the same county, Catherine Connor was reportedly among those who robbed corn from a deponent living in Churchtown in the parish of

[33] Deposition of Temperance Martin, 5 Apr. 1642 (TCD, MS 813, fol. 380).

Kildrought (Celbridge).[34] Similarly in Queen's County, a deponent, Sarah Vynes, claimed that she was robbed by a woman named Ellen Vicars whom she described as a 'famous she-rebell'. Vicars, Vynes alleged, led her family – both daughters and sons – on raids of the homes of several Protestant families in the locality, forcing them to flee their lands.[35] In County Carlow Margery Bellingham described how she was robbed and despoiled of her goods by Katherine Byrne, the wife of Cahir Byrne, a leading rebel in that county, who, in a rare expression of motive on the part of a female rebel, reportedly told the deponent that she hoped to 'drive all the English protestantes that would not leave this kingdom into the sea'. [36] Indeed many deponents claimed that female members of rebel mobs acted with as much – if not greater – cruelty towards Protestant victims as their male counterparts. According to deponent John Grissell, for example, the women were as 'forward as the men Rebells ... being very bould in theare Roberries, while Henrie Aylyffe from King's County testified that the female rebels there were 'as feirse eigar cruell and bloudy in pursueing robbing striping spojlinge and attempting all vyllanyes robberis and cruelties they could against the English as the men, and rather farr exceeding them'.[37] In County Longford, among the mob of rebels who robbed Petter Bard at his home in early December 1641 was Mary McShane, the wife of Mahoune McShane, a rebel leader who was also part of the thieving mob. According to Bard, Mary acted with 'more crueltie against the protestants then any of the rest'.[38] In County Wexford, among those who robbed and stripped John Archer and his wife was the wife of Oliver Masterston of Clohamon near Bunclody: when asked by Archer's wife for a 'shirt' and a 'smocke' to 'cover theire nakedness[s]', Mrs Masterson reportedly responded by threatening to shoot them both with 'a brace of Bulletts' before forcing the couple to travel to Dublin 'naked' and 'in great daingers'.[39]

[34] Deposition of Thomas Naylor, 9 May 1642 (TCD, MS 813, fol. 319).
[35] Deposition of Sarah Vynes, 12 Apr. 1642 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 274); Deposition of William Jackson, 11 Apr. 1642 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 229).
[36] Deposition of Margery Bellingham, 11 May 1642 (TCD, MS 812, fol. 063).
[37] Deposition of Henrie Aylyffe, 27 June 1642 (TCD, MS 814, fol. 176); Deposition of John Grissell, 21 Aug. 1642 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 202).
[38] Deposition of Petter Bard, 29 Aug. 1642 (TCD, MS 817, fol. 183).
[39] Deposition of John Archer, 12 Mar. 1642 (TCD, MS 818, fol. 42).

While in general female rebels participated in large mobs which attacked the homes of Protestant settlers, other women, including those of aristocratic rank, assumed leadership roles typically reserved for men, directing male rebels and actively orchestrating acts of robbery and criminality in their locality. Notable among these was the Lady Dowager of Upper Ossory, Margaret, widow of Barnaby Fitzpatrick, fifth Baron of Upper Ossory (d. 1638) and daughter of Walter Butler (d. 1633), eleventh Earl of Ormond.[40] Margaret's family were traditionally staunch Catholics; her father, Walter Butler, had played a leading role in the Munster recusancy revolt of 1603 while Margaret and Barnaby's eldest son, also named Barnaby (d. *c*.1666), was later among the leading members of the Roman Catholic Confederation.[41] According to one Queen's County deponent, in early December 1641, having entertained a group of rebels at her home at Water Castle, three miles north of the plantation town of Abbeyleix, Margaret sent her servants, along with the rebels, 'to Robb and Pilladge' the homes of Protestant settlers in Abbeyleix. This deponent claimed that during the plunder of the town Margaret appointed a priest named Paul Cashen to 'ouersee the thrashinge of the Corne' and that afterwards she and her servants had enjoyed 'the greatest parte of the pilladged goods there taken'.[42] Not only did Margaret actively direct mobs of rebels and members of the Catholic clergy, she herself also became embroiled in the pillaging, targeting members of the Protestant ministry and their families who lived in the local area. According to deponent Anne Bingham, Margaret was among the party of rebels who robbed and despoiled her husband, Thomas Bingham, a minister (who was later killed), at the family's home near Ballinakill, in the south of the county. Anne claimed that, as a result of the robbery, she and her five young children were left destitute.[43] The case of Margaret Fitzpatrick offers a revealing insight into the manner in which the turbulence and chaos of 1641 and the temporary breakdown of the social order afforded élite women a rare opportunity to defy gender and class boundaries which usually governed their behaviour in order to give expression to their grievances in a public arena. Her case also demonstrates that a small number of élite women effectively marshalled support for the rising at local level, occasionally using their

[40] Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, xii, pt. 2, 190.
[41] Ibid.,, x, 148-9. Fr Brian Fitzpatrick (d. 1652), David Rothe's successor as vicar apostolic of Ossory (1651), was a close relation.
[42] Deposition of William Hill, 5 July 1642 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 210).
[43] Deposition of Anne Bingham, 16 May 1643 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 305): see also the deposition of Thomas Dungan, 28 Feb. 1644 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 321).

social position and influence to direct Catholic rebel mobs and sometimes to incite sectarian violence by rebels in the Leinster and south-east Munster regions. Their ability to influence and direct members of the Catholic clergy is not surprising considering their prominent role as patrons of priests (as discussed in chapter one).[44] Furthermore, the deponent's assertion that the rebel party had been entertained at Margaret's home prior to launching an attack on the settlers points to the role of certain élite women as abettors, supporters and maintainers of rebel forces during the rising, particularly rebel leaders among the local gentry, some of whom may have been family members. As a widow with her own home and income largely at her own disposal, Margaret was therefore in an exceptionally propitious position to channel provisions from her household in support of the rebel movement.

Yet, her involvement was by no means unique. Another influential woman alleged to have lent assistance to rebel forces operating in her locality was Kildare resident, Lady Ursula White, wife of Sir Nicholas White of Leixlip (1583-1654) and daughter of Garret Moore (*c*.1566-1627), first Viscount Drogheda and his wife Mary Colley, (d. 1654) of Castle Carbery in County Kildare (see Fig. 4.1).[45] According to the deposition of a local surgeon, Ursula White had been so generous in supplying 'victualls and provisions' to the rebels from her family residence, St Catherine's priory, that 'whatsoeuer' the rebels sought 'the said house afforded [it]'.[46] Unlike Margaret Fitzpatrick, however, Ursula White's family were traditionally adherents of the Established Church; her husband's grandfather was Sir Nicholas White (d. 1593), master of the rolls of Ireland, who in 1569 had been granted monastic property, including St Catherine's priory, while the Moores ranked among the most prominent Protestant settler families in Elizabethan and Stuart Ireland. However, according to the Irish Capuchin, Nicholas Archbold, at some point prior to 1643 Ursula White, to

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[44] See chapter two.

[45] Lady Ursula White was the fourth daughter, born after 1594, to Sir Garret Moore and Mary Colley. She married Sir Nicholas White before *c*.1612 and the couple had eight children; four sons; Nicholas (d. 1669), Arthur (d. 1669), an unknown son and Charles who married Eleanor Barnewall, daughter of Sir Nicholas Barnewall, first viscount Kingsland, a grandson of Sir Christopher Barnewall of Turvey and Grace Dieu; and four daughters; Mary married Theobald Taaffe, second viscount Taaffe, Frances married (*c*.1636) Thomas Dillon, fourth viscount of Costello Gallen, Anne married (*c*.1636) Christopher Fagan of Feltrim in County Dublin and Eleanor married (*c*.1651) Edmund Butler, second viscount Galmoye and secondly Walter Butler of Munphin, County Wexford: see Walter Fitzgerald, 'Leixlip Castle' in *Kildare Arch. Soc. Jn.*, ii, no. 7 (1899), p. 397; Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, iv, 462; v, 609-10.

[46] Information of Charles Connor, 10 Aug. 1642 (TCD, MS 813, fol. 40).

her mother's abhorrence, converted to Catholicism and was subsequently praised by Archbold for her 'constancie' to her Roman Catholic faith.[47] While it is unclear whether Ursula's husband converted or remained Protestant, her youngest daughter, Eleanor, was Catholic and married into the staunchly Catholic family of the Butlers, Viscounts of Galmoye, who were connected through marriage to the Fitzpatricks of Upper Ossory while two other daughters, Joan and Margaret, were nuns.[48] According to the surgeon's deposition both Ursula and her daughter, Eleanor were intimately involved with the rebel movement in the Leixlip area; Eleanor reportedly held 'conference' with the captain of the rebel forces 'seuerall tymes' in the 'garden' of St Catherine's priory.[49] The deponent's claim about the White women's involvement in insurgency is supported by the fact that Frances (d. *c*.1664) and Mary, Ursula White's eldest daughters, were imprisoned in September 1651 by Cromwellian authorities on account of their involvement in a plot to reclaim Athlone Castle, which was surrendered to parliamentarian forces the previous June by Thomas Dillon, fourth Viscount of Costello-Gallen, Frances's husband.[50] Conversely, at some stage in 1643, Alice Moore née Loftus (d. 1649), wife of Charles Moore (d. 1643), second Viscount Drogheda, Ursula White's sister-in-law, was implicated in a

[47] According to Archbold, Ursula Moore, Lady White had been converted to Catholicism by a priest named Edward Bath and had, he claimed, ever demonstrated considerable 'constancie' in the profession of the Roman Catholic faith: Archbold, 'The Historie of the Irish Capucins' (MS 1103, ff 98-99).

[48] Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, v, 609-10. For Joan and Margaret Moore see Walter Fitzgerald, 'The Whytes of Leixlip, County Kildare. Pedigree' in *Kildare Arch. Soc. Jn.*, ii, no. 7 (1899), p. 397.

[49] Information of Charles Connor, 10 Aug. 1642 (TCD, MS 813, fol. 40).

[50] Mary married Theobald Taaffe, second Viscount Taaffe and first Earl of Carlingford. Two of Mary's sisters-in-law were nuns; Eleanor was a nun of the order of St Clare while Anne was a member of the Dominican order. Frances (d. 1664) married before 1636 Thomas Dillon (d. 1673/4), fourth viscount of Costello-Gallen. Frances died at Winetavern Street in Dublin and was buried in St. James's Church. Her husband, who died in 1674, was buried in St. Mary's chapel in Christ Church: see Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, iv, 189, 294-6: Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, iv, 358. According to the report 'there was a plot upon the castle of Athlone to surprise it, wherein the Lord Costello's lady and the Lord Taaffe's lady had a hand. One that was engaged in the plot discovered the same to the Governor, who so managed the matter that, when they made their attempt, he killed fifty of them, took Sir Lucas Dillon's son prisoner, who led them on, and the two ladies are prisoner'. '18 September 1651, Commissioners in Dublin to the Council of State' in Robert Dunlop (ed.), *Ireland under the Commonwealth: being a selection of documents relating to the government of Ireland from 1651–1659* (2 vols, Manchester, 1913), i, 53-4.

conspiracy to surrender Drogheda and Dundalk to the parliamentarian army on account of which she was imprisoned in Dublin Castle but was later released.[51]

While both Margaret Fitzpatrick and Ursula White were actively involved in directing resources from their households in support of rebel forces other women could become more intimately involved in the insurrection at a local level. This was true in the case of Lady Margaret Burke, wife of Sir John Burke, a landowner in Castle Carbery, north-west Kildare. According to one deponent, a tenant farmer, who, lived on land owned by the Burke family prior to the rising when Margaret 'from tyme to tyme' invited '[the] rebells to come to her howse' where 'she and her husband entertained and harboured them', her involvement was more complex.[52] Margaret, the deponent claimed, actively manipulated her position of influence and trust among her Protestant neighbours in order to corral additional material resources for use by the rebels. After convincing the local Protestant minister, Mr Huetson, to deposit his valuables, including containers of 'butter' as well as some 'beefe' and several 'horses', at her house for safe-keeping (which he did 'in trust'), Margaret, in collusion with her husband, allegedly arranged for the minister's livestock to be transported to 'the enimyes the Rebells' while she, in a particularly spiteful act, 'devour[ed]' the butter. Her malice towards her Protestant neighbours went beyond acts of deception, however, and it was alleged that she, along with her husband and a number of their tenants, targeted several settler families and robbed 'ffortie Cowes in a night' and 'alsoe ... three hundreth sheepe'.[53] Having transported the stolen goods afterwards to Dublin to be sold, Margaret and her husband were said to have spent some of the proceeds of the sale 'in drincking day and night'.[54] Margaret may have acted in collusion with her husband. Yet, the deponent was keen to highlight the fact that she was 'vpon all occasions ... more cruell and feirce then her husband against the english protestants'.[55] Indeed, when requested by the deponent 'to leave of[f]

[51] Alice Moore was the daughter of Adam Loftus, Viscount Ely (1568-1643). 'Amongst the rest, there was a lady of quality in Drogheda, so active in debauching the officers in intelligence with Monroe, and prepatory for admitting a partie from him into the town, that she provided [false keys] for the ports, and which was much resented by the Lord Lieutenant'. Alice died in June 1649 and was buried in St Peter's Church in Drogheda with her husband: see John T. Gilbert (ed.), *History of the Irish Confederation and the war in Ireland 1641-49* (7 vols, Dublin, 1882-91), iii, 19.
[52] Deposition of Alexander Haie, 25 June 1642 (TCD, MS 813, fol. 356).
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.

from beinge a Rebell, and to become a good subiecte', Margaret justified her actions by allegedly retorting that 'they had long enough beene Slaves to the English and it was now tyme to looke for their right'.[56] In further evidence of her intimate engagement as an abettor of the rebel movement, the deponent claimed that Margaret, as ringleader in a foiled attempt to smuggle ammunition from Dublin to Kildare had been (as a result of his intervention) apprehended 'in her Coach' at Dublin, which 'being searched there was fownd ... twoe baggs of gunpowder ... and some pewter which she (haveing been three dayes before in Towne) had bought and was to carrie home into the Cuntrie'.[57] Of course, the deponent's claims about the extent and nature of Margaret Burke's involvement must be viewed with circumspection in light of the fact that he, together with his wife, Margaret Speare, despite obtaining promises of protection from the Burkes at the beginning of the rising, were afterwards robbed and stripped by rebels acting under their command.[58] Undoubtedly his collusion with the Dublin authorities to secure Margaret's arrest points to the fact that the deponent harboured a personal vendetta against her which almost certainly coloured his portrayal of her. Moreover, the generosity that Margaret, by her own account, afforded her Protestant neighbour, Lady Anne Colley, as evident in an undated letter penned to her (discussed below) raises questions about the deponent's portrayal and points to the complex nature of the conflict, the intricacy and fluidity of the lines of division and the multifaceted nature of allegiances in 1641.[59]

Other élite women who reportedly supported the rebel movement in their localities included Lady Elizabeth Esmonde (d. *c.*1645), wife of Baron Laurence Esmonde of Limerick County Wexford, who, according to one deponent, 'contributed to the Irish forces' and was 'of the Roman Catholicque profession' and also Jane Nugent née Plunkett, Countess of Westmeath who was likewise accused of abetting rebel

[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Examination of Margrett Speare, 17 Jan. 1642 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 408).
[59] Letter from Margarett Bourke to Lady Colley, undated (TCD, MS 813, fol. 148).

forces.[60] According to one deponent, in December 1641 the countess entertained several rebel leaders at Clonyn Castle, the Nugent family residence, located near the Franciscan friary at Multyfarnham, County Westmeath.[61] Among those said to have been welcomed at the castle by the countess was Myles Reilly, 'one of the Cheefe of the Rebells in the Countie of Cavan', who allegedly 'supp[ed] and dine[ed] in the dyneing roome, with the Countesse of WestMeath & the said Earles sonnes'.[62] However, the deponent's claims are questionable as the countess later testified that she had been robbed by the rebels, among them members of the Reilly clan, while her husband, Richard Nugent, the Earl of Westmeath, by all accounts, refused to support the rebellion of his Catholic associates. He later died from injuries sustained during an attack by a rebel mob near Athboy in County Meath as he made his way towards Dublin in May 1642.[63] It was not only gentle women and aristocratic women who actively supported the rebels through their provision of resources, however. It was reported that a 'Mrs Butler' who resided at Ballydroit in County Tipperary was a 'partaker with, Releever and harbourer of Rebells', while Joane Nolan, wife of a tailor and resident of Back Lane in Dublin city, was accused of colluding with rebel commanders and supplying them with ammunition and other provisions.[64]

While certain women made an important contribution to the rising by providing food, shelter and ammunition to rebel forces, others took a more prominent role and were themselves involved in a leadership capacity, overseeing and sometimes carrying out acts of brutality and violence against the Protestant settler population. According to Longford resident Isabell Aleyne, for example, after the seizure of Longford Castle

[60] Lady Elizabeth Esmond was the granddaughter of James Butler (d. 1546), ninth earl of Ormond: see J. J.N. McGurk, 'Esmonde, Laurence, Baron Esmonde of Limerick (*c.*1570-1645)' in *O.D.N.B.* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8884, 3 Dec 2011]. Following the death of her husband in May 1645 Lady Esmond was described the following month as living 'in grief, age and debility': see Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, v, 112; Information of Richard Shortall, 2 Mar. 1654 (TCD, MS 817, fol. 303).
[61] Information of Richard Shortall, 2 Mar. 1654 (TCD, MS 817, fol. 303).
[62] Examination of William Baker, 25 July 1642 (TCD, MS 817, fol. 65).
[63] Deposition of Jane Countess of Westmeath, 24 Jan. 1643 (TCD, MS 817, fol. 23); Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, xii, pt. 2, 527-28.
[64] Deposition of Mary Bushen, 27 Sept. 1642 (TCD, MS 821, fol. 10); Deposition of Thomas Greames, 20 Apr. 1642 (TCD, MS 813, fol. 346). 'And further saith that one Joane the wiffe of one Nolan of the backlane in dublin Taylor in Christmas Last came to Captaine Scurlock aforesaid to his howse or place of residence att that tyme, and dyned with him there as she her self told him this deponent and that shee then furnished Walter Ashpoole a Rebell one of the said Art Cavanaghs souldjers whoe was her owne brother with ~~po~~ gunpowder herrings salte and aquavitae'.

where she and her family had fled for safety, a Lady Browne, whom Aleyne labelled 'a most cruell Rebell', ordered the murder of her husband who was 'most cruelly butchered *[and] slaine* by these Rebels'.[65] In Queen's County the brutal actions of another woman, Bridget Fitzpatrick née Darcy, wife of Florence Fitzpatrick of Castletown near Mountrath, a prominent rebel leader in the county, are referred to on numerous occasions in testimonies for that county.[66] The Fitzpatricks were among the most prominent Catholic families in Upper Ossory and were connected through marriage with members of the Irish Catholic nobility and gentry in the Leinster and south-east Munster regions, including the Prestons, Viscounts Gormanstowns, the Butlers, earls of Ormond and the Mac Carthys, earls of Clancarty.[67] Their son, John Fitzpatrick (d. 1693), served as a confederate officer in the Leinster army and was a member of the general assembly of the Catholic Confederacy (1642-9).[68] Bridget, alongside her husband Florence, took a leading role during the rising in Queen's County, assuming command of her husband's forces whom she deployed in a number of cold-blooded acts of violence and brutality against the community of Protestant settlers living in the Mountrath locality. According to Margaret Taylor, a resident of Mountrath, located ten miles south of the plantation town of Maryborough, Bridget exacted ten pounds from a Protestant woman named Mrs Nicholson under the pretence of securing safe passage for both her and her husband from their home to the English garrison at Fort Leix. Bridget then ordered the unsuspecting couple to travel in the company of 'a Convoy [of rebels]' in the direction of the garrison. However, no sooner had they set out on the journey than the 'convoy', together with 'other bloudie villaines ... sett vpon the said Nicholson & his wife & first stript & after slew & murthered them'.[69] Afterwards the 'murtherous Rebells', returning to Bridget with their victims 'aapparell', were publicly rebuked

[65] Deposition of Isabell Aleyne, 20 Aug. 1642 (TCD, MS 817, fol 180r).
[66] Deposition of Margrett Taylor, 21 Apr. 1643 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 361); Deposition of Elizabeth Baskerville, 26 Apr. 1643 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 314); Deposition of Philip Sergeant, 8 Jan. 1644 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 315); Examination of George Syllie, 9 Apr. 1642 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 260); Deposition of Job Ward 23 July 1642 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 287). Bridget Fitzpatrick née Darcy was probably a member of the Darcys of Platten, an influential County Meath family.
[67] Bridget and Florence's son, John (d. 1693) married as his first wife, daughter of the confederate commander Colonel Thomas Preston, first Viscount Tara. He married as his second wife, Elizabeth Butler (d. 1675), widow of Nicholas Purcell, and a sister of James Butler, first duke of Ormond and Eleanor, wife of Donough MacCarthy, first earl of Clancarty: see Anne Creighton, 'Fitzpatrick, John (?Jack?)', in *D.I.B.* (Cambridge, 2009), [http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a3237].
[68] Anne Creighton, 'Fitzpatrick, John (?Jack?)', in *D.I.B.* (Cambridge, 2009), [http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a3237, accessed 29 Nov. 2011].
[69] Deposition of Margrett Taylor, 21 Apr. 1643 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 361).

by their female commander who denounced them as 'roagues' and demanded to know why they had not 'ripped vpp and opened the fatt gentlewomans bodie and taken from her fatt or grease that she ... might have made benefite thereof'.[70] Bridget's malicious intentions concerning Mrs Nicholson's body were confirmed by another deponent, Elizabeth Baskerville, who had no doubt about the sectarian motive for the attack. She claimed that Mrs Nicholson had been targeted 'becawse she was an English protestant' and alleged that Bridget had 'fownd much fault with her husbands souldjers becawse they did not bring along ... to her the grease and fatt of one Mris Nicholson for makeing her Candles withall'. [71] Bridget Fitzpatrick's violent nature was also attested to by another deponent, a servant to Sir Charles Coote and resident of Mountrath, who claimed to have been 'credibly told by divers persons' that Bridget 'had but one hand' which she hoped to 'wash ... in Sir Charles Coots bloud'.[72] The same deponent also alleged that Bridget (or her husband) was complicit in the murder of another Protestant settler, a man named William Fox, who was hanged at Castletown.[73] It was reported that after Fox was hanged, his wife and children, travelling towards Mountrath, were pursued by rebels who, acting under Bridget's command, 'killd the children outright' and badly wounded the woman. She along with her dead children was then cast into 'an old saw pitt' where she lingered for two days before capturing the attention of an Irish rebel by pleading with him 'to giue her a little water to drinck'. The rebel retorted by asserting that 'he wold giue her her fill' and 'did instantly with a great stone knock out her braynes'.[74] As Jennifer Wells has discussed, eleven years later, in September 1653, for her complicity in the grisly murder of William Fox's wife and children, Bridget would stand trial at the High Court of Justice in Dublin.[75]

In a separate case of female-led rebel cruelty, this time in County Kilkenny, deponent Dorothy Reynolds, claimed that Ellen Butler, a servant to James Butler of Tinnahinch, located about thirty kilometres outside Kilkenny city, ordered the execution of a man named William Stone and that Ellen 'would not depart of the

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[70] Ibid.
[71] Deposition of Elizabeth Baskerville, 26 Apr. 1643 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 314).
[72] Deposition of Phillip Sergeant, 8 Jan. 1644 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 351).
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Jennifer Wells, 'Proceedings at the High Court of Justice at Dublin and Cork, 1652-1654 [part I, with index]' in *Achiv. Hib.*, lxvi, (2013), pp 109-21.

ground till the said Stone was hanged'.[76] In north Leinster/south Ulster too, women assumed leadership roles in their localities. Rose O'Neill, wife of a rebel commander in County Cavan, was denounced by one deponent as a 'bloudy viragoe' who was 'the principall cawser & instigator of the drowning of fifty protestants men, women, and Children, all at one tyme, at the bridge of Belturbett', while Margret McMahon, wife of rebel leader Rory McMahon in Monaghan was implicated in the execution of an unnamed female victim. Allegedly, Margaret 'with a white rod in her hand and a skeane by her syde' said that 'she would be sherriff for that turne & soe stood by till that poore woman was hanged'.[77]

Undoubtedly the most notorious case of female-led rebel cruelty in the Leinster and south-east Munster regions, however, was the brutal treatment accorded the heads severed from the corpses of seven Protestants killed at the battle of Ballinakill in Queen's County in September 1642.[78] Following the battle the heads were carried in triumph from Ballinakill to Kilkenny city, bastion of the Supreme Council of Confederate Catholics in Ireland, where they were ceremoniously displayed at the market place and subjected to ritualistic mutilation by rebel forces, among them members of the extended Butler family, including Edmund Butler (d. 1679), eldest son and heir of Richard Butler, third Viscount Mountgarret and president of the Catholic Confederacy (1642-8).[79] One deponent, a Wexford minister and eyewitness, reported that the severed heads, including that of Thomas Bingham, a minister from Ballinakill and husband of Anne Bingham (discussed above) and those of six soldiers (all of the defeated army), were 'brought by the Rebells into Kilkenny ... where a gentlewoman of the Rebells in expression of her malice drew out a skeane &

[76] Examination of Dorothy Reynolds, 19 Aug. 1652 (TCD, MS 812, fol. 249): see also Examination of Elizabeth Ferrall, 20 Aug. 1652 (TCD, MS 812, fol. 255).
[77] Deposition of Marmaduke Batemanson, 13 Apr. 1643 (TCD, MS 832, fol. 080); Deposition of Robert Aldrich, 10 Feb. 1644 (TCD, MS 834, fol. 169).
[78] Examination of Edward Butler, 16 Feb. 1653 (TCD, MS 812, fol. 327). Deposition of John Mayre, 29 May 1645 (TCD, MS 812, fol. 247).
[79] Examination of Edward Butler, 16 Feb. 1653 (TCD, MS 812, fol. 327). Deposition of John Mayre, 29 May 1645 (TCD, MS 812, fol. 247).

stabbd itt through the Cheekes of that decollated head of the said Mr Bingham'.[80] Another deposition which featured the joint testimony of a group of Kilkenny deponents, among them Elizabeth Gilbert and Rebecca Hill, both widows of English army lieutenants, also described the treatment accorded the severed heads by a 'gentlewoman' at Kilkenny. In this lengthier account the woman was named as Alice (Elice) Butler, second eldest daughter of Richard Butler, Viscount Mountgarret, and wife of Andrew Fitzpatrick of Queen's County (undoubtedly a member of the prominent Fitzpatrick family mentioned above.[81] These deponents described the treatment of the severed heads by the rebel mob, both men and women, but singled out the actions of Alice Butler for particular comment. They emphasised that the target of Alice's malice was not the minister's head but rather that of a man named William Alfrey, 'son of the Lord Lieutenant's comptroller'.[82] The deponents described how:

> ... all those seven heads ... [were] carried to Kilkenny by those rebels (their pipers for joy playing before them on horseback) ... where the rebels, but especially the women there and amongst the rest Elice Butler a reputed ~~house whore~~ [and] mother of severall bastards yet the daughter of the said Lord Mountgarret stabbd cutt and slasht those heades: the said Elice Butler drawing her skeine slasht at the face of the said William Alfrey & hitt him on the nose & those that could but gett a blow or stabb at those heades seemed to account themselues happie.[83]

Through their castigation of the daughter of one of Kilkenny's leading peers as a 'reputed house whore' and a 'mother of severall bastards', signifying her sexual lasciviousness, the deponents emphasised her immorality and deviation from prescribed feminine norms, her prominent social status making the barbarity of her actions all the more shocking. Intriguingly, however, the fact that the expression 'house whore' was scored out in the original deposition, suggests that it was retracted by the deponents after their testimony was recited to them by

[80] Deposition of Donatus Conner, 28 Oct. 1642 (TCD, MS 818, fol. 110). Connor explained that the 'rebels from time to time divulged that the cause of their insurrection was for that ten thousand at least of Protestants in England and Ireland had put their hands to a note to hang all the papists at their own doors unless they came to their church with them.' Conner also had knowledge of Catholic fears that this intended assault was part of a universal Protestant offensive because priests had spread rumours of atrocities committed by Protestants in France against the Catholic population there'.

[81] Richard Butler's wife was Margaret, eldest daughter of Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone: see Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, iv, 67; Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, ix, 322-33. For Andrew Fitzpatrick see the deposition of Andrew Bereton, 28 Feb. 1643 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 157).

[82] Deposition of John Mayre, 29 May 1645 (TCD, MS 812, fol. 247).

[83] Deposition of Joseph Wheeler, Elizabeth Gilbert, Rebecca Hill, Thomas Lewis, Jonas Wheeler, Patrick Maxwell and John Kevan, 5 July 1643 (TCD, MS 812, fol. 202).

commissioners, perhaps in recognition that they had crossed a line in the crude articulation of their judgement.[84] The redaction also points to the widespread concern among deponents to maintain a reputation for civility and credibility by disassociating themselves from use of pejorative language.[85]

Alice Butler was not the only woman among the Kilkenny mob to take an active role in the violation of the severed Protestant heads. As already discussed, the rebel mob, which included both men and women, targeted the head of Minister Thomas Bingham, which was chosen for a particularly cruel, ritualistic and sectarian fuelled attack. The rebels were said to have put 'a gagg' in the minister's 'mowth', produced a 'leafe of a bible before him [and] bade him preach saying his mowth was open wyde enowghe'. The actions of one unnamed woman, labelled a 'lewd viragoe', were similarly singled out: having no weapon of her own, she struck the minister's severed head 'with her hand'.[86] Denouncing her actions as a direct violation of God's divine will, the deponents recounted how divine retribution was exacted on this woman when that same night, her hand 'grew black and blew [and] rankled, and she was extremely lame with it a quarter of a yeer after'. Another female rebel who, 'with great rejoicing' witnessed the mutilation of the minister's head, was likewise targeted by God's retributive wrath and 'did quickly after' fall 'into such an astonishment and distraction, that for three or four days after she could not sleep nor

[84] 'Individual depositions, once taken, were then read aloud to deponents for purposes of revision, approbation, and corroboration': see Coolahan, *Women, writing & language*, p. 146

[85] Deponent reticence about using the term 'whore' was also evident in the testimony of County Armagh resident Alice Gregg, who, referring to a group of female rebels, labelled them 'base trulls and whores … & lewd women [who] did much vawnt & glory in such their cruelties', but afterwards retracted her use of the term 'whores'. Indeed a search of the depositions database for the term 'whore' or 'whores' reveals that only on occasions when it was used to refer to the reported speech of rebels was the term retained in deponent testimony: see Deposition of Elizabeth Gough, 8 Feb. 1642 (TCD, MS 833), Deposition of Gilbert Pemberton, 1 Mar. 1642 (TCD, MS 836), Examination of John Murghlan, 28 Feb. 1653 (TCD, MS 838), Deposition of Alice Gregg, 21 July 1643 (TCD, MS 836), Part of the Examination of Daniel Berwicke, 21 May 1642 (TCD, MS 810), Examination of Catherine Edwards, 17 Sept.??? (TCD, MS 815), Deposition of Timothy Pate, 6 June 1643 (TCD, MS 811), Examination of Joice Deane, 9 Sept. 1652 (TCD, MS 826) Examination of Edmond Realy, 8 September 1652 (TCD, MS 811), Examination of Isaac Philpott, 11 Aug. 1653 (TCD, MS 826); Deposition of Ellenor Stringer, 9 Aug. 1653 (TCD, MS 826), Examination of Joyce Deane, 15 Aug. 1653 (TCD, MS 826), Deposition of Samuell Franck, 1 Feb. 1643 (TCD, MS 815); Eamon Darcy, 'The spoken word in early modern Ireland', unpublished paper delivered at the History Department Research Seminar, Maynooth University, Dec. 2014.

[86] Deposition of Joseph Wheeler, Elizabeth Gilbert, Rebecca Hill, Thomas Lewis, Jonas Wheeler, Patrick Maxwell and John Kevan, 5 July 1643 (TCD, MS 812, fol. 202).

rest, but cried out that still she saw those heads before her eyes'.[87] Significantly, in the deponents' testimony it was the two unnamed women who were targets of divine retribution, signifying the extraordinarily deviant, barbaric and reprehensible nature of <u>their</u> behaviour. Equally revealing is the fact that the only named female rebel, the aristocrat Alice Butler, was exempted from God's punishment.

As Coolahan has discussed, the fact that an aristocratic or gentle woman, from whom submission, dutiful adherence, obedience and modesty were expected, engaged in such public and destructive acts magnified vividly for deponents the extraordinary rupture of the social order precipitated by the rising.[88] While the actions of Bridget Fitzpatrick and Alice Butler are revealing about the level and extent of female agency during the disturbances, their behaviour was not typical of female involvement. Indeed, the fact that their participation is mentioned so often in deponent testimonies reflects its exceptional nature. As will be discussed later in the chapter, their notorious behaviour was taken up in the late 1640s by the Protestant author John Temple who cited their cases as representative of female rebel cruelty, thereby perpetuating fear of the Catholic 'other' among English audiences.[89]

While thus far the focus has been on the activities of those Catholic women in Leinster and south-east Munster who were instigators and perpetrators of crime and violence and abettors and harbourers of Catholic rebels (including clergy), many others, despite their own religious allegiances and the direct involvement of their family members in the conflict, were unwilling to take part in the violence that emerged. Several deponents testified to the kindness and charity afforded Protestant victims by certain Catholic females, particularly gentle and noble women, who gave shelter and domicile to displaced Protestant victims in their homes, serving as important agents of conciliation within their local communities. Notable among these was a highly influential Catholic member of the Butler dynasty, the English-born Lady Frances Butler née Touchet, wife of Sir Richard Butler of Kilcash Castle, County Tipperary (d. 1701), second son of the staunchly Catholic Thomas Butler (d.

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[87] Deposition of Joseph Wheeler, Elizabeth Gilbert, Rebecca Hill, Thomas Lewis, Jonas Wheeler, Patrick Maxwell and John Kevan, 5 July 1643 (TCD, MS 812, fol. 202).
[88] Coolahan, *Women, writing & language*, p. 156
[89] Temple, *The Irish rebellion*, p. 101.

1619), Viscount Thurles.[90] Lady Frances was a well-known patron of Catholic priests in her own right. Indeed, in 1654 the Dublin-born Discalced Carmelite, Stephen Browne later commended her continued maintenance of a dedicated chapel at Kilcash Castle and her provision of ‘decent vestments [and] fine and clean altar clothes’ for priests under her patronage.[91] Frances was of a staunchly Catholic family: her older sister, Lucy (d. 1662), wife of Gerald Fitzmaurice, was also a supporter of Catholic clergy and maintained priests at her home at Ballinakill Castle in Queen’s County while another sister Dorothy (d. 1634), was married to Edmund (Roe) Butler (d. 1679), eldest son and heir of Sir Richard (d. 1651), Viscount Mountgarret, and a brother of Lady Alice Butler (discussed above).[92] Yet, notwithstanding her family’s entrenched Catholicism and the active involvement of her relatives, including females, in the rising, Lady Frances sheltered the Protestant Danuers family at her home during the course of the insurrection. Prior to the rising the Danuers had been tenant farmers and lived in the parish of Ballibrassell in County Kilkenny.[93] Elizabeth Danuers described how after being forced to flee their home, she, her husband and their six children were ‘most freely nobly & kindly welcomed, releeued and succored’ by Lady Frances at the Butler family residence. The family were accommodated ‘for [two] days and nights’ by Lady Frances who would not allow them to depart until she had obtained for them ‘a safe lodging place at Carrick about [three] myles from kilcash’.[94] Evidently close ties of friendship existed between the Danuers family and the Butlers of Kilcash prior to the outbreak of hostilities as in her deposition Elizabeth described Sir Richard as ‘her honourable *freind* [emphasis in the original]’.[95]

The hospitality afforded the Danuers family by Frances Butler testifies to the strength of strong bonds of fraternity and community between Catholic and

[90] Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, x, 149; James Touchet, *The Memoirs of James Lord Audley Earl of Castlehaven, his engagements and carriage in the wars of Ireland, from the year 1642 to the year 1651* (Dublin, 1815), xiv, xxviii.
[91] Browne, *The soul’s delight*, preface, unpaginated.
[92] Deposition of Captain Richard Steele, 22 Aug. 1643 (TCD, MS 815, fol 358); her brother George, (d. *c.*1689) was a Benedictine monk. *The earl of Castlehaven’s memoirs* (Dublin, 1815), xiv, xxviii. For Dorothy Butler née Touchet, second daughter of Mervin, Earl of Castlehaven see Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, iv, 68-9 and Touchet, *The Memoirs of James Lord Audley Earl of Castlehaven*, xiv, xxviii.
[93] Deposition of Elizabeth Danuers, 14 Aug. 1645 (TCD, MS 820, fol. 317).
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.

Protestant neighbours that predated the outbreak of hostilities and attendant social disorder in 1641 and reveals how, even at times of extreme sectarian hostility, conciliation and cooperation can be found at local level, a feature which historians of European sectarian conflicts have also observed, for example, during the French wars of religion (1562-98).[96] The case of Frances Butler case also demonstrates how the social rupture which characterised the rising precipitated a variety of reactions among individual women, even among members of the same family. While on the one hand, Alice Butler's outright sectarianism represented the most exceptional form of female rebel involvement, serving to provoke and inflame sectarian tensions in Kilkenny, on the other hand, her kinswoman, Lady Frances Butler was a stalwart of conciliation and mediation within her local community, her actions serving to reinforce bonds of community and friendship between neighbours in spite of religious differences.

The conciliatory actions of the Catholic Lady Frances were by no means unique, however, and the depositions attest to several instances of kindness and charity afforded Protestant settlers by Catholic women and their families in the Leinster and south-east Munster regions. For example, the English-born Lady Jane Plunkett née Heneage and her husband, Meath-native, Patrick Plunkett (*c*.1595-1668), ninth Baron of Dunsany, reportedly sheltered a group of displaced Protestant settlers at their home at Dunsany Castle.[97] These actions were mirrored in the north of the country by Katherine Hovendon, mother of Sir Phelim O'Neill (*c*.1604-53), who sheltered and provided sustenance to more than twenty settler families at her County Armagh home for a period of about eight months.[98] The fact that Frances Butler and Jane Plunkett were both originally of English descent points to the accuracy of Michael Perceval-Maxwell's contention that 'animosity towards the settlers

[96] Ford, 'Living together, living apart', p. 12.
[97] Deposition of Thomas Crant, 13 Feb. 1642 (TCD, MS 832, fol. 215). For Patrick Plunkett, ninth Baron of Dunsany see Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, iv, 553. Plunkett married (bef. 1634) Jane Heneage, daughter of Sir Thomas Heneage of Hainton in Lincolnshire. For other cases involving women see the Deposition of John Huxley, 21 May 1642 (TCD, MS 810, fol. 158) and the Examination of Henry Masterson, undated (TCD, MS 818, fol. 132).
[98] Deposition of Robert Maxwell, 22 Aug. 1642 (TCD, MS 809, fol. 9). According to Maxwell, Katherine claimed that 'she had never offended the English Except in being mother to Sir Phelemy [Phelim]'. According to the Irish Catholic friar O'Meallan's account, Katherine Hovendon was among those captured by English forces during the Confederate wars: see 'Friar O'Mellan's narrative of the wars of 1641' in Robert Young (ed.), *Historical notices of old Belfast and its vicinity* (Belfast, 1896), p. 230.

depended on the extent of contact with English culture before the rebellion; where contact had been close, behaviour was generally restrained', or in this case, even conciliatory.[99] Their cases also serve as useful comparisons to the charitable actions carried out by Protestant women during the disturbances of 1641-2. For example, the Scottish-born Lady Jane Forbes née Newcomen (d. *c*.1642), widow of Sir Arthur Forbes, first Baron Granard (*c*.1590-1632), who afforded refuge to a party of more than 200 'poore, robbed and distressed' victims whom she 'habored' and 'releeved' at her Castle Forbes home in County Longford for a nine month period between November 1641 until August 1642 and Lady Elizabeth Butler née Preston (1615-84), wife of James Butler, twelfth Earl and later first Duke of Ormond, who was reported to have provided considerable material help and shelter to large numbers of Protestant settlers at Kilkenny, Tipperary and Dublin.[100]

II

In the aftermath of the 1641 Irish uprising reports of atrocities perpetrated by Irish Catholic rebels against Protestant settlers quickly reached London where they were published in pamphlet accounts which flooded the London news circuit.[101] Between October 1641 and April 1642 (the most intense phase of the conflict) London printers produced over 160 works on the rising, the equivalent of twenty-two per cent of England's total printed output for the period.[102] As one might expect, these deeply partisan pamphlet accounts, written in formulaic prose and infused with hyperbolic and symbolic portrayals of violence, focused largely on the massacre of innocent Protestant settlers in order to lobby for support and financial assistance for victims of Catholic attacks.[103] Widely diverse in their content and claims, some sought to shock audiences with purported first-hand graphic accounts of events in Ireland while many were entirely unreliable, drawing on rumour, suspicion, and

[99] Perceval-Maxwell, *The outbreak of the Irish rebellion of 1641*, p. 228.
[100] Deposition of Dame Jane Forbes, 3 Sept. 1642 (TCD, MS 817, fol. 187); Deposition of Arthur Ahgmoty and Martin Johnston, 13 Sept. 1642 (TCD, MS 817, fol. 179). For Lady Elizabeth Butler see *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Ormonde, 1641-53* (new ser., 7 vols, London, 1902-12), ii, 367-75.
[101] Ethan H. Shagan, 'Constructing discord: ideology, propaganda and English responses to the Irish rebellion of 1641' in *Jn. Brit. Studies*, xxxvi, no. 1 (Jan. 1997), pp 4-34; David O'Hara, 'English newsbooks *and Irish rebellion, 1641-1649* (Dublin, 2006); Joseph Cope, *England and the 1641 rebellion* (Woodbridge, 2009); Darcy, *The Irish rebellion of 1641.*
[102] O'Hara, *English newsbooks and Irish rebellion*, p. 35.
[103] Joseph Cope, 'Fashioning victims: Dr Henry Jones and the plight of Irish Protestants, 1642' in *Historical Research*, lxxiv, no. 186 (Nov. 2001), p. 376.

outright fabrication about events in Ireland.[104] Whereas the earliest pamphlet reports emphasised the largely localised aspect of the rising, in time it came to be depicted as 'universall throughout the kingdom'.[105] Representing the conflict in overtly sectarian terms, these accounts demonised the Irish rebels, styling them 'rebellious', 'bloody-thirsty' and 'envious' papists whose conduct was 'worse than Scythian'.[106] Descriptions of those who attacked Protestant settlers featured literary terminology used by generations of colonial writers who commented on Ireland, characterising the Irish rebels as 'lazy', ignorant', 'illiterate', and thus 'fit subjects for the Jesuits to spur on such bloody actions'.[107] Indeed the pamphleteers habitually denounced the 'popish clergy' and 'mass-priests' as 'firebrands of hell', accusing them of playing a leading role in arousing violence among the general populace in 1641, while some pamphleteers claimed that the uprising was part of an international popish conspiracy against the Protestant Church.[108] In contrast, the victims of the insurrection were referred to as 'good Protestants of worth', 'afflicted Protestants' and 'God's saints', forced to suffer the wrath of unparalleled 'Romish' torment and cruelty.[109] Seeking to enthral and shock audiences, the 1641 pamphlets thus emphasised the most grotesque, gruesome and appalling aspects of victim suffering in Ireland while concurrently providing readers with 'evidence' of the inhumanity and degenerative nature of the Irish rebels. In this way the 1641 pamphlet literature

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[104] As Joseph Cope has highlighted, contemporary audiences marked the potential unreliability of such sources of information. A work entitled *No Pamphlet, but a Detestation against All Such Pamphlets are Printed Concerning the Irish Rebellion,* lamented sensationalist news, condemning 'the vanity of the authors, who for small gain' tried to persuade 'credulous people to believe such things as are contrived from their hellish brains': Cope, 'Fashioning victims', p. 376.

[105] *More newes from Ireland: or the bloody practices and proceedings of the papists in that kingdome at this present* (London, 1641), no pagination; *A great conspiracy by the papists in the kingdome of Ireland discovered by the lords, justices, and counsel at Dublin, and proclaimed there Oct. 23 1641*, (London [1641]), p. 2; G.S., *A brief declaration of the barbarous and inhumane dealings of the northerne Irish rebels, and many others in severall counites up-rising against the English, that dewlt both lovingly and securely among them* (London, 1641), pp 14-5.

[106] Nicholas Bernard, *A letter sent from Dr Bernard, a reverend divine, and parson of Tredagh to Sr. Simon Harcourt's lady in Westminster, London, Mar. 18. 1641* (London, 1642), title page; G.S., *A brief declaration of the barbarous and inhumane dealings of the northerne Irish rebels*, p. 1.

[107] *A true and credible relation of the barbarous crueltie and bloudy massacres of the English Protestants that lived in the kingdome of Ireland anno dom. 1641, in the province of Ulster and other provinces there, by the Irish rebellious traytors* (London, 1642), pp 1-2.

[108] *A Bloody Battell: or the Rebels Overthrow And Protestants Victorie* (London, 1641), sig. A4; G.S., *A brief declaration of the barbarous and inhumane dealings of the northerne Irish rebels, and many others in severall counites up-rising against the English, that dewlt both lovingly and securely among them* (London, 1641), p. 12; *A true and credible relation of the barbarous crueltie and bloudy massacres of the English Protestants*, pp 1-2.

[109] *Bloudy Newes from Ireland, or the Barbarous Crueltie By the Papists used in that Kingdome* (London, 1641), sig. A4; *Worse and worse Newes from Ireland* (London, 1641), sig. A3; *A true and credible relation of the barbarous crueltie and bloudy massacres of the English Protestants*, p. 1.

conformed entirely to the rhetoric of violence and cruelty commonly featured in atrocity publications of the era, notably accounts of the Thirty Years Wars (1618-48), many of which were familiar to English audiences having been publicised widely facilitated by a burgeoning trade in cheaply printed pamphlets and news-sheets on the London market.[110]

A common characteristic of the pamphlet literature published within the first six months of the outbreak of the rising was an emphasis on highlighting the most shocking and horrifying aspects of victim suffering in Ireland. The pamphleteers' fondness for the sensational and for fanning sectarian sentiment is evidenced by the titles which included, *A Bloody Battell: or the Rebels Overthrow And Protestants Victorie* (London, 1641), *Worse and worse Newes from Ireland being the coppy of a letter read in the House of Parliament* (London, 1641), *Bloudy Newes from Ireland, or the Barbarous Crueltie By the Papists used in that Kingdome* (London, 1641) and James Cranford's *The teares of Ireland* (London, 1642). The latter, edited by Cranford (*c*.1602-57), a Puritan minister and warden for the Stationers Company, was published at London in April 1642 and merits special attention in the context of this study for a number of reasons.[111] Like other pamphleteers Cranford presented the Irish uprising as an overtly sectarian conflict, stating at the outset that 'the Pope is that Antichrist' and including in his collection numerous graphic accounts of the alleged atrocities committed by Irish Catholic rebels against innocent Protestant victims.[112] In emphasising the ferocity and brutality of the Irish rising, Cranford's collection drew parallels with religious persecutions in Continental Europe, including the St Bartholomew's Day massacre in France (1572) as well as the 'merciless inquisition' in Spain.[113] Like other pamphleteers Cranford blatantly cited

[110] For a discussion of the similarities between how the Irish rebellion was presented in English newsbooks and pamphlets and the portrayal of atrocities during the Thirty Years War see Darcy, *The Irish rebellion of 1641*, pp 102- 19.
[111] E.C. Vernon, 'Cranford, James (1602/3-1657)' in *O.D.N.B.* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6610, accessed 19 Nov. 2011]. In 1643 James Cranford (1602/3-57) was made one of the parliamentarian licensers for the press. Cranford cites as his source of evidence as recollections 'taken from the mouthes of verie credible persons, and out of letters sent from Ireland to this city of London'; Cranford, *The teares of Ireland*, p. 20.
[112] In the preface Cranford stated that 'Here followeth a true description ... of the perfidious outrages and barbarous cruelties which the Irish Papists have committed upon the persons of the Protestants' and claimed that the priests and Jesuits were the key instigators in spurring on 'such bloody actions and murth'rous designes', Cranford, *The teares of Ireland*, p. 20.
[113] Cranford, *The teares of Ireland*, p. 20.

exceptional examples of violence perpetrated against women and children in order to convince audiences that the rising in Ireland went above and beyond the normal, accepted parameters of warfare; it was a conflict in which the rebels, Cranford claimed, had 'tyrannized over the weaker sex, women'.[114] Cranford's account, however, undoubtedly held the greatest shock value for audiences since these atrocities were featured not only in text but in a series of vivid printed images which (significantly) focused disproportionately on acts of atrocity and violence perpetrated against women. Out of a total of twenty-four images included in Cranford's compilation, no less than ten depict some form of violence against women. One features an atrocity which reportedly took place five miles outside Kilkenny in early December 1641, at the home of a man named only as 'Master Atkins' (see Fig. 4.2).[115] It is significant in the context of this study, that while the accompanying caption makes clear reference to an attack perpetrated against Master Atkins, the illustration depicts only the treatment afforded Atkins's pregnant wife. The caption reads that:

> At one Master Atkins house 7 Papistes brake in & beate out his braines, then riped upe his wife with childe, after they had ravished her, and Nero-like view'd nature's bed of conception then tooke they the childe & sacrificed it in the fire.[116]

Coolahan has highlighted how, 'The gendered situation of the pregnant woman, with its straightforward connotations of vulnerability and infant innocence ... occupied a memorable space in the collective imagination' and thus an image such as this had the effect of immediately seizing the viewer's attention.[117] As her comment emphasises, Cranford's pamphlet had the advantage of being accessible to literate and illiterate audiences alike.

The vulnerability associated with pregnancy as a powerful and arresting literary trope is again invoked by Cranford in his recollection of an atrocity committed

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[114] Ibid., p. 65.
[115] Ibid., p. 22.
[116] Ibid., p. 22. The account of the brutal murder of Mrs Atkins was included in a 1689 publication by an anonymous author entitled *A full and true account of the inhumane and bloody crueltie of the papists* (1689), p. 2. Cranford's account possibly refers to the Thomas Atkins, a weaver, and his wife, who lived at Passage Hill in County Waterford and are mentioned in the deposition of Roger Boyle and Anna Boyle. See deposition of Roger Boyle and Anna Boyle, 17 June 1642 (TCD, MS 820, fol. 246).
[117] Coolahan, *Women, writing & language*, p. 153.

against another woman, the wife of an army captain named Saint John. In this account Cranford juxtaposes the inhumanity of the rebels' 'extreame and unheard of cruelty' with the innocence of the woman referred to by Cranford as a 'poore Gentlewoman'. In a particularly malicious act of cruelty, Cranford related how the rebels:

> ... most inhumanely tooke the Captains wife (poore Gentlewoman) and set her on the wall having stript her to her smock, "who was big with with child (and within an houre of her delivery) that in case the Captain and his son should have assaulted the town, his wife should have beene the white at which hee must have levelled: oh extreame and unheard of cruelty![118]

While the graphic representation of the brutal atrocity committed against the pregnant Mrs Atkin's illustrated effectively one aspect of the gendered experience of violence during the 1641 rising, Cranford's assertion that the woman was first 'ravished' by the rebels, demonstrated another aspect of distinctly female victim suffering and gendered violence. In the accompanying illustration the perpetrator is depicted kneeling between the female victim's thighs while she lies naked with her hair dishevelled (both recognised signifiers of rape in seventeenth-century iconography).[119] While Cranford's inclusion of a pictorial representation of the rape crime was rare if not indeed unique in the context of 1641 pamphlet literature, allegations of rape were by no means unusual in the pamphlet accounts that permeated the London news-circuit during the first six months of the uprising. However, unlike Cranford's account which featured specific and detailed information, most pamphleteers used the rhetorical device of asserting in general terms that rape was commonplace, without giving specific examples. In August 1642, for example, Tristram Whetcombe, the mayor of Kinsale, in an account entitled *The Truest Intelligence from the Province of Munster in the Kingdome of Ireland*, claimed that the Irish rebels, whom he characterised as 'Turkes', 'Mahumetans' and 'Tygers', had 'ravished Matrons, vitiated wives [and] defloured virgins'.[120] Another pamphlet, entitled *Dolefull news from Ireland*, which purported to be a letter from an Irish Protestant to his brother in England, detailed how the Irish rebels 'spared

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[118] Cranford, *The teares of Ireland*, pp 28-9.
[119] Dianne Hall and Elizabeth Malcolm, ''The rebels Turkish Tyranny': Understanding sexual violence in Ireland during the 1640s' in *Gender & History*, xxii, no. 1 (Apr. 2010), p. 68.
[120] Tristram Whetcombe, *The truest intelligence from the province of Munster in the kingdome of Ireland extracted out of several letters of very serious importance lately sent from Mr Tristram Whitcome, soverainge of Kinsale* (London, 1642), p. 1.

neither man, woman nor child ... but after they had ravish[ed] their wives and daughters put them all to the sword'.[121] Other pamphleteers focused on the prevalence with which acts of rape were perpetrated against women in view of their male relatives, most often husbands and fathers. Thus Thomas Partington, presenting a long litany of cruelties committed by the rebels, claimed that they had 'ravish[ed] wives before their husband's faces and virgines before their parent's faces' and added the sectarian fuelled caveat that 'after they have abused their bodies', the rebels made 'them renounce their religion' in a final act of degradation of their victims.[122] Another pamphleteer writing in 1641 claimed that the rebels even targeted pregnant women whom they raped 'before their owne husband's faces' while 'lying in child-bed'.[123] The claim that married women and mothers were raped in view of their husbands and male relatives was also made by Cranford. He was keen not only to publicise the barbarity of the attackers but to emphasise the respectable marital and social status of the female victims. Cranford described how 'many gentlewomen' were stripped naked and 'ravished before their husbands' faces'.[124] In this way the utter barbarity of the 'base' Irish rebels who targeted women, regardless of their social status, was highlighted, reflecting and perpetuating the notion of a ruptured social order.

The impression created by these pamphlet accounts is that the suffering of those compelled to witness the crime (that is the male relatives of the female rape victims) was in fact greater than that of the female victims. In these accounts the men are presented as the main targets of the violent act; the rape of Protestant women, particularly married women, is represented as a grave affront to the honour of their male relatives.[125] Honour codes, drawing on assumptions about manhood and women's frailty, underpinned the cultural system that kept men's and women's social roles distinct. For women, reputation relied in the main on their sexual virtue

[121] P.S., *Dolefull news from Ireland sent in a letter* (London, 1642), sig. A2v.
[122] Thomas Partington, *Worse and worse news from Ireland being a coppy of a letter read in the house of Parliament, the 14 if this instant month of December, 1641* (London, 1641), p. 2: see also *The happiest newes from Ireland that ever came to England since their first rebellion* (London, 1641), p. 3.
[123] G.S., *A briefe declaration of the barbarous and inhumane dealings of the northerne Irish rebels*, p. 6.
[124] Cranford, *The teares of Ireland*, p. 31.
[125] This discussion concentrates on rape as it affected female victims. I have not uncovered any instances involving men but, as discussed below in the case of reports of rape involving women, this absence does not in itself preclude its occurrence.

and chastity. As Anthony Fletcher points out, 'men's sexual reputations mattered to them as well as women's and their behaviour in this respect was part of their honour code but it was not its centrepiece as it was for women'.[126] Thus, chastity for the unmarried woman — and fidelity for the married woman — were pivotal to female honour. There was a perceived relationship between a woman's sexual history, her moral worth and her material circumstances — thus, a woman's sexual reputation was constructed as a commodity, for her husband as much as herself. Sexual ownership was a key element of men's honour code, and it was seen as men's duty to ensure the sexual fidelity of their wives in order to protect their own reputations. Reported acts of rape, particularly the rape of married women were represented as intentionally dishonouring male Protestant settlers. These accounts, therefore, point to the relevance to the Irish context of Barbara J. Baines's contention concerning the process of the 'effacement' of rape in early modern literary representations whereby rape is 'troped' or 'metaphorised' and 'transformed into an occasion for conflict between men and for the privileging of male honour', rather than in terms of personal injury to the woman. This process both reflected, and was reinforced by, medieval perceptions of rape as a crime against property and a threat to class structure, notions which were still prevalent in the early modern period.[127] As well as representing an attack on the honour of individual male settlers, pamphleteers' representations of rape suggests a strong aversion to the tainting of English and Protestant blood with 'barbaric' Irish and/or Catholic lineage, thereby reflecting and perpetuating colonial perspectives on the inferiority of the native or 'mere' Catholic Irish.

While these generalised accounts worked to create a narrative of widespread and indiscriminate rape perpetrated against women regardless of marital or social status or geographical location, others featured more detailed individual cases of rape. According to one report, at Cloghan in King's County, the rebels entered the house of Simon Sloper, a merchant, 'and ravished his wife before his face and then hanged

[126] Fletcher, *Gender, sex & subordination*, p. 103.
[127] Barbara J. Baines, 'Effacing rape in early modern representation' in *English Literary History*, lxv, no. 1 (Spring, 1998), p. 70.

him at his doore'.[128] In County Cork, at the home of Minister Dabnet, 'a religious and godly man' his wife, 'a religious and godly woman', was accosted by the rebels, thrown to the ground 'and ravished her before her husband's face'.[129] The Puritan minister Stephen Jerome (d. 1650), in his 1641 publication entitled *Treason in Ireland*, included an account of an incident which allegedly occurred at an alehouse between Naas and Athy, in County Kildare. According to Jerome a band of rebels murdered the English owner before they 'ravished' the maid and afterwards 'threw her into the boyling Caldron, or panne of wort, that was then over the fire' while the mistress of the house was beheaded.[130] In a letter from Kells, County Meath, dated 5 January 1642, it was claimed that the women of Navan were given three options: renounce Protestantism and marry Irishmen, give their bodies to all who wanted them, or be murdered.[131] Similarly viscious attacks occurred elsewhere in the country. In Fethard, County Tipperary, where all the Protestants were 'massacred', the rebels made a spectacle of the local minister, Mr Low, whom they subjected to a brutal and torturous ordeal while his wife's life was preserved 'by reason that their intent is to keep her, and so to have her fulfil their Lust when they please'.[132]

Undoubtedly, however, Cranford was the most prolific in citing specific instances of rape. He identified no less than four individual cases (including that of Mrs Atkins mentioned above). For example, at an unspecified location, the daughter of an English gentleman, described by Cranford as 'a proper Gentlewoman', was seized upon by the rebel Rory Maguire who 'satisfied his beastly lust on her deflouring her', before cutting 'off her garments by the middle' and turning her 'to the mercy of the common souldiers to be abused at their pleasure'.[133] Cranford also related a particularly harrowing incident involving the fourteen-year-old daughter of a man named Arthur Robinson in County Meath. According to his report, the rebels robbed

[128] *The happiest newes from Ireland that ever came to England since their first rebellion* (London, 1641), p. 2.
[129] *The rebels Turkish tyranny, in their march Decem.24. 1641 as it was taken out of a letter sent from Mr Witcome a merchant in Kingsale to a brother of his here* (London, 1641), p. 2.
[130] Stephen Jerome, *Treason in Ireland for the blowing up of the kings English forces ... with a relation of the crueltie of the Irish rebels used against the English Protestants there* (London, 1641), pp 4-5.
[131] *Dolefull news*.
[132] *The happiest newes from Ireland that ever came to England* (London, 1641), unpaginated. For Minister Low see the Deposition of Samuel Pullein, 1 May 1642 (TCD, MS 821, fols 030r-031v): see also the Deposition of Randolphe and Margery Shaftoe, 16 Feb. 1643 (TCD, MS 821, fol. 26).
[133] Cranford, *The teares of Ireland*, pp 61-2.

and pillaged Robinson's house and afterwards killed most of his family. His daughter, a 'young virgin' who had hidden in a barn, was afterwards discovered by the rebels. Unlike the majority of female rape victims who were represented by pamphleteers as the passive victims of the rebels' despicable actions, in this case the young girl attempted to resist the rebels' attempts to violate her:

> ... she made what resistance she could to preserve her chastity, and with a knife she had (unseen to them) wounded one of them, which the rest perceiving seized upon her violently, stripped her and then bound her with her armes abroade, in such manners as she could not help her self any way, and so like hell hounds defloured her one after another, till they had spoiled her.[134]

Cranford's account of the young Meath woman's attempts to 'preserve her chastity' had previously been described in an earlier pamphlet entitled *Ireland's Tragical Tyrannie* which described how, having had her tongue cut out 'because she would not blaspheme against her Maker', the young girl sent a letter to her uncle living at Miniard in Somersetshire detailing her tortuous ordeal.[135] Cranford's deliberate incorporation of this exceptionally dramatic and remarkable case demonstrates his desire to commandeer the most shocking and lurid aspects of female victim suffering for inclusion in his account.

The impression given in the 1641 pamphlet literature is, therefore, that rape was a regular occurrence, a commonplace experience for female victims, many of whom were afterwards either mutilated or murdered (sometimes ritualistically), or both. Indeed one pamphleteer intimated that the crime was so widespread that, 'to speak of the ravishing of wives, maids and virgins ... would take up a great volume'.[136] Yet, while the pamphleteers accused the Irish rebels of indulging in indiscriminate and widespread rape of the female settler population in Ireland, they offered little evidence to substantiate these claims. Indeed reports of rape in official victim deposition testimonies are distinguished by their rarity, a fact which has attracted

[134] Ibid., pp 44-5.
[135] John Robinson, *Ireland's tragical tyranny* (London, 1642).
[136] *A true and credible relation of the barbarous crueltie and bloudy massacres of the English Protestants*, p. 3.

some – albeit brief – comment and debate from historians of early modern Ireland.[137] O'Dowd is convinced that rape 'must have been an element' of women's experiences of the uprising but she concedes that 'documented evidence for rape is curiously small'.[138] Nicholas Canny, on the other hand, has contended that because incidences of rape feature so rarely in the depositions, one can deduce that the crime did not occur.[139] More recently, Dianne Hall and Elizabeth Malcolm have argued that a deeper understanding of the multiple and 'diverse meanings' attached to rape and sexual assault in early modern society can help to explain why so few cases were reported in the official victim testimonies.[140] As these diverging opinions illustrate, assessing the incidence of rape in 1641 is a difficult task.[141] However, these small number of allegations in 1641 and 1642 should not be interpreted (as Canny has done) as implying that in reality instances of rape were low: rather they elucidate two points. Firstly, they demonstrate the courts' general ambivalent attitude towards the crime of rape in the early modern period and their reluctance to prosecute it.[142] Secondly, low levels of prosecution reflected the fact that the majority of rapes and

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[137] Deposition of John Stibbs, 21 Nov. 1642 (TCD, MS 817, fol. 203); Deposition of Suzan Steele, 14 July 1645 (TCD, MS 817, fol. 213); Deposition of George Burne, 12 Jan. 1644 (TCD, MS 839, fol. 38); Deposition of Gilbert Pemberton, 1 Mar. 1642 (TCD, MS 836, fol. 8); Deposition of Christian Stanhawe and Owen Frankland, 23 July 1642 (TCD, MS 836, fol. 75).

[138] O'Dowd, 'Women & war', p. 101.

[139] Nicholas Canny found evidence for rape in the depositions but simply concluded that 'rape was not as widespread [as contemporaries] would expect': Canny, *Making Ireland British*, pp 544-5.

[140] Hall & Malcolm, ''The rebels Turkish Tyranny'', pp 55-74.

[141] Indeed rape in pre-modern European societies is a notoriously challenging and complex crime to investigate and one which, until recently, has received sparse attention in early modern historiography. As Garthine Walker has highlighted, 'the social history of rape in early modern England could be described as a non-history, a history of absence', comments that can be extended to the Irish case. Rape was a felony and a capital offence punishable by death under English common law as it operated in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Ireland. However, as in England, it appears that there were few cases brought before the courts and even fewer convictions. For a discussion in the Irish context see Hall & Malcolm, ''The rebels Turkish Tyranny'', pp 55-74. For the English context see Garthine Walker, 'Rereading rape and sexual violence in early modern England' in *Gender & History*, x, no. 1 (1998), pp 1-25 and Barbara J. Baines, 'Effacing rape in early modern representation' in *English Literary History*, lxv, no. 1 (Spring 1998), pp 69-98.

[142] This ambivalence is perhaps best exemplified in a 1632 legal treatise entitled *The Lawes Resolutions of women's rights*, written by Thomas Edgar. As Baines, in her commentary on Edgar's text has discussed, on the one hand, Edgar represents rapists as predators and women as vulnerable prey; on the other hand because the perpetrator 'ventured his life for her sake' she might be 'flattered' and consent to the act which in turn invalidated the crime. According to Baines, Edgar's comments reflected an increasing preoccupation with and suspicion of the concept of female complicity and culpability in cases of sexual assault and rape on the part of early modern legalists. This preoccupation reflected social attitudes about the potential lascivious and promiscuous nature of women, notions derived from a complex body of theological, philosophical and legal texts which gained cultural potency in the early modern period and exemplified by Edgar's comment that 'a greater capacity of deceipt and maturity of [sexual] desire ... be in a woman than in men': see Thomas Edgar, *The lawes resolutions of womens rights: or, the laws provision for woemen* (London, 1632) and for commentary Baines, 'Effacing rape in early modern representation', pp 69-98.

sexual assaults were never reported; the humiliation inherent in such an ordeal meant that few rape victims were willing to bring charges before the courts. Indeed humiliation and shame on the part of female victims may explain why so few deponents were willing to speak about it, a point made by O'Dowd who contends that 'the shame attached to rape prevented more cases from being publicly reported'.[143] Highlighting a petition presented to the House of Commons on 4 February 1642 by a contingency of 'Gentlewomen and Tradesmens-wives' which referred to the 'savage and unheard of rapes exercised upon our sex in Ireland', O'Dowd claims that 'the women's petition registered their reluctance to speak of such matters' and that it was 'likely that a similar reticence was exercised by the deponents, particularly if the victim was still alive or of a high social standing'. O'Dowd has also highlighted the fact that 'the small number of rape cases ... noted in the depositions usually relate to servant girls'.[144] That shame and humiliation were reasons for the low reportage of rape among deponents was acknowledged by Henry Jones, head of the deposition commission. In a private report he commented that 'wickedness of that nature have commonly not witnesses' and considered possible reasons for the rarity of rape in the deponent testimonies, including the fact that the victim may remain silent out of a sense of modesty or because the victim knew that she would have no redress.[145] Cranford too, notwithstanding his susceptibility to the sensational, highlighted how female rape victims were ostracised by their communities. He claimed that some were sent away in such 'a shamefull, or rather shamelesse manner' that afterwards most of them 'died with shame and grief'.[146] The dishonour associated with rape and sexual assault is also reflected in the unwillingness of other commentators on the rising to elaborate upon it. Describing the experience of the wife of Minister Hudson, 'a religious and godly minister' at Belturbet in County Cavan, the pamphleteer related how she was 'abused in a shameful manner, not fit to be spoken'.[147] Indeed, notwithstanding all his lurid and graphic details of brutal atrocities committed against the settler population, Temple

[143] O'Dowd, 'Women & war', p. 101.

[144] Ibid. The petition was afterwards published as *A true copie of the petition of the Gentlewomen and Tradesmens-wives, in and about the city of London* (London, 1641). The statement regarding rape is quoted on p. 2. Interestingly the petition also included as an appendix 'severall reasons why their sex ought thus to petition, aswell as the men'.

[145] 'A treatise giving a representation of the grand rebellion in Ireland' (BL Harley MS 5999).

[146] Cranford, *The teares of Ireland*, p. 31.

[147] *A true and credible relation of the barbarous crueltie and bloudy massacres of the English Protestants*, p. 6.

often refrained from being specific in his depictions of rape and sexual violence, tending instead to imply sexual violence rather than describe it, and including the caveat ‘not fit to be mentioned’ on numerous occasions throughout his publication.[148]

A desire to provoke a shocked reaction among readers led certain pamphleteers to select particularly horrifying accounts of atrocities allegedly perpetrated on stalwarts of Protestant communities, namely clergymen and their wives who represented the very heart of their communities and religious traditions. In doing so, they chose to focus on the most depraved rebels reported to have carried out crimes against the most highly esteemed women in the Protestant community. Highlighting such cases in which the perpetrator and victim were diametrically opposed in both confessional and behavioural terms served to emphasise the horror of the crimes. Cranford, for example, claimed that it was standard practice for rebels to deploy ‘the basest villains they can pick out’ in order to rape the wives and daughters of Protestant ministers. He recounted in graphic detail the horrendous ordeal endured by one minister and his wife at Duncannon in County Wexford during which the couple were accosted by seventeen ‘barbarous monsters’ at their home, stripped naked and bound back to back.[149] The rebels then proceeded to ‘cut off the Ministers privy members [and] afterward ravished his wife on his back’ before cutting their throats.[150] While Cranford’s account was characteristically sensational and provocative, the trope of the beleaguered clergyman’s wife was one favoured by other pamphleteers. For example, in his account, Richard Chappell included a lengthy description of the treatment accorded Minister Trafford and his wife in County Longford.[151] In the gruesome depiction of the attack, Chappell described how the rebels, after seizing Longford town, targeted the minister in the street, and

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[148] Temple, *The Irish rebellion*.

[149] Cranford, *The teares of Ireland*, p. 80; this account was taken from another pamphlet entitled *The victorious proceedings of the Protestants in Ireland* (London, 1642).

[150] Cranford, *The teares of Ireland*, p. 80.

[151] Richard Chappell, *A true and good relation of the valliant exploits, and victorious enterprises of Sir Simon Harcourt and Sir Charles Coote* (London, 1642). The pamphlet takes the form of a letter, dated 20 Jan. 1642, written by Richard Chappell, an alderman of Dublin, to his friend, a draper in London. While primarily concerned with reporting the English army’s success in defeating the Irish rebels and extolling the valiant and heroic efforts of the army captains, the account also included descriptions of rebel cruelty and sets the rebellion in an overtly sectarian context.

'ript up' his belly, leaving him for dead.[152] However, despite the apparently gory nature of the attack inflicted upon the minister, it is the harrowing experience of his wife which becomes the central feature of Chappell's narrative. According to Chappell's sensationalist account, following the attack on Trafford, his wife quickly came to his aid: 'with her hands put his bowels into his belly again, and with the help of some other, drew him a little way where there was straw, with which she covered him'.[153] Having brought her husband to safety and covered him with straw, the woman ran back to her house 'to see her children which the Rebels were stripping and in pulling off of one of the children cots they broke the childes neck'.[154] She returned again to her husband and on discovering that he had received 'a wound in his head to the very braines', she went in search of the surgeon who refused to help. The woman was then stripped 'stark naked' by the rebels before 'returning in that case to her husband [whom she] found ... dead with his throat cut'.[155] The image of the traumatised and innocent minister's wife attempting to rescue her injured husband was a highly evocative trope which Chappell utilised effectively to elicit a sympathetic response from his audience. Struggling to protect both her wounded husband and her young children from brutalisation at the hands of the rebels, the virtuous and godly Mrs Trafford became the captivating character in Chappell's narrative, which was otherwise concerned with relating the military campaigns of the English army. In Chappell's account, Mrs Trafford was depicted as emblematic of Protestant settler suffering in Ireland.[156] Not surprisingly, as will be discussed below, the experience of Minister Trafford's wife would later be included by Henry Jones in his account of the Irish rising.[157]

[152] Chappell, *A true and good relation of the valliant exploits*, p. 4.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Ibid.
[156] The case of Minister Trafford is included in another pamphlet account entitled *A continuation of the Irish rebels proceedings, with our victories over them* which takes the form of a letter written by Alderman Cillard of Dublin dated 28 Feb. 1642. Although notably the pamphlet makes no reference to his wife. According to Cillard, the most inhumane aspect of the rebels' behaviour was their treatment of women; 'nay there is more inhumane things than all this, the damned Rogues did search the women's privie parts for money and would make the poor good women to dance naked with a bagpipe and being near a thatch house the poor souls would catch of the straw and hold it before them'. Cillard, *A continuation of the Irish rebels proceedings, with our victories over them* (London, 1642), pp 2, 3.
[157] Henry Jones, *A Remonstrance of divers remarkable passages concerning the church and kingdome of Ireland* (London, 1642), p. 68.

Another account which publicised the targeting of ministers and their wives by rebels was Daniel Harcourt's *The clergies lamentation*.[158] Harcourt's publication differed from the pamphlets discussed thus far, all of which (with the exception of Cranford's text) were published during the first six months of the rising. Published in 1644 Harcourt's publication is all that survives of the work of a second deposition commission of Ulster clergymen appointed in April 1642 to collect victim testimonies in regions of the northern province hitherto untapped by the earlier commission led by Henry Jones.[159] Harcourt, himself a minister, led the commission and as the title suggests his publication concentrated specifically on the plight of Protestant clergymen in Ulster. His lengthy preamble is laden with allegorical language, rhetoric and Biblical citation whereby Harcourt likens the ordeal of the 'calamitous Protestants' in Ireland to that of the children of Israel. His use of alliteration referring to 'Sodomiticall seminaries', 'Papisticall Prelates' and 'Jesuiticall Indcendiaris', which doubtless enhanced the written and spoken word impact of the text's colourful rhetoric was, according to Iain Donovan, extreme even by pamphlet literature standards of the day.[160] As well as presenting numerous instances of rebel cruelty against individual members of the Protestant ministry in Ulster, Harcourt incorporated accounts of the experience of four individual ministers' wives, emphasising the respectable married status of each woman.[161] However, while three of the four cases involved violence against clerical wives in Ulster, the most harrowing, and the one which in Harcourt's view stood apart from all others in terms of its brutality, was an attack perpetrated on a woman named Mrs Smithson, a clergyman's wife from Kill O' The Grange in south County Dublin.[162] The exceptional brutalisation of Mrs Smithson is borne out by the fact that while Harcourt dedicated merely a couple of lines to describing the experiences of the

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[158] Daniel Harcourt, *The clergies lamentation: deploring the sad condition of the kingdome of Ireland by reason of the unparrallel'd cruelties and murders excercised by the inhumane popish rebels* ([London], 1644). It was first published under the title *A new remonstrance from Ireland, containing an exact declaration of the cruelties, insolencies, outrages and murders exercised by the bloodthirsty, popish rebells in that kingdome*, which was published in two parts in July 1643.

[159] Clarke 'The 1641 depositions', p. 116. Harcourt was appointed along with Nathaniel Drayton, William Hammond and Simon Chichester, all Ulster clergymen. The original commission is printed in *A new remonstrance from Ireland, containing an exact declaration of the cruelties, insolenices, outrages and murders exercised by the bloodthirsty, popish rebels in that kingdome* (London, 1643), pp 1-2.

[160] Iain Donovan, ''Bloody news from Ireland': the pamphlet literature of the Irish massacres of the 1640s', (M.Litt thesis, TCD, 1995).

[161] Harcourt, *The clergies lamentation*, pp 10-19.

[162] Ibid., p. 21.

other three women, he devoted a full page to detailing the treatment afforded Mrs Smithson, making this the longest account of one individual's experience featured in his twenty-four page tract.[163] Her treatment at the hands of the rebels was, he claimed, the most 'barbarous, inhumane, heathenish, and unheard of murders', one so cruel as to render it comparable only to the experiences of the Israelites: 'And all that saw it said there was no such thing done or seen since the time that the children of Israel came up from the land of Egypt to this day'.[164]

Information concerning the case of Mrs Smithson was first recorded in the deposition given by her husband Joseph Smithson, a 'Minister and Preacher of Gods word' in the parish of Clonkeen, County Dublin, on 18 January 1642. Smithson relayed an account of his experience during the rising, including the treatment accorded his wife, Mary.[165] Harcourt's subsequent representation of Mary Smithson's case is revealing as it illuminates the extent to which authors of 1641 pamphlet literature exaggerated accounts of rebel atrocity and cruelty in order to meet the polemical criteria prescribed by the genre of massacre literature. While it might have been expected by readers of *The clergies lamentation* that, as a clergyman and member of a government appointed deposition commission, Harcourt would have relayed a *bona fide* account of events in Ireland as contained in the depositions, comparative textual analysis between Joseph Smithson's original deposition and Harcourt's subsequent rendition demonstrates the extent to which Harcourt exaggerated and manipulated the case of Mary Smithson's ordeal in order to suit his own polemical purposes and portray the Irish rebels as exceptionally heinous in their treatment of an innocent and upright member of the Protestant community in Ireland. While Harcourt's account corresponded generally with Joseph Smithson's deposition concerning the facts of the case (namely that Mary Smithson was stripped, taken captive and then murdered) his infusion of hyperbole, symbolism, exaggeration and numerous biblical and religious references which established cues

[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid., p. 23.
[165] Smithson testified that 'in December last vpon Innocents day at night hee was robbed in houshold goods to the value of 40*s*. in hay 50*s*. in a horse 3*li*. in bills and bonds 10*li*. in the losse of his gleabe land & garden 5*li*. in duties henns geese ducks piggs and turkeyes offerings and other duties 5*li*'. Deposition of Joseph Smithson, 18 Jan. 1642 (TCD, MS 809, fol. 327).

for readers to follow and interpret the account through a distinctly sectarian lens, demonstrated Harcourt's aptitude as a skilled propagandist.

As was customary, at the beginning of his deposition, Joseph Smithson provided the commissioners with a list of the financial losses he had incurred as a result of the uprising. He then proceeded to recount how, at the end of December 1641, on 'Innocents day', after they had pillaged his house at Kill O' The Grange, the rebels, among them the servants of Nicholas Rochford, 'a wilfull Papist', targeted his wife, Mary Smithson, took her prisoner and subjected her to a torturous ordeal before murdering her. Joseph Smithson recounted how his wife 'being taken in her own house her Appron pulled off and her selfe dragged out by the hayre of her head ... and set upon her own bare horseback [and] her clothes plucked from under her', was then driven 'through Boggs to one Mr William Woolverstons of Stillorgan in the said countie' who 'gave commaundment to the Rebells to hang her but not upon his lands'. Afterwards, Smithson claimed, his wife was carried away 'upon the same horse in and about 20 myles after the same manner'. While Smithson was not an eyewitness to his wife's murder, he testified that he had been 'crediblie informed that the said Rebells have most barbarouslie and crewllie hanged his said wife till she died and a servant woman of hers also'.[166] Intriguingly, and pointing to deeply-held tensions between the Protestant ministry and their Catholic parishioners over the payment of church tithes, Smithson reported that Rochford had kept from him 'soe many tithes ... in hope to see Protestants burne in them' while William Wolverston, a leading member of Dublin's recusant élite, claimed 'he would pay noe more tithes but to the Masse priest'.[167] As Alan Ford and Mark S. Sweetnam have highlighted, the relationship between Protestant clergy and their Catholic parishioners was perceived as 'uniquely exploitative'. The case of Mary Smithson demonstrates how during periods of heightened tension, in the breakdown of law and order, hitherto

[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid. Deposition of Josuah Bishop, 11 Feb. 1642 (TCD, MS 809, fol 248): on the involvement of William Wolverston see Francis E. Ball, *A history of the county Dublin: the people, parishes and antiquities from the earliest times to the close of the eighteenth century* (6 vols, Dublin, 1979), i, 118-9.

contained tensions and antagonisms found expression and ministers' wives such as Mary Smithson were deemed legitimate targets.[168]

Recounting Mary Smithson's case Harcourt was keen to emphasise to his audience the sectarian and dramatic nature of her ordeal. Thus, in his account Mary was described as 'the virtuous wife of a Levite' while her assailants were styled 'obstinate Papists' and 'Satanicall seducers'.[169] Highlighting her vulnerability, Harcourt described how, 'her poverty having made her too credulous', Mary was persuaded by one of the rebels to return to her house on the promise that a 'Communion cup, and a barrel of wheat' would be given to her. (The reference to the communion cup was an instructional cue, drawing readers' attention to the sectarian aspect of the episode). Having successfully lured 'the unfortunate Gentlewoman' back to her home, rebels set upon her and subjected her to a brutal ordeal. She was first 'stript of her apparrell' and afterwards set 'naked a stride upon a leane jade [a horse of inferior breed]'.[170] Having subjected the woman to a series of ritualistic cruelties and humiliations the rebels resorted to the physical abuse of her body; 'tying heavy weights at her heels, [the rebels forced] the horse to runne through waters, and leap over ditches, and to travell in the most uneasie passages till they brought her into their army'. This ordeal, which according to Harcourt provided 'Papisticall evidence of their [the rebels'] bestiality', continued until the woman's body 'was torne in a[n] unheard manner'. Indeed the rebels' cruelty was such that in order to prolong her distress they fed her with bread and water 'to protract the miseries they intended her [rather] than to preserve or reprive of [her] life'. Harcourt claimed that the woman's stripped, starved and savagely abused body was then subjected to the most shocking and brutal element of the rebels' maltreatment, a ritualistic and torturous mutilation:

> ... and when ... her body could not any more be made a spectacle of their shame, she was restrained, where first they cut off one eare, boyld it, and rubbed it about her mouth, then the other, after that her nose, using them in the same manner, had Zopieus beene here to have seene this picture in

[168] Alan Ford, 'The Reformation in Kilmore before 1641' in Raymond Gillespie (ed.), *Cavan: essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1995), pp 73-98; Mark S. Sweetnam, ''Sheep in the midst of wolves'?: The Protestant ministry in the 1641 Depositions' in *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*, vi, 2 (Spring 2013), pp 71-92.
[169] Harcourt, *The clergies lamentation*, p. 23.
[170] Ibid., p. 21.

> her face, he would have declined his notable resolution; at last they put out her eyes.[171]

Having been tortured and mutilated, the woman, by then at the point of near death, was said to have been hanged upon a tree along with her maid servant: ‘and when they saw nature willing to ease her torments by dissolution, and that mercifull death would set a period to their butcheries, they hanged her and her maid upon one bough’.[172]

Evidently Harcourt was keenly aware that this brutal account of the abuse, mutilation and murder of this woman, rendered her case particularly abhorrent to readers of his account and thereby in turn provoked widespread outrage and condemnation on the part of his readers. In essence, the mutilated and tortured body of Mrs Smithson was consciously deployed as emblematic of Protestant suffering in Ireland.

III

Use of the gruesome image of the dismembered and subverted female body motif was also favoured by authors of other ‘official’ treatises on events in Ireland. The works of Henry Jones, Dean of Kilmore, and later Bishop of Meath (1661-82), and John Temple, a prominent politician and member of the Irish Privy Council, fall into this category. Jones and Temple, both esteemed authors, made extensive use of official government sources in the compilation of their accounts. A core component of both texts was reproductions of original depositions. By incorporating these, Jones and Temple appeared to provide a reliable account of events in Ireland. In reality, however, they were selective in their use of material and manipulated heavily the evidence at their disposal. Omitting what they regarded as banal details allowed Jones and Temple greater scope to include the more shocking elements of deponent testimonies, notably instances of violence against women. In doing so, both sought to achieve a particular propaganda purpose, namely to exacerbate and in the longer term stoke fears of Catholic rebel cruelty in Ireland.

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[171] Ibid., p. 23.
[172] Ibid.

In April 1642 Henry Jones's *Remonstrance* entered a market that was already saturated with pamphlet accounts offering graphic details of the horrors of the Irish uprising. In keeping with themes familiar to earlier pamphleteers on the 1641 insurrection, Jones's account emphasised its sectarian nature. References to support from Catholics abroad, commentary on the Catholic clergy's involvement in atrocities, rumours of a universal conspiracy to murder Protestants and eradicate Protestantism throughout the Stuart kingdom, incidents of ritualised violence against objects of Protestant veneration, as well as against Protestant ministers, were all significant elements of his commentary.[173] Another common feature was Jones's emphasis on the victimhood, innocence and vulnerability of Protestant settlers. In his lengthy synthesis of cruelties carried out by the rebels, whom he derided as 'inhumane, blood-sucking tigers', Jones was keen to highlight the exceptionally cruel treatment accorded the most vulnerable members of society, stressing in particular the brutality inflicted upon women. In a generalised and sweeping statement Jones asserted that:

> Women [were] dragged up and down naked, women in child bed thence drawn out and cast into prison. One delivered of a childe while she was hanging. One ripped up, and two children taken away, and all cast unto and eaten by swine. One other stabbed in the breast her childe sucking. An infant cruelly murthered, whom they found sucking his dead mother slain by them the day before.[174]

By highlighting the widespread and indiscriminate nature of rebel cruelty towards the most vulnerable – in this case pregnant women and mothers – Jones's description of the conflict conformed entirely to accounts given by pamphleteers such as James Cranford and Tristam Whetcombe (as discussed above). However, in contrast to this initial round of pamphlet publications which provided little evidence to support the veracity of their sources, Jones included in his compilation an extensive appendix of edited depositions, lending considerable credence and authority to his account. As a result, the *Remonstrance* appeared to offer readers the first trustworthy and reliable

[173] 'There hath been beyond all parallel of former ages, a most bloody and antichristian combination and plot hatched , by well-nigh the whole Romish sect, by way of combination from parts forraign, with those at home, against this our church and state; thereby intending the utter extirpation of the reformed religion', Henry Jones, *Remonstrance* (London, 1642), p. 1. While Jones's interpretation of the rebellion can be read in a sectarian context, other aspects of his analysis highlighted different potential interpretations. As Joseph Cope has argued, Jones included examples of rebel hostilities towards symbols of 'Englishness', 'including punishments meted out against those who spoke English and the wholesale slaughter of English breeds of livestock: see Cope 'Fashioning victims', pp 370-91.
[174] Jones, *Remonstrance*, p. 9.

account of events in Ireland during – and immediately subsequent to – the outbreak of the uprising.[175] However, Jones was systematically selective in the deposition evidence he included, as noted by historians of 1640s Ireland. For example, Eamon Darcy has demonstrated how, in order to portray the plight of Protestants in Ireland as particularly calamitous, Jones omitted the fact that some of his deponents escaped from Ulster by obtaining a safe pass from the rebels, while, in order to propagate parliamentary criticisms of King Charles I, Jones included depositions which alleged royal complicity in, or toleration of the rising.[176] Historian Joseph Cope has shown how Jones omitted what he regarded as extraneous details such as the itemization of economic losses and ignored 'entire classes of testimony that deponents themselves considered especially important'. According to Cope, these allowed Jones to reinforce the desired image of a destitute population of helpless victims.[177] Jones's conscious selectivity in handling deposition evidence allowed him to include the more shocking and grotesque elements of victim testimonies, thereby supporting his contention that the conflict in Ireland was exceptionally ferocious, 'the like could not in any age be found to be perpetrated'.[178] Of the seventy-eight depositions printed in Jones's *Remonstrance*, approximately sixteen detail some form of violence perpetrated against women (either individuals or collective groups).[179] The following are some of these cases.

Cope has highlighted the fact that the depositions collected by Jones and his commissioners between December 1641 and March 1642 indicated a substantially lower level of violence in Leinster and the Pale than in the planted counties of Ulster. Of the original seventy-three depositions recorded for County Dublin, for example, remarkably only ten refer to acts of violence against Protestant victims.[180] The

[175] Henry Jones's *Remonstrance* included in total sixty-two pages of evidence taken from the original depositions recorded by Jones and his commission. The text was also unique in being the first of its kind to carry with it official sanction: both the Irish lords justices and the English house of commons recommended Jones's version of events in Ireland. The credibility of Jones himself, a well-respected clergyman, was another aspect which provided the text with a unique authority. The first section of the text provided a letter of introduction from the lords' justices and council of Ireland (of which Sir John Temple was a member), stressing Jones's unique qualifications and drawing attention to his impeccable character: see Jones, *Remonstrance*.
[176] Darcy, *The Irish rebellion of 1641*, pp 89-90.
[177] Cope 'Fashioning victims', pp 370-91.
[178] Jones, *Remonstrance*, p. 2.
[179] Ibid., pp 22, 36, 40-1, 44, 55, 58, 59, 61-5, 67, 69.
[180] Cope, 'Fashioning victims', p. 381.

Remonstrance, however, included John Mandefield's unique testimony 'that some of the rebels in that county did strike his wife, and stab her with a skean in the breast, when she had a young child sucking on her'.[181] Although information regarding the value of goods lost is recorded at the beginning of the original deposition, as are details of violence inflicted upon the deponent himself, including how he was struck on the head with a knife, in Jones's account Mandefield's deposition is heavily edited, featuring only an account of the treatment accorded the deponent's wife.[182] By focusing on this specific episode Jones distorted the evidence at his disposal to present the most violent, brutal and shocking account of victim experiences in Leinster. Jones's manipulation of evidence relating to violence against women in the Leinster region was by no means unique, however. His reproduction of graphic and shock-inducing accounts is entirely consistent with his portrayal of rebel activity elsewhere in the country. For example, in its original form, Cavan landholder Thomas Crant's deposition, one of the lengthier documents printed in the *Remonstrance*, contained information on a native Irish landlord who intervened to protect the deponent and offered assistance and shelter for his family. Crant's deposition also referred to the charity given by the English-born Lady Jane Plunkett née Heneage and her husband, Meath-native, Patrick Plunkett (*c*.1595-1668), ninth Baron of Dunsany, to a group of English settlers whom they sheltered at their home in Dunsany Castle.[183] However, in the edited version of the deposition, printed in the *Remonstrance*, none of this material appears.[184] Rather, the tract places centre stage Crant's vague recollections of a rumoured massacre in County Monaghan, providing specific details about the nature of the violence inflicted upon women and children there.[185] In yet another instance of Jones's deliberate manipulation of deponent testimony, he played down the compensation element of County Cavan deponent

[181] Jones, *Remonstrance*, p.64.
[182] Ibid., p. 64; Deposition of John Mandefield, 3 Feb. 1642 (TCD, MS 809, fol. 239).
[183] Deposition of Thomas Crant, 13 Feb. 1642 (TCD, MS 832, fol. 215). For Patrick Plunkett, ninth Baron of Dunsany see: Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, iv, 553. Plunkett was married (b. 1634) to Jane Heneage, daughter of Sir Thomas Heneage of Hainton in Lincolnshire.
[184] Cope, 'Fashioning victims', p. 385.
[185] 'Divers women and children murdered, lying unburied till dogs spoiled their corps, women with childe murdered, and some dyed for cold, after being stript forth of their cloaths, lying unburied, that dogs gnawed their children forth of their wombs, which this examinant heard some of the vulgar people report a cheerfulness'. Jones, in his reproduction of this deponent's testimony, also included Crant's hearsay evidence about an attack carried out against a male victim by a group of Irish women. The deponent stated that: 'A poor man was met withal by a couple of Irish women, who knockt him in the head, and killed him'; Jones, *Remonstrance*, p. 36; Deposition of Thomas Crant, 13 Feb. 1642 (TCD, MS 832, fol. 215).

Adam Clover's statement and instead highlighted the heinous acts of violence allegedly perpetrated by rebels in that region. Jones included Clover's remark that 'many very yong children were left and perished by the way to the number of 60 or thereabouts' while an account of the treatment accorded an English woman at the hands of Irish female rebels became central to the deponent's testimony. Clover stated that:

> ... he saw upon a high-way a woman left by the rebels striped to her smock, set upon by three women, and some children, being Irish, who miserably rent and tore the said poor English woman, and stripped her of her smock in a bitter frost and snow, so that she fell in labour in their hands and presence, and both she and her child miserably died there.[186]

By thus selecting exceptionally evocative contemporary testimonies Jones once again demonstrated the degeneracy of the Irish rebels, emphasising the brutal behaviour of Irish women while simultaneously highlighting the innocence of Protestant victims through reference to the cruel treatment afforded women and children. Significantly the remainder of the original deposition detailing the destruction of Protestant bibles by the rebels was also included reinforcing Jones's message that this was a sectarian-fuelled and religiously-inspired conflict.[187]

Like other commentators on the Irish uprising, such as Chappell, Cranford and Harcourt, Jones contended that ministers were the main targets of rebel aggression. The rebels, he claimed, 'with the deadliest venome spit against the persons of us the Ministers of the Gospel, towards whom their rage is without bounds'.[188] To support this assertion, Jones included extracts of deponent testimonies which retailed the 'miserable' condition and brutal murder of a number of ministers, some of whom Jones had known personally.[189] While these deponent extracts highlighted the barbarity of rebel cruelty perpetrated on the Protestant ministry in Ireland, many were in fact made by the wives of clergymen, several of whom had been widowed as

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[186] Clover began relating details of the values of lands and good lost to him as a result of the rebellion, excised by Jones: Jones, *Remonstrance*, p. 59; Deposition of Adam Glouer, 4 Jan. 1642 (TCD, MS 833, fol. 1).

[187] Jones, *Remonstrance*, p. 59.

[188] Ibid., p. 10.

[189] The brutal murder of Roger Blyth, a vicar in County Armagh, George Cottingham, a minister in Clogher and James Sharpe, a minister in County Meath were, Jones claimed, indicative of a nationwide trend 'that among a multitude, we may content ourselves with a few'. Jones, *Remonstrance*, p. 11.

a result of the conflict, and thus offer a unique insight into these women's experiences of the rising. As 'godly' women, routinely portrayed as paragons of virtue and of the civilising English Protestant influence in Ireland, whose respectable social and moral status within the Church of Ireland tradition lent added weight to their testimonies, Jones was undoubtedly acutely aware of the reaction which their accounts could provoke among his readers. With this in mind Jones selected for inclusion an extract of a deposition given by Margery Sharp, the widow of John Sharp, a 'minister of God's word' from Kells in County Meath. In the extract, replete with sectarian overtones and religious symbolism, Margery recounted how, as she and her husband travelled to Dublin from Longford to seek refuge, the couple were accosted by a group of rebels who subjected her husband to a ritualistic and sectarian-fuelled ordeal. The minister was first stripped and was then compelled, 'being naked', to 'trample and tread' upon 'his best Divinity Books and divers Bonds, Specialties, and Writings', which he had carried with him on the journey from Longford 'for fear of the rebells'.[190] Afterwards the rebels murdered the minister in full view of Margery who, 'after breath was departed from him', attempted to have her husband 'buryed in [a] Christian Buryall'. However, she was prohibited from doing so by the 'portreeve of Navan' who 'would not admit [her] but sent to cause the grave to be made in the same place where he was murthered [that is, on the roadside]'.[191] In this extract the image of the vulnerable and defenceless minister's wife attempting to secure a decent 'Christian' burial for her husband is juxtaposed with the barbarous rebels whose actions, causing a member of the Protestant ministry to be buried in such an inappropriate manner, signified the denial of Protestant ceremonial procedures and thus the complete subversion of the colonial order in Ireland. Margery Sharp therefore emerges as the symbolic defender of the rituals and rites of the Protestant church and community in Ireland in the face of heinous, wicked and traitorous 'Papists'. In yet another example of his attempt to highlight the sectarian dimension of the rising by reference to the experiences of Protestant ministers and their wives, Jones included an extract of a deposition given by Elizabeth Trafford, the widow of Thomas Trafford, a vicar at Ballincormack in County Longford (referred to above). In this, Elizabeth recounted how a rebel named John Reynolds stabbed her husband with a sword 'whereof he lay languishing [for]

[190] Jones, *Remonstrance*, p. 69; Deposition of Margery Sharp, 29 Jan. 1642 (TCD, MS 816, fol. 144).
[191] Ibid.

three hours' and was afterwards stabbed in the throat and so badly wounded in the head so that he died. Afterwards the rebels cast Elizabeth and her children out from their home 'naked' and 'exposed to hunger and cold'.[192] The fact that Elizabeth was able to name her husband's assailant, proving that she knew the man personally, magnified the barbarity of her experience and signified for readers the particularly perilous position of the Protestant population in general and of clerical families in particular in Ireland. As prominent, readily identifiable members within their communities and regarded by their Catholic neighbours as emblems of English and Protestant pre-eminence in Ireland, clerical families were particularly vulnerable targets in this period of sectarian unrest and conflict, even by those whom they regarded as neighbours.

Offering a strongly authoritative account of the Irish uprising and drawing on official deposition testimonies (albeit selectively), Jones's *Remonstrance* became a model for later writings on the subject. Arguably the most significant contemporary account for which Jones's *Remonstrance* provided a framework was John Temple's *The Irish rebellion*.[193] Published in London in 1646 after the initial hysteria surrounding the Irish uprising in England had dissipated, Temple's manifesto formed part of a wider propaganda campaign waged by members of the Independent parliamentary faction (to which Temple was aligned) to generate support in England for the dispatch of a new military force to secure the re-conquest of Ireland.[194] Like his predecessor, Jones, Temple drew heavily on the depositions in compiling his account; this lent considerable authority to his work, although it is clear that in the compilation of his account Temple relied heavily on Jones's publication. As in earlier accounts of the rising, Temple emphasised the sectarian dimension; he portrayed Ireland's Catholic population as vehemently anti-Protestant and claimed that their purpose was to 'extirpate the English and Protestants, and not to lay down arms until the Romish religion' was established.[195] Rebels were described in formulaic terms such as

[192] Jones, *Remonstrance*, p. 68.
[193] Temple, *The Irish rebellion*.
[194] Politically, Temple aligned himself with the Independent party, urging the English parliament to undertake the final conquest of Ireland: see Raymond Gillespie, 'Temple's fate: reading *The Irish Rebellion* in late seventeenth century Ireland' in Ciaran Brady & Jane Ohlmeyer (eds), *British interventions in early modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 316: see also Darcy, *The Irish rebellion of 1641*, pp 96-101.
[195] Temple, *The Irish rebellion*, pp 14, 46.

'Romish', 'Popish' and 'Heathenish' whose actions were compared to Spanish attempts to expel the Moors in the fifteenth century while the central role of the Catholic clergy as key instigators of the agitations is highlighted throughout Temple's account.[196] In contrast, the Protestant victims were described as 'poor' and 'lamentable', forced to suffer 'unparaleld cruelties' for 'what cause, offence, or least seeming occasion of provocation, our soules could never imagine (Sinne expected) save that we were Protestants'.[197] In keeping with the practice and paradigm established by Jones, Temple was likewise systematically selective in his use of the depositions, seeking to incorporate the most dramatic and gruesome elements of victim testimonies, thereby supporting his contention that the conflict was one of immeasurable cruelty; 'so execrable in itself' and 'so odious to God and the whole world'.[198] However, while Henry Jones was the first to provide contemporary audiences with first-hand deponent testimony relating to the Irish uprising, Temple perfected the technique of using selected episodes from the depositions for polemic purposes. Unlike Jones's lengthy, at times tedious accounts of deponent testimony, Temple provided readers with clear and concise snippets of information relating to rebel atrocities, highlighting those examples which provided the most shocking, sensational, lurid and fear inducing accounts. As Gillespie has remarked 'Temple's commentary on stories of ripped-up bellies, live burials, knocked-out brains and hangings is immediate and violent, dwelling lovingly on the details of the murders'.[199] In seeking to evince the most horrific and inhumane image of the Irish rebels, Temple made it blatantly clear that women, particularly those who were pregnant, were subjected to especially cruel treatment. Demonstrating the violence of the Catholic rebels through the trope of the dismembered body of the Protestant woman Temple contended that particularly 'horrid' cruelty:

> ... was principally reserved by these inhumane monsters for women, whose sex they neither pitied nor spared, hanging up severall women, many of them great with childe, whose bellies they ripped up as they hung, and so let the little infants fall out.[200]

[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid, pp 109, 113.
[198] Ibid., p. 16.
[199] Gillespie, 'Temple's fate', p. 320.
[200] Temple, *The Irish rebellion*, p. 96-7.

The following instances illuminate his exploitation of victim testimonies in order to represent victim traumatisation and brutalisation specifically in terms of violence against women.

As Naomi McAreavey has highlighted, while female deponents repeatedly represented their traumatic experiences 'in terms of threats to the maternal body, and the mutilation and murder of pregnant, labouring and lactating women, and their children', in Temple's account women's experiences were appropriated for political ends, serving to reassure men of their own capability, and indeed duty, to retaliate in defence of what was regarded as an attack against the Protestant community through the medium of the vulnerable and fragile female body.[201] For example, in its original form, the deposition of Arthur Agmoughty featured a summary of events during the nine-month siege of Castle Forbes in County Longford. In his reproduction of this deponent's testimony, however, Temple was highly selective, including only the deponent's recollection of rebel violence inflicted against a mother, who while begging the rebels to spare her husband's life: 'went to them with two children at her feet and one at her breast, hoping to beg her husband's life, but they slew her and her sucking child, broke the neck of another of her children, and the third hardly escaped'.[202] In a further example of his manipulation of deponent testimony, Temple reproduced the deposition of James Shaw, a vicar in County Carlow. In this case Temple selected an extract from the original deposition which recounted details of a particularly heinous attack carried out by a group of rebels in County Carlow against a mother and daughter. Whereas the original testimony stated that the mother and daughter were 'hanged up upon a tree by the haire of their heads', Temple's version gave added emphasis to the barbarity of the act by contending that the daughter was in fact hung aloft by the hair of her mother. His extract stated that:

> The wife of Jonathan Linne and his daughter were seized upon by the rebels near the town of Carlow, carried by them into a little wood, called Stapletown wood, and there the mother was hanged, and the daughter hanged in the hair of the mother's head.[203]

[201] McAreavey, 'Re(-)membering women'), pp 72-92.
[202] Temple, *The Irish rebellion*, pp 99-104.
[203] Temple, *The Irish rebellion*, p. 101; Deposition of James Shawe, 8 Jan. 1644 (TCD, MS 812, fol. 50). This account was later included in a news-sheet entitled *Ireland's Lamentation* published at London in 1647.

In his reproduction of the testimony of Anne Madesly from County Kilkenny, Temple's manipulation of evidence in order to bolster his own agenda is once again evident. Anne Madesly's deposition was heavily edited by Temple to the point that it included only the deponent's account of the brutal treatment of a woman and her young child. In the extract the deponent recounted how rebels viciously beat a woman to death having slit the stomach of her young child, 'the Rebels in Kilkenny aforesaid, struck and beat a poore English woman until she was forced into a ditch, where she dyed, those barbarous rebels having first ript up her child, of about six years of age, and let her guts run about her heels.[204]

In his reproduction of deponent testimony Temple also sought to highlight the sectarian nature of the rebels' actions. Temple argued that as part of their plan 'to root all the ... Protestants out of Ireland', the rebels often demanded that their victims' either convert to Catholicism or lose their life.[205] Temple was keen to publicise the fact that notwithstanding these threats many Protestant victims – both men and women – refused to convert and instead remained steadfast to the Protestant confession, despite often fatal consequences. Likening the perseverance of the Protestant victims to the constancy of the early Christian martyrs, Temple contended that:

> ... we shall find many thus cruelly put to death, equall to some of those ancient Worthies for their patience, constancy, courage, magnanimity in their sufferings, not accepting deliverance, but triumphing and insulting with their last breath, over their insolency, rage and malice of their most inhumane and cruell persecutors.[206]

To highlight the confessional constancy of female victims in particular Temple reproduced an extract from a deposition by Dennis Kelly of County Meath which detailed the brutal treatment afforded three generations of one family, two of whom were women. According to the extract cited by Temple, because Anne Hagley, her daughter and two of her grandchildren had refused the rebels' orders to attend Mass (that is, to convert to Catholicism), they were targeted by the rebels who, 'in [a] most bloody manner, with skeines, kill[ed] the said Anne Hagley, and her daughter, and

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[204] Temple, *The Irish rebellion*, p. 96.
[205] Ibid., pp 78, 84.
[206] Ibid., p. 109.

her daughters two children, because they would not consent to goe to Masse'.[207] The barbarity and sectarian nature of the rebels' actions was further emphasised by highlighting the fact that after Anne and her family were murdered, the rebels 'would not permit them to be buried in a Church or Church-yard, but they four were buried in a ditch'.[208] This refusal to allow their victims' bodies burial in consecrated ground mirrored the case of Margery Sharpe (cited by Jones above) whose attempts to afford her husband a 'Christian' burial had been similarly prevented by the rebels. In Jones's account Margery Sharpe emerged as an active and dedicated defender of Protestant funerary customs and ceremonial rites, while in Temple's account, Anne Hagley is portrayed as a stalwart professor of the faith; both cases bore testimony, through the image of female victimhood, to the constancy of Protestant Ireland in the face of 'Popish' persecutors.

In another instance of confessional steadfastness on the part of female victims Temple reproduced an extract from a deposition by John Glasse of Queen's County which recounted the brutal murder of Anne Nicholson and her husband, John, at the hands of the notorious rebel leader, Florence Fitzpatrick, husband of Bridget Fitzpatrick (referred to above).[209] In the deposition extract cited by Temple, Glasse recounted how Fitzpatrick 'did endeavour all he could to turne them to Masse, or the present Rebellion', 'they both professed' that rather than 'forsake their Religion, or fight against their Countrymen, they would dye the death'. However, while according to Glasse both Anne and her husband were determined to reject rebel demands to convert, Anne demonstrated even 'greater resolution', resisting rebel demands that she burn he Bible and asserting that 'before she would either burne her Bible, or turne against her Countrymen, she would dye upon the point of the sword'. As a result of their refusals the two were, in a sinister twist, 'cruelly butchered and murdered' on the 'Sabbath day in the morning before Masse'.[210] In seeking to demonstrate that divine retribution was working in favour of the inflicted Protestants of Ireland Temple included the deponents' statement that the rebel who had

[207] Ibid., p. 101.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Deposition of John Glasse, 8 Apr. 1642 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 197).
[210] Temple, *The Irish rebellion*, p. 109; as will be discussed later in the chapter, the case of Anne Nicholson's fortitude in defence of the faith would later be incorporated into the martyrological compilations of both Simon Clarke and Nathaniel Crouch.

murdered the couple, John Harding, had since 'been beyond all expression, tormented in his conscience' with continued 'apparitions of them [Anne and John] in such lively manner as he murdered them' so that he 'is even now consumed away with the horror of it'.[211] Indeed this was just one of a number of cases in which Temple highlighted the intervention of divine providence on behalf of victims of the uprising, a central concept in medieval and early modern thinking which Walsham has highlighted, was used 'as an intellectual weapon' by sixteenth and seventeenth-century authors, both Catholic and Protestant alike, in order to 'reinforce ... commitment' among confessional communities and to 'undermine the morale and credibility of their 'heretical' or 'anti-Christian' enemies'.[212] Temple therefore included the testimony of Jane Stewart of County Sligo. She recounted the story of a friar who 'barbarously murdered' a pregnant woman named Isabel Beard who was 'found the next day, with the childs feet appearing, and thrust out of her wounds in her sides'. According to Stewart, the friar subsequently 'fell frantic, and ran so about the Streets, and continued in that frenzy for three or four weeks'.[213] God's vengeance was not waged on male perpetrators of violence alone, however, and Temple was keen to highlight the fact that female rebels too could be targeted by God's divine intervention. To that end, he cited the case of the 'lewd viragoe' in Kilkenny discussed above.[214]

As the case of the Kilkenny women above highlights, Temple's portrayal of the Irish uprising as one of unparalleled cruelty was achieved not only through his representation of acts of atrocity perpetrated against Protestant female victims, but also through his portrayal of Irish female rebels as perpetrators of violence. As Andrea Knox has highlighted, during the late sixteenth and early to mid-seventeenth century English colonial commentary on Ireland represented the Irish as barbarous and violent and depicted Irish women as 'having a particular talent for aggression and instigating rebellion'.[215] Colonial polemicists such as Edmund Spenser (1552-99), Fynes Moryson (1566-1630), Barnaby Rich and John Davies all highlighted the perceived savage characteristics associated with Irish women who were portrayed as

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[211] Temple, *The Irish rebellion*, p. 109.
[212] Walsham, *Providence in early modern England*, p. 225.
[213] Temple, *The Irish rebellion*, pp 120-1.
[214] Ibid., p. 131.
[215] Knox, 'Testimonies to history', p. 21.

degenerate, lewd, wanton and barbaric, whose behaviour was regarded as sexually dubious and politically subversive and who represented the antithesis of Protestant women, depicted as morally upright, 'virtuous' and 'godly' colonial exemplars.[216] These representations in turn contributed to a fear of the savagery of Irish women among the English authorities, reflected in a parliamentary report dated December 1643 concerning the royalist occupation of Oxford in which it was contended that disorder and pillaging were commonly caused not only by the military garrison but also by Irish women, who were, it was reported, greatly feared in the town.[217] Temple's account in turn perpetuated this fear of Irish female savagery by popularising the belief that during the rising 'Irish women did naturally express as much cruelty as the chiefest Rebels among them' and reproducing a series of deponent extracts to elucidate his point.[218] For example, in his reproduction of the deposition of Elizabeth Baskerville of Queen's County (referred to above), Temple selected for inclusion an extract which focused on the brutality of Bridget Fitzpatrick, the wife of rebel leader Florence who, it was claimed, was incensed because the rebels responsible for murdering Anne Nicholson and her husband John 'did not bring along with them the grease of Mistresse Nicholson, whom they had slain, for her to make candles withall'.[219] Temple also reproduced the deposition of Westmeath resident, Thomas Fleetwood which centred on the treatment afforded an English woman at Athlone who was 'stoned to death by the women of the town'.[220] In his reproduction of another deposition, this time of a County Carlow deponent, the barbarity of the Irish female rebels was emphasised by the claim that not only did the they target other women, but young children were also victims of their brutal assaults, one instance in which a 'poore' English woman and her child were by 'divers Irish women slew' with 'stones' being cited.[221] Temple too reproduced details of the previously cited and notoriously violent attack on the head of William Alfrey by female rebels, including Alice Butler, at Kilkenny.[222]

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[216] See chapter three.
[217] Alan Crossley and C.R. Elrington (eds), *A history of the county of Oxford: volume 4: the city of Oxford* (1979). I am grateful to Professor Marian Lyons for this reference.
[218] Temple, *The Irish rebellion*, p. 101.
[219] Ibid., p. 101.
[220] Ibid., pp 101-98 (irregular pagination).
[221] Ibid., p. 98.
[222] Deposition of Joseph Wheeler, Elizabeth Gilbert, Rebecca Hill, Thomas Lewis, Jonas Wheeler, Patrick Maxwell, John Kevan, 5 July 1643 (TCD, MS 812, fol. 203).

Temple's representation of debauched and violent Irish women whose barbarity was boundless provided his readers with conclusive evidence that the Catholic rebels were irredeemable and posed a deadly threat to England and its population. That representation thereby served Temple's political agenda to bolster popular support in England for urgent military intervention in Ireland. Demonstrating the violence of the Catholic rebels 'through the trope of the dismembered body of the Protestant woman', *The Irish rebellion* shocked and enthralled its readers.[223] That Temple was keenly aware of the sensational impact of accounts of atrocities committed on women is clear. His skilful, deliberate and unapologetic manipulation of the sources at his disposal meant that Temple's *Irish rebellion* retained a significant appeal among readers for generations. While Henry Jones was the first to provide contemporary audiences with first-hand deponent testimony relating to events in Ireland during the rising, Temple further developed the technique of using selected episodes from the depositions for polemic purposes. While Jones, it may be argued, published the more reliable account, Temple's text proved the more enduring and popular. *The Irish rebellion*, which went through more than ten editions between its first appearance in 1646 and its last reprint in 1812, became a canon text which in the short, medium and long-term, exerted significant influence on the mind-set of the Protestant community, exacerbating already heightened fears about the threat of Catholic cruelty and thereby polarising religious and confessional divisions in seventeenth-century Ireland for generations to follow.[224]

IV

'But I shall not here touch any further upon those who dyed thus gloriously; this will be a more worthy work for some more able pen to undertake, and indeed fit for a Martyrology'.[225]

Following the publication of *The Irish rebellion* several historical accounts about the Irish rising appeared in print, drawing extensively on Temple's account and thereby conveying his interpretation of events to an even larger audience. Martyrologies, in particular, were an especially appropriate and popular vehicle for perpetuating

223 McAreavey, 'Re(-)membering women', p.72.
224 Gillespie, 'Temple's fate', pp 315-33; Kathleen M. Noonan, '"Martyrs in flames": Sir John Temple and the conception of the Irish in English martyrologies' in *Albion: A Quarterly Journal concerned with British Studies*, xxxvi no.2 (2004), p. 225.
225 Temple, *The Irish rebellion*, p. 109.

Temple's lurid and dramatic interpretation of the Irish rising.[226] Indicative of its popularity, wide readership and influence, in 1651, just four years after the publication of *The Irish Rebellion* (and notably on the tenth anniversary of the outbreak of the rising), Samuel Clarke, a Warwickshire-born minister, published a revised edition of his earlier martyrological account.[227] Entitled *A generall martyrologie*, in this 1651 edition Clarke incorporated a chapter chronicling events in Ireland during the 1640s.[228] Borrowing extensively, though without acknowledgement, and often quoting verbatim from *The Irish rebellion*, Clarke's narrative of the 1641 rising conformed largely to the model set by Temple; deliberate amplification of the most gruesome, lurid and shocking instances of brutality against innocent victims, especially women and children, highlighting the degenerative and unscrupulous nature of Irish Catholic rebels and emphasising instances of God's divine retribution, were all features of Clarke's account.[229] However, while Clarke may have derived much of his source material from Temple's *Irish rebellion*, it is clear that he drew his own conclusions from the evidence, altering aspects of Temple's representation of the uprising in order to propagate his own particular interpretation of events. Whereas Temple preferred to portray the events of the 1640s as a rising staged against the entire English colony, in which political grievances as well as religious motivations had played a part, Clarke focused solely on the religious nature of the conflict. Incorporating his sixteen-page narrative of the Irish uprising within a comprehensive 574-page history of persecutions committed against those whom he styled 'martyrs' of the 'true' faith from the early Christian period to the present day (including victims of the Spanish Inquisition and the 1572 St Bartholomew's Day massacre), Clarke's version of events in 1641 refashioned Temple's narrative into a recognisable account of religious persecution and its victims as religious martyrs.[230] In essence, Clarke portrayed the Irish uprising as yet another chapter in the perpetual war for the survival of Protestantism against Roman Catholicism. Laden with symbolic metaphor, biblical citation and allegorical conventions synonymous with the martyrological genre, Clarke's account construed

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[226] Gillespie, 'Temple's fate', p. 316; Noonan, '"Martyrs in flames"', p. 226.
[227] The first edition of Samuel Clarke's *A general martyrologie* was published in London in 1640. It was printed by Thomas Ratcliffe for Thomas Underhill and John Rothwell. For further discussion of Clarke's account see Kathleen M. Noonan, '"Martyrs in flames"', pp 223-55.
[228] Clarke, *A generall martyrologie*.
[229] For Clarke's reliance on Temple see Kathleen M. Noonan, '"Martyrs in flames"', pp 223-55.
[230] Clarke, *A generall martyrologie*, pp 347-63.

events in terms of a conflict waged by murderous 'popish' rebels and 'bloody Papists', whose ultimate aim was to secure the extirpation of the Protestant Church and its adherents from Ireland.[231] Highlighting the distinctly sectarian nature of the conflict Clarke contended that, 'so farre as ever I could hear ... neither were the English Papists murthered' but 'their cruelties were exercised upon Protestants only' whom the rebels denounced as 'Hereticks'.[232] Clarke, like Temple, warned that the Catholic clergy were the 'chief instigators' of the plot. However, Clarke elaborated significantly on this point claiming that the clergy had granted a special dispensation to Catholic rebels, assuring them that to kill a Protestant was a 'meritorious act' and would spare one from the 'pains of purgatory'.[233] Highlighting numerous instances of Protestant victim suffering at the hands of 'bloody Papists', Clarke's account of 1641 reinforced a view of Protestantism in Ireland as a confession under assault and of Irish Protestants as worthy martyrs who merited recognition in the pantheon of Protestant religious martyrdom, a recognition presaged by Lettice Digby, Lady Offaly, who, in a combative exchange of correspondence with rebel leaders during the siege of Geashill Castle in 1642, commented that if she should die, she 'doubt[ed] not' but that she would 'receaue a Crowne of Martyrdome'.[234]

While Clarke quoted verbatim from Temple's *Irish rebellion*, he also abstracted heavily depositions published in Temple's lengthier commentary, excising extraneous details, for example, the victim's name, the geographical location of the alleged incident and the name of the deponent, preferring to focus instead on the brutalisation and traumatisation of victim suffering in general. This process of abstraction meant that whereas Temple cited numerous cases of individual and identifiable victimhood, in Clarke's martyrology the individuality and identifiability of victims was played down as they were recast as obscure and often anonymous victims of extraordinary cruelty; throughout the narrative Clarke's cites numerous instances of acts of atrocity perpetrated against 'some', 'many', 'divers', 'multitudes'

[231] For a detailed discussion see Gregory, *Salvation at stake.*
[232] Clarke, *A generall martyrologie*, p. 347.
[233] Clarke, *A generall martyrologie*, p. 348.
[234] Deposition of Thomas Pickering, 15 Aug. 1642 (TCD, MS 814, fol. 169). The letters were published in Walter Fitzgerald, 'Lettice, Baroness of Offaly, and the siege of her castle of Geashill, 1642' in *Kildare Arch. Soc. Jn.*, iii (1902), pp 419-24 and later in Bourke *et al.*. (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, v, 25-7. For an analysis see Coolahan, *Women, writing & language*, pp 167-72.

and 'all' Protestant victims.[235] Admittedly, this is a tendency evident in Temple's account too but it occurs on a larger scale in Clarke's publication. These generalisations and ambiguities served to reinforce an impression of universal victimhood on the part of Irish Protestants. Yet, despite this abstraction of detail and victim identifiability, a process which historians have recognised as a common feature of commemoration, the essential message, that innocent and vulnerable Protestants, even women, were cruelly murdered by barbaric Catholic rebels in a sectarian dispute, was retained.[236] One example relating to female victimhood will suffice to illustrate Clarke's tendency to down play the identifiability of victims in favour of a narrative of universal suffering. The brutalisation of two female members of the Linne family in County Carlow, a mother and daughter, recounted originally by Temple, was reproduced by Clarke. In his account Temple represented the incident thus:

> The wife of Jonathan Linne and his daughter were seized upon by the rebels near the town of Carlow, carried by them into a little wood, called Stapletown wood, and there the mother was hanged, and the daughter hanged in the hair of the mother's head.[237]

In Clarke's rendition, however, this incident is abbreviated into one short sentence which focused solely on the brutalisation of the mother and daughter and omitted personal detail such as the name of the woman's husband and the location of the atrocity: 'One goodwife Lin and her daughter were carried into a wood, where they first hanged the mother, and then the daughter in the hair of the mothers head'.[238] Clarke's inclusion of the term 'goodwife' (a term not used in the testimony produced by Temple or in the original deposition) demonstrates his polemical aptitude; 'goodwife' indicated the victim's respectable social status, a stalwart of civility, and thus served to reinforce Clarke's message that the victims of 1641 were particularly undeserving targets and hence worthy martyrs.[239]

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[235] Clarke, *A generall martyrologie*, pp 349-61.
[236] For a discussion of commemoration and memory in an Irish context see McBride (ed.), *History & memory in modern Ireland*. Recently, Roisin Higgins has traced a similar phenomenon in the case of the heroes of 1916 who were 'transformed into the mould of Catholic martyrs': see Roisin Higgins, *Transforming 1916. Meaning, memory and the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising* (Cork, 2012), p. 15.
[237] Temple, *The Irish rebellion*, p. 101.
[238] Clarke, *A generall martyrologie*, p. 354.
[239] Temple, *The Irish rebellion*, p. 101; Deposition of James Shawe, 8 Jan. 1644 (TCD, MS 812, fol. 50). I am grateful to Dr Bríd McGrath for her insights concerning the term 'goodwife'.

Clarke's inclusion of an illustration depicting the experience of the mother and daughter Linne – featured among a series of eight images included in the text which related to the Irish conflict – served to further reinforce his message (see Fig. 4.3). The illustration depicts a woman dressed in a long mantle hanging from a gibbet. Her hands are joined in prayer, signifying her religious devotion and godliness. From her hair hangs her daughter, whose hands are also clasped in prayer. Beside them stands a rebel who, signifying the barbaric and inhumane nature of the 'bloody miscreants', appears to view the scene with elation. The caption above the image reads, 'A woman hang'd and her daughter in haire'.[240] In this visual representation and accompanying caption the case of the mother and daughter Linne is transformed into an abstract and generalised instance of female victimhood: the impression given is that this example was indicative of female suffering generally during the uprising. Indeed the illustration mirrored that of another image, included in Clarke's account, depicting the trauma endured by an early Christian female martyr in the second century, who, according to the image caption was 'stripped, hung up by the haire of the head and scourged' (see Fig. 4.3).[241] The visual representation of the mother and daughter Linne therefore readily linked the experiences of Irish Protestants with those of the early Christian martyrs, a feature of early modern martyrology which Alan Ford has argued created 'a kind of apostolic succession of suffering for the truth'.[242] It thus served to legitimise Clarke's contention concerning the status of Irish Protestant victims as martyrs while unequivocally vilifying their persecutors as barbaric and inhumane, the direct descendants of the pagan oppressors.[243] Furthermore, his inclusion of a series of illustrations meant his message was accessible to both literate and illiterate audiences alike.

According to his preface, Clarke's main motivation in compiling *A generall martyrologie*, which he described as a 'history', was to demonstrate the 'wonderfull constancy and patience the Saints have shewed in their greatest sufferings; what hath been the power of Almighty God in their support; and what miserable ends many of

[240] Clarke, *A generall martyrologie*, p. 365.
[241] Ibid., facing p. 39.
[242] Ford, 'Martyrdom, history & memory' in early modern Ireland', p. 45.
[243] Ibid.

their persecutors have come to'.[244] While Clarke, like Temple, sought to demonstrate that divine retribution was working in favour of the inflicted Protestants of Ireland by citing numerous instances of God's judgement on the 'Mercilesse papists', including the case of Anne Nicholson's persecutor (discussed above), his commentary, published just two years after the Cromwellian invasion of Ireland, readily linked the 1641 rising with contemporary news events.[245] Framing the recent parliamentary invasions as the continuation of God's judgement on the Irish rebels, Clarke concluded his account by contending that 'God is still fighting against [the Catholic rebels], and probably will continue their destruction, till they either shall truly be humbled for their horrid sins, or be utterly consumed from the face of the earth'.[246] Thus, while Clarke's account, by reminding English audiences of the need to avenge the 'bloud' of the martyrs, served, in the short-term, as a valuable propaganda tool for the English regime, it was also to have a more long-term impact. Upsurges of anti-Catholic sentiment in England, Scotland and to a lesser extent in Ireland, during the later seventeenth century prompted the publication of several pamphlets which featured excerpted and verbatim versions of Clarke's *A generall martyrologie*. As Darcy has shown in his detailed analysis of 1641 pamphlet literature, when the Popish Plot (1678-81) erupted in England and anti-Catholic hysteria gripped the English imagination, a series of pamphlets appeared reminding readers of the atrocities committed by Catholics during the 1641 rising, 'all of which', according to Darcy, drew upon Clarke's account.[247] Similarly, during the Williamite wars (1688-91), resurgent fears about Catholicism once again prompted the publication of numerous accounts about 1641, the most widely circulated of which, Darcy contends, were sourced from Clarke.[248] Thus, while historians have highlighted the fact that Temple's *Irish rebellion* provided a template for the demonization of Irish Catholic barbarity and the 'mythologisation' of Irish Protestant suffering in 1641, an observation which is undoubtedly true, Darcy's findings demonstrate how, during periods of heightened confessional hostility, it was Clarke's representation of 1641, with its overtly sectarian tone, providential themes, accounts of universal victimhood, martyrological conventions and emphasis on

[244] Clarke, *A generall martyrologie*, p. 8.
[245] Ibid., pp 357-9, 362-3.
[246] Ibid., p. 363.
[247] For example, *An account of the bloody massacre in Ireland: acted by the instigation of the Jesuits, priests, and friars* (London, 1679): see Darcy, *The Irish rebellion of 1641*, p. 147.
[248] Darcy, *The Irish rebellion of 1641*, p. 147.

confessional struggle, that permeated the English Protestant mind-set, proving a powerful tool with which to stoke already heightened Protestant anxieties about the threat of Catholicism at propitious junctures during the closing decades of the seventeenth century.[249]

While in the absence of booksellers' records it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which Clarke's martyrology infiltrated the burgeoning Irish print trade of the late seventeenth century, Gillespie has highlighted the emergence of a rapidly developing 'confessional print culture' in 1680s and 1690s Ireland (predominantly in Dublin) which, he contends, played an important role in shaping Irish Protestant identity at a time when Catholic and Protestant communities were becoming increasingly polarised.[250] Indicative of the emergence of a self-assured and confident Protestant ascendancy in Ireland, which up until the late 1690s had been threatened by Catholic resurgence, the appearance in 1698 of the first Dublin edition of Temple's *Irish rebellion*, which was purchased by a number of Dublin residents, testifies to the development of and enthusiasm for a distinctly Irish Protestant tradition of confessional struggle and martyrdom.[251]

V

While the diffusion of Clarke's representation of the Irish Protestant victims of 1641 in popular pamphlet literature during the final three decades of the seventeenth century contributed to the development of a burgeoning Irish Protestant martyrological tradition (albeit largely among English audiences), the parallel rival Irish Catholic martyrological tradition, which had its genesis in John Howlin's 'Perbreve compendium' gained significant momentum on the Continent as Irish Catholic scholars, among them Nicholas French, Richard Bellings (*c*.1603-77), John Lynch, and Anthony Broudin (d. 1681), each of whom were forced to flee Ireland in the aftermath of the destructive parliamentarian invasions, generated numerous accounts which publicised the perilous position of Catholicism in Ireland in the aftermath of the 1641 uprising. These authors highlighted the suffering of Irish

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[249] McAreavey, 'Re(-)membering women', pp 72-92.
[250] Raymond Gillespie, 'Irish print and Protestant identity: William King's pamphlet wars, 1687-1697' in Carey & Lotz-Heumann (eds), *Taking sides?*, pp 231-50.
[251] Gillespie, 'Temple's fate', p. 330; S.J. Connolly, *Religion, law and power: the making of Protestant Ireland, 1660-1760* (Oxford, 1992).

Catholics, whom they styled as martyrs, at the hands of a persecutory and heretical state and church.[252] While these accounts focused to a large extent on the male experience of the conflict, in particular that of the clergy, 'who were the servants of God', Mary Bonaventure Browne's account, charted the particular experience of female religious during the rising, specifically the Irish Poor Clare nuns.[253] As shown in chapter two, since their arrival in Ireland from Gravelines in Spanish Flanders in 1629, the Irish Poor Clare order, after a brief period of disruption between 1630 and 1631, enjoyed a period of rapid expansion, benefitting from substantial élite patronage provided through close family ties as well as the relaxation of the government's coercion measures against Catholicism from 1632 onwards.[254] On the eve of the 1641 uprising an active network of Poor Clare convents was in operation. According to Browne, prior to the uprising, the convents, both at Bethlehem and Drogheda, had been, 'flourishing both in the admission of good perfect members' while the sisters were venerated on account of their 'virtue and fame of a good life'.[255] The outbreak of hostilities in autumn 1641 seriously challenged the strength and resilience of the order's presence in the country, however, and the Drogheda and Bethlehem communities were forced to disband. Intriguingly, although not surprisingly considering their emphasis on the Protestant experience of the conflict, the depositions, with the exception of one brief reference to the Drogheda community, are silent in relation to the case of female religious in

[252] Nicholas French, *Protesta, y suplica de los Catholicos de Irlanda, y de la Gran Bretana. Al. Eminentissimo Senor Princepe de la Iglesia, el Cardenal Ivlio Mazerino* (Seville, 1659), *In Nomine Sanctissimae Trinitatis Eera descriptio moderni Status Catholicorum In Regno Hiberniae, & preces eorum Ad Santissimum Dominum Clementem Papam nonum* (Cologne, 1667), John Lynch, *De Praesulibus Hiberniae Potissimis Catholicae religionis in Hibernia Serendae*, ed. and trans. John Francis O'Doherty, (Dublin, 1944), ii, *Cambrensis eversus, seu potius Historica fides in rebus hibernicis Giraldo Cambrensi abrogata ...* (St. Malo?, 1662?) ed. and trans. Matthew Kelly, (Dublin, 1848-51), iii, 85-193. [P. Talbot], *The Politicians Cathechisme, for his instruction in Divine Faith and Morall Honesty* (Antwerp, 1658), Anthony Broudin, *Propugnaculum Catholicae Veritatis* (Prague, 1669). For a discussion on Nicholas French's texts see Jason McHugh, 'Catholic clerical responses to the Restoration: the case of Nicholas French' in Coleman A. Dennehy (ed.), *Restoration Ireland: always setting never settled* (Aldershot, 2008), pp 99-121.

[253] Born into a prominent Galway family, Mary Browne entered Bethlehem with her sister in 1632, professing as Sr Bonaventure. She was the daughter of merchant Andrew Browne and Catherine Bodkin: her grandfather had been mayor of Galway in 1609. Her cousin, Sr Catherine Francis Browne, had entered Bethlehem in 1631: see Marie-Louise Coolahan, 'Browne, Mary (*d.* in or before 1694)' in *O.D.N.B.* (Oxford University Press, May 2014) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/105827, accessed 19 Nov. 2014]: see also O'Brien, *Poor Clares, Galway, 1642-1992* (Galway, 1992), p. 12; Browne's chronicle is followed in the manuscript by the anonymous 'Additional Material Following the Narrative of Mother Mary Bonaventure Browne's "Narrative"', dated 1694: Galway chronicle. For quote see French, *Protesta, y suplica*, p. [5].

[254] See chapter two.

[255] Galway chronicle.

1641.[256] Browne's chronicle is therefore a unique source as it provides a rare first-hand (albeit retrospective) insight into the impact of the outbreak of sectarian violence in 1641 on the fledgling order and how the Poor Clare nuns were compelled to adapt their spiritual way of life in order to cope with the major upheavals which the conflict precipitated.

Like attempts by male clerical scholars to gain recognition for the cause of the Irish Catholic martyrs or *fama martyrii* within the context of European Catholic devotional and martyrological literature, it is clear that Browne viewed – and was keen to position – her community's suffering during 1641-2 within a wider Catholic martyrological tradition. Her account is replete with the customary hallmarks of the martyrological literary genre; the language deployed abounds with sectarian polemic which construes events in terms of a conflict between 'innocent lambs' who, as 'Christ's poor flock', were compelled to suffer 'enormous crimes' and 'detestable and sacrilegious actions' at the hands of persecutory and 'heretical' enemies, an experience which Browne contended was akin to a 'prolonged martyrdom'.[257] While Browne's chronicle shared important stylistic features with accounts written by exiled clerical writers there were significant differences too.[258] Unlike the latter's works which were published and/or disseminated in Catholic circles in Europe, Browne's chronicle was not intended for public distribution. Rather, by providing testimony to the nuns' sanctity and devotion during what was a period of unparalleled sectarian conflict, Browne's account was intended to inspire existing and future members of the order to continue their struggle to preserve their faith and vocation. Furthermore, as Coolahan has emphasised, while Browne's account conformed entirely to a wider tradition of writing activities by communities of female religious in Europe, in an Irish context Browne's chronicle is unique, providing the only account of the 1641 uprising and subsequent crisis of the 1640s

[256] A search of the depositions database for the term 'nun' or 'nuns' returns just one result. In this deposition Richard Hill, a merchant, claimed that he heard a rebel leader named Luke Netterville say that 'were it not for some friers and nuns in the towne [that is, Drogheda] they [the rebels] would fire the Towne'. See examination of Richard Hill, 26 Nov. 1641 (TCD, MS 816, fol. 035).
[257] The manuscript is entitled 'How various religious women of this holy Order died during persecution, exile and calamities for their holy faith and religious profession, and especially those of the Irish nation who died in such a manner'. Galway chronicle fol. 1.
[258] Coolahan, *Women, writing & language.*

and 1650s from the perspective of a Catholic religious woman.[259] Although Browne's account deals with the experience of the order throughout the period of the Confederate wars, the ensuing parliamentary invasions and the nuns' subsequent exile in the 1650s onwards, the following discussion is concerned with her description of the nuns experience during and immediately subsequent to the outbreak of hostilities in October 1641 (that is, up until May/June 1642 – the official commencement of the Confederate wars).[260]

Central to Browne's depiction of the rising is the theme of confessional division. Describing the circumstances in which the community at Bethlehem were notified of an impending attack at some point in early 1642 (Brown does not specify the exact date) she recounted how, 'as God would have it, information was given some time previously to the Catholics that the heretics intended to come and destroy it [the convent]'.[261] From the outset then, Browne represented the ensuing threat to the community in terms of a sectarian conflict between polarised Catholics and 'heretical' Protestant forces. Once news of the imminent arrival of the Protestant army reached the convent, the sisters were immediately fearful. Their vulnerability was highlighted and expressed in terms of their isolation and devotion: 'the poor flock of Christ living there [were overcome by] great fear and terror'.[262] Unlike the approaching army, the nuns possessed no material weaponry, only the power of prayer, the principal strategy through which the women sought to invoke the protection of God in the face of threatened attack. The women appealed for God's protection through the intercession of their patron saint, Saint Clare, to whom they fervently prayed for protection.[263] Like male religious orders, the nuns' spiritual inheritance from St Clare rested on an abiding faith in her divine power and protection. According to Browne, the sisters drew inspiration from the accounts of the life of St Clare, whose successful deliverance of Assisi from the Moors – associated with the anti-Islamic defence of Catholicism – offered them hope of a similar defeat of 'heretical' Protestant forces at Bethlehem; 'they therefore set up her [St Clare's] picture in the choir, in which this miracle was painted, so that they might

[259] For further discussion of the European comparison see Coolahan, *Women, writing & language.*
[260] Lenihan, *Confederate Catholics at war*; Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland, 1642-1649*.
[261] Galway chronicle, fol. 5r.
[262] Ibid.
[263] Ibid.

constantly pray before it in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar'.[264] For the sisters St Clare represented a 'channel' of God's power, through which his miracles could be experienced. As Gillespie has highlighted, such definitions of 'holy access' conflicted with the Established Church's emphasis on unmediated, personalised contemplation that rejected the powers of sacramental, liturgical and saintly intercession.[265] In contrast, the Bethlehem nuns not only invoked the protection of their founder St Clare to whom they 'constantly' prayed, but faced with the threat of the approaching Protestant army, the nuns were directed by their abbess to 'pray before the Most Blessed Sacrament'. The community were mobilised to participate in a series of intensive communal prayer vigils, praying in twos, and sometimes in fours, in rotation twenty-four hours a day. The nuns therefore strategically adapted their spiritual way of life in order to cope with the crisis, offering their 'sweet lamentations' over a period of several months.[266]

According to Browne, by carrying out these exacting and intensive prayer cycles over such a protracted period while continually fearing an impeding attack, the nuns conducted themselves as martyrs since; 'it would have been far easier to die at once than to endure such a prolonged martyrdom'.[267] After months of this 'prolonged martyrdom' by June 1642 the Bethlehem community were forced to flee their secluded residence on the shores of Lough Rea, most likely with the assistance of Sir James Dillon, commander of Confederate forces besieging Roger Jones (d. 1644), Viscount Ranelagh and president of Connacht at Athlone throughout 1642, and Sr Cecily Dillon's brother.[268] According to Browne, not long after the nuns' dispersal, an army arrived at the convent only to find that the nuns had fled by boat to the opposite shore of the lough. She recounted how, frustrated that they were unable to carry out 'their malignant intent', the 'mercyless hereticks' spent three days and three nights plundering the religious site, carrying out a succession of sacrilegious and iconoclastic acts. She described how the 'heretics':

[264] Ibid.
[265] 'Protestantism denied the efficacy of human intercession in bringing individuals closer to God. Neither saint nor priest could intercede for humanity since each individual was equally and solely responsible to God': see Gillespie, 'Popular & unpopular religion', pp 30-49.
[266] Galway chronicle, fol. 6r.
[267] Ibid.
[268] Ibid.

> ... made great sport of the Alters, pictures, ornaments and sacred things which were therein, some of them would putt on the habitts of the Nunns they found there, and jesting at them, would say, come lett us goe say Masse, and you to serve us. Lastly [they] sett fire to the Convent, and burned it with all that was therein.[269]

The Protestant force's destruction and desecration of these 'channels of the holy' mirrored accounts featured in the depositions which described how Catholic rebel atrocity was directed against objects of Protestants veneration including Bibles, catechisms and devotional books which were desecrated while Protestant churches and cemeteries were vandalised and set ablaze.[270] Similarly, in its depiction of blasphemous iconoclasm, Browne's chronicle conformed to imagery and rhetoric common in European Catholic martyrological literature. For example, in his early seventeenth-century account of the martyr Margaret Ball (discussed in chapter one), David Rothe, Bishop of Ossory, described how following her arrest a 'chalice' and 'all the priestly vestments with other appendages' were seized by those 'fanatical officers' and 'plunderers of sacred things' and turned to 'profane use'.[271] Such imagery reinforced a view of Catholicism as a confession, and more specifically, the order of Poor Clares, under severe attack from heretics, concomitantly heightening consciousness among members of the order of a collective sense of their persecuted and martyred faith.

Browne moved on from describing the nuns' 'prolonged martyrdom' and the blasphemous occupation of the convent to give an account of the divine retribution exacted upon the 'heretical' forces. In so doing she draws upon the central concept of divine providence which as discussed above was a powerful literary weapon used in the sixteenth and seventeenth century by scholars on both sides of the confessional divide in order to reinforce commitment among confessional communities and to 'undermine the morale and credibility of their 'heretical' or 'anti-Christian'

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[269] Ibid.
[270] Deposition of Elizabeth Hooper, 1 Feb. 1643/4 (TCD, MS 820, fol. 50); Deposition of Margery Sharpe, 29 Jan. 1642 (TCD, MS 816, fol. 144); Deposition of Andrew Cammell, 25 Aug. 1642 (TCD, MS 817, fol. 181); Deposition of John Glasse, 8 Apr. 1642 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 197); Deposition of George Syllie, 9 Apr. 1642 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 260); Deposition of Thomas Harris, 11 Apr. 1642 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 240); Deposition of John Wilmott, 11 Apr. 1642 (TCD, MS 815, fol. 295); Deposition of Henry Palmer, 12 Jan. 1642 (TCD, MS 818, fol. 88); Deposition of Donatus Conner, 28 Oct. 1642 (TCD, MS 818, fol. 110); Deposition of Thomas Ricroft, 10 July 1642 (TCD, MS 818, fol. 124).
[271] Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day Anthology*, iv, 474.

enemies'.[272] Thus, Browne described how in defiance of the Protestant forces attempts to destroy the convent, 'God preserved miraculously the Tabernacle in which the Most Blessed Sacrament was used to be kept ... and likewise an old Image of our Blessed Lady both made of wood'.[273] In keeping with the theme of divine providence, Browne recounted how a righteous mob (presumably of Catholic rebels) set upon the heretical soldiers in order to avenge the attack on the convent: 'they were all surprised and killed (being in number 120) by a p[ar]ty of ye Irish Catholickes who to revenge such Enormious a crime and publicke affront donn to the Spouses of Christ, Gathered from the boardering villages, and fell vppon them, in the high way like fierce Lyons'.[274] Dramatic as Browne's account may seem, there is corroborating evidence. As Coolahan has highlighted, in his history of the Confederate Wars, written in 1674, Richard Bellings, secretary to the Confederate government from 1642 to 1651, included an account of the convent's destruction by government forces, which matches in many details Browne's vivid and graphic description.[275] Indeed Bellings was not the only Irish Catholic author to feature the Bethlehem community's experience. For the anonymous native Irish author of the *Aphorismical Discovery of Treasonable Faction* (written between 1652 and 1660), the event stood out as a signifier of anti-Catholic cruelty.[276]Browne's chronicle was thus one of many contemporary and near contemporary accounts which unambiguously construed events of 1641-2 through the prism of Catholic persecution and martyrdom.

VI

This study has explored the roles and representations of women in Leinster and south-east Munster in what was undoubtedly the most violent expression of confessional division in early modern Ireland. Drawing on a selection of discrete examples extracted from the depositions this chapter has illustrated that as active agents in the sectarian violence that unfolded in autumn 1641, women's roles were diverse and multifaceted. In some cases, women, particularly élite women of aristocratic and gentry stock, were involved as abettors and harbourers of Catholic

[272] Walsham, *Providence in early modern England*, p. 225.
[273] Galway chronicle, fol. 6r.
[274] Ibid.
[275] Gilbert (ed.), *History of the Irish Confederation*, i, 85-6.
[276] Gilbert (ed.), *A Contemporary History of Affairs in Ireland*, i, 58.

rebels, including Catholic clergy, within their localities. This was revealed in case studies of women such as Margaret Fitzpatrick, Lady Dowager of Upper Ossory, Lady Ursula White of Leixlip and Lady Margaret Burke of Castle Carbery, who, by channelling, either with or without the connivance of their husbands, funds and/or material resources including food, shelter and ammunition in support of the insurrection, played an important role in sustaining and perpetuating the conflict at a local level. Indeed, as this discussion has shown, this was a feature of female participation not only confined to women of aristocratic and gentry backgrounds; women from more modest backgrounds, including those among the mercantile community, also played a key role as contributors of material support for the rebel cause. Women were also involved more directly in the conflict as instigators and perpetrators of crime, including robbery and were often prominent members of mobs that attacked and looted the homes of Protestant settlers. Some even assumed leadership roles, actively orchestrating acts of robbery and criminality and effectively marshalling support for the rising at a local level. At a more sinister level, women were also involved in carrying out acts of cold-blooded violence and were sometimes even complicit in murder. The exceptional conduct of Bridget Fitzpatrick in Queen's County, Alice Butler, daughter of Lord Mountgarrett, and other 'lewd viragos' at Kilkenny, demonstrated the extent and level of female agency in 1641, although as has been highlighted, their behaviour was exceptional and therefore should not be viewed as typical of female rebel participation in 1641. In contrast to the involvement of certain women in crime, violence and atrocity, the important conciliatory role played by others, particularly gentle and aristocratic women who gave shelter and domicile to displaced Protestant victims, revealed the multifaceted and heterogeneous nature of female agency in 1641 demonstrating that, even at times of intense sectarian hostility, bonds of community and friendship could transcend religious divides and that women, free from the commitment of active military engagement, could be important standard-bearers of conciliation in their localities.

As well as female agency, this study examined female victimhood with particular reference to representations of female victimisation and traumatisation in pamphlet literature published during the first six months of the uprising. The utilisation and manipulation of the 'trope' of violence, including sexual violence, against women,

usually considered non-combatants, in order to portray Catholic rebel cruelty as particularly barbaric and thus provoke anti-Catholic amongst English audiences has been highlighted. The subsequent appropriation and manipulation of instances of violence against women in official treatises on the rising demonstrated how an image of conflict as one of unparalleled and indiscriminate violence was subsequently disseminated and perpetuated both in the short term and in the mid-long term memories of the rising. Finally, the dissemination of representations of female victims of 1641 as Protestant 'martyrs' in contemporary martyrologies, notably Samuel Clarke's *A generall martyrologie* revealed how Clarke's martyrology formed part of a burgeoning Irish Protestant martyrological tradition developing (albeit within an English context) during the final three decades of the seventeenth century. This was juxtaposed against the parallel yet rival Catholic martyrological tradition which found expression on the Continent in the works of exiled Irish scholars. Mother Mary Bonaventure Browne's representation of the ordeal endured by the Irish Poor Clare nuns' in mid-1642 as martyrdom meant that her chronicle – although not generated for external dissemination – nevertheless formed part of a dichotomy of Irish Catholic persecution and martyrdom at the hands of heretical tormentors which proliferated on the Continent in the decades after 1641, especially in the aftermath of the Cromwellian conquest. This in turn contributed to the consolidation of a distinct Irish Catholic identity, *mentalité* and culture both among the Irish émigré community in Europe and the Catholic community in Ireland. Thus, these two emerging yet distinct martyological traditions, Catholic and Protestant, with their emphasis on representations of female suffering, affliction and martyrdom, in turn served to bolster a process of confessionalisation and polarisation along religious lines between two communities which had been gaining momentum since the 1560s. This was a process which, in the decades after 1641, with the onset of the Cromwellian conquests and the Williamite wars was to prove intractable.

CONCLUSION

I

This thesis has explored in their multiple forms the roles and representations of women in Leinster and south-east Munster in relation to the religious changes and conflicts that occurred during the period *c*.1560-*c*.1641. The Elizabethan religious settlement (1560) legislated for a concerted drive to enforce widespread conformity to the Established Church which, it was envisaged, would emanate outwards from the heartland of the medieval Anglo-Irish colony in Ireland. The advent of the Catholic mission in Ireland, heralded by the return to Ireland from the Continent of a small but growing number of proscribed religious and secular clergy from the late 1570s onwards, set in motion a process of confessionalisation in which Protestants and Catholics vied with one another to ensure conformity among their faithful and win converts for their respective faiths. That institutional polarisation and associated rivalry impacted profoundly the laity, both male and female. During the period *c*.1560-*c*.1641, at a macro level, the confessional divide between Catholics and Protestants grew progressively deeper and more intractable as both communities developed distinct religious identities and ideologies and established decidedly separate customs, practices and traditions in line with the tenets and theological precepts of their respective faiths. As emphasised, this period was characterised by oscillation between interludes of peaceful coexistence and religious toleration during phases of stability on the one hand and sporadic clashes between Catholics and the Protestant authorities and/or communities as a result of the vigorous imposition of coercive religious measures by church and state authorities at times of political crisis on the other. Although neither inevitable nor imminently expected, the outbreak of unprecedented sectarian violence in October 1641 came as a dramatic demonstration of the extent and consequences of that process of confessionalisation which had been in train since the early years of Elizabeth I's reign.

Whereas the male experience of these religious changes and attendant conflicts, and the nuances of men's confessional allegiances and practices as they emerged over the course of this period have been the subject of scholarly analysis, the female experience (with a few notable exceptions) has rarely featured. This thesis set out to

address that lacuna in the historiography of early modern Ireland by considering how this ongoing and (on the whole) progressively polarising process of religious change and conflict impacted women within two emerging, distinct yet connected communities, and how they in turn reacted in a variety of ways.

Notwithstanding the limited and inherently challenging nature of surviving relevant source material, this study has revealed that a wealth of insight into the lives and experiences of women in this era can in fact be gleaned as a result of detailed, resourceful mining of those sources. Furthermore, the adoption of a gendered approach to analysis has revealed that while there were similarities between men and women's experiences of religious change and conflict in this era, there were also marked differences, some of which were specific to women. By constructing the overarching interpretive framework on two linked conceptual frameworks ('roles' and 'representations'), this study has enhanced the historiography of early modern Ireland not only through its pioneering exploration of the gendered experience of religious change and conflict and our understanding of the societal impact of that change and conflict but also through its contribution to a more nuanced, inclusive and complete understanding of the impact of confessionalisation during this period.

II

Roles

Women assumed a multiplicity of diverse and multifaceted roles in responding to religious change and conflict and in the promotion and perpetuation of their respective faiths within their confessional communities, ranging from perpetrators of sectarian attack at the one end of the spectrum to victims of religious conflict and martyrs at the other. As in England, the role of provider of hospitality and maintainer of priests became increasingly important, particularly for women within the Roman Catholic Church tradition in Ireland from the early Elizabethan era when both secular and religious clergy grew increasingly reliant on their patronage and support in order to carry out their ministry. By the early years of the seventeenth century a wide network of support facilitated by wealthy and influential families of aristocratic, gentry and mercantile ranks provided shelter, hospitality and patronage to proscribed clerics in the Leinster and south-east Munster regions. Whereas male heads of

households were crucial to maintaining networks of domestic refuge and domicile for priests and religious, not least through the provision of the necessary financial resources, this study has highlighted the considerable influence exerted by women, in their role as matriarchs and female heads of households in the promotion and maintenance of these clerical support networks. In urban centres, women of means from mercantile families, such as Mary Browne née Sedgrave in Dublin, Anastasia Strong in Waterford and Joan Roche and Catherine Stafford in Wexford, provided clerics, some of whom were family members, with shelter in their households. In the countryside too, the residences of aristocratic and gentle women, such as Cecily Finglas née Cusack in Westpalstown, north County Dublin and Elizabeth Fitzgerald née Nugent, Countess of Kildare, at Kilkea Castle, south County Kildare, harboured clerics, many of whom were senior members of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and key figures in orchestrating the Catholic mission to Ireland. Through their maintenance of priests and religious, which was also predicated on their discretion and their exercise of authority over domestic staff in their homes, these women directly contributed to the success of the Catholic mission and the promotion and perpetuation of a clear Catholic identity within their wider confessional community in Ireland during the later Elizabethan and early Stuart eras. Indeed, the activities of Jane Nugent, who in the 1630s arranged accommodation for a priest under her patronage in the English household of the earls of Antrim, one of Ireland's leading Catholic titled families, reveal how certain aristocratic women operated as patrons of priests well beyond their own immediate localities and communities in Ireland, by belonging to a wide and inter-connected transnational network of Catholic patronage and recusant activity linking Ireland and England. This discovery raises important questions about how these Catholic networks operated, suggesting scope for useful comparison to be drawn with patronage networks linking Catholics in Ireland and the Irish émigré community on the Continent which have already been the subject of considerable scholarly analysis.

Catholic women's provision of support went beyond sheltering priests and religious in private households. In addition to organising domestic education within their own households, several women of means, including Margaret Ball in Dublin and Jane Nugent in Meath played important roles as providers of education in their localities

through sponsorship of schooling initiatives, in the late 1570s/1580s and the late 1640s respectively, thereby making important contributions to the promotion and perpetuation of their faith within their own confessional communities. That the state authorities took particular exception to Catholic women's involvement in this activity owing to its wider communal impact is evidenced by the exemplary punishment of Margaret Ball.

The endowment of sodalities, chantries, novitiates and training colleges, such as those patronised by Elizabeth Nugent at Kildare Hall in the heart of Dublin city during the late 1620s, was another popular channel through which wealthy women could (discreetly or publicly) provide essential material support for the Catholic – in this case Jesuit – mission in Ireland: this also afforded them a means of tangible and enduring expression of their own personal pious beliefs, practices and devotions. Through their sponsorship of these corporate institutions, women such as Elizabeth Nugent were important agents in the incubation and advancement of the burgeoning Catholic mission as it worked in direct opposition to the authorities' attempts to progress religious reform in Ireland.

Whilst acknowledging that the activities of Elizabeth Nugent were of course exceptional (she was, after all, in a particularly strong financial position as matriarch of one of the most powerful aristocratic houses in early modern Ireland), nonetheless, the extent and nature of the relationship between gentle and aristocratic women and the Society of Jesus in particular has emerged as a striking feature of the Counter-Reformation mission in these quarters of Ireland during this period. Alongside Elizabeth Nugent, other aristocratic women, such as Cecily Finglas, demonstrated the strength of wealthy women's attachment to that order. Indeed this could prove a fruitful area of future research, particularly with the forthcoming publication (by the Irish Manuscripts Commission) of a calendar of papers relating to the early Jesuit mission in Ireland (1577-1762), and letters of the mission dating from the

seventeenth century.[1] The special role played by Catholic widows in patronising priests and religious has also been revealed in this study. In this way, having their own homes and incomes largely at their disposal, it was commonplace for widows such as Margaret Shee née Fagan and Lattice Shee in Kilkenny, Sisley Walsh in County Waterford, Elizabeth St Lawrence in County Dublin and Joanna Eustace in County Wicklow to take advantage of their particularly propitious position and to channel funds towards supporting the Catholic mission.

As parties to marriage alliances arranged between Old English Catholic recusant families in Ireland and their Catholic counterparts in England, women played a vital role in forging and strengthening confessional identity and bonds of confessional solidarity and in sustaining support networks that facilitated the advancement of the Catholic mission in Ireland. Owing to strategic unions between families such as the Butlers of Mountgarret, the FitzGeralds of Kildare, the Flemings of Slane and the St Lawrences of Howth, and their English Catholic peers a number of English-born Catholic women, such as Elizabeth St Lawrence née Wentworth in Dublin, Frances Butler née Touchet in County Tipperary and Thomasine Butler née Andrews in County Kilkenny came to fulfil influential roles in the maintenance and propagation of Catholic and later Counter-Reformation ideology and devotion in Ireland, not just within their own private households but also within their wider locality. Their emergence in the narrative reveals a fresh new dimension to what was clearly an élite patronage network connecting Catholic communities across Leinster, south-east Munster and England during this period.

It is clear that during the period under consideration questions of confessional allegiance emerged as a new and significant feature governing familial and matrimonial relations and that this in turn impacted women (and men) to varying degrees. Inter-confessional marriage was not an uncommon occurrence in mid-seventeenth-century Ireland. And whereas for some women, such as Lady Susanna Brabazon, wife of Luke Plunket, Lord Killeen and first Earl of Fingall, and Leah

[1] In 2015 the Irish Manuscripts Commission will publish letters written by Jesuits working in the Irish mission between 1577 to 1752. The originals are mostly housed in Rome and run to about 2,200 documents. They contain a wealth of important information not easily available to scholars. The calendar is edited by Vera Orschel.

Mawe, wife of William Bedell, Bishop of Kilmore and Ardagh, marriage across the religious divide proved successful, with couples enjoying harmonious relationships based on mutual respect despite religious differences, for others, opposing religious affiliations could spark discord, tension and conflict between spouses, leading to the breakdown of matrimonial unions. The latter was true in the cases of Lady Elizabeth O'Brien née St Leger, wife of Murrough O'Brien, first Earl of Inchiquin, Lady Margaret Esmonde née O'Flaherty, wife of Sir Laurence, first Baron Esmonde of Limerick, and most strikingly in the case of Mrs Dillon, wife of Lucas Dillon, son of James Dillon, first Earl of Roscommon. Furthermore fathers such as Richard Boyle, earl of Cork, exerted considerable control over the betrothal of daughters, often restricting marriage opportunities to within their confessional community, thereby consolidating the status of the families within the Protestant community and reinforcing distinctions between communities along confessional lines. Indeed the case studies featured in this thesis testify to the importance that families such as the Boyles, the Balls, the Challoners, the Usshers and the Parsons attached to securing marriage alliances within their confessional communities. This bears out the important role played by women who as wives could perpetuate the English colonial ideals of civility, moral uprightness and godliness not just within their own families but also within their wider confessional community.

While women as wives were important for ensuring the Protestant lineage of the family in the next generation, women from Old English and New English Protestant families, like their Catholic counterparts, also fulfilled an important role as educators, guiding the spiritual teaching and religious edification of their households. Like their Catholic counterparts, individual women from both Old and New English Protestant urban patriciate, gentry and aristocracy exerted considerable influence as mothers, grandmothers, aunts and foster-mothers in the education, especially religious education, of young children. Women such as Catherine Boyle née Fenton, her mother Alice Fenton and Ann Cleyton in County Cork, Lettice Digby, in County Offaly, Margaret Dungan and Alice and Katherine Ussher at Dublin, and Leah Mawe, were all important figures in guiding the spiritual education of young children, grandchildren and relatives under their care. The educational guidance that they provided included recitation of prayers and reading the catechism and Bible,

activities which provoke important questions about changing levels of female literacy among the mercantile, gentry and aristocratic families during this period, many of which will undoubtedly be addressed through the major research project into early modern women's writing currently being undertaken at the National University of Ireland, Galway under the direction of Professor Marie Louise Coolahan.[2]

In addition to catechising children within the household and like their Catholic counterparts, Old English and New English Protestant women participated in public education and schooling initiatives in turn contributed to the consolidation and expansion of the Protestant evangelical mission in Ireland. The case of Elizabeth Cary née Tranfield, wife of Henry Cary, first Viscount Falkland and lord deputy of Ireland has proved particularly revealing in this regard. Although she subsequently converted to Catholicism, during her sojourn in Ireland (1622-25) Elizabeth was at least outwardly Protestant. Her initiation and active involvement in a schooling project in the heart of Dublin city, aimed at the conversion of local children to Protestantism, sheds new light on the roles and activities deemed appropriate for the wives of members of high-ranking government officials in that era. Further insights into the roles played by the wives of high-ranking government officials in upholding the Protestant evangelical mission in Ireland have also been gleaned from the case of Sarah Loftus née Bathow, wife of Adam Loftus, Viscount Ely, lord justice of Ireland, who in the early 1630s was instrumental in effecting the arrest and subsequent banishment from Dublin of the Poor Clare nuns. Significantly, Sarah, in her role as widow of a Church of Ireland bishop, may have been more zealous than most in seeking to effect the suppression of religious non-conformity in the city. Indeed the roles and experiences of the wives and widows of clergymen in Elizabethan and Stuart Ireland have, to date, received little scholarly attention, despite the fact that changes to the institutional and doctrinal status of clerical marriage during the Elizabethan period impacted them profoundly. This small but growing number of women of New English, Old English and Gaelic origin emerged from a socially stigmatised position during the 1530s, 1540s, 1550s to one of <u>relative</u> privilege,

[2] 'RECIRC: The reception and circulation of early modern women's writing, 1550-1700'. The project is funded by the European Research Council and will investigate this topic from 2014-2019.

visibility and respectability (depending on the rank of their husbands), at least within their own confessional communities from the late 1560s and 1570s onwards. Consequently, by the early Stuart period the wives of some of the more senior ranking clergy were lauded as exemplary Protestant women, as evidenced by funerary epitaphs such as those dedicated to the memory of Jeneta Houston, wife of Archibald Adair, Bishop of Waterford and Lismore and Elizabeth Pilsworth wife of William Pilsworth, Bishop of Kildare. However, there was also a negative side to their increased visibility and improved status as those married to senior-ranking clerics who were viewed as stalwarts of Protestant evangelisation and English conquest in Ireland, were by association, regarded as legitimate targets for criticism, derision and ridicule by members of the Catholic community, both lay and religious. This was best illustrated by the case of Anne O'Meara, the Gaelic Irish wife of Meiler Magrath, Archbishop of Cashel who was publicly denounced by the Franciscan poet and preacher Eoghan Ó Dubhthaigh in *c*.1578. But the targeting of clergymen's wives could extend beyond caustic defamation to include physical assault, abduction and/or injury such as experienced by Susan Steynings, wife of George Montgomery, Bishop of Derry, Clogher and Raphoe and the wife of Thomas Meredith, minister of Balrothery in north County Dublin in the early 1610s.

Within the Catholic community, the foil to these exemplars of 'godly' Protestant femininity were female religious who enjoyed an explicitly exalted role and status among their co-religionists. The onset of religious reform arguably impacted female religious more profoundly than any other cohort of women. As has been shown, the suppression of the monasteries in Ireland during the 1530s and 1540s (as elsewhere in Europe) was especially momentous, marking an abrupt end to a formal, organised, cloistered and exclusively female way of religious life which traced its origins back to the early Christian Church. The fallout from the dissolution campaign was uniquely gendered: unlike male religious, many of whom were appointed to positions within the hierarchy of the Tudor State Church, female religious in Ireland (like their counterparts in England and Europe) were by contrast deprived of their religious lifestyle and left without any alternatives for living a vocational life. This thesis has charted how in the aftermath of the dissolution campaigns, communities of female religious were neither immediately nor entirely disbanded. Rather, they

navigated their survival in a variety of ways, capitalising on close links with members of the local gentry, aristocracy and urban patriciates to ensure the survival and perpetuation of their way of life (albeit in a clandestine manner). Maintenance of traditional modes of conventual living was just one (albeit apparently unique) form of clandestinity adopted by women to enable them to live a religious lifestyle in an uncongenial environment: this was best illustrated by the Grace Dieu community at Portrane in north County Dublin. Other options were to live out one's religious vocation within a domestic setting, sheltered within the family home (although this was viewed with suspicion by church authorities eager to safe-guard female chastity), or to join religious communities as tertiaries (remnants of late medieval mendicant institutions). From the late 1590s and early years of the seventeenth century, in the absence of a formal vocational lifestyle in Ireland, young women from socially prominent and politically influential families of the Catholic Old English élite travelled to the Continent in pursuit of a formal religious lifestyle. As this study has demonstrated, the close familial and institutional connections that existed between the Catholic community in Ireland and the Irish émigré community on the Continent, notably France, Spain and Spanish Flanders proved vital in facilitating the education and vocational formation of not only men but also women from Ireland, several of whom returned from Europe to serve in the Irish mission. The return to Ireland in June 1629 of seven Poor Clare nuns – originally professed at the English Poor Clare convent in Gravelines, Spanish Flanders – was a significant turning point, heralding as it did, the revival of formal religious vocations for women in Ireland, in line with the doctrines of the Council of Trent. Indeed, their return in 1629 was even more remarkable considering that it was not until the late eighteenth century (as a result of the impact of violence associated with the French revolution and anti-religious legislation in Europe) that English nuns began to return to England. Their cloistered convents which they established first at Dublin and later at Bethlehem and Drogheda, signified a sacred place, a focal point for Catholic devotion, piety and culture, while the female religious, like their male brethren, played an important, albeit distinct, role as religious exemplars within their confessional communities, promoting and perpetuating Counter-Reformation ideology, culture and devotion. However, as demonstrated, the outbreak of violence in 1641 drastically ruptured that network and meant that female religious were once again compelled to navigate their survival in

what was for them an exceptionally unstable, threatening environment of sectarian hostility in which they and their protectors were vulnerable.

Having explored the common and distinctive features of Catholic and Protestant women's experiences of the religious changes and associated conflicts that took place during a period of relative, if at times uneasy, peace and stability down to the autumn of 1641, the focus of this study then shifted to concentrate on an analysis of women's roles in what was the most violent expression of confessional division in early modern Ireland: the 1641 uprising. A striking feature of the conflict was its gendered nature, as, like their male counterparts, women from various social ranks, lay and religious, Catholic and Protestant, were compelled to 'take sides' as the chasm between the two communities ruptured along lines of confessional identity.[3] This study has contributed to a more nuanced understanding of women's involvement in the uprising, challenging the perceived impression that they were victims only and highlighting how certain women, particularly those of aristocratic and gentry stock, were actively involved as abettors and harbourers of Catholic rebels, including Catholic clergy, at a local level. This was true of Margaret Fitzpatrick, Lady Dowager of Upper Ossory in Queen's County, Lady Ursula White of Leixlip and Lady Margaret Burke of Castle Carbery, in County Kildare, who channelled funds and/or material resources including food, shelter and ammunition in support of the insurrection. In this way, although unlike men they were not involved in the unrest in a formal military capacity, élite women nevertheless played an important role in sustaining and perpetuating the sectarian unrest at a local level. Women were also involved in the conflict in more direct and active capacities too, often as instigators and perpetrators of crime, including robbery. Some assumed leadership roles, actively orchestrating acts of robbery and criminality and effectively marshalling support for the rising at a local level while others were more directly involved in their capacity as members of mobs that attacked and looted the homes of Protestant settlers in various regions throughout Leinster and south-east Munster, among them, Katherine Keeray and Margaret Enda in County Kildare and Ellen Vicars in Queen's County. At a more extreme level, women also played a role in carrying out acts of cold-blooded violence; some were even complicit in murder.

[3] Carey & Lotz-Heumann (eds), *Taking sides?*

The extreme conduct of Bridget Fitzpatrick née Darcy of Upper Ossory in Queen's County and Alice Butler, daughter of Richard, Viscount Mountgarret in Kilkenny, demonstrated the extent and level of female agency in 1641, although as has been highlighted, their behaviour was exceptional and therefore should not be viewed as typical of female rebel participation in 1641. In contrast to the involvement of women in crime, violence and atrocity, certain women, particularly gentle and aristocratic women, played important roles as standard-bearers of conciliation in their localities: the case of English-born Frances Butler née Touchet, wife of Sir Richard Butler of Kilcash Castle, County Tipperary, who gave shelter and domicile to displaced Protestant victims, revealed the complex nature of women's roles and allegiances in 1641, demonstrating that, even at times of intense sectarian hostility, bonds of community, friendship and employment could transcend religious divisions and threats to one's life and property.

III

Representations

As well as revealing the multiplicity of women's roles, a second aim of this thesis was to analyse representations of women for what they could reveal about the process of religious change and the nature and extent of confessional enmity in Leinster and south-east Munster. The comparative analysis of definitions of 'ideal' Catholic and Protestant womanhood as prescribed largely by English and European clerical and literary commentators, in conduct books and devotional literature, revealed the paradigms and parameters underpinning early modern representations of womanhood and positioned contemporary representations of women in Leinster and south-east Munster within their English and European contexts. While Catholic and Protestant commentators were broadly in agreement concerning definitions of 'ideal' womanhood, several important differences also came to light. Whereas Catholic and Protestant commentators frequently singled out piety and devotion as one of the most praiseworthy female virtues definitions of what precisely constituted 'pious' practices often differed. While women from both denominations were praised for their adherence to private religious devotions and daily prayer rituals, certain aspects of 'pious' activity were exclusive to each denomination and thus effectively differentiated Protestant women from their Catholic counterparts. Thus, whereas in

the Protestant tradition women were praised for their scrupulous study of Scripture or vigilant sermon attendance (both of which reflected the theological precepts of the reformed faith) Catholic women, on the other hand, were lauded for their diligent observance of the sacraments and feast days, their engagement with the penitential psalms and Litanies, recitation of the book of hours and their good works, activities which corresponded to Catholic theological canons and were thus regarded as manifestations of distinctly Catholic female religiosity and piety. These distinctions were in turn reflected on funerary monuments and tomb sculpture depicting deceased women. For example, monuments erected to the memory of women such as Julia Aylmer née Nugent, at Donadea in County Kildare, Grace Cantwell in County Tipperary and Helen Lawless in County Kilkenny incorporate effigies and representation of these women clasping rosaries which are adorned with other distinctly Catholic religious symbolism and iconography, including effigies of saints, Passion symbols and crosses bearing the IHS motif, which in turn serve to reinforce distinctly Catholic images of female piety. By contrast, monuments commemorating women such as Catherine Boyle née Fenton, Countess of Cork, her mother Alice Fenton, Frances Jones née Moore, Catherine Jones née Longueville, Jacoba Agard née de Brett and her daughter Cecilia Harrington, Anne Harrington, Lady Baltinglass and Joan Boyle née Apsley, feature distinctly Protestant expressions of female religious devotion incorporating effigies of those commemorated kneeling in reverent prayer and/or beside a Bible, a reflection the Protestant tenet of *sola scriptura*.

While literary representations reinforced notions of 'ideal' or exemplary female behaviour, in the particular context of Elizabethan and Stuart Ireland they could also serve as powerful weapons of censure and propaganda used by Catholic and Protestant commentators alike to castigate women who – in their view – fell short of that 'ideal'. Indeed what emerges quite clearly from this study's literary analysis of polemical discourses written by colonial commentators, such as Barnaby Rich and John Davies, is how representations of 'ideal' femininity could, in turn, be constructed explicitly in contrast to depictions of its 'antithesis'. Whereas Irish (invariably) Catholic women were represented in colonial commentaries as sexually immoral, lasciviousness, politically suspect and a source of corruption for the

English colony, 'their' English (invariably) Protestant women were, by contrast, depicted as paragons, who embodying desirable and virtuous traits, served to bolster the English civilising and reform mission in Ireland and in the process, reinforced definitions of ideal womanhood. Similarly, although the Catholic Church in Ireland, as in Europe, was keen to emphasise and safeguard the sexual chastity and purity of female religious – who were represented by writers such John Howlin as the archetype of Catholic female purity and virtue – Protestant detractors, in attempts to discredit the Catholic reform mission, habitually portrayed women (and men) religious as sexually subversive and morally scandalous. For their part, Catholic commentators too deployed literary polemic invoking the dichotomy of 'ideal' versus 'antithesis' femininity in order to denounce women, who, in their view, failed to conform to standards of 'ideal' womanhood. By denouncing women whose behaviour was deemed to be unsatisfactory owing to their being on the opposing 'side', these representations served to reinforce confessional ideals about the nature and qualities of exemplary female virtue in each denominational tradition, which in turn served to define and render more rigid emerging confessional identities and *mentalités* in post-Reformation Ireland.

One particularly important emergent literary genre through which confessional ideals about the nature and qualities of exemplary womanhood were disseminated and reinforced in post-Reformation Europe was martyrology. This study has highlighted how from the inception of the Irish Catholic martyrological literary tradition on the Continent in late 1580 and 1590s the experiences of female martyrs, namely Margaret Ball and Dublin nun, Margery Barnewall, featured. The representations of these women in the foundational text – John Howlin's 'Perbreve compendium' – conformed entirely to prescribed traits of exemplary Catholic womanhood as defined in contemporary European and English devotional literature and conduct manuals while at the same time promoting an image of female steadfastness in the face of 'heretical' persecution. Both women were lauded for their exceptional devotion and pious practices, (Margaret being praised for her generosity and hospitality to priests, Margery, for her stalwart defence of her virginal status in the face of attacks by 'heretical' soldiers). Later in 1618, David Rothe's representation of Margaret Ball, emphasised her observation of distinctly Tridentine modes piety and devotion, in

line with Counter-Reformation literary conventions, representations which in turn served to reinforce and consolidate confessional identities and *mentalités* among both the Irish émigré community on the Continent and the Catholic community in Ireland. The chronicle of the Irish Poor Clare order complied by Mother Mary Browne in *c*.1669-70 – although not generated for external dissemination – also subscribed to the dichotomous representation of Irish Catholic persecution and martyrdom at the hands of heretical tormentors, concentrating on the particular sacrifice made by female religious.

Although an Irish Protestant martyrological tradition did not emerge until several decades later (the mid-to-late seventeenth century), the publication and dissemination of funerary sermons and elegies commemorating deceased – usually élite – women, was one mode through which expressions and representations of 'ideal' Protestant womanhood were propagated and reinforced among adherents of the Established Church in Ireland. In contrast to England where by the mid-seventeenth century funerary elegies and sermons commemorating the 'godly' deceased were published frequently, in Ireland these were comparatively few, reflecting the under-developed nature of Irish printing in the seventeenth century. The publication of the *Musarum* in honour of Catherine Boyle née Fenton, Countess of Cork at Dublin in 1630, was unique in an Irish context. Presenting her as a paragon whose pious life and holy death was to be admired and emulated, the *Musarum* served as a foil to Catholic depictions of female martyrs at a time of increasing antagonism and hostility between the two confessional communities. The aftermath of the 1641 uprising witnessed the emergence of a distinctly Irish Protestant martyrological tradition – albeit in an English context. Publications by Samuel Clarke and (to a lesser extent) John Temple – drawing on the English Foxean martyrological tradition – claimed the victims of 1641 as religious martyrs and in the case of Clarke, positioned them within a pantheon of 'godly' Protestant martyrs and professors of 'true' faith dating from the early Christian period. Emphasising instances of female innocence and suffering reinforced a view of Protestantism in Ireland as a confession under attack at the hands of murderous 'popish' rebels and 'bloody Papists', whose ultimate aim was to secure the extirpation of the Protestant Church and its adherents from Ireland. Thus, these two emerging yet distinct

martyological traditions, Catholic and Protestant, with their common emphasis on representations of female suffering, affliction and martyrdom, in turn served to bolster a processes of confessionalisation which had been gaining momentum in Ireland since the 1560s.

IV

The historiography of women in early modern Ireland remains an underdeveloped field of historical scholarship with scarcity of sources often cited as a reason for this. However, as this study has shown, careful mining of the available sources and a tuned ear to both the voices of women and their silences can yield significant insights into their experiences of religious change and conflict in this period. While analysis of women's involvement in the processes of religious change and conflict as they impacted communities in Ireland does not fundamentally alter our understanding or interpretation of events, nonetheless it does add considerably to our understanding of the complexity and subtlety of the broad contours of that interpretation. As O'Dowd has remarked, 'seeing the women … widens our perception of the whole picture'.[4]

[4] O'Dowd, *A history of women in Ireland*, p. 274.

APPENDIX

Fig. 1.1 Mural tablet commemorating Margaret Wale (d. 1623), St Canice's Cathedral, Co. Kilkenny

Epitaph: Ipsius Mariti funebre—Hexastichon—Grata deo delecta toro dilecta marito / Moribus et vita hic culta sepulta jacet / Illius Ingenium Ingenuum pietasq(ue) fi desq(ue) / Dona fuere suo dos satis ampla viro / Quanquam jure suo sua corpora Terra reposcat / Tanta vir digna est Hospite Terra Tamen.

Translation: Here is her husband's triple distich—[This woman], agreeable to God, chosen for the bier, beloved of her husband / revered for her uprightness and her life, lies here buried. / Her noble spirit, her piety and faith / were gifts, were—oh!—ample dowry to her husband. / Albeit according to its law the Earth may reclaim its bodies, / Yet is the ground hardly worthy of such a great guest.

Source: Paul Cockerham ''My body to be buried in my owne monument': the social and religious context of Co. Kilkenny funeral monuments, 1600-1700' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, cix, section c (2009), p. 249.

Fig. 1.2 Aylmer monument, Donadea, Co. Kildare (1626)

Source: Hans Hendrick Aylmer, ‘The Aylmer family’ in *Kildare Arch. Soc. Jn.*, i (1893), facing p. 301.

Fig. 1.3 Effigy of Grace Cantwell, Cantwell tomb, Kilcooley Abbey, Co. Tipperary (1608)

Source: Paul Cockerham and Amy Louise Harris, 'Kilkenny funeral monuments, 1500-1600: a statistical and analytical account' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, ci, section c, no. 5 (2001), p. 171.

Fig. 1.4 Rubbing of side panel of altar tomb commemorating Nicholas Walsh and Helen Lawless, St Mary's Church, Co. Kilkenny (1599)

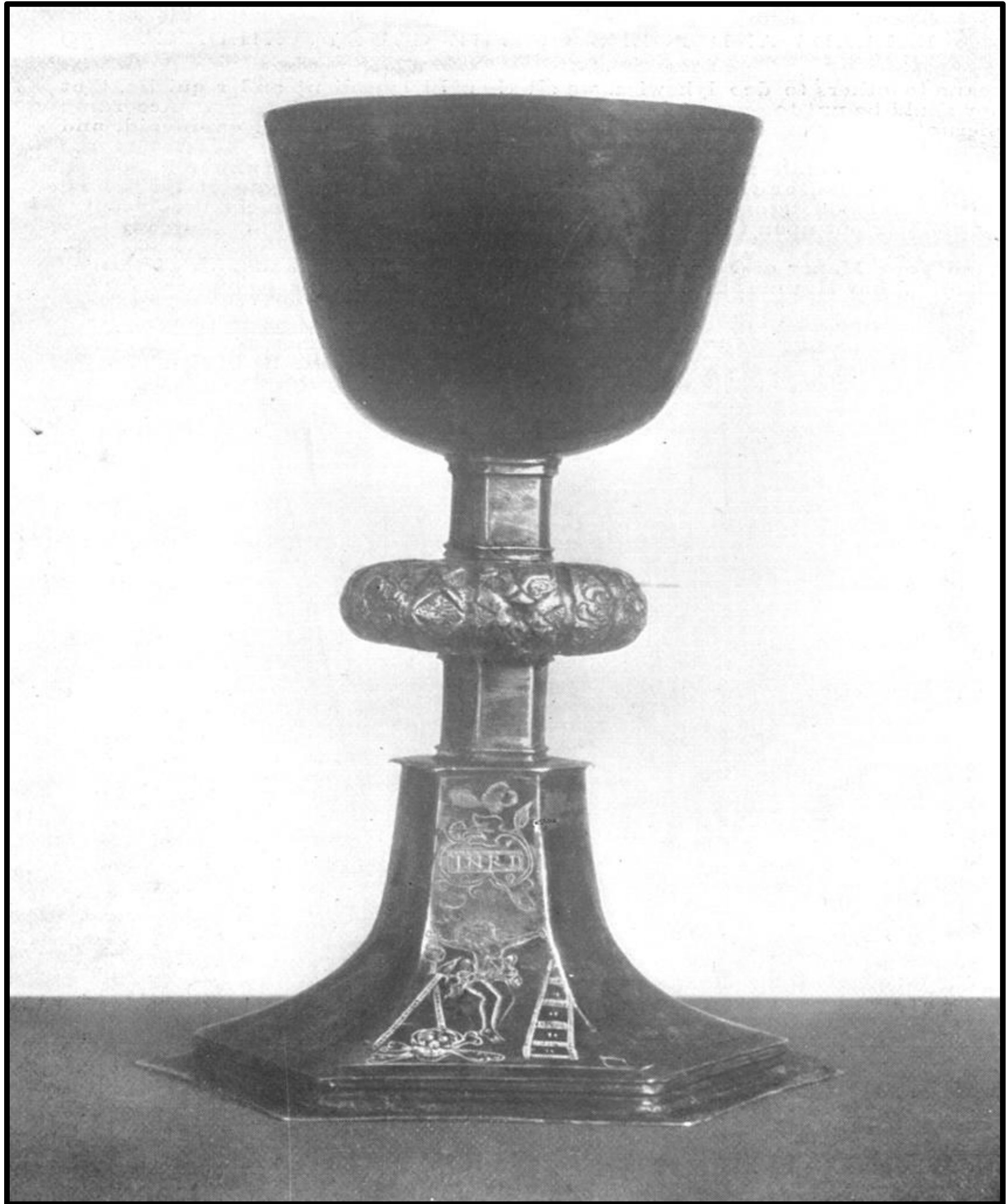
Source: Paul Cockerham and Amy Louise Harris, 'Kilkenny funeral monuments, 1500-1600: a statistical and analytical account' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, ci, section c, no. 5 (2001), p. 171.

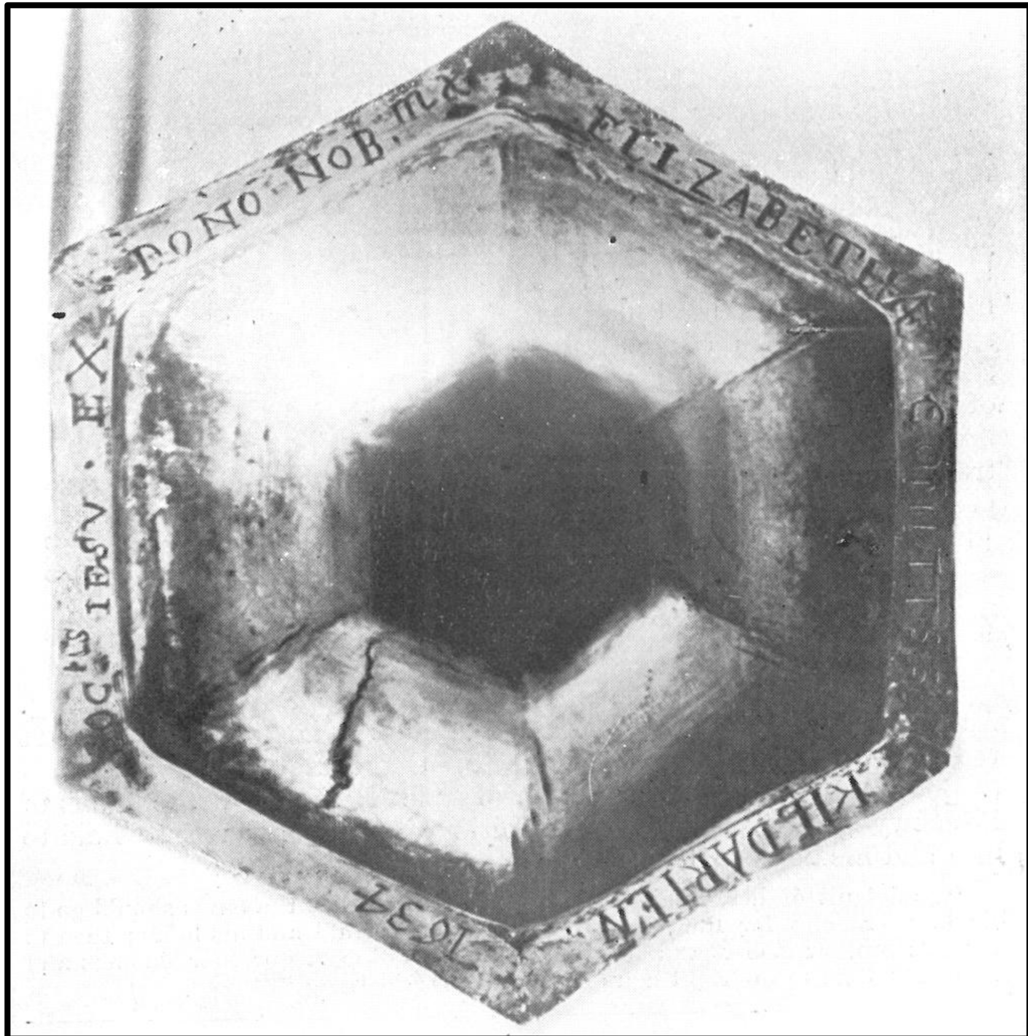
Fig. 1.5 Tomb commemorating Honorina Grace (d. 1596), St Canice's Cathedral, Co. Kilkenny

Epitaph: Here lies Honorina Grace, daughter of John Grace, Knight, and wife of Oliver Shortall, lord of Ballylarkin, who died Dec. 6th 1596.

Source: William Carrigan, *The history and antiquities of the diocese of Ossory* (4 vols, Dublin, 1905) vol. iii, 162.

Fig. 1.6 Chalice donated to the Jesuits by Elizabeth Fitzgerald née Nugent (d. 1645), Countess of Kildare (1634)





Inscription: Soc Iesu. Ex Dono Nobmm Elizabethae Comitissae Kildarien 1634.

Translation: [The property] of the Society of Jesus. The gift of the most noble Elizabeth, Countess of Kildare, 1634.

Source: Walter Fitzgerald, 'Miscellanae: a chalice presented to the Jesuits in 1634 by the Countess of Kildare' in *Kildare Arch. Soc. Jn.*, v (1906-8), pp 60-2.

Fig. 1.7 John Howlin, 'Perbreve compendium' (*fl. c.*1589-99)

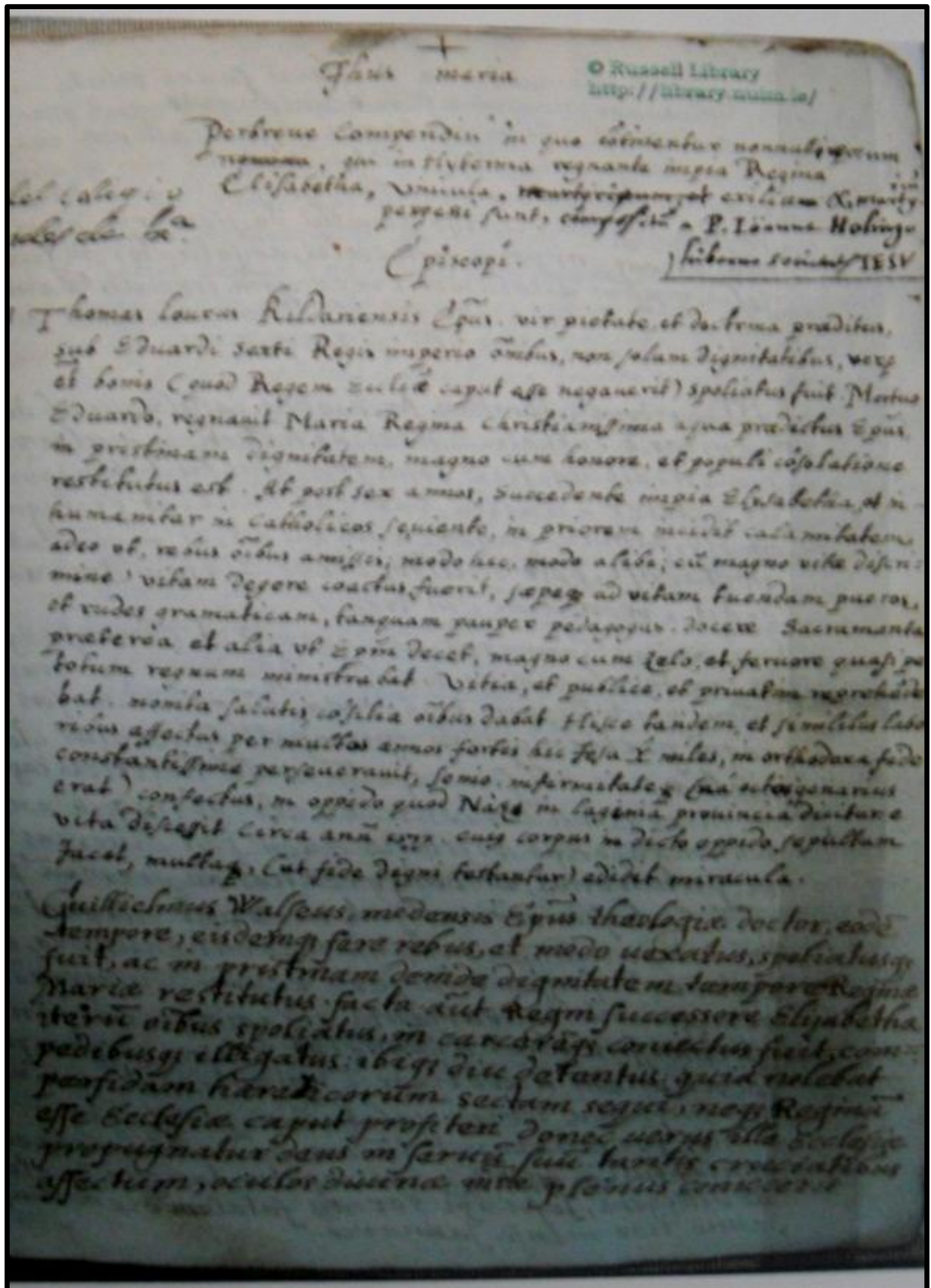

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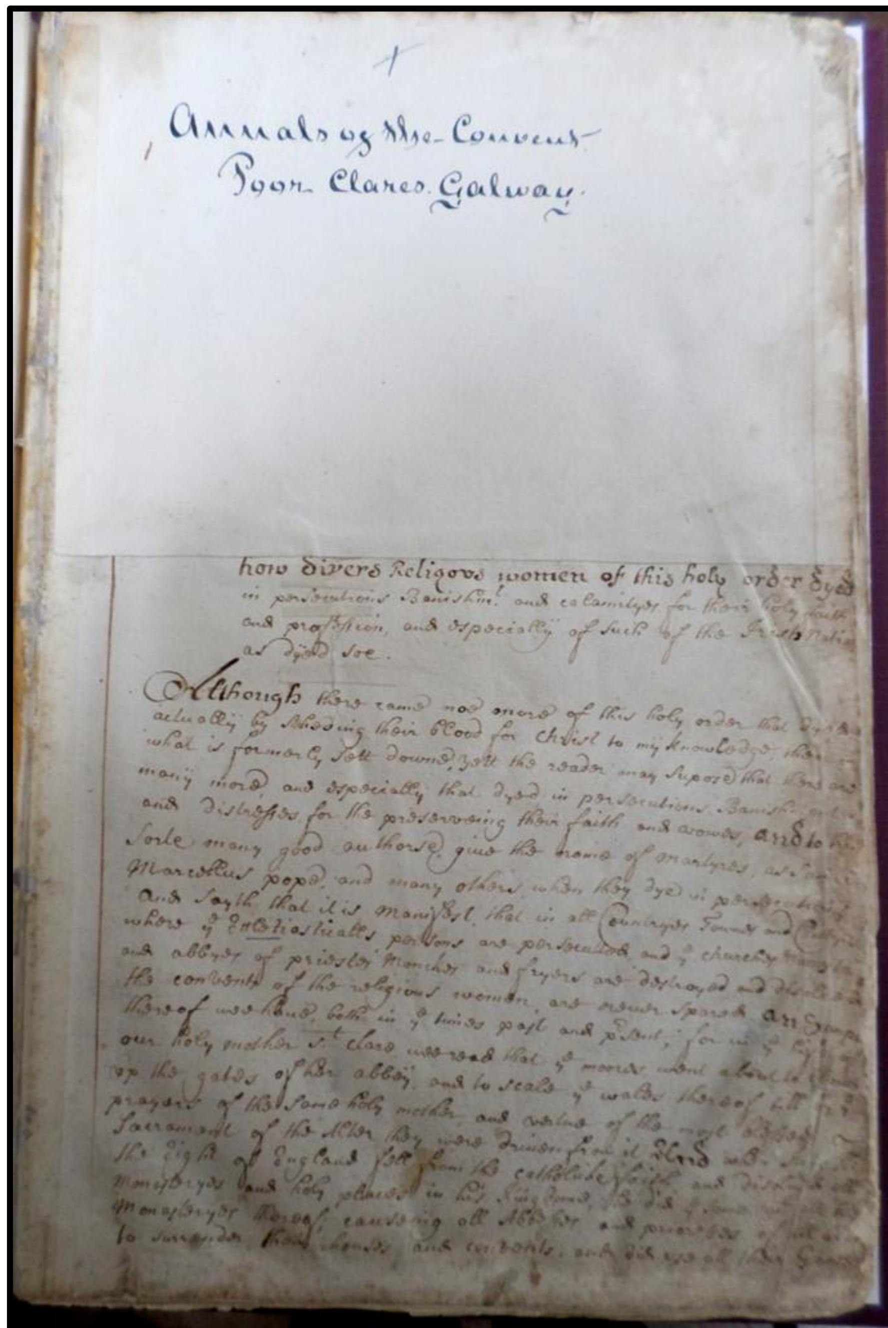
Fig. 2.1 Chronicle of Mother Mary Bonaventure Browne, Monastery of the Poor Clares, Co. Galway (*fl*. *c*.1669-71)



1

Annals of the Convent
Poor Clares Galway.

how divers Religous women of this holy order dyed in persecutions Banishm.t and calamityes for their holy faith and proffession, and especially of such of the Irish Nation as dyed soe.

Although there came noe more of this holy order that dyed actually by shedding their blood for Christ to my knowledge, then what is formerly sett downe, yett the reader may supose that ...

Fig. 2.2 Profession of Sr Catherine of St Francis [Browne], given at Bethlehem, 29 January 1631/2, Monastery of the Poor Clares, Co. Galway

Translation: I the undersigned, authorised for this by the Most Rev. Thomas bishop of the diocese of Meath, have examined Sister Catherine of St Francis, otherwise Browne, concerning all conditions required by the Council of Trent, whom I found fitted and suitable to make profession among the sisters of St Clare, Bethlehem.

Fig. 3.1 Portrait of Phoebe Ussher née Challoner (d. 1654), wife of James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh (1625-56)

Source: William Ball Wright, *The Ball family records: genealogical memoirs of some Ball families of Great Britain, Ireland and America* (York, 1908), facing p. 22.

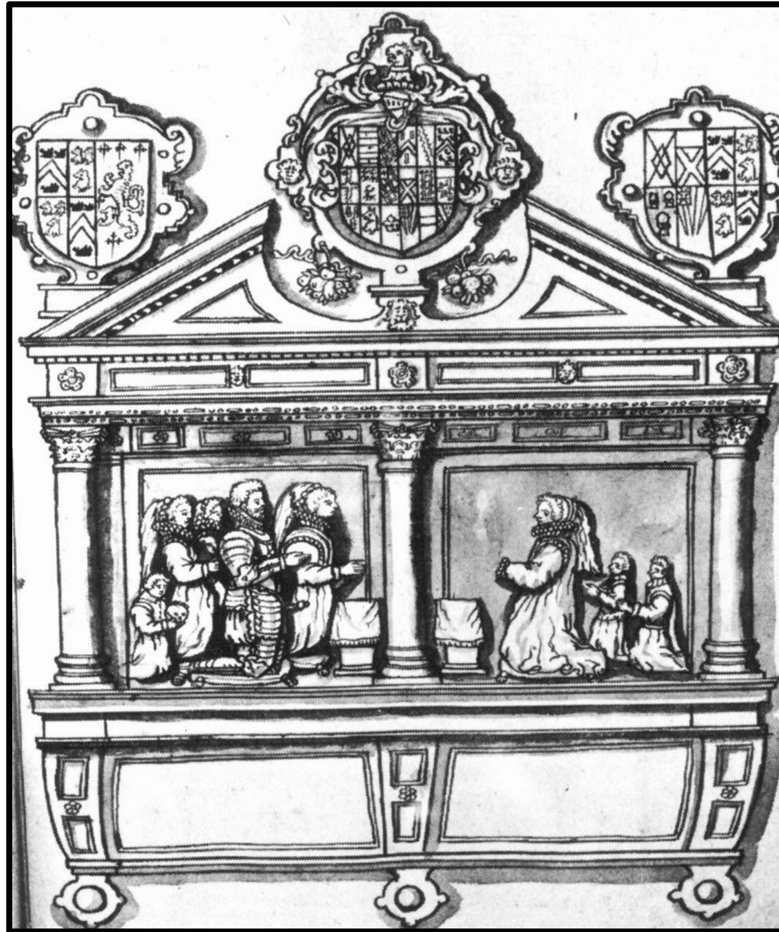
Fig. 3.2 Portrait of Lettice Digby née Fitzgerald (*c*.1580-1658), Lady Offaly, wife of Sir Robert Digby (d. 1618) of Coleshill, Warwickshire, England

Source: Walter Fitzgerald , 'Lettice, Baroness of Offaly, and the siege of her castle of Geashill, 1642' in *Kildare Arch. Soc. Jn.*, iii (1902), facing p. 419.

Fig. 3.3 Boyle and Fenton monument, St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin (1632)

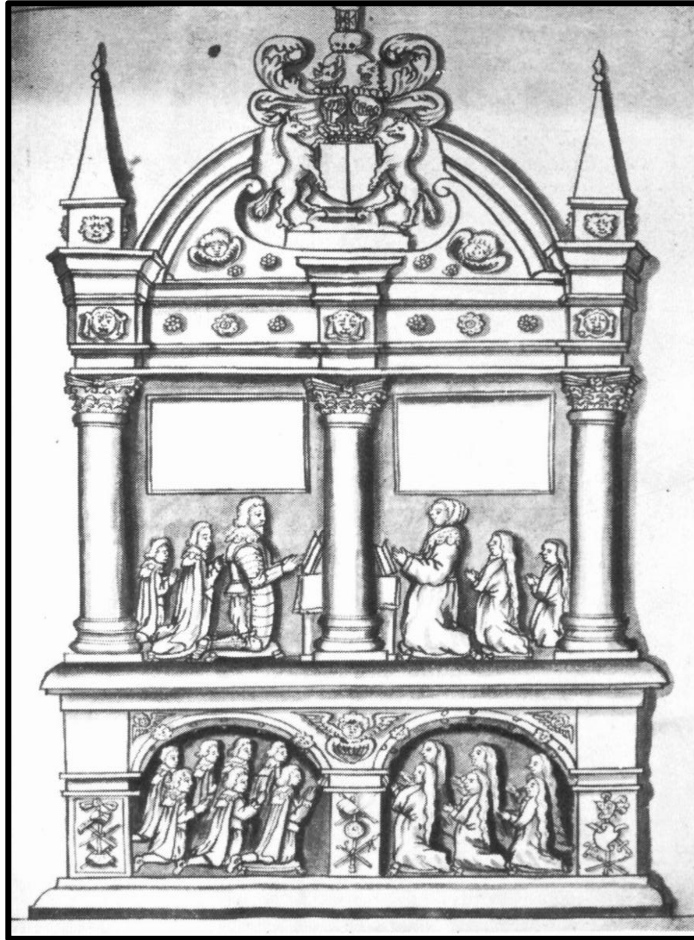
Source: Clodagh Tait, 'Colonising memory: manipulations of death, burial and commemoration in the career of Richard Boyle, first earl of Cork (1566-1643)' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, ci, section c, no. 4 (2001), p. 128.

Fig. 3.4 Agard monument, Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin (1584)



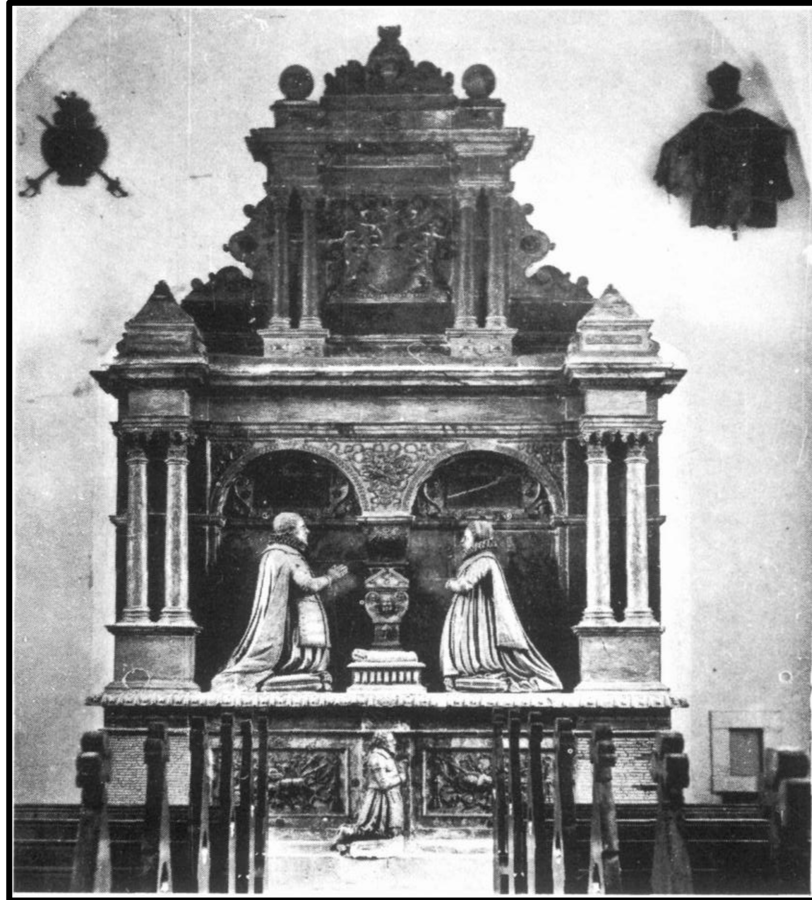
Source: Rolf Loeber, 'Sculptured memorials to the dead in early seventeenth century Ireland: a survey from 'Monumenta Eblanae' and other sources' in *R.I.A Proc.*, lxxxi, section c (1981), pp 267-93.

Fig. 3.5 Roper monument, St John the Evangelist Church, Dublin (1634)



Source: Rolf Loeber, ‘Sculptured memorials to the dead in early seventeenth century Ireland: a survey from ‘Monumenta Eblanae’ and other sources’ in *R.I.A Proc.*, lxxxi, section c (1981), pp 267-93.

Fig. 3.6 Chichester monument, St Nicholas' Church, Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim (1620)

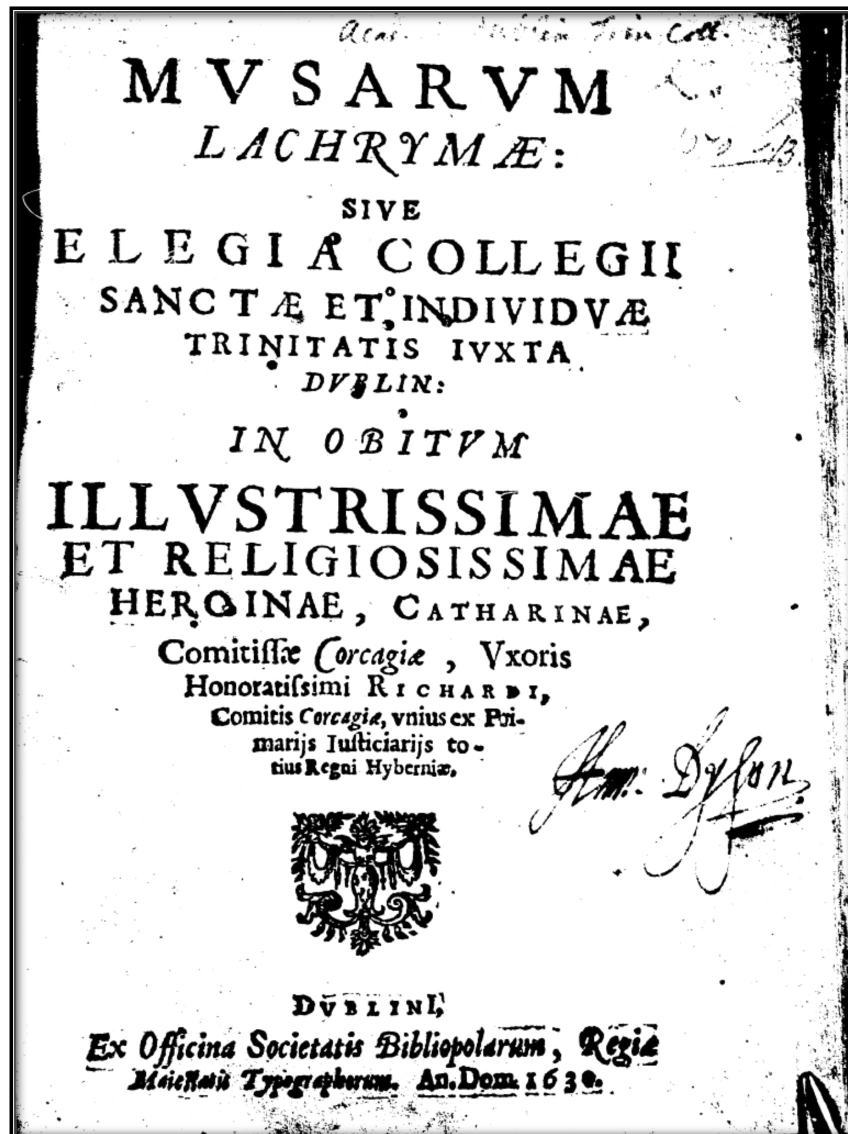


Source: Rolf Loeber, 'Sculptured memorials to the dead in early seventeenth century Ireland: a survey from 'Monumenta Eblanae' and other sources' in *R.I.A Proc.*, lxxxi, section c (1981), pp 267-93.

Fig 3.7 Effigy of Joan Apsley (d. 1599), Boyle monument, Youghal, Co. Cork (1620)

Source: Clodagh Tait, 'Colonising memory: manipulations of death, burial and commemoration in the career of Richard Boyle, first earl of Cork (1566-1643)' in *R.I.A. Proc.*, ci, section c, no. 4 (2001), p. 121.

Fig. 3.3 *Musarum Lachrymae* (Dublin, 1630)



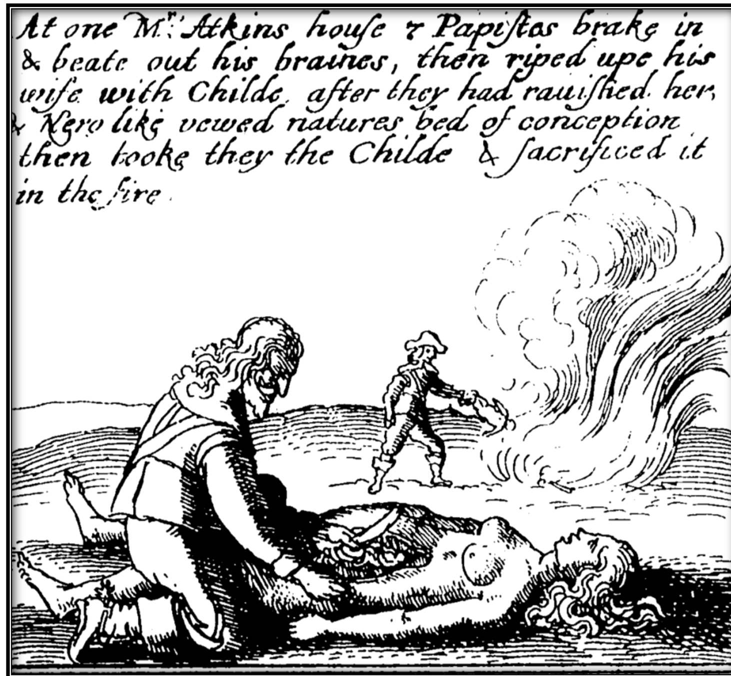
MVSARVM
LACHRYMÆ:
SIVE
ELEGIÆ COLLEGII
SANCTÆ ET INDIVIDVÆ
TRINITATIS IVXTA
DVBLIN:
IN OBITVM
ILLVSTRISSIMAE
ET RELIGIOSISSIMAE
HEROINAE, CATHARINAE,
Comitissæ *Corcagiæ*, Vxoris
Honoratissimi RICHARDI,
Comitis *Corcagiæ*, vnius ex Pri-
marijs Iusticiarijs to-
tius Regni Hyberniæ.

DVBLINI,
Ex Officina Societatis Bibliopolarum, Regiæ
Maiestatis Typographorum. An. Dom. 1630.

Fig. 4.1 Portrait of Mary Colley (d. 1654), wife of Garrett Moore (*c*.1566-1627), first Viscount Drogheda

Source: Dermot MacIvor, 'The legend of Gearóid Iarla of Hacklim' in *Louth Arch. Soc.*, xiv, no. 2 (1958), facing p. 81.

Fig. 4.2 Images from James Cranford, *The teares of Ireland* (London, 1640)



Source: James Cranford, *The teares of Ireland* (London, 1642), p. 23.

Fig. 4.3 Images from Samuel Clarke, *A generall martyrologie* (London, 1651)

Source: Samuel Clarke, *A generall martyrologie*, (London, 1651), p. 365.

Source: Samuel Clarke, *A generall martyrologie*, (London, 1651), facing p. 39.

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