

Chapter 1

Irish Collegians in Spanish Service (1560–1803)

by Thomas O'Connor

Abstract

Due to labour shortages in key areas, early-modern Spain frequently employed foreigners to provide missionary and military manpower, administrative personnel, and technical expertise. Like their Flemish, English, and French contemporaries, Irish Catholics served Spain as priests, soldiers, bureaucrats, and operatives. The Irish colleges functioned as elements of these service networks, although this aspect of their activity remains relatively obscure. In part, this is because the colleges and their students are usually viewed in the context either of Spain's international Catholic commitments and its geopolitical strategy or from the vantage of the Irish mission. Yet service to Spain and to the Spanish monarchy was also an important function of the collegial network and one that was not at odds with but rather complementary to its better known mission to the Irish church. Spanish support of the colleges, in fact, appears to have been at least tacitly predicated on Irish readiness to serve in the diverse religious missions of the Habsburg and Bourbon monarchies. Over time, this arrangement adapted to Spain's changing needs and to the exigencies of the Irish

mission. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, this largely complementary arrangement began to come under strain as Irish bishops sought more control over the formation and placement of clerical students trained overseas.¹

Key words: Irish college, Spanish monarchy, conversion, naturalisation, mission.

Introduction

Beginning in the mid-sixteenth century and throughout the following two hundred years or so, Irish clergy provided a range of specialist services to the Spanish administration, in Spain, and in Spanish territories. From the late sixteenth century, these clergy included Irish collegians. They acted as military, naval and hospital chaplains, university professors, interpreters, and as colonial missionaries. Some clergy also helped recruit skilled workers for

¹ The research for this essay is part of the research project 'Exilio, diplomacia y transmisión textual: Redes de intercambios entre la Península Ibérica y las Islas Británicas en la Edad Moderna', funded by the Ministerio de Economía (MINECO, Spain), ref. FFI2015-66847-P.

Spanish industry² and a smaller number provided military and industrial intelligence.³ More specialised, perhaps, was their role in assisting Spanish administrations dealing with Protestant aliens seeking conversion to Catholicism. This was a niche activity, particularly suited to the Irish. Because Spain consistently needed skilled foreigners,⁴ certain categories of incoming non-Catholics were welcomed. Given that Catholicism was a condition for permanent residence in Spanish territories, intending Protestant residents in Spain were obliged to take religious instruction and convert. The monarchy, through the Inquisition and

² Thomas O'Connor, 'Dublin Weavers Before the Spanish Inquisition', in *Politics and Religion in Urban Ireland c. 1500–c. 1750*, ed. by Salvador Ryan and Clodagh Tait (Dublin: Four Courts, 2016), pp. 210–24; Thomas O'Connor, *Irish Voices from the Spanish Inquisition: Migrants, Converts and Brokers in Early Modern Iberia* (London: Palgrave, 2016), pp. 165–78; J. Clayburn La Force, 'Technological diffusion in the Eighteenth Century: The Spanish Textile Industry', *Technology and Culture*, 5 (1964), 322–43.

³ Benjamin Hazard, 'In novis orbis amplitudine: Irish Franciscan View of the Americas in the Seventeenth Century 1610–1683', in *Irlanda y el Atlántico Ibérico: movilidad, participación y intercambio cultural*, ed. by Igor Pérez Tostado and Enrique García Hernán (Valencia: Albatros, 2010), pp. 196–99.

⁴ Regina Grafe, *Distant Tyranny: Markets, Power and Backwardness in Spain, 1650–1800* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Jesus Cruz, *Gentlemen, Bourgeois and Revolutionaries: Political Change and Cultural Persistence among the Spanish Dominant Groups 1750–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); J. Clayburn La Force, 'Royal Textile Factories in Spain 1700–1800', *The Journal of Economic History*, 24 (1964), 337–63.

other state agencies, facilitated this 'naturalisation' process by providing catechists, interpreters, and other personnel for conversion work. As subjects of a Protestant monarch but resident in Spain, Irish collegians were particularly suited to the instruction and conversion of Protestant immigrants, all the more so thanks to their cultural affinities with fellow subjects of the English monarchs. In part one of this essay, the sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century origins of Irish clerical service to the Spanish monarchy are examined. The second part outlines how, in the eighteenth century, the colleges continued to supply clergy for Spanish service, particularly for the conversion of incoming Protestant soldiers, artisans, and settlers. The conclusion draws out some of the consequences of these activities for the collegial network in Spain in the late eighteenth century.

Part 1

Seminary-trained Irish clerics served in many European countries but were perhaps most consistently present in the service of the Catholic monarchs and the Spanish church. This phenomenon pre-dated the foundation of the earliest colleges in the 1590s. As might be expected, some of the first recorded Irish clerics in Spanish service were members of international religious orders, including the Dominicans, the Franciscans, and the Jesuits. John Burke OP assisted the Inquisition in Seville in the 1560s⁵ and, from 1577, the Limerick-born Thomas Field SJ (1547–1626) was active on the South American mission.⁶ Irish Jesuits,

⁵ O'Connor, *Irish Voices*, p. 53.

⁶ Guillermo Furlong, *Misiones y sus pueblos de Guaranies, 1610–1813* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Teoria, 1962); Guillermo Furlong, *Tomas Fields SJ y su 'Carta al preposito general 1601'* (Buenos Aires: Casa Pardo, 1971).

Robert Rochford and John Howling, worked in the Lisbon house for converts, the *casa dos catecúmenos*, usually with incoming English, Irish, and Scots Protestants.⁷ Irish secular clergy were also active in Spain at this time. From the 1560s, Irish papal bishops like William Walsh of Meath and Redmond O’Gallagher of Killala acted as auxiliaries in Spanish dioceses, performing the sacramental donkey work for prelates in Toledo, Lisbon, Santiago, and elsewhere.⁸ In O’Gallagher’s case they also acted as political agents for various Irish factions. Other Irish seculars served on the Spanish overseas missions. In Florida, for instance, an Irish priest, Richard Arthur, was vicar general of Saint Augustine as early as 1597.⁹ Throughout the seventeenth century, Irish seculars and regulars remained active in Spanish territories. In the

⁷ O’Connor, *Irish Voices*, pp. 56–58.

⁸ Enrique García Hernán, ‘Obispos irlandeses y la monarquía hispánica en el siglo xvi’, in *Los extranjeros en la España moderna*, ed. by M. B. Villar García and P. Pezzi Cristóbal, 2 vols (Málaga: Gráficas Digarza, 2003), II, 275–80.

⁹ John J. Silke, ‘The Irish Abroad, 1534–1691’, in *New History of Ireland, III: Early Modern Ireland 1534–1691*, ed. by T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, and F. J. Byrne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 631.

1640s Irish Franciscans and Carmelites served on the American mission.¹⁰ Later, in the 1660s and 1670s, Andrew Lynch of Galway acted as chaplain to the Bishop of Guatemala.¹¹

To an extent, the emergence of the Irish overseas colleges in the 1590s and 1600s was a continuation of these older Irish clerical connections with the Spanish monarchy. Irish clerics in Spain and Spanish territories, men like John Howlin SJ, Thomas White SJ, and Florence Conry OFM were key figures in their foundation. As college founders, these Irish clerics were responding to specific challenges, brought on not only by the changing circumstances of Irish overseas migrants but also by the deepening pastoral needs of Irish Catholics. Howlin, working in the port of Lisbon, was concerned about accommodating and instructing incoming Irish migrants, mostly seafarers.¹² White, who was active in Santiago, Valladolid, and Salamanca, was concerned about finding accommodation for a group of

¹⁰ Natalia Silva Prada, 'Orígenes de una leyenda en el siglo XVII: redes irlandesas de comunicación y propaganda político en los casos inquisitoriales novohispanos de Guillermo Lombardo y Fray Diego de la Cruz', *Signos Históricos*, 22 (2009), 8–43.

¹¹ Seville, Archivo General de Indias [hereafter AGI], Bienes de difuntos: Andrés Lince (1697) Contratación, 461, N.1 R.2. In his will he left monies to the Irish college in Seville and to his brother, Dominic Lynch OP, resident in that city.

¹² 'Carta anua de 1590, referente ao P. Howling', cited in *Fontes inéditas Portuguesas para a história de Irlanda*, ed. by M. Gonçalves Da Costa (Braga: Barbosa & Zavier, 1981), pp. 206–07; Edmund Hogan, *Ibernia Ignatiana seu Ibernorum Societatis Iesu Patrum Monumenta* (Dublin: Societas Typographica, 1880), p. 32.

Munster and Leinster clerical students.¹³ Conry, who spent long periods in Louvain, wanted an institution that would cater specifically to the Gaelic speaking students he believed were disadvantaged in other colleges.¹⁴ From the monarchy's point of view, supporting Irish overseas colleges granted them influence over at least a portion of the Irish clergy. At the same time it both emblazoned the monarchy's Catholic escutcheon and maintained a strategic Spanish interest in the territories of the English monarch. Just as importantly, college support helped provide the monarchy with a supply of specialist clergy for royal service as the need arose. The circumstances of the establishment of the Lisbon college in 1590 revealed the motivational complexity of its founder, John Howlin. For this Wexford-born Jesuit, the college was intended as a hostel for the increasing numbers of Irish arriving in the port, some of whom advanced to clerical orders and priesthood.¹⁵ Interestingly, early drafts of the college rules specified that students 'study for no other purpose than to become priests to assist in the salvation of souls, *principally* [author's emphasis] those of their own compatriots'.¹⁶ Obviously, international service was not excluded.

¹³ T. Corcoran SJ, 'Early Irish Jesuit Educators: Thomas White of Clonmel (1556–1622)', *Studies*, 29 (1940), 545–46.

¹⁴ Brendan Jennings, 'St Anthony's College at Louvain', in *Micheál Ó Cléirigh, His Associates and St Anthony's College, Louvain*, ed. by N. Ó'Muráile (Dublin: Four Courts, 2008), pp. 23–27.

¹⁵ Patricia O'Connell, *The Irish College at Lisbon 1590–1843* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2001).

¹⁶ 'Regras e estatutos do collegio seminario do titulo e avocaçam da santissima fee catholica situato na mui nobre e sempre leal cidade de Lixboa...', cited in Da Costa, *Fontes inéditas Portuguesas para a história de Irlanda*, p. 201.

Once colleges like Lisbon were functioning, returning to the Irish mission was not the only possibility for ordained graduates, the needs of the domestic mission notwithstanding. For Irish students, the attractiveness of foreign service was all the stronger given, on the one hand, the sporadically perilous state of the Irish domestic church, and the compromised state of the Irish episcopacy and, on the other, the career opportunities offered to ambitious students by international religious orders like the Jesuits, who soon took over the running of Lisbon and many other colleges. The weakness of Irish episcopal authority afforded a relatively free hand to college protectors, generally senior Spanish clergy, who held the purse strings, and to the Jesuit college administrators, who decided on admission, formation programme, and fitness for ordination. Little wonder that this combination of royal patronage and Jesuit management attracted collegians into the interlocking Spanish and Jesuit global missions. This did not contradict the colleges' service to the Irish mission. It was, rather, the reverse side of the domestic mission medal, in a sense part of the price to be paid by the Irish for Spanish support. Accordingly, in the years after Lisbon's establishment, sister institutions in Salamanca (1592), Santiago (1605), and Seville (1612) contributed simultaneously to both the domestic and the international Catholic missions.¹⁷

Student statistics speak for themselves. Although it is not always possible to trace the post-ordination careers of collegians, we do know that of the 358 students listed as alumni

¹⁷ For the Spanish, Jesuit management of the colleges offered the most stable and unprejudiced government. See Simancas, Archivo General de Simancas [hereafter AGS], Memorandum of Gaspar de Córdoba OP, 4 February 1611, Estado 840, fol. 58; Silke, 'The Irish Abroad', p. 619.

of the Salamanca college between 1592 and 1638, thirty-six became Jesuits,¹⁸ mostly destined for the foreign missions.¹⁹ The first generation of collegians recruited into Spanish service tended to be high achievers, mostly the sons of the merchant families of the Munster ports whose domestic prospects diminished as English authority in Ireland grew. Typical in this regard were the Waterford Waddings. In the early seventeenth century, Michael Wadding, an alumnus of the Irish college in Salamanca, was recruited by the Jesuits. From 1619 he was posted to Mexico where he served in Native American missions in Sonora and Sinaloa, on the modern Mexico–Arizona border; he later taught in Puebla and Mexico.²⁰ His brother, Peter, a student of the Irish college in Douai, entered the Society at Tournai in 1601. Despite the objections of the Earl of Tyrone, this Wadding was not sent back to Ireland but remained abroad, later acting as chancellor of the University of Prague and teaching in Gratz.²¹ Other Wadding siblings went directly into international religious orders. Ambrose (d. 1619), joined the Jesuits in Rome in 1603, going on to teach theology and Hebrew in

¹⁸ Hugh Fenning, 'Students of the Irish College at Salamanca, 1592–1638', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 62 (2009), 7–36. There were also twenty-six Franciscans, fourteen Dominicans, twelve Cistercians, and four Augustinians.

¹⁹ There were five Jesuits on the Irish mission in 1602. Nicholas Lynch et al. (Ireland) to João Correa SJ, 12 August 1602, Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Reservados 174, fols. 66–69v. See Da Costa, *Fontes inéditas Portuguesas para a história de Irlanda*, pp. 226–29.

²⁰ *La escritura femenina en la espiritualidad barroca novohispana. Siglos 17 y 18*, ed. by Asunción Lavrin and Rosalva Loreto López (Puebla: Universidad de las Américas, 2002).

²¹ Paul O'Dea SJ, 'Father Peter Wadding SJ, Chancellor of the University of Prague, 1629–41', *Studies*, 30 (1941), 337–48.

Dillingen. Luke joined the Jesuits at Villagarcía in 1610 and taught in the Colegio Imperial in Madrid. Paul Sherlock, a first cousin, was assessor for the Inquisition in Valladolid.²² Another Luke Wadding, also first cousin, joined the Franciscans in Portugal, taught in the Irish college in Salamanca, before becoming the official historian of the Franciscans, assessor for the Roman Inquisition, and founder and co-founder of the Irish Franciscan and pastoral colleges in Rome respectively. Richard Wadding OSA, yet another cousin, lectured in the University of Coimbra and worked on behalf of the local Inquisition.²³

Other Spanish agencies facilitated the foreign placement of collegians. One of these was the so-called *Misión de Irlanda*, a fund set up in 1611 to assist ordained clergy in making their journey back to Ireland.²⁴ Successful applicants received money grants to cover both travel expense and the acquisition of sacramental paraphernalia. Even this fund, however, was not used exclusively for the benefit of the domestic mission. In the eighteenth century, for instance, it funded the distribution of Salamanca collegians to North America.²⁵ On other

²² Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional [hereafter AHN], Deposition of William Casey, 1 February 1644. Inquisición 1319, (2).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Cristina Bravo Lozano, “‘Que pretende viático para yr a la mission de irlandia’: los peticionarios en la España del siglo xvii’, in *Redes de nación y espacios de poder: la comunidad irlandesa en España y la América española, 1600–1825*, ed. by Óscar Recio Morales (Valencia: Albatros, 2012), pp. 79–91.

²⁵ Enrique García Hernán, ‘The Spanish Contribution to the Cause of Irish Catholicism (1700–1814)’, in *La presencia irlandesa durante las Cortes de Cádiz en España y América, 1812*, ed.

occasions the *Misión* extended assistance to religious migrants travelling in the opposite direction, as when funds were allocated to Irish female religious fleeing to Spain in the early eighteenth century.²⁶ More generally, because clergy petitioning for *Misión* support tended to congregate for lengthy periods in Madrid, some were diverted from the Irish mission. Moreover, not all successful applicants took the boat back to Ireland.²⁷

On the Irish side, clerical subornment into Spanish service was sometimes questioned but, overall, opposition tended to be sporadic, interested, and ambiguous.²⁸ There were a number of reasons for this, some of which reflected divisions within the Irish clergy.²⁹ For instance, complaints of the secular clergy about foreign recruitment as often as not

by Enrique García Hernán and M. Carmen Lario de Oñate (Valencia: Albatros, 2013), pp. 223–29.

²⁶Hernán, 'The Spanish Contribution', pp. 200–01.

²⁷ In a 1625 intervention, the fund's administrator imposed on Irish petitioners the same conditions that applied to Spanish missionaries intended for the Americas. Another intervention in 1662 imposed new conditions. Bravo Lozano, "'Que pretende viático para yr a la mission de irlanda'", p. 89.

²⁸ On the Ulster Earls' thwarted efforts to have Peter Wadding SJ sent on the Irish mission, see O'Dea, 'Father Peter Wadding SJ', pp. 337–48.

²⁹ On the tensions among the English clergy, see Michael Questier, *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage and Religion c. 1550–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

articulated anti-Jesuit prejudices.³⁰ In the case of Florence Conry's criticism of the Salamanca's Jesuit administration, there was an added ethnic and cultural dimension.³¹ Some Irish bishops did voice more genuinely pastoral objections. In a letter to the Pope in 1606, Peter Lombard, the Rome-based Archbishop of Armagh, lamented the alienation of talented pastors, expressing concern about the lack of episcopal control over the new colleges.³² A little later, in the 1630s, the Irish bishops raised the issue of the papal dispensations that allowed Irish seminarians to be ordained without episcopal testimonials.³³ The petitioning bishops overlooked the fact, however, that Paul V had originally granted the dispensations in question in response to requests from their predecessors.³⁴ Revealingly, visitors' complaints regarding Irish collegians centred not on their possible alienation to Spanish service but rather on their real reluctance to return to the Irish mission. One visitor to the Irish college in Alcalá reported that 'of the students who

³⁰ Thomas O'Connor, *An Irish Jansenist in Seventeenth-Century France: John Callaghan 1605–54*, (Dublin: Four Courts, 2005), pp. 129–48.

³¹ 'Un memorial de la parte del collegio de Salamanca que ha dado el Conde Odonel a 22 de mayo del año 1602', in Hogan, *Hibernia Ignatiana*, (1890), 106–08; Benjamin Hazard, *Faith and Patronage: The Political Career of Flaithrí Ó Maolchonaire (c. 1560–1629)* (Dublin: Irish Academic, 2010), pp. 38–40.

³² Thomas White to Gaspar de Córdoba OP, 7 February 1601, cited in Silke, 'The Irish Abroad', p. 619.

³³ O'Connor, *Irish Jansenist in Seventeenth-Century France*, p. 123.

³⁴ Dublin, University College Dublin, Letter apostolic of Paul V, 27 January 1615, p. 172. Franciscan Archive, MS D III.

enter the seminaries a certain number remain in Spain following up their own affairs and neglecting to return to the home mission, for the supply of which the colleges were originally established'.³⁵

Given these complexities, it is unsurprising that foreign recruitment of Irish collegians continued and even extended beyond Spain and the Jesuits. The Irish Franciscan house in Louvain, founded by Conry in 1609 with Spanish support, was so successful that it made a second foundation in Prague in 1629. Through this institution Irish clergy were funnelled into service in the local Bohemian church, particularly as teachers in the archiepiscopal seminary in Prague.³⁶ France also tapped this supply of Irish clerical labour, especially for challenging overseas missions. From the 1620s, the French Bourbons, together with Propaganda Fide, employed Irish clergy to work in the Caribbean missions, as part of a strategy to improve

³⁵ Visita, Alcalá. Kildare, Maynooth University, Russell Library Salamanca Archive S 40. 'De los estudiantes que entran en los seminarios [...] otros quedan en España siguiendo sus fines particulares, sin ir a la mission de Iralnda por la cual se institueron los dichos seminarios'.

³⁶ Jan Pařez and Hedvika Kuchařová, *The Irish Franciscans in Prague 1629–1786* (Prague: Karolinum, 2015); Jan Pařez, 'The Irish Franciscans in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Prague', in *Irish Migrants in Europe after Kinsale 1602–1820*, ed. by Thomas O'Connor and Mary Ann Lyons (Dublin: Four Courts, 2003), pp. 104–17.

their geopolitical position there.³⁷ In the empire, from 1610, the Irish Capuchins, led by Francis Nugent, were invited to work in Mainz and surrounding dioceses.³⁸

Part 2

These patterns of Irish clerical recruitment proved durable and tended to diversify in the eighteenth century. As already noted, seventeenth-century collegians in Spanish service were active on the missions, in education and chaplaincies as well as providing instruction to intending converts. It was the latter activity which saw the greatest development in the eighteenth century. This was in part because the Bourbon state needed an ever more plentiful supply of foreign labour, often Protestant, and more qualified clerical personnel to ‘naturalise’ them into subjects of his Catholic majesty. In the eighteenth century, intending converts fell into three distinct categories, which will be dealt with separately. First, there were industrial operatives, particularly textile workers. They were required to man the network of state-supported manufactories which the modernising Bourbons set up from the 1720s. As long term or permanent residents in Spain, these operatives were supposed to convert and Irish clergy were enlisted to assist them across the confessional frontier.

Second, was the larger number of foreign soldiers entering Spanish military service either by

³⁷ Matteo Binasco, ‘Few, Uncooperative and Engendered: The Activity of Irish Catholic Priests in the West Indies of the Seventeenth Century, 1638–1668’, in *Irlanda y el Atlántico Ibérico: movilidad, participación y intercambio cultural*, ed. by Igor Pérez Tostado and Enrique García Hernán (Valencia: Albatros, 2010), pp. 211–23.

³⁸ F. X. Martin, *Friar Nugent: A Study of Francis Lavallin Nugent (1569–1635). Agent of the Counter-Reformation* (Rome-London: Istituto Storico Frati Minori Capuccini, 1962).

desertion or recruitment, especially during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14), the Seven Years Wars (1756–63), and the American War of Independence (1775–83). Like the Protestant operatives, they were supposed, as the King's servants, to convert to Catholicism, again with Irish clerical assistance. Third, was the group composed of Protestant settlers in territories which the vagaries of international politics placed under Spanish administration in the wake of the Seven Years War and the American War of Independence. The Spanish colonial administrations in Louisiana (from 1763) and the Two Floridas (from 1783) were confident that with the patient ministrations of suitably trained Irish clergy, these populations might convert to Catholicism. In dealing with all three groups, the Spanish monarchy drew on Irish collegians and Irish college staff.

Industrial Operatives

The Spanish Bourbon drive to modernise the local economy by setting up state-sponsored manufactories involved the importation of skilled operatives.³⁹ France, the Netherlands, England, and Ireland provided the bulk of these. Because mercantilist governments opposed foreign recruitment, labour mobility was restricted, so Spanish recruiters operated clandestinely. Thanks to their centuries-long patronage of the English, Irish, and Scots colleges' networks, the Spanish believed they could rely for help on Spanish-trained clergy stationed in London and elsewhere. As Abreu, the secretary to the freshly re-established Spanish embassy in London, observed in 1750, those who 'had eaten the [Spanish] king's

³⁹ La Force, 'Royal textile factories in Spain', 24, 337–63.

bread' might be expected to serve Spanish interests.⁴⁰ Most immediately useful to Spanish interests were English and Irish collegians who served in London's Catholic embassies and ministered to immigrant Catholics in the city, mostly Irish.⁴¹ Chaplaincy appointments were made according to priests' past service to Spain.⁴² The chief Spanish chaplain, Gerard Shaw, who had looked after Spanish prisoners of war 'with apostolic love' ('con la charidad de un apostol')⁴³ was particularly well regarded by the Spanish and served as senior Spanish embassy chaplain during the recruitment drive. He was assisted by six priests, including the Irishman Patrick Kenny, later foreign language chaplain in Santiago and rector of the Irish college there.⁴⁴ Thanks to the chaplains, Spanish recruiters had access to local Catholic artisans, with a view to persuading them to migrate to Spain. Irish clergy from other Catholic embassy missions were also drafted in to help, including a certain Fr Lynch, chaplain in the

⁴⁰ 'ha comido el pan del rey'. See AHN, Abreu to Ensenada, London 15 May 1750. Leg 2463 (I), Estado.

⁴¹ On the London Irish see John Bergin, 'Irish Catholics and their Networks in Eighteenth-Century London', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 39 (2015), 66–102.

⁴² AHN, Wall to Caravajal, London, 3 April 1749. Leg 4277 (3).

⁴³ He died in 1780 (*London Evening Post*, 2 March 1780). He supported the new church in Bermondsey, Dockhead in 1773. See Denis Evinson, *Catholic Churches of London* (Sheffield: Academic, 1998), p. 202. Shaw was chaplain from the time of Ambassador Montijo. On Shaw, see AHN, Wall to Caravajal, 3 April 1749, Leg 4277 (3).

⁴⁴ One was Fr (Patrick) Kenney who was 'confesor de lenguas' (foreign language chaplain) in Santiago cathedral and rector of the Irish college there, 1767–69. See Patricia O'Connell, *The Irish College at Santiago de Compostela 1605–1769* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2007), p. 58.

Bavarian embassy, who played a key role in identifying suitable artisans and introducing them to Spanish recruiters.⁴⁵ He was subsequently arrested by the English authorities for his trouble.⁴⁶ On occasion the chaplains acted on their own initiative and somewhat too zealously. In mid-1752, for instance, the indefatigable Fr Shaw sent out to Spain a dyer named Keating, causing alarm among Spanish London-based diplomats who feared English intervention.⁴⁷

The Spanish preferred to recruit Catholics but were willing to consider suitably skilled Protestant candidates too. Despite reservations about possible interference from the Inquisition, a number of these were signed up and once in Spain were encouraged to take instruction and convert.⁴⁸ To this end the Spanish authorities provided chaplaincy services, delivered mostly by Irish clerics from the college network. Fr Gerard Plunkett, one time rector of the Irish college in Alcalá was employed from 1746 to minister to incoming foreign Catholics and to instruct intending converts.⁴⁹ He was assisted by his nephew and numerous

⁴⁵ Emilio Soler Pascual, *Viages de Jorge Juan y Santacilla, ciencia y política en la España del siglo XVIII* (Barcelona: Biblioteca Grandes Viajeros, 2002), pp. 250–97.

⁴⁶ Soler Pascual, *Viages de Jorge Juan*, p. 284.

⁴⁷ AGS, Abreu to Caravajal, 24 August 1752, Leg 6917.

⁴⁸ Soler Pascual, *Viages de Jorge Juan*, p. 282.

⁴⁹ In 1744, as rector of Alcalá he endorsed an application for viaticum for four Irish priests: AGS, Leg 966.

other Irish clerics including Peter O'Dwyer OFM,⁵⁰ Arthur McGuinness, of the Irish college Madrid,⁵¹ and Alipio Mooney OSA.⁵²

Military Converts

Irish military chaplains had a long tradition of dealing with intending Protestant converts. During the Spanish War of Succession, significant numbers of foreign troops fought in Spain. Many of these were Irish recruits in English service, who had been obliged to conform to Anglicanism in order to enlist. Once in Spain some of these deserted to the Bourbon side, joining numerous Jacobite compatriots fighting on that side.⁵³ For the Spanish administration the task of reconciling these men to Catholicism required chaplains with knowledge of both English and Irish and cultural affinity with intending converts. Accordingly, they enlisted Irish clergy already in Spain, drawn mainly from the local Irish colleges, as in the case of Nicholas Fallon in Madrid.⁵⁴ They also drew on hospital and naval chaplains, like Maurice O'Brennan, of Madrid's Hospital General del Corte⁵⁵ and

⁵⁰ AHN, Delación espontánea, 28 February 1753, Lib 1157, fols. 164r–167r.

⁵¹ AHN, Delación espontánea, 27 January 1753, Lib 1157, fols. 61r–63r, 68r.

⁵² AGS, Los Irlandeses fabricantes en las reales fabricas de San Fernando y Vicalbaro prostratos a las pies de Vuestra Excelencia, Vicálvaro, 9 January 1753, SSH, Leg 765 (1).

⁵³ O'Connor, *Irish Voices*, pp. 123–40.

⁵⁴ AHN, Delación espontánea, 1707, fols. 209r–213r, Lib 1153.

⁵⁵ AHN, Delación espontánea, 1713, fol. 431r, Lib 1153.

Bartholomew Boylan.⁵⁶ Irish religious like the Augustinian Francis Comyn⁵⁷ and the Dominicans Ambrose O'Connor, Luke Leyden, and Dominic Magennis were also active.⁵⁸

By mid-century some Irish clerics had honed their conversion services to a remarkable degree. One of the most remarkable of these was John Lacy, scion of a prominent Limerick family,⁵⁹ who was well connected in Ireland locally⁶⁰ and part of a dense Jacobite overseas network. His uncle, Robert Lacy, was rector of the Irish college in Bordeaux;⁶¹ a cousin served in the Jacobite household in Rome and he had four near relatives in Spanish military service. Two clerical relations were students in the Irish colleges of Alcalá and Lisbon. Lacy himself spent a number of years in the Irish college in Bordeaux and later studied in Rome where he completed his theological studies in 1734. Thanks to his cultivation of Diego Francisco FitzJames Stuart, Duke of Liria 1734–38, he was appointed chaplain to the multi-denominational Wirtz (Swiss) regiment.

Part of Lacy's pastoral brief was to look after the Catholic members of the company. He was also charged with converting their Protestant comrades. During the following

⁵⁶ AHN, Delación espontánea, 1717, fols. 1–3, Leg 3733, exp 268.

⁵⁷ AHN, Delación espontánea, 1713, fols. 429r–433r, Lib 1153.

⁵⁸ AHN, Ambrose O'Connor OP to? 1 May 1707, exp 4, 2508.

⁵⁹ For details on his family background, see his *Testimonio* (Madrid, 1745) p. 1 in AHN, Leg 3679, exp 12; 'Alegación', fols. 23r–24r, exp 12, Leg 3679.

⁶⁰ His uncle, Terence MacMahon, Bishop of Killaloe, ordained him in 1727 (*Testimonio*, 1745, p. 1 in AHN, Leg 3679, exp 12)

⁶¹ He became Bishop Limerick in 1737. See Patrick Fagan, ed., *Ireland in the Stuart Papers*, 2 vols (Dublin: Four Courts, 1995), i, 278.

months he secured, according to his own tally, no fewer than fifty-three conversions.⁶² This was reconciliation on an industrial scale, which easily outstripped the combined recorded output of the Madrid chaplains in the 1710s and 1720s. Lacy gave others the benefit of his experience, authoring a conversion handbook, *Opusculum adversus Haereticos* in 1737.⁶³ To achieve his extraordinarily high reconciliation scores, the Limerick man led a hectic social life that took him to bullfights, theatres, and dining rooms, to mix with people of all religions and both genders for ‘the good of their souls’.⁶⁴ His methods did not win universal approval and he was cited to the episcopal court in Tortosa for allegedly immoral behaviour. Lacy attributed his subsequent detention to a conspiracy, hatched by Protestant Swiss officers resentful at his conversion successes among the heretic rank and file. He later skipped episcopal custody and travelled to Madrid where thanks to the influence of old military contacts like the Count of Belalcázar and the Duke of Montemar, he acquired a chaplaincy at the prestigious Portuguese Hostel. In a few years and quite independently of Jacobite networks, he wove his own web of contacts and secured a place for himself in the Spanish capital.

Once in Madrid, Lacy’s reconciliation methods received a mixed reaction from his Irish confrères there. Some were overawed by his conversion tally, which, in 1741 had

⁶² See AHN, Testimony of John Lacy, 30 March 1745, Leg 3679, fol. 89v, exp 12.

⁶³ (Mallorca, 1737). It was also called *Theologiae polemicae opusculum*.

⁶⁴ In his own words, ‘comio y vivio con herejes con alegria con el fin de catequisarlos por le bien de sus almas’, AHN, Leg 3733, fol. 24v, exp 46.

reportedly risen to 248.⁶⁵ However, his alleged use of his Spanish connections to secure immunity from historic and newer charges, some concerning his sexual behaviour, alienated an influential portion of the Irish, clerical, military, and lay. Thanks to his careful manipulation of influence, however, Lacy held his enemies at bay for a number of years. He even won the confidence of the Inquisition, acting as interpreter, commissioner, and censor of books. Meanwhile, his conversion tally continued to mount. During a short trip home to Limerick in 1750⁶⁶ he was appointed parish priest of Ballingarry and in only two months converted, he later claimed, no fewer than sixteen local heretics. His conversion exploits presumably continued after his conviction for confessional solicitation and banishment from Madrid.

Lacy's proselytising prowess was exceptional but his was a speciality of which the Spanish administration had growing need, enlightenment headwinds notwithstanding. Irish clergy continued to oblige. In Cádiz, for instance, the local inquisitorial commissioner, Pedro Sanchez Bernal, set up a *casa de los catecúmenos* with a view to providing accommodation and instruction for incoming converts, particularly British sailors. Staffed by Irish and English catechists, it processed a steady flow of Irish and English migrants in the 1770s and afterwards. The vast majority of these were naval or military personnel, destined, the Spanish authorities anticipated, for service in the Bourbon armies and navy. In late December 1786, for instance, three Irish deserters from Gibraltar, all recently enlisted for

⁶⁵ Postulation on behalf of John Lacy, Madrid, 22 May 1741. See Fagan, *Ireland in the Stuart Papers*, p. 326.

⁶⁶ AGS, Concesión de ayuda de costa a Don Juan de Lacy, presbitero irlandés, para pasar a predicar a su tierra, 8 January 1750, 966/2.

the Royal Spanish Artillery, were attending Fr John Gallagher's catechism classes there.⁶⁷As in Madrid, sympathetic local officials assisted in these reconciliations, which were of great potential benefit to the state. In 1785, for instance, the city's Governor and County Meath native, Alexander O'Reilly, facilitated the conversion of the Englishman, John Flashman.⁶⁸

American Settler Converts

Across the Atlantic, Irish clerics were similarly occupied, though in this case less with Protestant military or industrial converts than with Protestant settlers. Thanks to the Seven Years Wars and the American War of Independence, the territories of Louisiana (1763) and the Two Floridas (1783), with their Protestant settler population, fell under Spanish jurisdiction. For nearly twenty years, until Louisiana's 1803 retrocession to France and subsequent sale to the United States, Spain administered American territories with significant Anglo-American Protestant populations. In their efforts to bring their new subjects to heel, the Spanish had recourse to Irish military, traditional servants of the Spanish monarchy. Hugo O'Connor was governor of Texas (1767);⁶⁹ from 1769 to 1770,

⁶⁷ AHN, Relación de causa, December 1786, Leg 3059, exp 14.

⁶⁸ AHN, Relación de causa, 1785, Leg 3059, exp 16.

⁶⁹ Jorge Chauca García, 'Redes de poder irlandesas en la América de la Ilustración', in *Redes de nación y espacios de poder: la comunidad irlandesa en España y la América española, 1600–1825*, ed. by Óscar Recio Morales (Valencia: Albatros Ediciones, 2012), pp. 294–95.

Alexander O'Reilly governed Louisiana, where he proved an effective agent of the former French territory's hispanisation.⁷⁰

For their part, Irish clerics assisted in the pastoral care of these mixed populations. In the case of Louisiana they were sourced in the Irish college in Salamanca, then in a state of instability, triggered by the 1767 expulsion of its Jesuit administrators.⁷¹ In 1778, when the Council for the Indies instructed the Bishop of Salamanca, Felipe Beltrán Serrano (1763–83) to procure missionaries for the Louisiana missions, he turned immediately to the local Irish college, recruiting two collegians, Michael O'Reilly and Thomas Hassett.⁷² Both were granted pontifical missionary faculties and instructed to 'extend our holy faith' in the Floridas.⁷³ They sailed to Philadelphia, later travelling to Saint Augustine in East Florida.

The need for missionaries like O'Reilly and Hassett only grew as Spanish geo-political involvement in the area deepened. The 1783 Treaty of Paris had provided for the evacuation

⁷⁰ Alfred E. Lemmon, 'Spanish Louisiana: In the service of God and His Most Catholic Majesty' in *The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History: The Spanish Presence in Louisiana 1763–1803*, ed. by Gilbert C. Din (Lafayette: Centre for Louisiana Studies, 1996), 517–529.

⁷¹ Denis J. O'Doherty, 'Students of the Irish College Salamanca', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 6 (1917), 3–4.

⁷² For Hassett's missionary activities, see Philip D. Rasico, 'The Minorcan Population of St Augustine in the Spanish Census of 1786', *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, 66 (1987), 160–84.

⁷³ Guillelmus Nogel, Victor Bray, and Denis J. O'Doherty, 'Students of the Irish College Salamanca', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 4 (1915), 52.

of non-Catholic settlers from the new Spanish territories in the Two Floridas, but many were reluctant to move. For their part, the Spanish balked at the expense of expelling them and, in any case, feared that their removal would generate hostility and create a security risk. The civil governor Esteban Miró (1785–91) accordingly decided to allow Protestant settlers to remain in Spanish territory. He even agreed to attempt to entice Protestants into the area, provided they converted to Catholicism.⁷⁴ For this he counted on a fresh injection of Irish missionary clergy.⁷⁵ In 1786, the new Bishop of Salamanca, André José Barco Espinosa (1783–94), was instructed by the King to recruit four Irish priests in the Irish college, who were to travel to New Orleans to man Miró's scheme. As only one suitable candidate, a Down and Connor priest called William Savage, was available at the time, Andrés turned elsewhere to fill his quota. In Cádiz he recruited a cleric called Michael Lamport and in Seville he found two more Irish clerics. Gregory White and Constantine McKenna OP were both resident in the city's Hospital of the Venerables.⁷⁶ Another priest, Bernard Lunney OP was sourced in the local Dominican friary of St Peter. All signed up for ten years on the mission,⁷⁷ sailing for Havana and then travelling onwards to New Orleans. In the absence of a local

⁷⁴ Gilbert C. Din, 'The Immigration Policy of Governor Esteban Miró in Spanish Louisiana', in *The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History: The Spanish presence in Louisiana 1763–1803*, ed. by Gilbert C. Din (Lafayette: Centre for Louisiana Studies, 1996), pp 317-33 (p. 317).

⁷⁵ AHN, Count of Gálvez to José Gálvez, 27 October 1785, Leg 3888bis, no. 56.

⁷⁶ McKenna received a grant from the *Misión del norte*. See Hernán, 'The Spanish Contribution', p. 226.

⁷⁷ AHN, Andrés to Sorona (minister of the Indies), Leg 3888bis, 28 September 1786.

prelate, Miró himself distributed the newly arrived Irish: Savage, White, and McKenna were sent to parishes in Northern Louisiana. By 1792, Savage had been installed as parish priest of Natchez, where a church had been constructed at state expense, a pattern repeated in the other parishes. McKenna served in various parishes until his death in 1802. White, who succeeded Savage in Natchez in 1793, was apparently rather unpopular and seems to have won few converts. He was the only one of the four to return to Europe. As for Lamport, he was stationed in a parish north of Mobile, in Florida, and died on the mission in 1789.⁷⁸

In the meantime, Miró stepped up efforts to recruit Protestant settlers, calculating that five new Irish priests would be sufficient to ensure their eventual conversion.⁷⁹ His proposal was approved in Madrid in 1791, with the King instructing Barco Espinosa to source the priests in the local Irish college. This time he identified six clerics, buttonholing the Dublin-born Patrick Mangan, already a priest⁸⁰ and five un-ordained clerics. They were Patrick Walsh (Cloyne), Francis Lennan (Dromore), James Coleman, George Murphy (Ferns), and Charles Bourke (Killala).⁸¹ Ordinations were quickly organised, contracts signed, a

⁷⁸ He died there in 1789.

⁷⁹ Gilbert. C. Din, 'The Irish Mission in West Florida', *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association*, 12 (1971), 321–22.

⁸⁰ Mangan was appointed rector of the Irish college Salamanca in 1808 but was not able to take up the post, due to war, until 1817. He was forced to retire in 1830. On his American activities, see AGI, Audiencia de Santo Domingo, duplicados de Intendentes del Ejército y del Real Hacienda, 1804, 2622.

⁸¹ Brendan Hoban, *A Melancholy Truth: The Travels and Travails of Fr Charles Bourke c. 1765–1820* (Dublin: Banley House, 2008), pp. 40–59.

monthly stipend of thirty pesos agreed and other monies released,⁸² to pay their expenses. The group sailed for America in July 1792.⁸³ The new governor, Francisco Luis Hector Caronelet, who had replaced Miró, arranged for their distribution in the new parishes.⁸⁴ Lennan went to Natchez,⁸⁵ Mangan and Walsh to New Orleans, and Burke to Baton Rouge. Coleman went to Mobile and later to Pensacola.⁸⁶

From the surviving records, it appears that the Irish performed rather well in this exotic ministry. In 1795, for instance, Bourke reported that he had the care of nearly 500 Catholics, twenty-seven Protestants, and ten Calvinists.⁸⁷ Like other clerics, he had acquired a small cotton farm and a black slave, and interpreted from English to Spanish for the local Spanish authorities in Baton Rouge. His report included several accounts of conversions to Catholicism. Despite his Salamanca education, Bourke's Spanish appears to have been poor and he spent a lot of time in the company of his English-speaking Protestant parishioners. In

⁸² MacMullan received a grant from the Misión del Norte. See Hernán, 'The Spanish Contribution', p. 226.

⁸³ Hoban, *A Melancholy Truth*, p. 41.

⁸⁴ Jack D. L. Holmes, 'Irish priests in Spanish Natchez', *Journal of Mississippi History*, 29 (1967), 169–80.

⁸⁵ Jack D. L. Holmes, 'Father Francis Lennan and His Activities in Spanish Louisiana and West Florida', *Louisiana Studies*, 5 (1966), 255–65.

⁸⁶ In 1821, Rachel Jackson would describe him as 'a divine looking man'. See Rachel Jackson to Elizabeth Kingsley, Pensacola, 23 July 1821, cited in *Papers of Andrew Jackson*, ed. by Harold D. Moser et al., 7 vols (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980-2001), v, p. 81.

⁸⁷ Hoban, *A Melancholy Truth*, p. 46.

the end he so frequently fraternised with one of them, John Turnbull, that some of his Spanish flock suspected his faith. These suspicions were fortified by rumours of excessive drinking and even affray, which earned Bourke a reprimand from the newly appointed Bishop of New Orleans, Luis Peñalver y Cárdenas (1749–1810).⁸⁸ Bourke's standoff with the Bishop eventually led to his return to Europe in 1799.⁸⁹

Bourke's case was colourful but rather exceptional. Most of the Irish missionaries lived out the rest of their lives on the American missions. Their efforts to enforce Spanish marriage law, faithfully recorded in diocesan records, suggest that this was one of the preferred means used by the Spanish to ensure conformity among populations of mixed religion. During 1788, Lamport, for instance, presided at the marriage of the English Protestant Richard Bailey to an unidentified Native American woman of heretic background, and also baptised their two children.⁹⁰ In his parish, Francis Lennan, maintained separate records for mixed marriages in an attempt to adapt peninsular standards to colonial conditions.⁹¹ Although the efforts of Irish priests to have frontier folk observe Spanish marriage law and custom were not entirely successful,⁹² intriguing evidence survives of the use of marriage legislation to thwart abusive husbands. It was in this context that in 1794

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁹⁰ Jack D. L. Holmes, 'Spanish Laws on Sex and Marriage', in *The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana history: The Spanish Presence in Louisiana 1763–1803*, ed. by Gilbert C. Din (Lafayette: Centre for Louisiana Studies, 1996), pp. 162-82 (p. 166).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

⁹² *Ibid.*

Bourke processed the divorce proceedings of Leonora Mullen and her violent husband, James.⁹³

As the mission was more formally organised under Bishop Peñalver, the Irish clergy continued to play an important pastoral role. Unsurprisingly, the revolutionary wars in Europe disrupted the cross-Atlantic traffic but a trickle of Irish missionaries made it through the blockades. In the 1790s, John Brady, Carmelite priest, went to Natchez; James Maxwell, a French naval chaplain and nonjuring cleric, served French speakers in St Genevieve until his death in 1814; the French-educated John Maguire, and John Bodkin joined the mission in 1797, having entered through the United States. Patrick Lonergan OFM came to the mission from Pennsylvania, by way of the Mississippi, serving in New Feliciana, where he died in 1805. Others Irish included Michael Crosby of Wexford and Constantine McCaffery a Mullingar-born Carmelite.⁹⁴

The number of incoming Irish may have been decreasing but established Irish clergy held posts of ever greater responsibility. When Bishop Peñalver was translated to Guatemala in 1801, diocesan administration was taken over by Salamancans Thomas Hassett (d. 1804) and Patrick Walsh (d. 1806). In 1802, when the retrocession of Louisiana to France was negotiated, Hassett prepared the diocese for the incoming French colonial prefect, Pierre Clément de Laussat.⁹⁵ He survived the subsequent transfer of the territory to the United

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 172–73.

⁹⁴ William J. Smith, *Irish Priests in the United States: A Vanishing Subculture* (Dallas: University Press of America, 2004), p. 53.

⁹⁵ Report on the parishes and the clergy serving in the province of Louisiana, 18 April 1803, New Orleans, The Historic New Orleans Collection, MS 125.

States and to the ecclesiastical authority of Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore, surely some sort of testimony to his cultural polyvalence. If the mission, as it left Spanish jurisdiction, was sufficiently well established to support a parish structure, this was at least partly thanks to Hassett, Walsh, the rest of the Irish missionary contingent and, more distantly, their Salamanca *alma mater*.⁹⁶

Part 3

In conclusion, the services rendered to Spain by Irish collegians were not trivial and, to some extent, royal support of the colleges was premised on Spanish access to these services, when needed. The colleges' Jesuit administrations, their reliance on royal funding, and the rights of interference of local prelates and councils, like those of Salamanca, Castile, and the Indies, suggests as much. Some Irish episcopal criticism aside, this was largely accepted in Ireland as part of the colleges' historical legacy. The experience of the Salamanca college following the Jesuit suppression of 1767 shows both the extent of Spanish authority within the college and also the limited influence of the Irish bishops. Following the Jesuits' departure, the Spanish government decided to rationalise the existing Irish colleges. Madrid and Alcalá were united, as were Seville, Santiago, and Salamanca.⁹⁷ This was legally possible because all Irish colleges, even under Jesuit government, had remained part of the *patronato real* and hence subject to royal intervention.⁹⁸ Accordingly, the Spanish appointed a secular cleric, Francisco Nieto Henriquez, to replace the Jesuit rector in Salamanca, but he departed shortly

⁹⁶ Smith, *Irish Priests in the United States*, pp. 43–54.

⁹⁷ Hernán, 'The Spanish Contribution', p. 207.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

afterwards. He left Francis Byrne, a mere priest student of the college, as interim rector.⁹⁹

The Irish hierarchy seem to have assumed that, with the expulsion of the Jesuits, the right of nominating the college rector had devolved onto them. Accordingly, in 1770 they sent Francis O'Lean, a priest of Lismore diocese as rector. On arrival in the college, he found a Spanish appointee, Peter Sinnott, already in situ,¹⁰⁰ obliging O'Lean to make do with the rectorship of Alcalá, where he ministered unhappily for the following two years.¹⁰¹

Undaunted, the Irish archbishops now enlisted Philip Perry, of the English college at Valladolid, to act as their Salamanca agent. Led by John Carpenter of Dublin, they nominated John Keaghry of Tuam as rector.¹⁰² This second attempt to impose a rector also proved unsuccessful. Sinnott was not well thought of by certain Irish bishops, including Nicholas

⁹⁹ A further disruption occurred in 1769 when the Irish were obliged to vacate their historic house to take up residence in the abandoned Jesuit college in the city. See Ana Castro Santamaría and Nieves Rupérez Almajano, 'The real Colegio de San Patricio de Nobles Irlandeses of Salamanca', in *The Ulster Earls and Baroque Europe*, ed. by Thomas O'Connor and May Ann Lyons (Dublin: Four Courts, 2010), pp. 223–41.

¹⁰⁰ Sr Benvenuta Curtin, 'Irish material in the Fondo Santa Sede Madrid', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 26 (1963), 40–49.

¹⁰¹ O'Connell, 'The Irish College at Alcalá' pp. 94–96.

¹⁰² AGS, Irish archbishops to the Royal Council of Castile, 25 August 1774, 965. Keaghry was a Salamanca old boy, ordained in 1765. In 1782–84 he registered under the Act for the further relief of his Majesty's subjects of this kingdom professing the popish religion. He was to take charge of all college affairs, including the thorny issue of the amalgamation into Salamanca of the Irish college in Alcalá.

Sweetman, Bishop of Ferns, the rector's native diocese. He also fell foul of the local bishop, Beltrán, a well-known reformer in the Catholic Enlightenment tradition, who, in a successful attempt to remove him in 1772 provoked a student revolt, led by Patrick Curtis.¹⁰³

Thereafter Beltrán took a keen interest in college, even after his appointment as inquisitor general in 1774.

In 1778, the Spanish royal council appointed William Bermingham as college rector, royal visitor, and Irish episcopal delegate.¹⁰⁴ Bermingham, like his predecessors, took his orders from the Spanish authorities,¹⁰⁵ while the local bishop's right of interference remained undiminished, as his recruitment to the American mission made apparent.¹⁰⁶ Bermingham's nomination was part of a royal design to reform the internal discipline of both Salamanca and Alcalá, mainly with a view to lessening student autonomy. This continued after Bermingham's death in 1780, under the rectorship of his successor, Patrick Curtis, who earlier had defied the reforms of Bishop Beltrán. Despite his colourful student past, Curtis was well connected and highly thought of by the Spanish.¹⁰⁷ A Salamanca old boy, he was ordained in 1748. Thanks to his linguistic skills, he had been appointed chaplain to the

¹⁰³ Hernán, 'The Spanish Contribution', p. 209.

¹⁰⁴ Bermingham was to take charge of all college affairs, including the thorny issue of the amalgamation into Salamanca of the Irish college in Alcalá.

¹⁰⁵ Limerick, Limerick Diocesan Archives [hereafter LDA], Royal letters [copy] commissioning William Bermingham (rector, Irish College, Salamanca, 1778–80) to carry out a visitation of the Irish colleges in Alcalá and Salamanca, BI/DC/1/1.

¹⁰⁶ Nogel, Bray, and O'Doherty, 'Students of the Irish College Salamanca', 4, 52.

¹⁰⁷ Monica Henchy, 'The Irish College at Salamanca', *Studies*, 70 (1981), 220–27.

Foreign Volunteer Regiment by Cardinal de la Cerda in 1772. Later, when the regiment was incorporated into the royal marines, Curtis served in the naval Hospital in Cádiz and subsequently as chaplain on the *St Ines*, a Spanish man of war. En route from the Philippines in 1779, the vessel was taken by the English, then at war with Spain. Ship, crew, and chaplain were taken as a prize to Cork, where Curtis continued his chaplaincy to the now imprisoned Spanish. The Count of Aranda, ambassador to Paris, summoned Curtis to London where he looked after Spanish prisoners of war there. In recognition of these services to Spain, Curtis' 1780 nomination as Salamanca rector was sanctioned by Carlos III.¹⁰⁸

It would have been unlikely for a cleric of Curtis' background to object to the Spanish recruitment of some of his best students for the American mission. Nor did he flinch before the royal order to amalgamate Alcalá with Salamanca, even when this involved taking Alcalá by force.¹⁰⁹ For their part, the Irish bishops found no reason to object. In 1793 a discussion of the state of the college among Irish bishops took for granted that the Council of Castile had 'supreme management' over the institution.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ León M. Gómez Rivas, 'Letters from the Irish College in Salamanca during the Peninsular Wars 1808–1814', *Archivum Hibernicum*, 64 (2011), 194–95.

¹⁰⁹ León Gómez Rivas, 'El colegio de los Irlandeses en Salamanca hacia 1808. Una nota sobre la correspondencia y otras circunstancias al tiempo de la invasión francesa', in *Universidades hispánicas: colegios y conventos universitarios en al edad moderna (II) Micelánea Alfonso*, 9 (2009), 273–94; W. McDonald, 'Irish Colleges since the Reformation', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 9 (1872), 546.

¹¹⁰ LDA, 21 December 1793, BI/JY/3/40.

Nonetheless, although the Irish bishops did not complain about this arrangement, it is unlikely that they were entirely happy to see capable clergy suborned to foreign mission at a time when the priest–people ratio in Ireland was worsening due to population growth and relative stagnation in clerical recruitment.¹¹¹ Conway of Limerick, in his *relatio status* of 1786, noted the failure of certain students to return to the mission and how this exacerbated the existing shortage of priests.¹¹² Circumstances allowed the bishop to look to domestic solutions to the shortage of clergy. With the Catholic Relief Act of 1782 partial lifting of the ban on Catholic education in Ireland, the bishops were free to set up diocesan colleges, initially to supplement rather than replace the overseas network. Domestic colleges had the added attraction of falling directly under the supervision of Irish bishops, unlike Salamanca, for instance, where the Spanish maintained extensive rights of interference. In 1782, Bishop Thomas Troy of Ossory established a secondary school in Kilkenny, intended to educate young boys in humanities and Christian morals.¹¹³ Later it was decided to expand the schools into a seminary.¹¹⁴ In nearby Carlow, Bishop Delaney of Kildare and Leighlin had similar ideas, establishing a seminary in the town in 1785.¹¹⁵ Thanks to the worsening

¹¹¹ Hugh Fenning, *The Undoing of the Friars of Ireland: A Study of the Novitiate Question in the Eighteenth Century* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 1972), pp. 26–54.

¹¹² LDA, ‘Status Diocesis Limericensis anno 1786’, BI/DC/1/22.

¹¹³ Ferghus Ó Fearghail, *St Kieran’s College Kilkenny, 1782–1982* (Kilkenny: St Kieran’s College, 1982), p. 21.

¹¹⁴ Peter Birch, *Saint Kieran’s College* (Dublin: Gill, 1951), p. 36.

¹¹⁵ Eric Derr, ‘The Irish Catholic Episcopal Corps, 1657–1829: A Prosopographical Analysis’, 2 vols (unpublished doctoral thesis, Maynooth University, 2013), I, 130.

international situation in the 1790s, which led to the closure of all Irish overseas colleges, most of them permanently, the newly founded domestic colleges came to play a vital role in maintaining the supply of seminary clergy to Irish dioceses. These 'Irish' Irish colleges, soon to be joined, and overshadowed, by Maynooth and others, assumed many of the roles played by their continental predecessors. They did not, for instance, turn their backs on the Irish colleges' historic function of providing clerical personnel for foreign service. In the changed post-revolutionary political landscape, however, it was the British rather than the Spanish empire which would benefit from the overseas ministrations of their clerical output.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ To cite only one example, after decades of service to Spain, Patrick Curtis' provision of intelligence to Wellington's peninsular armies earned him a British pension and facilitated his 1819 appointment as Archbishop of Armagh. See Oliver Rafferty, *Catholicism in Ulster 1603–1983: An Interpretative History*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), p. 126. For Irish clergy in British India, see Barry Crosbie, *Irish Imperial Networks: Migration, Social Communication and Exchange in Nineteenth Century India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 129–68.