



NUI MAYNOOTH

Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad

**Kingship, religion, culture and order:
The native Irish and the Old English in
early seventeenth-century Ireland**

by

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Abbreviations

<i>AB</i>	<i>Annals of Boyle</i> : Freeman, A. Martin (ed.), ‘The annals in Cotton MS. Titus A xxv’ in <i>Revue Celtique</i> , xli-xliv (1924-7)
<i>AClon</i>	<i>Annals of Clonmacnoise</i> : (bibliography, Murphy, Denis)
<i>AConn</i>	<i>Annals of Connacht</i> : Freeman, A. Martin (ed.), <i>Annals of Connacht</i> (Dublin, 1944)
Add. MSS	Additional Manuscripts
<i>AI</i>	<i>Annals of Inisfallen</i> : Mac Airt, Seán (ed.), <i>The annals of Inisfallen, MS. Rawlinson B. 503</i> (Dublin, 1951)
<i>Anal. Hib.</i>	<i>Analecta Hibernica</i>
<i>Archiv. Hib.</i>	<i>Archivium Hibernicum</i>
<i>ARÉ</i>	<i>Annála Ríoghachta Éireann</i> : (bibliography, O’Donovan, John)
<i>AT</i>	<i>Annals of Tigernach</i> : Stokes, Whitley, ed. and trans. ‘The annals of Tigernach’ in <i>Revue Celtique</i> , xvi-xviii (1895-7)
<i>AU</i>	<i>Annals of Ulster</i> : Hennessy, W. M. & McCarthy, B. (eds), <i>The annals of Ulster</i> (4 vols, Dublin, 1887-1901, reprinted, ed. Nollaig Ó Muraíle, Dublin, 1998)
BL	British Library, London
<i>Cal. S.P. Ire.</i>	<i>Calendar of state papers relating to Ireland</i> (bibliography, <i>Calendar...</i>)
<i>CGG</i>	<i>Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh</i> (bibliography, Todd, James H.)
<i>CS</i>	<i>Chronicon Scotorum</i> : Hennessy, W. M., (ed. and trans.), <i>Chronicon Scotorum, RS 46</i> (London, 1866, reprinted, Wiesbaden, 1964)
<i>FAI</i>	<i>Fragmentary annals of Ireland</i> : Radner, Joan Newlon (ed.), <i>Fragmentary annals of Ireland</i> (Dublin, 1978)
<i>FFÉ</i>	<i>Foras feasa ar Éirinn</i> (bibliography, Keating, Geoffrey)
H.M.C.	Historical Manuscripts Commission
<i>IHS</i>	<i>Irish Historical Studies</i>

Abbreviations cont'd.

<i>ITQ</i>	<i>Irish Theological Quarterly</i>
<i>LCé</i>	<i>Annals of Loch Cé: Hennessy, W. M., (ed.), Annals of Loch Cé: a chronicle of Irish affairs, 1014-1590 (2 vols, London 1871, reprinted, Dublin, 1939)</i>
<i>LG</i>	<i>Leabhar gabhála (bibliography, Macalister, R. A. S.)</i>
<i>MCB</i>	<i>Mac Carthaigh's Book: Ó hInnse, Séamus, Miscellaneous Irish annals, AD 1114-1437 (Dublin, 1947)</i>
<i>N.H.I.</i>	<i>New History of Ireland: (bibliography, Moody, T. W. et al (eds)</i>
<i>NLI</i>	National Library of Ireland, Dublin
<i>NUI</i>	National University of Ireland
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford dictionary of national biography</i>
<i>PRIA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy</i>
<i>RIA</i>	Royal Irish Academy, Dublin
<i>Stud. Hib.</i>	<i>Studia Hibernica</i>
<i>TCD</i>	Trinity College, Dublin
<i>UCC</i>	University College Cork
<i>UCD</i>	University College Dublin

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Introduction

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the native Irish and the Old English had both inhabited the island of Ireland for approximately four hundred years but, over the centuries, fractious relations had often prevailed between them. These two groups emerged from different political traditions; the native Irish had historically given allegiance to the chieftain of their particular lordship while the Old English political focus, especially that of the Pale, was directed towards London and they had generally seen themselves as subjects of the king of Ireland. There was a fragmented society and separate social, political and cultural priorities had traditionally been a barrier to integration. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, however, circumstances had changed for both groups, especially for the Gaelic Irish. They now found themselves subject to a centralized monarchy which had gradually spread its political and judicial power across the island, and the sixteenth-century Tudor conquest had seen their lands targeted for plantation. The Old English found their influence and political power diminished considerably due to infringement on their hitherto privileged position both in central and provincial government by New English administrators and officials. It was a changed world for each group and the ensuing half-century presented further challenges in their attempts to endure in the unfriendly environment of an anti-Catholic administration. This thesis examines and juxtaposes the political ideas which existed within these two Irish groups as they attempted to find a workable solution to their dilemma by looking at their assumptions surrounding kingship, religion, culture and order, the four staples that embodied the life of early-modern men and women. Many studies have been carried out on the Old Irish and the Old English separately but this thesis examines the political ideas, in tandem, of what the early Irish historian Geoffrey Keating called 'Irishmen', linking Old English and native Irish in one unit, and assesses the similarities and differences that existed between them. What emerges is the existence of a Catholic royalism among the Gaelic Irish and Old English in the first half of the seventeenth century.

After 1600 the native Irish seem to largely disappear from the historiography. In the sixteenth century, the Gaelic Irish play a significant part in the historical record: the power of Gaelic lordships gradually overcome by Tudor conquest; a series of rebellions culminating in the rising of the northern lords in the Nine Years War at the end of the century; defeat for Hugh O'Neill and Hugh Roe O'Donnell at Kinsale in 1601; and the death of O'Donnell in 1602 and O'Neill's submission to the crown in 1603.¹ The assumption has sometimes been that the Gaelic Irish were henceforth a spent force. Perhaps the departure from Ireland of many of their leaders with the Flight of the Earls in 1607 contributed to their disappearance from historiography. Perusal of the standard general study on early-modern Irish history, *A new history of Ireland: early modern Ireland, 1534-1691*, bears this out.² The Gaelic Irish feature prominently in the early part of the work but, after the first decade of the seventeenth century, their presence gradually diminishes. The focus instead has been mostly on the Old English, in whose world it has been assumed, the Gaelic Irish were regarded as 'the other', as de-facto rebels. However, this thesis argues that the Old English and Gaelic Irish world was a much livelier world than that. There was much political discourse and debate taking place and ideas were being formulated about how Ireland was going to work for them in the changed climate of New English political hegemony. Gaelic Ireland was a world that may have been alien to many of the sixteenth-century Old English but there developed between them a correspondence of thought, and a softening of attitudes and a drawing together of the two groups is evident as the decades of the early seventeenth century proceeded.

Relatively few historians have considered the question of political thought and ideas among the Gaelic Irish and this is probably due to the set of assumptions in historiography alluded to above. Breandán Ó Buachalla has been the only one to have addressed it in an extensive corpus of work derived from the evidence of the bardic poetry and the annals. For instance, he has shown how effusively the poets welcomed the Stuart king, James I, to the throne, quickly providing him with a Gaelic validation and a genealogy stretching back to the Irish king Fergus who went to Scotland c. 300 BC. He

¹ Colm Lennon, *Sixteenth century Ireland: the incomplete conquest* (Dublin, 1994) *passim*.

² T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin & F. J. Byrne (eds), *A new history of Ireland*, iii: *early modern Ireland, 1534-1691* (Oxford, 1976).

has also examined the Gaelic concept of kingship and how the native Irish accommodated their traditional beliefs to the reigns of the Stuarts.³ Historiography on the Old English side, on the other hand, has been better served. Aidan Clarke has written extensively about the Old English community.⁴ His article, 'Ireland and the general crisis,' reveals how adversity in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries led them to re-examine and develop their sense of identity.⁵ Nicholas Canny also traced the development of the ideology of the Old English of the Pale in the second half of the sixteenth century, showing them initially espousing a strong attachment to the idea of commonwealth civility and, by the end of the century, combining this with a committed adherence to a Tridentine Catholicism.⁶ Ciaran Brady likewise addressed this progression of the Old English to a synthesis of politics and religion, resulting in them adopting their political philosophy of loyalty to their monarch while retaining their Catholic religion.⁷ Moreover, all three historians agreed that a conscious decision to separate themselves from the native Irish formed part of this construction of an identity for the Old English in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

More recently, historians have investigated the political thinking that motivated Catholics in Ireland. Colm Lennon has looked at the development and expansion of Irish Catholic thought in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In an article detailing the emergence of Irish Catholic ideology in the second half of the sixteenth century, he has shown the importance of the role of Irish Catholic exiles on the continent in the dissemination of the Tridentine ideas into Ireland via the constant traffic back and forth

³ Breandán Ó Buachalla, *Aisling ghéar: na Stíobhartaigh agus an t-aos léinn* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1996); 'James our true king: the ideology of Irish royalism in the seventeenth century' in D. George Boyce et al (eds), *Political thought in Ireland since the seventeenth century* (London, 1993), pp 7-35; *The crown of Ireland* (Galway, 2006).

⁴ Aidan Clarke, *The Old English in Ireland, 1625-41* (Dublin, 1966); 'Colonial identity in early seventeenth-century Ireland' in T. W. Moody (ed.), *Nationality and the pursuit of national independence* (Belfast, 1978), pp 57-71.

⁵ Aidan Clarke, 'Ireland and the general crisis' in *Past and present*, 48 (1970), pp 79-99.

⁶ Nicholas Canny, *The formation of the Old English elite in Ireland* (Dublin, 1975).

⁷ Ciaran Brady, 'Conservative subversives: the community of the Pale and the Dublin administration, 1556-86' in Patrick J. Corish (ed.), *Radicals, rebels & establishments* (Belfast, 1985), pp 11-32.

of merchants, scholars and soldiers.⁸ Thomas O'Connor analysed the position of the Old English Catholic churchman David Rothe who, writing in 1616, elucidated the dilemma of Irish Catholics giving allegiance to a Protestant king; Rothe's aspiration to a sense of *natio* among the Catholic community is recognised, a theme O'Connor also addressed elsewhere.⁹ Raymond Gillespie has written on societal relations among all the social groups in early-modern Ireland. He has revealed that 'political thought' was often interpreted through the lens of social and cultural circumstances; assumptions challenged when communities were put under strain; and political ideas reshaped in the light of new situations; further, that different shades of political thought could be accommodated both within ethnic groups and between them. He has also described the process of establishing authority and creating order in early-modern Irish localities, which was often successful, and shown that it was largely the importance of negotiations at a regional level in creating the social order and cohesion that made society work on a day to day basis.¹⁰ Gillespie has examined too Old English convictions regarding societal order as articulated in the writings of Richard Bellings; the Old English were not only an economic and social elite but were imbued with a sense of honour and duty conferred on them by their lineage; consequently they considered they should be in positions of social authority, hold civic office and be called upon to give counsel to their king on affairs in Ireland; and they regarded the disjuncture between their expectations and their failure to fulfill this role as an inversion of the social order.¹¹ Regarding nationhood, Brendan Bradshaw has argued that a sense of nationalist sentiment emerged within the Anglo-Irish community in the mid-sixteenth century beginning with a spirit of commonwealth humanism that encompassed conciliation towards its native Irish neighbours and evolved

⁸ Colm Lennon, 'Taking sides: the emergence of Irish Catholic ideology' in Vincent Carey & Ute Lotz-Heumann (eds), *Taking sides?: colonial and confessional mentalities in early-modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2003), pp 78-93.

⁹ Thomas O'Connor, 'Custom, authority, and tolerance in Irish political thought: David Rothe's *Analecta sacra et mira* (1616)' in *ITQ*, 65:2 (2000), pp 133-56; 'Towards the invention of the Irish Catholic *natio*: Thomas Messingham's *Florilegium* (1624)' in *ITQ*, lxiv, no. 2 (1999), pp 157-77.

¹⁰ Raymond Gillespie, 'Political ideas and their social contexts in seventeenth-century Ireland' in Jane H. Ohlmeyer (ed.), *Political thought in seventeenth-century Ireland: kingdom or colony* (Cambridge, 2000), pp 107-27; 'Negotiating order in early seventeenth-century Ireland' in Michael J. Braddick & John Walter (eds), *Negotiating power in early-modern society: order, hierarchy and subordination in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge, 2001), pp 188-205.

¹¹ Raymond Gillespie, 'The social thought of Richard Bellings' in Micheál Ó Siochrú (ed.), *Kingdoms in crisis: Ireland in the 1640s: essays in honour of Donal Cregan* (Dublin, 2001), pp 212-28.

into a new ideology of Irish nationality. He also saw these sentiments advanced to a more developed sense of ‘nationalism’ in the Old English narrative on Irish history by Geoffrey Keating.¹² Bernadette Cunningham has written extensively on the works of Geoffrey Keating and in her definitive book on the author, *The world of Geoffrey Keating*, has clarified the political and cultural stimuli that motivated him to reach out to the Gaelic Irish community.¹³ She has also addressed the creation of a sense of Irish national identity between Irish Catholics in an article concerning the ideology of Franciscan scholars at Louvain who wrote to instill the ethos of the Council of Trent in the Irish people in the early seventeenth century.¹⁴ The above historians and others have examined the motivations and political thinking of the early modern politically-engaged figures separated by their ethnicity. While most of these have been Old English, Breandán Ó Buachalla has investigated and deciphered Gaelic political ideas. However, this thesis examines and juxtaposes the political and social ideas of these two groups of early-modern Irishmen. What is revealed is a remarkable consonance of ideas; instances of classic Old English thought among the Gaelic Irish; and different strains of thought among the Old English.

The thesis embodies the four key ideas of kingship, religion, culture and order. These closely-linked themes comprise the important ideas that prevailed in early modern Ireland and Europe generally. The idea of kingship was of central importance and it manifested in religion, culture and social order. These three things flowed from the king. The king was the head of the church. He was guarantor of the cultural world incorporating religion and the structure of society. Social order was very important to all groups in Ireland and emanated from the monarchy. These themes have significance for the study of opinions in seventeenth-century Ireland. Accordingly, the ideas of kingship, religion, culture and order are applied in interrogating the attitudes of the five Gaelic Irish and Old English

¹² Brendan Bradshaw, *The Irish constitutional revolution of the sixteenth century* (Cambridge, 1979); ‘Reading Seathrún Céitinn’s *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*’ in Pádraig Ó Riain (ed.), *Geoffrey Keating’s Foras feasa ar Éirinn: reassessments* (London, 2008), pp 1-18.

¹³ Bernadette Cunningham, *The world of Geoffrey Keating: history, myth and religion in seventeenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 2000); ‘Seventeenth-century interpretations of the past: the case of Geoffrey Keating in *IHS*, xxv, no. 98 (Nov. 1986), pp 116-28.

¹⁴ Bernadette Cunningham, ‘The culture and ideology of Irish Franciscan historians at Louvain’ in Ciaran Brady (ed.), *Ideology and the historians* (Dublin, 1991), pp 11-30.

figures under scrutiny in this thesis. The utilization of these key themes serves to ascertain the degree of similarity and difference between the two groups. A notable commonality of ideas is apparent.

The evidence for this commonality emerges from the opinions and assumptions of the subjects of five chapters of this thesis, five authors who wrote treatises in the first half of the seventeenth century, whose works comprise the principal sources of this study. Following a first chapter which deals with the idea of kingship, Conell Mageoghegan is the subject of the second chapter. He was a Gaelic scholar who, in 1627, translated old Irish manuscripts and compiled what is now known as the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*.¹⁵ Mageoghegan, the great-grandson of the last chieftain of the MacGeoghegan sept who had died in 1588, was a Gaelic scholar and collector of antiquarian material, and he lived in Lismoyne, Co Westmeath in what had been MacGeoghegan country. The *Annals of Clonmacnoise* are of a history of Ireland from earliest times to the year AD 1408 and it is clear that Mageoghegan had access to a wide range of sources. However, his account is interpolated with many of his own comments and observations, and from these his political and cultural outlook is discernible. There are four extant copies of *Annals of Clonmacnoise* surviving from the seventeenth century: Armagh Public Library (1660), British Library (1661), TCD (1685) and NLI (1685); additionally, one eighteenth-century and three nineteenth-century copies.¹⁶ Further, Sir James Ware extracted excerpts from *AClon*, c. 1650, probably from Mageoghegan's holograph, which is in Ware manuscripts in the British Library.¹⁷ In addition, Daniel McCarthy has shown that the Armagh manuscript was taken from an earlier copy (now lost) made by the scribe of the BL copy, Domhnall Ó Suilleabháin of Tralee, who McCarthy suggests was engaged in the production of a series of copies of Mageoghegan's work.¹⁸ Copies of *AClon*, therefore, were circulating in the middle seventeenth century. Mageoghegan was part of a scholarly network which included Micheál Ó Cléirigh and the Church of Ireland archbishop of

¹⁵ Denis Murphy (ed.), *The annals of Clonmacnoise* (Dublin, 1896, facsimile reprint, 1993).

¹⁶ Sarah Sanderlin, 'The manuscripts of the annals of Clonmacnois' in *PRIA* (C), lxxxi (1982), pp 111-23.

¹⁷ Sanderlin, 'The manuscripts of the annals of Clonmacnois', pp 120-1; BL, Add. MSS 4787, 4791.

¹⁸ Daniel P. McCarthy, *The Irish annals: their genesis, evolution and history* (Dublin, 2008).

Armagh, James Ussher.¹⁹ It might be concluded that Mageoghegan's work only held interest for collectors of antiquarian manuscripts. However, in the 1650s, a comment by the anonymous author of *Aphorismical discovery of treasonable faction*, which referred his readers to 'Connall Geoghegan in his Englishe annualls', suggests that the work was generally known.²⁰ Mageoghegan's social network which included his brother-in-law, Terence Coghlan, a future member of parliament, also connected him through Coghlan to the highly politicised Dillon family. It is likely, therefore, that Mageoghegan's interests reached outside the scholarly network and that his thoughts and opinions reflected contemporary political and social concerns.

The subject of the third chapter, Geoffrey Keating, an Old English priest from Co. Tipperary, also compiled a history of Ireland from old Gaelic sources, entitled *Foras feasa ar Éirinn* which he completed in 1634-5.²¹ Keating had both studied and taught in Irish colleges on the continent but had returned to minister in Ireland when he compiled his history. His account begins with the creation of the world and ends with the coming of the Anglo-Normans in the twelfth century. Keating prefixed a lengthy introduction to the work where he stated that his reason for writing was to refute negative accounts of his native country by foreign authors, especially that of the twelfth-century Giraldus Cambrensis, which had recently appeared in print. However, Bernadette Cunningham has demonstrated other contemporary political concerns that motivated him and reveals also that the compilation of *Foras feasa* involved an ongoing process of selection, adaptation and omission from his source material. Accordingly, Keating's opinions can be divined from his narrative and compared with Mageoghegan. The existence of thirty extant seventeenth-century copies of *Foras feasa*, one-third of them predating 1650, and many of them by well-known scribal families, attests to the popularity of Keating's work. In 1631, even before Keating had completed his opus, a letter from the bishop of Ferns to Rome indicates that he was aware of the forthcoming history, although Keating himself

¹⁹ Bernadette Cunningham & Raymond Gillespie, 'James Ussher and his Irish manuscripts' in *Stud. Hib.*, 33 (2004-5), pp 81-99.

²⁰ J. T. Gilbert (ed.), *A contemporary history of affairs in Ireland from 1641 to 1653* (3 vols, Dublin, 1879), p. 2.

²¹ Geoffrey Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn: the history of Ireland* (c. 1634), ed. and trans. P. S. Dineen & David Comyn (4 vols, London, 1902-14).

was not known to the bishop. In 1635, almost as soon as the work was finished, an English translation by Michael Kearney was commenced. Many copies also went into circulation on the continent through the Franciscan network, and, in the late 1650s, the secular priest John Lynch, based in France, translated *Foras feasa* into Latin. In 1662, Lynch was largely inspired by Keating's polemical preface to write his *Cambrensis eversus*.²² It is very likely, therefore, that *Foras feasa* was a very influential work in the seventeenth century. As Cunningham has shown, Keating strategically inferred the longevity of an ancient Old English presence in Ireland; he referred to a community of *Éireannaigh* that included only those born in Ireland and who were Catholic, thus excluding recently arrived New English settlers.²³ Such tactics were doubtless reflective of a general Old English practice in this period to emphasise that they were the rightful inhabitants of Ireland in an effort to counteract the encroachment on their positions by the New English *arrivistes*.

Chapter four considers and compares the opinions of an Old English lawyer and playwright, Henry Burnell from Castleknock in Co. Dublin. Burnell's play, *Landgartha*, although a work of fiction, contains a number of pointed allusions to contemporary concerns.²⁴ His chosen theme and his portrayal of characters are strong signifiers to Burnell's own sentiments and his presentation of the plot indicates the tensions that prevailed among the Old English after almost a decade of the autocratic rule of the lord deputy, Sir Thomas Wentworth. *Landgartha* had its first performance in Dublin on 17 March 1640, the night after the opening of the 1640 parliament, and its audience, which presumably included a substantial political coterie, would have well understood its underlying political ideas. In addition, the play went to the printers in 1641 assuring it of a wider circulation. In early modern Ireland, most private libraries contained some play scripts which suggests the popularity of the printed play.²⁵ In 1685, William Winters, a Dublin bookseller, advertising his wares, included 'the choice of the best collection of

²² Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, pp 100, 173-92; John Lynch, *Cambrensis eversus*, (St. Malo, 1662).

²³ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, pp 109-12.

²⁴ Henry Burnell, *Landgartha*, reproduced in Christopher Wheatley & Kevin Donovan (eds), *Irish drama of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries* (2 vols, Bristol, 2003), i, 5-79.

²⁵ Gillespie, 'Political ideas and their social contexts', p. 118.

plays in this kingdom'.²⁶ Some highly political dramas, such as Henry Burkhead's *A tragedy of Cola's furie or Lirenda's miserie*, published at Kilkenny in 1645, were almost certainly never staged but were more probably published only to be read. The importance of drama in shaping attitudes was well understood by contemporaries.²⁷ The message contained in the political undertones of Burnell's *Landgartha* would have echoed the thoughts and opinions of an Old English audience and readership.

Richard Hadsor is the subject of the fifth chapter; a lawyer, he was also from the Pale but lived in London for many years serving the crown as a legal adviser on Irish affairs. His tracts, reports and letters, penned from the end of the sixteenth century down to 1632, reveal quintessential Old English attitudes of the Pale and betray his concern for his fellow Old English.²⁸ He aspired to the success and prosperity of his native country and elucidated his prescription for the way forward that would provide a workable solution for the benefit of both the crown and his fellow Irishmen. Hadsor reported to successive secretaries of state and was a useful source of information on affairs in Ireland. In the closing stages of the rebellions of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, he acted as spymaster for Sir Robert Cecil on the activities of the Ulster Irish, and regularly proffered his suggestions on ways and means of defeating the rebels. He was particularly concerned about security in the Pale and was in ongoing contact with his Old English relatives and connections there. His London chambers were undoubtedly a port of call for many Old English and throughout his career he continued to represent them and to faithfully promote their cause. Hadsor's opinions and outlook are compared with those of Mageoghegan, Keating and Burnell. In this chapter also, the ideology of another Old English lawyer, John Cusacke, also from the Pale and also residing in England, is considered and compared with that of Hadsor.²⁹

²⁶ Raymond Gillespie, *Reading Ireland: print, reading and social change in early modern Ireland* (Manchester, 2005), p. 85.

²⁷ Gillespie, 'Political ideas and their social contexts', p. 118.

²⁸ Joseph McLaughlin (ed.), 'Richard Hadsor's "Discourse" on the Irish state, 1604' in *IHS*, xxx, no. 119 (1997), pp 337-53; George O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements for Ireland* (Dublin, 1923).

²⁹ Linda Levy Peck, 'Beyond the Pale: John Cusacke and the language of absolutism in early Stuart Britain' in *The Historical Journal*, xli, no.1 (March, 1998), pp 121-49.

Finally, the subject of chapter six is the anonymous author of the treatise *Aphorismical discovery of treasonable faction* (cited above), who almost certainly hailed from the Gaelic community, and whose likely identity this thesis putatively suggests although more research is needed for a definite identification. This work may have commenced in Ireland but was probably revisited and completed on the continent in the 1650s in the wake of the confederate wars in which the author was a participant and it covers the years from 1641 to 1652. The author presented a decidedly one-sided view of the period which concurred strongly with the uncompromising religious approach of the papal nuncio, GianBattista Rinuccini, who opposed the more pragmatic course favoured by the members of the Old English-dominated supreme council. The only known extant copy of the manuscript reposes in Trinity College.³⁰ Towards 1697, it was in the possession of John Madden, President of the Dublin College of Physicians and a collector of manuscripts, who had a valuable collection of manuscripts relating to the genealogies and histories of many English and Irish families. From him it passed into the library of another collector, John Stearne, Protestant Bishop of Clogher who, in 1741, presented it to Trinity College.³¹ The *Aphorismical* author's beliefs are compared with the previous authors' opinions. His philosophy was reflective of a substantial body of mid-seventeenth century Irish thought, in part shaped and crystallized by the divisive wars of the 1640s, but indicative as well of the general evolution of political ideas and ideology over the preceding half-century. Finally, I might have accorded a chapter also to the historical narrative of the confederate period by Sir Richard Bellings, the Old English lawyer and secretary to the supreme council, written in 1673, but for the fact that much work has been recently carried out on him and, additionally, Bellings' account of the confederate wars reflected his thoughts on the political circumstances for Irish Catholics in the early 1670s as much as it reflected his views of the 1640s.³² Nevertheless, his opinions are considered and compared in chapter six.

³⁰ TCD MS 846 (F.3.28).chapter

³¹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history of affairs in Ireland*, i, p. vii; 'Madden papers', http://www.proni.gov.uk/introduction_madden_papers.pdf

³² J. T. Gilbert (ed.), *History of the Irish confederation and the war in Ireland* (7 vols, Dublin, 1882-91); Gillespie, 'The social thought of Richard Bellings'; Anne Creighton, 'The remonstrance of December 1661 and Catholic politics in Restoration Ireland' in *IHS*, xxxiv, no. 133 (2004), pp 16-41; Deana Rankin, *Between Spenser and Swift: English writing in seventeenth-century Ireland* (Cambridge, 2005), pp 191-229.

Initially, chapter one reviews contemporary theories of kingship, culture, order and religion in Europe. It looks at how kingdoms were organized in Europe and what people in the early modern world thought about kingship, order and religion. The structure of the chapter broadly traces the progression of a constitutional approach to kingship which prevailed in the sixteenth to a more absolutist ideology which was more dominant in the seventeenth century. This first chapter provides a link to the ensuing five chapters where the political, social, religious and cultural views of the five main protagonists are investigated and compared and their thinking on kingship, order and religion explored. The methodology used to discover their views is to look at their attitudes to the king, to kingship and to the various institutions associated with the monarchy which essentially included all political and social institutions in the seventeenth century. The king and institution of the monarchy are being used as a tool as it were in order to glean similarities and differences in the political, social, religious and cultural beliefs and assumptions of the Gaelic Irish and Old English. This method has been chosen as monarchy in England and Ireland had become very centralized in the seventeenth century as it had in Europe generally and the person and office of the king was a common factor that affected both groups. The actions and decisions of the king determined the fate of people in the early modern period and their station in life was wholly dependent on him. The kingly institution encompassed religion, parliament and the administration, social order, in fact, the whole gamut of political, administrative and social life. Cultural inclinations, an integral part of people's lives, are also explored. Accordingly, the attitudes of each writer are examined under five categories with the headings: 'royalism', 'parliament and government', 'culture', 'hierarchy and social order' and 'religion'. These are followed by a sixth category under the heading of 'national identity', which reviews the development of a sense of shared national identity evolving among the Old Irish and Old English groups.

What constituted Irish Catholic royalism? This question has never been comprehensively addressed. Recent scholarship has investigated the nature of English royalism and the motivations of those who supported Charles I and the house of Stuart during the civil

wars of the 1640s and the interregnum.³³ While these scholars have found many strands of royalist ideology ranging along the theoretical spectrum, from ‘absolutism’ at one end to that of ‘moderation’ at the other, along with a myriad of different shades between these two extremes, there were certain basic tenets that were symptomatic of English royalism in general. Royalists were, of course, loyal to the person of the king but their commitment was equally to the institution of monarchy and to royal authority.³⁴ Many royalists esteemed the collegiality of courtly and aristocratic society surrounded by a culture that stressed gallantry, honour and personal loyalty to the king and queen.³⁵ Further, order and deference were regarded as essential in a traditional society.³⁶ Crucially, however, for English royalists, preservation of the Anglican religion was fundamental to their beliefs and there was a symbiotic relationship between the Protestant church and the monarchy.³⁷ In Ireland, Old English royalism exhibited many of these characteristics; they had traditionally been loyal to the king of Ireland after 1541 and they valued honour and a social order, the higher echelons of which they had been accustomed to occupying. The Gaelic Irish, since the beginning of the century, had enthusiastically welcomed the Stuarts as kings of Ireland and now also professed their loyalty to the king.³⁸ However, Ireland was different to England and to Europe. The religion of the king was different to the religion of the people. The implications of this for the ideology of royalism have not been systematically addressed. Protestantism was integral to English royalism and to the state. King and religion were joined and consequently king and social order were joined. This did not apply in Ireland. In England, those at the head of society were politically powerful, secure within the environs of the court or in the milieu of parliament. In Europe also, the social order was in accordance with the royal regime. Throughout Europe, the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*, whereby the ruler stipulated the religion of his territory, prevailed generally since the sixteenth century but this situation did not percolate through to Ireland. Ireland was unique in having a Protestant king with Catholic subjects. Irish royalism had to accommodate the separate

³³ Jason McElligott & David L. Smith (eds), *Royalists and royalism during the English civil wars* (Cambridge, 2007); *Royalists and royalism during the Interregnum* (Manchester, 2010).

³⁴ McElligott & Smith, *Royalists and royalism during the English civil wars*, pp 69, 156.

³⁵ McElligott & Smith, *Royalists and royalism during the English civil wars*, pp 47, 63.

³⁶ McElligott & Smith, *Royalists and royalism during the English civil wars*, pp 73, 215.

³⁷ McElligott & Smith, *Royalists and royalism during the English civil wars*, pp 63, 74, 75, 215.

³⁸ Ó Buachalla, *Aisling ghéar*, pp 4-9.

confession of Catholicism where religious allegiance had to be withheld from its monarch. This emergence of royalism among Irish Catholics, native Irish and Old English, who struggled under these anomalous conditions, has not been investigated.

At the outset, however, the problem of terminology has to be addressed and clarification provided of the ideologies of 'royalism', 'absolutism' and 'constitutionalism', as understood by this thesis. These terms are beset with difficulties having different shades of meaning in different contexts and periods. Royalism can sometimes be construed in terms of unlimited power on the part of a monarchy. In this thesis, the concept of 'royalism' constitutes an adherence to the monarchy and support for the person of the king. The institution of monarchy prevailed almost exclusively throughout Europe in this period (a notable exception being the Dutch United Provinces), and many people still conceived society in terms of a hierarchical system with the king at its apex lying immediately below God, followed by the nobility, gentry, and so on, descending in graduated levels. In Ireland, the royalism of the Gaelic Irish and Old English encompassed loyalty to the monarchy and a, certainly outwardly professed, loyalty towards the king. From 1603, the relationship between the native Irish and the monarch deepened when a Stuart king, James VI of Scotland and James I of England acceded to the throne. The Gaelic section of Irish society identified more closely with James's reputed Gaelic ancestry than they had done with the Tudor monarchs. The degree to which the Gaelic Irish and the Old English were 'royalist' is further explored in chapter one. (During the English civil war period, of course, in the 1640s, the term 'royalist' had a particularistic meaning, referring to those who sided with Charles I against his enemies who supported parliament).

An even more problematic term is that of 'absolutist', and the seventeenth century has sometimes been dubbed 'the age of absolutism'. The dictionary definition for 'absolutist' meaning 'despotic' or 'having unlimited authority or power' does not fully reflect the practicalities of the political situation in the first half of the seventeenth century in either England or Ireland or indeed in Europe generally. Early modern thinking revolved around a world picture of cosmic order, and the idea of cosmic harmony had a more

influential effect on political thinking in the early Stuart period than philosophical political theories. It encompassed the idea of balance and moderation and was a normative ideology of self-restraint for rulers.³⁹ James I did claim divinely ordained kingship and asserted virtually unlimited power but he offered an absolutism consistent with the observance of natural law and the laws of the land.⁴⁰ In addition, although parliamentarians could not openly disobey the directives of the king, the long tradition of English representative assembly meant that parliamentary opposition served to discourage autocratic rule. Charles I held the same autocratic notions as his father but despite his refusal to convene parliament during the 1630s, neither did he treat his subjects in a despotic manner. In the Irish situation, the king's orders were relayed through his lord deputy and his council in Dublin. During his reign, James fitfully employed a certain degree of tolerance towards his Catholic subjects despite the efforts of a less than friendly administration in Dublin which constantly urged a more hard-line approach.⁴¹ During the reign of Charles I, in 1628, Irish Catholics managed to extract relatively generous concession from the king. Some, however, were later withheld by lord deputy Sir Thomas Wentworth who, during his tenure in Ireland, was determined that Charles' Irish executive would suffer from few restraints.⁴² In this thesis, therefore, 'absolutism' should be understood in the above context rather than conveying a meaning of arbitrary rule on the part of the monarch. Accordingly, given that this extreme of absolutism was not the norm in England or Ireland nor indeed on the continent in the first half of the seventeenth century, what is indicated in this thesis by a figure being imbued with an absolutist strand of royalism is that he might more likely be accepting of whatever directives were handed down by the authorities, be they civil or church, and less likely to oppose unwelcome measures imposed through the king's prerogative.

³⁹ James Daly, 'Cosmic harmony and political thinking in early Stuart England' in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 69:7 (1979), pp 1-38; Kevin Sharpe, *Remapping early modern England: the culture of seventeenth-century politics* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 53.

⁴⁰ J.H.M. Salmon, 'Catholic resistance theory, Ultramontaniam, and the royalist response, 1580-1620' in J.H. Burns (ed.), *The Cambridge history of political thought, 1470-1700* (Cambridge, 1991), pp 248-9.

⁴¹ Aidan Clarke & R. Dudley Edwards, 'Pacification, plantation and the catholic question, 1603-23' in Moody et al, *N.H.I.*, iii, *early modern Ireland*, ch. 8.

⁴² M. Perceval-Maxwell, 'Ireland and the monarchy in the early Stuart multiple kingdom' in *The Historical Journal*, 34:2 (1991), pp 288-9.

‘Constitutional’ is a third term that presents difficulties, the meaning of which can be ambiguous. In this thesis the term is used in a number of related senses which are apparent from the various contexts in which they occur. Strictly speaking, a constitutional monarch rules within the principles of the political constitution and according to the laws of the country, and the terminology is sometimes used in this sense; for instance, where the discussion relates to the constitutional relationship between Ireland and England as enacted under the 1541 Kingship Act which established Ireland as a kingdom and Henry VIII its king. This sense of constitutionalism also encompasses the assumption of parliamentary involvement in government decision-making through debate on current issues and through giving advice to the king, and, of course, in parliament’s role in enacting legislation. The English House of Commons, which represented urban and county gentry, became increasingly more confident as the Jacobean and Caroline periods progressed and demanded rights and liberties which they maintained were contained in an ancient constitution. For instance, in the Petition of Right presented to Charles I in 1628, they asked the king among other things to refrain from forced loans and other financial exactions without parliamentary consent.⁴³ At other times in this thesis, however, ‘constitutionalism’ is employed in a related sense, a sense that incorporates the concept of a limited monarchy. In respect of Irish Catholics, this sense of ‘constitutionalism’ materialized in the idea of being oppositional to measures emanating from the crown which they considered to be detrimental to their interests. As M. Perceval-Maxwell has explained it, their imperative was to maintain a balance between the power of the executive and the interest of the subject in Ireland and they saw the monarchy as a means of preserving this balance, and therefore used the monarchy as a tool in developing a form of limited monarchy. The mechanism they used to achieve this was to appeal beyond the executive in Dublin and they developed the strategy of the visiting committee to the king which they used in conjunction with parliament.⁴⁴ Therefore, ‘constitutionalism’ in this sense suggests a type of ‘anti-absolutism’ representing figures or sections of society opposing in effect the wishes or dictums of the state, and therefore, of the king, despite their professed adherence and loyalty.

⁴³ Corinne Weston, ‘England: ancient constitution and common law’ in Burns (ed.), *Cambridge history of political thought*, pp 379-85.

⁴⁴ Perceval-Maxwell, ‘Ireland and the monarchy’, pp 285-6.

We see royalism emerging early in the views of Conell Mageoghegan. Writing in 1626, his enthusiastic treatment of kings and kingship is testament to a keen awareness of the current political and constitutional situation in the mind of this Gaelic Irishman. An appreciation of the importance of the social order can be seen in his inclusions of the nobility and important families. Countless instances of the activities and miracles of the saints inserted into his narrative point to a proclivity for a traditional style of religion but his display of a self-conscious Catholicism indicates contemporary concerns. A contemporary significance can also be attached to his giving prominence to the saga of Brian Boromha portraying him as the ideal king who rescued the persecuted Irish from the Norse invaders. Next, the attitudes of The Old English Geoffrey Keating are examined who, writing in the early 1630s, using the same evidence as Mageoghegan, displayed many of the same ideas regarding kingship and order as the Gaelic Irishman, and signs of an emerging shared Catholic identity are evident from comparing the two accounts. Then, a more straightforward royalism is apparent in the outlooks of the Old English Palesman, Henry Burnell, writing in 1640, and in that of fellow Palesman, Richard Hadsor, whose work spanned the first three decades of the century. Both displayed classic Old English attitudes and, not unexpectedly, some prejudice, and differences in culture to that of Mageoghegan, and indeed to that of Keating, can be detected, especially in the writings of Hadsor. Nevertheless, consonance of ideas is observable between the views towards monarchy and society of, on the one hand, the Gaelic Irish Mageoghegan and Old English Tipperary-native Keating and, on the other, the Old English Palesmen, as well as correspondence in aspirations towards a workable solution to the disadvantages they endured due to their religion. Finally, writing in the 1650s after the tumultuous and bloody events of the confederate wars, we see a synthesis of the above two positions in the opinions of the author of *Aphorismical discovery*. The interaction of the two approaches emerges in this author's treatise. His work reveals the end of this dialogue which had been going on among the Gaelic Irish and Old English since the beginning of the century. It is clear that their royalist leanings, encompassing closer links with the monarchy and king, had advanced to a degree of maturity and their attitudes to the social order had retained conviction and remained in parallel. However,

during the decade of their association in the Confederate era, differences in approach to religion, the third essential element of society in the early modern world, or more correctly, to a religious settlement, intervened and constituted a stumbling block to a successful outcome to their struggle for survival. Nevertheless, despite the *Aphorismical* author's often stated pro-Gaelic Irish bias, it is clear that a shared sense of national identity had evolved between native Irish and Old English by the mid point of the seventeenth century. It was not coalescence. There were diverse attitudes towards cultural matters. Nevertheless, they were sharing very crucial ideas encompassed by an emerging Irish Catholic royalism.

Chapter 1

The idea of Kingship

This preliminary chapter, structured in a loosely chronological format, reviews early-modern conceptions of kingship, and serves to put into context the assumptions of seventeenth-century Old Englishmen and Gaelic Irishmen by considering some contemporary ideas that may have informed their understanding. The chapter also looks at the manner in which some European countries were governed and power was exercised. The political and ideological assumptions of early modern Irishmen were not merely derived from a current discourse within the island of Ireland but were influenced by a much wider European debate which was preoccupied by kingship, social order and religion. These discussions, raised by the fragmentation of Christendom in the early sixteenth century, developed in Europe from then onwards, and encompassed a variety of ideological thinking ranging from constitutionalism at one end of the scale to absolutism at the other. In Europe, in the early modern period, there were many intellectuals and political theorists who wrote treatises setting out their opinions regarding the nature of kingship and their views on the ideal society, which during this period also necessarily entailed the question of religion. Of course, the views of these writers often reacted to contemporary political circumstances or particular situations or indeed to social or cliential relationships. However, their disclosures were doubtless also sincerely-held beliefs on a philosophical level and reflected current ideological thinking. Some circulated only in manuscript but many were published, some at the time of writing, others sometime later, and many were reprinted and disseminated more widely in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. These commentators debated important issues, for instance, in what manner they ought to be ruled, how society should be organized and what was the proper nature of the relationship between the state and the church. They pondered questions such as the power of kings. From where did their power originate? Was it from God or from an original people and, if the latter, was it merely delegated or alienated completely from the people? How much power should be held by the nobility and those in the higher echelons of society? Should the king after consultation with the

élite embrace its advice in governing? Further, was lawmaking the sole prerogative of the king or a duty jointly held with the representative assemblies? In addition, since the religious upheavals of the sixteenth century, deliberations on kingship and government could not be separated from the respective powers of church and state. The power of the pope to intervene in a temporal manner in other jurisdictions *vis-à-vis* state control over a national church was an intensely controversial issue. The nature of the social order and the accompanying implications of the dangers of anarchy were also major concerns. These debates, although addressed by the educated and elite in society, were also of interest to members of the wider community in the early modern period. This chapter both examines the various philosophical options which were available to the early-modern Irishman by reviewing the ideas of political thinkers and theorists from England, France and Spain as well as considering how power was exercised on the ground.

Constitutionalist thought

In the early sixteenth century, the Scot John Mair (1468-1550) together with his pupils at the Sorbonne, most notably his pupil Jacques Almain (1480-1515), revived the theories on constitutionalism of Jean Gerson (1368-1429). Gerson, writing at the time of the Great Schism, had considered the origins and location of legitimate political power within the secular commonwealth and, in considering the Aristotelian theory of a perfect political society, had concluded that a *communitas perfecta* is defined as an independent, autonomous corporation possessing the fullest authority to regulate its own affairs without external interference. Gerson's treatise, *On ecclesiastical power*, primarily concerned the Church but he also made it clear that the highest law-making authority within a secular commonwealth must analogously be lodged at all times within a representative assembly of all its citizens. At the end of his treatise Gerson widened his argument to 'speak about the concept of politics' and he asserted three claims regarding the location of political power: firstly, no ruler can be greater in power than the community over which he rules; secondly, ultimate power over any *societas perfecta* must remain at all times within the body of the community itself; and thirdly, the status of any ruler in relation to such a community must in consequence be that of *minister* or *rector* rather than that of an absolute sovereign. He further made the constitutional point

that any ruler must always ‘rule for the good of the republic’ and ‘according to the law’; that he is not above the community but rather part of it and he is bound by its laws and limited by an absolute obligation ‘to aim at the common good in his rule’.¹ Mair and Almain expanded on Gerson’s ideas. As regards the origins and legal characteristics of the secular commonwealth Mair and Almain developed an equally radical and influential version of his theory: men (after the fall of Adam) found it expedient for their own protection to ‘constitute heads for themselves’ and to set up ‘kingly forms of government’; men therefore made use of the rational powers given to them by God [i.e. the concept of natural law] and, as a way of improving their own welfare and security, they decided ‘to introduce kings’ by an ‘act of consent on the part of the people’. The Sorbonnists further insisted that political authority is not merely derived from but inheres in the body of the people; people only delegate and never alienate their ultimate power to the rulers and thus the status of the ruler can never be that of absolute sovereign but only that of a minister or official of the commonwealth. Mair’s views appeared in print in various editions of his series of commentaries on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences (Questions)* between 1509 and 1530, *Ethics* (1530) and in his *History of Greater Britain*, completed after his return to Scotland in 1518, and first published in Paris in 1521.² Mair was one of the authors whom Geoffrey Keating cited to support an argument he made in *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*.³

British Calvinist thought

In the second half of the sixteenth century much opposition to the changes which occurred in the wake of the Reformation was expressed in England. Dissatisfaction with the outcome of the Anglican settlement of 1559, which confirmed Elizabeth I as supreme governor of the church, resulted in resistance on behalf of both Puritans and Catholics to the new reforms. George Buchanan (1506-82), a propagandist for the Scottish covenanting regime, wrote primarily with the aim of justifying the deposition of Mary Stuart. However, his most sophisticated work *De jure regni apud Scotos*, published first

¹ Quentin Skinner, *The foundations of modern political thought* (2 vols, Cambridge, 1978), ii, 114-7.

² Skinner, *Foundations of modern political thought*, ii, 118-121.

³ Geoffrey Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn: the history of Ireland* (c. 1634), ed. and trans. P. S. Dineen & David Comyn (4 vols, London, 1902-14), ii, 59-60.

in 1579, with further publications appearing throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, articulated a wider argument enunciating anti-absolutist thinking. Written in dialogue form, it contrasted a legitimate king with a usurping tyrant. Starting with a brief analysis of the state of nature before the creation of society and government, it posited a version of a social contract. A king gains power by popular consent, rules by law and is subject to the law. Laws are made and changed by the estates of the realm and kings must have a council of wise men to guide him in their interpretation and application. Kings rule for the benefit of their subjects whereas tyrants rule for their own personal gain. Obedience, Buchanan argued, need only be given to a legitimate king and not to a tyrant. A tyrant can be deposed and, if this were not possible, he could even be assassinated as a last resort. Buchanan's work provoked a storm of protest both in Britain and on the continent. Presenting a theory that was really secular, although he did attack papal power as well, the work could be used even by those who were not Calvinist.⁴ Buchanan was another author whom Keating quoted, refuting some assertions he had made regarding Ireland, although it is possible that Keating came into contact with his work secondhand through another source.⁵ During the years 1570-8, Buchanan had been tutor to the young king, James VI of Scotland, later James I of England, although James' political philosophy was to later evolve much differently to that espoused by his former teacher.

Anglican thought

While a popular Puritan religious culture continued to thrive in England, with its emphasis on sermon attendance, bible study, anti-Catholicism and domestic piety, Puritanism as a political movement, by the 1590s, had been rendered impotent. Puritans' demands for change failed in parliament and their public preaching assemblies were banned by Elizabeth.⁶ Richard Hooker (1554-1600) wrote to defend the Elizabethan religious settlement and to disarm its Puritan critics.⁷ His treatise, *Of the laws of*

⁴ Robert M. Kingdon, 'Calvinism and resistance theory, 1550-1580' in J. H. Burns (ed.), *The Cambridge history of political thought, 1450-1700* (Cambridge, 1991), pp 215-8.

⁵ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 61-8; Bernadette Cunningham, *The World of Geoffrey Keating: history, myth and religion in seventeenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), p. 86.

⁶ H. G. Koenigsberger et al, *Europe in the sixteenth century* (Harlow, 1989), pp 353-4.

⁷ Howell A. Lloyd, 'Constitutionalism' in Burns (ed.), *Cambridge history of political thought*, p. 280.

ecclesiastical polity: eight books, 'is the first major work in the fields of theology, philosophy, and political thought to be written in English.'⁸ In 1593 Hooker published the preface along with the first four books and sent a copy to Lord Burghley in time to be used in support of legislation in that year's parliament that was for the first time directed against protestant separatists as well as Catholic recusants.⁹ The content of Hooker's books bespoke moderation, inclusiveness and constitutionalism; the members of the church of England were the same persons who composed the commonwealth; it was by the consent of the body politic that the king received his 'power of dominion'; 'men should make their own laws'; and Hooker used the language of contract to describe an agreement between an original people and their king.¹⁰ However, despite this seemingly constitutional approach, Hooker's conclusions reinforced the supremacy of the monarch. Salmon points out that for all his emphasis upon parliamentary consent, and in defiance of all the principles which he had laid down, Hooker concluded that in the making of laws, the king had 'chiefest sway', and that there was no justification for resisting a king if he should abuse his power.¹¹ Even before the arrival of James I to the throne, royal power had come to be regarded as supreme by many in England.

English Catholic thought

Political thought of English Catholics displayed a variety of opinion.¹² There were Catholic exiles who were very critical of the reformed religious regime while those who remained at home necessarily could not be as extreme in their outlook. Catholic priests Nicholas Sanders (1530-81) and William Allen (1532-94) and the Jesuit, Robert Parsons [or Persons] (1546-1610) were among those who wrote from the continent. All of them defended the papal bull *Regnans in excelcis* which excommunicated the queen in 1570 and upheld the pope's power to intervene in temporal matters. Sander's *De visibili monarchi* (1571) propounded a resistance theory that saw the world as one church under a single head, whom other rulers were bound to obey. His *De origine ac progressu*

⁸ A. S. McGrade, 'Richard Hooker (1554-1600)', *ODNB*, www.oxforddnb.com.

⁹ McGrade, 'Richard Hooker'.

¹⁰ J. H. M. Salmon, 'Catholic resistance theory, Ultramontaniam, and the royalist response, 1580-1620' in Burns (ed.), *Cambridge history of political thought*, p. 245; Lloyd, 'Constitutionalism', pp 280-83.

¹¹ Lloyd, 'Constitutionalism', p. 283.

¹² Salmon, 'Catholic resistance theory', p. 241.

schismatis anglicani, published first in 1585, described the history of ecclesiastic history in England since Henry VIII's break from Rome; a polemical work, it proved very popular, first published in 1585 and running to a further five editions between that year and 1628. The author of *Aphorismical discovery* obviously drew on this work for his negative account of the English Tudor regime.¹³ William Allen trained priests for the English mission at his seminary in Douai with the aim of the reconversion of his country. One of his pupils was the English martyr Edmund Campion (1540-81), who had lived for a time in Ireland when writing his history of Ireland.¹⁴ During the years 1578-93, Allen was compelled to relocate his college to the town of Rheims and it was at the university of Rheims where Geoffrey Keating went to study at the end of the sixteenth century.¹⁵ Consequently, Keating may well have been familiar with his thinking. Allen, like Sanders whom he knew, defended the pope's powers of deposition and justified the papal invasion of Ireland in 1579 in which Sanders had taken part. After 1583, following the martyrdom of his followers, he abandoned a theory of non-resistance. He insisted they had died for their religion and were not guilty of treason. In his *True, sincere, and modest defence of the English Catholics* (1584), he contrasted the political doctrine of Catholicism as being the product of 'men of order and obedience' to that propounded by Protestant resistance theory which led 'opinionative and restless brains to raise rebellion at their pleasure under pretense of religion'. Later, however, in 1588, he encouraged revolt against a heretic queen.¹⁶ The third proponent of Catholic resistance theory, writing in both the late Tudor and early Stuart periods was the Jesuit, Robert Parsons, who collaborated with Allen in his work and who also accompanied Campion on his fateful mission to England. Parson's constitutional views, elucidated in his best known work, *A conference about the next succession to the crowne of England*, allowed that although hereditary monarchy was probably the best kind of government, this did not mean divine right monarchy and he stated explicitly that kings were originally appointed with power merely delegated from the people. Parson spent much time at the Spanish court, initially hoping to secure an invasion of England by Philip II but later going on to

¹³ T. F. Mayer, 'Nicholas Sanders (c. 1530-1581)', *ODNB*; Gilbert (ed.), *Contemporary history of affairs*, pp 4-5.

¹⁴ Colm Lennon, 'Recusancy and the Dublin Stanyhursts' in *Archiv. Hib.*, xxxiii (1975), 104-7.

¹⁵ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, p. 27.

¹⁶ Salmon, 'Catholic resistance theory', p. 242; Eamon Duffy, 'William Allen (1532-1594)', *ODNB*.

establish English seminaries in Spain. He did moderate his views somewhat early in the new century, ceasing to defend secular grounds for resistance, but he continued to uphold the indirect power of the pope.¹⁷

The views of these English exiles, however, were not shared by many Catholics at home who remained loyal to the crown and who opposed the ultramontane views of the Jesuits. This became manifest when, in 1598, a number of English secular priests, who became known as ‘appellants’, appealed to the Pope against the appointment of George Blackwell as archpriest in charge of secular priests in England, believing him to be sympathetic to the views of the Jesuits.¹⁸ The appellants were resistant to the new, higher standards of churchmanship and were also representative of conservative, loyalist lay people who wished to keep a low profile.¹⁹ The priests’ appeal was unsuccessful and they were ordered by the papacy to discontinue contacts in Anglican circles. Indebted to French royalist theory, they published eighteen tracts between 1601 and 1603, their particular target being Parson’s *Conference*. Several of their tracts drew on the works of William Barclay (c. 1546-1608) for their arguments.²⁰ Barclay, a Catholic Scotsman, had taught civil law at the university at Pont-à-Mousson in France and expressed an absolutist view on kingship which espoused loyalty to king and church. Accordingly, he served as a model for royalist English Catholics. Barclay’s views on an absolute distinction between the spiritual and temporal spheres of the Pope were contained in his *De potestate Papae* (1609); he held that kings were appointed directly by God and responsible only to him; laws were the king’s commands; and any limits on the power of a king was an invitation to anarchy. His treatise was published posthumously in London in 1609 with further editions appearing in 1610, 1612 and 1617, along with two English and two French translations, attesting to the interest in the work. A proponent of divine right, sovereignty, and the sort of *politique* royalism of Gallicanism, Barclay’s *De regno et regali potestate*, published in Paris in 1600, was written to refute the work of Buchanan

¹⁷ Salmon, ‘Catholic resistance theory’, pp 242-4; Victor Houlston, ‘Nicholas Persons (1546-1610)’, *ODNB*.

¹⁸ Salmon, ‘Catholic resistance theory’, p. 243.

¹⁹ Victor Houlston, *Catholic resistance in Elizabethan England: Robert Person’s Jesuit polemic, 1580-1610* (Aldershot, 2007), p. 121.

²⁰ Salmon, ‘Catholic resistance theory’, pp 243-4.

and of the French Catholic League member and proponent of resistance theory, Jean Boucher.²¹

French Catholic Leaguer thought

France in the sixteenth century saw the development of Catholic resistance theory. The Catholic League manifesto of 1585 focused on the banning of heresy, the rights of the aristocracy and the active participation of the estates in government and, after 1587, its militant wing, the 'Sixteen', openly espoused the doctrine of the election of the king by the Estates General. In his 1589 treatise, *De justa Henrici Tertii abdicatione*, Jean Boucher, a leading preacher of the Sixteen, explained that the ancient Franks preferred to choose the best candidate from a particular dynasty. After League leaders were murdered at the behest of King Henri III in 1588, popular sovereignty, papal deposition and tyrannicide became the motifs of Leaguer thought. Boucher aimed to demonstrate the superiority of commonwealth over the king. He repeated the commonplace that the king, though greater than the people taken individually, was less than they as a whole (*rex maior singulis, universis minor*). Although not asserting full, direct jurisdiction for the papacy over secular power, he claimed indirect power for Rome based on the doctrine that the spiritual was superior to the temporal. In the case of a king endangering the salvation of the people or fostering schism or apostasy, a pope should release people from their obedience to him and arrange for them to be ruled with 'more appropriate care'. However, Boucher was no radical regarding the social order; by 'people', he did not mean the 'mob' but rather nobles and senators and 'a prudent multitude assembled by law'.²² Social conflict, however, created tensions within the League. The extreme radical wing favoured popular rights, a social radicalism and religious fervour whereas, among the aristocratic leadership, Gallican sentiment existed. Gallicanism tended to limit the authority of the Pope and subordinate the rights of the church to the power of the state. The assassination of Henri III by a religious fanatic in 1589 encouraged the *politique* followers of Henri of Navarre (soon to become Henri IV) to endeavour to attract Gallican League leaders by emphasising the ultramontanism of the radicals, and,

²¹ Salmon, 'Catholic resistance theory', pp 235-6; Marie-Claude Tucker, 'William Barclay (1546-1608)', *ODNB*.

²² Salmon, 'Catholic resistance theory', pp 222-5.

following the new king's conversion to Catholicism in 1593, nearly all the Leaguer bishops and *parlementaire* judges defected to him.²³ Thus, approaching the close of the sixteenth century, Gallicanism and a *politique* royalism were in the ascendant in France.

French absolutism

The doctrine of the divine right of kings and the absolutist version of sovereignty were the hallmarks of *politique* royalism and the absolutist views of Bodin were of great importance at this time. Jean Bodin (1529-96), the French jurist, was one of the most celebrated proponents of the ideology of absolutism in the early modern period. In his *Les six livres de la République* (1576) he advanced a theory of ruler sovereignty that revealed his famous principle that sovereignty is indivisible; by this he meant that the high powers of government could not be shared by separate agents or distributed among them but that all of them had to be entirely concentrated in a single individual or group. In *République*, Bodin concluded that sovereignty was absolute and it seemed utterly clear to him that, not only was the power of the king of France absolute, but that this applied to the kings of England and Spain as well.²⁴ A translation of *République*, the Six Books of the Commonwealth was published in 1606 and the work won admirers at the English court, but undivided sovereignty was generally an unattractive innovation to most of the English governing class because it implied a weak parliament and an overweening court.²⁵ However, Bodin's work was extremely influential. Skinner remarks that 'as early as the 1580s, Gabriel Harvey observed that "you cannot step into a scholar's study" without the chances, as he put it, being ten to one that you will find him reading either Le Roy on Aristotle or Bodin's Six Books.'²⁶

Exercise of power in France

France, from the late sixteenth century, saw the ever increasing centralization of the state and the reduction of all the subordinate units such as principalities and independent noble

²³ Salmon, 'Catholic resistance theory', pp 228-33.

²⁴ Julian H. Franklin 'Sovereignty and the mixed constitution: Bodin and his critics' in Burns (ed.), *Cambridge history of political thought*, pp 298-307.

²⁵ Paul Kléber Monod, *The power of kings: monarchy and religion in Europe, 1589-1711* (New Haven, 1999), pp 79-80.

²⁶ Skinner, *The foundations of modern political thought*, ii, 300-01.

houses which had exercised political power in the localities since feudal times. In addition, from 1614 until 1789, French kings and regents ruled without the Estates General, the national representative assembly. Provincial sovereign courts or *parlements* represented local élites and were primarily judicial bodies but could potentially act as a check on the king's power. When the king wanted to enact a new tax, the legislation came before the courts for registration and they could either register the legislation unaltered, register it amended, or fail to register it. However, the power of the *parlements* was limited. If a sovereign court failed to register the legislation, the king could convene a *lit de justice*, a special session of the Paris *parlement*, and force the law through anyway and arrange for the collection of taxes through the offices of *intendants*, representatives of central government operating throughout the provinces. Nevertheless, while the French state can be said to have been 'absolute' in the early seventeenth century, because it operated without the input of a parliament, its power was not unlimited. Ultimately, like many other European states, it was normatively bound to respect the same social classes it was trying to dominate and had to respect the laws it inherited from the past.²⁷ Further, toleration of their Protestantism, including freedom to worship, which was granted to the Huguenots under the Edict of Nantes in 1598, obtained throughout the greater part of the century until the edict was revoked in 1685. As the second half of the century dawned, however, the monarchy became more powerful. Defeat of the armed insurrection of the élites and nobility, known as the Fronde (1648-53), strengthened the monarchy and paved the way for a more thorough centralization of the French political system under the reign of the more absolutist Louis XIV (1643-1715).

English absolutism

In England also, the seventeenth century saw a greater drift towards absolutist thinking. Sir Robert Filmer (1588-1653) was a prominent exponent of the divine origins of royal authority and he particularly espoused a theory of political patriarchalism. At creation, God had given power to Adam, the first father, and Filmer illustrated his description of the political order in terms of familial symbols, which signified that political authority

²⁷ Francis Fukuyama, *The origins of political order* (London, 2011), ch. 23 *passim*.

was identical with the rule of a father or patriarch over his family.²⁸ An important feature of contemporary social thought was the importance of patriarchy to social order, which rested on the family and household, on schooling and apprenticeship and on the formal and informal institutions of control in the parish. Relations between husbands and wives, parents and children as well as heads of households and their dependants and servants were deemed to be central to the maintenance of a well-regulated society.²⁹ Legislation in England dealt very severely with those who strayed outside the bounds of order. For instance, there were quite savage punishments for begging and vagrancy; offenders could be tied to a cart and beaten with whips through the nearest market town. Clearly, such measures cannot be explained merely by the seriousness of the offence but reflect contemporary thinking about the nature of the social order.³⁰ Despite these examples of petty crime, however, in the greater scheme of things, during the period 1569-1642 England enjoyed the longest period of domestic peace, the authorities preferring to deploy minimum force in response to unrest.³¹ King James I had developed his absolutist views even before he succeeded to the throne of England in 1603. In 1598, he had written *The trew law of free monarchies* containing his theory of the divine right of kings: monarchy was divinely ordained; hereditary right was infeasible; kings were accountable to God alone; and non-resistance along with passive obedience were enjoined by God.³² He did have to modify his opinions over the course of his reign as king of England (1603-25), particularly when dealing with parliament. In a speech to parliament in 1618, while still maintaining that laws 'are properly made by the king only', James agreed that the king should observe the fundamental laws of the kingdom.³³ Nevertheless, James' influence ensured that absolutist ideas were expressed with increased frequency during his reign.³⁴

Exercise of power in England

²⁸ Gordon J. Schochet, *The authoritarian family and political attitudes in seventeenth-century England: patriarchalism in political thought* (New Brunswick, 1988), pp 7-8.

²⁹ Michael J. Braddick, *State formation in early-modern England, c. 1550-1700* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 101.

³⁰ Braddick, *State formation in early-modern England*, pp 107-8.

³¹ John Morrill, *Stuart Britain: a very short introduction* (Oxford, 1984), pp 26-7.

³² Salmon, 'Catholic resistance theory', p. 247.

³³ Salmon, 'Catholic resistance theory', pp 248-9.

³⁴ Burns (ed.), *Cambridge history of political thought*, pp 679-80.

However, no matter how absolute kings might be in the abstract, in the actual situation in which James found himself, he conceded that he could only make law and raise taxation through parliament, and that every one of his actions as king was subject to judicial review. His prerogative, derived though it was from God, was enforceable only under the law. Though he argued with parliament over many measures that he wanted introduced, he failed to succeed with some of his visions; for instance the extension of the unions of the crowns of England and Scotland into a fuller union of Britain was frustrated by the county gentry in parliament, and an elaborate scheme for rationalizing his revenues, known as the Great Contract, also failed to get through parliament. Even so, parliament failed to secure any reduction in royal power during his reign nor did it manage to enhance its own participation in government.³⁵ The fractious relationship between king and parliament continued during the reign of Charles I. In 1629, after a series of confrontations concerning foreign policy, finance, and his religious policies, which many English Protestants regarded as akin to Roman Catholicism, Charles decided that he would govern without parliament for the foreseeable future. Although there were many outspoken critics of royal policies in the 1630s during the personal rule of Charles, disunity prevented their successful opposition. However, by the end of the decade, faced with a Scottish invasion in the autumn of 1640, Charles was compelled to call a parliament. This provided the members with an opportunity to demand to be allowed to meet regularly to discharge its ancient duties: to make law, to grant supply, to present the grievances of the subjects to the king and to seek redress. Within twelve months those institutions and prerogatives through which Charles had sustained his non-parliamentary government were swept away and within two years civil war broke out culminating with the execution of the king in 1649.³⁶

Exercise of power in Ireland

Before 1541, Ireland's status in English law was that of a feudal lordship granted to the English crown for conquest by Pope Adrian IV under the terms of the bull *Laudibiliter* in 1156. Thus the English king had claimed jurisdiction as lord over the whole of his

³⁵ Morrill, *Stuart Britain*, pp 28-31.

³⁶ Morrill, *Stuart Britain*, pp 33-8.

lordship of Ireland. In practice, however, his authority had been confined mainly to the Pale, an area within a fifty-mile radius of Dublin, and the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman conquerors had long been regarded by the crown as the only legitimate inhabitants of the island. In the parliament held in Dublin in 1541 the constitutional status of Ireland was decisively changed. Ireland was no longer to be an abridged and divided lordship but was now established in law as a single and distinct sovereign entity, a kingdom in its own right joined to England only under the rule of a common monarch. Through the act 'for the kingly title', together with the policy of unification and assimilation which it inaugurated, from now on native Irish lords who surrendered their properties and rights would receive them back again as subjects of a new Irish king. They would no longer be regarded as the enemies of the English in Ireland but as their equals, common subjects under the law of their new united kingdom.³⁷ The act of the kingly title was to provide for political unity of all the island's inhabitants in a single community of subjects under the unilateral jurisdiction of the crown.³⁸

The power of the crown was exercised through its viceroy and its executive in Dublin, delegated by the crown and subject to the king's overriding authority.³⁹ However, in the sixteenth and the early seventeenth century, a number of factors limited the power of central government and ultimately royal power. In the years following the constitutional change, a political system that predated the sixteenth-century institution of an all-island kingdom persisted; a system of the domination of political life by extensive networks of allies and enemies that was inherent in both Gaelic and Anglo-Norman lordships.

Further, local government was controlled by the local elite which inevitably constituted a serious obstacle to the effectiveness of central government authority. Thus, the Dublin administration only asserted its will in times of upheaval and then by arbitrary military rule, which made it highly unpopular in the localities. In the Pale, however loyal the inhabitants were to the English crown and anxious to fulfil its objectives, they continued to regard their administration in Dublin less as the royal instrument for the rule of the

³⁷ Ciaran Brady, 'Court, castle and country: the framework of government in Tudor Ireland' in Ciaran Brady & Gillespie, Raymond (eds), *Natives and newcomers: essays on the making of Irish colonial society, 1534-1641* (Dublin, 1986), pp 25-7.

³⁸ Colm Lennon, *Sixteenth century Ireland: the incomplete conquest* (Dublin, 1994), pp 155-6.

³⁹ Art Cosgrove, *Late medieval Ireland, 1370-1541* (Dublin, 1981), p. 2.

whole island, than as the seat of their own local government. The extraordinary powers held by the king's viceroy included the exercise of prerogative rights, and increased economic and military burdens which successive viceroys imposed upon the country led to disillusionment and estrangement amongst the most loyal supporters of English rule in the Pale and the corporate towns in the sixteenth century. Further, alterations and oscillations in policy towards particular regions and individuals also alienated the Gaelic and gaelicised lords of the island causing most of them to renege on their 'surrender and regrant' agreements.⁴⁰ By the end of the century relations between the Dublin government and the communities on the island had deteriorated.

Although the Old English and Gaelic Irish had registered their protests with some successes during the sixteenth century, by 1603, because of the requirement to swear the oath of supremacy in order to be nominated for government office, only one Catholic held a post in the Dublin administration.⁴¹ Nevertheless, in the seventeenth century, indications of limitation on the power of the monarch are clear. In an article dealing with the distribution of power between monarchies and parliaments in early modern Europe, H.G. Koenigsberger details many factors that imposed restraints on the considerable powers which kings had amassed since the medieval period.⁴² With regard to peripheral kingdoms held in composite monarchies, he has shown that, despite possessing often overwhelming powers, kings found it expedient to avoid antagonising the privileged classes in the interests of stability and security, as well as in alarm at the prospect of foreign intervention which might aid the discontented in the regions situated far from the metropolis.⁴³ In Ireland, in this respect, during the years 1604 to 1607, following the accession of James I, lord deputy Sir Arthur Chichester and the government, conducted a campaign of coercion, including hefty fines and imprisonment, to compel conformity in religion on the citizens of the Pale and the Munster towns. The London government periodically urged moderation and in 1607, due to a fear that Old English recusants might resort to armed resistance as well as apprehension of a reputed native Irish rebellion,

⁴⁰ Brady, 'Court, castle and country', pp 22-49.

⁴¹ Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650* (Oxford, 2001), p. 173.

⁴² H. G. Koenigsberger, 'Monarchies and parliaments in early modern Europe: dominium regale or dominium politicum et regale' in *Theory and Society*, 5:2 (Mar., 1978), pp 191-217.

⁴³ Koenigsberger, 'Monarchies and parliaments in early modern Europe', pp 202-5.

James and his English council reined in the extreme reforming policies of his chief governor and halted the prosecutions undertaken in Castle Chamber.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, Gaelic and gaelicised lesser lords, less able to defend themselves before the law, suffered the brunt of the administration's frustration at being reined in, and government onslaughts against them were carried out on fiscal grounds and in the interests of promoting religious and civil reform.⁴⁵ As mentioned, the Old English had developed the practice of a visiting committee to the king to appeal against the actions of the government in Ireland. In 1613, their delegation was partly successful when they protested against the government granting borough status to obscure locations in newly-planted Ulster in order to ensure a Protestant New English majority in parliament. The king reduced the number of Protestant MPs and made other concessions including the withdrawal of proposed anti-Catholic legislation.⁴⁶ In 1628, a delegation of Irish representatives to Charles I was enormously fruitful in wringing a number of important concessions known as the 'Graces' in return for substantial subsidies which the king needed to fund war with Spain.⁴⁷ Although circumstances, including the ending of hostilities with Spain in 1629 and the implacable opposition of Sir Thomas Wentworth to two crucial measures for the Old English, meant that not all the concessions were realised, such pressure by Irish representatives resulted in a real limitation on power held by the king. In 1641, in a challenge to the lord justices, the Old English MP Patrick Darcy represented the views of both Irish Catholic and Protestant MPs working together to limit the powers of the executive which was, whether intended or not, a challenge to the authority of the king.⁴⁸ A few years later, although in the context of the period of the wars of the 1640s, the confederate Catholics, despite referring to themselves as the king's 'loyal subjects', blatantly violated the king's royal prerogatives and consistently refused to obey his instructions.⁴⁹ Therefore, although power ultimately rested with the monarchy, in practice this power was not unlimited.

⁴⁴ John McCavitt, 'Lord Deputy Chichester and the English government's "Mandates policy" in Ireland, 1605-1607' in *Recusant History*, 20:3 (May, 1991), pp 320-35.

⁴⁵ Canny, *Making Ireland British*, p. 175.

⁴⁶ M. Perceval-Maxwell, 'Ireland and the monarchy in the early Stuart multiple kingdom' in *The Historical Journal*, 34:2 (1991), p. 286.

⁴⁷ Aidan Clarke, *The Old English in Ireland, 1625-1641* (Dublin, 1966), pp 44-60.

⁴⁸ Perceval-Maxwell, 'Ireland and the monarchy', pp 292-4.

⁴⁹ Jane Ohlmeyer, *Ireland from independence to occupation, 1641-1660* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 18.

Jesuit thought

The Jesuits were also influential theorists on both ecclesiastical and political matters. They were defenders of Ultramontanism and expressed some constitutionalist ideas but were convinced conservatives as regards the social order. Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), in *De summo pontifice* (1586), insisted that it was the duty of a Christian king to defend the true faith, that subjects need not obey a heretical ruler and the Pope could decide the ruler should be deposed. Bellarmine acted as a polemicist against James I's oath of allegiance with his *responsio* to it of 1608. In 1610, his *De potestate summi pontificis in rebus temporalibus* replied to William Barclay's *De potestate Papae*, in which Barclay had refuted the power of popes over the temporal power of kings.⁵⁰ The works of Bellarmine were consulted by Keating, especially his *Disputationes de controversiis Christianae fidei adversus huius temporis haereticos* (1590).⁵¹ Jesuits Luis de Molina (1535-1600) and Francisco Suarez (1548-1627) expounded a Thomist view of natural law in their discussions of secular government. Natural law was understood by men through the rational apprehension of it imprinted upon the mind by the Creator and it served as the measure of justice in human positive law. Both viewed the ruler as effectively limited in his acts and ordinances by their consonance with natural law.⁵² Suarez was a man of enormous erudition with an output of thirty large volumes of work. His massive treatise on law, *The laws and God the lawgiver*, was published in 1612, and in the same year he also composed *A defence of the Catholic and apostolic faith* in refutation of James I's *Apology* in which James had defended his oath of allegiance. These two works represent Suarez's major contribution to legal and political thought and they reflect also the homogenous outlook which had developed by the whole school of Thomist political philosophy in the sixteenth century.⁵³ With regard to papal temporal power, Suarez went further than Bellarmine and, in common with the views of the majority of Thomists, held that not only did the Pope have the power of excommunication but that he was also licensed to coerce kings with 'temporal

⁵⁰ Salmon, 'Catholic resistance theory', pp 236-7; Tucker, 'William Barclay', *ODNB*.

⁵¹ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, pp 31-3, 100.

⁵² Salmon, 'Catholic resistance theory', pp 236-7.

⁵³ Skinner, *Foundations of modern political thought*, ii, 137-8.

punishments and even deprivation of their kingdoms'. In his *Defence*, which considered whether the people of England were obliged by the oath of allegiance, Suarez developed an analogy between the rights of individuals and of communities. Just as, in the case of an individual, 'the right to preserve one's life is the greatest right of all', in the case of the commonwealth, 'where the king is actually attacking it with the aim of unjustly destroying it and killing the citizens', there is an analogous right of self-defence. This makes it lawful for the community to resist its prince, and even to kill him, if it has no other means of preserving itself.⁵⁴ On the other hand, Suarez in common with other Counter-Reformation theorists was not in favour of populist sovereignty. When it concerned positive or human law rather than natural law he agreed with Aquinas: that 'the ruler must stand above the entire community' and 'when the community transfers its power to a prince', that prince 'is then able to make use of this power as its proper owner'. As Skinner points out, 'it is clear that one of the major concerns of the Counter-Reformation theorists, in developing their own views about community power, was to counteract what they took to be the highly subversive implications of this concept of popular sovereignty.'⁵⁵ In his *The laws and God the lawgiver*, Suarez affirmed that in the original handing over of power, 'the power of the community is transferred absolutely' and 'such a transfer is not an act of delegation but rather a kind of alienation'. Therefore, he agreed with Aquinas that 'the positive laws can hardly bind the prince' and believed that although the prince has a moral duty to obey whatever laws he makes, if he fails to do so, there is no action can be taken; he is free from the coercive power of the positive laws.⁵⁶ Jesuit thought was very influential and the Jesuits were regarded as spearheading the Counter-Reformation in Europe. They propagated their Thomist teachings with unparalleled energy in Italy and France as well as in Spain.⁵⁷ In addition, the Irish Franciscans at Louvain, despite frequent disagreements between the two orders, used much Jesuit catechetical material in preparing the Tridentine content of their texts for

⁵⁴ Skinner, *Foundations of modern political thought*, ii, 177.

⁵⁵ Skinner, *Foundations of modern political thought*, ii, 175-82.

⁵⁶ Skinner, *Foundations of modern political thought*, ii, 183-4.

⁵⁷ Skinner, *Foundations of modern political thought*, ii, 136-7.

dissemination to Irish Catholics at home in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.⁵⁸

In sum, the foregoing selection of the opinions of various theorists, whose work circulated in early modern Europe, provides examples of the type of political thought which might have informed the consciousnesses of the five protagonist of this thesis. What is also apparent is that theory and practice were not always in alignment; the reception of ideas of power and how it was exercised often differed from the ambitions and intent of kings and princes.

⁵⁸ Salvador Ryan, 'Popular religion in Gaelic Ireland, 1445-1645' (2 vols, PhD thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2002), ii, 201-3.

Chapter 2

Conell Mageoghegan

This chapter examines the political views of Conell Mageoghegan, the annalist who compiled the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* in 1627.¹ He described his manuscript as a translation of ‘an ould Irish book’ but in actual fact he supplemented his source or sources with additions and enlargements and from these his cultural attitudes may be ascertained. He is an important figure for many reasons. First, he was compiling and constructing material for the first time in the seventeenth century, his work predating two other major seventeenth-century historical works, Geoffrey Keating’s *Foras feasa ar Éirinn* (1634)² and the Four Masters’ *Annals of the kingdom of Ireland* (1636).³ Secondly, he was writing in a comparatively ‘normal’ environment, a relatively calm period for Irish Catholics during a time when a degree of religious tolerance prevailed in the mid 1620s and before the hiatus of the failure to confirm by parliament the king’s concessions known as the ‘Graces’ in 1628. Thirdly, he was writing from the perspective of an Irish layman who did not go abroad and may not have been as influenced by European and Counter-Reformation thought to the same degree as the continentally-educated clerics or soldiers or other laymen who had studied on the continent. Fourthly, he was the direct descendant of the last Gaelic chief of the MacGeoghegans, Connla, who died in 1588, and was one of a large extended Gaelic family which, in common with so many other families of Gaelic lords, found their power, influence and possessions greatly diminished over the course of the sixteenth century; so he was almost certainly familiar with Gaelic sensibilities and the struggles and tensions that had to be endured over the previous century. Fifthly, his brother-in-law and patron of the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, Terence Coghlan, whose views he may well have been reflecting, was in political life, to be returned to the 1634 parliament and was connected by marriage to the very politically

¹ Denis Murphy (ed.), *The annals of Clonmacnoise* (Dublin, 1896, facsimile reprint, 1993).

² Geoffrey Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn: the history of Ireland* (c. 1634), ed. & trans. P. S. Dineen & David Comyn (4 vols, London, 1902-14).

³ John O’Donovan (ed. and trans.), *Annála ríoghachta Éireann: annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters from the earliest period to 1616* (7 vols, Dublin, 1851, reprint New York, 1966).

active Old English Dillon family which provided an opportunity for insight into the world of politics as well. Finally, sixthly, he was part of an intellectual and scholarly network of people in the early seventeenth century who were interested in exploring the past and who cooperated with one another in exchanging old manuscripts, a group that included such diverse figures as the Gaelic scholar and annalist Micheál Ó Cléirigh, the Old English author, Geoffrey Keating and the Protestant archbishop of Armagh, James Ussher. Therefore, Conell was not writing in an abstract environment; his influences and connections came both from the Gaelic world and from the political and the intellectual worlds of the early seventeenth century in which he also moved. It was a world where Gaelic Irish and Old English were coming to terms with their changed situations after 1603 and were searching for ideas in the new environment in an attempt to find a workable solution to their dilemmas and to construct for themselves a new political and social world where they could survive.

Mageoghegan's background

Paul Walsh has done much to elucidate the background of the Mageoghegans, chieftains of Kineleagh (*Cenel Fhiachach*), Co. Westmeath, which is the area approximately coextensive with the barony of Moycashel extending into northern Co. Offaly, then King's County.⁴ Conell Mageoghegan was the great-grandson of Connla (d. 1588), chieftain of the Mageoghegan lordship who refused to submit to the queen and relinquish his Gaelic title in 1570. Connla's son Ross, on the other hand, grandfather of Conell, did submit, thereby dispossessing old Connla, and became sheriff of Westmeath in 1571 which resulted in his being murdered by his brothers and his father in 1580. After his murder, Sir Henry Wallop, treasurer of Ireland, reported that 'the best and civilest subject on the borders of Offaly was murdered by the consent of his father'.⁵ Ross, Conell's grandfather therefore had had no qualms about submitting and cooperating with the crown. His wife, Conell's grandmother, was a sister of Terence O'Dempsey, sheriff of Queen's county in 1593 who was later to become first Baron Clanmalier, therefore one of a family who also cooperated with the authorities. Niall, father of Conell and son of the

⁴ Paul Walsh, *The Mageoghegans: a lecture by Rev. Paul Walsh at Castletown-Geoghegan, 6 Dec 1938* (Mullingar, 1938); 'Notes on two Mageoghegans' in *Irish Book Lover*, xx, no. 4 (Jul-Aug, 1932).

⁵ Walsh, *The Mageoghegans*, p. 31.

murdered Ross, was embroiled in a lengthy family wrangle with his uncles for supremacy in Kineleagh but he eventually seems to have inherited and held on to extensive possessions; Lord Deputy Fitzwilliam wrote in 1591, ‘the tough heavy matter between the Mageoghegans ended, and God send love between them, which I fear will never be.’⁶ The settlement confirmed Niall as chief of his name and entitled to receive ‘benefit’ or rent from his uncles. He was given a Gaelic title by the Four Masters at his death in 1596 and though he referred to his position as the ‘captaincy’ or ‘captainry’ of Kinaleagh on several occasions and these terms ordinarily connote formal inauguration, Paul Walsh did not think that he would have been inaugurated in the ancient Irish way,⁷ presumably because he had held official positions from the crown. This branch of the Mageoghegan family therefore was able to negotiate two worlds, that of Gaelic Ireland and the new world which required cooperation with the crown. Niall’s death was untimely for his two young sons, Ross and Conell, who were under-age, and their grand-uncles were waiting in the wings to secure their share of the patrimony. However, the older son, Ross, whose wardship was given to Terence O’Dempsey of Cloneygowan, a relative of his grandmother, seems to have inherited at least some of the lands of Kinaleagh and on the eve of the war of 1641 he was in possession of a considerable estate in Westmeath.⁸ Conell, on the other hand, being a younger brother, does not appear to have been a large landed proprietor and devoted his life instead to academic pursuits.

Paul Walsh regarded that situation as unusual; ‘here we find, within less than fifty years after the death of an illiterate chieftain [Connla not having been able to sign his name in an Irish covenant he had made with his neighbour Breasal Fox in 1566⁹], his great-grandson not only an adept in his own Gaelic, and the ways of committing it to writing, but sufficiently acquainted with the English language to be able to make a very fine and a very valuable translation.’¹⁰ It was unusual to find the great-grandson of an Irish chieftain involved in such scholarly and literary activity. In Ireland up to and even during the seventeenth century such literary activity was the domain of the hereditary learned

⁶ Walsh, *The Mageoghegans*, p. 40.

⁷ Walsh, *The Mageoghegans*, p. 41.

⁸ Walsh, *The Mageoghegans*, pp 27-43.

⁹ ‘Covenant between Mageoghegan and the Fox’ (<http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/G102004/index.html>).

¹⁰ Paul Walsh, ‘Notes on two Mageoghegans’ in *Irish Book Lover*, xx, no. 1 (Jan–Feb, 1932), p. 81.

families such as the Mac Fírbíshigh, the O Maolchonaire or the Ó Cléirigh. The bardic poets who were highly skilled at their trade came from families such as these and were trained for years in centres of education which were situated in various parts of the country. However, having no land or at least not much land, and not going for the church, it is likely he followed his natural inclination for learning. It is not known where Conell received his education. Perhaps he attended the same school as his uncle, the Dominican and bishop of Kildare, Ross Mageoghegan who studied at Fartullagh, Co. Westmeath under a Welsh teacher by the name of Humphrey.¹¹ In any case, Conell's life was spent in scribal and academic activity.

More information about Conell has emerged since Paul Walsh wrote in the 1930s. It has been recently shown by Bernadette Cunningham and Raymond Gillespie that Conell Mageoghegan was part of a network of people who in the early seventeenth century corresponded with each other and exchanged old manuscripts pertaining to early Irish saints and to Irish history.¹² The principal thing these people had in common was they were all interested in the past and in the ancient history of Ireland. This network of scholars included such diverse figures as James Ussher, Church of Ireland archbishop of Armagh and primate of Ireland, Geoffrey Keating, author of *Foras feasa ar Éirinn* and Micheál Ó Cléirigh, the Franciscan brother and principal annalist of the Four Masters. Conell borrowed the Book of Lecan which contained the origin myth of Ireland from Ussher and he lent that book to Micheál Ó Cléirigh. He certainly knew Ó Cléirigh and the other scholars of the Four Masters team as he provided an approbation for their work on the genealogies of the saints and kings of Ireland in November 1630. In fact, Conell may have provided the Four Masters with their source material for that work as, in the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, when disproving allegations that St Manchan of Lemanaghan was Welsh and not Irish, he averred, 'I thought good here to sett downe his pedegree...as is confidently laid down among the genealogies of the saints of Ireland'. It is very likely

¹¹ 'Students of the Irish college, Salamanca (1595-1619)' in *Archiv. Hib.*, ii (1913), p. 11.

¹² Bernadette Cunningham & Raymond Gillespie, 'James Ussher and his Irish manuscripts', in *Stud. Hib.*, xxxiii (2004-5), pp 81-99.

that it was from Conell that Keating borrowed the Red Book of Mac Egan.¹³ From Conell also, Keating may have got the Book of Lecan which, as well as the origin myth, contained much antiquarian material, as Keating used it in his history. All these scholars and historians wanted access to the Book of Lecan which suggests that they all had a vested interest in using this origin myth of Ireland for their own particular purposes. Finally, a description of Conell in 1644 by the scribe, Pól Ó Colla, as ‘the industrious collecting Bee of everything that belongs to the honour and history of the descendants of Milesius and of Lughaidh, son of Ith, both lay and ecclesiastical’ is very apt, and, as Cunningham and Gillespie point out, his ‘influence extended well beyond the traditional world of Gaelic scholarship into the English-speaking world of Dublin and the Pale’¹⁴. By the same token, Mageoghagan himself was open to a wide variety of influences in his professional life and was communicating with a broad spectrum of acquaintances and connections.

Other such influences on Conell’s thought came from his personal and social connections. He described himself as ‘of Lismoyne’ in the county of Westmeath which is on the borders of that county and King’s County and which was bequeathed to him by his father Niall.¹⁵ He was married to Margaret, sister of Terence Coghlan of Kilcolgan, King’s County or Turlough Mac Cochláin who was also a direct descendant of Irish chiefs, the Mac Cochláin, lords of Dealbna Eathra, or Delvin MacCoghlan country, in King’s Co,¹⁶ and it was to his brother-in-law that he dedicated the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*. Terence Coghlan, younger son of James Óg MacCoghlan of Kincora (d. 1642), received a large grant in the plantation of Delvin in 1622 including most of the lands of Kilcolgan where he built a grand fortified house in the early 1640s, which is just a few miles from the MacCoghlan castle at Lemanaghan where Conell wrote his book, and he also acquired extensive lands and mortgages in counties Galway and Roscommon. Nicholls remarks that Terence Coghlan’s building and his land acquisitions show him as one in command of considerable financial resources and, pondering their origins, he

¹³ Cunningham & Gillespie, ‘James Ussher and his Irish manuscripts’, pp 90-3.

¹⁴ Cunningham & Gillespie, ‘James Ussher and his Irish manuscripts’, p. 96.

¹⁵ Kenneth Nicholls, *Land, law and society in sixteenth-century Ireland* (O’Donnell lecture delivered at UCC, May, 1976), p. 9.

¹⁶ Kenneth Nicholls, ‘The MacCoghlan’s’ in *The Irish genealogist*, vi (1983), p. 452.

posits the possibility that he might have been involved in Strafford's survey of Connacht, known to contemporaries as 'Coghlan's Survey'. Terence was usually styled 'of Kilcolgan' but in his father's settlement of lands, made on his sons in 1629, he was styled 'Terence of Dublin'.¹⁷ It is also possible that he might have been the Terence Coghlan, attorney, who presided over a conveyance of lands between Robert Dillon of Clonbrock, Co. Galway and others, and John Coppinger of Feltrim, Co. Dublin in 1618;¹⁸ his brother-in-law James Dillon was married to Jane Dillon of Clonbrock. Terence's wife, Mary Dillon, was the daughter of Robert Dillon, Canorstown, Co Westmeath, second cousin to the earl of Roscommon and of Margaret née Dillon, daughter of Theobald, first Viscount Costello-Gallen.¹⁹ Terence was to be elected to the 1634 parliament as the only Catholic MP for King's county, which was unusual for a county that had been planted; Queen's County and the planted counties of Ulster returned only Protestants to parliament.²⁰ His political capital with the Gaelic Irish and Old English section of the electorate was obviously significant. Besides his lands in King's County, he also acquired lands and mortgages in Connacht, as mentioned above, so, in common with other landed Old Irish and Old English, he had a vested interest in seeing the concession which had been granted by Charles I in 1628 regarding land tenure in Connacht, ratified by parliament. In parliament, he would sit alongside two of his wife's uncles, Sir James Dillon MP for Westmeath county and Sir Lucas Dillon MP for Roscommon county as well as beside her kinsmen, Lord Robert Dillon of Kilkenny West and MP for Trim, and his son James MP for Longford county, and Lord Robert's brother Lucas MP for Cavan. Terence's connections to the very influential Dillon family would have been advantageous to him.

The Dillons were one of the most important Old English families with extensive land interests from Meath to Roscommon, and had a strong history of loyalty to the crown and

¹⁷ Nicholls, 'The MacCoghlan's', p. 456.

¹⁸ John F. Ainsworth & Edward MacLysaght, 'Dillon papers' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 20 (1958), p. 37.

¹⁹ Nicholls, 'The MacCoghlan's', p. 456.

²⁰ Hugh F. Kearney, *Strafford in Ireland, 1633-41* (Manchester, 1959), pp 45, 232.

of service within the administration.²¹ They had been among the first Anglo-Normans to come to Ireland in the twelfth century when they settled in western Meath, which eventually became known as ‘Dillon’s country’, and later branches established themselves in Meath, Galway, Roscommon, Cavan and elsewhere. Over the centuries, they had forged marriage alliances with members of both Old English and Gaelic Irish aristocratic families, and in the early seventeenth century, as mentioned above, the two premier branches boasted an earl and a viscount. Sir James Dillon of Moymet, Co Meath was created Baron of Kilkenny West in 1619 and first earl of Roscommon in 1622, when his son Sir Robert Dillon, who was reared as a Protestant, then took the title Lord of Kilkenny West, later to become second earl of Roscommon. Sir Theobald Dillon of Kilfaghney, Tubberclare, Co Westmeath, knighted during the Nine Years War in 1599, was created first Viscount of Costello-Gallen in 1622 and held numerous offices under James I including the Lord Presidency of Connacht. He and his wife Eleanora Tuite of Tuitestown, Co Westmeath had nineteen children, most of whom either found spouses among the gentry or went for the church. Sir Theobald received numerous grants of lands in Westmeath, Mayo, Roscommon and elsewhere, and in the 1640s his grandson, Sir Thomas, the fourth viscount, who was prominent in the confederacy, had his vast estates sequestered by the Commonwealth but later restored to him by Charles II.²²

In addition, Terence was a client of another very prestigious figure in the seventeenth century, the marquis of Clanricard, Ulick Burke, who referred to him as ‘cousin’,²³ a term of friendship in the early-modern period. Clanricard cited Terence as ‘a person of great worth and ability’, ‘whom himself confidently employed’ [and] ‘a gentleman of very good parts and ability, and of a disposition and integrity suitable...’²⁴ Terence Coghlan was to become an important figure in the confederate period. An uncle of the apostolic delegate, Fr Anthony Geoghegan, in 1648, he sheltered Rinuccini at his house

²¹ Brid McGrath, ‘A biographical dictionary of the membership of the Irish house of commons, 1640-1’ (2 vols, PhD thesis, TCD, 1997), p. 135.

²² Liam Cox, ‘The Dillons, lords of Kilkenny West’ in *Ríocht na Midhe*, xi-xiv (2000-2003).

²³ Thomas Carte, *The life of James, duke of Ormond...a new edition* (6 vols, Oxford, 1851), p. 322.

²⁴ John Dalton, *Illustrations, historical and genealogical of King James’s Irish army list, 1689* (Dublin, 1855), p. 365.

at Kilcolgan and organised safe passage over the Shannon for him. In the period 1649-50, he held the position of commissary for supplies to the army, and in 1650, he successfully defended the important garrison of Rachra on the Shannon, eventually having to yield it to the enemy in 1651.²⁵ He sat on two general assemblies in the commons and in 1648 acted as intermediary between Clanricard and General Owen Roe O’Neill.²⁶ His role as intermediary did not satisfy the author of *Aphorismical discovery*, however, who, while not condemning him outright, doubted his total commitment to the side of the ‘clerical party’ in the confederation.²⁷ Perhaps a (possibly ironic) comment made by Rinuccini, as translated by Annie Hutton, gives an accurate description of Coghlan: ‘this man’s great prudence and his voluntary abstention from public affairs made him a favourite with all parties’; a Gaelic Irish gentleman, determined to survive in the hostile anti-Catholic climate, who was at home in both Gaelic and Old English worlds. He did, however, benefit from Rinuccini’s favour, who was impressed with his ‘singular attachment to the Catholic religion’, and he received a papal brief in 1648.²⁸

Terence also remained connected to the Gaelic world. Contiguous to his interest in politics, Terence, like his brother-in-law Conell, was also interested in the past. As well as being patron for the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, he was also to become the patron and dedicatee of the Four Masters’ work on the genealogies of saints and kings of Ireland, mentioned above, which was completed in the Franciscan convent at Athlone in 1630.²⁹ Terence’s interest in sponsoring works which involved the retelling and reshaping of the history of Ireland was in accordance with the contemporary new interest in using national histories for current political ends. These networks, scholarly, social, and political, transcended traditional communications within Ireland. Mageoghagan’s contacts with such people as Coghlan, Ó Cléirigh and Fergal Ó Gadhra, dedicatee of *ARÉ* and a

²⁵ J. T. Gilbert (ed.), *A contemporary history of affairs in Ireland from 1641 to 1653* (3 vols, Dublin, 1879), i, 196-7, ii, 28, 150, 161, 458, 481.

²⁶ Micheál Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland, 1642-1649* (Dublin, 1999), pp 37, 43, 256.

²⁷ Gilbert (ed.), *Contemporary history*, i, 234.

²⁸ Hutton, Annie (ed.), *The embassy in Ireland of Mons. G. B. Rinuccini, archbishop of Fermo, in the years 1645-1649* (Dublin, 1873), pp 385, 533-4.

²⁹ Paul Walsh (ed.), *Genealogiae regum et sanctorum Hiberniae, by the Four Masters* (Maynooth, 1916), pp 5-6.

connection of Coghlan's wife's family, and also with the Dillons, Keating and Ussher reveals a group held together by marriage networks and by the exchanging of manuscripts and it appears that a lot of them seem to have been using such contacts for political purposes. Conell's views are likely to reflect some of the views held by those who were part of this network and it is quite probable that some of his opinions were influenced by the priorities of his political brother-in-law, Terence Coghlan. The extent to which this network might have served in the circulation of ideas and in the shaping of political opinion will be discussed below.

Annals of Clonmacnoise

Conell Mageoghegan's principal historical work was the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* that he compiled in 1627. Mageoghegan himself did not name the book as the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*; this title was given to it by James Ware in the mid-seventeenth century, and it is now also sometimes known as *Mageoghegan's Book*.³⁰ However, in this thesis it will be referred to by Ware's title. Mageoghegan's autograph copy is unfortunately lost but there are eight surviving manuscripts extant including copies at Armagh (1660), the British Library (1661), Trinity College Dublin (1685) and National Library of Ireland (c. 1685).³¹ The TCD copy of the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* was edited by Denis Murphy and printed at Dublin in 1896 and a facsimile reprint produced in 1993 as already cited, from which edition this thesis is mainly drawn. The British Library copy transcribed by Domhnall O'Sullivan in 1661 has also been consulted.³²

Mageoghegan described his work in his dedicatory preface, which he addressed to his patron and brother-in-law, Terence Coghlan, as the translation of an 'ould Irish booke'. In fact, it is much more than that definition suggests. The *Annals of Clonmacnoise* is the translation and compilation of a number of sources and it recounts the history of Ireland from Creation up to the year 1408 with (as John O'Donovan noted in 1861) the addition

³⁰ D.P. McCarthy, 'Chronological synchronisation of the Irish annals', https://www.cs.tcd.ie/Dan.McCarthy/chronology/synchronisms/Edition_4/K_trad/K_synch.htm.

³¹ Sarah Sanderlin, 'The manuscripts of the annals of Clonmacnois' in *PRIA* (C), lxxxii 1982), p. 112.

³² BL Add MSS 4817.

³³ Breandán Ó Buachalla, *The Crown of Ireland* (Galway, 2006), p. 20.

of interpolations.³³ The writing of national histories by scholars was a prominent feature in early-modern Europe and the use of history as a political tool was an integral part of the new genre. Similarly, in Ireland, in the early part of the seventeenth century, both Old Irish and Old English showed an interest in Irish history with a view to commenting on and addressing current political and social realities.³⁴ Bernadette Cunningham has shown that one thing Geoffrey Keating was doing in writing *Foras feasa ar Éirinn* was reformulating the history of the past with an eye to current political perspectives.³⁵ Conell Mageoghegan's history fits into this genre too. He mentioned himself that the commission to write this history came from his patron and dedicatee, Terence Coghlan - 'There are soe many leaves lost or stolen out of the ould Irish book which I Translate, that I doe not know how to handle, but to satisfie your request, I will translate such places in the book as I can read'³⁶ - and Coghlan, an aspiring politician, was elected to the Irish parliament in 1634. Mageoghegan addressed him in the dedication as 'the worthy and of Great expectacon young gentleman Mr Terenc Coghlan'; therefore, signs of a political undertone in this work of history are evident from the start. The brief given to Conell by Terence, whether explicit or implicit, may very well have been to write a history of the past with an eye to the present.

Conell Mageoghegan tells us that he was translating from an old Irish book. However, he was doing much more than that. He changed the format which was traditionally used in annals and added to and embellished the records. He used a wide variety of sources; perhaps many of these were contained in his old book or, as a collector of old manuscripts, it is likely he had extra material to draw upon. The *Annals of Clonmacnoise* is presented in two parts. The first part runs to almost two-thirds of his book and brings the history of Ireland up to the coming of the Normans. Much of the material comes from *Leabhar gabhála Éireann* (Book of invasions of Ireland) and *Réim rioghraidhe*

³⁴ Bernadette Cunningham, 'Seventeenth-century interpretations of the past: the case of Geoffrey Keating' in *IHS*, xxv, no. 98 (Nov. 1986), p. 116.

³⁵ Bernadette Cunningham, *The world of Geoffrey Keating: history, myth and religion in seventeenth-century Ireland* (Dublin 2000), p. 106.

³⁶ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 215.

(Roll of the kings of Ireland).³⁷ There is also much Clonmacnoise material contained in this section which is concerned with the monastery itself and with the history of all the area around the midlands especially Meath, to which Clonmacnoise was then attached. For much of this period Meath was under O'Melaghlin influence, kings of Meath and occasionally of Ireland, and this sept features prominently in this part of the book. The second part of the book runs from AD 1170 to 1408. Again there are many entries relating to the monastery at Clonmacnoise but this section is dominated by entries concerning the O'Connors, kings of Connacht. The O'Briens and the Burkes feature strongly as well reflecting the politics of this later medieval period but the O'Connor influence is predominant, which is not surprising as the O'Connors exerted their authority and influence over Clonmacnoise during this period.³⁸ It is possible that both parts of his work emanated from Clonmacnoise where the bias of the chroniclers would have reflected the politics of the Irish chiefs whose patronage they enjoyed at a given time.³⁹ He obviously had access to versions of the *Leabhar gabhála* and the *Réim ríoghraidhe* and compiled his history from Clonmacnoise sources and those two sources. In addition, Conell gives a 'bibliography'. The following is his list of 'the names of the severall authors which I have taken for this booke': 'Saint Colum Kill, sainte bohine, Collogh O'More, Esqr, Venerable Bede, Eoghye O'Flannagan, arch dean of Armach and Clonfiachna, Gillernew Mac Conn ne mboght, archpriest of Clonvickenos, Keilachar Mac Con als Gorman, Eusebius Marcellinus, McOylyne O'Mulchonrye and Tanaige O'Mulconrye, 2 professed Chroniclers.' Again, these may have been in his old book. Certainly, the entries from Bede, Eusebius and Marcellinus accord with similar entries in earlier annals. Eochaidh O'Flanagan, archdean of Armagh and Clonfiachna, died in 1003 and his books are referred to in *Leabhar na hUidhre*, and the latter mentioned book was written at Clonmacnoise before the year 1106⁴⁰. The Conn na mBocht family controlled various ecclesiastical offices in Clonmacnoise down to at least AD 1134 and one noted member of that family was the scribe, litterateur and chronicler, Maelmuire, son of the

³⁷ R. A. S. Macalister (ed.), *Lebor gabála Erenn* (5 vols, Dublin, 1956).

³⁸ Annette Kehnel, *Clonmacnoise, the church and lands of St Ciaran: change and continuity in an Irish monastic foundation (6th to 16th century)* (Berlin, 1997), p. 126.

³⁹ Kathryn Grabowski & David Dumville, *Chronicles and annals of medieval Ireland and Wales: the Clonmacnoise-group texts* (Woodbridge, 1984), pp 174-5.

⁴⁰ Eugene O'Curry, *Lectures on the manuscript materials of ancient Irish history* (Dublin, 1995), p. 166.

son of Conn na mBocht, who was the reviser and interpolator of the manuscript *Leabhar na hUidhre*; so it is not unlikely that both Mac Con annalists mentioned were members of the Conn na mBocht family.⁴¹ Finally, as he alluded himself, the Ó Maolchonaire was a famous scholarly family: the ‘McOylyne’ he mentions in his ‘bibliography’ may be the ‘Chronicler and poet Moylynn o’Mulchonry’, or else a relation of his, whom he cites later in his book under the year AD 1384 as one ‘numbering the kings of Connaught in his verses’.⁴² The sources that he cited in his ‘bibliography’ therefore are either ecclesiastical or have connections with Clonmacnoise or with the O’Connors and it is likely that they emanated from his exemplars but, as mentioned, he was very likely to have had access to and used additional sources too. Murphy remarked that there are historical details given of districts and families which are not found elsewhere.⁴³

Daniel McCarthy’s remarkable and comprehensive book on the Irish annals throws much light on the sources of the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* or *Mageoghegan’s Book*. However, he concludes that Mageoghegan’s work is largely drawn from a single old book, the compilation of Maoilín Uí Mhaoil Chonaire (d. 1441) and that it was obtained by Conell from the heirs of Collogh O’More (d. 1618), who was one of Conell’s stated sources. However, the dates which Conell appended to his work do not accord with this understanding. He signed off on his introductory preface 20 April 1627 and on his second book 30 June 1627. Introductions were almost invariably written when the author finished his work so it looks very likely that because of the dating and also because at the end of his first book he wrote ‘FINIS’ that there were at least two old books. Further, before he commenced his first book, he explained that the book, ‘by longe lying shutt & unused I could hardly read and left places, that I could not read because they were altogether growne illegible & put out’; then, immediately after starting on his second compilation, which he may not have intended to carry out at all at the outset, he again apologised, ‘There are soe many leaves lost or stolen out of the ould Irish book which I Translate, that I doe not know how to handle it’. This suggests that this is a separate old

⁴¹ Grabowski & Dunville, *Chronicles and annals of medieval Ireland and Wales*, pp 176-8.

⁴² Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 309.

⁴³ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. v.

book otherwise he would not have needed to repeat the explanation about the condition of the book a second time.

However, the way in which Conell presented his sources is significant. Unlike the earlier annals, he selected the format of the *Leabhar gabhála* and *Réim ríoghraidhe* with which to frame his history. As stated above, early seventeenth-century writers of history were addressing a current political situation and reflecting the political and social climate of the decades in which they worked. After 1603, due to an increasing diminishing of their status to the benefit of New English officials and administrators, Irish Catholics were having to find ways to construct a new world; a world where their proper natural status, as they saw it, and their political influence would prevail again. By employing the format of the origin myth, a historian could show where Ireland had come from. He could use it for his own contemporary political purposes. The origin myth was highly respected in the ancient materials and the utilisation of it would add respectability to any work that purported to be a history of Ireland. It was highly sought after by scholars who, as mentioned, were all anxious to access the Book of Lecan which contained the origin myth which suggests perhaps more than just academic purposes to their scholarly endeavours. The origin myth contained in the *Leabhar gabhála* depicted the kings and rulers of the ancient tribes which invaded the country from the Partholonians to the Fir Bolg until the arrival of the Gaeil, the sons of Miletus of Spain. The *Réim ríoghraidhe* gave an account of all the ancient kings up until the twelfth century and the coming of the Normans. The new English settlers who, with the backing of the administration, were squeezing out the old inhabitants of the country from all avenues of advancement, who had dispossessed and displaced much of the Gaelic population and who were endeavouring to increase their possessions at the expense of the Old English as well, had no place in this origin myth and no connection with these Irish kings of old. The Old English might have had no claim to them either but Keating was to address that anomaly when he came to write his history a few years later. Conell found the *Leabhar gabhála* and the *Réim ríoghraidhe* useful for his purposes as it provided him with a framework into which the history of Ireland could be arranged neatly around the reigns of kings. It is also significant that Conell treated the second part of his history differently to the first

part. Most of his enlargements and interpolations occur in the first part up to and including the arrival of Brian Boromha on the scene and to the battle of Clontarf. Brian Boromha, whom he extolled above all the other kings, even though many of those were accorded the highest accolades from him, received the most attention in the book and it appears that after Brian, he felt less need to interpolate. In the second half, there are some of his own insertions but they are much fewer and this section gives an impression of being more faithfully reported from his exemplar than section one does. The battles and political events of Connacht and of the O'Connor-dominated areas of the midlands comprise the majority of section two. It seems then as if Conell was most interested in kings and in the qualities that these kings displayed and once he had dealt with the hero Brian Boromha, whom he depicted as a colossus and unifying force (and his coverage of Brian will be considered in detail below), his own input in the form of interpolation and embellishment was no longer as important. Significantly, Terence Coghlan was also interested in kings; as alluded to above, as well as being patron for Conell, he sponsored Micheál Ó Cléirigh and his associates' work on the genealogies of the saints and kings of Ireland. It is possible that Mageoghagan's choice of emphasis and format may have been as a result of collaboration between the brothers-in-law.

Mageoghagan's targeted readership appears to have been the literate, English-speaking section of Irish society, most likely the educated classes of the Old Irish and Old English. The theme running through his dedicatory preface is suggestive of an aspiration for a closer bond between the Old Irish and Old English. His preface describes how Brian Boromha had cleared the island of the intolerable yoke of the heathenish Vikings, restored ancient patrimonies to their rightful owners, repaired all the churches and houses of religion, called together all the nobility, spiritual and temporal, and overseen the composition of a book to be distributed and to be taken as the official chronicle of Ireland by all the people.⁴⁴ He then proceeds to praise the English who came to study in the colleges of Ireland in early Christian times, especially those who came with St Colman from Lindisfarne to the town, since called 'Mayo of the english':

⁴⁴ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 7-8.

among all other nations that came thither there was none soe much made of nor respected with the Irish as was the english & Welshmen, to whome they gave severall Collages to Dwell and Learne In...from whence these said twoo nations haue brought their charactors, espetically the eng : saxons as by conferring the old saxons Characters to the Irish (wch the Irish neuer change) you shall find little or no Difference at all.⁴⁵

Therefore, an underlying theme in the preface, couples a condemnation of the heathenish invader with an extolling of the Catholic English who came to Ireland in the centuries following the introduction of Christianity. It is not unlikely that Mageoghegan was mentally making the analogy of the Protestant New English and the Catholic Old English in his preface and comparing the unwelcome presence in the country of the one with the legitimate, long-standing merits of the other. The request to undertake the translation came from the ambitious and politically-involved Coghlan and it is likely that the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* was conceived with the intention of motivating Irish Catholics.

Conell Mageoghegan obviously interpolated into his main text from time to time, inserting comments and opinions and embellishments that were not in other annals and which were almost certainly not in his original manuscripts either. The format he used differed from the earlier annals which recorded events in short, bald statements. The *Annals of Clonmacnoise* was written in a semi-annalistic and a semi-narrative style with the author's interpolations usually contained in the long narrative passages. It is not always readily apparent what he had copied from his exemplar and what were his own additions and the method I have used to in attempting to identify the latter is by comparison with the earlier annals, viz. *AB*, *AConn*, *AI*, *AT*, *AU*, *FAI*, *LCé*, and *Mac Carthaigh's book*, the *Leabhar gabhála* and *Réim ríoghraidhe*, various Irish tales and legends and the later-compiled *ARÉ*, *FFÉ* and *CS*. I have then tried to analyse most of these interpolations in search of the author's opinions. As well as comments, he also inserted between the two sections of the book, the genealogies of the three premier peers of the Old Irish nobility of the day, Randal MacDonnell, first earl of Antrim, Henry O'Brien, fifth earl of Thomond and Arthur Magennis, first Viscount Iveagh. In addition, the dedication to Terence Coghlan is obviously his own composition. However, perhaps

⁴⁵ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 8-9.

the most surprising and unexpected aspect about the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* is the extensive coverage that Mageoghegan accorded Brian Boromha, king of the Munster sept, the Dal gCais, and king of Ireland (1000-12) whom he portrayed as the ideal king. It is clear that he interpolated this material because his source text emanated from the areas of influence of the O'Melaghlin kings of Meath and the O'Connor kings of Connacht and the tenor of the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* is on balance hostile to Munster politics and its kings. Accordingly, Mageoghegan's inclusion of effusive commentary with regard to Brian seems incongruous and out of place. Therefore, from his selection of material, his interpolated comments and his original dedicatory preface it is possible to glean the opinions and cultural assumptions of a seventeenth-century Gaelic Irish gentleman.

Royalism

Many of Mageoghegan's insertions are comments on Irish kings who figure so prominently in his work and they betray not only his image of the 'ideal king', but also his royalist sentiments. He structured his history according to the reigns of kings of Ireland, unlike the earlier annals. The annals, most of which had been compiled some centuries before, had certainly recorded accessions, battles and deaths of kings but kings of Ireland received more or less equal prominence with other figures such as provincial kings, bishops or poets. However, as stated above, Mageoghegan chose the format employed by the compilers of the *Réim rioghraidhe*, a version of which he had access to. In this regard, historians have shown that during the seventeenth-century both the Gaelic Irish and the Old English were royalist in their leanings.⁴⁶ The king was the source of all patronage and preferment and both groups professed loyalty to him. There were, however, different degrees of royalism; some loyal subjects could be accepting of absolutism (as defined in the introduction) and tolerate summary decrees while other loyal subjects could be somewhat oppositional, desiring limits on monarchical power. As

⁴⁶ Raymond Gillespie, *Seventeenth-century Ireland: making Ireland modern* (Dublin, 2006), p. 9; 'Political ideas and their social contexts in seventeenth-century Ireland' in Jane Ohlmeyer (ed.), *Political thought in seventeenth-century Ireland: kingdom or colony* (Cambridge, 2000), pp 107-27; Breandán Ó Buachalla, 'James our true king: the ideology of Irish royalism in the seventeenth century' in D. George Boyce et al (eds), *Political thought in Ireland since the seventeenth century* (London, 1993), pp 7-35; Gerard Murphy, 'Royalist Ireland' in *Studies: an Irish quarterly review*, xxiv, no. 96 (Dec., 1935), pp 589-604.

discussed in the chapter on kingship above, absolutists held that their king was accountable only to God alone; his commands ought to be obeyed provided they do not conflict with natural law; and he ought never to be resisted actively by his subjects. Other royalists could be described as loyal adherents of their king who tended to support him in the political controversies of the day although neither would they countenance actively resisting their monarch.⁴⁷ There was a tradition also in Gaelic Ireland of a deep-rooted royalism manifesting itself in an inherent loyalty and devotion to one's lord.⁴⁸ In the sixteenth century, the Tudor regime found that they could not bring the Gaelic population along without subduing and curtailing the power of the great lords first. Conell Mageoghegan exhibited a strand of royalism which displayed some absolutist tendencies.

The royalist theme, which pervades the book and is particularly prevalent throughout the first half of the work up until the coming of the Normans, is clearly visible right from the very first sentence of the dedicatory preface to his patron, Terence Coghlan: 'Among all the worthy & memorable Deeds of K. Bryan Borowe sometime K. of this Kingdome, this is not of the least account'.⁴⁹ Apart from the fact that this was unconventional, as dedicatory prefaces usually extolled and expressed gratitude to the patron for his support, this first sentence set the scene for the very royalist and monarchical approach which was to follow. This theme is continued. From the first pages of the body of the book itself, unlike the *Leabhar gabhála*, the reader was given the strong impression of a 'kingdom' of Ireland from earliest times. To give just a couple of examples: he retold the myth of a man named Fintan who lived 'in the Kingdom' at the time of Noah's ark and the great flood; and when the Partholonians arrived in Ireland Mageoghegan described the rivers and lakes which were 'in the Kingdom'.⁵⁰ There are innumerable such references to the 'kingdom' of Ireland throughout the first half of the book. Some other instances include the king Cathair Mór who took upon himself 'the Government of the kingdom' in the second century AD; and O'Clohogan, the lector of Armagh at his death in 1069AD was

⁴⁷ J. P. Sommerville, 'Absolutism and royalism' in J. H. Burns (ed.), *The Cambridge history of political thought, 1450-1700* (Cambridge, 1991), pp 348-9.

⁴⁸ Murphy, 'Royalist Ireland', pp 589-90.

⁴⁹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 7.

⁵⁰ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 12, 13.

hailed as ‘one famous throughout the kingdom’.⁵¹ The earlier annals hardly ever referred to Ireland as a kingdom; any references to ‘kingdom’ related to provinces or lordships or else to a foreign country. Therefore, it is quite possible that Conell Mageoghegan made a deliberate and conscious decision when he chose to use an anachronistic term to describe Ireland during that early period. Since the beginning of the seventeenth century and the accession of a Stuart to the throne, the idea of Ireland as a ‘kingdom’ existed in the minds of the people to a much greater extent than before, at least in the minds of the educated learned classes and in the consciousness of the political elite. The native Irish seemed to identify immediately with the new Stuart king; the literati were quick to provide James I with a pedigree stretching back to Fergus Mac Erc, the first king of Scotland who had come from the lordship of Dal Riata in the north of Ireland around the fifth century AD, and the bardic poets welcomed James with laudatory verses.⁵² The Fermanagh poet Eochaidh Ó hEodhasa referred to James as ‘our king’ (*ar ríogh/ár rí*), and Breandán Ó Buachalla was not aware of any poet before that who accorded this description to a foreign king.⁵³ Eoghan Ruadh Mac an Bhaird, a poet from Donegal, showed a similar appreciation for a king of Ireland: ‘Three crowns – ‘tis fitting for him – shall be placed on James’s head...that young Prince so high of mind, James Stewart, shall have Ireland’s wondrous crown’.⁵⁴ The native Irish, though they may not have identified with the English king before James came to the throne, had always been under the jurisdiction of a king; even as late as 1642 such concepts of kingship remained, with some inhabitants in Cavan crying, ‘God save king O’Reilly’.⁵⁵ The mainly Old English Catholic political elite were no less sanguine about the new reign and the concept of the ‘kingdom of Ireland’ achieved more significance as the century progressed. Their strategy of appealing over the heads of successive lords deputy, the king’s representatives in Ireland, during the previous century had been fruitful for them and they continued to employ this method of direct appeal to the king during the difficult first three decades of the seventeenth century including when trying to negotiate the concessions to Irish Catholics

⁵¹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 57, 180.

⁵² Gillespie, *Seventeenth-century Ireland*, p. 6.

⁵³ Breandán Ó Buachalla, *Aisling ghéar: na Stíobhartaigh agus an t-aos léinn* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1996), pp 4-5; poem with first line *Mór theasda dh’obair Oivid*, RIA MS. 23 L 17.

⁵⁴ cited in Ó Buachalla, ‘James our true king’, p. 10.

⁵⁵ Gillespie, ‘Political ideas and their social contexts’, p. 107.

known as the Graces in the mid 1620s. The entity of a kingdom of Ireland with the monarch being king of Ireland as distinct from his role as king of England was important to them especially as the New English settlers regarded their new domain as a conquered country with colonial status thereby underpinning the legitimacy of their land settlements.⁵⁶ Mageoghegan's 'kingdom' of Ireland, therefore (at least fifty-eight such references in all), can be seen in these contexts. He was addressing a seventeenth-century political situation and by endlessly mixing in within the older sources of the standard origin myth a portrayal of Ireland as a kingdom he was revealing royalist leanings. These could well have been influenced by a Gaelic concept of kingship.

Mageoghegan's royalist views are transparent when one looks at his representation of the early kings of Ireland. The manner in which Mageoghegan reported on the first Fir Bolg king, Sláinghe, and his brothers is different in tone from the other sources. *LG* expressed this event as 'no king took, who was called "of Ireland" till the Fir Bolg came' (*dá n-ainmigher Érenn*), and another version of *LG* stated, 'they gave the kingship to Slanga' ('*tugsat rigi do Slaine*' and '*ratsat rige do Slaingi*').⁵⁷ *ARÉ* at the year 3266.1 merely recorded 'The other four and the Fir Bolgs in general elected Slaine as king over them,' and *FFÉ*'s wording reads 'Sláinghe...took rule of Ireland and he was the first king of Ireland [ever].'⁵⁸ Mageoghegan's rendering of the account of this king went, 'Slane their said elder Brother by the Consent and election of his other 4 Brothers was chosen King, and was the first King that ever absolutely ruled in Ireland.'⁵⁹ There is an implication given here that from here on kings of Ireland continued to rule absolutely. As seen in the preliminary chapter, there was an absolutist strand of royalist thinking prevalent among many theorists and commentators in the seventeenth century, including the Jesuit Suárez, which held that even if a king's power had originally been transferred from the people, they had not just delegated that power but had alienated it from themselves.⁶⁰ Mageoghegan may not have been consciously advancing an absolutist

⁵⁶ Gillespie, *Seventeenth-century Ireland*, pp 10-11.

⁵⁷ Macalister (ed.), *Lebor Gabála*, iv, 9, 18-19.

⁵⁸ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, p. 197.

⁵⁹ Murphy, (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 16.

⁶⁰ J. H. M. Salmon, 'Catholic resistance theory, Ultramontaniam, and the royalist response, 1580-1620', in Burns (ed.), *Cambridge history of political thought*, p. 238.

message to his reader but his choice of the phrase ‘ever absolutely ruled in Ireland’ could indicate a leaning in this direction.

Further signs of Conell’s royalism are evident in his anachronistic portrayal of the second-century king Feidhlimidh Reachtmhar. The terminology he employed in this account is resonant of the language of absolutism. One cannot imagine that the account in his source would have resembled his rendering of it. He recounted an episode, which is probably his own interpolation, where the Munstermen had invaded Leinster and appropriated much of their land and where the Leinstermen could not withstand the onslaught of the attackers:

Whereby their K. was constrained to have Recourse to the K. of Irelands Court, and there submissively to crave his ayd, where he Remayned 3 monthes together, humbly beeseching the K. (whose loyall subjects they did acknowledg to bee)...to succour and ayd them against the wrongfull Invasions and daly Incursions of the Munstermen, being in his Royallty bound for their Defence because he was their naturall leidge, Lord, & K., and they his Dutifull subjects, wherefore they pitifully Craved his assistance, that in the mean time under the shelter of his wings they might come to their own againe.⁶¹

Seventeenth-century terminology and ideas on monarchy abound in this passage. The king of Ireland is shown as a father figure whose royal duty it is to protect his subjects and they in turn are depicted as utterly loyal. The provincial king remained at the court humbly beseeching the king to come to their defence so that under his protection they would prevail against their enemies. In the early-modern period it was an accepted axiom that a father’s power came from God and a child had a divinely appointed duty to obey its father. Patriarchalism was asserted by many proponents of absolute monarchy who saw paternal power as analogous to kingly power and the duty of children to obey their father analogous to the obedience of a subject to his ruler; some even saw kingly power as identical to the power of the father. James 1 himself frequently used the analogy. In his tract *The trew law of free monarchies* (1598) he asserted, ‘By the Law of Nature the King becomes a naturall Father to all his Lieges at his Coronation: And as the Father of his fatherly duty is bound to care for the nourishing, education, and vertuous

⁶¹ Murphy, (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 55.

government of his children; even so is the king bound to care for all his subjects'.⁶² Conell's choice of the phrases, 'being in his Royallty bound for their Defence because he was their naturall leidge, Lorde & K., and they his Dutifull subjects' suggests an understanding of a kingly-subject relationship that accorded with the views of James I. It is not likely that copies of James's writings would have been widely available and impossible to if know his views would have filtered through to the educated sector of Irish society but Conell's presentation of this account reveals an admiration and enthusiasm for views such as those held by James and by the present incumbent, his son Charles, who held similar views to his father. Such an ideology of patriarchalism was evident too in Gaelic Ireland. The practice of obedience to one's vassal lord and the assumption and expectation of his protection featured prominently in medieval Ireland.⁶³ Such a tradition may have influenced Conell's absolutist presentation here.

A further instance of embellishment and enlargement on the original story with regard to another early Irish king, Ollamh Fodla, shows Mageoghegan emphasising the power of a king. In common with *ARÉ* and *FFÉ* and *LG* (the extant versions of the other sources do not cover the reign of this king), he reports that Ollamh Fodla was the first king to hold the Feis of Tara. But, with regard to power, whereas the *ARÉ* at 3922.2 record that this king 'appointed a chieftain over every cantred, and a Brughaidh over every townland, who were all to serve the king of Ireland', Mageoghegan's interpretation was thus: 'He was the first king of this land that ever kept the Great feast at tarragh called Feis Tarach...whereunto all the kings friends and Dutifull subjects came yearly and such as came not were taken for the kings enemies, and to be prosecuted by the law & sword as undutiful to the state.'⁶⁴ The terminology here reveals an attitude that accepted a regime that brooked no resistance to the king or his government (anachronistically referred to as 'the state'), and is consonant with a royalist adherence to a philosophy of non-resistance to one's monarch. Absolutist writers in the seventeenth century held that unlimited and

⁶² James Stuart, *The trew law of free monarchies*, <http://personal.pitnet.net/primarysources/stuart.html>.

⁶³ Katharine Simms, *From kings to warlords: the changing political structure of Gaelic Ireland in the later middle ages* (Woodbridge, 2000), p. 96.

⁶⁴ Murphy, (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 34.

indivisible sovereignty was necessary to the security of the state.⁶⁵ The phraseology that he used in this extract is akin to the type of rhetoric to which sixteenth and seventeenth-century Irish Catholics were treated by pronouncements and declarations emanating from the crown authorities.

Mageoghegan's embroidering and expansion of the record of another ancient king in respect of his sovereignty and power is more revealing of his royalist convictions. According to *LG* R1 version (and *FFÉ* and both other *LG* versions are essentially the same), King Tuathal Teachmhar 'broke' battles against the provinces of Ireland, convened the assembly of Tara and then (in connection with the fulfilling of a prophecy regarding the kingship of Ireland), *LG* continued thus:

The men of Ireland came there with wives, son, and daughters. Túathal took sureties of sun, moon and every power in heaven and earth, that though the Provincials of Ireland might be equal in power, they should not be equal in right of Ireland with the progeny of Túathal, but that his progeny should have the kingship for ever.⁶⁶

The *Annals of Clonmacnoise* reporting of this occurrence underlines the might of the king and is exceedingly repetitious of the 'sovereignty' element:

When K. Twahall was thus established in the quiet of the Crowen & kingdom, & had brought the whole K.dom into his subjection, he kept the Great feast of Taragh Called feis Tawra, whereunto all the nobility of Ireland men & women yonge & ould came, & after banqueting the K. being merry among his nobles with a Company of chosen men for the purpose, enjoined all the nobility & caused them to swear by the sonne & moone, and all other oathes which they then had in use, never to gainsay himself nor any of his posterity, or that would linally succeed him in the government of Ireland, & to Disclaime all their one tytles & Interests unto the premisses for ever, as long as the land of Ireland would be Compass'd with the seas, & that none of them or any of them would make claim to the Crowen or any of their heires and posterityes, notwithstanding their Rights thereunto were as Good as his, soe as if their posterityes had then after Groon more potent & of Greater abilitie than his, notwithstanding their potency they should be quite excluded from the tyme of that oath for ever from claiming any (Right) or title thereunto, & that they should suffer him & his heirs & successors quitely to enjoy the Crowen for ever, & doe him and them all services due to a king, which oath was duely & voluntarily sworn by them & every one of them one after another.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Sommerville, 'Absolutism and royalism', p. 351.

⁶⁶ Macalister (ed.), *Lebor Gabála*, v, 309

Mageoghegan put more emphasis on the king's power than the *LG* source did by stressing that King Tuathal 'enjoined' and 'caused' the nobility to swear away their rights in favour of his descendants; and though he did state at the end that they 'voluntarily' swore their oaths, that term came at the end of a long passage, the tenor of which very much belied the likelihood of the nobility having had any choice in the matter. However, what comes across even more strongly from this passage is a thorough affirmation of the concept of sovereignty. The superlative tenor of his language in this interpolation indicates that he considered the power of the ruler to be omnipotent and sovereignty to be invested in the king's hereditary line. The other sources just made mention once that the king 'took sureties' from the 'men of Ireland' so that his descendants would retain the kingship despite the fact that the future provincial kings might be just as powerful as they. It is clear from Mageoghegan's rendering of this account and from his continuous repetition of the fact that the nobles and their descendants must never threaten the right of the king's heirs to the kingship that he regarded the sovereignty of the king to be inviolate. Furthermore, his interpretation, written perhaps from a contemporary perspective, that the nobility 'should be quite excluded from the tyme of that oath for ever claiming any (Right) or title' to the crown, could be interpreted as an affirmation of centralised monarchy such as pertained in Ireland especially since the beginning of Stuart rule and which had finally broken the power of the petty lordships of the previous centuries. This attitude accords with the increasingly absolutist ideas of kingship pertaining in the seventeenth century where the monarch reigned as supreme head of the state.

There are many echoes in this passage also of the contemporary political situation in Ireland. James I, through his administration in Ireland, had also 'brought the whole K.dom into his subjection' and now in 1627 his son Charles 1 was 'established in the quiet of the Crowen & kingdom'. An enthusiastic and positive attitude towards kingship can be discerned in this passage. It was during these years that optimism was running high with Irish catholics. 'Matters of Grace and Bounty', concessions to Catholics promised by the crown in 1626 which would eventually evolve into the more

⁶⁷ Murphy, (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p.52.

comprehensive ‘Graces’, opened a two-year period of great political activity on the part of the Old English.⁶⁸ Around the time that Mageoghegan was writing this passage in April-June 1627, Richard Nugent succeeded in persuading Charles to receive a delegation from the Old English in Ireland.⁶⁹ Therefore, the celebratory note of sovereignty and kingship evident here may reflect the confident political scenario of this period for Catholics especially the Old English. If such hopes were present in Mageoghegan’s consciousness here, it would indicate an evolving solidarity in an area of mutual concern between the Catholic inhabitants of both ethnic backgrounds.

What is also striking about this passage is its majestic imagery. Mageoghegan’s King Tuathal is much more resonant of an early-modern monarch than the king of the Irish origin myth contained in the Roll of Kings in *LG*. Whereas the *LG* Tuathal ‘convened’ the ‘Assembly of Temair’ and the ‘men of Ireland came there with wives, sons, and daughters’, Conell depicts a gracious monarch entertaining his nobility: ‘he kept the Great feast of Taragh...whereunto all the nobility of Ireland...came & after banqueting the K. being merry among his nobles...enjoined all the nobility...’. This type of anachronistic and regal terminology is to be found throughout the whole book and it underpins Conell’s royalism. He constantly referred to the king’s ‘pallace’ especially ‘the King of Ireland’s pallace at Taragh’; his Ollamh Fodla ‘builded a faire palace at Tarrach, onely for the learned sort of this Realm to Dwell in’, whereas the *LG* versions report of this king, ‘by him was the Rampart of the Scholars made in Temair’; in addition, neither do any of the other sources refer to Ireland as a ‘realm’. Other anachronisms designed to enhance the image of kings abound especially in the case of Brian Boromha; while *LCé* refer to ‘Brian’s three guards’ and *CGG* to ‘three rear guards of Brian’, Mageoghegan described them in the language of the Stuart court as ‘three noblemen of the kings bedchamber’; and while *AI* write of Brian’s house as ‘the fort of Cenn Corad’ and the other sources term it a ‘fortress’, Mageoghegan’s term is ‘the mannor-house at Kincora’. But perhaps the most anachronistic term he uses is the ‘crown’ of Ireland which he uses as a synonym for the kingship of Ireland: the young

⁶⁸ Hugh F. Kearney, *Strafford in Ireland 1633-41: a study in absolutism* (Manchester, 1959), p. 21.

⁶⁹ Gillespie, *Seventeenth century Ireland*, p. 76.

Prince Conn, later to become King Conn Ceadchathach, was informed by a magician that King Cathaoir Mór ‘usurpeth unto himself the Revenewes of the Crowen due to your fathers son’. Breandán Ó Buachalla has recently pointed to this central leitmotif, the notion of ‘the Crown of Ireland’, running through the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, which seems to be unique in Irish annalistic material from the pre-Patrician period down to the twelfth century. Ó Buachalla explained that in ancient, early and medieval Ireland neither the concept of ‘the crown of Ireland’ nor the term is attested nor did any Irish equivalent exist. It was only towards the end of the sixteenth century that the crown assumed symbolic signification and function in the ideology of Irish kingship. Irish kings were never crowned; at inauguration the cultural artefacts used in the ceremony might have included a wand or a single shoe but not a crown.⁷⁰ Therefore, this application of an early-modern European regal insignia to early Irish kingship is not in accordance with the customs used at inauguration in early Irish kingship. Mageoghegan had knowledge of such customs evidenced by his account of the inauguration of Feidhlimidh Ó Conchubhair at Carnfree, the royal inauguration site of the O’Connors: ‘hee was enstalled King with as great solemnity, Ceremonies and other customes theretofore practised as any one of his auncestors’.⁷¹ His employment of the imagery of the crown is another indication of Mageoghegan’s leanings towards a royalist world, a world in the seventeenth century of majestic pomp and imagery signifying and making manifest the power of the ruler. In just another few years, Ireland would be treated to more of this outward show of the trappings of royal regalia designed to underpin the supremacy of the monarchy with the arrival of lord deputy Sir Thomas Wentworth in 1633 whose official visits to the provinces were conducted with royal ceremonial splendour.⁷²

Parliament and government

The way in which Conell presented some of his material makes it possible to get a glimpse at his attitude towards the representative assembly and the government of the country. Parliament in the early seventeenth century in England had a strained

⁷⁰ Ó Buachalla, *Crown of Ireland*, pp 23-5.

⁷¹ Murphy, (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 265,

⁷² Margaret M. Phelan, ‘Sir Thomas Wentworth’s visit to Kilkenny August 1637’ in *The Journal of the Butler Society*, ii, no. 2 (1982), pp 190-2.

relationship with the monarch. James I frequently lectured his subjects about not meddling with his government and with his ancient prerogatives, and the reign of Charles I was even more autocratic to the extent that he only summoned parliament when in urgent need of revenue. In Ireland too there was tension between those in the political world and a government that increasingly reflected the supremacy of the monarchy and tried to minimize the role of parliament. In the later middle ages, it had been the Old English community which had served in the administration and supplied members of parliament although in the early seventeenth century the size of their representation was dwindling now as a result of encroachment by newcomer settlers. The Gaelic Irish did not have a tradition of representative assemblies; early Irish kings did hold an annual assembly but it was more of a cultural occasion, such as *Óenach Tailten* or the Fair of Teltown, an event which survived in attenuated form down to the nineteenth century.⁷³ The native Irish were becoming more politicized; in 1615 there were twenty-three members of parliament of Gaelic background and by the 1634-5 parliament that figure was approximately the same. The king governed through his viceroy and administration in Dublin but parliament in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was also a forum for debating and resolving minor disputes usually local issues. However, we do not get any intimation in Conell's interjections of any great interest in conciliar or parliamentary activity. Perhaps the absence of a parliamentary tradition in Gaelic Ireland may account for Conell's account focusing mainly on monarchical arbitration

Much of the work of government in the early modern period involved considering the concerns and grievances that subjects brought to the king. The king could seek the advice of his council and then pronounce on his decision. Conell's kings are generally shown making decisions themselves. King of Ireland Tuathal Teachmhar is shown issuing his verdict on the Leinstermen after due consideration of the seriousness of an offence by the king of Leinster. When the Leinster king was 'crying for mercy' at the king's hands for having deceived him and having wronged his daughters, 'the K. of Ireland well Pondering or weighing the Grievousness of that fact ordered that the king of Leinster & all the Inhabitants of that province...should henceforth...pay yearly' a hefty

⁷³ Francis J. Byrne, *Irish kings and high-kings* (Dublin, 2001), p. 31.

tribute to himself and to his heirs in compensation.⁷⁴ Elsewhere, King Diarmaid Mac Cearbhall was so troubled and grief-stricken by the death of St Ciarán of Clonmacnoise that ‘he grew Deaf & could not heare the Causes of his subjects’.⁷⁵ Conell saw the petitioning and resolving of the subject’s dilemmas and disputes to be the king’s sole responsibility. On only one occasion did he show his kings consulting with the nobility for advice. When king King Feidhlimidh Reachtmhar, was petitioned by the Leinstermen for his help against Munster, Mageoghegan reported, ‘Whereupon the K. & Councell Delibrally considering how the cause stood & with the mature advice of all his nobility, thought fitt the K. of Leinster and leinster men should be instantly ayded’;⁷⁶ Conell’s ideal king would seek the advice of his nobility to guide him.

Conell’s ideal king would also rule with peace and justice, and with ‘majesty and magnificence’: Cormac mac Airt, ‘absolutely the best king that ever Raigned in Ireland before himselfe...was wise, Learned, valiant, & mild, not Given causelessly to be bloody as many of his auncestors were, hee Raigned majestically and magnifitiently’.⁷⁷

Although Conell reported the violent acts of early kings without comment, it is clear he admired greatly the honourable qualities of Cormac. Brendan Kane has highlighted the importance of honour codes in early modern Gaelic society.⁷⁸ In examining the writings of two native Irish authors of the early seventeenth century which dealt with Gaelic lords, he has found that themes of honour and nobility pervade the texts, along with influences of a contemporary European conception of honour interspersed with a late medieval ‘might makes right’ aggressiveness of Irish aristocratic honour. While true honour flourished on the battlefield, the subject aristocratic lord was at the same time portrayed as a good, generous and model governor who protected his people and looked after the poor.⁷⁹ In his depiction of Irish kings and of Cormac mac Airt, Conell exhibited the influence of the ‘honour violence’ of an earlier Gaelic Ireland intermingled with that of a more restrained Christian humanist modern approach.

⁷⁴ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 53.

⁷⁵ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 82.

⁷⁶ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 55.

⁷⁷ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 60.

⁷⁸ Brendan Kane, ‘Making the Irish European: Gaelic honour politics and its continental contexts’ in *Renaissance Quarterly*, 61:4 (Winter, 2008), pp 1139-1166.

⁷⁹ Kane, ‘Making the Irish European’, pp 1154-7.

It was not that Conell would not have been cognizant of the institution of parliament. The Gaelic Irish were becoming more politicized. His brother-in-law and patron Terence Coghlan, who was ‘of great expectation’ and was to sit in the parliament in the next decade, no doubt already had intentions in that direction. The 1634 parliament was presided over by the lord deputy, Sir Thomas Wentworth, who, as we have seen, ruled without much regard for the sensibilities of the subject, and whose essential motivation was to promote and safeguard the interests of Charles I. Those who were appointed to a committee during this parliament were very likely to have been in favour with the lord deputy and Terence sat on one committee⁸⁰ which indicates that he may have been acquiescent in the policies of the king’s representative. Furthermore, Terence may have been influenced by his wife’s kinsman, James Dillon, grandson of the earl of Roscommon and MP for Ballyshannon in 1634 and for Longford in 1640, who was Wentworth’s brother-in-law and who presumably also shared in his ideology. It is not unlikely that Coghlan’s approach was reflected in Conell’s presentation.

The issue of the function of parliament as a legislature was the cause of much of the tension mentioned above between the monarch and parliament. James I had famously said ‘laws are but craved of by subjects’. The following interpolation suggests that Conell adhered to this non-constitutional approach and believed that law was the responsibility of the English king. His report on Robert de Ufford who was lord deputy of Ireland from 1268 to 1282 went thus: ‘Robert Suforme or Stafford came over from England as Deputy of this kingdome, apointed by the king of England for the reformation of the Lawes, customs, and statutes of this land’.⁸¹ *AConn* 1269.3 gave de Ufford’s mission as ‘to order and settle the country’ and *LCé* 1269.2 reported he came ‘to settle and pacify Erinn’ and these descriptions of the thirteenth-century deputy’s brief are likely to have been the meaning which had been conveyed in Conell’s source. Conell’s positive and euphemistic account gave a rather more favourable impression of the king’s commission to the deputy and implied that he regarded the reforming of the laws,

⁸⁰ *Journals of the house of commons of the kingdom of Ireland* (19 vols, Dublin, 1796), i, p. 104.

⁸¹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 246-7.

customs and statutes of the country to be in the royal domain. There are no indications that he regarded law as the preserve of the Irish parliament. In Gaelic Ireland, in earlier times, customary law had been the preserve of and jealously guarded by the professional class; kings had merely confirmed the law and pledged his subjects to its observance.⁸² But, as there had been no parliamentary tradition, neither had law-making been the role of the annual assembly called by the king. Another interpolation implies that Mageoghegan had no complaints regarding the prevailing situation. Since the beginning of the seventeenth century the king's writ and English common law reached out across the land. Manor courts and assizes were now the norm and the practice of old Irish law was forbidden. Conell in an aside referred to this situation. At the end of a lengthy interpolation in which he described to the reader the operation of Brehon law explaining that the brehon was allotted his holding from his chieftain, he remarked, 'this was before the Lawes of England wer of full force in this Contry or land, and before the kingdome was devided into shieres'.⁸³ We see here a matter-of-fact acceptance of these relatively recent legal and geographical administrative structural changes, begun in the sixteenth century under the Tudor monarchs and completed under the Stuarts, but there is no hint of censure of the crown authorities over the loss of the old legal system.

Culture

However, that is not to infer that Conell was not interested in the cultural and social ways of his forebears. On the contrary, his interjection on the workings of brehon law mentioned above is worth reciting as it shows that he was deeply interested in the customs of Gaelic Ireland and was anxious to share them with the reader. He explained in contemporary seventeenth-century terminology how the system worked: 'this fenechus or brehon law is none other that the sivil Law, which the Brehons had to themselves in an obscure & unknown language, which none could understand except those that studied in the open schooles they had, whereof some were judges and others were admitted to plead as barresters, & for their fees costs & all received the 11th part of the thing in demand of

⁸² Byrne, *Irish kings and high-kings*, pp 30-1

⁸³ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 280.

the party of whome it was ordered, the Loozer paid noe costs.’⁸⁴ In Conell’s comprehensive description there is no hint of contempt for the old Irish law system but rather a note of respect for the practice unlike the pronouncements of the administration and new settler interest over the last century who had constantly derided it as barbaric. He went on to register the professional families involved in the practice: ‘The brehons of Ireland were divided into several tribes and families as the McKiegans, O’Deorans, O’Brisleans, & McTholies, every contry had his peculiar Brehan Dwelling within itselfe, that had power to Decide the cases of that Contry & to maintaine their controversies against their neibor-contries; by which they held their Lands of the lord of the Contry where they dwelt; this was before the Lawes of England wer of full force...’⁸⁵, and he continued as set out in the previous paragraph regarding the situation that now pertained. His citing of these families, some of whom he may have known such as the McKiegans (Mac Aodhagáin), and his describing their role within their communities indicates his esteem for them and for their profession. He digressed again from his history to elucidate for his readers on another Irish custom, that of fosterage: ‘The manner in those days was to bring up noblemens children, especially their friends, in princes and great men’s houses, & for ever after would call them fosters and love them as well as their own natural father’.⁸⁶ The existence of professional families and the practice of fostering children were common in Ireland up until relatively recently. Conell’s intended readership, which probably consisted in the main of Old Irish and Old English, would have been familiar with Irish customs. Therefore, what he may have been doing here was advocating an appreciation of Irish heritage. This seemed to be an expression of pride in his native Gaelic customs and is indicative of a growing self-confidence on behalf of a gentleman of Gaelic background and of a desire that his Gaelic cultural heritage be regarded with respect. By extension, his patron Terence Coghlan would doubtless also have been happy to see an attractive light thrown on the customs of his ancestors to redress the negative images which had surrounded them and enhance the status of his class with a view to increasing his chances of succeeding politically and socially.

⁸⁴ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 280.

⁸⁵ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 280.

⁸⁶ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 41.

Mageoghegan's admiration for the learned classes is evident throughout the book and patronage of the arts by the king was clearly something that he regarded as an important royal attribute of the ideal king. He frequently mentions kings and princes showing favour to the poets and historians. *LG* just accorded a brief entry to King Ollamh Fodla in this respect: 'by him was the Rampart of the Scholars made in Temair'; and *ARÉ* treated this equally briefly: 'by him Mur Ollamhan [professor's house] was erected at Teamhair.' Mageoghegan greatly enlarged his account with this description:

This king was soe well learned and soe much given to the favour of Learning that he builded a faire palace at Tarrach, onely for the learned sort of this Realm to Dwell in, at his own peculiar cost & charges, of whome he was soe much againe beloved and Reverenced that ever after his house stocke and family were by them in their Rimes and Poems preferred before any others of their equals of the Irish nation.⁸⁷

Both his obvious approval of the king's patronage for the scholars and his genuine affection for them are evident here. Similarly elsewhere, during the insertion of an extensive tale, he spoke equally favourably of King Maoilseachlainn Mac Domhnall's sponsorship of his chief poet; and further, in a lengthy interjection in the second half of the book in 1302, he cited the evidence of 'a certain learned poet' who compared the merits of Don Maguire, prince of Fermanagh and Donell Roe McCarthy of Desmond for 'their bounties and hospitalities'. A scholar himself, it is natural that Mageoghegan would champion poets and chroniclers.

However, such nostalgia and admiration did not blind him to present-day realities. There is no doubt that he esteemed the Irish language. He frequently supplied an Irish term of an English word for the reader. For example, when discussing the Picts he explained, 'their land in English is called pictland, in Irish *criocha cruthneach*' and in another interjection revealed that one of St Patrick's clergymen was called Manton because 'a troe of a stone...make him toothless, for Mantan in Irish is as much as toothless in English'. However, in his preface, he sternly admonished the professional historian class for losing their interest in scholarship, for failing to preserve the ancient records and for opting to have their children learn English rather than Irish. There is also a hint here of impatience at their living in the past and failing to adapt to current realities:

⁸⁷ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 34.

there were many septs in the k.dome...whose profession was to Chronicle and keep in memory the state of the K.dome as well for the time past present & to come, & now because they canot enjoy that respect & gaine by their said profession as heretofore they and their auncestors receaved they set naught by the sd knowledg, neglect their Bookes, and choose rather to put their children to learne eng: than their own native Language, in soe much that some of them suffer Taylors to cutt the leaves of the said Books which their auncestors held in great account. . .that the posterities are like to fall into meere Ignorance of any things hapened before their tyme.⁸⁸

Here we see not only a love of his own language but also an awareness of his Irish heritage and the fear that the legacy left by the chroniclers of old might be lost for future generations. While he was stating the reality of the position in which the learned class found themselves in early seventeenth century with their loss of status and earnings due to the disappearance of patronage from the Gaelic lords, one cannot detect him attaching any blame to the authorities for this situation. It is instead a criticism of the Irish learned class for their failure to preserve the records of the past. The implication was that they should put their misfortunes of the recent past behind them, adapt to present circumstances and continue to preserve the written legacy of their ancestors. Furthermore, his comment about the chroniclers putting their children to learn English, as well as being a sign of Mageoghegan's affinity for the Irish language, could also be a shot across the bow at social climbing and so would be symptomatic of such denunciations made by some Gaelic Irish poets and writers in the seventeenth century of their fellow Irishmen. The Gaelic poet Brian Mac Giolla Phádraig mocked 'beggarwomen's sons' who wore fancy clothes 'like Ireland's one-time princes of Dál gCais' and also denounced servants 'with grimy English/but no regard for one of the poet class/save "Out! and take your precious Gaelic with you!"'⁸⁹ Similarly, the anonymous author of the satirical *Pairlement Chloinne Tomáis* derided a group of native Irish who, having risen in the world economically, used their faulty English to buy tobacco from a travelling merchant.⁹⁰ It is noteworthy that the Irish literary class did not appear to blame the monarchy or the authorities for their reduced circumstances due to the demise of patronage since the beginning of the century but instead confined themselves to

⁸⁸ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 8.

⁸⁹ Brian Mac Giolla Phádraig, 'These fashions on the plain of Éibhear' in Sean Ó Tuama & Thomas Kinsella (eds), *An duanaire, 1600-1900: poems of the dispossessed* (Portlaoise, 1981), pp 90-1.

⁹⁰ N. J. A. Williams (ed.), *Pairlement Chloinne Tomáis* (Dublin, 1981), pp 96-8.

castigating those Irish who were bettering themselves socially.⁹¹ Conell's chastisement of the professional families for their neglect since the loss of patronage suggests the attitude of a modern, confident Irish gentleman who was proud of his heritage and advocating that his compatriots move forward and accept the new and changed world.

We get another interesting, if somewhat curious, example of Conell's esteem for the learned class after the death of Maoilseachlainn at AD 1022; curious, because he recounted that Ireland was ruled for twenty years, not by a king, but by a poet and a cleric. Up until now, he had virtually never shown any periods where there had not been royal rule but, as stated at the outset, after the era of Brian Boromha, kings did not seem to be as important to Mageoghegan. Of course, the year AD 1022 was a major watershed in the older sources such as the *Réim Ríoghaidhe* because it was the beginning of the era of 'kings with opposition'. Accordingly, at this juncture Mageoghegan signalled a change in the political history of Ireland with the heading: 'HEREAFTER FOLLOWETH A DISCOURSE OF THE KINGS OF IRELAND THAT LIVED WITHOUT A CROWN', and he continued,

After the death of king Moyleseaghlin this kingdome was without a king for the space of twenty years: Dureing which time the Realme was governed by two learned men, the one called Cwan o'Lochan, a well learned temporall man and cheefe poet of Ireland, the other Corcrann Cleireagh a devout & holy man, that was anchorite of all Ireland, whose most abideing was at Lismore. The land was Governed like a free state, & not like a monarchy by them. There fell a great wonderfull snow at this time before the battle of Sleive Grott.⁹²

As obviously a respected and prominent poet, Cuan Ó Locháin's obit is recorded in *CS*, *AT*, *AB*, *AU*, *LCé*, *AI* and *ARÉ* and Corcran the Cleric's obit in *AU*, *LCé*, *AI* and *ARÉ*; but none of those sources mention anything about them governing the country. However, the entries in Version (L) of *LG* are ambiguous; after the death of Maoilseachlainn and under the heading, 'Kings with Opposition', the entries are thus:

A joint rule over Ireland for a space of forty-two years. Cúan hua Lothcháin. Corcran the priest. A great snow. Amalgaid successor of Patrick. The battle of Sliab Crott.

⁹¹ Gillespie, *Seventeenth-century Ireland*, pp 69-70.

⁹² Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p.173.

Niall Mac Eochada. Niall Mac Máel-Sechlainn. DIARMAIT mac Máil-na-mBo was king with opposition.⁹³

Incidentally, it is very possible that this version of *LG* (L) and Mageoghegan's exemplar emanate from the same source because he mentions the snow and the battle of Sliab Crott in a similar position to where they appear in (L) and I have met no mention at all of these two entries anywhere else. Be that as it may, in the *LG* (L) quoted above, it is not entirely clear what the appearances of Cuan or Corcran signify here. However, to clarify, at this stage in *LG*, instead of reporting events separately under each king-with-opposition as hitherto was the case with the earlier kings, the various versions of *LG* treat the whole period over the next century-and-a-half in blanket fashion, covering the reigns of the kings-with-opposition in block along with entries of battles, obituaries, incidences of snow, etc. Therefore, it is extremely unlikely that what was meant by the sense of this entry in *LG* (L) was a joint rule by the poet and cleric. Instead, these entries could signify obits. Cuan died in 1024. Corcran died in 1040. As a further illustration of the block format of the entries in *LG* at this stage, Amalgaid successor of Patrick acceded in 1021 according to *ARÉ* and died in 1049; Niall Mac Eochada did not die until 1063 according to *AU* (and in Version (B) of *LG* the entry, 'Niall Mac Eochada died' occurs in a similar position to its appearance in Version (L) quoted above, just after the 'joint rule over Ireland' entry⁹⁴); and Niall Mac Mael-Sechlainn died in 1025 (*CS* and *AClon*).

Therefore, if the entries referring to Cuan and Corcran are obits, Mageoghegan has either misunderstood their significance, which is unlikely seeing his familiarity with old manuscripts, or else he has chosen to neatly fit in a joint rule by a poet and a man of the church to cover the period up until the start of the reign of Diarmaid mac Murchadha mac Maol na mBó which he recorded in 1041.

It is interesting to speculate on his motives here. His obvious admiration for Cuan and Corcran is natural given his regard for the learned classes and he has also embellished and enhanced the prestige of these two men to a great extent when recording their deaths. His record for Ó Locháin at 1024 AD, reads 'Cwann o'Lochan prince poet of Ireland, a

⁹³ Macalister (ed.), *Lebor gabála*, v, 407.

⁹⁴ Macalister (ed.), *Lebor gabála*, v, 413.

great chronicler, and one to whom for his sufficiency the causes of Ireland were committed to be examined and ordered, was killed...his associate Corcran lived yet, and survived him for a time after';⁹⁵ and his record for Corcran at 1040 AD goes, 'Corcran anchorite of all Ireland died at Lismore, this is hee that had the hearing of all the causes of Ireland'.⁹⁶ In all the other annals Cuan Ó Locháin is described as 'chief poet of Ireland'; additionally, in *CS* as 'an expert in tradition lore' and in *AI* as 'a historian'. However, nowhere is he accorded the designation, 'one to whom for his sufficiency the causes of Ireland were to be examined and ordered'. Similarly, the annals which mention Corcran variously gave him the attributes of piety, learning and wisdom but none have the equivalent of 'hee that had the hearing of all the causes of Ireland'. In addition, that was a role that Mageoghegan had previously accorded to a king.⁹⁷ Therefore it appears that he has invented a scenario for which there seems to be neither historical precedent nor any evidence in the sources. The professional and clerical classes did indeed have a role with regard to kingship in Gaelic Ireland. Both the *comharba* of the church and the *ollamh* of a learned family had traditionally been involved in officiating at the ceremonies of the inauguration of kings from early medieval times right up to the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and had important roles to play.⁹⁸ Indeed, as recently as the 1590s in Mageoghegan's neighbourhood, Matthew de Renzy had claimed that Sir John Mac Coghlan, a kinsman of Mageoghegan's brother-in-law, had been inaugurated in the Gaelic way.⁹⁹ In addition, the professional legal families were indeed the ones who had acted as judges in cases of dispute that arose from time to time between clans or individuals and had mediated and drawn up settlements between them. Mageoghegan was quite familiar with these traditions; at 1315 AD he reported that Rory Mac Cathal Roe Ó Conchubhair 'was Invested king of Connaught by the 12 Chieftaines of Sile Morie, 12 cowarbbbs, and other spirituals that were accustomed to use the Ceremonies at the tyme of the Investure of the king'¹⁰⁰; so it appears that he decided to

⁹⁵ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 174.

⁹⁶ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. p. 176.

⁹⁷ Murphy, (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 82.

⁹⁸ Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, *Royal inauguration in Gaelic Ireland c.1100-1600: a cultural landscape study* (Woodbridge, 2004), pp 173-82.

⁹⁹ Brian Mac Cuarta (ed.), 'Matthew de Renzy's letters on Irish affairs 1613-1620' in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 34 (1987), p. 116.

¹⁰⁰ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 270.

revert to the Gaelic practice of *ollamh* and clerical involvement in kingship in the absence of a monarch.

However, he has taken some licence in extending their role to rulership. This is surprising given that the whole book is structured to such a degree on kingly rule and surprising also that Mageoghegan would countenance the land be governed ‘like a free state, & not like a monarchy’. There does not appear to be any other allusion to a ‘free state’ in the sources except one made by James Ware when he referred to the ‘free state’ of 1022 in some notes that he made c. 1650, which duly appeared in his *De Hiberniae et antiquitatibus ejus, disquisitiones* in 1654,¹⁰¹ but his source had been Mageoghegan’s *Annals of Clonmacnoise*. However, seeing that Mageoghegan specified that they governed the land ‘like a free state’ meant that he obviously did not envisage a poet and cleric assuming the functions and privileges of a sovereign ruler such as collecting revenue or tribute from the people although he could allow them the role of peacemaker and arbitrator. However, it is strange that Mageoghegan would consider non-monarchical rule at all. In two previous instances where regal reign had been interrupted and commoners had taken control he had inferred disapproval: ‘Carbry Kincatt succeeded as K. of Ireland, a man whose birth is unknowne, therefore thought to be of mean parentage...He hated noble men & their decents’;¹⁰² and on another occasion when two brothers, the Fothadhs, seized control he recounted, ‘These Fothies were none of the blood Royal’.¹⁰³ But it appears that for Mageoghegan the political scene as regards sovereignty had changed since the death of Maelsheachlann and Brian Boromha. On three occasions he stressed that the ‘kings-with-opposition’ were kings who reigned ‘without a crown’. After the death of Ruaidhri Ó Conchubhair in 1164 he explained,

Rory more mcTerlagh o'Connor in the English Chronicles is called Rotherick, was the last king of Ireland of Irish blood, and raigned 10 years. Our Irish Chronicles for the most part call those seven and last kings imperfect and defective kings, because they raigned without a crown (as before is mentioned) since the raigne of Bryan Borowe, and Moyleseachlin more o'Melaghlin.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Sanderlin, ‘Manuscripts of the annals of Clonmacnoise’, p. 120.

¹⁰² Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 49-50.

¹⁰³ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 62.

¹⁰⁴ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 206.

It is noteworthy that even though Maoilseachlainn was actually the last king to reign ‘without opposition’, Mageoghegan gave precedence to Brian. But given the fact that he featured the Brian-saga so prominently in his book, an obvious interpolation, or at least an extensive embellishment of his source, it is clear that he was lauding Brian Boromha as the most important and the last Irish high-king. After the demise of Brian, either deliberately or subconsciously, he heralded the new political structure, showing the end of Irish monarchical rule, by the device of creating a period of rule by two laymen. To further underpin that Brian and Maoilseachlainn were the last two Irish kings ‘with crown’, he brought this section of the book to a close by giving a summary of all kings and their ancestry since the arrival of St Patrick and he completed this detailed list with the descriptive explanation, ‘48 Kings of Irish blood’.¹⁰⁵ After this Mageoghegan did not seem to feel the need to glorify kings and they did not receive anything like the same attention in the second half of his book. It is not that he did not show respect for the ensuing kings and he never failed to record the reign of each king of England after the coming of the Anglo-Normans, but he no longer embellished his accounts; it seems that after the reign of Brian, his ideal king, there was no longer any necessity to enlarge on his sources.

Hierarchy and social order

Society in early-modern Ireland was hierarchical. At the top of the chain sat the king and power and influence emanated from him down through the nobility to the lower gentry and officials. The title page of the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, which is headed ‘A Booke’ and which doubled as a ‘Contents’ page, left the reader in no doubt as to the centrality of kings in the book. This page announced: ‘wherein is shewed all the Ks of Clanna Nevie Firvolge Twatha Dedanan & the sons of Miletus of spaine...discovering the yeares of the raignes of the sd. Ks with the manner of their governmts &...A brief Catalogue of all the Ks of the severall races after the comeing of St. Patrick...& of the Ks. that raigned after until the tyme of the conquest of the English’.¹⁰⁶ Apparently the focus on kings was

¹⁰⁵ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 171-2.

¹⁰⁶ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 3.

of paramount importance to Mageoghegan. Later in the book he assured the reader that despite the dilapidated state of his source manuscript, he guaranteed that all kings were included. Apologising for not naming all the Popes, he explained, ‘for mine excuse I say that the ould Irish book out of wch I writt this is soe overtorne & rent that the Characters of the very letters are quite lost in some places, soe as I must be content to translate what I can Read, and undertake that the succession of the monarchs is truly translated & agreed upon by all the Irish Cronicles of the K.dom.’¹⁰⁷ Kings, according to Mageoghegan had to have a lineage and status appropriate to their position of honour. He appeared to frown upon the reigns of Cairbre Chinn Chait, ‘of mean parentage’ and not fit to govern the kingdom, and upon the Fothadhs, who were not of royal blood, which suggests that he regarded the rule of such upstarts as undermining the social order. Mageoghegan’s consciousness of the hierarchy of the social order is evident too in the pre-eminence he gave to those on the next rung of the hierarchical ladder viz. the nobility. Mageoghegan showed that he embraced the idea of communication between the monarch and those in the highest stratum of society. In the case of King Feidhlimidh Reachtmhar, mentioned above, the king consulted his nobility before going to war; and Queen Macha, even though she had rejected the wishes of her nobles, had evidently sought their advice. When she had to decide of the fate of her rebellious kinsmen, ‘all the best sort desired to put them to Death’, but she would not countenance executing men of such quality.¹⁰⁸ This consultation role was a major component of the concept of commonwealth popular in the early seventeenth century which assumed that the king had an obligation to consult with those in society who had the moral and social authority to give him advice.¹⁰⁹

Mageoghegan had an acute sense of lineage especially that of important families. Throughout the book he constantly interjected to inform the reader of the present-day descendants of the early Irish kings. For instance, he related that the earls of Tyrone and Tír Conaill were descended from Cobhthach Caol mBreagh as were the O’Melaghlins of Meath and the O’Kellys of Breagh, ‘besides many other great houses in Meath, Ulster, Connaught, & the kingdom of Scotland...between wch 4 Houses the Crowen of Ireland

¹⁰⁷ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 51-2.

¹⁰⁸ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 40-1.

¹⁰⁹ Gillespie, *Seventeenth-century Ireland*, pp 12-13, 59.

remained for the most part *in Diebus illis* until the Conquest of Ireland by K. Henry the second, king of England.’¹¹⁰ There are many such interjections concerning the lineage of present-day aristocracy showing his awareness of status and hierarchy, which is not surprising given that he himself was a descendant of Irish nobility. In his exemplar, an entry, recorded at the time of King Rory MacSitric, must have run something like the entry in *LG* (R1), ‘these are the three free peoples of Ireland, Conn, Araide, Eogan’; Mageoghegan’s interpretation of this statement shows much embellishment: ‘The three cheef houses in Ireland were Conn, Araye, & Owen, I mean of the Irish Nobility...Between which 3 houses the Crown of Ireland Rested a great while’.¹¹¹ Again he has taken great care to give prominence to the nobility and to emphasise the fact that royalty had traditionally resided with them. In addition, his sense of awareness of a disruption in the right social order permeates an account that he gave the reader of Magh Breagh (eastern Meath) and its inhabitants, explaining that the O’Kellys of Breagh, ‘the chiefe name of that Race...are brought soe low now a Dayes...& are Turned to be mere churles & poor laboring men’.¹¹² Similarly, when relaying a eulogy of an ancestor kinsman of his own, he recorded: ‘Rory mcJohnnock mcMurtagh maGeoghegan a very bountiful worthy & hardy man without doubt, Died...Though mine authority maketh this great account of this Rory that he extolleth him beyond reason, yet his Issue now & for a long tyme past are of the meanest of their owen name’.¹¹³ He had earlier departed from his source to set out the lineage of the various branches of the Mageoghegans as he did also with the family of his brother-in-law, Terence Coghlan.¹¹⁴ Genealogies were of course very important in medieval and early-modern Ireland and Mageoghegan had informed himself of the lineages of many of the important Gaelic families whose descendants were still prominent members of society in the seventeenth century.

Somewhat incongruously, as mentioned above, Mageoghegan interpolated a set of three genealogies, those of Randal MacDonnell, first earl of Antrim, Henry O’Brien, first earl of Thomond and Arthur Magennis, first Viscount Iveagh into his history after the section

¹¹⁰ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 43.

¹¹¹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 46.

¹¹² Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 125.

¹¹³ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 304.

¹¹⁴ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 257.

dealing with the Norman invasion and the coming of Henry II to Ireland. Just as, after the deaths of Brian and Maolseachlainn, he had introduced a period of rule by a poet and a cleric to demarcate the end of the reigns of ‘kings-with-crown’, he also drew a line under the period of the kings-with-opposition by the insertion of the genealogies. His concluding sentence to this part of the book just before the genealogies, read, ‘King Henry hearing of the good success the said englishmen had in Ireland, the kings majesty in his owen person came over, who made a final end of an intire conquest in Ireland, in the year of our Lord God 1173’, and he ended this stage of his history with the decisive term ‘FINIS’.¹¹⁵ It is unlikely that his exemplar was presented in this fashion; certainly the annals have no such marker but Mageoghegan might have wanted to further mark the end of Irish rule with this note of finality. He then inserted his genealogies which were headed as follows:

‘FOR YOUR BETTER INSTRUCTION (BROTHER) I WILL SETT YOU DOWNE
THREE PEDIGREES OF THE RACES DESCENDED OF THE THREE SONS OF
MILETUS THAT HAD ISSUE, AS HEBER THE WHITE, IRE, AND HEREMON’¹¹⁶

Presumably the perfectly legitimate and obvious reason for this interpolation at this stage was to bring the history of the sons of Míleadh to a close by describing some of their present-day noble descendants. In doing so, however, Mageoghegan chose to tabulate the genealogies of the three peers who were numbered amongst the highest nobility in the country, who were all royalist in their leanings and who themselves or their sons were to sit in the House of Lords in 1634. Mageoghegan could have chosen any number of noble descendants of the sons of Míleadh such as the O’Neills of Tyrone whom he had prioritised often hitherto in the book but that family was no longer a political force with the attainted Hugh O’Neill, earl of Tyrone, now dead and his son in exile. He could have chosen his own family, the Mageoghegans, or indeed the Coghlanes both of whom had also received much prominence from him. He could also have opted for the McCarthys, a representative of whom was the present Lord Muskerry. However, there are some indications as to why he would have chosen those particular descendants of Eibhear, Ir and Eireamhón. The principal reason may have been political; as a budding MP, Terence

¹¹⁵ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 208.

¹¹⁶ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 209.

Coghlan might have hoped to enjoy the influence and support of such premier peers. In addition, firstly, with regard to Sir Randal MacDonnell, earl of Antrim, in 1625 Sir Randal's daughter Mary married Lucas Dillon, second Viscount of Costello-Gallen, the uncle of Terence Coghlan's wife, and the earl himself attended Lucas Dillon's funeral on 14 July 1629.¹¹⁷ Incidentally, in terms of seniority he should have listed Eibhear's descendant (O'Brien) first and Eireamhón's (MacDonnell) third as was the convention and he himself was aware of this discrepancy because when inserting the heading, 'The Genealogie of the Lord Henrie earle of Thomond of the race of Heber the white', he added, 'whome I should write first for Antiquities sake of place'. However, no doubt his reason here was the marriage connection of Terence Coghlan to Lord Randal and the resulting political capital Coghlan might have gained from that. Secondly, regarding Viscount Arthur Magennis of Iveagh, he was probably the most senior peer of the race of Ir. Thirdly, with regard to Lord Henry O'Brien, earl of Thomond, he was the descendant of Brian Boromha and so an integral element of Mageoghegan's interpolated bias into the book. Furthermore, there is a sign here of possible deliberate manipulation of O'Brien's genealogy. It is remarkable that there is an omission in Henry O'Brien's forbears; the last king of Thomond, Conor (d. 1539), his great-great grandfather, who died in 1539, has been left out.¹¹⁸ Of course, it is possible that this was a scribal error (however, BL and TCD both have the omission) but there are some putative reasons why Mageoghegan might have dropped Conor from the table: firstly, this Conor had allied himself with the rebelling earl of Desmond, a traitor in the eyes of the crown who had been negotiating with the king of Spain and who had also supported the rebel Silken Thomas; secondly, Conor had negotiated with the emperor Charles V, a memory that the earl of Thomond might not have wanted publicised at this stage in 1627 when England was again at war with Spain and paranoid about possible invasions; and thirdly, the said Conor was suspected by his eldest son Donogh (Henry O'Brien's great-grandfather), whose mother was a Burke of Clanricard, of trying to disinherit Donogh in favour of his younger

¹¹⁷ BL Add. MS. 4820, ff 110-11.

¹¹⁸ Duaid Mac Firbis, *Leabhar mór na ngenealach/The great book of Irish genealogies* (ed. & trans.), Nollaig Ó Muraile (5 vols, Dublin, 2003-4), v, 685.

brother whose mother was a Fitzgerald of Desmond.¹¹⁹ So Henry O'Brien would not now have been earl of Thomond if Conor had got his way.

Moreover, Conor's memory might not have been popular either with the extremely influential Irish and English peer, Richard, fourth earl of Clanricard (1572-1635) or his son Ulick, fifth earl and future marquis of Clanricard (1604-1658). Richard was regarded as being at the apex of the social order in Ireland; in 1626 there was a dispute between himself and the earl of Thomond over the right to precedence in the Irish nobility, the issue being resolved to Clanricard's satisfaction in 1628.¹²⁰ It is likely that Mageoghegan would not have wanted to risk any slur on the reputation of one in such an exalted position either. This was probably the motivation also that caused him to add a lengthy interpolation in defence of William Burke, ancestor of Clanricard and the first of the family to come to Ireland; with an added reason being, as mentioned at the outset, the connection between the earl of Clanricard and Terence Coghlan. The fifth earl referred to Coghlan as 'cousin', as mentioned before, and he employed him as a messenger to the confederate council in 1642.¹²¹ Following, presumably faithfully, his exemplar, Mageoghegan first reported at AD 1204 that William Burke had spoiled and pillaged all of the churches of Connacht and that 'God and the patrons of these churches shewed their miracles upon him that his entrayles...trayled after him even to the very earth, whereof he died, impenitently without shrive or extreme unction or good Buriall.' However, he immediately followed with his own interjection, 'These and many other reproachful wordes my author layeth down in the ould books, which I was loth to translate because they were uttered by him for the disgrace of soe worthy and noble a man as William Burk was, and left out other his reproachful words which he (as I conceive) rather declared of an evil will he did beare towards the said William than any other just cause'.¹²² Such an interpolation certainly seems to have a contemporary context, a metaphorical genuflection in the direction of the noblest family in Ireland which could be an enormous

¹¹⁹ Ivar O'Brien, *O'Brien of Thomond: the O'Briens in Irish history, 1500-1865* (Philimore, 1986), pp 11-13; BL Add. MS. 39260.

¹²⁰ Colm Lennon, 'Richard Burke, fourth earl of Clanricarde and first earl of St Albans (1572-1635), ODNB, <http://www.oxforddnb.com>.

¹²¹ Micheál Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland, 1642-1649* (Dublin, 1999), p. 37.

¹²² Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 220.

boost to the career of his brother-in-law, the budding politician, and it emphasises the growing political ambitions of the Old Irish.

Mageoghegan's sense of hierarchy and consciousness of genealogy extended to the saints as well. He did not omit to give an account of the antecedents of St Colum Cille and St Brigid, pointing out that he was the great-great grandson of Niall of the Nine Hostages while she was of noble descent having been a kinswoman of King Conn Ceadchathach.¹²³ He was also careful to interject on their behalf with a refutation of the claims of the Scottish historian, Thomas Dempster (1579-1625), who in the early seventeenth century was laying claim to most matters of Gaelic antiquity including Ireland's most cherished saints:¹²⁴

The Reader may perceive by St. Columbs pedigree that he is not a Scotch man as Thos Dempster untruly reported, nor St. Bridget. What better testimony can be had then to Derive their Linial Degrees from their auncestors (whoe were knowen to be of the marrow of the meer Irish blood) the one of the families and Discent of Conell mcNeale the other the race of Eochy ffinn, K. Felym Reaghtwar's son.¹²⁵

Mageoghegan's use of the descriptive terminology, 'of meer Irish blood' is indicative of a self-assured Irishman who had no compunction about using a phrase which was so often used in a disparaging sense by the like of the writer and settler Spenser or indeed by the Old English lawyer from the Pale, Hadsor, now resident in London. Mageoghegan had no inhibitions about using the adjective, 'meer' in the sense of 'unmixed' or 'pure' with regard to the Gaelic race which is another indication of the growing self-confidence of the Gaelic population in the first decades of the seventeenth century.

Religion

Early-modern Irish people, in common with others in Europe, were a deeply religious people and they believed that the hand of God was present in their everyday lives.¹²⁶ Mageoghegan was no exception to this rule and it is plain to see that religion loomed

¹²³ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 76.

¹²⁴ Joseph Leerssen, *Mere Irish and fíor-Ghael: studies in the idea of Irish nationality, its development and literary expression prior to the nineteenth century* (Philadelphia, 1986), pp 303-4.

¹²⁵ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 96.

¹²⁶ Raymond Gillespie, *Devoted people: belief and religion in early-modern Ireland* (Manchester, 1997), p. 20.

large in his life. He inserted lengthy accounts of the lives of St Patrick, St Colum Cille and St Ciarán of Clonmacnoise. These may have been included in his old book but it is more likely, given their length, that they were derived from a copy or copies of the lives of the saints. He seemed to imply that the latter was the case because he added at the end of a passage which had depicted the recently deceased St Ciarán appearing to St Kevin: ‘St Kevinn entred, to whom St. Queran appeared & remained Conversing together for 24 hours, as is very confidently Laid Down in the Life of St. Queran’.¹²⁷ In either case, he paraphrased the accounts he found in the sources as is evident by his characteristically conversational tone. From his presentation and extensive treatment of these saints, it is feasible to glean some of Mageoghegan’s cultural attitudes with regard to religion.

In the early modern period, the church was anxious that the laity practise their religion in accordance with the guidelines of the Counter-Reformation which laid down that the individual have a knowledge of the teachings of the church as expressed in the ten commandments, explained to them in sermons delivered by learned priests who had been educated in the Tridentine doctrines. However, in Ireland traditional forms of medieval religion persisted particularly among the native Irish for whom personal devotion to saints and the Virgin Mary continued to be perceived as the key to salvation. Holy wells and pilgrimage sites, relics and legends of the miraculous powers of local saints were the phenomena with which the majority of the inhabitants of Ireland identified.¹²⁸

Mageoghegan displayed such inclinations in his representations of various events in the lives of the saints. His accounts contain numerous miracles and he relayed them with great enthusiasm and wonder. Having related one such miracle concerning St Ciarán, he added, ‘But what doe I speak of his miracles which are soe innumerable as would fill a whole volume’.¹²⁹ With regard to St Patrick, in describing the resistance of the people of Leinster who threw stones at Patrick and his clergy to prevent them coming ashore at the coast of Wicklow as they were attempting to land to begin the mission in Ireland, Mageoghegan recounted, ‘Whereupon St Patrick & his clergy cursed the haven soe as

¹²⁷ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 82.

¹²⁸ Raymond Gillespie, *The sacred in the secular: religious change in Catholic Ireland, 1500-1700* (Colchester, 1993), p. 104.

¹²⁹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 82.

from that time to this day there is little or noe fish caught there'.¹³⁰ Even though it is unlikely that he believed literally that there was little or no fishing in the seas off the coast of Wicklow, for a learned man he betrayed a certain naïveté in repeating the tale and, it would seem, translating so faithfully the terminology of his exemplar, which reveals his own cultural approach to religion. Moreover, some of the elements of the older tales of St Patrick's life did not meet the standards of the Counter-Reformation church; in 1625 a revised version of Jocelin's life of Patrick was published with fifty-four of the original chapters dropped to remove some of the more fantastic miracles and the cursing episodes.¹³¹ However Mageoghegan did not adhere to this new sanitised image of the saint and was quite happy to recite the traditional versions. He related another case where Patrick 'cursed' the king of Ireland and all his descendants for agreeing to be baptised while only simulating a belief in the Christian faith; and in a further situation, at AD 563 regarding King Diarmaid Mac Cearbhall, he recounted that the holy man, Ruadhan, abbot of Lothra, 'cursed the K. & place...that no K. or Q. ever after would or could Dwell in Tarach, & that it should be waste for ever with out Court or Pallace, as it fell out accordingly'.¹³²

His account of St Colum Cille's life is also filled with examples of his miracles, not necessarily grandiose miracles such as controlling the elements, but small domestic instances with local connections that he repeated from the sagas. For instance, in the town of Derry, in compensation for his monks being allowed by the landlord of a wood to cut 'wattles for to build a House...to Dwell in', St Colum Cille miraculously made the seed of beer, sown at the wrong time of year after midsummer, to yield a better and earlier harvest than any other beer in the locality; at Durrow, when presented with sour apples, 'by his Prayers he converted to be sweet apples'; and, again in relation to Colum Cille, he recounted what he apparently believed to be a more recent supernatural occurrence at Kells, 'which town was freely granted to St Colum and his successors for ever after. There was a great Tall Oake neere adjoining the town under which St Columb

¹³⁰ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 66.

¹³¹ Bernadette Cunningham & Raymond Gillespie, "'The most adaptable of saints": the cult of St Patrick in the seventeenth century' in *Archiv. Hib.*, xlix (1995), p. 90.

¹³² Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 85.

did accustom to Dwell, which oak was seen of late yeares until it was fallen by a Great blast of wind. One of the townsmen seeing it lay prostrate on the earth took the bark thereof & put it on leather to Tann it, whereof he put a paire of shooes on his feet, & as soon as they were on Imediately the party was Infected with leprosie from top to toe, & thereof Dyed.¹³³ He demonstrated a traditional approach to religion here by repeating a story, the significance of which presumably was that the place where St Colum was wont to rest was a sacred place. Traditionally, in Ireland the landscape in people's consciousness was intertwined with Christianity and their religion; unusual features in the landscape were assigned religious explanations and regarded as sacred and stories of holy men attached to them.¹³⁴ Mageoghagan displayed this sense of place which was integral to traditional Irish religion throughout his accounts of the saints.

There is another example of him appearing to believe implicitly in the supernatural power of the saints' relics in his own time and this is in relation to the Book of Durrow which is today in Trinity College, Dublin. He averred that Colum Cille had written three hundred New Testament gospels which all had miraculous powers and that he had:

left a book to each of his Churches in the Kingdome, which Bookes have a strange property which is that if they or any of them had sunck to the bottom of the Deepest waters they would not lose one letter, signe, or character of them, which I have seen partly myselfe of that book of them which is at Dorow in the Ks County, for I saw the Ignorant man that had the same in his Custody, when sickness came upon cattle, for their Remedy putt water on the booke & suffered it to rest there a while & saw alsoe cattle returne thereby to their former or pristin state & the book to receive no loss.¹³⁵

Mageoghagan's interpolation reveals that he was a part of that traditional religious culture to which relics, particularly local relics, were inextricably linked and which the Counter-Reformation clerics sought to change. A synod in Drogheda in 1614 had condemned the custom of farmers using relics to bring their animals back to health, a practice they regarded as 'an act of superstition not of piety.'¹³⁶ It was not that the church did not value the relics of saints but they did not want them in the hands of the lay

¹³³ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 94-5.

¹³⁴ Gillespie, *Sacred in the secular*, p. 10.

¹³⁵ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 95-6.

¹³⁶ Gillespie, *Sacred and the secular*, p. 18.

community and out of their control but rather in abbeys and churches where they could be suitably venerated.¹³⁷ Mageoghegan related another occasion at a much later period in 1139 where relics were used, this time as part of a sworn agreement between Toirdhealbhach Ó Conchubhair, king of Ireland and Murchadh O'Melaghlin, king of Meath; and here, if he has not embellished the original account in his source, doubtless he has not omitted any of the items which were used: 'king Terlaugh took Morrogh o'Melaghlin king of Meath prisoner, after hee agreed with him that each of them would be true to one another...these were the oathes and suretyes that were between them...vidzt. the alter of St. Querans shrine, Relicks, Norannagh,...the staff of Jesus which St Patrick brought into this kingdom,...St. Fehins bell, and the boban of St Kevin, by all which suretyes and oathes they were bound to each other'.¹³⁸ These were all relics of very prestigious saints, Patrick's staff of Jesus being the most famous, and in enumerating them in such detail Mageoghegan was obviously deeply impressed with the distinguished list of artefacts. Patrick's staff was used for swearing oaths in the late sixteenth century and God's vengeance would be all the greater on the perjurer if the oath had been sworn on this uniquely august relic.¹³⁹

Oaths were regarded with great seriousness in early modern times and it was believed that failure to abide by them was bound to bring God's punishment down upon the offender. On several other occasions also, Mageoghegan revealed his respect and awe for oath-taking and inferred his disapproval when the oaths were violated. His account at AD 1158 of the blinding of Conor Mac Domhnaill O'Brien and his son by Toirdhealbhach O'Brien is an enlargement of this account as reported by *AB*, *AT*, and *ARÉ*; Mageoghegan's addition reads, 'notwithstanding there was an agreement made before by them of conditionall peace with suretyes and oaths taken before great prelates of the church'.¹⁴⁰ In another extensive passage, with the O'Melaghlin this time being the malefactors, his censure is obvious: Cuuladh Ua Cain-dealbhain, lord of Laeghaire was 'unhappily and treacherously killed' by the O'Melaghlin king of Meath, 'having

¹³⁷ Gillespie, *Sacred and the secular*, pp 20-1.

¹³⁸ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 197.

¹³⁹ Gillespie, *Devoted people*, pp 33-4.

¹⁴⁰ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 203.

sworne to each other before by these ensuing oaths to be true to one another'; and he went on to list not only the prelates of the church to whom O'Melaghlin was bound for adherence to his oaths, but the kings in whose presence the oaths were taken, concluding, 'and if there were no such oaths or sureytes, it was a wicked act to kill such a nobleharted man without cause.'¹⁴¹ The Council of Trent deemed oath-taking to be inappropriate and would certainly not condone oaths being taken in front of laymen.¹⁴² Therefore, in relation to the type of local miracles on which he focused, his emphasis on the importance of relics in oath-taking, and in the presence of kings, and his condemnation of their violation, it is clear that Mageoghegan showed a proclivity towards a traditional style of piety and religion.

There are few intimations that Mageoghegan showed leanings towards the new theologically-based Tridentine religion or towards setting down many such ideas in this regard. While he may have reported that St Moling [St Mullin] delivered a 'learned sermon' to the king of Ireland and that St Colum Cille went around Ireland 'preaching and teaching the word of God', he never depicted any of the bishops, prelates of the church or the clergy involved in such activity. In this way, he was not advancing any message of the Counter-Reformation. The bishops and prelates are instead often shown to be mediating and taking sureties between disputing princes and kings or else attending along with the nobility at the court of the king of Ireland. However, he may have been aware that changes were introduced at the Council of Trent; a fairly detailed account that he gave of a convocation of clergy in Clonfert in 1170 perhaps indicates that he was conscious of the priorities of Tridentine reforms. He reported that, at this gathering of clergy, 'it was laid down by them...that noe layman should have the rule of any Church or Church matters from thence forth, that noe portion Canons should be sought of women their husbands liveing, that Holy Orders should not be given to bushopp nor Priests sons, and...they tooke the livings of seven bushopps that had Bushopricks and were laymen.'¹⁴³ In addition, on one other occasion, he displayed a more definite sign that he

¹⁴¹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 201.

¹⁴² Salvador Ryan, 'Popular religion in Gaelic Ireland, 1445-1645' (2 vols, PhD thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2002), ii, 214.

¹⁴³ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 213-14.

was cognisant of the new recommendations. He described how St Mobhí questioned a number of saints, including SS Canice, Ciarán and Colum Cille, as to what they would most desire in their churches; Colum's preference pleased Mobhí most: a 'church full of Gould and Silver to found & build churches houses of religion to adore the Relicks & shrines of Saints that they might be in the Greater Reverence with Posterity.'¹⁴⁴ This answer shows that the emphases of Tridentine teaching permeated his thinking to a certain extent but, apart from these two references, Mageoghegan's approach to religion was towards the older traditional style of devotion. He did not show to any great extent influences of the writings of Irish Catholic *émigrés* on the continent who were anxious to inculcate the new reforms in the Irish faithful.

Some Irish exiled clergy residing in the Irish colleges in Europe in the early seventeenth century were applying themselves to penning the lives of Irish saints while others were compiling catechisms, and both endeavours stressed the Tridentine view of proper catholic worship. Thomas Messingham (c.1575-1638?), rector of the Irish college in Paris from 1621 to 1632, was among the first of these Irish Catholic writers, and in 1624 he published a collection of Irish saints' lives under the title *Florilegium Insulae Sanctorum*.¹⁴⁵ Messingham's aims were both political and pastoral. First, he wanted to portray Ireland as a Catholic entity to the European élite in the hope that they might exercise their influence on James I for toleration of Catholicism. Secondly, and equally importantly, he wished to encourage Catholics in Ireland, especially lukewarm Gaelic Irish and Old English, as well as apostate Old English, to persevere in the face of state persecution, and he hoped they would be strengthened in their resolve through reading the exemplary lives of the saints. Irish theologians on the continent realised the importance of presenting their national saints to a European audience in a modern light, one which reflected the imperatives of the reformed religion, in order to qualify for inclusion in the calendar of saints which the Roman authorities were in the process of

¹⁴⁴ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 93-4.

¹⁴⁵ Thomas O'Connor, 'Towards the invention of the Irish Catholic *Natio*: Thomas Messingham's *Florilegium* (1624)' in *ITQ*, lxiv, no. 2 (1999), pp 157-77; 'Thomas Messingham (c.1575-1638?) and the seventeenth-century church' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, xi (2000), pp 88-105.

revising.¹⁴⁶ A friend of Messingham, David Rothe (1572-1650), bishop of Ossory, also contributed to this hagiographical enterprise. In his *Brigida Thaumaturga*, a hagiography centred on St Bridget, published in 1620, he prayed fervently for the protection of the Irish *Natio*, the restoration of the church and the free profession of the faith. In 1621, he published *Hibernia Resurgens* in refutation of Thomas Dempster's claims regarding the origins of certain Irish saints.¹⁴⁷ The Irish theologians on the continent highly resented Dempster's attempted poaching of Ireland's premier saints. As alluded to before, Conell Mageoghegan was aware of Dempster's hagiographical appropriations and therefore must either have had sight of some written reference to the affair or else became aware of the dispute through his academic network.

Another important body of work emanating from the continent was the catechetical material in the Tridentine mould which the friars at Louvain were producing for dissemination to Irish congregations. In 1593, Flaithrí Ó Maolchonaire compiled the first Irish language catechism, followed by Bonaventura Ó hEoghusa's *An Teagas Críosdaidhe* which was published in Antwerp in 1611. These were in turn followed by Theobald Stapleton's *Catechismus* (1639) and Antoin Gearnon's *Parrthas an anma* (1645).¹⁴⁸ Ó hEodhusa's catechism, which was reprinted in 1614, was written in accessible Irish and was designed to be disseminated to the faithful via either priest or learned laity, as well as to the military community serving in the Low Countries. Although the evidence is scarce as to what extent the work circulated in Ireland, in 1658 a source commended *An Teagas Críosdaidhe* for the great contribution it had made in catechizing the people. Much earlier than that date, between 1613 and 1615, up to eighty-nine Old Irish soldiers returned from Flanders so it is quite likely that some of those brought a copy home with them.¹⁴⁹ Further, Brian Mac Cuarta has shown that, as early as the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, catechisms and religious

¹⁴⁶ O'Connor, 'Towards the invention of an Irish Catholic *Natio*', pp 157-8, 167-77.

¹⁴⁷ O'Connor, 'Towards the invention of an Irish Catholic *Natio*', p. 163.

¹⁴⁸ Ryan, 'Popular religion in Gaelic Ireland, ii, 5.

¹⁴⁹ Salvador Ryan, 'Bonaventura Ó nEoghusa's *An Teagas Críosdaidhe* (1611/1614): a reassessment of its audience and use' in *Archiv. Hib.*, lviii (2004), pp 259-67.

artefacts were passing through the port of Chester, probably frequently, on route from Catholic Europe to the families of the Pale.¹⁵⁰

Mac Cuarta has also carried out a detailed study on the revival of Catholicism in the ecclesiastical province of Armagh, which covered ten dioceses stretching from the northern coast of Antrim to King's County, in the first half of the seventeenth century. Franciscans, Jesuits and secular priests, schooled on the continent, laboured to bring back to the fold those who had lapsed and to introduce the reforms of the Counter Reformation.¹⁵¹ In comparing the two regions of the province, those of Ulster and North Leinster, Mac Cuarta has found that the rate of development differed between the two areas. There was a slower pace of Catholic reform and persistence of a more traditionalist outlook among clergy and people in Ulster than in the southern part of the province.¹⁵² In Ulster, where the Catholic community was mainly native Irish, due variously to societal upheaval after the Flight of the Earls in 1607, the arrival of planters among them, and a lack of economic means to send their young men to the continent to be educated, there was limited progress in the promotion of reform by 1641.¹⁵³ North Leinster, on the other hand, was the home of the more wealthy Old English gentry of the Pale who could afford to send their sons abroad for a continental education. While the period of the consolidation of the church in Ulster occurred between 1620 and 1641, this happened much earlier in north Leinster where by the early 1620s if not perhaps a decade earlier, most of the Old English were committed to Tridentine Catholicism. In the early 1620s, in the northern and western parts of Westmeath on the borders of the Pale, which were dominated by the Old English Nugent and Dillon families respectively, priests and religious, including seminary-educated clerics, enjoyed the protection of Richard Nugent, the earl of Westmeath and of the Dillon family of Kilkenny West.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Brian Mac Cuarta, 'Old English Catholicism in Chester documents, 1609-19' in *Archiv. Hib.*, lvii (2003), pp 1-10.

¹⁵¹ Brian Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival in the north of Ireland, 1603-41* (Dublin, 2007).

¹⁵² Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, p. 14.

¹⁵³ Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, pp 242-3.

¹⁵⁴ Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, pp 203-12.

In south Westmeath, the Catholic revival was also in train. Mageoghegan hailed from Lismoyne, in what had been the Gaelic lordship of the MacGeoghegans, an area that straddled southern Westmeath and northern King's County. In south Westmeath, not a dozen miles from Lismoyne, three clerics who returned from the continent in the early 1620s were maintained by the Tyrrell family in Fertullagh.¹⁵⁵ In 1622, at Gallen, King's County, beside where Mageoghegan was living at the time of writing the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, a large celebration, including mass and sermons, was openly held, which was organized by the Dominican order, at this time under the leadership of Ross MacGeoghegan OP, who was an uncle of Conell Mageoghegan.¹⁵⁶ Accordingly, it is very likely that Conell was conscious of the revivalist activity taking place within the Catholic church in the early 1620s at a time when toleration largely prevailed.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, as Mac Cuarta points out when describing the stellar efforts of one particular priest, Stephen Daly OP, to instill Tridentine practices in western King's County, such zeal and achievements as Daly's may have been exceptional and older forms persisted alongside the newer strands of Catholicism.¹⁵⁸ Despite the particular instances of activity mentioned above, it may have been that the Gaelic areas of the midlands were somewhat farther behind in the reception of Tridentine ideas than was the inner Pale, the heartland of the Old English.

Mageoghegan's familiarity with the Dempster controversy has been mentioned. There was, in addition, one other instance where he showed that he had encountered material originating on the continent. In establishing the correct date for the coming of the sons of Míleadh to Ireland, he cited Philip O'Sullivan Beare's history, *Historiae Catholicae Iberniae compendium*, published in Lisbon in 1621. Mageoghegan certainly knew some Latin and he does seem to have consulted O'Sullivan's book, but he probably was not proficient enough in Latin to read it in full.¹⁵⁹ O'Sullivan's history was a polemical, anti-English work imbued with a militant Tridentine flavour, which had gained quite a bit of

¹⁵⁵ Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, p. 154.

¹⁵⁶ Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, p. 205.

¹⁵⁷ Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, p. 210.

¹⁵⁸ Mac Cuarta, *Catholic revival*, pp 162-3.

¹⁵⁹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 240-1; Bernadette Cunningham & Raymond Gillespie, 'James Ussher and his Irish manuscripts' in *Stud. Hib.*, xxxiii, (2004-5), p. 95.

notoriety at the time, and it drew negative responses from Francis Nugent, head of the Irish Capuchins, and from Archbishop Ussher.¹⁶⁰ Accordingly, Mageoghegan's consciousness of some of the teachings of Trent together with his familiarity with affairs on the continent and writings coming from Europe, indicate that by the 1620s the message of the Counter Reformation was filtering through to the outer reaches of the Pale. On the whole, he tended towards a more traditional understanding of his faith but Salvador Ryan has shown that while the Irish writers in seventeenth-century continental Europe were anxious to uphold the religious ideals proclaimed by the Council of Trent as standards to be driven for, they were at the same time defending many of the practices of their forefathers as legitimate.¹⁶¹

It is clear from Cunningham and Gillespie's article mentioned above concerning the group of scholars involved in exchanging manuscripts, including Ussher, the Four Masters and Keating, that Mageoghegan was one of those central to this network. Some of the scholars in this circle were very much in touch with what was happening in Europe and were au fait with the flurry of writing that was coming in from the continent in the wake of the Counter Reformation. Keating obviously used Messingham's *Florilegium* in the writing of *Foras feasa* and Ussher's copy of Messingham's book is preserved in Trinity College Dublin.¹⁶² Ussher corresponded and exchanged books with David Rothe and he also corresponded through an intermediary with the Irish Franciscan, Luke Wadding, based at the Irish Franciscan College in Rome, with whom he exchanged information extracted from early manuscripts.¹⁶³ In 1631, Ussher received two volumes of Wadding's works, perhaps of his eight-volume history of the Franciscan order, the

¹⁶⁰ Hiram Morgan, 'Philip O'Sullivan Beare', *DIB*, www.dib.cambridge.org; Clare Carroll, 'Irish and Spanish cultural and political relations in the work of O'Sullivan Beare' in Hiram Morgan (ed.), *Political ideology in Ireland, 1541-1641* (Dublin, 1999), pp 229-53.

¹⁶¹ Ryan, 'Popular religion in Gaelic Ireland', ii, 130.

¹⁶² Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, p. 91; O'Connor, 'Towards the invention of an Irish Catholic *Natio*', p. 166, n.60.

¹⁶³ Cunningham & Gillespie, 'James Ussher and his Irish manuscripts', pp 83-4; H.M.C. *Report on Franciscan manuscripts preserved at the Convent, Merchants Quay, Dublin* (Dublin, 1906), pp 14, 16, 57, 143.

Annales Minorum, published between 1625 and 1654.¹⁶⁴ Micheál Ó Cléirigh and the Four Masters were at the centre of the continental efforts to promote the counter-reformation through their writings. Accordingly, taking into consideration, on the one hand, that many members of this network were embracing the contemporary continental scholarship, and, on the other, that these writings, with regard to adopting a Tridentine approach towards his religion, were only impinging on Mageoghegan's consciousness to a limited extent, it is pertinent to wonder how cohesive was this circle and how influential it may have been as a mechanism for circulating fresh ideas from Europe among the Old English and Gaelic Irish. However, as Salvador Ryan has shown, the package of catechesis that the ecclesiastical scholars at Louvain exported home was balanced neatly between the new emphases of the Council of Trent and a form of devotion to which the Gaelic Irish were endeared.¹⁶⁵ Further, the members of this circle were of course interested in the continental material with their own priorities in mind. Ussher, as well as possessing an avid interest in antiquarian matters, was interested in establishing an unbroken link between Christianity and Protestantism from the time of St Patrick and was claiming that it was the Roman Church which had become corrupt. Keating was anxious to promote the reformed ideas of Trent while also seeking the old manuscripts to establish an ancient Irish identity for the Old English. Ó Cléirigh and his associates were mandated by the authorities at the Franciscan college in Louvain to compile a history of Ireland and lives of the saints in order to enhance the image of Ireland in Europe as well as sending the message of Trent back home. Scholars could interpret the sources for their own ends.

Perhaps, at this stage in the 1620s, the emerging sense of identity evident between the Old Irish and Old English was equally propelled as a reaction to the persecution faced by them due to their Catholicism than by the writings and preaching of continentally trained clerics which, as Mac Cuarta has shown, was having more effect in Old English areas than Gaelic Irish areas of population. It was still early days to realise fully the fruits of the Irish church establishment of a diocesan structure begun in the 1610s or to reap the

¹⁶⁴ H.M.C. *Report on Franciscan manuscripts*, p. 51; Benignus Millett, 'Luke Wadding', *DIB*, www.dib.cambridge.org.

¹⁶⁵ Ryan, 'Popular religion in Gaelic Ireland', ii, 97.

results of the religious orders sending an increased number of young men to be educated abroad in the Irish colleges. Such Counter-Reformation activity gathered apace in the relatively more tolerant and relaxed atmosphere that prevailed as the 1620s progressed when government measures against recusancy were not enforced systematically due to the crown's fear of alienating Irish Catholics during the English war with Spain (1625-30). However, the fact that the spiritual content of the new ideas was not resonating loudly with Mageoghegan does not mean that communications between the network of scholars and collectors was not without influence in circulating ideas from the continent among the Old Irish and Old English. The obvious respect that scholars from different backgrounds held for each other attests to the good relationship between them.¹⁶⁶ The content in the material they exchanged resulted, in some cases, in promoting a standard message as will be seen from the interpretation put on the achievements of the high-king Brian Boromha by Mageoghegan and Keating. In addition, a new way of thinking with regard to 'nation', was bound to be imparted to Irish Catholics by those who returned to minister them, who had spent years on the continent, as well as by other returning scholars and soldiers. It is difficult to say from where the centre point of the impetus for a change in political ideology emanated. It seems that extensive landholders, like Terence Coghlan, anxious to safeguard their possessions and also politically active, who were under enormous pressure as Irish Catholics, were conscious motivators in promoting ideas of national identity. As will be seen from the opinions of Richard Hadsor, this sense of national identity was somewhat weaker in the Pale. National sentiment appears to have lagged behind a little in the Pale; however, as the century progressed into the 1630s and into the 1640s, the realities of the discrimination Irish Catholics in general faced, together with the concept of national identity promoted by returned *émigrés*, concentrated minds on a closer relationship.

In any case, with regard to his religion, Mageoghegan displayed the influences of both older and newer strains but with a stronger tendency towards the traditional faith. His ideal king is one who is generous towards the church. His King Diarmaid Mac Cearbhall who flourished in the 540s in thanksgiving for the return of his hearing by the miracles of

¹⁶⁶ Cunningham & Gillespie, 'James Ussher and his Irish manuscripts', *passim*.

St Ciarán, ‘bestowed great Gifts of Lands on Clonvicknois in honour of St. Queran for the recovery of his health.’; and in the reign of a subsequent king, Aodh Mac Ainmire (fl. 580s), ‘when St Columb was come to the Kings Court, the king of his great bounty and affection he did bear to St Columb for his affirmityes sake Graunted & Dedicated unto him the Town of Dery with the appurtenances.’¹⁶⁷ Neither of these incidences is mentioned in any of the annals so it is not possible to compare them but it is clear that Mageoghegan regarded patronage of the church to be a desirable attribute in a monarch. On other occasions, the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* does share entries of more celebrated events with the annals and in these cases Mageoghegan’s reports are more effusive than his fellow annalists. Recording the aftermath of an *annus horribilis*, a year of a great plague (1095-6 AD), many of the annals have the common entry that the clergy of Ireland caused the people of Ireland to fast and pray in order to avert further catastrophe. CS and ARÉ record that this was duly followed by generosity on behalf of the kings of Ireland toward the church; thus, CS 1096 reports, ‘The kings of Ireland gave freedom to many churches that were liable to tribute’; and at ARÉ 1096.9 we are told, ‘and many lands were granted to churches and clergymen by kings and chieftains’. Mageoghegan reports differently and is much more descriptive in his account: ‘The king, the noblemen, and all the subjects of the kingdome were very benefitiall towards the Church and poore men this yeare, whereby Gods wrath was aswaged. The king of his great bounty gave great immunityes and freedom to churches that were then before charged with Cess and other extraordinarie contry-charges with many other large and bountifull gifts.’¹⁶⁸ This rather extravagant embellishment and probable enlargement of his source signals Mageoghegan’s approval of the king’s liberality towards the church. There is no mention in any of his descriptions of a king being involved in the practice of religion. Traditionally in Ireland, the kings would have been deeply involved with the church in terms of patronage but the sacred side of religion was left to the bishops and abbots. In the latter quoted extract, it is likely that the dilemma of persecution and the threat of recusancy fines which dogged and overshadowed Catholics in Ireland in the early seventeenth century were present in Mageoghegan’s mind as he embellished his accounts

¹⁶⁷ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 82-3, 94.

¹⁶⁸ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 186-7.

of the generosity of kings towards the church. An underlying aspiration for religious tolerance from the reigning monarch, Charles 1 could be discerned in his descriptions.

There are some indications that Conell was anxious to emphasise Catholicism albeit of a traditional sort. The annals did not use the term ‘Catholic’; the faith was accepted as such and accordingly *CS* and *AT* at AD 599 and 597 respectively reported that the Saxons received ‘the faith’. Mageoghegan, however, and at this stage of his history the order of his entries agrees with *AT* which indicates a common ultimate source, inserts a qualification, ‘The Saxons Received the Catholique faith’.¹⁶⁹ On another occasion, Mageoghegan reported that Pope Gregory sent the fathers of the church to ‘the Brittaines for their conversion to the Catholique faith’,¹⁷⁰ whereas *AT* (AD 582.3) in its account did not use the adjective here either. There are other instances where he used the superfluous term as well. The mother of Colum Cille, Eithne when she was pregnant with the saint dreamt that she would bear a son ‘whose instruction & sermons in the Catholique faith would be throughout the Realmes of Ireland and Scotland’.¹⁷¹ In another instance, his probable enlargement of his exemplar’s account regarding St Patrick is further sign of perhaps an underlying significance to his usage of the term. While his entry, ‘St Patrick was approved in the Catholic Religion’ by Pope Leo echoes almost exactly the *AI* and *AU* entries at AD 441 (an example of one of the rare occasions when the annals used the qualifying adjective), the ensuing embellishment from Mageoghegan sounds like his own addition, ‘and by the rest of the Popes of Roome that succeeded in his time, & then after flourished in the heat of Christian Religion in this land’.¹⁷² It appears that Mageoghegan was intentionally forwarding the case for Catholicism for Ireland. This may have been part of an evolving consciousness among both native Irish and Old English that being ‘Irish’ was analogous to and equated with being ‘Catholic’, an idea which had been gaining ground since the revolts of the sixteenth century and part of an unfolding concept of *patria* or ‘faith and fatherland’, and one which would be advanced by Geoffrey Keating. In addition, ideas of an Irish Catholic identity, being promoted by the

¹⁶⁹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 97.

¹⁷⁰ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 89-90.

¹⁷¹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 93.

¹⁷² Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 70.

intellectual community at Louvain, which is discussed below, may have been percolating through to the educated community at home. Mageoghegan's obvious loyalty to the crown coupled with his promotion of his religion is reflective of the emergence of a common interest among the Old Irish and Old English. The concept of temporal loyalty to one's monarch and spiritual loyalty to the pope was more often propounded by the Old English but the presence of Catholicism in Mageoghegan's stream of consciousness on a number of occasions is indicative of the evolving amalgamation of both groups into a kind of 'Catholic party'.

Case study: Mageoghegan's treatment of Brian Boromha: national identity

The *Annals of Clonmacnoise* is a history of Ireland from the time of Adam to AD 1408 but one would think from the very first sentence of Mageoghegan's preface that this was a history of Brian Boromha: 'Among all the worthy & memorable Deeds of K. Bryan Borowe sometime K. of this Kingdome, this is not of the least account'. It is obvious that the implicit message to the reader was that Brian was the primary figure in this historical work. As mentioned at the outset, it is apparent that his biased account of Brian was an interpolated intrusion and a deviation from the account of his exemplar, an O'Melaghlan and O'Connor-influenced annals. This is borne out by the way in which he interrupted the logical flow of a very flattering commentary of the king of Ireland and Meath, Maoilseachlainn Mór mac Domhnaill, in order to introduce details uncomplimentary to the midland king. He reported initially, obviously faithfully, from his exemplar on Maoilseachlainn's victories over the Danes, over Leinster and over Connacht as well as his defeat of Brian himself, 'King Moyleseachlin burnt and spoyled all the hether Mounster, and overthrew Bryan Borowe and Munstermen in the field'. Other favourable comments were also repeated from his source; Maoilseachlainn's prowess as a horseman is stressed, 'he could soe exactly ride [a seven year-old unbroken horse] as any other man could ride an old tame and gentle horse'; and his cherishing of poets received great coverage too, 'his great bounty and favour to learning and learned men'.¹⁷³ However, to counterpoint his championing of Brian, it was necessary for Maoilseachlainn to receive negative attention: we learn from *AClon's* postmortem on the

¹⁷³ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 159-62.

battle at Clontarf that ‘Moyleseachlin that was late before king of Ireland (but at that time but king of Meath) all be it hee fought of his side, was his mortall enemie, and therefore for his evill will to king Brian, he was content rather to lose the field then win it.’¹⁷⁴ He did not go as far as Keating in claiming that Maoilseachlainn, ‘through a plot between himself and the Vikings...did not come into the battle array amongst Brian’s host’¹⁷⁵; perhaps this was because Mageoghegan could not bring himself to be quite so condemnatory of a king from his own province whose family had been a neighbouring sept of the Mageoghegans. However, while Brian was still alive and holding the kingship, it was he who was ‘very well worthy of the place and government’. When Maoilseachlainn duly resumed the kingship again after Brian’s death, Mageoghegan returned to a favourable presentation of the midland king and accorded him the conventional and very positive obituary notice at his death in 1022.

Of course, the legend of Brian was well established by the seventeenth century and Mageoghegan no doubt had access to a text like *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh*¹⁷⁶ or a derivative with its damning description of the reign of the Vikings and its euphemistic praise of Brian. In March 1629, Michéal Ó Cléirigh had copied the extensive tract *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* from the book of Cú Chonnacht Ó Dálaigh at Multyfarnham in Co. Westmeath¹⁷⁷ which is not far from Lismoyne so sight of this book was also possible for Mageoghegan. *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* appears to have been a very influential text in the seventeenth century; Keating also drew on it for his account of Brian as high king in *Foras feasa*.¹⁷⁸ Although the entries of the descriptions of the Danes and Brian in *A Clon* do not reveal a close relationship with those in *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh*, they do agree in substance and it is possible that Mageoghegan was recording from memory or else from some other source. Praise for Brian, however, was not universal. The *Annals of Loch Cé* 1014.3 recorded that the ‘Gaeidhel of Laighen’

¹⁷⁴ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 167.

¹⁷⁵ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 285.

¹⁷⁶ James H. Todd (ed. and trans.), *The war of the Gaedhil with the Gaill or the invasions of Ireland by the Danes and other Norsemen* (London, 1867).

¹⁷⁷ Paul Walsh, ‘The travels of Michel Ó Cléirigh’ in Nollaig Ó Muraíle (ed.), *Irish leaders and learning through the ages* (Dublin, 2003), p. 356.

¹⁷⁸ Meidhbhín Ní Urdail, ‘Seachadadh Cath Cluana Tarbh sna lámhscríbhíní’ in *Léachtaí Cholm Cille*, xxxiv (2004), pp 182-3.

came to Clontarf to ‘ward off from them the oppression of Brian Boromha’. Furthermore, as a scholar himself, Mageoghegan might have been aware of the very recent *Iomarbhaidh na bhfileadh*, the war of words between poets from Leath Cuinn and those from Leath Mogha, and there were some very derogatory things said about Brian by some of the northern poets;¹⁷⁹ in addition, Mageoghegan was of Leath Cuinn himself. Consequently, the extensive coverage given to the Munster king is remarkable.

Brian is encountered first in the dedicatory preface. The recipient of a dedication in early modern times was often an eminent figure such as a monarch, for instance, Queen Elizabeth, the dedicatee of Spenser’s *Faerie Queen*, in which case the author’s intention was likely to have been to seek advancement or favour. Alternatively, the dedicatee was often the sponsor of the work and in such cases prefatory dedications usually consisted of an encomium of the patron in gratitude for his support like the Four Masters’s dedication to the patron of the *Annals of the kingdom of Ireland*, Feargal Ó Gadhra, whose genealogy they quoted in his honour. Mageoghegan’s preface is unusual in this respect. The encomium in the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* is of Brian Boromha instead of the patron Terence Coghlan and, because Coghlan was his brother-in-law, it is very likely that it was with his blessing, if not on his actual instructions, that Mageoghegan devoted virtually half of the entire preface to a panegyric of Brian. Therefore, an underlying significance is indicated from the very start of the book with this unconventional prefatory format.

For Mageoghegan, there is no doubt that Brian Boroma was the ideal king. All the admirable qualities that he so obviously admired in the earlier kings are encapsulated in his portrayal of Brian Boroma. He explained that Brian ‘tooke the kingdome and government’ out of the hands of Maoilseachlainn and added, ‘in such manner as I doe not Intend to Relate in this place’. The latter was of royal blood being the hereditary king of the Clann Colman branch of the O’Neills and Brian was the first of his obscure Munster sept to rise to prominence and the kingship of Ireland. Mageoghegan, who hitherto revealed himself to be so conscious of royalty, was probably aware of this fact because he

¹⁷⁹ Roibeart McArtúir, ‘Gé saoil a Thaidhg nach dearnas’ in Lambert McKenna & Eleanor Knott (eds), *Iomarbhaidh na bhfileadh: the contention of the bards* (London, ITS, 1918), pp 148-75.

followed immediately with the caveat, ‘Hee was very well worthy of the place and government...the most famous king for his time that ever was...of the Irish nation...he never had his peere...[he] was judged to beare the bell away from them all’.¹⁸⁰ He was making it quite clear here that of all the illustrious kings that had gone before (he mentioned by way of comparison Conn Ceadchathach and Niall of the Nine Hostages), the zenith had been reached with the kingship of Brian Boromha.

Furthermore, many of his previously revealed attitudes to parliament, culture, society and religion can also be discerned in his discussion of Brian. Mageoghegan’s aspiration for government, as we have seen before, was for peaceful rulership. When Brian saw that incivility had developed during the rule of the Danes, what ‘rudeness the kingdome was fallen’, he set himself up ‘in the quite [quiet] Government thereof’. He showed Brian consulting with the nobility; ‘he assembled together all the nobility of the K.dome as well spirituall as temporall...and caused them to compose a booke’,¹⁸¹ effectively a book of history. With regard to learning, so very close to his heart, one of the attributes of Mageoghegan’s ideal king was patronage of scholars and the preservation of the heritage of the Irish. The Danes had ‘burnt their books of Cronicles & prayers to the end that...all Learning should be quite forgotten but Brian had ‘caused open schoole to be kept in the severall parishes to Instruct their youth, which by the sd Long warrs were growne rude and altogether illiterate’.¹⁸² Mageoghegan’s sense of hierarchy is apparent in this passage which reveals his outrage and disgust at the treatment meted out to the nobility at the hands of the Danes but Brian reinstated the overturned social order:

yea almost all the noblemen, gentlemen and those that were of any account were turned out of their landes and liveings without any hopes of recovery or future redress...some of the best sort were compelled to servitude and bounden slavery...it was strange how men of any fashion could use men as the Danes did use the Irish men at that time. King Bryan Borowa was a meet salve to cure such festred sores, all the phisick of the world could not cure it else, where in a small time he bannished the Danes...restored the nobilityes to their auntient patrimonies and possessions, and in fine brought all to a notable reformation.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 165-6.

¹⁸¹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 7-8.

¹⁸² Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 7.

¹⁸³ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 166.

An underlying contemporary political significance is clearly discernible here taking into account the straitened circumstances in which the Catholics found themselves since the early 1600s in their continuous struggle to hold on to their possessions and in the case of many of the Gaelic Irish to recover their lands. The depiction of the ideal king, Brian Boromha, coming to the rescue of a persecuted people and championing the rights of the rightful ancient inhabitants provided an apt analogy of restoring the natural order in the seventeenth century. Mageoghegan and, by extension, Coghlan no doubt hoped that the incumbent Stuart king would deliver a solution in line with their hopes and expectations and live up to their idealised view of how a monarch should behave. In no less a manner, regarding religion, they doubtless had high hopes that their monarch would resolve their dilemma caused by their adherence to Catholicism. Mageoghegan also reported that Brian had ‘repayred their Churches and houses of religion’ after their destruction by the Danes. Responsibility for ecclesiastic structures necessary for a healthy state of religion was obviously one of the attributes that he considered to be desirable in the ideal king.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, Mageoghegan in his preface stated that Brian arranged for a book of history to be written. He depicted Brian assembling the nobility to his seat in Cashel to arrange for the composition of the Psalter of Cashel, which was a highly esteemed body of literature, now long lost, but frequently referred to by the literati of medieval and early-modern Ireland. Pádraig Ó Riain maintained that while the traditional view has been to ascribe the compilation of this manuscript to Cormac mac Cuileannáin (d. 908), king-bishop of Cashel, in his opinion, it is not unlikely that Conell Mageoghegan was correct in his assessment that Brian was the one who commanded its compilation¹⁸⁴ and, more recently, Daniel McCarthy was also of the opinion that Brian was indeed the compiler.¹⁸⁵ Bart Jaski deemed it more likely that Brian Boromha was just responsible for updates to the Psalter c. 1000 to include the Dál Cais genealogies.¹⁸⁶ However, if Brian had been the composer of the psalter, it is strange that the early twelfth-century O’Brien-inspired *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* did not attribute the composition of this tome to him. In any event, with regard to its reputed content, from

¹⁸⁴ Pádraig Ó Riain, ‘The Psalter of Cashel: a provisional list of contents’ in *Éigse*, xxiii (1989), pp 126-7.

¹⁸⁵ Daniel McCarthy, *The Irish annals: their genesis, evolution and history* (Dublin, 2008), pp 279-80.

¹⁸⁶ Bart Jaski, ‘The genealogical section of the Psalter of Cashel’ in *Peritia*, 17-18 (2003-4), p. 331.

references to the Psalter of Cashel which, it has been suggested, is Bodleian Library MS Laud 610, it is thought that the book may have contained some or all of the following: genealogies and passions, genealogical material concerning Munster, saints' lives, a version of Cormac's Glossary, the Dindshenchus and some poetry and prose.¹⁸⁷ Mageoghegan, however, gave the impression that the Psalter was more of a book of history; he stated that Brian

caused them to compose a booke containing all the Inhabitants, events and scepts that lived in this land from the first peopling, Inhabitation and Discovery thereof after the creation of the world untill that present, which booke they caused to be called by the name of the psalter of Cashell.¹⁸⁸

Accordingly, in his introductory preface to this historical work, his major *opus*, Conell Mageoghegan was describing an iconic and revered Irish document as a work of history and attributing its compilation to Brian Boromha. By describing the esteemed Psalter of Cashel (rivalled only in reputation by the venerable, if putative, Psaltar of Tara), as 'a booke contayning all the Inhabitants, events and scepts that lived in this land', he was ascribing material to it that he thought perhaps should be in it. This equating of the Psalter of Cashel with an origin myth was setting the scene for the tome which he himself had written. He had used the origin myth contained in the *Leabhar gabhála* as the basis for his book and the implicit message contained in his preface was that his book should be read with an understanding of importance of that origin myth viz. that Ireland was a kingdom from earliest times with a long line of illustrious kings culminating with the king who stabilized and developed that kingship, Brian Boromha. Mageoghegan's preface continued with Brian depicted as signing the psalter himself, having the five provincial kings and the ecclesiasts of the kingdom sign it as well and ordering that copies should be distributed to the kings with the instruction that this history was to be the official record thereafter:

He...signed it with his owen hands together with the hands of the Ks. of the five provinces, alsoe with the hands of all the Bushops and prelates of the K.dome, caused several coppyes thereof to be given to the Ks. of the provinces, with straight Charge, that there should be noe credit giuen to any other Chronicles

¹⁸⁷ John T. Koch, *Celtic culture: a historical encyclopaedia* (Santa Barbara, 2006), p. 1109.

¹⁸⁸ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 7-8.

thenceforth, but should be held as false, Disannulled & quite forbidden for ever.¹⁸⁹

It is unlikely that Mageoghegan retrieved this account from his sources so it appears that he may have been taking poetic licence and have been conjuring a scene of Brian having a number of copies made of the Psalter of Cashel, consisting of the origin myth, and instructing the provincial kings to circulate this official chronicle so that everyone should believe a standard story.

Mageoghegan obviously regarded this as important. Within the book itself he had interposed into his exemplar's records a long, embellished and heroic account of Brian but in his preface he developed his representation further and depicted a fanciful image of Brian distributing a standard story to be believed by all. In this way he was giving the impression that with the suzerainty of Brian, Ireland was now one kingdom, with Brian as high-king and the provincial kings subordinate to him. In line with the origin myth contained in the *Leabhar gabhála*, a version of which he used, he had shown one king after another succeeding to the throne often having challenged for the kingship by killing his predecessor. But now, Brian was established in the 'quite government' of Ireland, and the impression Mageoghegan gave was that, with the one origin story for all, Brian had created one kingdom. He portrayed Brian as a national king and, instead of local monarchy, Brian had created a national monarchy. Mageoghegan may have been expressing ideas of nation and of the Irish nation; ideas of the origins of the Irish nation, as founded by Brian Boromha. As Breandán Ó Buachalla has pointed out, the Irish nation, the kingdom of Ireland and the crown of Ireland were central to seventeenth-century Irish political thought and the historical existence of these political entities is explicit in Mageoghegan's narrative.¹⁹⁰ Ideas of 'nation' in the early seventeenth century may have been primarily expressed through the language of 'kingship'. After 1603, everything had changed for the Irish Catholic, especially for the Gaelic Irish. The Catholic group - indigenous Irish and those who thought of themselves as Anglo-Norman descendants – seem to have been thinking of creating a new world and part of this

¹⁸⁹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 8.

¹⁹⁰ Ó Buachalla, *Crown of Ireland*, pp 40-1.

process was sharing ownership of this common myth and creating a sense of identity. Therefore, Mageoghegan employed the saga of the high-king, Brian Boromha, whom he portrayed as reaching the apogee of ideal kingship and creating one kingdom of Ireland, to reflect these joint communal concerns and these embryonic ideas of nation.

Irish exiles on the continent, as alluded to above, were also engaged in fostering a sense of identity that encompassed a national dimension. In 1626-7, Captain Somhairle MacDonnell, a soldier based in Spanish Flanders was responsible for compiling a collection of heroic, or Fenian, ballads known as *Duanaire Finn*. These recounted the exploits of the legendary hero Fionn MacCumhaill and his band of warriors, the Fianna. Ruairí Ó hUiginn tells us that these ballads, a highly important part of Irish popular culture, would almost certainly have been known and sung among the Irish military community in Flanders, contributing to keeping up a common spirit of comradeship within the Irish soldiers, many of whom would have been intending to return home eventually, some perhaps to do battle in Ireland.¹⁹¹ In 1631, MacDonnell had a further collection assembled, known today as the Book of the O’Conor Don, one of the largest collections of Irish bardic verse, religious and secular, to have been handed down to us. Ó hUiginn analogises an Irish poem book, a *duanaire*, written in honour of a patron or family, as a ‘verbal art gallery’ and a monument to that family’s nobility. However, the Book of the O’Conor Don differed from a localized anthology of poetry devoted to a single patron or family; instead it was arranged as a collection in which the leading families of Ireland, both Gaelic and Old English, were extolled and venerated, which transformed it into a national *duanaire*.¹⁹² Significantly, Ó hUiginn considers that the compilation of these works need not necessarily have been solely promoted by the sponsor’s personal interest in literature; given the closeness of MacDonnell to the intellectual community at Louvain, he may have been functioning, as were others including the Four Masters, in the wider context of compiling a national corpus of literature.¹⁹³ It looks like this impetus for a search for national identity, alive on the

¹⁹¹ Ruairí Ó hUiginn, ‘Literature in Spanish Flanders’ in Thomas O’Connor & Lyons, Mary Ann (eds), *The Ulster earls and baroque Europe: refashioning Irish identities, 1600-1800* (Dublin, 2010), pp 349-61.

¹⁹² Ó hUiginn, ‘Literature in Spanish Flanders’, pp 354-5.

¹⁹³ Ó hUiginn, ‘Literature in Spanish Flanders’, pp 360-1.

continent, incorporating both strands of Irishness, was filtering back home. Conell Mageoghegan, and by extension his sponsor Terence Coghlan, casting a national light on the exploits of Brian Boromha, may have been inspired by this continental momentum towards a joint national identity. We have seen where the new-style, reformed religious approach did not reverberate greatly with Mageoghegan but, nevertheless, some of this national spirit imbued in those exiled on the continent, may have been resonating with the Irish at home. Indeed, a connection between Coghlan and Somhairle MacDonnell may have some significance here in terms of familiarity with current ideologies circulating among the exiled community; as mentioned above, Mary Coghlan née Dillon was the niece of Lucas Dillon who was married to Mary, daughter of Randal MacDonnell, first earl of Antrim, and therefore first cousin of Captain Somhairle MacDonnell.¹⁹⁴

Conclusion

The positive attitude shown to James I and VI, a Stuart king with reputed Gaelic ancestry, at the time of his accession, seems to have persisted into the reign of his son, Charles I and an enthusiastic royalism existed in Gaelic Ireland in the early seventeenth century. It may be that some of the native Irish were relatively acquiescent in the autocratic style of government practised by the Stuart kings through their viceroys and administration signaled by the fact that Mageoghegan did not comment adversely on the autocratic behaviour of early kings. A residual influence of the legacy of the mighty power of Gaelic lords may have been a contributory factor in this respect. Many Gaelic Irish were probably, as yet, not generally intimately engaged with the institution of parliament, the Old English having been traditionally dominant in the political sphere. Deference towards contemporary peers and the nobility in general, distaste for signs of social climbing, and the assumption of an appropriate ordering of society into layers of hierarchy, the norm across Europe in the early modern period, were mirrored in Gaelic Ireland. The educated native Irish were obviously acutely conscious of their cultural heritage and anxious to preserve the surviving early manuscripts. The disruption of the Gaelic order with the resulting changes in terms of loss of patronage for the professional learned classes doubtless crystallised for them the danger of the loss of their distinctive

¹⁹⁴ Hector MacDonnell, 'Randal MacDonnell, first earl of Antrim', *ODNB*, www.oxforddnb.com.

cultural legacy. The repercussions of such a loss were even more keenly realised among Irish exiles in Europe and the sterling efforts of émigré scholars to ensure the endurance of early material probably invigorated their compatriots at home. Mageoghegan's clearly expressed affinity to his own cultural identity, while at the same time embracing the Old English community, indicate a self-confident Old Irish elite, operating comfortably in both worlds. The question of religion touched every aspect of life in the early seventeenth century. It seems that an older style of worship still prevailed in Gaelic Ireland in the mid 1620s; the imperatives of reformed Tridentine devotion and the ideas of the Counter-Reformation, being disseminated by returned clergy who had been educated in continental seminaries, was only beginning to impact slowly in the Gaelic midlands in the mid 1620s.

On the other hand, because of confessional divisions, political connotations were attached to religion in this period, and this aspect was more to the fore. A probably conscious emphasis on 'Catholic' by Mageoghegan suggests the urgency felt by Catholics for the necessity to work together to alleviate mutual difficulties and to dismantle barriers to advancement. Such ideas were doubtless partly inspired by a deliberate promotion of a self-conscious Catholic identity being affirmed on the continent by Counter Reformation clerics. Indeed, the exercise in compiling the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* was probably partly motivated by strategic political considerations. The targeted readership seems to have been Old Irish and Old English Catholics. It is likely that the author was influenced by and that his views reflected those of his brother-in-law and sponsor, Terence Coghlan. The commission for the work undoubtedly came from Coghlan, a substantial Gaelic Irish landholder, ambitious politician and one who was socially well-connected. Successful and propertied Irish Catholics, both Old Irish and Old English, were striving to survive and hold on to their possessions and this imperative very likely dictated the manner in which the book that was framed. The progression of events as presented, implying that Ireland comprised one kingdom from earliest times, detailing early kings often violently acquiring succession and culminating in the unifying and peaceful reign of Brian Boromha, indicates an underlying political and social agenda to the enterprise. The depiction of Brian was that of high-king who had conquered the whole kingdom and

created a national kingdom. Brian had established the ideology of national monarchy. Brian was the perfect king and he made the perfect kingdom. James I had also established hegemony over the whole kingdom in the first decade of the century. Perhaps the analogy was that James was the perfect king and the new Brian Boromha, the high-king who had created a national kingdom. These nascent ideas of nation that are visible in Conell Mageoghegan's *Annals of Clonmacnoise* are indicative of a growing sense of shared identity among Irish Catholics in the third decade of the seventeenth century.

Chapter 3

Geoffrey Keating

What has emerged from an examination of Conell Mageoghegan's interpolated comments and opinions interspersed between the records of his annals has been a set of ideological beliefs embodying his enthusiastic royalism leaning towards absolutism, his firm conviction of the appropriateness of the social order, great pride in his native Irish heritage and a tendency towards an older style of religion. Revealed also has been his sense of nation expressed as national kingdom. This chapter builds on these ideas and contextualises them within the work of the Old English historian and priest Geoffrey Keating. As already noted, Keating wrote *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, a history of Ireland compiled from old Irish manuscripts which was completed by 1634/5 and it is from this work that his political, social, cultural and religious attitudes are divined for comparison. Whereas Conell Mageoghegan came from a native Irish background and was a recent descendant of a Gaelic chieftain, Geoffrey Keating, the author of two religious works and a history of Ireland, came from Anglo-Norman stock. Mageoghegan's views are important as those of a Gaelic Irish layman from the midlands who was educated in Ireland, who remained at home and was perhaps therefore not as subject to the influence of Counter-Reformation reforming theology as Irish exiles. Keating, on the other hand, a Catholic diocesan priest, a descendant of the early Anglo-Norman settlers, from a gaelicised area in south Co. Tipperary, left Ireland at the end of the sixteenth century, studied in Rheims where he imbibed Tridentine doctrine and went on to the Irish college in Bordeaux, founded in 1603, presumably to teach theology. He wrote three works all in the Irish language: *Eochair-sgiath an Aifrinn*¹, a tract on the Mass, probably written while he was still on the continent; *Trí bior-ghaoithe an bháis*², a treatise on death, written by 1631, a didactical work advocating morality as the proper way to live one's life and attain the kingdom of heaven; and, in a completely different vein, his major work

¹ Geoffrey Keating, *Eochair-sgiath an Aifrinn: an explanatory defence of the mass*, ed. Patrick O'Brien (Dublin, 1898).

² Geoffrey Keating, *Trí bior-ghaoithe and bháis: the three shafts of death*, ed. Osborn Bergin (Dublin, 1931).

*Foras feasa ar Éirinn*³, a history of Ireland from the time of creation down to the twelfth century ending with the arrival of Anglo-Norman settlers, probably completed in 1634.

Bernadette Cunningham has written extensively on Geoffrey Keating.⁴ In her definitive work *The world of Geoffrey Keating*, as well as considering his two theological works in detail, she has devoted a large part of her book to the study and analysis of *Foras feasa ar Éirinn* and has comprehensively looked at Keating's motivations and attitudes as gleaned from his presentation of his history. Alternatively, this chapter will take the approach of looking at *Foras feasa* by way of comparison with the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* and with some other sources as well. It will examine Keating's choice and presentation of material and compare it with the presentation of the same figures and events or similar situations by Conell Mageoghegan and by others. A comparison of the respective ideas and opinions permeating their two accounts will establish the degree of consonance or dissonance in their political, social, religious and cultural attitudes.

Keating's background

In the course of her book, *The world of Geoffrey Keating*, as well as in a subsequent article⁵, Cunningham has thrown a light on Keating's family background and early life. He was born c. 1580 and Cunningham has demonstrated that he was almost certainly of the Keatings of Moorestown in the barony of Iffa and Offa in south Co Tipperary, a reasonably well-off family which had substantial land holdings. He was associated with the parish of Tubbrid and, beside Tubbrid, at Burgess, the Meic Craith family was known to have operated a school of *seanchas*; it is quite likely that it was here that Keating had access to an early education which equipped him with the professional knowledge of the Irish language and its oral and written literature which can be seen in his writings.⁶ The Meic Craith family, one of the few Gaelic proprietors of land in the district, were poets to

³ Geoffrey Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn: the history of Ireland*, ed. David Comyn and P.S. Dinneen (4 vols, London, ITS, 1902-14).

⁴ Bernadette Cunningham, *The world of Geoffrey Keating: history, myth and religion in seventeenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 2000); 'Seventeenth-century interpretations of the past: the case of Geoffrey Keating' in *IHS*, xxv, no. 98 (Nov. 1986), pp 116-28; 'Geoffrey Keating's family connections' in *Tipperary Historical Journal*, xv (2002), pp 59-67.

⁵ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, pp 17-40; 'Geoffrey Keating's family connections', pp 59-67.

⁶ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, p. 21.

the Butlers, and patronised especially by Theobald Butler, lord of Cahir (1566-96) for whom a *duanaire* was compiled.⁷ Like other Irish Catholic sons, Keating had to travel to the continent to further his education and he initially studied at the university at Rheims where he probably received his doctorate in theology. He was also associated with the Irish college at Bordeaux probably as a teacher and mentor to the Irish students who attended the nearby Jesuit university. He was back working as a priest in Munster by 1613 and appears to have been travelling as a preacher around various parts of south Tipperary and Waterford, as the 1615 visitation to the diocese of Lismore reported: ‘Father Jeffrey Keating, a preacher and a Jesuit, resorting to all parts of this diocese’.⁸

Foras feasa ar Éirinn

Keating’s major work *Foras feasa ar Éirinn* was a history of Ireland which spanned the period from creation to the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in the twelfth century (AD 1169) and to which he prefixed a lengthy introduction. Unlike the Four Masters’ *Annals of the kingdom of Ireland*, which was written in annalistic format, and Mageoghegan’s *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, written in a semi-annalistic fashion, Keating wrote in an attractive narrative style in easily understood Irish. Like *AClon*, *Foras feasa* was a compilation of different sources and, although Keating’s history did not extend as far as Mageoghegan’s which ran to AD 1408, it is a lengthier work incorporating long narratives on such mythical heroes as Cormac mac Airt and Conchubhar mac Neasa. As Cunningham has shown, Keating used a wide range of Gaelic manuscript sources including numerous poems and legendary tales. He also revealed himself to be familiar with and well versed in the histories and learned works of a number of English, Scottish and Latin writers. However, like Mageoghegan, his two major sources were a version (or versions) of *Leabhar gabhála Éireann* and *Réim ríoghraidhe Éireann* and these two also provided the framework for his narrative. His account of the early waves of invasions into Ireland in pre-Christian times from the Partholonians to the sons of Míleadh is drawn from the former source and the chronological lists of kings drawn from the latter.⁹ Therefore, the framework of the reigns of the kings of Ireland drawn from *Réim*

⁷ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, p. 20.

⁸ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, p. 41.

⁹ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, pp 65-7.

ríoghraidhe was common to both *AClon* and *Foras feasa* and individual kings and the theme of kingship receive equally prominent attention in Keating's history.

Keating's stated purpose in writing a history of Ireland is set out very comprehensively in his long introduction. He said he wished to refute the negative and untrue chronicles that had been written in the past. He singled out for particular criticism the writings of Giraldus Cambrensis¹⁰ who had given a negative account of the Irish in the twelfth century and whose work had been recently published in print in the early seventeenth century and was in circulation on the continent. He also placed particular censure on Richard Stanihurst,¹¹ a member of the Old English community from the Pale, who had cast very unfavourable aspersions on the native Gaelic population in a chronicle of the late sixteenth century. However, as Cunningham demonstrates, Keating had other motives other than those which he stated for writing a history of his country. She has established that Keating was reformulating the history of the past in line with current political perspectives.¹² As we have seen, Mageoghegan was also writing in such a genre, and he too, along with his brother-in-law, the future MP Terence Coghlan, had an eye to contemporary political and social conditions when writing his historical work. Cunningham has indicated additional imperatives that inspired Keating to write a history of Ireland and has outlined many factors that motivated him to do so. Apart from his very natural inclination as a Counter-Reformation-educated priest to wish to show Ireland in a favourable light as a Catholic 'nation' loyal to the true church, she has pointed out that one such imperative was, in line with the new trend in history-writing in early-modern Europe when historians were writing to emphasise the history of their individual peoples, Keating was providing an origin myth for the Old English. The Gaelic people already had one in the shape of the *Leabhar gabhála* but the Old English, descendants of the twelfth-century Anglo-Normans, did not; and since the framework of *Leabhar gabhála* facilitated the legitimisation of newcomers establishing themselves in Ireland as their homeland, Keating could present the Anglo-Normans as the final wave of settlers who had long ago chosen to make Ireland their homeland and thereby he could present

¹⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 13-25.

¹¹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 21-43.

¹² Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, p. 108.

both Gaelic and Old English collectively as *Éireannaigh*.¹³ She explained that this was important for the Old English as their concern for their property rights and their hopes for regaining their influence in civic life, revealed in the protracted negotiations over the Graces in the 1620s and 1630s, could be enhanced by an appropriate historical underpinning of their political claims.¹⁴

Keating composed his own prose narrative to produce a highly readable and easily understood history so technically he cannot be said to have interpolated. However, the compilation of *FFÉ* involved an ongoing process of selection, adaptation and omission from his source material.¹⁵ Further, from his obvious didactic and moralistic tone as well as his embellishments, some of his opinions and attitudes are clearly discernible and can be compared with those of Mageoghegan. As we saw, much of Mageoghegan's material on Brian Boromha was interpolated into his Connacht and midland-orientated source. Keating's *Foras feasa*, on the other hand, has a Munster focus so it is perhaps not surprising that his material on Brian Boromha is even more extensive than that to be found in *AClon* and equally as flattering to Brian. Cunningham has shown that he derived much of his information on Brian Boromha and on the Vikings from *Cogadh Gael re Gallaibh*.¹⁶ Nevertheless, in order to gain an insight into Keating's ideas, it will be fruitful also to compare his approach to the saga of Brian and Maoilseachlainn with the account of Mageoghegan. Similarly, a juxtaposition of the way in which both men treated other kings and situations will reveal a similarity or a contrast in their individual cultural attitudes and assumptions.

Royalism

As mentioned and cited in the previous chapter, historians have shown that many of Gaelic Irish and Old English in the early seventeenth century were royalist in their leanings and displayed a favourable and positive attitude towards their monarch. Keating was no exception to this general rule and he likewise displayed a definite royalism. As stated, like Conell Mageoghegan, he used the framework of the *Réim ríoghraidhe* and

¹³ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, pp 111-12.

¹⁴ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, p. 109.

¹⁵ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, p. 166-7.

¹⁶ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, p. 68.

chose to structure his history around the reigns of kings. However, whereas as we have seen, Conell Mageoghegan tended towards an absolutist version of royalism, Keating's vision propounded a more limited form of monarchy.

Initially, however, with regard to designating Ireland a kingdom from earliest times, a comparison between *Foras feasa* and the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* reveals both Keating and Mageoghegan to have chosen to employ an identical mechanism in this respect, Mageoghegan writing in 1627 and Keating between 1629 and 1634. In his preface to the reader right from the beginning of his history, just as Mageoghegan, Keating represented the country as a kingdom - 'Ireland was (being) a kingdom apart by herself like a little world'¹⁷ - and he utilised the description, 'kingdom of Ireland', constantly throughout the book. The significance of the status of Ireland as a kingdom has been discussed in the previous chapter. In brief, it was desirable for Irish Catholics that the king be seen as king of Ireland separately from his role as king of England as his prerogative concessions were regarded by the Old English especially as a bulwark against a hostile administration and against the encroachment on their position by new settlers who preferred to interpret their new country's status as a colony. It is not perhaps surprising that Keating displayed a preference in this direction. The Old English in the main had always maintained loyalty to the king of England; over the centuries their existence as a coherent political group depended upon a tradition of loyalty to the crown.¹⁸ However, for many of the Gaelic Irish, in the sixteenth century and for some in the seventeenth, their political axis rested on Madrid and the Spanish Netherlands¹⁹ with, as we have seen, identification with the English monarch being a more recent phenomenon since the arrival of the Stuarts on the throne. The coincidence of aspirations with regard to the constitutional status of Ireland by both Keating and Mageoghegan is a marked indication that Irish Catholics of both traditions were growing closer in their political attitudes and holding the same goal in common, that of a direct link and line of communication with the king of England.

¹⁷ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 39-40.

¹⁸ Aidan Clarke, *The Old English in Ireland, 1625-41* (Dublin, 1966), p. 25.

¹⁹ Hugh F. Kearney, *Strafford in Ireland, 1633-41: a study in absolutism* (Manchester, 1959), p. 16.

Like Mageoghegan, Keating's royalism is undoubted. This can be seen in the way both afforded so much space in their commentaries to relate the tale of the Lia Fáil, the legendary coronation stone of the Tuaithe de Danaan, and to specify that kings of England were now crowned on that famous Irish artefact. According to O'Curry, this ancient stone on which monarchs were crowned at Tara, was incorrectly supposed to have been taken from Ireland to Scone in Scotland, thence to England, and that the stone at Westminster Abbey where English kings had long been crowned is known now not to have been the celebrated Lia Fáil.²⁰ Such, however, was not the understanding of Keating and Mageoghegan. Mageoghegan reported that

this stone remained a long time in the King of Ireland's pallace of Taragh, whereon many Kings and Queens were crowned untill it was sent ouer into Scotland by the King of Ireland with his sonn ffergus, who was created the first King of Scotland on that stone, and for a long time after all the Kings of Scotland receaued theire Crownes thereon untill the time of King Edward the first, King of England, whoe tooke the same as a Monument from thence into England in the wares between him and Scotchmen & placed it in Westminster abby, where many a King of England haue been likewise Crowned thereupon, & is to be seen there amongst other monum[en]ts this day.²¹

Keating's version is similar but he elaborated further, revealing his unquestioned assumption and favourable acceptance of the ancient Irish genealogy which the poets had provided for the Stuart kings at the time of the accession of James I:

it was in the destiny for this stone, whatever place it would be in, that it is a man of the Scotie nation, i.e. of the seed of Mileadh of Spain, that would be in the sovereign of that country...it is there now in the chair in which the king of England is inaugurated, it having been forcibly brought from Scotland, out of the abbey of Scone; and the first Edward king of England brought it with him, so that the prophecy of that stone has been verified in the king we have now, namely, the first king Charles, and in his father, the king James, who came from the Scotie race.²²

A marked similarity in their sentiments showing an appreciation of the importance of the ancient Irish stone and of the link between the Lia Fáil and the present monarch is

²⁰ Eugene O'Curry, *Lectures on the manuscript materials of ancient Irish history* (Dublin, 1995), pp 388, 479-80, 620.

²¹ Denis Murphy (ed.), *The Annals of Clonmacnoise* (Dublin, 1896, facsimile reprint, 1993), pp 26-7.

²² Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 207-10.

apparent here and the royalist tendencies of both men are clearly visible in their presentations of the saga of the famed mythical stone.

However, one can detect differences in emphasis between Keating and Mageoghegan in relation to the function of the Lia Fáil and here the discrepancy in interpretation between the two is obvious. Keating explained, ‘it used to roar under the person who had the best right to obtain the sovereignty of Ireland at the time of the men of Ireland being in assembly at Tara to choose a king over them.’²³ Mageoghegan’s rendering had a more absolutist resonance: ‘when anyone was borne to whome to be a King of Ireland was predestinated, as soone as the party soe Borne stood upon this stone forthwith the stone would give such a shouting noyse... which presently would satisfie the party standing on the stone, and all the Rest of his future fortune to the Right of the Crowen.’²⁴ Keating made it clear that the king was to be chosen by the men of Ireland whereas Mageoghegan, although adding that the future king and others were happy once the stone shouted out, announced at the outset that a king of Ireland was destined to rule, therefore, by implication, his candidature incontestable. This indicates that Mageoghegan was not countenancing any process of election. Further variances in this regard are also evident in their treatment of the king Tuathal Teachtmhar. Mageoghegan’s passage concerning this king was quoted in full in the previous chapter and his embellishment of his sources shown to illustrate his belief in the supreme power of kingship and the undisputed sovereignty of the monarch. A divergence in emphasis between Keating and himself was briefly alluded to then but it is worth expressing in more detail here. The relevant passage in *Foras feasa* states: ‘he convened the Feis of Tara... then the nobles of the Gael from every province in Ireland came to him, and accepted him as their king... and they pledged themselves by the elements, that they would leave the sovereignty of Ireland to himself, and to his children’.²⁵ As has been seen, on the other hand, Mageoghegan’s king Tuathal ‘kept’ the feast of Tara and rather than being *accepted* by the nobles as their king, he ‘enjoined’ the nobility never to deny himself or his descendants the crown and

²³ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 101.

²⁴ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 26-7.

²⁵ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 245.

government of Ireland'.²⁶ Keating was unequivocal in his belief that the king should be chosen by the people and stated as much on several occasions. For instance, in the course of disparaging the possibility which had been asserted by the contemporary Scottish historian, George Buchanan, that a particular king of Ireland could have reigned as a child, he announced, 'we do not read in the seanchus that there was ever any king of Ireland, from the time of Slainghe to the Norman Invasion, but a king who obtained sovereignty of Ireland by the choice of the people, by the excellence of his exploits, and by the strength of his hand.'²⁷ The only time Mageoghegan ever mentioned a king being 'chosen' was the very first king 'that ever absolutely ruled in Ireland', Slainghe of the Fir Bolg, as mentioned in the last chapter, whereas Keating claimed here that all kings of the *Gaeil* had been chosen by election. Keating's beliefs seem to subscribe to a strain of constitutional thought propounded in the early sixteenth century by political theorists in the Sorbonne, including John Major, who held that 'people were prior to their monarchical ruler and possessed the capability of participating in his appointment'.²⁸ Keating did quote John Major, but in a different context, referring to him as 'a reputable Scotch author'²⁹ and, while he may not have actually read Major's works,³⁰ it is likely that such influences came to bear on him during his period of studies in France. Furthermore, in 1591, around the time when Keating may already have been in France, a number of Catholic Leaguer pamphlets described the crown as elective and in 1593 the Leaguer estates met with the express intention of electing a king so it is likely that Keating was open to such ideas.³¹ Keating's constitutional approach to elective monarchy contrasts with the more absolutist style of Mageoghegan's interpretation.

Another example of Keating's aspiration of collective cooperation with the nobility rather than king as absolute ruler is clear where he described Tuathal Teachtmhar sending 'messengers in all directions to the nobles of Ireland to complain of the treachery which

²⁶ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 52.

²⁷ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 183.

²⁸ Howell A. Lloyd, 'Constitutionalism' in J. H. Burns (ed), *Cambridge history of political thought, 1450-1700* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 258.

²⁹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 58-9.

³⁰ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, p. 85, n16.

³¹ J. H. M. Salmon, 'Catholic resistance theory, Ultramontaniam, and the royalist response, 1580-1620' in Burns (ed.), *Cambridge history of political thought*, p. 228.

the king of Leinster had practised against him; and accordingly the nobles of Ireland gave aid in warriors and auxiliaries to Tuathal with a view to avenge this outrage'.³²

Mageoghegan's description instead gives the impression of royal might and power; his king Tuathal 'gathered together all his Royall army & forces, with whome the king in his one person marched towards Leinster to be Revenged on them.'³³ Keating's portrayal of voluntary assistance being offered by the nobles contrasts with the impression that Mageoghegan gives of a king whose forces were under the monarch's direct control. Keating's assumptions perhaps stemmed from an Old English understanding and conception of their proper and traditional role in society as guardians of security for the crown in Ireland, a role that had been very recently denied to them when their offer to participate in the 'trained bands' scheme in the 1620s was rejected and thrown back in their faces. This scheme would have empowered the Old English to maintain a militia in their own area which they could call up in defence of the crown against any Spanish invasion.³⁴ Neither did Keating portray his kings exercising sovereign power to the same degree as Mageoghegan's kings. Keating's kings were subject to the law. At the point in his history where Ollamh Fodhla held the first Feis of Tara, he explained that at the Feis it was the custom 'to put to death anyone who committed violence or robbery, who struck another or who assaulted another with arms, while neither the king himself nor anyone else had power to pardon him such a deed'.³⁵ He supplied the reader with a verse of a poem which was his source for this information:

Whoever did any of these things
Was a wicked culprit of much venom
Redeeming gold would not be accepted from him
But his life was at once forfeit.³⁶

If the poem was his only source for his assertion, he has embellished the contents somewhat in stating definitely that the king had no power to grant pardon.

Mageoghegan's version, quoted in the previous chapter, while differing in sense somewhat to Keating's rendering although probably referring to the same entry in an ultimate source, gave the impression of the king as agent who accepted no disloyalty to

³² Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 255.

³³ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 53.

³⁴ Raymond Gillespie, *Seventeenth-century Ireland: making Ireland modern* (Dublin, 2006), pp 74-5.

³⁵ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 133.

³⁶ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 135.

his command to attend the Feis; to reiterate, his entry read, ‘such as came not were taken for the kings enemies, and to be prosecuted by the law & sword as undutiful to the state’.³⁷ Those who did not obey the king’s command to attend were prosecuted as enemies of the king whereas Keating’s king was powerless to contravene the law. However, when explaining why a person is made king over his tribe and district, Keating at one point did state that no-one ‘should have power to resist or oppose him during his sovereignty’ because it from God that ‘he obtained sovereignty’.³⁸ On first reading, this may appear to accord with an absolutist interpretation of royalism but this would be to misinterpret Keating’s beliefs because, on closer examination, as Cunningham has pointed out, this was not an espousal of the ‘divine right’ of kings because Keating had insisted on several occasions that kingship in Ireland was elective.³⁹ It is quite likely that Keating was influenced by and subscribed to the theories of Suarez with whose views he accords in this respect; in *De legibus* (1612), citing St. Paul, Romans 13:1 (‘There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God’), Suarez averred that God alone could bestow power.⁴⁰ Keating had drawn on Suarez’s teachings for his theological tract *Eochair sgiath an Aifrinn* and was probably quite familiar with the political thought of the Jesuit theorist.⁴¹ Furthermore, in a qualification that Keating added shortly after this statement, it is clear that his views were certainly not those of unlimited monarchical supremacy as he asserted that early kings often gave sureties ‘for the carrying out of the laws of the country in accordance with the Instruction for Kings, or else [had] to forego the sovereignty without a struggle’.⁴² We do not get any hint in *AClon* of the possibility of a king of Ireland giving up his sovereignty.

Keating does not appear to have been as impressed with the trappings of monarchy as Conell Mageoghegan was. He never applied the artefact of a ‘crown’ to an Irish king and only ever used the word to refer to the crown of one’s head. Even when he described in great detail the inauguration of Irish kings, he did not stray into any inappropriate regal

³⁷ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 34.

³⁸ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 9.

³⁹ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, p. 142.

⁴⁰ Salmon, ‘Catholic resistance theory’, p. 238.

⁴¹ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, pp 32-3.

⁴² Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 11.

imagery but adhered faithfully to traditional accoutrements as found in the sources such as a set of instructions for kings [*fír flathemon* or *tecosca*⁴³] and a white wand. The rod or wand was the more common feature in inauguration⁴⁴ but Keating gives equal prominence to the ‘book called the Instruction for Kings’, reputedly written by Cormac mac Airt. The qualities which the wand and contents of the book signify are of more importance to him than the objects themselves. To Keating, the practicalities of just rule by the monarch were the crucial aspect of the ceremony so he first outlined the procedure of the chronicler presenting this book ‘in which there was a brief summary of the customs and laws of the country, and where it was explained how God and the people would reward the doing of good, and the punishment that awaited the king and his descendants if he did not carry out the principles of justice and equity’.⁴⁵ Keating may well have been influenced by a strain of political theory on kingship circulating in Catholic-League France in the late sixteenth century espoused by Jean Boucher, who had taught at Rheims university prior to 1576 and whose theories were perhaps still being advocated when Keating was studying there. Boucher published a treatise in 1589 discussing whether a king may be deposed for a just cause: there was a mutual contract between the king and his people and the king at his coronation ceremony pledged his faith to the people and if he violated it he became a private citizen and might be put to death.⁴⁶

In contrast to Keating’s preoccupation with kingly virtues, Mageoghegan’s priority was the ritual that accompanied inauguration; when he described the inauguration of Feidhlimidh Ó Conchubhair as king of Connacht his depiction was one of grand celebration and he portrayed the king’s foster-father Maoilruanaidh McDermott organising ‘a magnificent and great feast in honour thereof, with the assembly and presence of all the nobility of Conaught such as none other of his auncestors or predecessors kings of Conaught ever before him was heard.’⁴⁷ Furthermore, Keating did not employ anachronistic ‘royalisms’ such as Mageoghegan was wont to do, as we discussed in the previous chapter; Keating only used the term ‘palace’ twice in his book

⁴³ Francis J. Byrne, *Irish kings and high-kings* (Dublin, 2001), pp 24-6.

⁴⁴ K. W. Nicholls, *Gaelic and gaelicized Ireland in the middle ages* (Dublin, 2003), p. 32.

⁴⁵ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 11.

⁴⁶ Salmon, ‘Catholic resistance theory’, pp 224-6.

⁴⁷ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 265.

and then when referring to the palace at Cashel of the king/bishop of Munster, Cormac mac Cuileannáin, whereas Mageoghegan constantly referred to the king's palace at Tara; and regarding Brian Boromha, Keating referred to the 'three companions of Brian' whereas Mageoghegan designated them the 'three noblemen of the king's bedchamber' as noted above. Perhaps the majestic trappings of pomp and ceremony consonant with English kingship struck more of a chord with the Gaelic Irish representative than the political theories of Renaissance Europe which penetrated the mind of the Old English clergyman. Nevertheless, although Keating espoused a decidedly constitutional brand of royalist ideology and Mageoghegan a somewhat absolutist strand of royalism, both men exhibited a favourable and enthusiastic attitude towards the Stuart incumbent and towards monarchical government.

Of course, the provenance of the present monarchical government of Ireland stretched back to the arrival and conquest of the Anglo-Normans and subsequently of Henry II in the twelfth century. There was much debate in the early seventeenth century surrounding the Norman invasion and Keating brought his lengthy book to a close with a trenchant discussion on this seminal event. He made clear the inherited right of the Old English to be in government:

It is... manifest that it is more frequently the English authorities entrusted the care of defending and retaining Ireland to the charge of the earls [whom we have mentioned] who made alliance with the native Irish, than to the charge of all the settlers that ever were in the English pale.⁴⁸

It was the noble and loyal progenitors of the earls of Kildare, Ormond, Desmond and Clanricard who had been regularly entrusted by the English authorities with the defence of Ireland and her retention to the crown of England. These same families, the Fitzgeralds, Burkes and Butlers are those which head the list of 'good' Anglo-Normans with which Keating brought his history to a close; those who came to Ireland in the 'beginning of the Norman Invasion', who built churches and abbeys, gave patronage to the clergy and carried out 'many other good deeds' and, consequently, 'God gave them as a return for this that there are many descendants after them at this day in Ireland'.⁴⁹ As

⁴⁸ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 33-5.

⁴⁹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 369.

Cunningham has pointed out, it is obvious that Keating considered that the Old English would be those best suited to looking after the government of the country and, as she has noted elsewhere, there is a hint of superiority in his representation of *Gall* and *Gaeil*.⁵⁰ His attitude in this regard is discernible throughout his introduction where this underlying implication is evident viz. that it was the gentry-descendants of the Anglo-Norman settlers of the twelfth century who were the ones with the right of political hegemony. On the one hand, this was just reflecting political reality because until the late sixteenth century the Gaelic Irish did not generally participate in parliament. On the other, it could indicate a certain attitude of superiority on the part of Keating towards the Old Irish, taking for granted that the political sphere in the country belonged by right to the Old English and not taking into account the fact that those of native Irish descent, like Terence Coghlan, were becoming increasingly politicised. Throughout, he referred continuously to the Norman invasion, implying that that was the definitive moment for Ireland. For instance, in making the point that Ireland had since the beginning been an independent kingdom he intimated that this situation changed with the arrival of the Anglo-Normans: ‘neither Arthur nor any other foreign potentate, ever had supremacy over Ireland from the beginning till the Norman invasion’;⁵¹ when explaining why mistakes may have been made in the transcription of some of the ancient manuscripts by the scribes since the twelfth century, he used a telling phrase: ‘because, since the time *the suzerainty of Ireland passed to the Galls*, the Irish have abandoned making the revision which was customary with them every third year of the ancient record’;⁵² and, when explaining that his work was divided into two books - ‘the second book from the coming of Patrick to the invasion of the Galls, *or down to this time*’⁵³ - he implied that the supremacy of the twelfth-century invaders and settlers was still the status quo. This is not to say that any hint of animosity against the native Irish is to be found in Keating’s *FFÉ*; on the contrary, it is obvious from his warm comments and praise of the native Irish nobles that he displayed sentiments of good will towards them; but it is clear that significant participation by the Old Irish in government was not uppermost in his mind.

⁵⁰ Cunningham, ‘Seventeenth-century interpretations of the past’, p. 127.

⁵¹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 17.

⁵² Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 85 (my italics).

⁵³ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 95 (my italics).

Accordingly, it may be an indication that the Old English did not consider seriously the merits of Old Irish for high positions of prestige and importance.

In this regard, Mageoghegan gave no indication that political hegemony by the Old English perturbed him. It is not easy to divine Mageoghegan's thoughts on this particular question as in the second part of his book, as stated, he reported more or less faithfully from his exemplar and embellished very little, his account being at times almost identical to *AConn*. He related innumerable accounts of the battles and plunderings of the late medieval period involving the Anglo-Normans, the *Gaeil* and alliances of the Anglo-Normans and *Gaeil*. He referred to the exploits of various deputies to the crown as they arose, which included members of the families of Fitzgerald, Butler and Burke, just recording their actions matter-of-factly as they would have appeared in his exemplar. Accordingly, he appears to have been quite comfortable with the suzerainty of the English crown through its representatives in Ireland. At AD 1209 he chose to include an entry concerning tribute to be paid to the monarchy, which is omitted in the extant annals of this particular year viz. *AI*, *AU*, *LCé*, and *ARÉ*; (*MCB* 1210.1 does have a somewhat similar entry but it related only to a single lordship, that of Donnchadh Cairbreach Ó Briain). Mageoghegan's entry reads, 'The Englishmen of Munster accompanied with Geffrey March, Thomas Fitz Moris fitz Gerald, and Donnogh Carbreagh o'Bryan with their forces marched through Connaught, till they mett with the said Bushopp (that was Deputy) at Athlone aforesaid, where they constituted and ordained a certain rent to the king of England out of the lands of Ireland in generall as well of the Englishmen as Irishmen'.⁵⁴ Such a decree covering all Ireland must have surely existed in theory only until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as Mageoghegan would have been aware. His respect for the deputies was obvious too in a passage that he inserted after the year 1182 of his book when he apologised for his exemplar's ignorance of their names. In an interpolation, addressed to Terence Coghlan, his dedicatee, he stated,

I shall entreat you to hold me excused for not nameing the kings deputies and Englishmen therein contained by their right names, for I goe by the words of the ould booke and not by my owen invention, which is soe illfavouredly and confusedly handled, that mine author could not gett his pen to name the Kings of

⁵⁴ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 223.

England or other foraigne contryes by their proper names but by such Irish names as he pleased to devise out of his owen head, although he was a great Latinist and Scholler, which I though fitt to declare for mine owen excuse soe I rest Yrs assuredly C. M. G.⁵⁵

He was taking care to ensure that any blame for errors in the names of the king's representatives or of the predecessors of the Old English would not be ascribed to him and it is clear that he had no qualms about those who had authority to run the country in the centuries following the conquest. In addition, his respectful tone regarding the 'Englishmen' and his plea to Terence Coghlan to excuse him suggests that both he and Coghlan held the present-day descendants of the early Anglo-Norman settlers in the highest esteem, another indication that they were comfortable with the notion of the status-quo of Old English political leadership from the mid-twelfth century up to when the New English took control and that the days of animosity and enmity between the Gaelic Irish and the Old English were rapidly declining.

Keating devoted the last five chapters of his history to a comprehensive narrative on the coming of the Normans to Ireland and, consequently, his opinions regarding the twelfth-century conquest are transparent and easily ascertainable. As Cunningham has shown, he went to great lengths to justify and legitimise the Norman invasion.⁵⁶ He emphasized Henry II's right to intervene in Ireland, stressing that it had been a Christian and not a pagan conquest and that not only the nobility and the clergy but also the king of Ireland had submitted to Henry, and, as mentioned above, as a finale Keating brought his history to a satisfactory close with an account of the virtuous Anglo-Normans whose descendants happened to be the present-day Old English aristocrats. Mageoghegan, by contrast, normally much given to embellishing especially up to the time of Brian Boromha, was much less effusive and dealt with the conquest in a more cursory fashion and therefore his opinions are not as easily divivable. However, it is evident from his account that he did not regard the outcome of Norman invasion resulting in English rule in Ireland as a catastrophic episode in the pages of history. Nevertheless, there were variances between

⁵⁵ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 215.

⁵⁶ Cunningham, 'Seventeenth-century interpretations of the past', pp 126-7.

them in interpretation of points of detail which gave a distinctly different overall flavour to their accounts.

Initially, with regard to the pope's gift to Henry II via the papal bull, *Laudabiliter*, both were broadly in agreement on the lawfulness and validity of the pope's right to bestow the sovereignty of Ireland on the English king; however, they differed on the detail of the pope acquiring that right. Mageoghegan averred,

Donnogh mcBrian Borowa was king, some say, and was soon deposed again (and went to Rome), to Doe penance because hee had a hand in the killing of his owen eldest brother Teige mc Bryan. Hee brought the Crowen of Ireland with him thither, which remained with the Popes until Pope Adrean gave the same to king Henry the second that conquered Ireland.⁵⁷

First, it was the need to do penance for fratricide that he gave as the reason for Donnchadh O'Brien going on pilgrimage, and secondly, he intimated that it was from Donnchadh that the pope received the kingship of Ireland. However, in his version of events, Keating was more definite about the pope having the sovereignty of Ireland in his gift and he also put a different complexion on who had actually donated the sovereignty:

Donnchadh, son of Brian Boraimhe, and the real nobles of Ireland were at enmity with one another concerning the mastery of Ireland from the time of Brian to that of Donnchadh, and hence they bestowed with one accord the possession of Ireland on Urbanus, the second Pope of that name, in the year of the Lord 1092; and the Pope of Rome had possession of and authority and sovereignty over Ireland from that time to the time when Adrianus, the fourth Pope of that name, assumed the successorship of Peter in the year of the Lord 1154...and Stow says in his Chronicle that this Pope bestowed the kingdom of Ireland on Henry 11., king of England...in 1155.⁵⁸

In his rendering of these events, first, Keating declared that it was internal fighting between the nobility and Donnchadh over the supremacy of the country that caused the possession of Ireland to be given to the pope and, secondly, that it was the deposed king *in collaboration* with the nobility who had handed over sovereignty. Both agreed that the 'crown' of Ireland, in Mageoghegan's words, or the 'kingdom' of Ireland, in Keating's, was given to the pope who in turn gave it to Henry II. (Mageoghegan seemed to use the

⁵⁷ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 179.

⁵⁸ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 347-9.

expression ‘crown of Ireland’ here simultaneously as both an abstract noun denoting kingship and as a real object, an issue that will be discussed later; and, incidentally, the only other reference in the annals I have found referring to Donnchadh bringing the crown of Ireland with him to Rome is in *AB* at AD 1064 -*coróin ri Erenn do breith leis dó* – none of the other annals gave this detail). In any case, Mageoghegan and Keating both chose to include this gift to the pope from their particular sources which indicates that neither had any difficulty in respect of the conquest. However, as part of his justification of the invasion of the Normans, Keating was leaving the reader in no doubt as to the pope’s right to transfer the sovereignty to Henry II and, as a logical conclusion, to Henry II’s right to engage in a conquest of the country; he stressed that the pope had ‘possession of and authority and sovereignty over Ireland’ whereas Mageoghegan just baldly stated that the crown of Ireland ‘remained with the popes’. Furthermore, Mageoghegan’s explanation that Donnchadh went to do penance for killing his brother is consonant with Gaelic traditional thought where *finjal* was considered an unnatural and heinous crime as can be seen from countless condemnatory entries of such killings in the annals and indeed from many such references throughout *AClon* as well.⁵⁹ On a previous occasion as well, Keating had explained that it was internecine fighting within Ireland that caused the nobility and the king to hand over sovereignty; albeit in a different context, while explaining why various customs had been enshrined into Irish law, he had referred to Irish infighting, remarking they ‘were usually slaying, harrying and plundering each other’.⁶⁰ Such references served to further justify the intervention of the English king and the Anglo-Normans. Furthermore, as regards who had authority to bestow this gift on the pope, Mageoghegan’s implication that it was Donnchadh himself who transferred sovereignty is consistent with his more absolutist royalist ideology than that of Keating whose assertion that it was the joint decision of the nobility and the king indicates his more constitutional outlook and his efforts to present the invasion as a legitimate conquest.

⁵⁹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, e.g. pp 43, 173, 250, 306.

⁶⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 67-8.

A more significant difference in outlook can be detected between the two historians in their treatment of Diarmaid Mac Murchadha, the king of Leinster who instigated the events leading to the Norman invasion; Keating showed a degree of sympathy towards him while Mageoghegan's portrayal of Mac Murchadha was highly unfavourable. Again, this was doubtless part of Keating's strategy to throw a favourable light on the Norman invasion. Mageoghegan stated that Mac Murchadha was banished by king Ruaidhri Ó Conchubhair, Tighearnan Ó Ruairc and their allies 'for the unjustly taking and keeping of Dervorgill daughter of Murrogh o'Melaghlyn king of Meath, and wife of the said Tyernan o'Royrck, being for his pride, tyranny, and badd government hated of the Leinstermen themselves'.⁶¹ Keating did agree that 'Diarmaid...had committed many acts of injustice and tyranny' against the Leinster nobles but, while his account of Diarmaid was not entirely complimentary, he was not as condemnatory of him as Mageoghegan; Keating revealed that Dearbhforgaill, the wife of Tighearnan, 'sent messengers in secret to Diarmaid Mac Murchadha asking him to come to meet her and take her with him as his wife'; that there had been 'an illicit attachment between them'; and that she had 'screamed in pretence, as if Diarmaid was carrying her off by force'.⁶² Further disparities are evident in the way they presented their material on Diarmaid. Keating painted a pitiful picture of Diarmaid after he had returned secretly to Ireland after his banishment, whereas Mageoghegan just reported that Diarmaid 'came privily before into Ireland, and soe lay close hidden in the abbey of Fearnas, among the monks there'.⁶³ Keating's version seems to have been intended to evoke the compassion of the reader: 'having landed in a place where he had many enemies and few friends, he went secretly to Fearnas Mor Maodhog, putting himself under the protection of the clergy and community of Fearnas; and he stayed with them sad and wretched...until the coming of summer'.⁶⁴ In addition, Keating, perhaps reporting from a Leinster-influenced source, further took on the role of apologist for the actions of the twelfth-century Leinster king by rationalizing some of Diarmaid's motives: Diarmuid decided to plunder Dublin because of 'all the outrages that the people of Ath Cliath had committed on himself and

⁶¹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 206.

⁶² Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 319-21.

⁶³ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 207.

⁶⁴ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 323.

on his father'⁶⁵ and furthermore, 'it was they who slew his father; and they buried him with dishonour and contempt, and buried a dead dog in the same grave with him as an insult to him',⁶⁶ and whereas Mageoghegan stated that Diarmaid 'did not onely recover his owne patrimony, but a great deale more then in reason he could make challenge unto',⁶⁷ Keating presented the Leinster king's point of view viz. that Diarmaid reflected that his 'ancestors before him possessed the sovereignty of Ireland...and he said to himself that the strength or might of all these kings to hold Ireland was not greater than his own.'⁶⁸ Finally, Mageoghegan, in common with many of the annals, for example, *AB*, *AT* and *AU*, gave an unflattering account of his death, stating that Diarmaid 'died of an unknown disease, without doing penance, shrive or Extrem Unction',⁶⁹ whereas Keating merely reported that 'Diarmaid, king of Leinster, died; and he was buried at Fearná Mor Mhaodhog.'⁷⁰ Therefore, while Mageoghegan did not in any way give any sign that he condemned the coming of the Normans to Ireland, he was not in sympathy with Diarmaid Mac Murchadha whose actions helped to cause that event, as Keating appeared to be. He just reported on the Norman invasion without comment in the manner of the annals, neither condoning nor condemning the invaders, unlike Keating whose lengthy narrative on the whole episode was intended to emphasise what eventual positive consequences ensued for Ireland with the domiciling of the virtuous second-wave settlers whose worthy descendants became the contemporary Old English.

However, while Mageoghegan disapproved of the instigator of the twelfth-century conquest, and while he did not choose to deviate from the original Gaelic account in order to present a positive account of the actual invasion, he did display feelings of goodwill and esteem towards the conquering English king, Henry II, and he did not query his right to intervene in Ireland. In this respect both he and Keating were perfectly in accord. Mageoghegan portrayed the king as a merciful monarch explaining that when Diarmaid made 'his repaire to the king of England, to king Henry the second, who being

⁶⁵ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 328-9.

⁶⁶ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 336-7.

⁶⁷ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 207.

⁶⁸ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 331.

⁶⁹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 208.

⁷⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 340-1.

ready to go to France to war with the French king, notwithstanding the matter the king had in hand was of such importance as could not admitt of other troubles, yet he had such regard and pittie to mcMurrogh, that he sent his favourable letters in his behalfe’;⁷¹ and, with a passage which does not suggest any misgivings on his behalf, Mageoghegan brings part one of his book to a close, ‘King Henry hearing of the good success the said Englishmen had in Ireland, the kings majesty in his owen person came over, who made a final end of an intire conquest in Ireland, in the year of our Lord God 1173’.⁷² Conell Mageoghegan was almost certainly cognizant of the fact that all of Ireland was not brought under crown control until the reign of James I yet he was transposing the seventeenth-century political situation back almost five hundred years which indicates his satisfaction with the current constitutional position *vis-à-vis* the monarchy. Keating also presented the king as an honourable and favourable monarch throughout his account, one who received ‘homage’ and ‘respect’ from the clergy and provincial kings and the submission of Ruaidhri Ó Conchubhair, king of Ireland as well.⁷³

Parliament and government

With regard to parliament and kings ruling their subjects, the attitudes of Keating and Mageoghegan diverge significantly in some aspects of their interpretation regarding a collaborative role for those in parliament. As has been shown, Mageoghegan did not envisage much of a collaborative process between monarch and nobles. On the contrary, his kings determined their own course of action although the nobility could be asked for advice. Keating was more definite with regard to input from the nobility. Whereas Mageoghegan *inferred* that Queen Macha had consulted her nobles for advice regarding her treasonable kinsmen, stating, ‘all the best sort desired to put them to Death’,⁷⁴ Keating asserted more definitely, ‘she asked the Ulster nobles what she should do with them’.⁷⁵ Differences in approach and interpretation are apparent also in their accounts of king Ughaine Mór. In Mageoghegan’s version of events, Ughaine is seen acting independently whereas in Keating’s version there is a process of collaboration with the

⁷¹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 207.

⁷² Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 208.

⁷³ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 342-5.

⁷⁴ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 40-1.

⁷⁵ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 155.

men of Ireland. Mageoghegan's account agrees essentially with *LG* in asserting that this king 'divided Ireland into 25 parts'⁷⁶ among his twenty-five children but Keating throws a different complexion on this division: 'when the men of Ireland observed this' (i.e. the king's children exhausting the food and provisions of all the districts of Ireland), 'they went to complain of this injury to Ughaine, the king. And it was mutually agreed on to divide Ireland into twenty-five parts'.⁷⁷ While both men appeared to favour consultation between king and his nobles, on balance, when Keating's frequent assertions about the elective process of the monarch are also taken into account, he can be said to have a greater expectation of a collective role involving the nobility that Mageoghegan.

Further discrepancies can be seen in their understanding regarding a legislature. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Mageoghegan showed no signs of displaying any interest in parliamentary activity associated with a constitutional monarchy and furthermore he appeared to consider the making of laws to be the role of the king himself. Keating, on the other hand, was unequivocal in his support for limited kingly rule and in his conviction that parliament was the forum for making laws. He explicitly compared the Feis of Tara to a parliament: 'the Feis of Tara was a great general assembly like a parliament, in which the nobles and the ollamhs of Ireland used to meet at Tara every third year at Samhain, where they were wont to lay down and to renew rules and laws'; and he continued with this seventeenth-century image of a parliament as he recounted that the company used to spend six days in feasting together 'before the sitting of the assembly.'⁷⁸ As mentioned, Keating may have been familiar with and influenced by the works of the Jesuit Suarez whose lectures on law given at Coimbra had been published in 1612 as *De Legibus*; Suarez argued that the community held a 'political power' separate from the power of the ruler and that power consisted chiefly in the authority to legislate.⁷⁹ Keating was unequivocal about parliament being a legislature and when making this point again later made it quite clear that it was the function of parliament to pass laws: 'when the entire assembly sat for the purpose of determining and completing

⁷⁶ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 42.

⁷⁷ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 157.

⁷⁸ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 133.

⁷⁹ Lloyd, 'Constitutionalism', p. 294.

the laws and customs of the country, the great Teach Miodhchuarta was their hall of public debate.’⁸⁰ As Bernadette Cunningham has pointed out, these descriptions of the Feis of Tara with their echoes of a contemporary parliament, along with Keating’s assertion that it was the earls of Kildare, Ormond, Desmond and Clanricard who had traditionally been consigned by England to rule Ireland, indicate that Keating considered it appropriate that the day-to-day government of the kingdom of Ireland should be entrusted by the monarch to the responsible care of the Old English nobility.⁸¹ Keating’s ‘ideal king’ was one who permitted elected representatives to participate fully in the legislature.

Whereas Mageoghegan’s image of the ‘ideal king’ had to be divined from his interpolations and descriptive comments on kings, Keating’s opinions in this regard are more readily apparent and his concept of kingship and appropriate kingly behaviour more defined. He was openly didactic in conveying his ideas on proper kingship and rulership and devoted much space to describing the qualities that were necessary for early Irish kings to be chosen by the people: ‘we shall set down here from the seanchus the manner in which kings were inaugurated in Ireland, and for what object they were inaugurated’.⁸² There followed a detailed list of attributes that a king had to possess.

Frequently it was the cleverest and most learned people in Ireland who were chosen to reign, to repress evil, to adjust tribute, to make treaties of peace, such as...Cormac, son of Art who was learned in the Breitheamhnas Tuaithe and who wrote the Instruction for Kings...it was the learned and those who were most zealous for the aggrandisement of the public weal that the men of Ireland elected...the chronicler came forward bearing the book called the Instruction for Kings in which there was a brief summary of the customs and laws of the country, and where it was explained how God and the people would reward the doing of good, and the punishment that awaited the king and his descendants if he did not carry out the principles of justice and equity...the wand which the ollamh places in the king’s hand is altogether white...since whiteness is likened to truth, and blackness to falsehood.⁸³

Keating may well have been emulating his ideal king, Cormac mac Airt who, he recounted, ‘composed the Teagaisc Riogh, setting forth what a king should be...and how

⁸⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 37.

⁸¹ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, p. 155.

⁸² Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 9.

⁸³ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 9-13.

he should rule the people through their laws'.⁸⁴ He seemed to imagine the *Teagaisc Ríogh* or Instruction for Kings to resemble the 'advice-to-princes' tracts containing Renaissance humanist values which were being addressed by political thinkers and theorists to rulers in late-medieval and early-modern Europe. The message of these tracts, as discussed in the preliminary chapter on kingship above, exhorted kings and princes to behave honourably to their subjects and Keating probably hoped his message would circulate amongst the political elite of his day and perhaps help to foster an ethical culture of rulership. The Old English would certainly not have credited the king's representatives in Ireland, the members of the administration, with fair play with regard to their treatment of them and such considerations may have been lurking at the back of Keating's mind when writing this passage. Mageoghegan's concept of kingship and rulership was more nebulous. For him too, as mentioned in the last chapter, Cormac mac Airt was indeed the ideal king. However, he may not have been as conscious as Keating of such philosophical political treatises which circulated in England and on the continent. His image of the contents of Cormac's book harked back instead to the early Roman and Greek writers; his description was that of a book 'which in Irish is called *Teagasg Rí* (*teagasg rí*), which Booke Contaynes as Goodly precepts and morall Documents as ever Cato or Aristotle did ever write'⁸⁵. He compared Cormac's book somewhat vaguely with the ancient classical past whereas Keating's description resonated with contemporary early-modern ideas on kingship. Nevertheless, whereas Mageoghegan may not have been as forceful as Keating in stating his expectations of exemplary rulership, it is clear from the ideal qualities of Cormac that he listed – 'wise, Learned, valiant, & mild, not Given causelessly to be bloody as many of his auncestors were' – that like Keating he too valued just and merciful rule by his king.

Culture

An initial comparison shows both men to appear to have similar inclinations in the sphere of culture despite their differing ethnic background. It is not surprising that two educated scholars highly esteemed learning and scholarship. Mageoghegan in his preface, as we

⁸⁴ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 345-7.

⁸⁵ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 60.

have seen, chided the professionals for neglecting their duties and warned of the danger of the history of Ireland being lost to future generations. Similarly, Keating appreciated the importance of safeguarding the record of Ireland's past. He cited and referred to the 'seanchus' all the time and described how three ollamhs brought the Seanchus of Ireland to be approved and purified by St Patrick and, 'when the Seanchus had been purified in this way the nobles of Ireland decreed that the charge of it should be entrusted to the prelates of Ireland' to be copied and preserved.⁸⁶ Both were aware and proud of Ireland's tradition of learning, with Mageoghegan averring that 'Ireland in ould time, in the raighe of the sd K. Bryan & before was well stored with learned men and colledges that people came from all partes of Christendome to learne therein'⁸⁷ and Keating claiming that the tradition of learning reached right back to the Scythians, the ancestors of the *Gaeil*.⁸⁸ Scholars from all traditions were beginning to value Ireland's past in common with the new-found European interest in national histories.

However, Mageoghegan for the most part just revealed his love of and admiration for learning through embellished descriptions like 'Moylemorey a learned poett and the best historiographer of Ireland died' and 'fflorence o'Gibbolan arch Deane of Oylfyn, a man of wonderful knowledge, Learning, and great philosophy, Died',⁸⁹ whereas Keating, as well as having the highest respect for learning, could also see more practical benefits emanating from study and scholarship and regarded learning as a means to an end. As shown above, he considered that kings should be 'the cleverest and most learned people' in order to be able to rule justly and efficiently and to ensure an increase in the common good. He also explained that members of the old professional families used to employ their best efforts to study hard 'in hope of obtaining the professorship in preference to the rest of his tribe', as was being practiced 'beyond the sea now by many who go to obtain (college) chairs in consideration of their learning',⁹⁰ his thinking here, not surprisingly, given his earlier continental education, encompassing the European dimension as well. In addition, as we saw in the last chapter, Mageoghegan referred to the custom of a

⁸⁶ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 31-5.

⁸⁷ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 8.

⁸⁸ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 13-14.

⁸⁹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 143, 256.

⁹⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 73-4.

brehon being allotted land from his lord, ‘they held their Lands of the lord of the Contry where they dwelt’,⁹¹ in a matter-of-fact way as just an unremarkable Gaelic tradition, whereas Keating analysed this practice more objectively, in the manner of an observer, and explained, ‘For they [the princes] assigned professional lands to each tribe of them, in order that they might have sustenance for themselves for the cultivation of the arts’.⁹² The fact that Mageoghegan just accepted such Gaelic customs unquestioningly whereas Keating felt the need to explain the reasoning behind them is a further indication of their different cultural backgrounds.

Further differences in tone and outlook are discernible in their attitudes towards kingly and noble patronage of the old learned and professional families. When reporting on a regulation made by King Aodh, son of Ainmire and St Columcille about the number of ollamhs which were to be allowed in Ireland, Keating again gave a utilitarian reason for the provision of lands to the professional families: ‘it was also ordained that a common estate should be set apart for the ollamhs where they could give public instruction after the manner of a University...where they gave free instruction in the sciences to the men of Ireland’ and he further added that ‘each of them was to get certain rewards for their poems and compositions’.⁹³ He appeared to view the custom of a king bestowing patronage in a more detached fashion than Mageoghegan when he reported on Cormac Cas, who held the sovereignty of Munster, that ‘he gave in one day nine ounces and five hundred ounces of silver to bards and learned men for praising him’.⁹⁴ Mageoghegan, on the other hand, implied that it was for the love of art and the enjoyment of the poets’ rhymes and verses that the king bestowed patronage on his bards: ‘King Moyleseaghlyn of his great bounty and favour to learning and learned men bestowed the rejuvenes of the Crown of Ireland for one yeare upon McCossye’⁹⁵ who was his chief poet. Again, he enlarged on his exemplar with ‘McLiag arch poet of Ireland and one that was in

⁹¹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 280.

⁹² Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 73-4.

⁹³ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 95-6.

⁹⁴ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 275-7.

⁹⁵ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 161.

wonderfull favour with king Bryan⁹⁶ whereas Keating merely referred to ‘Mac Liag, chief ollamh of Ireland.’⁹⁷ Further, Mageoghegan clearly revelled in the hospitality given to poets when embellishing this source: ‘William o’Donogh Moyneagh o’Kelly invited all the Irish Poets, Brehons, bards, harpers, Gamesters or common kearoghs, Jesters, & others of their kind of Ireland to his house upon Christmas this yeare, where every one of them was well used during Christmas holy Dayes, & gave contentment to each of them at the tyme of their Departure, so as every one was well pleased and extolled William for his bounty’.⁹⁸ Keating viewed the arrangement between king and poet as something of a contract or position of employment whereas Mageoghegan depicted the patron as deriving much pleasure from it. Keating recounted that ‘there were over two hundred professors of history keeping the ancient record of Ireland, and every one of them having a subsidy from the nobles of Ireland on that account’.⁹⁹ The Old Irish law tracts such as the *Bretha Nemed* of Munster province contained details on the rights and responsibilities of poets¹⁰⁰ and it is likely that Keating had studied such tracts and informed himself of the old customs. Mageoghegan, as well as acquiring his knowledge from the old manuscripts, may have had memories of itinerant poets who might have visited the Mageoghegan clan during his childhood.

There is no doubt that Keating greatly esteemed poetry and respected poets but, strangely, as a poet himself, in *Foras feasa* he did not betray the same affinity towards poets as Mageoghegan. The latter was quite happy to follow, indeed embellish, his sources and indulged in superlatives with his descriptions, such as ‘Colga mcConnagann abbot of Kynnetty, the best and elegantest Poet in the kingdome, and their cheefest chronicler, died’.¹⁰¹ Keating instead prioritised the use of poetry as a historical source as Cunningham has pointed out.¹⁰² He mostly referred to poets in that context; even when naming such poets he did not accord them any complementary attributes but simply wrote such statements as ‘the poet Eochaidh Ua Floinn agrees...according to this

⁹⁶ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 169.

⁹⁷ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 265-6.

⁹⁸ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 298.

⁹⁹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 81.

¹⁰⁰ Byrne, *Irish kings and high-kings*, p. 174.

¹⁰¹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 143.

¹⁰² Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, p. 117.

verse...’ or ‘the poet Tanuidhe, agreeing with the same statement, speaks thus...’¹⁰³ Furthermore, unlike Mageoghegan, Keating did not follow the tradition of the annals by supplying eulogies for poets or for anyone else (an exception being a eulogy for bishop Cormac son on Cuileannan, a figure whom he obviously admired greatly). It seems Keating was more interested in supplying a clinical history than in adorning his work with the niceties of eulogies. Keating doubtless loved poetry but he did not see fit to grant extravagant compliments to previous generations of Gaelic poets like Mageoghegan, who had perhaps a more instinctive appreciation of the privileged and important position that the *filid* occupied in the Gaelic world.

Keating was exceedingly interested in and obviously greatly esteemed the Irish language. In this respect, he resembled Mageoghegan who, as we have seen in the previous chapter, was proud of his native tongue. Mageoghegan, though writing in English, sometimes included an Irish soubriquet or an Irish placename and he frequently translated the meanings of these and of old Irish expressions for the benefit of his readers. For instance, he explained that ‘Eochy Moymean rained 8 years and was called Moymean in English Moystmidle, because he was much troubled with the flux of the Belly.’ He related that ‘Syonan in Kinleagh is named in Irish Sidhi Adamhnán which is as much in English as the seat of Adawnan’. And he explained that the descendants of Saw, the daughter of King Conn Céadchathach, such as the McCarthys and O’Briens, ‘have Gotten themselves to that selected & Choyse name much used by the Irish poets at the time of their Comendations and prayses called Sile Sawa wch is as much in English as the Issue of Saw’.¹⁰⁴ Mageoghegan appears to have taken some of his explanatory meanings from his manuscript sources but it looks like others were acquired from oral sources and from local knowledge; for instance ‘Sidhi Adamhnán’ above was in his own locality. He also delivered his explanations as asides in a casual and colloquial tone. Keating, on the other hand, appears to have been fascinated by the etymology of the Irish language and rarely failed to give the meanings of soubriquets, indeed to a much greater extent than Mageoghegan did. Whereas, as stated, the latter appears to have been working from local

¹⁰³ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 169-70, ii, 105-6.

¹⁰⁴ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 63, 112, 58.

knowledge and from his sources, it appears that in many cases Keating decided to deviate from *Leabhar gabhála* and delighted in deciphering his own meanings of the nicknames by dissecting the Irish word and supplying his own interpretation. In the case of King Óengus Olmucaid, *LG* states, ‘this is why he was called *Ol-muccaid*; the daughter of Mogaeth Mór-ólach (the great drinker), son of Mofebis, was his mother, and she gave great drinkings’;¹⁰⁵ Keating’s rendering was ‘He was called Olmucaidh from the word oll, that is great, and muca, hogs, since he had the largest hogs that were in Ireland in his time.’¹⁰⁶ *LG* tells us that Tuathal Teachtmhar was so called ‘for his “coming over-sea” (*techt tar muir*)’,¹⁰⁷ whereas Keating claimed ‘he was called Tuathal Teachtmhar, as every good came in his time’;¹⁰⁸ and there are many other variations between his definitions and those of *LG*. Mageoghegan, being of Gaelic descent, apparently viewed his native tongue as something unremarkable whereas Keating, for whom Irish was perhaps not his first language but who had obviously studied it in depth, appeared to almost flaunt his extensive knowledge and absolutely faultless grasp of the language with his intricate explanations for almost every Irish descriptive term. His academic interest in the intricacies of the language compared with Mageoghegan’s unquestioning approach is an indication of their different cultural backgrounds.

Keating did come from an Irish-speaking area in Co Tipperary. Bernadette Cunningham has also shown convincingly that Keating, although not coming from a bardic family, was ‘skilled in the use of the Irish language as taught by the cultural elite’, probably the Meic Craith family who were associated with a school of *seanchas* in the vicinity of Cahir, Co Tipperary.¹⁰⁹ Diarmuid Ó Murchadha disagrees that Keating was actually trained in the bardic tradition due to the fact that he incorrectly transcribed several place names in his history.¹¹⁰ However, Keating’s mastery and obvious fluency in the language is undoubted as well as his ability to understand and transcribe older Irish from the manuscripts. Nevertheless, it cannot be proven whether Irish or English was his first

¹⁰⁵ R. A. S. Macalister (ed.), *Lebor gabála Erenn* (5 vols, ITS, Dublin 1956), v, 218-19.

¹⁰⁶ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 129.

¹⁰⁷ Macalister (ed.), *Lebor gabála*, v, 310-11.

¹⁰⁸ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 243.

¹⁰⁹ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, pp 22-3.

¹¹⁰ Diarmuid Ó Murchadha, ‘Keating: traditionalist or innovator’ in (ed.), Pdraig Ó Riain, *Geoffrey Keating’s Foras feasa ar Éirinn: reassessments* (Dublin, I.T.S., 2008), pp 90-102.

language. As stated above, Cunningham has demonstrated that he was almost certainly of the Keatings of Moorestown, a reasonably well-off family with substantial land holdings and that he was likely to have had the patronage and been under the influence of either the Butlers of Cahir or the Dunboyne Butlers or indeed both.¹¹¹ Therefore, it is quite possible that, coming from a fairly well-to-do Old English family and moving in the social milieu of the aristocratic Butler family, his first language was English. He did, however, produce all his writings in Irish. It is understandable that he would have written his two theological tracts through the medium of Irish as his principal, targeted readership for those works would have included the clergy for dissemination to the Irish-speaking populace. His intended readership for his history, on the other hand, would surely have been the literate upper echelons of society, and these would have included in the main the Old English who, though no doubt having a knowledge of spoken and perhaps even written Irish, would have been more comfortable reading such a comprehensive and large book in English. Indeed, Keating's purpose from the outset may have been to have the book immediately translated into English for the benefit of his intended readership; the speedy translation into English in 1635 by Michael Kearney from Ballylusky, Co Tipperary, whom Keating quite likely knew, points to such a design.

Yet Keating chose to write *Foras feasa* in Irish. Of course, Cunningham has convincingly ascertained his main reasons for writing in Irish; not only were such national histories being written in Europe at the time in the vernacular but, more importantly, Keating used the language to help to define an Irish identity and his mechanism of tracing the language further back to *Clann Neimhidhe*, earlier invaders than the *Gaeil*, allowed him to claim the language as an identifier of all the Irish, the *Éireannaigh*, which included those of Anglo-Norman stock.¹¹² However, an additional reason for him choosing to write in Irish may have been a desire to further the lines of communication between the Old Irish community and those in his own section of society, the Old English. In his preface, he was at pains to be inclusive of both communities and constantly coupled the 'old foreigners' and the 'native Irish' together. For instance, he castigated English historians who 'continuously sought to cast reproach and blame both

¹¹¹ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, pp 19-21, 24.

¹¹² Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, p. 131.

on the old foreign settlers and on the native Irish.’¹¹³ His main objective of course, was to include the Old English into the Irish origin myth but simultaneously he may have been reaching out inclusively to the indigenous inhabitants of the island. This could be symptomatic of a desire by Irish Catholics of both traditions to come together in a united front against the incursions of the New English and to seek to protect their status and livelihoods against further erosion by the newcomers. Perhaps this was also one of the reasons why Conell Mageoghegan chose to write in English. As a native Irish speaker, it would have been more natural for him to write in Irish. But his brother-in-law, Terence Coghlan, future MP, was moving into a world where English was needed in order to progress politically, socially and officially and, as we have seen, it was Coghlan who instigated the writing of the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*. Therefore, whether Mageoghegan and Keating knew each other or not, or whether they knew of each other’s work or not, their separate decisions to write in the particular language that they chose could be indicative of this drawing together of the Old Irish and Old English communities for their mutual benefit. By the time Keating was writing his history in the first years of the 1630s the situation had not improved dramatically for Irish Catholics. The attempt to secure delivery of the ‘Graces’ had failed in 1628 through the postponement of a parliament, and the puritanically-orientated Richard Boyle, one of the lord justices with responsibility for the government of the country pending the appointment of a lord deputy, was actively pursuing anti-recusant measures.¹¹⁴ At the time that Keating was putting the finishing touches to *Foras feasa*, the people that he represented were pinning their hopes, now that the new lord deputy Wentworth had arrived in the country, on the legal ratification of the ‘Graces’ in a forthcoming parliament, and the survival of the livelihoods and status of Old Irish and Old English Catholics depended on the successful acquisition of these privileges. Such underlying concerns may have been the motivations that inspired Geoffrey Keating and Conell Mageoghegan when choosing which language to employ for their major historical undertakings.

Hierarchy and social order

¹¹³ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 3-4.

¹¹⁴ Kearney, *Strafford in Ireland*, pp 22-3.

As shown, Mageoghegan was not happy with any interference in the social order and Keating too disliked any interruption to what he regarded as the proper ordering of society. Keating obviously agreed with the sentiments of a proverb which he recited; having described an attempt by a servant named Ceann Bearroide to obtain the kingdom of Ulster by presuming to carry the body of the king of Ulster to his place of rest, he remarked, ‘this event has given rise to the saw which says that one seeks the kingdom of Ceann Bearroide when one aspires ambitiously to a rank which it is beyond his power to attain’.¹¹⁵ Similar to Mageoghegan, who, as we have seen, disparaged king Cairbre Chinn Chait with the descriptions, ‘of mean parentage to Govern the kingdom & subjects’ and, ‘he hated noble men and their decents’,¹¹⁶ Keating also obviously disapproved of this king’s reign. He afforded much space to an account of the rising of the Athachthuaith which had given the kingship to Cairbre: ‘Cairbre obtained the sovereignty of Ireland in this manner. The serfs or rustic tribes of all Ireland devised a treacherous plot against the king and the nobles of the country’; and, demonstrating an early-modern providential frame of mind, he went on to explain that during his reign Ireland endured ‘great famine and failure of crops and much adversity’.¹¹⁷ It is clear that Keating and Mageoghegan both regarded the stepping out of one’s social level as producing negative consequences for society. Raymond Gillespie has shown how in the seventeenth century both the native Irish and the Old English found the language of commonwealth attractive because of its stress on social order and many contemporaries believed that Ireland was undergoing a social revolution.¹¹⁸ It appears likely that both Mageoghegan and Keating both had concerns about current trends of upward social mobility.

Both Gaelic and Old English society were historically hierarchical; in native Irish society, the lower social orders were dependent on their local lords who in turn paid tribute to an overlord and to those in the upper echelons of Gaelic society; those lower down the Old

¹¹⁵ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 203-5.

¹¹⁶ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 49-50.

¹¹⁷ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 239-41.

¹¹⁸ Raymond Gillespie, ‘Negotiating order in early seventeenth-century Ireland’ in Michael J. Braddick & John Walter (eds), *Negotiating power in early-modern society: order, hierarchy and subordination in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 195.

English social ladder looked up to the lesser gentry who themselves showed respect for the magnate earls who in turn answered to the king at the top of the social chain. It is to be expected then that Keating and Mageoghegan both displayed attitudes of deference towards monarchy and the nobility and indeed their attitudes seem remarkably similar in this respect. Ancestry was obviously of much importance to them and both constantly included references to the present-day descendants of early Irish Gaelic kings. Both mentioned that king Colla Uais was ancestor to the MacDonnells; Mageoghegan stated, ‘of Colla Wais are Desended the McDonnells of Scotland’¹¹⁹ and, of course, as shown previously, he had chosen Sir Randal MacDonnell, the current aristocratic head of that family, for inclusion in his special genealogical tables. Keating showed a similar fondness for alluding to the elite of the day: ‘many of their descendants hold possession [of Ulster]...today, as Raghnull son of Samhairle, earl of Antrim, or Aondrom, descended from Colla Uais’.¹²⁰ However, when it came to genealogy, Keating did not enlarge upon his sources to the same extent as Mageoghegan. When treating of the descendants of Ughaine Mór, he merely stated, ‘the children of Ughaine had died without issue, except two, namely Coghthach Caol mBreagh and Laoghaire Lorc, from whom come all that survive of the race of Eireamhon’¹²¹ whereas Mageoghegan, as we saw, inserted a lengthy list of these particular descendants ‘of Heremon’ and named the earls of Tyrone and Tír Conaill as well as the O’Melaghlin and O’Kellys of Breagh, explaining that the ‘Crown of Ireland’ had remained with those houses for the most part.¹²² In the initial discussion about the first kings of the sons of Míleadh, Mageoghegan inserted a catalogue of sixty-seven of their descendant families including eight peers¹²³ whereas Keating only included a handful, and that was just to support an argument he was making regarding the division of Ireland by those two early kings.¹²⁴ Therefore, whereas both were obviously conscious of whom were the important families descended of the sons of Míleadh, on balance Mageoghegan indulged in more ‘name-dropping’ of the present Gaelic aristocracy than did Keating which indicates a greater and perhaps not unnatural interest

¹¹⁹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 63.

¹²⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 101.

¹²¹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 159.

¹²² Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 43.

¹²³ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 29.

¹²⁴ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 101.

on the part of one descended from Gaelic Ireland towards the present-day representative Old Irish families.

That is not to say that Keating did not refer to Old Irish families; he named many of them especially from Leinster and Munster, mainly those in adjacent areas to his own county of Tipperary. In addition, in his preface, he did give honourable mention to the Old Irish aristocracy; however, this was in the context of handing out accolades to the premier representatives of the descendants of the early Anglo-Norman settlers. As alluded to above, he took Stanihurst to task for stating that the greatest Gaelic prince was not a suitable marriage partner for even the lowliest resident of the Pale:

I ask Stanihurst which were the more honourable, the more noble, or the more loyal to the crown of England, or which were better as securities for preserving Ireland to the crown of England, the colonists of Fingall, or the noble earls of the foreigners who are in Ireland, such as the earl of Kildare, who contracted alliance with Mac Carthy riabhach, with O'Neill, and with others of the nobles of the Gael; the earl of Ormond with O'Brien, with Mac Gil Patrick, and with O'Carroll; the Earl of Desmond with Mac Carthy mór, and the earl of Clanricard with O'Ruarc. I do not reckon the viscounts nor the barons, who were as noble as any settler who was ever in Fingall, and by whom frequently their daughters were given in marriage to the nobles of the Gael... Wherefore I conceive not whence it is that they do not contract alliance with the nobles of Ireland, unless it be from disesteem for their own obscurity, so that they did not deem themselves worthy to have such noble Gaels in their kinship.¹²⁵

The concept of honour was a core value held by the members of both Gaelic and Old English gentry society. Brendan Kane has explored the culture of honour in early modern Ireland and Britain and explains that discussions of honour and status dominated the texts of the period in both English and Irish languages, revealing honour was a serious issue for contemporaries.¹²⁶ Honour provided the social glue for early modern English and Irish societies, as it did for all of Europe. It manifested itself horizontally as the bonds that held social peers together as part of a particular honour group (as noble to noble, for instance) as well as vertically, as ties of deference and responsibility inherent

¹²⁵ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 33-5.

¹²⁶ Brendan Kane, *The politics and culture of honour in Britain and Ireland, 1541-1641* (Cambridge, 2010); 'Scandal, Wentworth's deputyship and the breakdown of Stuart honour politics' in Brian Mac Cuarta (ed.), *Reshaping Ireland, 1550-1700: colonization and its consequences* (Dublin, 2011), pp 147-62.

in a hierarchical social structure (as king to subject).¹²⁷ In the above passage, Keating's sense of honour and hierarchy are evident; a distinct note of deference to Gaelic nobility is present in his account and he obviously greatly respected the Old Irish families that he named. However, his suggestion that it was due to feelings of inferiority that the settlers in the Pale would not contemplate contracting alliances with Old Irish nobles was obviously motivated primarily by a desire to reinforce his assertion that the Old English viscounts, barons and earls were superior in social standing to the Old English of the Pale, rather than by a wish to actually enhance the Old Irish in this instance. In *AClon*, Mageoghegan, for his part, had demonstrated esteem for Anglo-Norman nobles. His interpolation of an accolade to William Burke has been discussed in the last chapter with the probable explanation advanced being that the earl of Clanricard, Burke's descendant, was the premier peer in the country and the latter's kinship connection with the budding politician, Terence Coghlan, also being a factor. Mageoghegan displayed good will and accorded complimentary comments to other Anglo-Norman historical figures as well. At AD 1210, reporting that a stone tower fell and killed Richard Tuite, he added, 'my author sayeth that this befell by the miracles of St. Queran, of St. Peter and St. Paule', and followed his entry with the whole passage again in the original Irish.¹²⁸ His prefacing the entry with 'my author sayeth', together with the reciting of his exemplar's original entry as proof that these were the words of his exemplar and not his own, indicates that he himself was disclaiming such sentiments. However, the fact that the Tuites were significant landowners from his own county of Westmeath probably contributed to his attitude here. At AD 1398, Mageoghegan accorded an extravagant eulogy to another early Anglo-Norman:

the Lord Garrett earle of Desmond, a nobleman of Wonderfull Bounty, Mirth, cheerfullness in conversation, easie of access, charitable in his deeds, a witty Ingenious composer of Irish poetry, a learned & profound Chronicler, and in fine one of the English nobility that had Irish learning & professors thereof in greatest reverence of all the English of Ireland, died penitently after receipt of the sacraments of the Holy Church in due forme.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Kane, *Politics of culture and honour*, pp 10-15.

¹²⁸ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 224.

¹²⁹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 319-20.

However, both *ARÉ* (AD 1398) and *AU* (AD 1398) also recorded a favourable eulogy for this man indicating that Mageoghegan's exemplar was probably well disposed towards him as well so Mageoghegan's account was probably just an embellishment. In addition, perhaps this nobleman's apparent patronage of Irish learning and Irish professors influenced his rendering of the entry as indeed it may have also influenced the earlier annalists. Nevertheless, while the three examples instanced above demonstrate a favourable attitude on Mageoghegan's behalf towards the individuals mentioned, and while there is no hint that he had any negative opinions about other Anglo-Norman personages, he did devote more attention towards the Gaelic Irish nobility, as we have seen in the previous chapter. Correspondingly, although Keating displayed positive attitudes towards the Old Irish nobility, his warmest regard was for the Old English earls. Therefore, each man's higher regard was focused on the elite of his own individual community group. This was perhaps perfectly reasonable and natural but it does point to their individual priorities with regard to their sympathies and orientations towards the social elite of Ireland.

However, there is no doubt that both men consciously strove to present a positive attitude towards the other's community. In the context of the conquest, Bernadette Cunningham has made the point that Keating asserted that there was never real conflict between the descendants of the *Gaeil* and the Normans and that he claimed that the stories of resistance to invasion could easily be explained away by the tyrannical oppression of the first five unscrupulous Norman leaders.¹³⁰ He exonerated the *Gaeil* for the fact that 'there was so much resistance on the part of the Gaels to the Norman yoke' and attributed the blame to 'what these same Normans, through the excess of vanity, pride and haughtiness...paid attention to, was to keep up constant dissension among themselves.'¹³¹ Mageoghegan appeared to be of a similar train of thought; at AD 1311, having given an account of a battle between Mac William Burke and the earl of Clare, he inserted a lengthy interpolation:

Butt by the way this much I gather out of this history, whome I take to be an authentick author and worthy prelate of the Church, that would tell nothing but

¹³⁰ Cunningham, 'Seventeenth-century interpretations of the past', p. 127.

¹³¹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 366-9.

truth, that there raigned more Disscentions, strifes, warres, and Debates betweene the Englishmen themselves in the beginning of the Conquest of this kingdome than between the Irishmen, as by perusing the warres betweene the Lasies of Meath, John Coursy earl of Ulster, William Marshall and the English of Meath and Mounster: mac Gerrald, the Burkes, Buttlers and Cogann may appear.¹³²

It seems as if Mageoghegan too was attempting to minimize the historic hostility and strife that existed between the early invaders and the indigenous people of the country. (I am taking his meaning here to mean that he believed there was more fighting between the Englishmen themselves than between the English and the Irish; otherwise he would have inserted the word ‘themselves’ after ‘Irishmen’). Keating, however, would not have included the Fitzgeralds, Burkes or Butlers in such a comment, being the ancestors of his much-lauded present-day earls. Nevertheless, the expression of similar sentiments on the part of both Mageoghegan and Keating in this respect points to a desire on behalf of both Old Irish and Old English communities to bury past resentments and work together as part of an Irish catholic political entity.

Religion

Differences are readily apparent between Keating and Mageoghegan in their religious orientation, Keating being very much in tune with the reformed ideas of the Counter-Reformation while Mageoghegan inclined towards more of an older style of religion; although at times, but not generally, Keating did display traditional influences. The differences that are apparent between them, on the one hand, might be explained by the fact that Keating was a priest and doctor of theology, educated in continental Europe, and Mageoghegan, a layman educated at home. However, on the other hand, Mageoghegan was closely related to two eminent churchmen who had both studied on the continent; his uncle the Dominican, Ross Mageoghegan was appointed bishop of Kildare in 1629 and his cousin, the future bishop, Anthony (Mac)Geoghegan, was in 1626 appointed first guardian of the Franciscan house in Athlone, in Mageoghegan’s own neighbourhood.¹³³ Accordingly, it is likely that Conell Mageoghegan was not ignorant of the type of post-

¹³² Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 266-7.

¹³³ Padraig I. Ó Maoleachlainn, ‘Anthony MacGeoghegan (1598-1664)’ in *Teathbha: journal of the Longford historical society*, i, 4 (October, 1978), p. 293.

Tridentine system of worship, appropriate religious behaviour and ecclesiastical organisation being encouraged by the Catholic church. Therefore, differences in inclination and approach between Keating and Mageoghegan with regard to religion may equally emanate from cultural background.

As discussed in the last chapter, religion was an important aspect of everyone's life in early modern Ireland whether Catholic or Protestant.¹³⁴ The lives of the saints and ecclesiastical affairs were, as we have seen, of great concern to Mageoghegan. To an even greater extent, and not surprisingly, being a priest, religion was especially important to Keating, with references to God, the saints and ecclesiastical affairs providing a dominant theme throughout the book. Moreover, as stated, having been trained in the continental colleges, he was well versed in the doctrinal reforms introduced and confirmed at the Council of Trent. As noted in the last chapter, the more fantastic miracles of the saints did not conform to Counter-Reformation notions of sanctity and, as we saw, such modern ideas did not deter Conell Mageoghegan from repeating the traditional stories with their full medieval flavour. Keating did include an occasional fabulous episode: he recorded that 'his head fell off Abacuc at the fair of Tailte, for having sworn falsely by the hand of Ciaran; and he lived thus headless four years amongst the monks';¹³⁵ this information he retrieved from the annals as it is recorded thus in *AT* 543.4 and in *CS* 544. However, this occasional type of entry is uncharacteristic and, in line with the more orthodox spirit of the Council of Trent, most of the miracles that he recorded were achieved not just by the power of the particular saint involved but by the latter's intercession with God. Mageoghegan for the most part (although not exclusively)¹³⁶ attributed miraculous happenings to the wonderworking of the specific saint alone; he cited countless episodes such as 'there was another overthrow given to the Leinstermen in Dorow...by the miracles of St Columekill'¹³⁷ or 'the shrine of St Querean was abused by Donnell mcTuloge, who by the miracles of St. Queran was

¹³⁴ Raymond Gillespie, *Devoted people: belief and religion in early-modern Ireland* (Manchester, 1997), *passim*.

¹³⁵ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 53.

¹³⁶ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 103-4.

¹³⁷ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 178.

killed within a weeke after.’¹³⁸ Keating was nearly always anxious to point out that these wonderful outcomes were not achieved solely by the saint but through the saint’s prayers to God. For instance, St Caimin ‘fasted three days’ against Guaire in order that King Diarmaid would win a battle against him; elsewhere, St Beacan ‘prayed fervently thrice, by the direction of Columcille; and it was in this way that the son of the king of Ireland, to wit, Breasal, was brought back to life through the prayer of St Beacan; and God’s name and that of Beacan were magnified through that miracle.’¹³⁹ Therefore, whereas Mageoghegan seems to have been impressed by the almost magical aspect of the miracles, Keating revealed his awareness that the supernatural outcome was by the hand of God as prime mover.

As we saw in the last chapter, Mageoghegan chose mainly to instance small domestic miracles when relating the wondrous workings of the saints. For instance, a typical example was where St Ciaran, who had no servant when he was studying at Clonard, only had to use the ‘strick of his batt’ [bundle of fabric] to keep her calf away from the saint’s cow, presumably in order to conserve her milk for drinking.¹⁴⁰ On occasion, Keating did include some such small practical miraculous occurrences but he nearly always stressed that it was through prayer that the miracle was delivered. St Mochua ‘prayed with fervour to God, asking for meat’ for a young cleric who was observing Lent with him and, ‘through Mochua’s prayer’, meat was carried over the walls from Guaire’s household and into the deserted place where Mochua and the young cleric were on retreat. Upon Guaire’s men pursuing the flight of the meat, Mochua beseeched God whereupon ‘the horses’ hoofs clung to the ground so that they could not go forward till the young cleric had had his fill’; and Mochua praised and magnified the name of God.¹⁴¹ The latter aspect of the miracle accords with an early-modern, especially a native Irish, attitude towards the battlefield where soldiers regularly prayed before a battle and the hand of God was seen in the circumstances of the victory.¹⁴² However, as stated, in line with Counter-Reformation thinking, Keating had also made sure to emphasise the power

¹³⁸ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 169-70.

¹³⁹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 61 and 69.

¹⁴⁰ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 81-2.

¹⁴¹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 65-7.

¹⁴² Gillespie, *Devoted people*, pp 51-5.

of prayer. Furthermore, Mageoghegan tended to supply popular additions possibly derived from oral tradition to his accounts whereas Keating merely recounted the bare details of the event. When reporting on a miracle of St Ciaran, Keating explained that the head of the slain Conchubhar, son of Maoilseachlainn, king of Meath ‘was forcibly carried off from where he was buried at Cluain Mic Nois to Cenn Choradh by Toirrdhealbhadh O Briain the Friday before Easter, and the same head was taken back northwards to Cluain Mic Nois the next Sunday, and this happened through the wonderworking of Ciaran’,¹⁴³ (a rare occasion when he referred to the saint alone). Mageoghegan preferred to include extra incidentals when recording this happening (which are likely to have been omitted by Keating had he encountered them in his source): ‘King Terrence O’Brian did violently take from out of the church of Clonvickenos the head of Connor O’Melaghlin, king of Meath, that was buried therein, and conveyed it to Thomond. A mouse ran out of the head, & went under the king’s mantle, & immediately the king for fear fell sick of a sore disease by the miracles of St. Queran, that his haire fell off his head, and was like to dye until hee restored the said head againe’.¹⁴⁴

Mageoghegan did not omit to include incidences of cursing by the saints from the medieval sources. Similarly, in this regard, Keating took from his sources the full traditional content and he represented his saints cursing liberally. For instance, St Ciaran cursed Ceallach for deserting his community and ‘besought God that he might be carried off by a violent death’ and St Columcille cursed Conall, the son of the king of Ireland, for inciting disrespect to him.¹⁴⁵ However, this does not necessarily mean that Keating did not ascribe to the new theological ideas nor aspire to them. Clergy often found it more expedient to absorb the ideas and perceptions of their flock than to impose new cultural and religious norms.¹⁴⁶ Salvador Ryan has shown how the Franciscan friars at Louvain, who at the end of the sixteenth and in the first half of the seventeenth centuries were compiling catechisms to imbue Irish Catholics with the new Tridentine religious ethos,

¹⁴³ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 295-6.

¹⁴⁴ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 180-1.

¹⁴⁵ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 55 and 91.

¹⁴⁶ Gillespie, *Devoted people*, p. 26.

also drew on the older popular and rich source of religious imagery so that their work would be couched in a familiarity that would resonate with their audience.¹⁴⁷ There is a hint, however, that Keating wished to indicate that he was aware that he was contravening the objectives of the Counter-Reformation; shortly after he had shown Colmcille cursing at the convention of Drom Ceat, by way of qualification perhaps, he quoted the saint as saying, ‘though my piety be pure, I am often frail and worldly’.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, when it came to St Patrick, the paragon of Irish saints in Europe, it is noteworthy that Keating conformed to the norms of Counter-Reformation standards and did not choose any stories of St Patrick which involved the saint cursing. Mageoghegan had depicted St Patrick cursing Laoghaire, the king of Ireland, for feigning belief; he had also shown Patrick competing with the king’s magicians who were ‘familier with the Devill’ to see who could work more wonders: and ‘after long comparisons between them...St Patrick overcame the Magitians & by the help & power of God ended boisterous Whirlewyndes & Earthquakes to terrifie the king and people to the end by terrour to make them believe.’¹⁴⁹ Keating did not allow this saint, whose provenance and Irish sainthood Keating and other Irish clerics in Europe guarded so jealously, to indulge in cursing which would not have conformed to Counter-Reformation thinking. Furthermore, in contrast to Mageoghegan’s description of Patrick’s method of converting the Irish to Christianity, Keating’s depiction showed Patrick performing the duties of a contemporary bishop. As well as working miracles, he was building and blessing churches, organizing tithes for the church, preaching the gospel, consecrating archbishops and bishops and ordaining priests,¹⁵⁰ again revealing his conscious awareness of Counter-Reformation emphasis on church institutional reform. Further, he later described in detail the twelfth-century institutional church reform which regulated the Irish dioceses at the synod of Raith Breasail in AD 1100.¹⁵¹ As Bernadette Cunningham has shown, Keating emphasised the continuity of the church through the ages, establishing the Catholic church as the true successor to the church of Patrick. He was linking together all Irish

¹⁴⁷ Salvador Ryan, ‘Popular religion in Gaelic Ireland, 1445-1645’ (2 vols, PhD thesis, NUI Maynooth, (2002), ii, 93-4.

¹⁴⁸ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 107.

¹⁴⁹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 67-8.

¹⁵⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 17-31.

¹⁵¹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 299-308.

Catholics in one Christian history and putting forward new ideas of ‘nation’, ideas that were formulating in the early seventeenth century of Irish Catholic nation.¹⁵²

With regard to Counter-Reformation teaching regarding marriage, Mageoghegan did not give any indication that he was particularly concerned about the morals of kings in this respect. Keating, on the other hand, frequently revealed his conscious awareness of the teachings confirmed by the church at the Council of Trent including the indissolubility of marriage. On several occasions he specified that a particular woman was a king’s ‘wedded wife’ rather than his mistress,¹⁵³ and he regarded with great favour ‘a most becoming custom’ at the fair of Tailte where ‘the men kept apart by themselves on one side, and the women apart by themselves on the other side, while their fathers and mothers were making the contract between them; and every couple who entered into treaty and contract with one another were married’.¹⁵⁴ This occurred in pre-Patrician times so Keating was not concerned about the absence of a priest. The Counter-Reformation taught that marriage should be conducted publicly before a priest ensuring there were no impediments to the sacrament but the evidence shows that such was not yet the norm in Ireland.¹⁵⁵ Mageoghegan did not appear to be particularly conscious of such conventions; he referred many times, without comment, to women who were married several times, presumably not always as widows. Neither did he insert any comment when he reported that Bryan Mac Mahon got married and ‘was procured to put away the Daughter of o’Kelly that was formerly married to him’; nor did he elaborate when Toirdhealbhach O’Connor ‘put away his owne wife’ and married the daughter of Toirdhealbhach O’Brien.¹⁵⁶ Whereas Keating obviously saw the modern regulations on marriage as mandatory, Mageoghegan appeared to see nothing amiss with the traditional Gaelic customs in this regard.

¹⁵² Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, p. 111.

¹⁵³ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 179, 299, 385.

¹⁵⁴ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 249.

¹⁵⁵ Bernadette Cunningham, ‘The culture and ideology of Irish Franciscan historians at Louvain’ in Ciaran Brady (ed.), *Ideology and the historians* (Dublin, 1991), p. 27.

¹⁵⁶ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 302, 193.

In terms of moderation and simplicity in material things, Keating again showed himself to be in tune with Tridentine aspirations. He reported that St Mochua looked to Colmcille for sympathy after his mouse, cock and fly had died and St Colm answered, ‘thou must not be surprised at the death of the flock that thou hast lost, for misfortune exists only where there is wealth’; Keating revealed his approval of St Colm’s reply and added, ‘From this banter of these real saints I gather that they set no store on worldly possessions, unlike many persons of the present time’.¹⁵⁷ Prelates in particular were enjoined by Trent to ‘indulge in no pomp or luxury, wear no silken cloth, use no precious furniture; their board should be frugal and spare’¹⁵⁸ and Cunningham has shown that, especially in *Trí bior-ghaoithe an bháis*, Keating was especially concerned about the greed and profligacy of those in the upper echelons of society.¹⁵⁹ No such value judgements are apparent from the pages of *AClon*, suggesting that the detail of the directives of the Counter-Reformation in this respect did not penetrate Mageoghegan’s consciousness.

Showing further the influence of Counter-Reformation teaching, Keating inserted a passage which incorporated much of the core message of Tridentine reform; regarding Donnchadh, a virtuous king of Ossory, he stated, ‘indeed among the pious practices of the king were frequent confession and the receiving of the Body of Christ and fervent prayers’;¹⁶⁰ as shown in the previous chapter, Mageoghegan did not generally portray his kings participating in liturgy; only once did he portray a king making a ‘confession of his sins’¹⁶¹ and never attending mass or receiving the body of Christ whereas Keating employed these terms more frequently.¹⁶² Keating’s passage continued, ‘and among his exercises of holy zeal was to send food and provisions to be given to God’s poor in each principal church in Osruighe’.¹⁶³ As well as promoting prayer and confession, the Louvain friars in their Tridentine catechisms also stressed almsgiving.¹⁶⁴ Again,

¹⁵⁷ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 73.

¹⁵⁸ Pierre Janelle, *The Catholic reformation* (Milwaukee, 1948), pp 315-16.

¹⁵⁹ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, pp 44-5.

¹⁶⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 219.

¹⁶¹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 319.

¹⁶² Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 63, 195.

¹⁶³ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 219.

¹⁶⁴ Ryan, ‘Popular religion in Gaelic Ireland’, ii, pp 110, 158.

Mageoghegan only once referred to a king being a ‘reliever and cherisher of the poor’,¹⁶⁵ and this, not in the context of ‘holy zeal’, but rather in the spirit of the traditional conventional eulogy accorded to Gaelic kings in the annals. Keating, on the other hand, appeared to be very conscious of the importance of providing for the poor and for orphans.¹⁶⁶

Keating, like Mageoghegan, as we saw in the last chapter, was admiring of his kings showing generous patronage towards the church. In his preface Keating commended the nobles of the Irish for ‘the number of abbeys they had founded, and what land and endowments for worship they had bestowed’ on the people.¹⁶⁷ Both men’s entries recording a battle won by Diarmaid, son of Aodh Slaine, through the intercession of St Ciaran, are remarkably similar in content and agree with *CS* (AD 648), *AT* (AD 649) and *ARÉ* (AD 645), indicating that both men remained faithful to their sources here; both agreed that the king bestowed land on Clonmacnoise in thanksgiving for his victory, although Keating, again probably influenced by Tridentine thinking, omitted the curse contained in those other sources which Mageoghegan did include: ‘in soe much that the king of Meathe might not thenceforth challenge a Draught of water thereout by way of any charges’.¹⁶⁸ Differences in approach are more apparent in many of their other entries. According to Keating, King Muirheartach O’Brien ‘bestowed Cashel on the Church as an offering to God and to Patrick’¹⁶⁹ whereas Mageoghegan was more impressed with the king handing over the prime locus of his royal power; in an apparent embellishment, he stated, ‘the king of his meer motion and free will graunted to the Church and all devout members thereof such a grant as none of his predecessors the kings of Ireland ever graunted to the church before, which was his cheefest seat, court and town of Cashel’.¹⁷⁰ In the case of king Toirdhealbhach Ó Conchubhair, Mageoghegan delivered his customary flattering eulogy including that he was ‘a great benefactor of the

¹⁶⁵ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 200.

¹⁶⁶ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 5; iii, 41.

¹⁶⁷ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 5.

¹⁶⁸ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 104; Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 135-7.

¹⁶⁹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 297.

¹⁷⁰ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 188.

church and all spirituall men in generall'¹⁷¹ whereas Keating, detailing the riches which this king left to the church, added that he had left this great legacy to the clergy 'for his soul's sake',¹⁷² a phrase he used again in connection with Cormac, son of Cuileannan.¹⁷³ Mageoghegan exhibited a traditional train of thought visible also in the annals, that of Gaelic kings patronising the church in their particular area of influence whereas Keating, perhaps conscious of Council of Trent discouragement of lay patronage for a prince's own benefit including appropriation of church property,¹⁷⁴ made sure to point out the religious motivation behind the king's bounty.

It has been shown in the previous chapter that Mageoghegan inserted the term 'Catholic' in many instances into his original source which had likely just referred to 'the faith'. Keating was of the same frame of mind as he also inserted the qualifier on numerous occasions; like Mageoghegan, he reported that Pope Gregory had sent St Augustine with a community of clerics 'to propagate the Catholic Faith in Britain'.¹⁷⁵ He certainly interpolated the term into his quotation from Bede regarding St Columcille: 'Colum, (says he,) was the first doctor of the Catholic faith to the Picts of the mountains in the north';¹⁷⁶ various versions of this passage from Bede's history refer either to 'the Christian faith' or to 'the faith'.¹⁷⁷ This emphasis on Catholicism is especially obvious in a long sequence which began with Keating expressing 'astonishment' that, in his papal bull of 1155, Pope Adrian had believed that the faith had fallen down in Ireland. In a passage refuting this 'lie' that some party had told the pope, Keating referred to 'the Catholic Faith' five times which indicates a conscious decision on his part to highlight Catholicism and he further put great emphasis on the fact that so many nobles had ended their days 'in piety and as Catholics' from the time of Brian to the Norman invasion.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷¹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 200.

¹⁷² Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 313.

¹⁷³ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 199.

¹⁷⁴ Janelle, *Catholic reformation*, p. 88.

¹⁷⁵ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 89-90; Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 117.

¹⁷⁶ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 85.

¹⁷⁷ A. M. Sellar, *Bede's ecclesiastical history of England* (Charleston, 2007), p. 295; Judith McClure & Roger Collins, *Bede: The ecclesiastical history of the English people: the greater chronicle, Bede's letter to Egbert* (Oxford, 1999), p. 248; David H. Farmer, Leo Sherley-Price & Ronald E. Latham, *Ecclesiastical history of the English people: with Bede's letter to Egbert* (London, 1990), p. 279.

¹⁷⁸ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 351-9.

It is noteworthy that both men employed this mechanism in this way. Keating strove in *FFÉ* and in his other writings to create for his readers a sense of Irishness intertwined with Catholicism and to deliver an understanding of Catholicism as something peculiarly Irish.¹⁷⁹ Correspondingly, the Franciscans at Louvain were researching the genealogies of Irish saints for their hagiographies, linking the saints to Irish families, which indicates they intended their work to be the basic text for the Irish Catholic nation that they were creating in men's minds.¹⁸⁰ The fact that Conell Mageoghegan and Geoffrey Keating were thinking along the same lines is an indication of a common interest emerging among the native Irish and Old English.

There are, however, some hints that they may have possessed a slightly different outlook in their attitude towards the pope. Keating, although exhibiting great respect for popes, was less dramatic in his descriptions than Mageoghegan who, in his presentation of the following entry, displayed almost a sense of wonderment and awe. *AB*, *AConn* and *LCé* at AD 1237 all record that Donat O'Fidhubhra, coarb of St Patrick died, with *AB* adding that he died 'i Sachsanib'; Mageoghegan, however, attached an addendum to his entry: 'Donace o'ffurie primate of Ardmach died in England, as he was comeing from the pope, with great honour and spirituall glory from the pope.'¹⁸¹ He demonstrated a deep veneration of the pope here, betraying the same sort of reverential esteem that he gave to the saints, and the circumstance of the archbishop dying on his way home from Rome seemed to imbue him with a sense of wonder. Keating used more mundane language when referring to the popes and his references were delivered in less deferential terms; as alluded to above, he had expressed 'astonishment at a condition in the bull of Pope Adrianus in which he granted Ireland to Henry II' (viz. that the faith had fallen in Ireland) and he assured the reader that 'those who informed the pope that it had lapsed in Ireland when he bestowed that country on Henry II, lied'.¹⁸² Furthermore, in refuting the English author, Nicholas Sanders, whom he cited as saying 'that the Gaels, immediately on accepting the Faith, put themselves... under the power and government of the Bishop of

¹⁷⁹ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, p. 123.

¹⁸⁰ Bernadette Cunningham, 'The culture and ideology of Irish Franciscan historians at Louvain' in Ciaran Brady (ed.), *Ideology and the historians* (Dublin, 1991), p. 23.

¹⁸¹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 236.

¹⁸² Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 351-3.

Rome’,¹⁸³ Keating had no compunction in stating forthrightly that ‘the Roman Pontiff had never definite authority over Ireland any more that he had over Spain or France or other countries until the time of Donnchadh, son of Brian Boraimhe’, and that it was the latter and the Irish nobility who ‘consented to the Bishop of Rome’s having authority over them’.¹⁸⁴ There is no doubt that throughout the book Keating esteemed the pope and acknowledged his authority as head of the church but his terminology reveals him to be less in awe of the pontiff than Mageoghegan was. In this context, Mageoghegan included a curious entry at AD 772: ‘The Pope rained over all the kingdome.’¹⁸⁵ His annal in this particular year consisted of eight records and, with the exception of this entry of the pope reigning over the kingdom, the other seven appear in *AU 779 AD* in exactly the same order as *AClon*, indicating a shared ultimate source; Mageoghegan may have gathered this extra information from some such source as the Sanders entry referred to above. It is noteworthy, however, that Keating was not prepared to accept the pope’s supremacy over Ireland any earlier than the year AD 1092, the year that he placed Donnchadh O’Brien bestowing the country on him, which allowed for the grant of Ireland to Henry II just sixty-three years later and which accounted for the presence of the Old English in Ireland. Keating, like many of the Old English, had been educated in France where the comparative independence of the Gallican church of the pope may have influenced him. Mageoghegan, on the other hand, had no problem with such a scenario and was quite happy to accept the authority of the pope as early as AD 772 and apparently found nothing amiss with the papacy having hegemony over Ireland. Further, at AD 1328, his depiction suggests that his vision of the pope corresponded with that of a monarch: ‘Thomas o’Meallie Bushop of eanagh downe Died in Roome in the Pope's Court’,¹⁸⁶ whereas no similar descriptions appeared in *FFÉ*.

If their separate outlooks in this respect were replicated in their individual communities, it would point to a difference in the Catholicism of the Old Irish and the Old English. The warmth of Mageoghegan’s allusions to the pope and the ease with which he referred

¹⁸³ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 1.

¹⁸⁴ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 7.

¹⁸⁵ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 123.

¹⁸⁶ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 286.

to his reign over Ireland may indicate that the Old Irish were entirely comfortable with the notion of papal supremacy. On the other hand, Keating's insistence that, although the Emperor Constantine had bestowed the islands of western Europe on Pope Sylvester, 'that did not give the Pope possession of Ireland, since no emperor that was ever in Rome, nor Constantine, had possession of Ireland'¹⁸⁷ may reflect the awkward dilemma of the Old English. For centuries, and until relatively recently, they have given their complete submission to the English monarch but now found themselves in the uncomfortable position of proclaiming temporal loyalty to the king and spiritual loyalty to the pope and this equivocating stance elicited little sympathy from either James I or Charles I. Total loyalty to the crown on the part of the Gaelic Irish was a more recent phenomenon; even as recently as the 1590s, a much greater number of Old Irish than Old English had joined in the 'faith and fatherland' campaign of the northern earls. Therefore, when a split occurred between the two factions in the confederacy movement in the 1640s, a difference in their religious ideology and their brand of Catholicism may have been a factor in a division between the Old Irish and the Old English.

Keating's treatment of Brian Boromha: national identity

It has been shown in the previous chapter that Conell Mageoghegan imposed on his narrative an elaborate and eulogistic account of Brian Boromha; Brian was shown to be the ideal king; a negative account of Maoilseachlainn Mór was introduced into a Meath-influenced chronicle in order to justify Brian deposing him from the kingship; and Brian's achievements in delivering Ireland from the tyranny of the Vikings and in restoring peace and social stability were highlighted in his unconventional preface. Furthermore, Mageoghegan's portrayal of Brian as the high king who had united the whole kingdom perhaps reflected ideas of national identity current in the early seventeenth century. Both Keating's and Mageoghegan's accounts of Brian are remarkably similar. Keating was equally enthusiastic about the Munster king; his extensive narration of the career and exploits of Brian and the Dal gCais and his enumeration of Brian's good works in building schools and churches testify to his conscious decision to also present the eleventh-century figure in a heroic light. Keating

¹⁸⁷ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 7.

acquired much of his account, detailing Brian's deliverance of the *Gaeil* from Viking plunder and enslavement, from *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh*¹⁸⁸ and it was upon this text also that he drew for much of his account of Maoilseachlainn Mór.¹⁸⁹ As mentioned before, *CGG* appears to have been a very influential text with scholars in the seventeenth century and its influence can be clearly seen both in *FFÉ* as well as in the tale, *Cath Cluana Tarbh*, transmitted slightly later.¹⁹⁰ Mageoghegan too, as mentioned previously, may also have drawn upon *CGG* for his damning account of the Danes and for his favourable account of Brian. This is an indication of a common train of thought abroad among beleaguered Catholics in the seventeenth century incorporating the idealization of the heroic medieval king, the saviour of the eleventh-century inhabitants of the country from tyranny and injustice, and one in whose image they fervently hoped another might emerge to ease their afflictions and restore them to a more felicitous state; and that person, they probably hoped, would be Charles I.

There is no doubt that Keating like Mageoghegan consciously selected the legend of Brian Boromha with contemporary considerations in mind. *FFÉ* presented an even greater bias towards Brian and against Maoilseachlainn than *AClon*; when the latter felled the tree under which the chiefs of the Dal gCais were inaugurated, Keating commented, 'But, O reader, see whether he escaped punishment from Brian, as will appear later on'.¹⁹¹ Mageoghegan, on the other hand, with regard to this particular episode - which occurs in *AClon* before he intruded the imported account of Brian upon his exemplar's version - transcribed a somewhat favourable account of Maoilseachlainn's act as it appeared in his Leath Cuinn-influenced source, 'Dalgaisse was preyed altogether by king Moyleseachlin and hewed down the great tree of Moyeyre in spite of them.'¹⁹² The other annals have this entry as well but only *AClon* has 'in spite of them'. Keating, a Munsterman, was not under the same constraints as Mageoghegan in his treatment of the king of Meath and Ireland and he felt free to give full vent to his criticism and

¹⁸⁸ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, p. 68.

¹⁸⁹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 285; Todd, *The war of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*, pp 181-3.

¹⁹⁰ Ní Úrdail, 'Seachadadh Cath Cluana Tarbh sna lámhscríbhinní' in *Léachtaí Cholm Cille*, xxxiv (2004), pp 182-3.

¹⁹¹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 247.

¹⁹² Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 159.

condemnation of Maoilseachlainn. Brian was more worthy of the sovereignty because Maoilseachlainn ‘gave himself up to luxury and comfort and ease, a line of action that was useless for the defence of Ireland;¹⁹³ at Clontarf, ‘through a plot between himself and the Lochlonnaigh, he did not come into the battle array amongst Brian’s host’; and Keating only grudgingly accepted that Maoilseachlainn ‘was a pious man in his latter days’ because he restored schools and built churches, ‘after the example of Brian’.¹⁹⁴ Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail, in her article on Geoffrey Keating, has demonstrated the frequency of scribes editing texts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that often resulted in their own interpretations and political sentiments being reflected in their transcriptions.¹⁹⁵ In *FFÉ*, Keating laid more stress on the supposed treacherous pre-battle pact between Maoilseachlainn and the Vikings than did *CGG*, his source.¹⁹⁶ Therefore, the fact that Mageoghegan imported a highly flattering depiction of Brian into his history and that Keating enhanced an already laudatory narrative of the famous Irish king confirms a common political motivation emanating from these two representatives of the Old Irish and the Old English communities.

For both historians Brian was the ideal king but again Keating was less restrained than Mageoghegan when defending the deposition of Maoilseachlainn by Brian, and here he took the opportunity to advance his ideas on ideal kingship. In the early seventeenth century, not all of the allusions to Brian Boromha were entirely positive. In contrast to the version of the *translatio imperii* contained in *CGG*, there were some negative views in circulation of Brian’s behaviour, emanating from Leath Cuinn, similar to those aired in the poem by Roibeart Mac Artúir as cited in the last chapter. Mageoghegan, perhaps reluctant to transcribe any outright criticism of Brian, which does appear to have been present in his exemplar’s account, merely stated that Brian ‘took the kingdom and government...out of the hands of king Moyleseachlin in such manner as I do not intend to relate in this place.’¹⁹⁷ Keating did elaborate and described in detail Brian’s hostings

¹⁹³ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 247-9.

¹⁹⁴ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 287-9.

¹⁹⁵ Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail, ‘The literary legacy of Keating’s *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*’ in ed., Pádraig Ó Riain, *Geoffrey Keating’s Foras feasa ar Éirinn: reassessments* (London, I.T.S., 2008), p. 66.

¹⁹⁶ Ní Úrdail, ‘Seachadadh Cath Cluana Tarbh’, p. 185.

¹⁹⁷ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 165.

around the island seeking and getting hostages and the submission of the provincial kings and territorial chiefs up until the time that ‘Maoilseachlainn was obliged to abandon the sovereignty of Ireland and cede it to Brian’.¹⁹⁸ In justifying the usurpation by Brian, he stressed that ‘it would not be right to call him a tyrant’ and he impressed upon the reader his views on tyranny and on the proper way for a king to govern. For, it was ‘not according to his will or his strength that he governed the country during his reign, but according to the country’s constitution and law’, and he had ‘been chosen by the majority of the Irish nobles’ to supplant Maoilseachlainn in the sovereignty of the country.¹⁹⁹ While he had made such constitutional views clear earlier in the book as well, it is significant that he chose to repeat them at this juncture in association with Brian Boromha. Like Mageoghegan, whose views on ideal kingship were revealed to be encapsulated in his portrait of Brian, Keating also made sure that two of his dearly-held convictions, the ideal of governing in accordance with the constitution and the law and his preference for elective monarchy, made an appearance in his depiction of Brian.

Moreover, in this connection, as discussed earlier in this chapter, all the ideal qualities that Keating believed to be necessary for exemplary rulership are to be found in the passage on the inauguration of kings.²⁰⁰ Cunningham has pointed out that this inauguration passage in the extant early seventeenth-century manuscripts usually occurs immediately preceding the description of the rights and dues of Brian instead of at the time of the arrival of Christianity to Ireland at which point it appears in the later seventeenth-century manuscripts.²⁰¹ Keating may therefore have intended his template for the qualities of ideal kingship to relate to his narrative of Brian and such a positioning of the passage would place his views immediately after his assertion that Brian was no tyrant as set out above. It is difficult not to see a contemporary political significance in Keating’s association of ideas associated with the kingship of Brian Boromha. At the beginning of the passage on inauguration (probably originally incorporated within the narrative concerning Brian, as said), he stated, ‘we shall set down here from the seanchus the manner in which kings were inaugurated...including high kings.’ He went on to

¹⁹⁸ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 249-57.

¹⁹⁹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 265.

²⁰⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 9-15.

²⁰¹ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, pp 180-1.

explain, ‘formerly in Ireland the only title the territorial chiefs had was that of king’, and to illustrate his point, he chose for his example the reputed ancestor of the Stuart kings: ‘thus the Dal Riada in Scotland had a leader, Taoiseach until Fearghus Mor, son of Earc, was made king over them.’²⁰² It appears that Keating’s thinking with regard to the kingship of Brian Boromha corresponded closely with the ideas of Mageoghegan. Brian, high king of Ireland, was the ideal king and he was being discussed by Keating in association with Fergus, who had been feted by the Irish literati as the illustrious ancestor of the seventeenth-century kings of Ireland and England, James I and Charles I.

Thus it appears that both Keating and Mageoghegan were using the saga of Brian Boromha for ideological purposes and this could be indicative of an emerging corresponding sense of national identity. In the seventeenth century, there was a ‘flurry of prose’ writing about Brian Boromha, perhaps to inspire and comfort people during troubled times, and, in accounts of the battle of Clontarf, it can be perceived how national identities are developed through historical myths, and how historical narratives are often remoulded to suit current affairs.²⁰³ Brendan Bradshaw sees in *FFÉ* evidence of a sense of a common nationality evolving among the Old English and the native Irish.²⁰⁴ Bradshaw maintained that a sense of national consciousness had developed among the descendants of the Anglo-Normans; it had its genesis in the fifteenth century and gained maturity in the mid-sixteenth century when a group of so-called commonwealth men among this colonial elite sought a closer relationship with their fellow-inhabitants through the process of bringing the ‘wild Irishry’ to civility, not through force but through methods of persuasion.²⁰⁵ Bradshaw further claimed that Keating was building on this sense of goodwill on the part of the Old English but was being more generous in his vision and was urging his fellow Old English compatriots, instead of seeking to anglicise the Old Irish, to bridge the divide between them and to become ‘gaelicised’

²⁰² Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 9.

²⁰³ Clare Downham, ‘The battle of Clontarf in Irish history and legend’ in *History Ireland*, xiii, no. 5 (September/October, 2005), p. 19.

²⁰⁴ Brendan Bradshaw, ‘Reading Seathrún Céitinn’s *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*’ in Pádraig Ó Riain (ed.), *Geoffrey Keating’s Foras feasa ar Éirinn: reassessments* (London, 2008), pp 1-18; ‘Geoffrey Keating: apologist of Irish Ireland’ in Bradshaw, Brendan, Andrew Hadfield & Willy Maley (eds), *Representing Ireland: literature and the origins of conflict, 1534-1660* (Cambridge, 1993), pp 166-90.

²⁰⁵ Bradshaw, ‘Reading Seathrún Céitinn’s *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*’, pp 5-6.

themselves; and that his message represented a ‘conceptual advance towards creating a viable notion of Irish nationality’.²⁰⁶ Bradshaw had first put forward his thesis regarding the development of nationalism between the Gaelic Irish and the Old English in his book *The Irish constitutional revolution of the sixteenth century*.²⁰⁷ At that time, Ciaran Brady and Nicholas Canny, while welcoming Bradshaw’s important and comprehensive study of constitutional change in the sixteenth century, were both of the opinion, firstly, that Bradshaw exaggerated the significance of a sense of humanism as the impetus that motivated the Anglo Irish to embrace the native Irish in the mid-sixteenth century; and, secondly, neither agreed with his assertion that a sense of common nationality evolved between the two groups at that early stage.²⁰⁸ Cunningham’s interpretation of *FFÉ* stressed that Keating’s priority was to incorporate the Old English into the origin legend as discussed previously and the purpose of his methodology of linking the Old Irish and the Old English together so pointedly including referring to them collectively as *Éireannaigh* was designed primarily to imply that the Old English were also inheritors of the ancient homeland.²⁰⁹ This thesis finds that Cunningham’s emphasis seems more plausible. The hint of superiority, as mentioned earlier, that can be seen from his preface does not sit comfortably with the notion of Keating wishing his fellow compatriots to become gaelicised. However, his desire for inclusiveness of the native Irish into his vision for Ireland was clear especially in his preface and it certainly appears that he was reaching out to them. Therefore, the hailing of Brian Boromha as a unifying king of the whole island, taken along with this inclusivity of the Old Irish as seen in his preface, strike a concordant note with the way Mageoghegan presented his account of Brian and with his absence of animosity towards the descendants of the first Anglo-Normans. Although this thesis would not describe these indications of a common goal as signifying the development of nationalism among the Old Irish and Old English, this correspondence of ideas and display of goodwill towards the other side seems to suggest

²⁰⁶ Bradshaw, ‘Reading Seathrún Céitinn’s *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*’, pp 14-15.

²⁰⁷ Brendan Bradshaw, *The Irish constitutional revolution of the sixteenth century* (Cambridge, 1979), pp 187-288.

²⁰⁸ Ciaran Brady, ‘The Irish constitution revolution of the sixteenth century by Brendan Bradshaw’ in *Stud. Hib.*, no. 19 (1979), pp 177-81; Nicholas Canny, ‘The Irish constitution revolution of the sixteenth century by Brendan Bradshaw’ in *The Historical Journal*, 24:4 (1981), pp 1023-6.

²⁰⁹ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, pp 110-12.

the beginnings of a common sense of national identity developing among the two Catholic sections of Irish society.

However, there may have been nuanced differences in their visions of a national Ireland. Mageoghegan constantly used the expression ‘crown of Ireland’ to denote ‘kingship’ whereas Keating never employed this terminology and instead chose the term ‘sovereignty’. Ó Buachalla demonstrates that it was only during the sixteenth century, ultimately resulting from the constitutional change in 1541 in the status of Ireland from a lordship to a kingdom, that the ‘crown’ for the first time assumed symbolic signification and function in the ideology of Irish kingship.²¹⁰ At the beginning of the seventeenth century, a poet welcomed James I as one to whom it was fitting that ‘three crowns’ be placed on his head and one who ‘shall possess Ireland’s wondrous crown’; the poet further described the Stuart king as one who ‘banishes all strife’, dispenses ‘straight judgements’ and is Ireland’s ‘spouse’; and Ó Buachalla points out that these attributes are explicable and meaningful only in the context of the Irish ideology of kingship.²¹¹ In the previous century, in a letter addressed to Philip II in 1569, the ‘Bishops and Nobles of Ireland’ vowed to ‘recognise and crown him as their true, legitimate and natural king, thereby restoring the royal throne of this island’.²¹² The ‘crown of Ireland’ therefore appears to have entered the Irish psyche, not in the context of the authority of the crown of the English king, but in evocation of an ancient crown imagined to have been worn by Irish kings since time immemorial. Furthermore, Mageoghegan also used the terminology to denote an actual artefact, as mentioned above; for instance, he described Donnchadh O’Brien bringing ‘the Crown of Ireland’ with him to Rome to present to the pope whereas Keating made no such reference to the crown. It seems that there was widespread belief that the Irish crown was in Rome. In 1593, one Nicholas Whyte from Kildare was whipped, pilloried and imprisoned because he had ‘traitorously published’ that ‘there was an old crown of the Kings of Ireland in Rome’ and that the Catholic bishops had written to the pope for it so that O’Donnell should be king of Ireland.²¹³

²¹⁰ Breandán Ó Buachalla, *The Crown of Ireland* (Galway, 2006), p. 26.

²¹¹ Ó Buachalla, *Crown of Ireland*, p. 38.

²¹² Ó Buachalla, *Crown of Ireland*, pp 28-9.

²¹³ Ó Buachalla, *Crown of Ireland*, p. 35.

Mageoghegan may not have been aware of such seditious connotations attached to the crown of Ireland but he certainly had no compunction in referring to the revered diadem. It is remarkable that he obviously consciously chose to employ the terminology so frequently whereas Keating, intentionally or not, studiously avoided its use. This is not in any way to suggest any disloyalty on the part of Mageoghegan but it seems that his ideology of kingship emanated from the Gaelic tradition. Perhaps the Gaelic Irish vision of national identity, while certainly encompassing a monarch (and in the early seventeenth century embracing the Stuart incumbents on the throne) may not necessarily have identified exclusively with an English king whereas the Old English, whose royal ideology had always been traditionally focused upon London, would not have contemplated any other allegiance. Such a marked difference between Mageoghegan and Keating in the terminology they used suggests slight variations in their notions of national identity.

Conclusion

Similarity and some difference are evident in the political, social, cultural and religious ideologies of the Old English Geoffrey Keating and the Gaelic Irish Conell Mageoghegan. It is remarkable how closely attitudes towards kingship coalesced, confirming a common close adherence to the Stuart king by both the Old English and Gaelic Irish. Almost identical strategies in adopting the format of the *Réim rioghraidhe* as a structure for their works, coupled with anachronistic emphases on an all-Ireland kingdom indicate that similar debates were taking place both within and between the two communities concerning, for instance, the importance of the constitutional status of Ireland as enacted in the Kingship Act of 1541 establishing Ireland as a kingdom. Differences in strains of royalism - expectation of a limited monarchy by the Old Englishman as opposed to an attitude of obedience shown by the Old Irishman - point to the greater self-confidence of an Old English group which would have experienced more contact with the king over the years than the native Irish; secondly, it may reflect Old English reaction to the inflexible and 'thorough' regime of Wentworth compared to the more relaxed atmosphere that prevailed under Falkland when Mageoghegan wrote in the previous decade. Variations between the two men in their treatment of parliament are

very pronounced, drawing attention to Old English traditional dominance in the institution and the corresponding paucity of Gaelic Irish representation. What can be deduced also is that the Old English considered a leadership role in parliament as part of their natural birthright and, in general, perhaps neglected to seriously regard the worth of the Old Irish as contenders in this field.

Culturally, it seems that native Irish and gaelicised Old English had much in common. There seems to have been little deviation between the groups either in assumptions of a hierarchical order, deference displayed towards the élite and the importance of keeping to one's appropriate level in society being paramount. The Gaelic Irish were perhaps not as enthusiastic in celebrating the Norman conquest as the Old English but that event appears to have been an accepted reality rather than a contentious issue at this stage in the early seventeenth century. In fact, it is clear that these representatives of their respective sections of society strove to minimise past enmities and mutual resentments, a definite signal of a willingness of Irish Catholics to work together now. Features of Tridentine reform seem to have resonated with the Old English, while an older, traditional style of Catholicism persisted with the Gaelic Irish. While the Old English priest's education in Europe obviously accounts for this, the variation could also possibly be due to a slower progress in bringing the message of Trent to the Gaelic midlands than to the area of Keating's south Munster, a region which obviously benefited from his own catechising. It is not unlikely that there were other returned seminary priests active in Munster; a list compiled in 1618 of attendees at the Irish college in Bordeaux, where Keating himself probably taught, revealed mostly Munster students including a son of the baron of Dunboyne.²¹⁴ Interestingly, the slight difference noted in attitude to the papacy perhaps indicates a variation between an Old English and an Old Irish understanding of the power of Rome. If so, this perhaps may have had significance for the split between the two groups during the confederacy period.

Nevertheless, further evidence of parallel thinking existing within the Old Irish and Old English communities emerges from the comparison of these two men's accounts. Their

²¹⁴ Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, p. 28.

strategies in stressing the Catholic religion converged remarkably indicating an emerging Catholic identity between Old Irish and Old English, galvanised by state discrimination against the co-religionists, but likely also boosted by the confessional imperatives of seminary-educated priests returning to minister to them from the continent. The twin strategy of portraying Brian Boromha as a unifying national king may have had its inspirational genesis in *émigré* visions, and is a further sign of the growing sense of national identity between the original indigenous inhabitants and the descendants of the twelfth-century settlers. Despite the nuance of difference detected in each man's concept of this sense of identity, it is clear that the Old English and Old Irish groups were finding much common ground and were drawing together to form one Catholic nation.

Chapter 4

Henry Burnell

Henry Burnell (c.1590-c.1669), an Old English playwright and landowner from the Pale, stands in apparent contrast to Conell Mageoghegan, of Gaelic Irish stock from the former gaelic lordship of Kineleagh in the midlands, and to Geoffrey Keating, of Anglo-Norman descent from the gaelicised area of south Tipperary. We have seen Keating's and Mageoghegan's political ideas correspond in many respects especially with regard to their royalist inclinations and their views on the ordering of society although some differences in culture and in religious orientation were apparent. Much of what is known of Burnell's ideas is derived from his play *Landgartha*.¹ Although a work of drama, *Landgartha* contained an obvious allegory relating to the political circumstances existing at the time of its composition and performance. It is germane to compare Burnell's attitudes as gleaned from his play with those of Mageoghegan and Keating. Whereas, as mentioned, Mageoghegan, Gaelic gentleman, hailed from Co Westmeath on the borders of King's County, and Keating, Old English cleric, originated from gaelicised Tipperary, Burnell, Old English gentleman and playwright, was born and reared in Castleknock near Dublin, in the inner Pale. His cultural approach therefore might be expected to represent the attitudes of his fellow Old English of the Pale, the heartland of traditional Old English influence and values, while his views might also reflect the outlook of those whom he would have encountered in the area where he resided after his marriage in the outer regions of the Pale in Co Meath. His play was available not only to the audience which was present at its first public performance at Werburgh St. theatre in Dublin in March 1640, and to those who attended possible subsequent performances, but also to a much wider section of the population through its printed version which was published in 1641. Dramatic texts were extremely important to the inhabitants of early modern Ireland; often conveying a political message, they enjoyed a wider circulation in their printed form and

¹ Henry Burnell, *Landgartha* in Christopher Wheatley & Kevin Donovan (eds), *Irish drama of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries* (2 vols, Bristol, 2003), i, 5-79.

could be instrumental in shaping attitudes.² Accordingly, Burnell would have appreciated the importance of his craft, and his audience and readership would have been alert to any underlying contemporary allusions in his text. Therefore, comparing his philosophical opinions with the views of Mageoghegan and Keating should prove fruitful.

Burnell's background

In her thesis on political and cultural society in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Dublin and surrounding areas in the Pale, Nessa Malone has described the Burnell family.³ Henry was born and reared in Castleknock where the Burnells had a presence since the end of the fifteenth century. His grandfather, also Henry, died in 1614 at which time his father, Christopher, succeeded to the family seat at Castleknock. Presumably Henry also continued to live there until the time of his marriage, probably around 1625, when he moved to Castlerickard near Clonard in Co Meath. Sources on Henry's life are scant; although his family background was in law, it is not clear if he was trained as a lawyer like his grandfather, Henry Burnell senior (c.1540-1614).⁴ However, much is known about the latter, who was married to a member of the O'Reilly family in Cavan. He was the son of John Burnell and Katherine Barnewall. He had been a distinguished lawyer, having qualified at the Inns of Court in London, and he numbered the earl of Kildare and his family among his clients. He had been publicly and politically active as a member of the 1585 parliament and also as a representative and spokesman for the Old English community right up to the time of his death in 1614. In the sixteenth century, he had been one of those representing the Old English in their opposition to cess, a taxation which they regarded as both excessive and unconstitutional being levied on foot of the king's prerogative rather than through parliamentary legislation. In the seventeenth century he opposed the anti-Catholic 'mandates' and his involvement in this campaign (against what Catholics regarded as unfair measures being aimed at those not conforming

² Raymond Gillespie, 'Political ideas and their social contexts in seventeenth-century Ireland' in Jane Ohlmeyer (ed.), *Political thought in seventeenth-century Ireland: kingdom or colony* (Cambridge, 2000), pp 117-18.

³ Nessa Malone, 'The social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family of Dublin, 1552-1660' (PhD thesis, NUI, Maynooth, 2008).

⁴ Malone, 'Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family', p. 147.

to the state religion) resulted in him being imprisoned in 1605-6; and, though not a member of the 1613 parliament, probably due to his age, he was consulted for his advice by Old English candidates and political activists regarding their proposed parliamentary strategy. He had been appointed justice of the queen's bench for a single term in 1590.⁵ It is possible that the briefness of his sojourn in that position was due to his recusancy or perhaps on account of his marriage to the daughter of the Gaelic O'Reillys. Such a religious stance and such a close connection to the Gaelic Irish were becoming increasingly disadvantageous in the last decade of the sixteenth century. Medieval statutes forbidding intermarriage had been renewed in the 1530s and were not repealed until the reign of James I.⁶ Furthermore, the fact that he was a legal counsellor to a confraternity, which was attached to St Audeon's church in Dublin, from 1593, in its defence against the commission for ecclesiastical causes, would also have attracted attention to his recusancy.⁷ His kinsmen and associates also included the Burnell family in Drogheda, the Dillons of Meath and the Nettervilles of Corballis. Therefore, taking into account the foregoing career of his grandfather, the family background of the playwright Henry Burnell was steeped in the politics and the defensive strategies of the Old English community of the Pale.

Christopher Burnell, however, Henry's father, had not followed his father into the legal profession.⁸ It is possible that the requirement for entry into legal studies in England, that of swearing the Oath of Supremacy and thereby denying the authority of the pope, acted as a disincentive to him in this regard. Instead, having inherited large estates, he apparently lived as a gentleman farmer. Nevertheless, Christopher was obviously an active and respected member of the Old English community in his locality. During the period of the proposals for the 'trained bands' scheme in 1625, which would have seen Catholic Old English landowners being permitted to participate in a project of raising and overseeing a militia-type force to defend Ireland against any potential Spanish invasion, Christopher agreed to organise the mustering and funding of men in his barony of

⁵ Malone, 'Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family', ch. 1.

⁶ Mary O'Dowd, *A history of women in Ireland, 1500-1800* (Harlow, 2005), p. 15.

⁷ Malone, 'Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family', p. 56.

⁸ Malone, 'Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family', p. 190.

Castleknock.⁹ The scheme however, as previously noted, failed to get approval due to opposition from the Protestant New English and a hostile administration and was abandoned in early 1626. Christopher's participation reveals him to have been actively supportive of Old English efforts in their attempts to emphasise their privileged status as responsible and loyal subjects in the mid 1620s. It is not known who Christopher's wife and Henry's mother was but she may well have belonged to one of the Old English families in north Dublin or Meath, to many of whom Christopher's father had been connected by marriage, friendship and by professional alliance.

The foregoing would suggest that if Henry Burnell followed the same traditions and inherited the same cultural attitudes that his father and especially his grandfather appeared to espouse, he would be endowed with the typical oppositional outlook which has been well documented of the majority of the beleaguered Old English. His wife, however, was Lady Frances Dillon, the daughter of Sir James Dillon, earl of Roscommon and of Eleanor Barnewall, daughter of Christopher of Turvey (which meant Frances was related to Conell Mageoghegan's sister-in-law, Mary Coghlan née Dillon). The Dillon family, earls of Roscommon and lords of Kilkenny West had a history of service to the crown in Ireland and cooperation with the government. In both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, various members received extensive grants of land as well as perquisites such as permits to hold fairs and markets and licences to sell various wines and whiskey.¹⁰ Frances Burnell's grandfather, Sir Lucas Dillon of Newtown and Moymet had been a loyal member of council until the 1590s and had sided with Sir Henry Sidney over the cess controversies mentioned above.¹¹ Her father, Sir James Dillon, had been imprisoned having signed the 'mandates' protest in 1605-6 but obviously afterwards was considered a thoroughly loyal supporter and was endowed with the baronetcy of Kilkenny West in 1619 and made earl of Roscommon in 1622. In addition, the earl ensured that his eldest son and Frances' brother, Sir Robert, the future second earl, known as lord of Kilkenny West, conformed to the Protestant religion and

⁹ Malone, 'Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family', p. 167.

¹⁰ John Lodge & Mervyn Archdall, *The peerage of Ireland or a genealogical history of the present nobility of that kingdom* (7 vols, Dublin, 1789), iv, 157-61.

¹¹ Malone, 'Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family', p. 193.

the latter was thus sufficiently trusted to receive membership of the Privy Council in 1628 and be temporarily appointed a lord justice in Wentworth's absence, doubtless on the recommendation of the lord deputy himself, in 1639.¹² Such positions were highly unusual for an Irishman even one of Old English background in the seventeenth century. In turn, Sir Robert reared his son, the third earl, in the state religion and had him married to the sister of Wentworth. Robert Dillon was a wholehearted supporter of Wentworth and spoke positively in his defence at his trial in 1641.¹³ It is possible that Henry Burnell benefitted from this association with Wentworth by having his play staged at the state theatre and if this were the case it might be assumed that he sympathised with Wentworth's absolutist views. However, this connection to Wentworth is not proof of Burnell's brand of royalism. Although artistic works would have been strictly vetted by the master of the revels, if there were coded allusions of doubtful orthodoxy they may have gone undetected by the master of the revels, the Scotsman, John Ogilby, a comparatively recent newcomer to Ireland and one perhaps not totally au-fait with the complexities of Anglo-Irish politics. John Kerrigan holds that Burnell made few concessions to the agenda of the lord deputy in his play even while he underlined the traditional loyalty of his community to the crown.¹⁴ Wentworth's agenda was to ensure that Charles I's power in Ireland should be as 'absolute' as that enjoyed by any other princes in the world.¹⁵ The manner in which Burnell's characters relate to their king does not concur with this vision of the lord deputy. Burnell's brother-in-law's patronage therefore may not have been a factor in having his play performed.

In addition, there are a couple of indications that Robert Dillon, while being a thoroughgoing supporter of Wentworth, may not have shared his absolutist beliefs. He had expressed reservations at Wentworth's denial of property rights in the Graces in 1634;¹⁶ and Thomas Carte, biographer of Ormond, listed Dillon as one of the moderates who had not signed a letter of complaint from the Irish council to the earl of Leicester on

¹² Lodge & Archdall, *Peerage of Ireland*, iv, 161-2.

¹³ Malone, 'Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family', pp 178-80.

¹⁴ John Kerrigan, *Archipelagic English: literature, history and politics, 1603-1707* (New York, 2008), p. 177.

¹⁵ Hugh F. Kearney, *Strafford in Ireland, 1633-41: a study in absolutism* (Manchester, 1959), p. 7.

¹⁶ Aidan Clarke, *The Old English in Ireland, 1625-41* (Dublin, 1966), p. 90.

26 November 1641, just a month after the rising began, which had expressed distrust in some members of the that council.¹⁷ Dillon's sympathies, therefore, may well have lain with the plight of his fellow Old Englishmen. In any case, whatever about Robert Dillon's ideological position, unlike him, the remainder of Frances Burnell's many brothers and sisters appear to have remained Catholic, and it is not unlikely that her mother did likewise. Frances' brother, Luke Dillon, adhered to Catholicism, lived in Cavan and was MP for Cavan county in 1634; her sister, Lady Jane married into the Catholic Costello-Gallen Dillons, two of whose members were prominently involved in the Confederation; and her other siblings also married into Catholic families.¹⁸ In addition, Henry Burnell also became a member of the Confederation of Kilkenny. He and his father, Christopher, signed the oath association of the Confederation and were both outlawed in July 1643. In 1646 Henry Burnell petitioned the supreme council for the sum of £25; and in 1647 an instruction to pay him £10 was issued; his involvement therefore appears to have been minor. His cousin, Robert Burnell, of Drogheda, was more prominently active being a captain in the Leinster army.¹⁹

In sum, influences emanating from Henry Burnell's background are contrasting. His immediate ancestors displayed a decidedly constitutional attitude *vis-à-vis* the crown authorities while his wife's family, particularly her brother Robert who was closely allied to the absolutist Wentworth, had traditionally shown a very favourable attitude towards the crown which was being represented by an increasingly hostile government. Henry's attitudes therefore must be gleaned from his representations of character and situations in his play, and scholars have convincingly demonstrated the obvious contemporary political analogies which underlay his dramatic work.²⁰

Landgartha – the characters and plot

¹⁷ M. Perceval-Maxwell, *The outbreak of the Irish rebellion of 1641* (Dublin, 1994), pp 245-6, 335n.

¹⁸ Lodge & Archdall, *Peerage of Ireland*, iv, 160.

¹⁹ Malone, 'Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family', pp 238-40.

²⁰ Catherine M. Shaw, 'Landgartha and the Irish dilemma' in *Éire-Ireland: a journal of Irish studies*, xiii, no. 1 (1977), pp 26-39; Gillespie, 'Political ideas and their social contexts', pp 121-1.

Initially, in the interests of clarity and in order to become familiar with the characters, it will be helpful to recite briefly the dramatic plot of the play and to list its principal characters.

Characters:

Landgartha	Norwegian lady
Reyner	king of Denmark
Frollo	king of Sweland and conqueror of Norway
Scania	sister to Landgartha
Fatyma	cousin to Landgartha and Scania
Elsinora	aunt to Landgartha and Scania
Valdemar	near cousin to Reyner
Inguar	Danish nobleman
Marfisa	humourous gentlewoman, cousin to Fatyma
Hubba	humourous merry Danish captain
Harold	competitor for Denmark, a Christian
Eric	his brother, also a Christian
Vraca	daughter to Frollo
Cowsell & Radger	two foolish coxcombs

Dramatic plot:

Norway, to which Reyner, king of Denmark, has a claim by birthright, has been conquered by Frollo, king of Sweland, who rules as a tyrant and abuses the population including ravishing its women. Reyner sets out to invade Norway but, before he arrives, a group of Norwegian women, dressed as amazons and led by the courageous and beautiful Landgartha, rises against the Swelanders and Landgartha herself kills the usurping Frollo. Reyner falls in love with Landgartha and woos her but she rejects his proposal of marriage explaining that she has taken a vow of chastity and has vowed never to marry. She reconsiders, however, and eventually accepts him, citing her change of mind as obedience as his subject as well as love, and they duly marry and reside in Norway. Reyner's fidelity to Landgartha, however, does not last and, back in Denmark to quell an insurrection, he betrays his wife, committing adultery with Vraca, daughter of the king of Sweland. However, he subsequently repents of his unfaithfulness but, needing military assistance against the attempted coup by Harold, Christian pretender to the throne of Denmark, he dares not hope that his former wife and her amazonian army will come to his aid. Landgartha, however, out of loyalty and love for him, although deeply hurt by his betrayal, does sail to Denmark to assist him. Arriving at the eleventh

hour as Reyner is in danger of being overcome by Harold, she not only wins the battle for him but also saves his life; and Harold, being overpowered by Landgartha, makes his escape to the Holy Roman Emperor in Germany, but not before an angel has appeared and foretold Landgartha's conversion to Christianity. Reyner abjectly confesses his sin of consorting with Vraca and begs his wife's forgiveness and asks to be reinstated as her husband. Landgartha forgives him and tells him that she still loves him and will take him back but not, however, into her marriage bed and, despite pleas from her sister, her aunt and friends, is resolute about her decision. The play ends with Scania, her sister, telling Reyner not to lose hope but to follow Landgartha to Norway and, if he remains constant to her, he may yet regain the trust of the virtuous Amazonian queen. Thus the play ends somewhat inconclusively with Landgartha granting her love and loyalty to her liege and husband but not her unreserved submission.

Burnell took the skeleton of the plot of *Landgartha* from an account of tenth-century Danish history by Saxo Grammaticus, who flourished in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.²¹ However, Burnell amended his source extensively and the values and ideology elucidated in *Landgartha* are more resonant of the seventeenth century than those of the medieval period. In addition, authors and playwrights often chose exotic locations and situations for their works in order to disguise their subversive message or any views that may have been considered unorthodox by the authorities and censored by the master of revels. The outline of the story of *Landgartha* comes from Saxo but the text is the product of Burnell's imagination and, although largely fictional, it is natural that Burnell's beliefs and prejudices would penetrate the lines of the play. Much of what writers of fiction include in their works tends to be influenced from their own experiences and impressions of life. Moreover, given the political background of his family, it is to be expected that Burnell would have been possessed of a conscious political ideology and it is not surprising that he may also have held a political agenda. Moreover, his cousin Michael, together with many members of both the Dillon and the Barnewall families, were represented at the 1640 parliament; therefore, Burnell was moving in circles where

²¹ *The first nine books of the Danish history of Saxo Grammaticus*, tr. Oliver Elton (London, 1894), pp 361-84; Shaw, 'Landgartha and the Irish dilemma', p. 29.

the affairs of parliament would have been of topical interest.²² It seems that he wished to send a message to his audience and readership. There is ample evidence that English audiences read multiple layers of allegory into the plays they saw,²³ and Dublin audiences were doubtless no different in this respect. His play was performed on 17 March 1640, the day after the opening of parliament. His audience would have consisted of MPs, many of them from the country who were in Dublin to attend parliament, and would have included presumably both Old English and New English and some Old Irish. The readership of the printed play, which went to the press in the following year, would have been even more extensive. The dramatic text in early-modern Ireland exerted enormous influence and the printed text could be relayed and its message diffused and interpreted even by those who could not read.²⁴

In *Landgartha*, Burnell supplied a number of hints that the play contained an underlying hidden political message which he wished to convey to his audience and readership. For instance, Burnell dedicated the play to ‘ladies’ which was somewhat unusual; playwrights frequently were conscious of seeking patronage when adding their dedication, recipients consequently often being notable and important figures. If Burnell were an ardent admirer of the lord deputy, he would have been an obvious choice (although by the time the dedication was added, Wentworth, now the earl of Strafford, was undergoing trial for treason or may even have been dead). Dedications were usually furnished at the time of going through the press,²⁵ so Burnell’s dedication – ‘To all fair, indifferent fair, virtuous that are not fair, and magnanimous Ladies’ - would probably have been appended during 1641, the year after its first performance on 17 March 1640, when Burnell had had time to consider reaction to his work. It is possible that his play had raised suspicions of subversive content amongst the authorities and that his innocuous dedication was designed to ‘throw them off the scent’ as it were. Certainly, his play was not well received in some quarters as is clear from the ‘afterword’ which Burnell also affixed to

²² Alan J. Fletcher, *Drama, performance and polity in pre-Cromwellian Ireland* (Cork, 2000), p. 276.

²³ Richard Dutton, ‘The Werburgh St. theatre, Dublin’ in A. Zucker & A.B. Farmer (eds), *Localising Caroline drama: politics and economics of the early modern English state, 1625-1642* (Gordonsville, 2006), p. 148.

²⁴ Gillespie, ‘Political ideas and their social contexts’, pp 117-8.

²⁵ Allan H. Stevenson, ‘Shirley’s dedications and the date of his return to England’ in *Modern language notes*, lxii, no. 2 (Feb., 1946), p. 79.

the printed version where he stated that ‘some...were offended at the conclusion of this play’ owing to the fact that the heroine refused to submit to ‘the king’s kind night-embraces’.²⁶ Although he went on to specify that the ‘some’ were ‘the over-amorous’ and ‘babblers’, it is not unlikely that the ‘some’ in question may have been the New English authorities who, though not initially recognising the subversive elements in his play, were now suspicious of its intent. What appear to be further coded hints were supplied in the prologue. Here, it looked like Burnell was trying to forewarn the audience to be watchful for any underlying ideas throughout the play. The Amazon presenter of the prologue assured them that it was not just for his own gain that Burnell wrote but for the benefit of the minds of his audience. Referring to an earlier play of his that had ‘met with too much spite’, she stated, ‘Yet this his second (as that first) he made/To please you, not for money; to invade/Your wills for your own profit’. Then, inferring that Burnell would have liked to treat his subject more seriously and more condemningly but that, for entertainment’s sake, he refrained from doing so, she continued,

If his mind/He had sought by it to content, you’d find/Another method in’t; and not a word/Of any mirth or love would he afford/To make you laugh or languish. All rich stuff/(Though not pleasing) he’d expose, to cuff/(And generally too) the monster vice;/Which he performs, but gently, in this piece.²⁷

It appears, therefore, as if *Landgartha*, like many early-modern dramatic texts, was concerned with more than just art and entertainment and that the ‘rich stuff’ that he would like to expose related to the more important field of contemporary political affairs.

However, it is in Act III, which portrays a court masque (a complete interpolation on his source)²⁸ where his most transparent clues are displayed. Burnell portrayed Reyner, king of Denmark, the hero of *Landgartha*, as a prince of the land of *Brutaine*, descended of the ‘Brutains’ on the one side and ‘I’th’other side extended/Up by the royal blood of Danes’.²⁹ It would have been clear then to his audience and readership that they were to

²⁶ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 68.

²⁷ Burnell, *Landgartha*, pp 6-7.

²⁸ Shaw, ‘*Landgartha and the Irish dilemma*’, p. 31.

²⁹ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 40.

understand Reyner, hero of *Landgartha*, to be Charles I whose paternal ancestors would have been considered Briton and whose mother was Anne of Denmark. Further, Landgartha and her Amazonian ladies, Scania, Fatyma and Elsinora were clearly intended to be equated with the Old English.³⁰ Once this connection in Burnell's play was recognised by historians, many other likely intentional analogies and coded political messages become apparent in the work. Principally, the king of Denmark, Reyner, being read as Charles I, has been unfaithful and betrayed his Norwegian wife and queen, the noble Landgartha, leader of the virtuous Amazonian Norwegian women, understood as representing the Old English. While there can probably be no exact matching of characters with reality, contemporaries would have understood the real life betrayal to be a political betrayal of the Old English by Charles I due to his failure to honour his promises to them which were contained in the Graces.³¹ The importance of honour in this period has been underlined in the previous chapter. The concept of honour was grounded in the notion that the king was the fount of all honour;³² therefore, the Old English would have expected Charles to have done his duty by them as loyal subjects.

Apart from artistic considerations and a natural inclination to follow his talents, and it is obvious that Burnell was highly educated and well versed in the classics, the impending parliament may have incentivised him to produce a vehicle in which he could put forward his ideas and expound his political philosophy. This conclusion could be drawn from a hint in his epilogue delivered by the Amazon, Scania: 'our author...(for him) desired me say;/Where others spend a year about a play/(Picking a sentence here, a word from thence)/This tragicomedy with the expense/Of less than two months time he penned, for he/'S not too ambitious of the dignity/Of a prime poet'.³³ On the one hand, he may just have needed to have the play ready for the larger theatre-going crowd which would accompany the holding of parliament but, on the other, he may have been hinting at the topicality of the play's underlying political content. It was as if he was telling the audience that he realised that his work was not high art but the implication was to

³⁰ Gillespie, 'Political ideas and their social contexts', p. 121.

³¹ Gillespie, 'Political ideas and their social contexts', p. 121.

³² Brendan Kane, *The politics and culture of honour in Britain and Ireland, 1541-1641* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 13.

³³ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 68.

emphasise to them the immediacy of his efforts and suggest that it was the hidden messages that were important. Such an interpretation could also be gathered from an earlier exchange when one of the characters said of the masque, which was being staged for the newly-married Reyner and Landgartha, ‘There is no fustian,/Nonsense, wind, or foppery in’t’, which was followed by the king, agreeing, ‘We despise affected stuff,/Or a strained eloquence, being the smoke/And fruits of a vainglorious and an empty brain’.³⁴ These remarks may well signify Burnell’s response to the style of the play of his rival playwright, Shirley, whose recently-performed play at Werburgh St, *St Patrick for Ireland*, contained many special effects.³⁵ However, they may also reflect the imperatives that governed Burnell’s thinking when writing his play with the prospect of parliament looming, the first since the assembly in 1634 which had produced such disappointing results for the Old English when Wentworth had successfully duped them and stymied their efforts to achieve delivery of the Graces.³⁶ These positive descriptions by Burnell’s characters of the unadorned style of the masque may have been intended to insinuate into the minds of his audience some deeper concerns than those which appeared on the surface dispersed throughout the play. Burnell could have been familiar with William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, also drawn from Saxo’s history of Denmark, which likewise featured a ‘play within a play’ with crucial significance for the overall plot of that play. Correspondingly, with these remarks, Burnell may have been signalling that his masque was a microcosm of his work as a whole and inferring that he was dealing with more serious matters than just frivolous amusement.

It has been suggested that Burnell’s motive in writing *Landgartha* was probably to influence the passage of an act concerning bigamy which was due to come up in parliament.³⁷ A bill to prevent bigamy brought before parliament by Wentworth in 1634 had been rejected by MPs. Indeed, it is likely that many Irish Catholics, taking their lead from their clerics, viewed the regulating of marriages to be in the ecclesiastical domain

³⁴ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 37.

³⁵ Gillespie, ‘Political ideas and their social contexts’, p. 121.

³⁶ Kearney, *Strafford in Ireland*, pp 57-64.

³⁷ Fletcher, *Drama, performance and polity in pre-Cromwellian Ireland*, pp 275-6.

and regarded Wentworth's intervention as evangelising.³⁸ However, the priority of the legislative programme for the 1640 parliament was to consider the passing of an act to secure the plantation of the counties in Connacht and this issue was of primary importance to the Old English.³⁹ Wentworth's intention of using parliament to confirm the plantation was innovative and unwelcome; traditionally, the issue of plantation lay in the domain of the king which meant that the Old English would be able to appeal directly to him regarding any encroachment on their entitlements. Wentworth's plantation ambitions had become utterly clear to them over the past decade and their overriding concern was the security of their lands and livelihoods. Wentworth had disparagingly referred to the Old English 'ravenous appetite' with regard to their estates.⁴⁰ Plantation in Connacht would mean Old English, who had significant estates there, as well as Old Irish land would be affected and that the precedent would be set for the rest of the country. What was at stake was not just a couple of hundred thousand acres in Connacht but the 'privileged status upon which every member of the old English group relied to protect his property'.⁴¹ Therefore, it is more likely that this was the issue which most influenced Burnell's mind when writing his play. Both Burnell and his father were landowners and would have had a vested interest in seeing that the bill coming up for the confiscation of the counties in Connacht would not be passed (as subsequently transpired due to opposition tactics when parliament met). Success in achieving the granting of the Graces and their ratification in parliament, specifically Grace number twenty-five, would secure property rights for the Old English. Both Burnell's father and grandfather had been involved in enfeoffment-to-use of lands (a mechanism used by the Old English to retain land within their own extended families and social networks) and pardons granted to them in 1616 and 1622 with the relevant fines levied.⁴² The forthcoming bill regarding plantation would have been of paramount importance to Burnell as it was to other Old English landholders. More broadly, this parliament was going to be about voting substantial subsidies to Charles I to help to finance his war with the Scots so

³⁸ Kerrigan, *Archipelagic English*, p. 177.

³⁹ Kearney, *Strafford in Ireland*, p. 190.

⁴⁰ Clarke, *Old English in Ireland*, p. 112.

⁴¹ Clarke, *Old English in Ireland*, p. 110.

⁴² Malone, 'Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family', pp 27, 187.

Landgartha could also be seen as Burnell's contribution to a debate about whether and how extensively the Old English should support their king in this financial regard.

Royalism

As mentioned before, different strands of royalism prevailed in the seventeenth century; there were some people whose loyalty was so thoroughly committed that they accepted monarchical decisions without question and others who were prepared to challenge, albeit diplomatically, measures that affected their livelihoods. Like Mageoghegan and Keating, Burnell showed himself to be a royalist, that is, a firm supporter of the king.

Mageoghegan, as we have seen, tended towards an acceptance of absolutist power whereas Keating preferred some limitations on the power of the king. Burnell's ideology orientated towards a royalism favouring a more limited monarchical rule which corresponded more closely with Keating's approach than that of Mageoghegan.

Initially, however, all three writers shared the same conception regarding Ireland's constitutional status. As shown, both Mageoghegan and Keating both placed much emphasis on Ireland's status as kingdom and both showed their presumption and enthusiasm for the position that Ireland was ruled by the king of England as a kingdom in its own right. For Burnell, this was also a firmly-held assumption. He constantly inferred the distinction of the kingdoms of Norway and Denmark and, given his clear objective that King Reyner be understood as Charles I, it seems likely that at times during the play Burnell intended Norway and Denmark to be analogically associated with Ireland and England respectively. Reyner, in urging on his soldiers to have courage and to wrest the kingdom of Norway from the usurping hands of Frollo, assured them that 'this kingdom' was 'more fatal unto them [the usurpers] /Than Capua was to Hannibal' and so 'not worth your meanest fears.'⁴³ Later, his captain Hubba, disappointed to have to leave Norway and return home in order to put down a revolt in Denmark, railed against his king: 'You brought us hither with the hazard of our lives/To gain this kingdom for you';⁴⁴ and Reyner's colonel, Valdemar, further inferred the distinction between the countries as he rebuked the king on his waning love for his queen: 'we that are your

⁴³ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 13.

⁴⁴ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 43.

countrymen/(Whom you mainly dishonour in't) can have/No such patience'.⁴⁵ Burnell also frequently referred to Reyner's kingdoms: for instance, Landgartha agreed to assist 'in the recovery of your kingdoms' and, subsequently, a repentant Reyner pleaded with her to restore him 'Once more unto your heart, as to my kingdoms'.⁴⁶ However, more tellingly, his audience and subsequent readership can hardly have missed the fairly transparent analogy to Ireland when Elsinora, Landgartha's virtuous and pious aunt, muses sorrowfully on her niece's decision to commit herself in marriage to the king, 'I see she does affect him in good earnest./But wisdom bids be silent, this poor kingdom/Being already torn too much by tyranny and troubles./Things past our help, with patience must be born,/Until a fit time.'⁴⁷ The constant tensions and the struggles of Irish Catholics over the past decade against a hostile administration under Wentworth's command may well have inspired this speech and 'a fit time' may have signified Burnell's hopes for redress in the coming parliament. Another suggestion of two distinct kingdoms of England and Ireland is suggested by Landgartha who, advertising her consent to sail to the aid of her faithless husband in his bid to put down sedition at home, advised Inguar: 'When we behold our neighbor's house on fire,/The proverb says we ought look to our own'.⁴⁸ This could be a clear reference to an apprehension felt by the Irish that the war raging between Charles and the Scots might easily spill over into Ireland through Ulster, and Burnell, who enlisted in Wentworth's 'new army',⁴⁹ would have been fully aware of this danger. Finally, Burnell seemed to be underpinning the separateness of the two kingdoms when he referred to the king's crowns. Valdemar warned his monarch about the possible consequences of his folly, with the admonition, 'be assured...she'll be revenged at full/For her dishonour; and snatch the crowns you wear/From off your treach'rous temples'.⁵⁰ The fact that he referred to the symbolic artefact of kingship in the plural suggests that Burnell was also an adherent of the Old English conception of Charles as king of Ireland apart from his role as king of England. Therefore, it appears that Burnell, Keating and Mageoghegan all shared similar

⁴⁵ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 43.

⁴⁶ Burnell, *Landgartha*, pp 56-7, 64.

⁴⁷ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 31.

⁴⁸ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 52.

⁴⁹ Kerrigan, *Archipelagic English*, p. 177.

⁵⁰ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 43.

assumptions about Ireland's status as unique kingdom, separate from the kingdom of England. Gaelic and Old English views appear to have coalesced in respect of the constitutional status of Ireland.

There is no doubting Burnell's royalism. Like Mageoghegan and Keating, he chose to structure his creative piece on monarchy. The play is centred upon the king and court, and the king's subjects, especially the heroine Landgartha and her fellow Amazonian women, are shown to display loyalty and to come to his aid against challenges to his hegemony from usurpers and the uprisings of rebels. Although Burnell had never visited England, he was obviously familiar with the theatrical activities at court where masques were performed which were often designed to legitimate and praise the kingly wisdom of the Stuart monarchy.⁵¹ Burnell's masque enacted in Act III was very complimentary to the king, bolstering his ego by predicting future prosperity and conquests for him. In this respect, Burnell's royalism revealed an affinity towards English court circles, which perhaps had not been evident in the accounts of Keating and Mageoghegan. Mixing in the milieu of Pale society and closer to Dublin, the centre of political and social communication with the seat of monarchy, perhaps accounts for this variation. Burnell's portrayal of Reyner is not, however, one of a strong king. Unlike the original Ragnar of Saxo's history who had advanced to become a conquering monarch of many countries,⁵² he created a flawed, weak and capricious king who, having betrayed his wife, having repented and begged for her forgiveness, falls into near despair, and whose only salvation from disaster depends on her decision to welcome him back unconditionally. He did, however, treat of the king's dilemma in a very human fashion designed to evince sympathy from the audience. For instance, Landgartha's kinswomen deliver heartfelt pleas to their queen to forgive her errant husband unconditionally as the play draws to a close. Overall, the tenor of *Landgartha* suggests a definite royalist creator but not one with absolutist beliefs.

⁵¹ David Bevington & Peter Holbrook (eds), *The politics of the Stuart court masque* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 36.

⁵² *Saxo Grammaticus*, pp 370-80.

In the seventeenth century, it was widely held, especially by absolutist thinkers, that a husband's power over his wife and children was natural and that God alone gave power to husbands and fathers much as a king's power over his subjects was God-given.⁵³ Nessa Malone suggests that in *Landgartha* Burnell revealed divisions in his ideology, employing figurative language and metaphors from both constitutionalist and absolutist political philosophy. She views his use of the figure of the family as a tendency towards an absolutist strand in his thinking and the broken family as representing the failure of the constitution enacted in the play.⁵⁴ However, the fact that Burnell portrayed Reyner as a weak man who failed in his duty towards his wife and child, and instead showed Landgartha to be the partner with power in the marriage, does not point to absolutism in his approach. On several occasions, his characters alluded to the possibility of Landgartha exacting revenge on her husband. The brother of Harold, Reyner's rival for the throne of Denmark, hopes for such an eventuality, 'She is a lady of so stout a heart,/That when she finds him base.../she cannot but be revenged/For her repudiation and disgrace';⁵⁵ the king's cousin, Valdemar, voiced his concern also, 'all men did conceive/(And very probably) the queen would aid/With th'utmost of her pow'r, Harold in his/Design for Denmark'⁵⁶; and, when it became apparent that she was after all marching to her husband's aid, Harold's armed commander mused, 'It's strange so stout a mind as hers, should ever/Yield love or obedience to a man that has/So basely dealt to her'.⁵⁷ Burnell further indicated that active resistance by the betrayed Landgartha had indeed been a possibility; as she reveals her decision to come to the aid of her 'unkind husband' who 'were rather to expect/Sharp war and hate than any aid from me', she adds, 'my love.../Joined to my own innocence and merit, has/(As all my see) got the upper hand, and stopped/My once intended course of strict revenge'.⁵⁸ So many references in the play to a heroine's rebellion against her husband and king, albeit one who has betrayed her, do not point to patriarchal sentiments in Burnell. It is tempting to read into his portrayal a wearing thin of Old English patience after half a century of political

⁵³ J. P. Sommerville, 'Absolutism and royalism' in J. H. Burns (ed.), *The Cambridge history of political thought, 1450-1700* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 355.

⁵⁴ Malone, 'Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family', pp 225-6.

⁵⁵ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 48.

⁵⁶ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 50.

⁵⁷ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 54.

⁵⁸ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 51.

disappointment. Reyner is the suppliant partner who begs for full restoration in the marriage and Landgartha the one who withholds her total acquiescence. In Shakespeare's plays, in line with the prevailing patriarchal culture in late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century England, women were often represented as weak and acquiescent, notably Gertrude and Ophelia in *Hamlet* and Desdemona in *Othello*; whereas in cases of strong women like Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* or Cleopatra in *Anthony and Cleopatra*, they were portrayed comparatively negatively. In contrast, the strong, autonomous and virtuous Landgartha is the heroine of the piece and there is no indication that Burnell subscribed to any great extent to the patriarchal thinking of the period. In respect of the family, Keating in his *Foras feasa* did reveal a patriarchal attitude at times; he included a story about Art, Cormac's father, interpreting a vision for his wife where she had seen a tree grow out of her neck, reporting that, 'the head of every woman is her husband';⁵⁹ and when Cormac asked Eithne to be his wife, she replied, 'It is not I who can dispose of myself...but my foster-father'.⁶⁰ These instances, of course, may have been presented in this manner in his source and were, of course, part of early-modern cultural convention as well. He did, however, betray some prejudices with regard to women; he recounted a tale about Deirdre and Naoise, one of the sons of Uisneach, where she is described as a 'wicked women' although the storyline does not bear this out;⁶¹ and he retold in great detail an account of Flaithri son of Fitheal who put to the test some words of counsel that his father gave him before he died, and thus discovered that 'the keeping of a dangerous secret is not by nature in the power of women in general; hence it is not prudent to commit such a secret to them', and also that one should not lend money to a woman for 'it belongs to the nature of women to regard as spoil whatever valuables their friends give them to keep in safety'.⁶² Mageoghegan, on the other hand, was quite admiring of women and had no hesitation in transcribing in full detail and even enlarging on flattering eulogies from the annals;⁶³ and he included some favourable accounts of strong and powerful women in his history, notably Queen Macha

⁵⁹ Geoffrey Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn: the history of Ireland*, (c. 1634), ed. and trans. P. S. Dineen & David Comyn (4 vols, London, 1902-14), ii, 299-300.

⁶⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 305-6.

⁶¹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 161-2.

⁶² Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 341-4.

⁶³ Denis Murphy (ed.), *The annals of Clonmacnoise* (Dublin, 1896, facsimile reprint, 1993), pp 247, 312; *AConn*, AD 1269.9, AD 1287.2.

and Gormphley.⁶⁴ Therefore, with regard to attitudes of patriarchy in respect of the family, Keating's attitude seems to differ from both Burnell and Mageoghegan. However, being a Counter-Reformation educated priest, he would not have had as much personal contact with women as the other two men, which probably accounted for his thinking in this respect. With regard to a patriarchal monarchy, however, as we saw, Mageoghegan did show a tendency towards an absolutist understanding of relations between the king and his loyal subjects, who remained with the king 'under the shelter of his wings',⁶⁵ whereas Keating's view on kingship displayed no inclinations towards a patriarchal absolutism. Burnell's approach more resembled Keating's in this regard and he did not adhere to an assumption of a patriarchal king; as Landgartha and her army prepare to meet with the usurper Frolo, she intimates to them that they have no great need of Reyner's assistance, 'Let then the king of Denmark fight where he list;/We will pursue no other than our worst/And strongest adversary.'⁶⁶ The amazonian characters displayed independent military agency in defence of their country rather than depending on the king's protection. The Old English traditionally over the centuries had the responsibility of mustering a number of men to re-establish and entrench themselves against native Irish ambush,⁶⁷ which may account for Burnell's influences here.

Burnell did subscribe, however, to a doctrine of hereditary right of succession in the monarchy which might suggest that he tended towards an absolutist royalism. In relation to this, his philosophy appears to coincide more with that of Mageoghegan than that of Keating. As has been shown, Mageoghegan's thinking favoured the succession of a king's familial descendants to the throne whereas Keating's emphasis was on a king being elected by the people for his good qualities. Since the arrival of James I to the throne when parliament had based his title on his 'inherent birthright' according to the 'laws of God', it was generally accepted in England that hereditary right was indefeasible; even James, doubtless for his own reasons, declared it outside his own

⁶⁴ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 39-41, 145.

⁶⁵ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 55.

⁶⁶ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 12.

⁶⁷ Clarke, *Old English in Ireland*, p. 29.

prerogative.⁶⁸ Reyner, when he arrives in Norway to oust the usurper, Frollo, refers to ‘our right, th’inheritance of this kingdom’, and his colonel Valdemar agrees, ‘Let’s march on, sir,/...to purchase what’s your birthright’.⁶⁹ Later, the pretender to the throne of Denmark, Harold, at first dismisses Reyner’s right to Denmark, saying he acquired it ‘by dint of sword; that being the best,/Nay only patent, Reyner has to show for’t’, but then qualifies this by admitting, ‘Though he from’s father got it, which doth lessen/Much his guilt’.⁷⁰ These assertions show an acceptance of an ideology of hereditary right of kings. Furthermore, Burnell’s heroine, even though denying the king conjugal rights due to his infidelity, allows, ‘Norway shall be preserved for your young son’.⁷¹ Burnell’s emphasis on the king’s birthright suggests that his thinking in this regard would seem to be in accord with that of the Stuart king which perhaps does not suggest a constitutional approach. However, this does not mean that Burnell necessarily subscribed to absolutist ideologies with regard to other issues such as rulership or parliamentary power. Such a position on hereditary right may have been the current assumption of seventeenth-century citizens regardless of whether they held absolutist or constitutionalist views. Even Sir Edward Coke (1552-1634), a common law champion of parliamentary privilege and national liberties, agreed that divine right rather than common law governed the succession to the crown, and this appears to have been an orthodoxy that prevailed in England throughout the seventeenth century.⁷² Although Burnell’s and Mageoghegan’s attitudes coincide on this issue, it is possible that their individual beliefs emanate from two separate traditions. Mageoghegan’s approach may well originate from an understanding of royal succession in Gaelic Ireland; the poet Eoghan Ruadh Mac an Bhaird had composed a poem in honour of James legitimising his kingship due to the ‘blood of a high-king’ (*fuil airdríogh*);⁷³ and when James succeeded to the throne of England, the Irish literati created an impeccable genealogy for him showing him to be

⁶⁸ Jeffrey Goldsworthy, *The sovereignty of parliament: history and philosophy* (New York, 1999), p. 91.

⁶⁹ Burnell, *Landgartha*, pp 13-14.

⁷⁰ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 49.

⁷¹ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 66.

⁷² Goldsworthy, *Sovereignty of parliament*, pp 91-2.

⁷³ Breandán Ó Buachalla, *Aisling ghéar: na Stíobhartaigh agus an t-aos léinn* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1996), pp 9-10.

descended on his mother's side from the Ulster King Fergus, the Irish king of Scotland.⁷⁴ In addition, although primogeniture was not part of Gaelic law, in practice it was often those who were strongest and wielded most power in the kinship group who usually succeeded, which often meant that sons succeeded fathers.⁷⁵ Accordingly, it is likely that Burnell accepted the widespread assumptions detailed above on royal succession existing during the Stuart era while Keating's more constitutional views on royal succession may have been influenced by his humanist education on the continent.

However, Burnell created too many instances of limited obedience on the part of Landgartha towards the suit of the king to merit the description of absolutist. In the courtship scene, as Reyner woos Landgartha, nearly all of the exchanges which would suggest an absolutist attitude are briskly followed by a qualification. For instance, Landgartha's seemingly obedient declaration, 'Your poor and humble vassal, that desires/No other recompense for her small service/Than your kingly license to remain.../to lead a solitary/Quiet life', is quickly countered, as Reyner was attempting to dissuade her from such a course, by her assertion, 'I must not be/Compelled to any state of life, sir'.⁷⁶ When conferring a compliment on the king, 'that may command.../the best/And fairest lady i'th'world', she includes the caveat, 'if pow'r and person can compel'.⁷⁷ As the courtship develops further and Reyner becomes more insistent, it begins to look as if Landgartha's submission may be total and that Burnell's intention was, after all, that his heroine represent the totally obedient subject. The king, while giving her the choice of agreeing to marry him but still making clear the extent of his powers, says; 'For though I claim you not as by desert/or duty; yet, being your prince, you owe me/Some regard'; she then, on consideration, gives her assent and finally agrees 'to return with all convenient speed/To obey Your Highness' pleasure in all points'; however, her final words in this courtship scene make clear that she herself was mistress

⁷⁴ Breandán Ó Buachalla, 'James our true king: the ideology of Irish royalism in the seventeenth century' in D. George Boyce et al (eds), *Political thought in Ireland since the seventeenth century* (London, 1993), p. 11.

⁷⁵ Mary O'Dowd, 'Gaelic economy and society' in Ciaran Brady & Raymond Gillespie (eds), *Natives and newcomers: essays on the making of Irish colonial society 1534-1641* (Dublin, 1986), p. 123.

⁷⁶ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 18.

⁷⁷ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 28.

of her decision: 'I may myself repent to be persuaded'.⁷⁸ The heroine of the play, whose dilemma may have resonated with many Old English in the audience as they began to recognise equivalences to their own experience, was not at all sure if she was right to have been persuaded by the king. Perhaps what was running through Burnell's consciousness as he wrote this comment for his heroine was how the Old English had initially been taken in by Wentworth; how he had duped them into voting subsidies to the king in the 1634 parliament on the promise of full ratification of the king's promises contained in the Graces; and how he had then withheld the most important concession concerning the security of their estates. In addition, it was not only Landgartha herself who showed signs of opposition in this scene. Her fellow Amazons had no intention of being overpowered by royal guards. While the senior member Elsinora fretted, 'if you should/Give him a flat denial, we might be/All seized on here at court, and some villainy/Committed on us, being to defend ourselves/Too few by many', a younger member countered, assuring her, 'They shall take our lives,/Ere we'll endure to be defiled', and another added, 'And with/The loss of some of theirs'.⁷⁹ These exchanges no doubt extracted merriment from the audience but such images of active resistance at court, even in comedy, and, even though artistic and hypothetical, do not sound like the creation of a playwright possessed of an absolutist ideology.

Moreover, in the final scene of the play, it becomes transparent that Burnell's royalism, like Keating's, did indeed consist of adherence to an ideology of a monarchy with limits on its powers. Landgartha agrees to take Reyner back as her husband but not into the marriage bed. The scene consists of exchanges between Landgartha and her fellow Amazons about whether she should submit fully or partially. This scene could be seen as Burnell rehearsing a debate among the Old English about how far they should proceed in parliament in their support for Charles in order to help him out of his financial difficulties as they strove to wrest his consent to full delivery of the Graces. Should they accord the crown whole-hearted support initially as they had in the parliament of 1634 or proceed with oppositional tactics as in 1615? A now-contrite Reyner beseeches Landgartha to be

⁷⁸ Burnell, *Landgartha*, pp 29-32.

⁷⁹ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 29.

reinstated in her love, to which she replies, ‘My heart shall still receive you; but on my word,/Th’rest of my body you shall not enjoy, sir.’ There is no doubting her loyalty; but she shows a certain amount of opposition. Despite solicitations from her sister on the king’s behalf, ‘we all are/Suitors for him, and will become his sureties’, she remains resolute, ‘I love him still, I do confess, because/I gave him that no other ever had/...and mercy I have shown/In my assistance. But, the wrong he did me,/As I was his wife, being irreparable,/I will in justice punish, in not paying/To him (unfaithful) the duties of a wife./For having proved the way of falsehood,/He may walk in’t again’. Her sister again intervenes, ‘We’ll all be bound, he shall no more leap o’er/The hedge; for, if he should, we that do now go/Jointly for him, would then prove worse than varlets,/To torment him’ - her sister Amazonian is confident of the king’s faithfulness but even she equivocates that they will not accept future infidelity without protest. Following a pledge from Reyner that he will not commit adultery with Vraca again, ‘She shall ne’er enjoy me, nor has not/Of a long time, I’ll swear, if that will serve’, Landgartha is adamant: ‘It shall not, sir, believe it’; but she assures him, ‘Yet, ne’er fear/You shall be armed in’t front by me’.⁸⁰ Despite her resistance to complete association, her loyalty is indisputable. It seems that Burnell portrayed the classic Old English loyalty to their monarch while registering their dissatisfaction. However, he displayed doubts about the sincerity of Charles’ promises. As Reyner again swears he will be faithful to the one whom he loves best and has ‘best right’ to him, his mistress, Vraca, (who may well represent the Protestant New English),⁸¹ scoffs derisively, ‘That you say/To flatter her, and for mere fear. But if/I had you in private, I know what you/Would sing, and play too, if I should but yield.’ Again, this comic intervention with its sexual innuendo no doubt provoked hilarity in the probably mostly male audience but Burnell may have been recording his fears about the real life king’s integrity when dealing with the Old English. Landgartha’s response to these words has an air of finality and implies that her decision is unshakeable: ‘I will ne’er have him,/That is resolved’. These words of seemingly unequivocal rejection of the wishes of a king do not resonate with a philosophy of absolutism on the part of the creator. However, Burnell then implies that Landgartha will confer with her

⁸⁰ Burnell, *Landgartha*, pp 64-5.

⁸¹ Christopher Wheatley, “*Beneath Ierne’s banners*”: *Irish Protestant drama of the Restoration and eighteenth century*, (Indiana, 1999), p. 3.

fellow Amazonian sisters about her final position, ‘I must hear more opinions ere I part/From my strong purpose; therefore, sir, adieu’. By closing the debate with these words, the implication is that the Old English have much thinking to do about their strategy in parliament. But then her parting words to Reyner and her final lines in the play suggest that she will not be moved but they do make clear her loyalty, ‘And as for me (though yours) I’ll end my life/An honest widow, or forsaken wife’.⁸² It might appear that Burnell intended that to be her final position; that Landgartha was immovable in her qualified support for her king, loyal but not unequivocally supportive, but Burnell pursued this prevarication. He gave the final Amazonian position to Scania who seems to leave the door open for a total reconciliation; advising Reyner to follow Landgartha back to Norway, she says, ‘I believe what now she does deny/She would then grant.../For this perchance she does to tempt and try you./Nay I am sure she does, and that she will be/Yours again, if you persever in your love to her’.⁸³ Thus the last word from the Old English element, in the text of play, itself is hopeful; Scania assures the king that if he perseveres in his love, she will unequivocally submit. Here we see Burnell’s hope for the king’s willingness to assist the Old English by granting what they desire during the coming parliament. A year later, however, as Burnell wrote his afterword, the situation had not been resolved. He was still adamant about the inconclusive ending to his play:

Some...were offended at the conclusion of this play, in regard Landgartha took not then, what she was persuaded to by so many, the king’s kind night-embraces. To which kind of people (that know not what they say) I answer (omitting all other reasons) that a tragicomedy should neither end comically or tragically, but betwixt both...To the rest of babblers, I despise any answer.⁸⁴

His qualification, ‘omitting all other reasons’, no doubt refers to political concerns and implies his underlying meaning. His afterword may have been written before news reached Dublin that Charles in April 1641 had agreed to redress most of the grievances presented by Irish commons committee in England. In any case, despite Charles’ concessions (the effects of which were to be overtaken anyway by events in October), there had been by this stage in April an erosion of confidence in Ireland in his ability to

⁸² Burnell, *Landgartha*, pp 65-6.

⁸³ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 67.

⁸⁴ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 68.

deliver them.⁸⁵ Burnell, therefore, was most probably registering Old English dissatisfaction with the progress of their efforts to assure their possessions and their future political and social positions, and parliamentary opposition was to reinvigorate its efforts throughout 1641. Therefore, a year after the play was performed, the position of Landgartha remained unchanged and Burnell remained unapologetic regarding her opposition.

Furthermore, in the ultimate speech of the play, Burnell had strongly inferred what both the dramatic and the real life tragic elements of the play were, as he struck a very pessimistic note with Reyner's final, self-accusing soliloquy, which overtook somewhat the positive note that had been sounded by Scania:

Accursed fate of man, of foolish man,/That cannot prize a jewel while he has it,/Till it be lost, and then his grief is vain,/Vain and unprofitable, when no hope/Is left to find it, which I fear's my case;/Our misery the mirror's made, by which/We only see our faults, our dangerous wounds,/Which likely then can never be recured,/Being gangrene filthy sores, that do corrode/So far into the very soul of man/That they hale to sad desperation./To which point I'm almost arrived, the gem/I lost, being so rich, as all earth's potentates/A richer could not boast. Which if I find not/(Struck with my dire misfortune) my own hand/ Shall send my spirit to the Stygian strand.⁸⁶

While Reyner has not totally succumbed to desperation, the mood is bleak and gloomy. His soliloquy contains all the elements of a conventional tragedy. The king is very pessimistic about the outcome; his hope is very faint that he will regain his 'gem' and if he cannot, he will commit suicide. He has been granted a partial reconciliation with Landgartha but only a full resolution of his dilemma will avert a full tragedy. Burnell's composition here looks very like transference of thought from artistic creation to political reality and the analogy is clear. He was not at all confident that relations between Charles and the Old English would run smoothly; that their support for him in parliament would result in the king showing his gratitude by yielding to their demands through his prerogative; the security of their estates and their political participation in public life were dependent on Charles' decision in their favour. The tragedy in the play was Reyner's fatalistic expectation of the failure of a resolution to his problem. The real life tragedy

⁸⁵ M. Perceval-Maxwell, *The Outbreak of the Irish rebellion of 1641* (Dublin, 1994), p. 141.

⁸⁶ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 67.

for Burnell was his pessimistic anxiety for the prospects of success for the Old English during parliament. As we saw, Mageoghegan, writing before the failure to ratify the Graces in a parliament to be called in 1628, displayed an optimistic and enthusiastic attitude towards kingship; Keating, writing perhaps before it became clear that neither would the 1634 parliament deliver on Charles' promises, was also thoroughly positive about kingship. Burnell, writing at this stage in 1640, after almost a decade of further disappointment, was not so sanguine about the political outlook and was probably registering Old English desperation and fear that another rejection was forthcoming from the king.

There is no doubting Burnell's sense of loyalty but the countless instances he created of resistance to the will of the king are strongly suggestive of a belief in the philosophy that monarchy should have limits on its powers rather than one with absolute power. Burnell's ideology regarding the power of a king seems to be more in line that that of Keating than of Mageoghegan. As we have seen, Mageoghegan's kings had sovereign power and tolerated no resistance whereas the power of Keating's kings was limited in certain circumstances and those who broke the law would have to forgo sovereignty.

Parliament & government

We have seen that Keating was very definite about the desirability of a strong parliament being the locus for making laws, and about the nobility having an input with their advice into decision making, and that Mageoghegan, on the other hand, regarded the king as acting independently and as law-maker. Although there is no specific reference in *Landgartha* to parliament, Reyner stated explicitly that law-making was in the domain of the Norwegians themselves. When the usurper Frolo had been expelled from Norway, thanks largely to the efforts of Landgartha and her kinswomen, the Norwegian ladies, Reyner asserts, 'You shall be the lawmakers to yourselves,/For those by whom we reign shall be our guides'. Reyner was making it clear that he welcomed direction from the native gentry on running the affairs of their country and that he would allow a functioning legislature. Such a position was one cherished by constitutionalists everywhere in the seventeenth century. Burnell's sentiment here must have been echoed

ferverly in the hearts of the Old English in the audience. Their spirits would have been lifted further with Reyner's ensuing invitation, 'Come ladies, we'll to counsel to conclude/Concerning what we have (by you) subdued',⁸⁷ a comment that seems to confirm Burnell's aspiration to a collaborative role for the country's elite in government, which resonates more with the attitude of Keating attitude than that of Mageoghegan.

At several junctures in the play, Burnell shows Reyner being offered advice from his subordinates especially his colonel and trusted cousin Valdemar. Of course, even absolutist kings like James I and Charles I were no doubt offered counsel from those closest to them but Burnell went further by not only causing his characters to offer guidance to the king but also by having them criticise him strongly when he refused to listen to them. Valdemar informs the king that his subjects are amazed at his decision to go back to Denmark and that they suspect his motives are more than just putting down a rebellion: 'Your resolution to be gone for Denmark/men do admire...some do fear your projects are/Ignoble. I...would be your adviser, if you dare take advice'. When Reyner reprimands him with 'Y'are too saucy, and what I have resolved on/I will not alter. Must we be curbed by you/In tendering the welfare of our subjects?', Valdemar continues to show his disapproval, 'That color/Dyes but very poorly, though you stalk with it.../But we that are your countrymen/(Whom you mainly dishonor in't) can have/No such patience'; and he persists further, 'You cannot, sir,/Nay shall not, mask your black intentions/So from me, they do appear too many'. Even Hubba, the king's Danish captain who was lower down the social scale, protests that the king had brought them to Norway to gain that kingdom for him and, 'now you have it,/You'll wisely gi't away and fetch 'em all/Upon our backs'. Reyner rewarded that comment with a box, saying, 'Who made you a councilor?/There's your reward',⁸⁸ but Burnell's inference is that Hubba was too inferior socially to offer advice and not that there was anything amiss with the concept itself. These, along with other examples of his noble aides offering him advice,⁸⁹ suggest that Burnell was an adherent of the practice of the gentry having a consultative role with their monarch. Mageoghegan had favoured the gentry having an advisory role

⁸⁷ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 19.

⁸⁸ Burnell, *Landgartha*, pp 42-4.

⁸⁹ Burnell, *Landgartha*, pp 55-7.

but, in this respect, Burnell more closely resembles Keating for whom collaboration with the nobility had been a *sine qua non*.

We have seen how Keating emphasised his abhorrence of tyranny; ‘a tyrant is one who governs and rules according to might and not according to right’.⁹⁰ Burnell also made clear his dislike for tyrannical rule. In the very first lines of the play, Frolo is described as ‘the bloody usurper’, and shortly after, Landgartha, in motivating her followers to march against him, tells them that they are following the example of the virtuous female gods *Pallas* and *Phoebe* and, therefore, ‘Do now expose ourselves to death, and what/A cruel, vicious revengeful tyrant/May inflict on us, if vanquished’.⁹¹ When flying to Reyner’s aid later to help him oust the rebellious Harold, she informs Reyner that she hopes, ‘this, my second duty, may prove as happy in the recovery of thy kingdoms as my first was against a tyrant’.⁹² This condemnation of autocratic rule from the mouth of his heroine is an indication that Burnell shared Keating’s opinions regarding tyranny. Mageoghegan had condemned the tyranny committed by the Danes in line with the prevailing contemporary general opinion of the ‘heathen’ invaders, and also of the celebrated figures of Diarmuid Mac Murrough and Edward Bruce, as they had been likewise regarded in the annals. However, on another occasion, Mageoghegan just reported without embellishment that an earlier more obscure king, Giallcha, ‘tooke hostage of every of the chiefs of the 5 provinces, and that ‘he raigned tyrannically 9 years.’⁹³ The acceptance of this king’s tyranny without any interpolated condemnation here suggests that Mageoghegan, even though he doubtless abhorred tyranny, did not give the concept much thought.

Mageoghegan, as we have seen, in showing unreserved admiration for the ‘wise’ and ‘mild’ reign of Cormac mac Airt, did aspire to just and peaceful rule. For Keating, however, it was more than just an aspiration; as we saw, he set out unequivocally his criteria for ideal kingship which should be conducted with justice and equity. Burnell

⁹⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 265-6.

⁹¹ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 12.

⁹² Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 57.

⁹³ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 36.

was also a definite adherent of a king ruling with fairness and mercy. He had Reyner observe the conventions of a just conqueror having routed the fleeing forces of Frolo: ‘Pursue the flying foe,/but most with mercy,/Not devoid of circumspection/...Save all that yield, whom we do mean to send/Home ransomless, to see if that benefit/May work a peace betwixt us’.⁹⁴ These sentiments are strikingly similar to Keating’s ideology regarding a just conquest; defending the Norman conquest in the twelfth century, he asserted, ‘indeed, he who makes a Christian conquest thinks it sufficient to obtain submission and fidelity from the people who have been subdued by him’.⁹⁵ In respect of the Norman conquest, as we have seen, Mageoghegan just reported on the occurrence without elaboration. Furthermore, in respect of just rule, the lines Burnell wrote for Landgartha’s final speech are openly didactic:

Be merciful in chief unto your subjects,
 To allure their hearts by love, that being the tie
 That will hold strongest, never can be broken,
 Unless by fools, or madmen. For that party
 That should tend any mischief ‘gainst a good prince,
 Were first to kill all his subjects, being the king’s friends;
 Or perish himself, by his fatal and bad
 Purpose. Be just and virtuous, and you need not
 Fear poison, poniards, or conspiracy.⁹⁶

Again, we see Burnell’s aspiration to a loving, good and just monarch. Burnell’s criteria for ideal kingship are remarkably like those of Keating who had stressed how ‘God and the people would reward the doing of good’, and that kings ‘are bound to be free from unevenness or roughness in dealing justice and equity to all, to friend and enemy’.⁹⁷ The audience no doubt could see the allegory; a plea to Charles from the Old English to treat them with love and justice with, however, the speech also containing a warning of the consequences of the king being unjust and dishonourable to his subjects.

Accordingly, while we see in this passage a total repudiation of any armed rebellion against a king who rules with justice and integrity, Burnell’s cautionary allusion to those with ‘bad purpose’ and to ‘poison, poniards, or conspiracy’ warrants investigation. It is

⁹⁴ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 19.

⁹⁵ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 37-8.

⁹⁶ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 66.

⁹⁷ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 11-14.

interesting to speculate on what ‘party’ may have been at the back of Burnell’s mind that would ‘tend any mischief ‘gainst a good prince’. He could have been thinking of New English intruders many of whom occupied offices of authority once held by the Old English and whom the Old English considered socially unsuitable to hold such positions. Burnell created two comic Norwegian characters whom the audience might well have interpreted as New English settlers. Cowsell and Radger, were ‘a pair of coxcombs,/So individual by the littleness/Of their understandings, they cannot be parted’; and Burnell treated the audience to a scene which ridiculed their undignified habits of overeating, excessive drinking and womanizing.⁹⁸ He could equally have been thinking of the parliamentarians in England who were extremely hostile to the absolutist and religious tendencies of Charles I. Alternatively, he may have been thinking of the Scots Puritan settlers in Ulster; since the outbreak of the Bishops’ Wars in Scotland in 1638, many of them looked to Edinburgh and Glasgow for political and religious leadership and from Wentworth’s perspective represented a threat to national security. He labeled them political subversives and forced them to take an oath of loyalty - the ‘black oath’ - to the king.⁹⁹ Perhaps he was alluding to the Old English amongst whom there was also enormous resentment at Wentworth’s autocratic rule that had resulted in consolidating discrimination against them and eroding their positions in society. His land policies had threatened their very livelihoods and they were intending to redress the damage he had caused them as best they could in this parliament. However, the majority of the Old English had been traditionally loyal and had not widely participated in armed rebellion. Therefore, it is possible Burnell was referring mainly to the Gaelic Irish who, up until the relatively recent past, had been accustomed to taking up arms against the crown. Since the beginning of the seventeenth century, they had been affected more than anyone else by plantation, especially in Ulster. There was a general downturn in the economy in the 1630s and the economic problems of Ulster natives caused some to have to sell their land with the result that a new inferior class of settler took up residence in Ulster, whom the

⁹⁸ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 33.

⁹⁹ Jane Ohlmeyer, ‘Driving a wedge within Gaeldom: Ireland & Scotland in the seventeenth century’, in *History Ireland*, vii, no. 3 (1999), p. 30.

status-conscious native Irish resented.¹⁰⁰ Burnell could well have been cognizant of rumours of discontent and threats of unrest due to poverty and adverse social conditions festering in Ulster. His cousin, Michael Burnell, an MP in the present parliament and a future confederate captain, came from Drogheda in the environs of Ulster. Burnell himself was to join the ‘new army’ for which Wentworth was making plans during the winter of 1639 and which was to assemble in Carrickfergus in July 1640 and may have informed himself about the state of affairs in the country. Therefore, Burnell could have been commenting on the dangers facing Charles from a beleaguered native population and, as we shall see, his treatment of the play’s native Irish character attests to this opinion to a certain extent. However, it is obvious from the passage that his own view was unequivocally non-confrontational and he may have been sending out a plea for moderation in response to any murmurings of discontent and unrest that may have been abroad even at this early stage in early 1640. As we have seen, Keating inferred that the native Irish were a fighting people; criticizing John Davies for finding fault with some of the customs enshrined in the native Irish legal system, he explained that ‘those customs were not sanctioned in the law of the land until the Irish had entered upon war and conflict between every two of their territories, so that they were usually slaying, harrying, and plundering each other’.¹⁰¹ It seems that Burnell, like Keating, regarded belligerence and potential for aggression as being Gaelic Irish characteristics.

Culture

There are some obvious differences in cultural orientations between Burnell and Mageoghegan and Keating. Burnell was more in tune with the cultural milieu that prevailed in England than either of the other two writers. First of all, his choice of story on which to base his play was drawn from the ancient lore and history of Denmark as chronicled by Saxo Grammaticus, from which Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* was also drawn;¹⁰² and for his masque, he borrowed from the classical legends of Greek and Roman

¹⁰⁰ Raymond Gillespie, ‘The end of an era: Ulster and the outbreak of the 1641 rising’ in Ciaran Brady & Raymond Gillespie (eds), *Natives and newcomers: essays on the making of Irish colonial society, 1534-1641* (Dublin, 1986), pp 198-9.

¹⁰¹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 67-8.

¹⁰² Deana Rankin, *Between Spenser and Swift: English writing in seventeenth-century Ireland* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 105, 95n.

mythology. The inclinations of Mageoghegan and Keating (although both obviously familiar with the classics, albeit the former on a more superficial level than the latter) were attracted towards the tales of Irish legends and Irish history as found in ancient Irish manuscripts. Burnell was immersed in the culture of the playwrights of sixteenth and seventeenth-century England like Shakespeare or Ben Jonson. Indeed, Burnell's cousin, who wrote a commendatory verse to him, likened him to Jonson and assured him that 'in some things thou dost pass him'.¹⁰³ Furthermore, as mentioned already, masques were the fashion at the English court in this period and Burnell obviously identified with and was comfortable in positioning himself in this genre. In addition, with regard to language which is a fundamental element of every culture, there is no word of the Irish language at all to be found in *Landgartha*, indicating that Burnell was not proficient enough in writing or perhaps not inclined towards it. Furthermore, although there are some prominent allusions to the Gaelic Irish in the play, they refer to the present-day Old Irish population rather than to ancient Irish culture which had appealed to both Keating and Mageoghegan.

The native Irish element in the play is found in the character of Marfisa. Burnell's presentation of Marfisa reveals his interpretation of the differences between the native Irish and Old English communities. Marfisa is introduced as 'lusty' and a 'virago' and her costume is described as '*an Irish gown tucked up to midleg, with a broad basket-hilt sword on, hanging in a great belt, brogues on her feet, her hair dishevelled, and a pair of long-necked, big-rowelled spurs on her heels*'.¹⁰⁴ Landgartha and her cohort whom the audience were to associate with the Old English are described as '*ladies...all attired like Amazons, with battle-axes in their hands, and swords on*'.¹⁰⁵ Burnell also indulged in stereotyping as he presented Marfisa in the same fashion as the native Irish were portrayed on the English stage in the early-modern era; as Hubba enquires of her, 'Y'are cousin-german to th'Lady Fatyma?', she replies in Irish idiom, 'Herself dare not deny it, sir'.¹⁰⁶ By the 1640s, when theatres were closed in England under the Puritan ban, the

¹⁰³ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 6.

¹⁰⁴ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁵ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁶ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 35.

rudimentary image of the stage-Irishman had been formed; he spoke a broken but colourful brand of English and was often a figure of fun on the London stage.¹⁰⁷ Burnell was not averse to presenting the Gaelic Irish in this way. A note of condescension can also be seen in Burnell's attitudes towards the native Irish when his character Frederick, the Norwegian nobleman, uses the metonym 'cheese and butter' for Marfisa.¹⁰⁸ As was shown, Keating had betrayed a hint of superiority in his approach to the Old Irish but, in Burnell's portrayal of the Gaelic Irish character, there is more than just a hint - rather definite signs of condescension on his part.

Significantly, however, Burnell created the character of Marfisa as an important element in the play. Her character is the only one to be given specific and repeated directions as to her costume. Therefore, he clearly wanted his audience and readership to give particular attention to her and they probably understood his underlying message. She is portrayed as potentially being not quite as loyal towards the king as the others. If any rebellion were to transpire against Charles I, perhaps Burnell was setting down a marker that it would be from the native Irish population that it would emanate. As Marfisa and Hubba discuss Reyner's inconstancy, she declares, 'He had need be circumspect in what he does;/Or he may soon repent it, and perchance,/When matters prove past remedy to him.'¹⁰⁹ When Scania asks her what she would do should her sweetheart Hubba be unfaithful to her, she informs her, 'Not do as the queen did, forgive the offense' and at Fatyma's suggestion that 'No less than's life would satisfy your anger', Marfisa assures her, 'Do you make doubt on't?'¹¹⁰ The native Irish figure is shown to display much less finesse with her blunt approach towards opposition than the other amazonian characters.

Burnell did, however, include an instance of traditional Irish culture. Landgartha announces, 'I long to see Marfisa dance' and Reyner shows his appreciation - 'this was excellent' - as Marfisa and Hubba dance 'the Whip of Dunboyne'.¹¹¹ As Dunboyne lay in the vicinity of Burnell's parental home of Castleknock, he may have been familiar

¹⁰⁷ Declan Kiberd, *The Irish writer and the world* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 21.

¹⁰⁸ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁹ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 47.

¹¹⁰ Burnell, *Landgartha*, pp 53-4.

¹¹¹ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 41.

with this Irish jig indicating that he had a fondness for Irish dance. Significantly, too, Burnell obviously had no problem with the proposed marriage of the Danish/English Hubba and the native Irish Marfisa; therefore, any residual opposition which may have lingered among Pale residents to intermarriage with the native Irish as suggested in the earlier writings of Richard Stanihurst in the previous century¹¹² did not hold true for Burnell. His grandmother, of course, had been of the O'Reilly family. Furthermore, an exchange between Landgartha and Marfisa suggests that Burnell approved of solidarity between the Old English and the Old Irish. As Landgartha makes final arrangements for her army to sail to her husband's aid, she turns to Marfisa, 'And now, Marfisa./Silence declares with you, how gladly your heart/Consents to go for Denmark', to which Marfisa replies, 'I mean to do/Your Majesty some service there, now that/You measure my affection by your own'.¹¹³ These kind words exchanged between them is another indication of the closer relationship that was developing at this stage in 1640 between the Old English and the Old Irish.

Hierarchy and Social Order

Burnell displayed the same sense of hierarchy and anxiety to maintain the social order as did Mageoghegan and Keating. One of his characters asserted, 'All ought to live according their vocation./And not preposterously prove aliens to it'.¹¹⁴ These sentiments resonate strongly with Keating's intimated disapproval of one who 'aspires ambitiously to a rank which it is beyond his power to attain'.¹¹⁵ We have already seen how Burnell relegated the native Irish character Marfisa to a lower echelon on the social scale. However, to justify her presence at court at all, Burnell ensured that she was at least 'cousin-german' to Fatyma, who herself was cousin to the noble Landgartha. Even so, Marfisa and Hubba, having performed the 'Whip of Dunboyne', were not sufficiently socially important to participate in the 'grand dance' enjoyed by the king and queen and the other noble amazons. Burnell revealed further his assumptions of seventeenth-century ideas regarding the social order: the king, at the height of his passion for

¹¹² *supra*, p. 116.

¹¹³ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 53.

¹¹⁴ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 66.

¹¹⁵ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 203-5.

Landgartha, realising that he cannot have her as his concubine, concludes, ‘For, being nobly born,/(though she no fit match be for us, in lieu/Of worldly substance, being in herself/An ample dowry for a richer prince)/We should (and gladly) sue to be her husband’.¹¹⁶ Conversely, later, when he has tired of her, he upbraids himself, ‘A poor gentlewoman, an ordinary/Nobleman’s daughter, to have catched me thus,/Whom Caesar would rejoice to have made his son’.¹¹⁷ As we have seen Mageoghegan was also extremely conscious of social status; he lamented that some of the O’Kelly’s were ‘Turned to be mere churles’ and that some of his own kin were now ‘the meanest of their owen name’.¹¹⁸ He also frequently referred to the ‘meaner sort’, where in those instances the annals used the terms ‘people’, ‘multitude’, ‘men’, or ‘men of Ireland’.¹¹⁹ Those like Mageoghegan, the grandson of a chieftain, at the higher levels of Gaelic Irish society were acutely conscious of their social status.¹²⁰ As was also shown, Mageoghegan and Keating both disliked any disruption to the social order and Burnell showed his apprehension too with regard to any interference in the socially-accepted order of things. Landgartha, in the face of the king’s determined wooing, advises caution:

But yet, gracious sir,/I (that am mean and poor to be your consort,
And that things of this kind are oft repented)
Do now beseech you to decline a while
The vehemency of your fleet desires,
And take full time to think on what you do...
For know, sir, the honor/You now afford me, compared to th’infamy
That would redound to both of us, and to others...if aught
Should chance amiss...would but heighten your disgrace.¹²¹

Reyner’s subsequent infidelity bears out Landgartha’s fears and the lesson contained in the play in this respect seemed obvious: unlike the real king Ragnar of his exemplar who had advanced to become a successful conqueror, Burnell’s king’s meddling with the social order produced negative consequences; it brought grief down upon himself and

¹¹⁶ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 20.

¹¹⁷ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 42.

¹¹⁸ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 125, 304.

¹¹⁹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 186, 235; *AU* AD 1095.8; *LCé* AD 1095.4; *ARÉ* AD 1095.3; *LCé* AD 1236.15; *AConn* AD 1236.1.

¹²⁰ Raymond Gillespie, ‘Negotiating order in early seventeenth-century Ireland’ in Michael J. Braddick & John Walter (eds), *Negotiating power in early-modern society: order, hierarchy and subordination in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 196.

¹²¹ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 30.

threatened the kingdoms of Norway and Denmark with instability and uncertainty. It is clear that Burnell, in common with the other two writers frowned on any disturbance in the social order.

Burnell's creation, Landgartha, is the character that the audience and readership would have above all mentally associated with the Old English and the playwright has used all the superlatives to emphasise her qualities of decency and honour. She is the epitome of morality and integrity and her virtues are extolled throughout the play. She is described variously as being 'divinely fair' and a 'brave maid', and as having 'incomparable virtues' and 'honourable obligation'. We are told that 'in her mind/The noblest virtues keep their residence' and that 'she squares all her/Actions by the rule of goodness'.¹²² By association, Burnell was clearly equating honourable conduct with the Old English. In the seventeenth century, the concept of honour was a core organising principle of all aspects of society; it was a cultural value that the Old English and the elite in general assumed to be an essential attribute of those in the higher strata of society.¹²³ All three writers esteemed 'honour' in the hierarchical sense of status and reputation. We have seen how Mageoghegan and Keating both held those in the top echelon of society in such high esteem. However, honour did not just relate to status and reputation. There was a dual aspect to honour; it was also understood to encompass virtue and worth.¹²⁴ In other words, it was expected that the gentry would behave in an honourable fashion. Indeed, so important was honourable conduct to the nobility and elite, that Sir Thomas Wentworth went to extraordinary lengths to pursue his enemies through Star Chamber in order to defend his reputation against rumours of dastardly behaviour. Failure to vindicate his character might well have endangered not only his personal honour but his estate, life and fortune as well.¹²⁵ In his preface, Keating took issue with the New English writers who took no notice of 'the virtues or good qualities of the nobles among the old foreigners and

¹²² Burnell, *Landgartha*, pp 20, 54.

¹²³ Raymond Gillespie, *Seventeenth-century Ireland: making Ireland modern* (Dublin, 2006), pp 89-90.

¹²⁴ Kane, *Politics and culture of honour*, pp 14-15.

¹²⁵ Brendan Kane, 'Scandal, Wentworth's deputyship and the breakdown of Stuart honour politics' in Brian Mac Cuarta (ed.), *Reshaping Ireland: colonization and its consequences, 1550-1700* (Dublin, 2011), pp 147-62.

the native Irish' and then went on to elaborate on their many good deeds.¹²⁶ Mageoghegan showed that he admired the quality in royalty: he did report that Queen Macha 'took upon her the Governm[en]t as Queen & behaved herselfe very honorably', and that Tuathal Teachtmhar had been 'brought up in all princely qualities'.¹²⁷ In this respect, Burnell made clear his sense of values, and his approach is consonant with both of the others; when motivating her army to march in battle against the tyrant Frollo, Landgartha tells them that they, 'in defence/Of that all should hold dearest, our honours, ladies,/Do now expose ourselves to death.'¹²⁸ Burnell reaffirmed these views by, contrastingly, causing his villain and tyrant of the piece, Frollo, to denounce such values: 'honour by war, riches, and our pleasure/ Shall be the altars and the gods we'll bow to'.¹²⁹ Furthermore, by then having his heroine counteract such unworthy ideas as those articulated by Frollo, Burnell may have been referring to the importance of the Old English cause; as she cited examples of the deeds of the noblest of the female gods, she averred, 'Yet, this we may say,/That our chaste glories shall pass theirs, as far/As th'worth of our intentions doth exceed/The cause they undertook.'¹³⁰ The struggle for survival and success by the virtuous Amazons against the injustice of the usurping tyrant could be associated with the desperate attempts of the Old English to counter the increasingly grasping intrusions of the new colonists with the backing of hostile crown authorities. Landgartha's later contemptuous dismissal of Vraca's offer to relinquish her claim to Reyner has a definite contemporary resonance in this respect: 'Your claim is nothing, and your/Possession is but mere intrusion/On what's another's due'.¹³¹ The Old English in the audience can hardly have missed the significance of this barbed reply by the conjectural Catholic character regarding intrusions by the New English character on what is hers by right. Correspondingly, Keating resented the writings on Ireland by the 'new foreigners', regarding them as intruders, and he took the opportunity in his preface to dismiss their accounts which he said were founded on ignorance and lies. Of the late sixteenth-century settler and poet, Spenser, he said, 'I am surprised how Spenser ventured

¹²⁶ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 5-6.

¹²⁷ Murphy, *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 39, 50.

¹²⁸ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 11.

¹²⁹ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 15.

¹³⁰ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 12.

¹³¹ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 65.

to meddle in these matters, of which he was ignorant, unless that, on the score of being a poet, he allowed himself license of invention'; and of the crown official, Fynes Morrison, he said, 'I discard the witness of Fynes Moryson who wrote jeeringly on Ireland; for, though his pen was skilful for writing in English, I do not think that he intended by the power of the pen to disclose the truth, and so I do not consider that it is worth (while) giving him an answer...[and] I think it is not allowable he should have the repute of an historian'. Keating did not think that these New English figures had behaved as honourable historians should, having 'abandoned the rule most necessary for an historian' which, 'according to Polydorus...[is] *That he should not dare to assert anything false*'.¹³² Mageoghegan, even in his preface, did not interpolate any allusions to the present day New English; instead, in his preface, as we saw, he criticised the Old Irish for their neglect of old books and for putting their children to learn English rather than hold on to their Irish language. As also noted, Mageoghegan may have been registering his unease at social climbing on the part of the Irish. As Kane points out in his discussion on honour within the Gaelic Irish community, native opportunists, no less than the New English interlopers, were considered enemies to honour, nobility and hierarchy by Irish contemporaries.¹³³

The idea of commonwealth was adopted by a wide range of people in early seventeenth-century Ireland because of its ability to help to maintain the social order,¹³⁴ and it is clear that Burnell valued the concept and that it was deeply embedded in his consciousness. Despite the many instances that he created of exaltation of the virtuous Amazonian ladies, and the many illustrations of the king being amenable to their wishes, he made it clear that the business of the commonwealth took precedence over the affairs of the heart. A courtship song directed at Landgartha celebrates the power of love that 'commands' kings and statesmen and 'doth spring/In them strange thoughts; in both much care/(Beside th'affairs o'th'commonwealth)To crouch and to obey'.¹³⁵ His heroine's understanding of her role as a subject shows that Burnell also adhered to the notion of the

¹³² Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 31-2, 55-8.

¹³³ Kane, *Politics and culture of honour*, p. 148.

¹³⁴ Gillespie, 'Negotiating order in seventeenth-century Ireland', p. 197.

¹³⁵ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 28.

subject's reciprocal responsibility in a commonwealth: Landgartha, as she finally concedes to marry the king, says, 'Now therefore, sir, your affection (grounded/In way of honor, without taint of baseness).../I cannot (nor will my heart permit it) but/In way of gratefulness, reciprocally/Requite with love again, as duty binds'.¹³⁶ Both Keating and Mageoghegan also showed their consciousness of the concept of commonwealth. Mageoghegan, as we saw, couched an account of the second-century king Felim Reachtmhar providing protection to the Leinstermen in seventeenth-century commonwealth language: the Leinster king 'was constrained to have Recourse to the K. of Irelands Court, and there submissively to crave his ayd...humbly beeseeking the K. (whose loyall subjects they did acknowledg to bee)...being in his Royallty bound for their Defence because he was their naturall leidge...and they his Dutifull subjects, wherefore they pitifully Craved his assistance'.¹³⁷ In the same vein, Keating asserted that 'as the wise scholar loves and obeys and is grateful to his master, in the same way subjects are bound to their kings, for it is with the wand of equity and justice he directs his subjects, and not with the edge of the weapon of injustice.'¹³⁸ However, there is a nuanced difference between Keating and Burnell's presentation of the concept involving the mutual love between the king and subject as against Mageoghegan's interpretation of submission and protection. The humanist approach of the Old English writers, focusing on honour, love and justice, contrasts with the more feudal scene depicted by the Gaelic Irish man.

The ideology of commonwealth also incorporated the idea of the 'public good'. Sir Thomas More's celebrated work *Utopia* (1516) had spelt out the criteria for proper government directed towards human betterment and general welfare and service in the public interest.¹³⁹ Burnell's repeated references to the 'public good' suggest that for him the concept was a deeply-held conviction and not just mere rhetoric. The common good was a widely-held aspiration in the seventeenth century. Absolutists held that, although a king could not be compelled to do so, he had a duty to rule in the common interest, their

¹³⁶ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 30.

¹³⁷ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 55.

¹³⁸ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 11-14.

¹³⁹ Brendan Bradshaw, 'Transalpine humanism' in Burns (ed.), *Cambridge history of political thought*, pp 116-7.

reasoning being that, if the king did not possess absolute power, the state would fall into anarchy and that would not be in the public interest.¹⁴⁰ Neither did non-absolutists want anarchy; for instance, in the previous century, the English humanist, Thomas Starkey (c.1499-1538) saw the public good as a mechanism for the maintenance of peace, avoidance of discord and promotion of concord and unity.¹⁴¹ Burnell obviously shared such concerns. As Reyner shows signs of malaise due to lovesickness and to Landgartha's vow to remain celibate, Inguar is apprehensive, 'His sickness may in time prove dangerous,/If some fit remedy be not applied'.¹⁴² Keating showed plainly that he also was conscious of the association of the public good with peace and prosperity. He quoted a poem to support a tale he told of Eoghan, who, hearing from a druid of an imminent famine, made provision for the scarcity by storing meat and corn in his granaries for the men of Ireland to support them in the time of distress: 'More plenteously the food of adventurous Eoghan/Was being distributed according to laws of peace.../So that men eat...Throughout distressful Erin'.¹⁴³ With regard to Mageoghegan, however, the concept of the public good did not make an appearance in his history to any great extent. This may be explained by the fact that Gaelic Ireland had traditionally been fragmented into lordships rather than being a single political unit. However, on one occasion, in connection with the killing of Edward Bruce at AD 1318, Mageoghegan did alter the terminology of the sources in this context of the public good; where the annals were agreed that this deed was good 'for the men of Ireland', Mageoghegan's version read, 'there was not a better deed, that redounded better or more for the good of the kingdome.'¹⁴⁴ Mageoghegan's wording suggests that the concept of the public good was developing in the outlook of the native Irish and signals also that Gaelic Irish thinking now encompassed a national sphere.

However, aside from the issue of social order, the public interest was interpreted differently by people with opposing ideologies. Anti-absolutists who believed that royal authority was founded upon an original grant from the people drew on the concept of the

¹⁴⁰ J. P. Sommerville, *Politics and ideology in England 1603-1640* (Harlow, 1986), p. 69.

¹⁴¹ Howell A. Lloyd, 'Constitutionalism' in Burns (ed.), *Cambridge history of political thought*, p. 264.

¹⁴² Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 19.

¹⁴³ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 265-8.

¹⁴⁴ Murphy, *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 281-2.

public good to show that the power of a king was limited and that he could, in certain circumstances, be resisted.¹⁴⁵ On balance, it looks like Burnell falls into this anti-absolutist category with regard to the public good. It is clear that he was an advocate of the common weal being preserved in the interests of both people and king. When Landgartha, unaware of the cause of Reyner's affliction, arrives in court, she states, 'Our duty charged us, sir, to obey your summons;/Yet, our affection to your grace's welfare,/And to that depends of it (the general good/Of the republic) were the chief motives/To our journey'.¹⁴⁶ Burnell's usage of the term 'republic' – *respublica* having long been a term cherished by humanists¹⁴⁷ – suggests his primary focus includes the good of the people. Burnell reaffirmed his constitutionalist understanding of the common weal with a further offering, this time by Valdemar; after Reyner had strayed with Vraca but was now repentant and overcome with emotion at the prospect of seeing Landgartha again, Valdemar admonishes him, 'Pray, recall your wits/Before she comes, you may lose all: yourself and *us*'.¹⁴⁸ As seen, Keating was also conscious of the concept of commonwealth; he extolled the fact that it was 'those who were most zealous for the aggrandisement of the public weal' who were elected to be king.¹⁴⁹ Instances of the public interest in the context of limiting the power of a king are not apparent in the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*.

Burnell, however, also clearly believed that individual good was subordinate to the corporate good. After victory for Reyner over Frollo, the amazonian Scania is sanguine about the outcome: 'For us, we shall hereafter (we doubt not)/Partake the fruits of your most royal bounty./Which we shall beg more for the general/Good, than our particular interests, sir'.¹⁵⁰ The theory that the king should rule in the public interest derived from natural law and it was generally accepted by absolutists and anti-absolutists alike that natural law dictated that the interests of the individual were subordinate to the public interest. However, this could be interpreted differently; for instance, absolutists believed

¹⁴⁵ Sommerville, *Politics and ideology in England*, p. 69.

¹⁴⁶ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 27.

¹⁴⁷ Bradshaw, 'Transalpine humanism', p. 104.

¹⁴⁸ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 57 (my italics).

¹⁴⁹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 11-12.

¹⁵⁰ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 19.

that if public necessity required it the king could arbitrarily take a subject's property or tax him without his consent, as happened with Charles I's 'forced loan' of 1627,¹⁵¹ anti-absolutists, on the other hand, believed that, even if the king needed extraordinary revenue, he needed the consent of parliament.¹⁵² For the former, many of whom believed the king's power was derived from God, the king could decide what constituted public necessity; for the latter, who believed that it was the people who had originally granted power to the king but had not alienated it completely, they could also participate in deciding what determined the public good. In 1633, Wentworth, shortly after he had arrived in Ireland, had complained, 'I find myself in a society of strange people, their own privates altogether their study without any regard at all to the public'.¹⁵³ It might be thought that Burnell was influenced by such sentiments issuing from Wentworth. However, this was just rhetoric on Wentworth's behalf and his understanding of the public good extended more to the interests of the crown at the expense of, rather than inclusive of, the good of the people. Burnell's characters' utterances on the public good seem to encompass the people as well. However, while Burnell values the concept, he reveals himself to be no radical with regard to the public interest. In the final scene of the play, Scania disagrees with Landgartha on her refusal to receive Reynier back unconditionally: 'Nor will it serve to say he tore the bond,/Now that he's sorry for't, for still the general good/Must be preferred to all particular/Merit; or that devotion that may/By foolish zeal, prove a too great offense'.¹⁵⁴ While Burnell has shown himself to be a defender of the interests of the people, it is clear that active resistance against the king – 'foolish zeal' – would have been a step too far for him.

Religion

Religion is but a toy, and first invented
 By politic states to keep fools in awe;
 And of all men observed least by themselves,
 If she but thwart the least of their intendments.
 They glorify her much for their own ends,

¹⁵¹ Sommerville, *Politics and ideology in England*, pp 76-7.

¹⁵² Sommerville, *Politics and ideology in England*, pp 158-9.

¹⁵³ Gillespie, 'Negotiating order in seventeenth-century Ireland', p. 205.

¹⁵⁴ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 66.

And that's even almost all.¹⁵⁵

Most inhabitants of seventeenth-century Europe were religious, but these lines delivered in Act 1 of his play seem surprising and might indicate that Burnell was an exception to this general rule. However, when one considers then that Burnell placed these words into the mouth of his villain, Frolo, it becomes clear that his intention was to actually counter such irreligious sentiments. The speech was probably conceived in order to convey an ironic comment on the anti-Catholic stance of the administration and the 'reason of state' policies of the Wentworth era. In common with Keating and Mageoghegan, religion was indeed a preoccupation for Burnell.

The majority of the inhabitants in early-modern Ireland believed that nothing happened in the world without God's approbation and Burnell, Keating and Mageoghegan were no exceptions.¹⁵⁶ Although the principal characters in the play are pagan, living at a time before Denmark was fully Christianised, Burnell has written Christian values into his characters, and his belief in a providential God is clearly discernible. Reyner, in assuring his troops that they will be victorious over the usurping Swedes, reminds them, 'consider/The everlasting honour due to virtue;/Of which we now shall make a glorious purchase'.¹⁵⁷ In Ireland during the seventeenth century, victory and defeat in battle were often thought of by all sides of the confessional divide in terms of the blessing or the curse of God.¹⁵⁸ Harold, the Christian pretender to Reyner's throne, is optimistic about God's helping hand in his bid for success, 'Then, let's march on with speed, and trust our cause/To him that only gives life by his laws'; and when defeated by Reyner with Landgartha's assistance, his brother Eric consoles him, 'Heaven will in time, I hope, revenge our wrong'.¹⁵⁹ Keating also displayed this providential train of thought; referring to 'constant warfare' between the Scots and the Britons in AD 447, he said, 'on account of the evil passions and the pride and the sins of the Britons...God gave the Scots

¹⁵⁵ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 15.

¹⁵⁶ Raymond Gillespie, *Devoted people: belief and religion in early-modern Ireland* (Manchester, 1997), p. 40.

¹⁵⁷ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 14.

¹⁵⁸ Gillespie, *Devoted people*, p. 51.

¹⁵⁹ Burnell, *Landgartha*, pp 55, 62.

and the Picti the victory over them'¹⁶⁰ Similarly, Mageoghegan thought along providential lines: 'William Burk and the sons of Rory o'Flathvertye privily consulted and conspired together to kill Cahall Crovedearge o' Connor, which God prevented, for they were by great oaths sworne to each other befor'.¹⁶¹ All three writers displayed identical outlooks in this respect.

Providence was understood also to visit the wrath of God upon the guilty as retribution for their sins.¹⁶² Reyner's self-accusing stance, having repented, shows Burnell's understanding that providence would bring punishment as well as blessing: 'We are of all the world forsaken,/But most of heaven, for we have deserved it,/And our repentance now comes too, too late'; and the king further bemoans his transgressions, 'Had I but faithful proved to her, as she/Deserved...I might then/Ha' played at stool-ball with young children, or/Have wasted time more idly, if I'd listed;/And have my estate multiplied to many kingdoms,/Now, thou seest, we are not worth one province,/Strike me heaven!'.¹⁶³ Keating had a similar outlook; he told how Cormac Conluingeas was the incestuous offspring of Conchubhar and Neasa, who was Conchubhar's own mother, and, 'in punishment of this misdeed all his sons died without issue except three', and even of those three, 'no one to-day in Ireland descended from these.'¹⁶⁴ Mageoghegan also believed in the punishment of God; he reported that 'Anastatius the Emperor dyed of a sudaine & unprovided death of a Thunderbolt which by Gods providence was sent him' because he had aided heretics and persecuted Catholics.¹⁶⁵ Therefore, no differences in thinking are present in the three men's accounts of God's providence.

With regard to marriage, Burnell seemed to be in tune with the reformed ideas of the Counter Reformation and his view greatly resembled Keating's in this regard. The Tridentine church had set its face firmly against divorce and it is clear that Burnell was a firm adherent of the concept of marriage for life. The original Ragnar of Saxo's history

¹⁶⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 397-8.

¹⁶¹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 218,

¹⁶² Gillespie, *Devoted people*, p. 41.

¹⁶³ Burnell, *Landgartha*, pp 55-6.

¹⁶⁴ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 215-18.

¹⁶⁵ Murphy, *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 75.

had no compunction about ‘changing his love’ and divorcing himself from Ladgerda who herself remarried,¹⁶⁶ but Burnell’s *Landgartha* describes her marriage to Reyner as ‘mine by bond’ and she refers to herself as the king’s ‘queen and only lawful wife’. As she is resisting total reconciliation with Reyner, her aunt, the pious Elsinora, cautions her, ‘I confess/I was at first an opposite in your love/Unto the king; but seeing you would needs/Yield then your virgin fort unto His Highness,/I now would have you take what wives do use’,¹⁶⁷ and, as mentioned already, *Landgartha* vowed she would become either an honest widow or a forsaken wife. Furthermore, Burnell’s disapproval of the king deserting his wife is evident from the condemnation he caused his Christian characters to throw upon Reyner’s conduct: Harold refers to ‘his base adultery’, and Eric, to ‘unheard of madness, so vilely to betray/... a poor and virtuous lady’.¹⁶⁸ In addition, even though the heroine withheld her full submission to her husband, Burnell did not allow the marriage to be dissolved and left it open for a complete reconciliation in the future. Keating, as we have seen, also strongly adhered to Tridentine rules on marriage; even in his preface he condemned as untrue Camden’s assertion that ‘the marriage bond is not strictly observed in Ireland’ and he strongly refuted suggestions by English writers that Irish had no regard for marriage.¹⁶⁹ However, Gaelic customs of divorce and separation continued to be observed into the seventeenth century¹⁷⁰ and Mageoghegan, as we saw, was quite unconcerned about reporting examples of men with multiple wives.¹⁷¹

Burnell also displayed Christian humanist values and his views in this respect resemble those of Keating to a greater extent than Mageoghegan. The only characters in the play who are Christian are Harold and his brother Eric; and Harold, though a pretender to Reyner’s throne and to be defeated by him in battle, is nevertheless treated sympathetically by Burnell instead of being portrayed as a villain. As Reyner was understood by the audience to be Charles I and therefore by association to adhere to Protestantism, the religious allegiance of the Christian Harold therefore would have been

¹⁶⁶ *Saxo Grammaticus*, p. 364.

¹⁶⁷ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 66.

¹⁶⁸ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 49.

¹⁶⁹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 61-4; *supra*, p.

¹⁷⁰ O’Dowd, *A history of women in Ireland*, p. 98.

¹⁷¹ *supra*, p. 124.

seen as Catholicism. It is through this Catholic character that Burnell reveals his ideology regarding a Christian polity where subjects can expect to be ruled with justice. In reply to Eric who speculates that the defeat and death of Reyner would leave the way open for Harold to settle himself in Reyner's kingdoms, Harold responds,

Brother, the man whose deity we adore...
Can witness for me: could I but persuade
My mind by any probability
'Twere possible for me to live in peace here,
And not have my throat cut, although my right
Unto the crown of Denmark be apparent,
My title while I slept or waked, should sleep,
As when King Reyner lived a virtuous kind man.¹⁷²

The Christian Harold, although apparently possessing a legitimate right to the throne of Denmark, would be happy to renounce his claim if he could be guaranteed to live in peaceful domain under a monarch who reigned with morality and justice. Burnell revealed his aspiration to live in a truly Christian commonwealth here and his sentiments resonated strongly with the ideology expounded by the Christian humanist, Thomas More. The message conveyed in *Utopia* was that the construction of a truly Christian political order must rest upon the foundation of a just secular one.¹⁷³ The allegory of the contemporary situation in which the Old English found themselves in 1640 can hardly have been missed by the audience. Furthermore, the remainder of this speech by Harold with its humanistic overtones resounds also with contemporary Catholic resistance theory:

For I delight not in th'expense of blood,
Though I fear not to spend my own in a just cause.
As the strong law of nature binds, I must
Shift for myself, the best I may. Which shall not
Be effected by base treachery or murder.¹⁷⁴

The Jesuits were seen as supporters of secular resistance theory in the early modern period. They expounded a Thomist view of natural law in their discussion of secular government and held that it served as the measure of justice in human law.¹⁷⁵ Burnell

¹⁷² Burnell, *Landgartha*, pp 48-9.

¹⁷³ Bradshaw, 'Transalpine humanism', p. 105.

¹⁷⁴ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 49.

¹⁷⁵ J. H. M. Salmon, 'Catholic resistance theory, ultramontaniam, and the royalist response, 1580-1620' in Burns (ed.), *Cambridge history of political thought*, pp 236-7.

was obviously conscious of the concept of natural law. Suarez asserted the right of self-defence under natural law and he allowed that a legitimate king could be attacked if he threatened to destroy the commonwealth but only after being declared a heretic and previously deposed by a public authority.¹⁷⁶ The sentiments in the above passages seem to empathise with these Jesuit theories. Robert Parsons, the English Jesuit, also espoused a resistance theory, as we saw in the preliminary chapter, although his views were more extreme than those of Suarez. Richard Stanihurst (1547-1618) was close to Parsons while both men were at the Spanish court in the 1590s and were advocating Spanish military intervention in England and Ireland to restore Catholicism. Towards the end of his life, Stanihurst also became a Jesuit and he published a number of works in defence of the Catholic faith.¹⁷⁷ The Burnell and the Stanihurst families were long-standing neighbours in north Dublin; Burnell's grandfather had moved in the same social and professional circles as Richard's father, succeeding him as recorder of Dublin in 1573; and Richard Stanihurst had once made a fleeting reference to the 'Burnell house at Castleknock.'¹⁷⁸ Further, Stanihurst's first wife was of the Barnewall family; Henry Burnell senior's mother was a Barnewall and he had been close to the many legal members of that family in his career; and, in addition, Frances Burnell's mother was Elinor Barnewall, dau of Sir Christopher of Turvey. Another connection between the Burnells and Stanihurst was the family of the earls of Kildare. The eleventh earl had been Old Burnell's 'most important ally and patron', and Stanihurst had been tutor to the earl's son.¹⁷⁹ Therefore, given the close connections between the two families, it is quite likely that Burnell would have taken an interest in following the career and writings of Richard Stanihurst and may well have been familiar with the sentiments contained in such works as those by Suarez and Parsons. These Christian humanist ideas are to be found extensively in *Foras feasa*; as we have seen Keating asserted that 'God and the people would reward the doing of good, and the punishment that awaited the king' if he failed to rule with equity and justice; that he would have to 'forgo the sovereignty' if he didn't carry out the laws of the country; and he further stressed that since 'Ireland

¹⁷⁶ Salmon, 'Catholic resistance theory', p. 239.

¹⁷⁷ Colm Lennon, 'Richard Stanihurst, 1547-1618' in *ODNB*, www.oxforddnb.com

¹⁷⁸ Malone, 'Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family', pp 22, 64, 73.

¹⁷⁹ Malone, 'Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family', pp 47, 51.

received the Faith of Christ, an ecclesiastical chaplain took the place of the druid, to declare and explain the precepts and the laws of God to the king'.¹⁸⁰ Burnell and Keating do seem to have shared the same Christian humanist ideology. However, this does not mean that in practice Burnell was contemplating taking up arms against Charles; as we saw above, 'foolish zeal' would have been 'a too great offense' for him.

Burnell made it clear on several occasions that the Christian characters, Harold and Eric, were being befriended and patronised by the Holy Roman Emperor, Louis the pious, son of the renowned Charlemagne, and that their mission to take over Denmark was not an unworthy venture but in fact a proselytising one. As Harold prepares to march to meet Reyner, he says, 'We must make haste... (now that by/The help of heaven, for which we chiefly move,/And the assistance which.../The noble Emperor Louis, true inheritor/Of his great father's virtues, did afford us,/We are ascended to what is our right...)'.¹⁸¹ The Catholic element in the audience would have communed with the references to the Holy Roman Emperor whom they would have associated with the papacy. Furthermore, Harold, although essentially involved in rebellion against Reyner, did not suffer the same fate from the pen of the playwright as the usurper Frolo had received; Harold and Eric escape with their lives and were said to 'betake ourselves again to th'emperor', on the advice of an angel who appeared to Eric while the two were asleep. Burnell created this scene, which seemed to be superfluous to the main plot, for the purposes of facilitating the intervention of the angel who visited Eric in a dream and delivered a prophecy regarding Landgartha: 'Her the pow'rs divine/Will, for her moral virtues, turn/A Christian, ere she come to th'urn'.¹⁸² Therefore, seeing that it was through the two characters in the play who were associated with Catholicism that the heroine's future conversion was predicted, it seems that Burnell, like Keating and Mageoghegan, was promoting the Catholic cause. He could not be as openly didactic or enthusiastic about Catholicism as the other two writers because his dramatic opus was to be performed publicly under the stringent gaze of members of the administration and perhaps even the lord deputy himself when he returned to Dublin. However, his inclusion of the prophetic

¹⁸⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 11-2; ii, 343.

¹⁸¹ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 54.

¹⁸² Burnell, *Landgartha*, pp 61-2.

lines that his heroine would convert to the religion of the play's two Christian/Catholic characters is another indication of the strong realization of a self-conscious Catholic identity that had developed among Irish Catholics in the first four decades of the seventeenth century.

National identity

Brendan Bradshaw maintains that successive episodes over the course of the seventeenth century that resulted in the virtual dispossession of the older Catholic landowning elite in favour of Protestant planters, together with religious discrimination by the authorities against Catholics, had the effect of consolidating a new sense of Irishness and a patriotic ideology among the two ethnic communities of the island.¹⁸³ Bernadette Cunningham shows that the Franciscans at Louvain implanted in men's minds the idea of an Irish Catholic nation with their research into the genealogies of Irish saints and into Irish history. Although the primary aim of the community at Louvain was to foster the doctrines of the Counter Reformation in Ireland, and although the culture of Irish exiles on the continent was not identical to that at home, their writings reached a wide audience in Ireland, as discussed previously.¹⁸⁴ As we have seen, in the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* and in *Foras feasa*, there were signs of an emerging sense of national identity developing between the Gaelic Irish and the Old English and that Mageoghegan and Keating revealed their inclinations in this direction particularly by utilising the saga of Brian Boromha. This vision of nationhood is more nebulous and somewhat difficult to detect in *Landgartha*. However, there are indications, as we have seen, that Burnell was thinking along these lines as well. He exhibited a marked fondness on the part of Landgartha for Marfisa and displayed a definite sense of camaraderie between them. In addition, the Old English and Gaelic Irish character fought side by side to oust a usurper from their country and again joined together to assist their king in putting down a rebellion. As we saw above, he was conscious of the importance of the Catholic religion, a badge of identity that both groups held in common. Furthermore, as we saw also, all

¹⁸³ Brendan Bradshaw, 'Irish nationalism: an historical perspective' in *Bullán: an Irish studies journal*, v, no. 1 (Jan., 2001), p. 9.

¹⁸⁴ Bernadette Cunningham, 'The culture and ideology of Irish Franciscan historians at Louvain' in Ciaran Brady (ed.), *Ideology and the historians* (Dublin, 1991), pp 16-30.

three men held the firm assumption of the status of Ireland as a kingdom in her own right. Perhaps it was through the lens of the concept of Ireland as a separate kingdom that Irish Catholics perceived their sense of Irish identity and, if so, both Old Englishmen and Gaelic Irishman revealed an alignment of ideology in terms of national identity.

Conclusion

Burnell could be said to be closer to Keating's ideological slant than Mageoghegan's. While all three were undoubtedly royalist, and all three shared the same assumptions regarding the social order, he and Keating fell into the 'constitutional' category in their opinions about the powers of monarchy and the role of parliament in contrast to Mageoghegan. The overall tenor of Burnell's account, while lightened at times with merriment, was one of gloom and pessimistic resignation, reflecting the effects of continuous disappointments and the fraught uncertainty of the Old English position in early 1640. The oppositional stance portrayed was reminiscent of that taken by the Old English of the Pale in the sixteenth-century 'cess' campaign and during the 'mandates' controversy early in the seventeenth century; while affirming their loyalty, they had been oppositional enough to withhold their total submission, and protest against crown decrees emanating from the king to ensure survival of their livelihoods. Burnell, who became a member of the confederation, probably exemplifies the Old English of the Pale who, however reluctantly, and still swearing their allegiance to the king, joined in arms with their erstwhile enemies, the Gaelic Irish in 1641.

The Old English of the Pale do not appear to have had as much in common culturally with the Gaelic Irish as the Old English in the provinces and may have been more attuned to the literary genres that were fashionable in England. It appears also that a lack of trust towards the native Irish may have been held by the Old English of the Pale which would not be present to the same extent in those living in closer proximity to Gaelic areas; perhaps as a result of centuries of Gaelic raids on the Pale. Such social cultural division might have served to be a hindrance to the development of a close relationship when it came to working together under the stresses of war. Nevertheless, it seems likely that many old English of the Pale, like Burnell, did harbour warm feelings towards members

of the native Irish community. The scant references to religion in the *oeuvre* were not surprising as Palesmen had to be more circumspect when it came to their religion than those living elsewhere; it was the elite of the Pale along with townspeople who had been principally targeted by the authorities when it came to prohibitive measures against Catholic recusants. Nevertheless, Burnell's oblique references to Catholicism indicate that the sense of Catholic nationhood noted in the accounts of Mageoghegan and Keating existed also among the people of the Pale. Whereas a vision of joint national identity does not come through as strongly as in the previous two accounts, there are signs in this presentation that a growing sense of solidarity did exist in Palesmen's consciousness with their fellow Irishmen.

Chapter 5

Richard Hadsor

Our second member of the Old English group from within the Pale is Richard Hadsor (c. 1570-1635) and his viewpoint is now examined and placed alongside those of the other three protagonists, Mageoghegan, Keating and Burnell. The correspondences in political thought encompassing the king and society between the native Irishman, the Old Englishman from gaelicised Tipperary and the Old Englishman from the Pale have been noted, as well as their respective attitudes to religion and culture. Now it is pertinent to gain an insight into this figure from the Pale who lived within the Pale until he went to study law at Oxford. Unlike the others, Hadsor served the crown in an official capacity. Whereas Mageoghegan and Keating were historians, motivated by present political concerns, and Burnell was a playwright with a legal background and also inspired by the current political situation, Hadsor was a lawyer, based in England. He operated a private practice while also filling the important if unobtrusive role of adviser on Irish affairs to the government in England. He compiled two treatises and wrote numerous letters during his career. He hailed from Co. Louth, a Pale heartland and spent his adult life in London ensconced in the Inns of Court and operating close to the nucleus of political activity. Having doubtless been brought up as a Catholic (signalled by the fact that his brother, John, joined the confederacy in the 1640s), he appears to have conformed to Protestantism, probably in the interests of furthering his career. In 1604, Hadsor wrote a 'Discourse' on the kingdom of Ireland intended for the information of the newly enthroned James I, giving a description of the present state of the country and his ideas for its improvement and reformation.¹ In 1622-3, having spent approximately nine months back in Ireland as a member of the Irish commission of 1622 which investigated the financial and ecclesiastical state of the country, he compiled a comprehensive report, 'Advertisements for Ireland' for the information of Lord Treasurer Middlesex and the

¹ Joseph McLaughlin (ed.), 'Richard Hadsor's "Discourse" on the Irish state, 1604' in *IHS*, xxx, no. 119 (1997), pp 337-53.

English privy council.² Besides these two tracts, Hadsor's attitudes can also be gleaned from the numerous letters which he penned to successive English secretaries of state throughout his career and from some of the official correspondence arising from the 1622 commission. From these works, Hadsor's attitudes are transparent and it is apposite to compare them with those of the Gaelic Irishman and both Old Englishmen.

Background

In his article on Richard Hadsor and his 'Advertisements for Ireland', Victor Treadwell has traced his life and career.³ Son and heir to Nicholas Hadsor of Keppock, Co. Louth, Richard committed the management of his estate to his half brother and heir, John, during his thirty-five year residency in England. He does not seem to have been married or to have had any children himself. Despite his long absence from Ireland, Hadsor obviously kept in close touch with his relatives. In 1618, he probably assisted John, financially and as mediator, in purchasing a manor and demesne from the earl of Essex, proprietor of Farney, Co. Monaghan. In November 1622, he requested permission from Lord Middlesex to 'stay for a month or two' to visit friends, family and estate; and in 1629 he estated his youngest surviving half brother Reignald with a fee farm acquired from a courtier-undertaker in the Leitrim plantation.⁴ In addition, as was common in the Pale, he was related to various Pale families and in his legal practice acted for many of his kinsmen including Garret Sutton and Thomas Dillon, former chief justice of Connacht.⁵ Furthermore, throughout his career, he mentored many Irish students from the Pale who came to study in the Middle Temple.⁶ Accordingly, Hadsor remained up-to-date and conversant with the current situation at home and with the concerns of his fellow Palesmen.

² George O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements for Ireland* (Dublin, 1923).

³ Victor Treadwell, 'Richard Hadsor and the authorship of "Advertisements for Ireland", 1622-3' in *IHS*, xxx, no. 119 (1997), pp 306-36.

⁴ Treadwell, 'Richard Hadsor', pp 306-7; Victor Treadwell, *The Irish commission of 1622: an investigation of the Irish administration, 1615-1622, and its consequences, 1623-1624* (Dublin, 2006), p. 227.

⁵ *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1600-1*, p. 312; H.M.C., *Calendar of manuscripts of the...marquess of Salisbury, preserved at Hatfield House* (24 vols, London, 1883-1976), viii, 312.

⁶ Treadwell, 'Richard Hadsor', p. 328.

In 1587, Hadsor left Ireland for Oxford where he studied for three years. In 1590 he was admitted to the Middle Temple and he remained there for the rest of his life, having his home in his chambers in Garnett's Buildings at Shere Lane near Temple Bar. In 1603, he was called to the bar, became a bencher in 1617 and served (*inter alia*) as reader of his Inn in 1617 and as treasurer in 1624-5. He pursued an extensive and prestigious private practice attracting both Protestant and Catholic clients including Theobald, Viscount Tulleophelim, Lord Dunsany and the earls of Kildare, Thomond and Clanricard. Along with William Talbot, he was joint executor of the fourteenth earl of Kildare's will. His most important clients, who were also his patrons, were the king's cousins, the duke of Lennox and his brother, Lord Aubigny.⁷ He also numbered some Old Irish figures among his clients such as Sir Brian Maguire and O'Connor Sligo.⁸ It is not unlikely then that his chambers were a port of call for the gentry from Ireland who were visiting London, especially the Old English.⁹ As well as his private practice, he served the Whitehall bureaucracy for well nigh thirty-five years. Loyalty and devotion to the crown were paramount in his priorities throughout his career. From 1598, he attached himself to Secretary Cecil, who found a bilingual lawyer useful as a 'solicitor for Irish causes', and after Cecil had died in 1612, Hadsor answered to successive secretaries. In 1616 he served as consultant to the London government on a committee that reformed the Irish staple system.¹⁰ In 1622-3, as mentioned, he completed his report arising out of his membership of the 1622 commission in Ireland, and, subsequently, in 1625, he was appointed to the standing commission for Irish affairs which was instituted in 1623, providing information and advice to the privy council regarding decisions for Ireland.¹¹

His writings in sum comprise his 1604 'Discourse', his 1622 report, letters to secretaries of state, and correspondence in connection with the 1622 commission. His 1604 discourse, cited above, was composed for the enlightenment of the new king and was written on the prompting of Irish peers.¹² The discourse reads like an apologia for the

⁷ Treadwell, 'Richard Hadsor', pp 306-8.

⁸ *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1625-32*, pp 303, 607.

⁹ Treadwell, 'Richard Hadsor', p. 313.

¹⁰ Treadwell, 'Richard Hadsor', pp 309-15.

¹¹ Treadwell, 'Richard Hadsor', p. 324.

¹² Treadwell, 'Richard Hadsor', p. 311.

Old English and is basically a manifesto of their position, detailing their continuous loyalty since the conquest of the twelfth century, their unique suitability to be in positions of authority and the desirability of employing them in governing the country. This is counterbalanced by stressing the unreliability of the native Irish and their potential for rebellion. The first half of the discourse describes the current state of his 'native distressed country' which is followed by his recommendations for its reform. His 1622 report, also cited above, still affirmed the traditional loyalty of the Old English and stressed the distinction between them and the native Irish; however, now reflecting his official position as crown counsel for Irish affairs, it had as its main thrust the increase of royal revenue and the priority of finding ways and means of making Ireland self-sufficient and ceasing to be a drain on crown finances. This had been the mission given to the commissioners and the main purpose of this 1622 commission. Nevertheless, Hadsor's second but equally important imperative was the improvement and reform of his country to the end that she would become more prosperous and 'civil'. His letters to Cecil and subsequent secretaries, which are to be found in the state papers and in the collections of statesmen, for instance in Salisbury papers, consist of topics ranging from the supply of information about the movements of the earl of Tyrone and other rebels in the last years of the wars, to an advice paper to the crown known as the 'Propositions of 1632', to petitions concerning the legal requirements of his various clients.¹³ Finally, being an Irish speaker, Hadsor was the member of the 1622 commission who liaised with the native Irish who flocked to the commission with their grievances caused by their displacement in the plantations in Longford, King's County and Wexford, and his ensuing reports are edited by Treadwell in his recent book.

Royalism

Whereas all three previous figures under discussion were royalist, in the sense that all were supporters of kingship and of the king, we have seen that Mageoghegan tended to have an absolutist conception of the powers of monarchy whereas Keating definitely favoured limits on the authority of the king and Burnell's ideas resembled those of

¹³ H.M.C. *Salisbury*, xii, 73-4, 394-5, 451; H.M.C. *Salisbury*, xi, 494-5; H.M.C. *Salisbury*, xv, 145-6; *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1625-32*, pp 681-3.

Keating, if perhaps to a lesser extent. This section will show that Hadsor, in parallel with Mageoghegan, tended towards a more absolutist royalism than either Keating or Burnell.

However, in respect of the status of the kingdom of Ireland, all four shared the same perception. The status of Ireland as a kingdom, distinct from the kingdom of England, was a self-conscious conviction which Hadsor held in common with Keating and Burnell; and for Mageoghegan too, Ireland's status as kingdom was an unquestioned assumption and he was quite happy with the rule of Stuart kings, to whom the native literati had attached a Gaelic pedigree. Hadsor, in his 'Discourse', stated unequivocally, 'Ireland since the said conquest...hath been ruled by the Kinges of England as a distinct kingdome'. He stressed that the English parliament had no jurisdiction over the Irish parliament; in 1604, he proclaimed that just as the earls of Ireland 'have noe voice in parliament in England, Neither hath the Nobilitie of England any voice in the parliament in Ireland.'¹⁴ The previous generation of Old English in 1541 had guided the act establishing Ireland's constitutional status as kingdom through parliament and this remained the Old English position, in opposition to some New English notions of colonial dependency status for their adopted country. Like Keating and Mageoghegan, Hadsor gave the impression of Ireland being a kingdom from earliest times; he spoke of the 'auncyent divisions of the kingdome of Ireland'; of the petty kings in Ireland 'whereof one was by eleccion Kinge of all Ireland'; but that, since the conquest, the kings of England ruled 'by the name of Lord of Ireland having absolute kingly authority over the same' until Henry VIII was, 'by act of parliament in that Realme acknowledged & enacted to Kinges of Ireland'.¹⁵ Thus he stressed the status of Ireland as a kingdom ruled by the English king, pointing out at the same time that it been an Irish parliament which had passed the Act instituting Henry king of Ireland. This interpretation was obviously extremely important to Hadsor. As we saw, Keating had similarly spoken of Ireland being a 'kingdom apart by herself'; Burnell had been at pains in his play to depict his king ruling two separate kingdoms; and Mageoghegan was obviously proud of Ireland being a kingdom, the king having always been the dominant figure in Gaelic Ireland.

¹⁴ McLaughlin (ed.), 'Discourse', pp 346-7.

¹⁵ McLaughlin (ed.), 'Discourse', pp 345-6.

However, Mageoghegan's account did not infer that he consciously connected the idea of Ireland being a kingdom with the issue of the mutual exclusivity of the two parliaments. Perhaps the Old English, being more experienced in participating in parliament, were more concerned to emphasise the king's dual but separate royal domains because they were conscious of the dangers of the English parliament encroaching on decision-making in Ireland and were more alert than the Gaelic Irish to the danger that the principal New English officials in the government in Ireland were closely involved with politics in England.

Hadsor's royalism, somewhat like Burnell's, manifested itself in an impelling sense of connection with the crown. Mageoghegan and Keating, although undoubted adherents of the king and kingship, did not reveal the same kind of direct feelings of connection with the crown and court. The link with the crown was even more crucial to Hadsor than it was to Keating and Burnell and he was extremely anxious that the monarchy remain strong in Ireland. In 1604, he declared that if, in the Nine Years War, the 'meere Irish...had the understanding to unite' and to have their swordsmen capable of meeting the crown forces on plane ground instead of in 'straighes & groundes of advantage', the kingdom had been 'in greate danger to be lost'; and, therefore, he welcomed the ending of the wars and the establishment of common law throughout the kingdom, 'to thende yt may yelde benifytt & strengthen the Crowne of England, and not to be a meane to weaken the same'.¹⁶ It was to the crown that the gentry of the Pale had traditionally looked to preserve them from aggression and encroachment of their territory, rather than to the magnate earls who held such sway in the marcher areas.¹⁷ Keating, as we saw, on the other hand, looked for leadership to the 'noble earls of the foreigners'. Burnell's play, focused as it was on kingship and the close bond, however turbulent, between the Old English heroine and the king, indicated his strong sense of closeness with the crown. The wars at the end of the century had affected Hadsor at a personal level; therefore, a strong and effective monarchy was of the utmost importance to him and to his fellow Palesmen. In a letter to Cecil in 1599, he had written that he was as willing to use his

¹⁶ McLaughlin (ed.), 'Discourse', pp 349-50.

¹⁷ Nicholas Canny, *The formation of the Old English elite in Ireland* (Dublin, 1975), p. 10.

profession to yield his 'best furtherance' to her Majesty's service as 'my grandfather, being an Englishman, and my father, were in spending of their blood voluntarily in the field therein, having my patrimony wasted by the northern rebels these four years since my father's death'.¹⁸ Hadsor was always keen to stress Old English loyalty to the crown especially of those from the Pale. In 1604, he explained that the 'English Pale or Country [is] inhabited to this daie with Noblemen and Gentlemen descended of English who are civill men and have continued their obedience to the Crowne...since the said Conquest of Kinge Henry the second'.¹⁹ He reiterated these sentiments in 1622, stating that, even during the Wars of the Roses, when 'few houses or families in England escaped that unfortunate mark, and yet did the nobility and gentry of the English Pale adhere still to the crown; and did ever shake hands and forsake the factions that opposed them against their sovereign whom they held lawful being invested in the regal throne'. In those uncertain times of the early 1620s, shortly before war was declared on Spain, he assured their lordships that the Old English 'will adventure as far as any in defence of His Majesty's right against all his adversaries'.²⁰ Therefore, a strong monarchy and a close link with the crown were of great importance to Hadsor. Further, in his 1604 'Discourse', he had told the king that it would give great contentments to his subjects in Ireland if 'your Matie would be also pleased in your happie union of England & Scotland to unite your highness Realme of Ireland unto them in Amytie'.²¹ It is a further indication of how strongly Hadsor felt about the link between his own country and the crown that he wished Ireland could be united in friendship to the new union of England and Scotland, brought about by the accession of James VI and I. McLaughlin has commented that the question of Ireland being part of the proposed entity of 'Greate Britain' was not being generally considered at this early stage and has pointed out that when Hadsor suggested joining Ireland to James' other two kingdoms 'in amity', he meant 'on the same basis'.²² Hadsor's suggestion was certainly unrealistic. In the debates and disagreements surrounding the union of crowns during the five years following James' accession, the English view was that Scotland be incorporated into

¹⁸ *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1599-1600*, pp 139-40.

¹⁹ McLaughlin (ed.), 'Discourse', p. 345.

²⁰ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 4.

²¹ McLaughlin (ed.), 'Discourse', p. 352.

²² McLaughlin (ed.), 'Discourse', p. 343.

England but the Scottish demand was that the two kingdoms should be equal partners; the recent Nine Years War in Ireland hardly inspired enthusiasm for an equal status for the kingdom of Ireland within the composite kingdoms.²³ Hadsor's personal sense of royalism was influenced by his Pale upbringing and is encapsulated in his fervent desire to maintain a strong link with the English monarchy.

However, there were varying shades of royalism. As we have seen, Mageoghegan displayed some signs of absolutism in his thinking, perhaps consonant with the might of traditional Gaelic lords; Burnell depicted his characters showing qualified resistance towards monarchy; while Keating was wholehearted in his belief that there should be limits on the power of kings. Hadsor's stance in relation to 'royalism' is ambivalent; on the one hand, he adhered to the constitutionality of parliament and to justice under the law; but, on the other, at times he was not averse to recommending quasi-legal means to achieve his majesty's ends, which revealed some absolutist tendencies in his approach.

Hadsor's overriding aim in his 1622 report was to improve the king's revenues and to put an end to the situation where Ireland was a drain on the crown's finances. These, indeed, were the directions given to him and his fellow-commissioners by the lord treasurer, Sir Lionel Cranfield, later earl of Middlesex, in their examination of affairs in Ireland and, accordingly, it was to Cranfield that Hadsor's recommendations in 'Advertisements' were obviously intended. The prospects of a war with Spain highlighted the inadequacy of the royal coffers and revenue was urgently needed. Hadsor reserved much space in his 1622 report to emphasising the miniscule return that the king derived from royal grants. In the English parliament of 1621, concern with the state of the economy led to MPs criticising patents and monopolies granted by the crown under its prerogative to private individuals and to clients of courtiers. Treasurer Cranfield himself attacked monopolies in parliament although this was probably with the approval of the king who at this juncture was willing to see redress of grievances.²⁴ In Hadsor's report, a major element of his recommendations for reform involved an attack on the over-generous monopolies

²³ Jenny Wormald, 'James VI & I', *ODNB*, www.oxforddnb.com.

²⁴ Michael J. Braddick, 'Lionel Cranfield, 1st earl of Middlesex (1575-1645), merchant, financier and government minister', *ODNB*, www.oxforddnb.com.

granted by the king. The Jacobean regime, in order to raise short-term revenue, had increasingly sold or mortgaged crown lands and granted monopolies on trade and on commodities to particular individuals, making some of them very wealthy.²⁵ Hadsor's contention was that the king should have much more of the benefit of these monopolies rather than all of it going into the 'private purse', and recommended that the king levy a tax on luxuries under his prerogative.²⁶ The king's prerogative was accepted by most people in early-modern England although they did expect their king to refrain from breaking the law when using his prerogative powers. The Stuart kings, however, had an absolutist interpretation of these royal powers and this was a source of friction between James and parliament.²⁷ In the parliament of 1610, parliament's alarm was triggered by a book, a dictionary of law entitled *The Interpreter* (1607), written by the civil lawyer, John Cowell, which defined a king as having absolute power above the law. There was such uproar that James, although privately sympathetic to Cowell, had to suppress the book.²⁸ In this parliament of 1610, parliamentarians' fear of despotism was evident; they expressed their wish to be governed by the rule of law and not by an arbitrary form of government; and they declined to pass James' 'Great Contract' which would have guaranteed him a fixed annual revenue.²⁹ Many English lawyers believed that the king had no extra-legal powers and that his prerogative encompassed rights he possessed at law. Hadsor, although a champion of the common law, strongly recommended the frequent use of the king's prerogative. This showed an absolutist strain in his approach. Hadsor was, of course, employed by the king and, although not a courtier, was operating close to court circles. There is no doubt that Hadsor's advice was sometimes not compatible with the political thought of constitutional parliamentarians who believed, for instance, that taxes should be agreed in parliament. In the years after the 1634-5 parliament, the Old English opposition was indignant when crown representative Wentworth arbitrarily changed the method of collection of the subsidies which had been

²⁵ Braddick, 'Lionel Cranfield', *ODNB*.

²⁶ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 38-9.

²⁷ J. H. M. Salmon, 'Catholic resistance theory, Ultramontaniam, and the royalist response' in J. H. Burns (ed.), *The Cambridge history of political thought, 1450-1700* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 249.

²⁸ Brian P. Levack, 'John Cowell', *ODNB*, www.oxforddnb.org.

²⁹ R.W.K. Hinton, 'Government and liberty under James I' in *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 2:1 (1953), pp 48-64.

agreed in parliament.³⁰ In the 1620s, Hadsor recommended that the king lay a tax in the form of a monopoly on luxury items, as happened in Florence, and he declared such a course was covered by ‘the ancient laws’ in England, and that such a tax should be applied to tradesmen who were a ‘prowling brood’. He explained, ‘these and many more vigorous impositions are frequent in all other countries...nor is it reason (howsoever our common law of England seems to impugn it) were this tax a bare tax or bare monopoly taken in the most rigorous sense, that His Majesty exceeding most princes in grace, favour and clemency towards his liege people and subjects, should of all earthly princes of any note be excluded from this prerogative and regal privilege.’ He further claimed that the Irish of all nations did not mind paying taxes as long as they were ‘warrantable by law’ or were levied by ‘the king’s mere prerogative’.³¹ Keating, as we saw, was a firm believer in ruling according to law; his ideal king Brian Boromha governed ‘according to the country’s constitution and law’; the whole tenor of his work would suggest that he would not approve of overuse of a king’s prerogative. Mageoghegan on balance seemed to present his kings acting independently without reference to nobility.

Nor was this the only instance that Hadsor advocated the use of law other than the common law. There are other examples which indicate that he did not balk at the kind of arbitrary and absolutist methods which James I attempted in governing his kingdom, methods with which anti-absolutists felt very uncomfortable. He spoke approvingly of a Roman law in the interests of maintaining social order in Ireland: ‘methinks that was a commendable law...with the Romans, and worthy in the king’s dominions that are so populous to be put in practice; that every man that was not of some notable rank, trade, profession or quality should upon pain of death, once a year give some account of his actions, and how he maintained himself’.³² Hans Pawlisch has shown that the political debates of the Jacobean period provide dramatic examples of the uses to which knowledge of civil law could be put particularly in controversies surrounding public law and the nature of the royal prerogative. In a comprehensive article on civil law and Sir John Davies, solicitor-general (1603-6) and attorney-general (1606-19) in Ireland,

³⁰ Hugh F. Kearney, *Strafford in Ireland, 1633-41: a study in absolutism* (Manchester, 1959), pp 66, 190-1.

³¹ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 38-9.

³² O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 57.

Pawlisch demonstrates that Davies frequently cited civil law in active Irish litigation.³³ After the defeat of the forces of Hugh O'Neill, earl of Tyrone, the use of civil law in Ireland was considerably expanded by Davies and other English jurists as they attempted to justify and consolidate English sovereignty over Ireland.³⁴ Davies' familiarity with Roman and canon laws probably originated in his educational training at Oxford and the Middle Temple.³⁵ Davies and Richard Hadsor spent eight years together at Middle Temple (1590-98) and although McLoughlin points out that they held many opposing views,³⁶ it is clear that both were prepared to use civil law where the common law did not suffice for their requirements. In another example of absolutist tendencies, Hadsor made a deduction from a finding of his fellow-commissioners, those with responsibility for assessing supplies of wood and timber in the country who, in the relevant certificate to which Hadsor was not a signee, had stated, 'we cannot learn that your majesty hath any woods of your own within this kingdom.'³⁷ Hadsor, on the other hand, in his report, in denouncing the bad management of the resources of timber in Ireland, observed, 'I take all the main forests there to be the king's of right'.³⁸ Medieval statutes in England had regulated the boundaries of royal forests and these had remained unquestioned until James I's time, when in 1622-3 a new enquiry into the boundaries of royal jurisdiction seems to have taken place, and in 1634-5 Charles I was to attempt a revival of the forest laws as a means of drawing in revenue through his prerogative.³⁹ Hadsor further ventured the opinion that 'most of their large mountains do of right appertain to the crown' and, if they could not be found for the king, he should have the benefit of any minerals found there, or at least 'a great revenue by the custom' from them.⁴⁰ Sir John Davies had similarly put forward pragmatic proposals to secure resources for the crown; in the Case of the Bann Fishery, by using civil law precepts, he had secured the seizure of the richest fishery in Ulster.⁴¹ Hadsor's recommendations for the appropriation of such

³³ Hans Pawlisch, 'Sir John Davies, the ancient constitution, and civil law' in *The Historical Journal*, xxiii, no. 3 (1980), pp 689-702.

³⁴ Pawlisch, 'Sir John Davies', p. 696.

³⁵ Pawlisch, 'Sir John Davies', p. 695.

³⁶ McLaughlin (ed.), 'Discourse', pp 341-3.

³⁷ Treadwell, *Irish commission of 1622*, p. 282.

³⁸ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 31.

³⁹ George Hammersley, 'The revival of forest laws under Charles I' in *History*, xlv (1960), pp 85-102.

⁴⁰ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 32.

⁴¹ Pawlisch, 'Sir John Davies', pp 700-1.

lands and resources by the king without considering the rights of those in possession is an indication of strains of absolutism in his ideology. Mageoghegan seems to have thought similarly when he inserted a slight interpolation into his descriptions of a king's first raid. He reported that Hugh O'Connor, 'a valorous and sturdie man', on becoming king of Connacht, had 'made his first and Regall prey' on the country of Offaly, committed burnings and outrages, then returned to Athlone and blinded Cahall McTeige O'Connor who subsequently died.⁴² Whereas the annals agree with most of this, referring to 'his king's raid', his 'royal depredation' or 'his regal depredation', none of them affix the flattering description, 'valorous and sturdie'.⁴³ The positive interpretation given the entry by Mageoghegan suggests that he may have regarded the king's prey as his rightful due.

Furthermore, as always with an eye to the king's revenues, Hadsor was adamant that much church land which had been impropriated into lay hands by successive bishops could be restored, not only to the clergy, but some of it also to the king. He explained that most of the episcopal lands and other ecclesiastical estates had been 'dismembered there...without consent of the Dean and Chapter and...His Majesty may...recover back the lands as founder of the same'. These lands had been 'usurped' by the natives and others and Hadsor proposed a somewhat drastic measure to recover them. He suggested that, through an act of resumption in parliament (there had not been one in Ireland since the time of Henry VII), the king should arrange the repossession of the lands and restore to the clergy such land as they could show proof of title. However, for the lands which had been alienated by bishops 'without consent', the king could, by 'this resumptive act', take them into his own possession, if tenants' grants could not be overthrown in law.⁴⁴ The bypassing of the courts in favour of the king again shows an absolutist strain in Hadsor's thinking. The concealing of chantry lands, he explained earlier, had been discovered by his kinsman, Sir Bartholomew Dillon of Riverstown, 'an Irish gentleman of the English Pale', who had been given a grant to recover these to the church, but was foiled by the 'possessors and intruders' who had re-conveyed the lands for 'small or no

⁴² Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 245; for a king's raid, see Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, *Royal inauguration in Gaelic Ireland, c.1100-1600* (Woodbridge, 2004), p. 11.

⁴³ *AConn* 1265.8; *ARÉ* 1265.6; *LCé* 1265.6.

⁴⁴ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 53.

composition'.⁴⁵ Hadsor was confident that all these lands could be recovered because the majority of parliament would agree to the act of resumption as it was 'the ancient corporations, ministerial officers and others of their rank' who were the ones who mostly had an interest in these lands and that they 'be not the third part of the rest of the commons in number'.⁴⁶ While Hadsor clearly believed that the English parliament had no jurisdiction over the Irish parliament, as shown above, he saw nothing amiss with the king using parliament in order to resume lands that had already been conveyed legally, albeit for small payment as he claimed; however, such a course of action would not seem to be in keeping with the spirit of the common law.

As mentioned above, Hadsor recommended extra taxes at which he said the Irishman would not complain and he justified these taxes by reference to the patriarchal aspect of the concept of the commonwealth whereby the king-subject relationship corresponded to that of father-child, and the subject and monarch had reciprocal responsibilities:

And admit these monopolies and new taxes may in some men's estimate seem heavy and burthensome to that growing commonwealth, yet if we consider...how that by His Majesty's extraordinary grace, fatherly love and providence that kingdom hath and doth notably rise...and that the subjects...will by his rare wisdom and policy...arise to the height of all worldly happiness and blessings, these will be esteemed by the subjects there that acknowledge themselves deep debtors to His Majesty for their most and best moral being, rather a thankful present from them all to his Majesty by way of retributions in discharge of their so many obligations...they owe His Highness.⁴⁷

Many people agreed in the early modern period that royal power was essentially patriarchal and that kings were indeed like fathers to their subjects, as discussed above. Absolutist theorists, however, like Saravia (1532-1613), a translator of King James' authorised version of the bible, whose *De imperandi autoritate* was published by the royal printer in 1593, further held that not only was fatherly power kingly, but that the power of the ruler came from God alone.⁴⁸ It is impossible to know whether Hadsor subscribed to the divine right of kings but the quasi-religious tenor of this passage

⁴⁵ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 17-18.

⁴⁶ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 53.

⁴⁷ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 39.

⁴⁸ J. P. Sommerville, 'Absolutism and royalism' in Burns (ed.), *Cambridge history of political thought*, pp 358-9.

certainly resembled the language of absolutism. The people would not mind contributing burdensome taxes when they considered that in return James would bestow gifts of ‘grace, fatherly love and providence’ - all gifts associated with the divine Father himself – which would bring them happiness and ‘blessings’, and these gifts from the king would benefit their ‘best moral being’. A further example of the language of obedience occurred when he referred to Ireland as being ‘the creature of the king’s most excellent Majesty’.⁴⁹ As we saw, Mageoghegan too showed signs of a belief in the patriarchal role of a king to his subjects, probably emanating from the traditional lord-vassal relationship in Gaelic Ireland when the people expected and were accustomed to the protection of the lord in return for tribute and hospitality, which pointed to an understanding of absolutist kingship in Mageoghegan. Indeed, his own great-grandfather, Connla, had signed a covenant with Breasal Fox in 1566 which broadly stipulated that, as a ‘sign of the lordship which Mageoghegan has over the Fox and his country’, and, in return for various tributes to which Connla was entitled, he would ‘do his utmost for the protection and shelter of the Fox’.⁵⁰ Therefore, this reciprocal agreement of tribute and protection, (often effected by coercion although such is not apparent in the Mageoghegan-Fox case) was present in Mageoghegan’s own recent ancestry. As we saw, Keating did not display such signs of adherence to patriarchalism in his approach and this thesis did not find these absolutist beliefs penetrating Burnell’s play.

At this juncture, it might be useful to compare Hadsor’s attitude to royalism with the absolutist views of John Cusacke, also from the Pale, to set Hadsor’s thinking in a wider Pale context. In doing so, I am drawing mainly on the research of Linda Levy Peck⁵¹ (although some of the interpretation is my own). Peck has found Cusacke to profess an unambiguously absolutist ideology with regard to the power of the king. John Cusacke was the grand-nephew of Sir Thomas Cusacke, a lord chancellor of Ireland in the 1550s. He had been educated on the continent and practised as a solicitor on the fringes of the law courts in London, especially around the court of wards. He claimed that he had been

⁴⁹ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 57.

⁵⁰ John O’Donovan (ed.), ‘Covenant between Mageoghegan and the Fox’ in *The miscellany of Irish Archaeological Society*, i (Dublin 1846), pp 179-197; also see <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/publishd.html>.

⁵¹ Linda Levy Peck, ‘Beyond the Pale: John Cusacke and the language of absolutism in early Stuart Britain’ in *The Historical Journal*, xli, no. 1 (March 1998), pp 121-49.

defrauded by his cousins out of his rightful inheritances from both his father and grand-uncle and he brought two cases in Chancery in Ireland against his relatives in order to recover his inheritance but his suits had been denied by the court. Probably as a consequence of this he was frequently in financial difficulty and spent many periods in prison in England on account of his debts.⁵² Cusacke wrote a number of tracts and treatises between 1615 and 1647, many of them proposals for various projects in which he was involved in promoting, and Peck has found an espousal of royal absolutism featuring prominently in all his writings.

Cusacke like Hadsor stressed a distinct kingdom of Ireland and distinguished between the Irish and English parliaments; when Ireland had achieved the status of kingdom 1541, it had obtained the same ‘liberties and priviledges’ which England had to make laws regarding trade and the economy with the authority of her own parliament ‘by whose absences from the Parliaments of England, their publique consents are from the same separated’.⁵³ (As we shall see below, however, Cusacke considered the Irish parliament to be more constricted than its English counterpart as regards which areas of law it could bring within its remit, due to the absence of ‘the immediat presence of the kinge’ in the parliament of Ireland.) Hadsor and Cusacke were also of the same mind regarding the importance of close connections between Ireland and England. Both pointed out that Irishmen were denizens of England;⁵⁴ Hadsor referred to the Old English as ‘English Irish’, Cusacke, as ‘Anglo Hiberni’; and just as Hadsor had stressed the loyalty of the Old English of the Pale, Cusacke, writing at the time of insurrection in 1641, concurred that, in the past, they had been ‘the chief props of the honour of the crown of England’.⁵⁵ The Pale connection to the crown was of great importance to its inhabitants.

However, the presence of an absolutist strain in Hadsor is borne out by the equivalence of many of his attitudes with those of Cusack regarding the sovereignty of the king.

Cusacke was a firm proponent of the king’s prerogative. Hadsor, as we saw, was willing

⁵² Peck, ‘John Cusacke’, pp 121-7.

⁵³ Peck, ‘John Cusacke’, p. 133.

⁵⁴ McLaughlin (ed.), ‘Discourse’, pp 347-8; Peck, ‘John Cusacke’, 145.

⁵⁵ Peck, ‘John Cusacke’, p. 146.

to bypass common law and was quite positive about the use of the king's prerogative in the taxing of what he considered were luxury items. Cusacke similarly defended Charles I's right under his prerogative to collect 'ship money', which had hitherto only been collected in times of war and he condemned those who thought otherwise: 'he knoweth not either what common law or king is who doth doubt of the free and absolute exercise of his royal prerogative in this particular act concerning the public good of his kingdom which is the chief ground of his challenge of ship money.'⁵⁶ With regard to the property of the subject, Hadsor, as seen above, recommended the appropriation of all forest and mountain lands to the king, and also urged the pushing through of an act of resumption in parliament to recover concealed chantry lands to the king. Similarly, Cusacke offered a project to Secretary Conway of concealed lands which promised to bring 'above £100,000 into his Majesty's coffers from...unlawful intruders' and he pointed out that uncertainty in land titles both in England and Ireland offered possibilities of profit to the crown'.⁵⁷ Hadsor, in his critique of defective husbandry, had stated, 'such as be backward in improving their land...should be compelled thereto for the common good. And such as want ability to perform the same should be driven to let over their lands to other industrious men'.⁵⁸ Cusack recommended the same course of action, albeit being more absolutist in his language: 'the King of England by his royal prerogative without an act of parliament may compel his subjects to give way to his royal design for the improvement of their lands in things concerning the public good of his kingdom...in spite of the subject's teeth...and who denieth this supreme act in the King of England...is a traitor'.⁵⁹ Furthermore, both considered that land should be held under feudal conditions which would mean it would revert to the crown for re-granting in cases of, for instance, escheat or attainder, or if the heir was underage. Hadsor lamented that the king was denied his 'ancient right and former titles, either by forfeiture for conditions broken, escheat, attainder, &c., fine for alienation, intrusion, livery, primer seisin, title of wardship and other the like collateral advantages' because, when surrenders had been made of estates, they had been re-granted by the officials 'absolutely in fee simple

⁵⁶ Peck, 'John Cusacke', p. 140.

⁵⁷ Peck, 'John Cusacke', p. 129.

⁵⁸ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 34.

⁵⁹ Peck, 'John Cusacke', p. 139.

without conditions, and with many of their tenures *in capite* altered to soccage'.⁶⁰ In similar fashion, Cusacke asserted that 'it was high treason in a subject to say that the streets of the city of London or of any other city within his Majesty's dominions of England or Ireland are not his Majesty's proper possessions and that the buildings on or over any of them raised are not held *in capite*'.⁶¹

Finally, with regard to the patriarchal nature of kingship, Cusacke's and Hadsor's royalist attitudes coalesced further. Both appeared to admire the absolutist rule of continental rulers. In defending the tax on luxuries, Hadsor had contended that the king was entitled to this tax as such revenue was 'the best part of the revenues of many Christian princes of the main continent, which tender dearly the ease and good of their subjects, and of them be in the highest degree of duty and both obeyed and honoured. As we see the kings of France and Spain...and elsewhere'.⁶² Similarly, Cusacke averred that the Irish, 'employed as good subjects for a good king to govern from...golden dispositions, endeavours and industries...by their conformable government he [King Charles] may reap more honour, profit then the King of Spain doth from his west Indy mines considering no gold is comparable to virtue'.⁶³ Hadsor's views on patriarchalism were especially apparent in the long passage quoted above which was also slightly suggestive of a belief in a divinely-inspired aspect to the king's rule of his subjects. Cusacke was unambiguous in his declaration: 'a king is the proper and absolute owner of his kingdom as the father of a family is of his housewife, children and servants...and to deny this assertion of common lawe is highe treason'.⁶⁴ Cusack was a firm believer in the absolutist ideology of the divine right of kings, proclaiming that it was an 'impious rebellion against God' to say that the people have a role in the election of the king, could compel him to be popular in his rule or could depose him; this was 'against the law of nature, which places in God the Absolute and voluntary selection of the king as a divine vicar'.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 11.

⁶¹ Peck, 'John Cusacke', p. 137.

⁶² O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 38-9.

⁶³ Peck, 'John Cusacke', p. 134.

⁶⁴ Peck, 'John Cusacke', p. 144.

⁶⁵ Peck, 'John Cusacke', p. 147.

Therefore, as shown by Peck, John Cusacke, born and reared in the Pale, revealed that he possessed a self-confessed absolutist understanding of royal sovereignty. While his views on the status of Ireland as a consequence of its conquest in the twelfth century are considered and compared below, his absolutist royalist opinions on sovereignty can be seen, in many ways, to be consonant with those expressed by Hadsor. Hadsor certainly did not reveal himself to be as absolutist in his royalism as Cusacke but the latter's absolutist views could have become more entrenched from his having spent time on the continent; he claimed to have studied 'Divinity and Philosophy and all liberal sciences in the most famous universities in Christendom', and Peck sees his writings situated in French legist discussions of royal power of the sixteenth century and reflecting the French *politique* Catholic writers who aligned themselves against the Leaguers.⁶⁶ Nicholas Canny has observed that it is possible that Cusacke's espousal of absolutist principles and the prerogative of the monarchy may have been more widely shared within the Old English community than is usually acknowledged. He noted that, despite their spokesmen employing the language of common law, the Old English interest was ultimately supportive of the British monarchy and its prerogative powers.⁶⁷ It is possible, of course, that such support could have resulted from a self-interested position rather than emanating from an ideology; having failed to achieve their demands from an increasingly hostile administration, the only redress the Old English could hope for was the king's prerogative.

However, Nessa Malone has given much consideration to the political and ideological attitudes of the Pale in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and has concluded that the relationship between Old English identity and constitutionalist politics cannot be assumed.⁶⁸ Whereas, Old English lawyer leaders in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries argued from a common law perspective to protest against infringement of their rights, such a strategy changed in the increasingly absolutist political culture of the Stuart

⁶⁶ Peck, 'John Cusacke', pp 124-5.

⁶⁷ Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650* (Oxford, 2001), p. 410.

⁶⁸ Malone, 'Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family', p. 6.

reigns.⁶⁹ Malone considers that the imprisonment and subsequent trial at Star Chamber in 1614 of the recusant lawyer William Talbot, a member of the Old English delegation to the crown, who refused to take the oath of supremacy and declined to condemn outright the writings of the Jesuit Suarez, seems to have marked a turning point in the tactics of Old English opposition and that, thereafter, the Old English appealed to the king's 'grace' to redress grievances rather than seeking their 'rights' under common law.⁷⁰ It is worth noting that the Old English oppositional leaders of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were all trained in the English Inns of Court and understandably based their arguments on common law; therefore, it is possible that this set of circumstances has weighted the findings of historiography somewhat towards the conclusion that the Old English in general possessed a 'constitutional' outlook. Malone has followed the careers of Talbot and of Sir Robert Dillon, Lord of Kilkenny West, whom we encountered in the previous chapter. Talbot, who had been a main oppositional member of the Old English community, remained a favoured figure among the court elite even after his disgrace before James I in 1614 and became baronet in 1622.⁷¹ After his imprisonment, he toned down his constitutionalist approach. Malone maintains that Talbot, along with those in the circle surrounding him, following his disciplining by Star Chamber under prerogative law, were highly conscious of their relationship as subjects to the king and prerogative, which is signalled by the quieter later political career of Talbot, including during the negotiations of the Graces.⁷² Robert Dillon, whose career was partly covered in the previous chapter, could not be considered to have ever been a figure in opposition to the government. A member of the Irish council and a supporter of Wentworth (whose sister was married to his son and who extolled Dillon's worth in many letters), he had participated in the negotiations for the Graces and had increasingly taken the position of advocate and negotiator for the crown.⁷³ Even in the years 1635-41, when the majority of the Old English had become completely disenchanted with Wentworth, he continued to support him, and, as we saw earlier, spoke in Wentworth's defence at his trial. Nevertheless, Dillon, though a Protestant and favoured by the crown, was

⁶⁹ Malone, 'Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family', pp 100, 132, 164.

⁷⁰ Malone, 'Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family', pp 152, 164.

⁷¹ Malone, 'Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family', p. 162.

⁷² Malone, 'Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family', p. 183.

⁷³ Malone, 'Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family', pp 166-7.

embedded within the recusant Old English elite and, in 1629, balked at collection of recusancy fees which were adversely affecting his own community.⁷⁴ Almost the single exception in the Old English group in terms of receiving appointments, favour and proximity to the court, he was still considered a venerable member of their community by the rest of the Old English lords and gentry.⁷⁵ This suggests perhaps that many of the Old English shared his outlook.

Therefore, taking into account the absolutism of John Cusacke, the absolutist tendencies of Hadsor in the area of sovereignty, the pro-government Dillon, and the muted political response of the erstwhile ‘constitutionalist’ Talbot, who were all members of the Pale community, it is possible that the ideological beliefs of the Old English of the Pale in terms of their royalism tended more strongly towards an absolutist understanding of the king-subject relationship than did the ideology of the Old English of the provinces. Up until the seventeenth century, it was possible to distinguish clearly between two streams of Anglo-Norman descendants. Firstly, there were those who lived in the area directly under the control of the crown ruled through its Irish administration, mainly the counties of the Pale, the seaports outside Ulster and most of the inland towns of Leinster, Munster and county Galway, and these had remained loyal to the king. Others lived closer to the lands occupied by the native Irish, variously known as ‘degenerate English’ or ‘the king’s English rebels’, who over the centuries had established themselves in positions of power and independence that placed them beyond the control of the government and weakened both their allegiance to the crown and their resilience in resisting the influence of the Irish. It was only at the end of the Elizabethan reign, with the full assertion of royal control, that these separate groups of the twelfth-century settlers had coalesced into a cohesive group united by the common bond of Catholicism, descent and government discrimination.⁷⁶ Therefore, it is not surprising that the inclinations of the Old English of the Pale should have been more attuned to the prevailing ideology in England than those who for centuries had been more accustomed to a greater degree of autonomy independent of the English king. Keating, as we have seen, displayed a much more anti-

⁷⁴ Malone, ‘Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family’, p. 169.

⁷⁵ Malone, ‘Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family’, p. 183.

⁷⁶ Aidan Clarke, *The Old English in Ireland, 1625-1641* (Dublin, 1966), ch. 1.

absolutist philosophy than Hadsor. Burnell, although from the Pale but having spent some time living on its outskirts, and also writing in 1641 at the end of the Wentworth era at a time when the situation for the Old English had reached crisis point, maintained an oppositional stance to arbitrary sovereignty. In *AClon*, however, any suggestion of opposition to a king was not inferred from Mageoghegan's treatment of the concept of kingship.

It is pertinent to wonder whether James I and Charles I were aware of the degree of variance of opinion that existed among Irish Catholics. While it is possible that James had been made aware of Hadsor's earlier 1604 discourse and quite likely that he and Charles were informed of the opinions and content of his reports of 1622 and 1632, they may not have been familiar with the works of the other four men. Nevertheless, from the reports of returning crown officials to London and from correspondence from the Irish council to the king and privy council, they were probably kept well informed that different shades of ideology prevailed among Irish Catholics. In addition, English spies on the continent periodically reported back to London on conversations being aired and unrest that existed among the Irish communities in Europe. As a consequence, both kings, doubtless always wary of antagonising their Irish Catholic subjects to the point of endangering the security of England through possible Spanish invasion in Ireland, employed a restraining hand from time to time on their viceroys in Ireland. Nevertheless, the Stuart absolutist approach to monarchy was effected continuously on the ground in Ireland by English administrators and crown officials in Ireland, as instanced earlier regarding the government onslaught against lesser lords after James had halted the systematic fining and imprisoning of the élite in the 'mandates' campaign. Similarly, during another period of tacit toleration of Catholics, this time by Charles when he granted the 'Graces', Protestant leaders, conscious that such concessions diminished their hopes for further gains through plantation, and encouraged by the recent spirit and vocabulary of anti-Catholicism raging in England during the negotiations of the Spanish match for Prince Charles, were loud in their condemnation of Catholics and succeeded in persuading the king to recall the relatively moderate Falkland in 1629.⁷⁷ Therefore,

⁷⁷ Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650* (Oxford, 2001), pp 266-8.

despite intermittent royal relaxation of measures against Irish Catholics, the more severe anti-Catholic regime experienced by English Catholics was also perpetrated in Ireland. Such discrimination contributed to the drawing together of the Old Irish and the Old English throughout this period.

Whatever about their particular strands of royalism, however, there was no doubt in Hadsor's mind that the Norman invasion had been a conquest and that it was a defining moment for Ireland, as it was for Keating. Hadsor's preamble to his 'Discourse' in 1604 supplied a potted history of Ireland and he punctuated the various periods thus: 'before the conquest...', 'at the time of the conquest...', 'upon his conquest...' and 'since the conquest'. Like Keating, who made sure to say that Henry II had received the submission of the provincial kings and of the king of Ireland and had 'suffered...the people to remain in the country', Hadsor stressed that Henry II 'receaved the said kinges and other the Cheiftaynes of that Realme into mercy, having sworne allegiance unto him & his Successors & did not absolutely supresse or transplant them.'⁷⁸ These two Old English commentators were in agreement on those particular details of the conquest; Keating, however, had stressed the circumstance of the 'gift of the Pope', an incident to which Hadsor did not allude. Hadsor went on to emphasise that the English kings had ruled from there on with 'absolute kingly authority' until the 1541 Irish parliament when they were then 'enacted to be Kinges of Ireland.'⁷⁹ As noted, Mageoghegan had not regarded the Norman invasion as such a watershed for Ireland although he had reported that Henry had made 'an intire conquest in Ireland', revealing that he had no problem in accepting the conquest. Another example which illustrates the absence of any resentment on Mageoghegan's part regarding the conquest, and indicates he was quite happy with the status quo of the kingdom of Ireland and the presence of the Anglo-Norman descendants, is evident from an interpolation regarding the death of Edward Bruce in AD 1318. He reported that Bruce, who 'was sure he was able to overthrow' the English of Ireland, was

slaine himselfe as is declared to the great joy & comfort of the whole kingdome in generall, for there was not a better deed, that redounded better or more for the

⁷⁸ Geoffrey Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn: the history of Ireland* (c. 1634), ed. and trans. P. S. Dineen & David Comyn (4 vols, London, 1902-14), i, 35-8; McLaughlin (ed.), 'Discourse', p. 345.

⁷⁹ McLaughlin (ed.), 'Discourse', pp 345-6.

good of the kingdome since the creation of the world...done Ireland then the killing of Edward Bruce.⁸⁰

While the substance of his entry is in full agreement with the annals, he expanded the record, and his seventeenth terminology of, ‘not a better deed, that redounded better or more for the good of the kingdome’ is different from the annals whose entries ran, ‘never was a better deed done for the Irish’; or, ‘from which greater benefit had accrued to the country’; or, ‘a deed that was better for the Men of Ireland’; or, ‘no better deed for the men of all Erinn was performed.’⁸¹ Nevertheless, for the Old English, the twelfth-century conquest was something to be celebrated whereas the Gaelic Irishman treated it as an event of minor importance. In Mageoghegan’s account, the figure of Brian Boromha took centre-stage and Brian’s career took pride of place as the defining moment in Irish history.

For John Cusacke also, the twelfth-century invasion had been the decisive event for Ireland and he held even more deeply entrenched convictions than Hadsor or Keating regarding the conquest. He implied that the country had been virtually uninhabited before the conquest. Ireland had been a waste land, ‘having neither lawfull kinge, or owner...a vast, and waste kingedome exposed to the absolute conquest of kinge Henry the second’. Henry had planted the English colony there which was ‘since inlarged into a kingdom as a profitable grasse inserted into a wild stocke’.⁸² Cusacke repeatedly referred to Ireland as a colony; for instance, he explained that the reason for the enactment of Poynings’ law was, ‘for the better preservation of the coloniall government of Ireland’. However, this is not to say that he thought of Ireland as a colony in the colonial sense of later eras. Raymond Gillespie has pointed out that, in the early seventeenth century, most contemporaries in the British Isles used the word ‘colony’ loosely without the imperial, political overtones that it acquired in the nineteenth century; the word ‘colony’ simply meant a group of people that migrated from one place to

⁸⁰ Denis Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise* (Dublin, 1896, facsimile reprint, 1993), pp 281-2.

⁸¹ *AConn* AD1318.8; *ARÉ* AD 1318.5; *AU* AD 1315.5; *LCé* AD 1318.7.

⁸² Peck, ‘John Cusacke’, pp 133-4.

another.⁸³ Indeed, at AD 1381, Mageoghegan, without any political significance, used the terminology, ‘the English collonyes of them parts’, to describe the English of Meath when reporting a routine skirmish between them and Rory O’Connor, where the earlier-written *AU* at 1381.8 used their customary description of ‘the Foreigners.’⁸⁴

Accordingly, even though Cusacke was certainly absolutist in his ideology, and he did consider the Irish to be dependents of the English king, this did not mean they were subordinate to the English kingdom. He held that colonial government was ‘grounded on a relation of colonial dependency in the colony from her mother country, like unto that which is betweene a naturall child and his parent’, but, as noted already, that redress for ‘colonoians’ was to the king himself not to the king in parliament.⁸⁵ Hadsor, in 1622, in relation to Ireland, used the terminology, ‘her mother Britain’, indicating that he shared this understanding of a dependant relationship between Ireland and Britain, and, as we have seen, he believed in the independence of the Irish parliament.⁸⁶ Furthermore, Cusack believed that the Old English - and the native Irish whom he considered should now also be designated as ‘English-Irish - were not inferior to the inhabitants of England; in fact the Old English were a race of conquerors. For Cusack, the reality of the conquest meant that

my native country your majesty’s realme of Ireland, inhabited for the most part by the English race there planted as in their colony of England is not a land conquered but a land of conquerors, the same occupying and enjoying as free Denizons of England there resident and ruled by the same common lawes with the subjects and inhabitants of England to whom the incorporation of the Irish natives by way of Denization doth also make them to be partakers of the same liberties, privileges and immunities with them by common lawe for which their peculiar manner of civil and legal existences your majesties subjects of your realm of Ireland are to be properly stiled Anglo Hiberni from their offspring, conquest, abode and government...and not absolutely Hibernis.⁸⁷

The Irish, or in Cusacke’s nomenclature, the Anglo Hiberni, were denizens of and entitled to the same privileges and liberties as those in the mother country. Again,

⁸³ Raymond Gillespie, ‘The problems of plantations: material culture and social change in early modern Ireland’ in James Lyttleton & Colin Rynne (eds), *Plantation Ireland: settlement and material culture, c.1550-c.1700* (Dublin, 2009), p. 45.

⁸⁴ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 307.

⁸⁵ Peck, ‘John Cusacke’, p. 133.

⁸⁶ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 55.

⁸⁷ Peck, ‘John Cusacke’, p. 145.

Hadsor shared the same approach as the absolutist Cusacke: ‘Irishmen borne are denizens by birth in England and may beare office and inherytt Landes in England as ys to be seene, without Charters of denizacion’.⁸⁸ Hadsor used the same colonial language to describe the conquest as Cusacke. He first asserted that Ireland had been conquered in the seventh century by Egfride, king of Northumberland and, in the tenth century, by Edgar King of England; ‘And last of all King Henry II arrived there...and subjected it to the imperial Crown of England, to which we see it was subject and united before.’⁸⁹ Keating had rejected the narrative of Spenser that either Egfride or Edgar ever had authority over Ireland but the more absolutist Hadsor accepted it. However, despite absolutist language, Hadsor did not consider Ireland to be a colony in the nineteenth century ideology of colonialism. He wanted her to thrive and prosper in her own right, recommending improvements in trade and industry, albeit with the partial aim of directing customs money into the king’s coffers. On several occasions he alluded to the desirability of working up yarn and wool at home and turning it into cloth: ‘did they make of their own yarn and wools, stuffs and cloth at home, then might they utter much abroad and furnish besides sufficiently the inhabitants, and that to the king and subject’s high advantage’.⁹⁰ Hadsor genuinely wished for a successful future for Ireland, couching his hopes in patriarchal language: ‘let her therefore...truly glory above her neighbour’s countries in birth and perfection for that she is born and bred of so absolute and complete a father, tutor and governor’.⁹¹ Therefore, with regard to the conquest and to Ireland’s relationship to the English king, the foregoing is another indication that Hadsor and Cusacke, both from the Pale, shared many similar beliefs.

Parliament & Government

In terms of his attitude to legislating, however, there is no doubt that Hadsor believed in the constitutional function of parliament as the forum for making and enacting law. In his discourse of 1604 he stated clearly that, since the conquest, ‘Courts of parliament’ had been held in Ireland consisting, as in England, of the three estates, the bishops, nobility

⁸⁸ McLaughlin (ed.), ‘Discourse’, p. 347.

⁸⁹ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 2.

⁹⁰ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 25-6.

⁹¹ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 57.

and commons, for the ‘making or repealinge of such Lawes & statutes as are fit for that Realme’.⁹² We remember that Keating was clear in his assertion that the Feis of Tara, which he depicted as a parliament, was where the nobles ‘were wont to lay down and to renew rules and laws’; and Burnell had inferred his belief in the constitutionality of parliament by having his king assure the Old English characters of their law-making status. Mageoghegan, conversely, as we saw, showed little interest in the institution of parliament and seemed to view law-making as the king’s responsibility. Hadsor, nevertheless, despite his constitutional approach, was very keen to stress the monarch’s role in parliament by emphasising and repeating the element of ‘the King’s Royal assent’. He gave a rather convoluted explanation of the procedures that had to be followed in preparation for parliament in accordance with Poyning’s Law of 1494. The king, under the ‘greate seale of England’, would authorise his deputy by commission to summon parliament; he would ‘give ye Royall assent unto such Actes as are agreed upon in that parlyamente’; he and his privy council would have to be informed beforehand of this proposed legislation ‘by certificatt under the greate seale of Ireland’; and, ‘uppon ye kinges allowance of ye same actes [sic]’, the deputy, under his commission, ‘gives the Kinges Royall assent to such Actes as are agreed upon the parliament there’.⁹³ Hadsor was very keen to stress that the king’s royal confirmation was required for acts that had been passed by parliament. For Cusacke too, although to an even greater extent than Hadsor, the ‘king-in-parliament’ was an essential component of that institution – Cusacke articulating an absolutist standpoint as usual. Cusacke understood the institution of the English parliament to be a council assembled by the king to advise him: the lords spiritual and temporal had no actual right to be called and the commons did not have to be included at all; the ‘principes primores’ and the ‘patres’ were just ‘grave councillors of state’ and the ‘Commons’ were there ‘by congruity not by necessity’.⁹⁴ Therefore, although professing a constitutionalist standpoint, Hadsor ensured that he stressed the king’s integral part in parliament.

⁹² McLaughlin (ed.), ‘Discourse’, p. 346.

⁹³ McLaughlin (ed.), ‘Discourse’, pp 346-7.

⁹⁴ Peck, ‘John Cusacke’, p. 130.

However, Hadsor did stress the independence of the Irish legislature by declaring that, while all English statutes prior to 1495 were confirmed by act of parliament in Ireland, since that time only such statutes passed in England that were ‘necessary for that Realme,’ were enacted in the Irish parliament, as well as laws specific to Ireland which were not enacted in England. Therefore, Ireland was governed by English common law and by certain ‘auncyent Customes of that Realme’ along with those said statutes. This insistence that laws had to be passed in the Irish parliament shows that he shared Keating’s convictions that law-making was the domain of parliament and indicates Hadsor’s respect for the constitutional role of the institution. Furthermore, as stated above, Hadsor believed in the independence of the Irish parliament of its English counterpart. He stated unequivocally that the ‘tryall of Noblemen in Ireland for treason, ys by the Act of parliament in that Realme.’⁹⁵ At this stage in 1604 he was obviously thinking of the earl of Tyrone and the gentry who had supported Tyrone during the wars and he was emphasising that according to law they should not be tried in England. Again in 1622, when he recommended remedying deficiencies in Irish law, he was careful to specify that new legislation was to be introduced in Ireland: that ‘statutes may there be enacted by the next parliament’ and that the same offices and courts that were current in England ‘by the parliament there to be established’.⁹⁶ His understanding accords with his acceptance of Ireland’s status as separate kingdom and consequently his rejection of any subordination to the English parliament. Cusacke, in 1629, as we saw, distinguished between the two parliaments; he stated then that the Irish, because they had been conquered by the English kings, should have redress to the king himself and not to the king in parliament, suggesting that he too did not see the English parliament having jurisdiction over Ireland. In this, his view and Hadsor’s coalesced. By the early 1640s, however, Cusacke’s thinking had developed somewhat. He was writing in the context that ‘common law belonged to the person of a king as *Rex in solio* in parliament’; he asserted that in redress of oppressions sustained contrary to common law, the king’s subjects of Ireland and Scotland should ‘implore their helps from your Majesty in your

⁹⁵ McLaughlin (ed.), ‘Discourse’, p. 347.

⁹⁶ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 42-3.

royal throne and Parliament of England'.⁹⁷ His intended meaning here seems to have been, however, that the king was integral to parliament; and, as he had always maintained that the king was the supreme voice in parliament anyway, his thinking had not really become any more absolutist than it already was; he believed the English parliament itself to be subject to the decisions and will of the king.

However, Cusacke believed that the Irish parliament was circumscribed in its powers because the king did not sit there in person:

As the immediat presence of the kinge in his parliament of England, doth by the exercise of his immediat act of Royall prerogative...make it to be a supreme court of common lawe...soe the want of that Royall presence [in Ireland]...doth lymitt their publike determinations...wheareby the intermeddling of that court, with the publike resolutions, and determinations of common lawe and equity, or monarchy, is a thinge improper.⁹⁸

Therefore, whereas Hadsor and Cusacke may have agreed on the importance of the king's role in parliament, Hadsor's understanding of parliament accorded with a constitutionalist position whereas Cusacke's doctrine stemmed from his extreme absolutist theory of the king's role in parliament with regard to making common law. Cusacke gave his definition of law:

Lawe is a certaine reason, flowing from the mynd of God...contayning a true, and perfect discovery of the matter of common lawe in her integrity...and of her forme in her confirmation by Royall authority, in beinge an immediate act of Sovereigne command...with which definition of common lawe, I doe araigne all the precedents of common lawe made without Royal confirmation as apocriphe in their attempt, and traitorous in their intent before your Majesty and that lawier for a traitor that dares to call any of them lawe.⁹⁹

There is no mistaking Cusacke's meaning here; while he may have been railing at an individual lawyer, perhaps Sir Edward Coke, who had refused to find for him in a suit, it is obvious that he was convinced that common law was not valid until confirmed by the king. As we have seen, Hadsor did not have such absolutist ideology with regard to law; whereas, at times, he recommended the use of prerogative law when a course of action

⁹⁷ Peck, 'John Cusacke', p. 146.

⁹⁸ Peck, 'John Cusacke', pp 133-4.

⁹⁹ Peck, 'John Cusacke', p. 135.

would not stand up under common law, he still understood common law to be independent of the king and to be separate from the king's prerogative law. Accordingly, whereas with regard to the sovereign power of the king, there were similarities between the absolutist Cusacke and Hadsor, when it came to the function of parliament making law, Hadsor revealed that he possessed constitutionalist beliefs.

Nevertheless, Hadsor was not 'constitutionalist' in the sense of being in any way opposed to the will of the king or to the use of his prerogative. Nessa Malone has pointed to variations between the constitutionalism of the Old English and that held by constitutionalists in England. In the Irish context constitutionalist meant a belief in limits on the arbitrary power by a ruler together with a belief in the sovereignty of the English king over Irish subjects, whereas, in England, as interpreted by Sommerville, constitutionalism represented an alternate or oppositional ideology to that propagated by the state,¹⁰⁰ presumably meaning the government consisting of king and privy council. Victor Treadwell's profile of Hadsor is of one who continued to wear the mantle of constitutionalism of the Old English of the previous generation: a 'Jacobean torchbearer of the Pale constitutionalist tradition, a direct heir of the Elizabethan lawyer-commonwealthmen'; and 'a key link in an unbroken chain of Old English constitutionalism which stretched from the sixteenth century to the twentieth'.¹⁰¹ Hadsor did indeed exhibit the inherited attitudes of the sixteenth-century 'commonwealthmen' but the absolutist strand of royalism in his approach is a significant indication that many of the Old English, especially those of the Pale, while being 'constitutionalist' in one sense, were not completely anti-absolutist in their understanding of the sovereign power of the king.

Hadsor, in contrast to Cusacke also, believed in the independence of the courts and reposed great trust in the Irish judiciary to deliver justice. He bemoaned that,

many of the inhabitants there resort daily here...after their cause received a legal trial before in Ireland, and a judgment passed there upon them...yet will they not

¹⁰⁰ Malone, 'Social, cultural and intellectual milieu of the Burnell family', p. 151; J. P. Sommerville, 'Ideology, property and the constitution' in Richard Custard and Anne Hughes (eds), *Conflict in early Stuart England* (London, 1997), p. 49.

¹⁰¹ Treadwell, 'Richard Hadsor', pp 313, 331.

rest satisfied, but must repair to His Majesty and the Lords here, and renew before them the whole cause, which I take to be...much to the dishonour of the State there and disability of the acts and authority of the Courts of Justice there, who have full power to try, judge and determine all matters and suits of that kingdom.¹⁰²

The only caveat he entered in this respect was in cases that involved governors, judges or supreme officers whom he considered should be heard in England by committees appointed by the king.¹⁰³ Treadwell has suggested that lurking behind Hadsor's words here lies his regret at the situation where Irish Catholic lawyers had since 1613 been excluded from practising in the Irish courts.¹⁰⁴ In any case, Hadsor's opinion was in direct contrast to that of Cusacke, who sought to extend the judicial reach of English courts into Irish property disputes.¹⁰⁵ Having lost his suit in Ireland to recover his alleged inheritances, in 1615 Cusacke sought relief in the English court of exchequer chamber, which he elsewhere referred to as 'a supreme court'.¹⁰⁶ Cusacke believed that it was the king who had the ultimate power to act as judge; he stated that the members of parliament should award subsidies 'to the honour and dignity or right of your crown and obey all your Majesty's just sentences delivered and lawes made in parliament'.¹⁰⁷ He denounced Sir Edward Coke for 'excluding of the king from the acts of judicature' by refusing to give a certificate for James I to rule on Cusacke's appeal. Cusacke, though a solicitor, argued that the king could hear causes as a judge: 'a kinge ought to hear...causes...as well by himself as by others...because it is not to be doubted that the ancient kings and emperors have done it'.¹⁰⁸ Hadsor, a barrister and better trained in the precepts of pure law, had more faith in the judiciary and recommended that they should expand their reach wider; he recommended that 'the Courts of Justice and State should now and then remove to some convenient place within the heart of the land...for the ease of the subjects that live remote from Dublin'.¹⁰⁹ It will be remembered that Mageoghegan wrote regretfully that when King Dermot McCeruell grew deaf he could

¹⁰² O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 39.

¹⁰³ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 40.

¹⁰⁴ Treadwell, 'Richard Hadsor', p. 313.

¹⁰⁵ Peck, 'John Cusacke', p. 130.

¹⁰⁶ Peck, 'John Cusacke', p. 126.

¹⁰⁷ Peck, 'John Cusacke', p. 130.

¹⁰⁸ Peck, 'John Cusacke', p. 131.

¹⁰⁹ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 37.

not ‘hear causes of his subjects’ and he referred to this role in two other cases as well. Mageoghegan drew on his Gaelic traditions in his understanding of this role as the function of the monarch. Even though the law was the responsibility of the professional brehons, Kenneth Nicholls has instanced the custom in Gaelic Ireland, as late as the middle of the sixteenth century, of taking an oath upon the hand of the lord of the country, and where perjury was committed after such an oath it would be severely punished by the lord as an insult to himself. In addition, while arbitration was usually left to the brehons, in cases where his own interest was involved, the lord of the country would interfere to enforce his will.¹¹⁰ Therefore, though emanating from different traditions, the beliefs of the absolutist Cusack and the Gaelic Mageoghegan coalesced somewhat in this respect.

Writing in 1604, when the Old English had effectively ceased to be considered for high political office and had been replaced by New English appointees, Hadsor openly bemoaned the fact that ‘few men of note of English descent’ [the Old English] were ‘employed or countenanced in the publique affaires & Councillors of estate in the Kingdome and some unfit persons ymployed as inferior magistrates there’.¹¹¹ He further pointed out in this discourse, intended for consideration by the newly enthroned James I, that the king was empowered by law to make an Irishman his lord deputy in Ireland ‘as divers of the Nobility of the Realme have been.’¹¹² No Irishman had served as lord deputy since the earls of Kildare in the early sixteenth century and Hadsor obviously harboured hopes that the new king would institute a change of policy. Hadsor clearly regarded it as appropriate that an Irish kingdom should have the input into the governance of the country of those who, over the centuries, had been the traditional leaders in political and public affairs in Ireland viz. the Old English. He recommended their inclusion at all levels of governance in Ireland, including on the Irish Council. Along with English and Scottish men ‘of worth’, he suggested that ‘Noblemen and cyvill Gentry of quality Natives of the Country whose posterity the good or evill estate of that Realme shall most concerne...may be used as Councillors of estate...and also as lyvetenautes of

¹¹⁰ Kenneth Nicholls, *Gaelic and gaelicized Ireland in the middle ages* (Dublin, 2003), pp 52-7.

¹¹¹ McLaughlin (ed.), ‘Discourse’, p. 349.

¹¹² McLaughlin (ed.), ‘Discourse’, p. 347.

Counties Judges & annuall Sheriffes & other principall officers'.¹¹³ It is not entirely clear whom he specifically meant by 'quallity Natives'; perhaps he was alluding to some loyal native gentry such as the earl of Thomond, but judging by the tenor of his writings overall, he was mainly referring to the Old English. Keating, it may be recalled, similarly lauded the Anglo-Irish earls for their trustworthiness and unequalled ability to govern. However, by the time Hadsor wrote his report of 1622, while still lamenting that 'they are not placed in offices', he had ceased to expect that the Old English could aspire to high office: 'Would to God His Majesty and the state here would be pleased to make trial of our English Pale gentlemen and others of the English descent...to employ them in some acceptable service'.¹¹⁴ Hadsor would have had to water down his demands for Old English participation in the increasingly anti-recusant atmosphere in Ireland but he still had the independence and courage to voice support for the Old English at a time when they were facing outright hostility from the New English and scant support from those at court either. It is likely that he was a committed supporter of theirs in the circles of power even if he had to operate in a discreet and unobtrusive manner.

Even though, as noted, at times he proposed the use of prerogative law, Hadsor advocated normally governing through justice and within the tenets of the law. In 1604, he condemned the fact that many sheriffs, who were of inferior status, did not even have lands in the counties where they served, 'contrary to the Laws of the Realm', and the first recommendation that he made in a long list of measures for the 'better estate' of the kingdom, was 'that justice may be duly ministered throughout the Realm according to the Laws thereof by learned & sincere Judges and Magistrates', obviously referring to the Old English.¹¹⁵ By 1622, his respect for the law had not diminished, in fact, if anything, it had increased. He despised injustice, fraud and corruption. What seemed to irk him more than anything was the rise of a person from having no wealth to having extensive possessions and high office. He complained that 'most of the ministerial offices there, especially of the clerks, are bestowed upon some sharks there that be of obscure fortunes, birth, and quality...who ingress most of the wealth of that realm to themselves; do raise

¹¹³ McLaughlin (ed.), 'Discourse', p. 350.

¹¹⁴ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 4-5.

¹¹⁵ McLaughlin (ed.), 'Discourse', pp 349-50.

their estate from nothing to an incredible value in a trice of time.’¹¹⁶ He conducted a sustained campaign between 1624 and 1629 against the earl of Cork for holding lands unjustly to the detriment of crown revenue and from whom Hadsor hoped to recoup £50,000 in compensation for the king.¹¹⁷ It must be said though that this crusade against Cork also coincided with the plans of the duke of Buckingham on whose patronage Hadsor would at this stage have depended, his two patrons Lennox and Aubigny having died in 1624.¹¹⁸ There is no doubt that Hadsor’s primary focus in attacking fraud and corruption was because they adversely affected and diminished the revenues properly due to the king (this was, after all, the fiscal nature of his mission in 1622) but the injustices being perpetrated against the subjects in general also caused him great discomfiture. He denounced dishonest clerks who ‘do vex the subject very much’; who arrested innocent parties on a charge of outlawry; others who exacted unreasonable fees for approving weights and measures; and tax collectors who ‘do practise many enormities’ and failed to apply the taxes towards the public works for which they were intended.¹¹⁹ Keating also put great stock also on honesty and justice; for example, he instanced the case of the Connacht sage, Connla Caoinbhriathrach, one of the trio who brought the Seanchus to Patrick to be purified, who ‘never delivered an unjust judgment, for he was a virtuous truly upright man according to the light of nature’.¹²⁰

Hadsor possessed a genuinely strong sense of the injustice which had been perpetrated against the native landowners and tenant farmers who complained of unfair treatment in the re-grant of their lands which they had surrendered in the plantations. In a paper of December 1623 or January 1624, probably intended as agenda for the new standing commission on Irish affairs, and attributed by Treadwell to Hadsor, he set out the irregularities committed in the plantations of Longford, King’s Co. and Wexford. The natives ‘had not the benefit of his majesty’s’ original plantation instructions; by their petitions ‘touching the abuses of his majesty’s said instructions, it is declared that the said escheated lands were misemployed, especially by the want of skill or corruption of the

¹¹⁶ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 5.

¹¹⁷ *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1625-32*, pp 262, 330, 369, 386, 391; Treadwell, ‘Richard Hadsor’, pp 324-6.

¹¹⁸ Rob Macpherson, ‘Ludovick Stuart, 2nd duke of Lennox and duke of Richmond’, *ODNB*.

¹¹⁹ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 46-7.

¹²⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 34-7.

inferior surveyors and measurers...who, as the natives inform, measured the said escheated lands' incorrectly. Some land was granted to those who were neither undertaker nor native of the county; some natives received more land than they actually surrendered; some got their lands back without any deduction (the plantations regulations stipulated that a quarter of their lands were forfeited for granting to the planters); and 'some of the natives are dispossessed of all the lands which they held before the plantation...whereby divers of them are so impoverished as they are enforced to beg'. Hadsor firmly attributed this injustice to 'the corruption of certain Irish gentlemen...who gained great proportions to themselves and deceived the native thereof.'¹²¹ The chief offender in this case, as bitterly accused by the O'Farrells of Longford, was Robert Dillon of Canorstown,¹²² the father-in-law of Terence Coghlan, whom we met in chapter two; he was son-in-law of Sir Theobald Dillon who also came in for criticism from Hadsor (see below). Hadsor obviously felt very aggrieved at the injustice meted out to 'the poor natives or former freeholders' of the Longford plantation. He reported that 'some run mad and others died instantly for very grief, as one James McWilliam O Ferrell of Clonyard...and others, whose names for brevity I leave out, who in their death-beds were in such a taking that they by earnest persuasion cause some of their family and friends to bring them out of their said beds to have abroad the last sight of the hills and fields they lost in the said plantation, every one of them dying instantly after'.¹²³ This shows that, at an individual level, Hadsor was sympathetic to the plight of the wronged natives, all of them Old Irish, and that he treated their cases in an ethical, unbiased and impartial manner even though, at a general level, he displayed much prejudice and cultural antipathy to the Gaelic traditions.

Culture

Hadsor was both geographically and culturally-speaking a Palesman and proud of the long lineage of the residents of the Pale. He declared, 'most of the gentry of the English Pale there have from King Henry II's conquest there retained their ancient estates and possessions.' He lamented that very few people made 'any distinction between the

¹²¹ Treadwell, *Irish commission of 1622*, pp 742-3.

¹²² Treadwell, *Irish commission of 1622*, pp 661-3.

¹²³ Treadwell, *Irish commission of 1622*, p. 666.

English Irish (especially those of the Pale of Ireland, whereof I confess myself to be a member) and the mere Irish', and averred that there was 'so large a distance between them really as there be betwixt two several nations'. Assuring their lordships that the Old English had always been the 'chief servitors to the crown' and the 'prime base and pillars of the safety of that distracted kingdom', he observed, 'I have heard them lament much their own misfortune in that they...cannot be so happy as to be retained in the king's or prince's service about court; for that they are (as they think) not better thought of in their loyalty than the mere Irish'.¹²⁴ Sir Walter Butler, eleventh earl of Ormond, was to make a similar comment in 1630 in his efforts to avoid the plantation of his lands, for which New English officials were clamouring, when he protested that, if plantation were to go ahead, he would have the distinction of being 'selected amongst all the ancient English plantators to be the first replanted and ranked with the Irish'.¹²⁵ Ormond's comment, while indicating some anti-Irish bias, is perhaps understandable, being made in the context of self-interest and the quest for survival of his estates. In the composition of a formal report, Hadsor's clear distinguishing between the two communities, showing the one in a negative light in order to enhance the cause of the other, strongly suggests a lack of cultural empathy with the Gaelic Irish.

It must be said, of course, that Hadsor's constant disparaging references to the mere Irish, to their 'innate sluggishness', their 'idleness' and 'improvidence', was symptomatic of typical contemporary rhetoric and hierarchical attitudes towards the 'common sort', those at the bottom of the social ladder, and does not necessarily point to any excessive ethnic prejudice on his part. Nevertheless, it was not only those in the lowest social group whom he criticised; he also at times declaimed against their gentry. Therefore, a certain amount of prejudice on his part is apparent which confirms the cultural divide between himself and the native Irish. He complained about the dishonest conduct of the 'mere Irish and others' who had grants of 'waifs and felons' goods. It is clear that it was the gentry and lesser gentry of the native Irish to whom he was referring here and he did not specify who 'others' were, though doubtless it was not only the native Irish who were

¹²⁴ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 4.

¹²⁵ quoted in Canny, *Making Ireland British*, pp 272-3.

recipients of such grants. He complained that ‘these kind of men have many followers and great trains of loose and vagrant persons’, who live by ‘pillage, robbery, stealth, and the like’ and are motivated to their criminal practices by the knowledge that ‘their goods and waifs shall come to the lord’s hands’, and that the lord would then restore these goods or their value to the pilferers. He further condemned the

many gentlemen of good estates that do border upon the marches and bounds of several countries’ who protected ‘these vagabond caitiffs and rogues...some of these great patrons and abettors...with ease avoid the danger of the law by favour and strength of purse’ by obtaining pardons for themselves, and they also have inset in their charter of pardon sometimes exorbitant and notorious offenders.¹²⁶

Hadsor may also have been mentally including some gaelicised Old English marcher lords in this barrage of criticism of the gentry, but, if so, he did not specifically designate them thus. To be fair to Hadsor, such practices may have been widespread; the Jesuit Barnabas Kearney (1567-1640), brother of the bishop of Cashel, David Kearney, who worked with the Jesuit missions in Ireland for thirty years in the early seventeenth century, also condemned robberies and preached in Munster against lords and families who sheltered robbers.¹²⁷

Hadsor further opined that it was inappropriate that the gentry of the native Irish should cling to their traditional dress and native language:

few of the gentry can either write or read; neither do they affect the learning of the English tongue...and, although sometimes abroad, as at the general assizes...they wear the English habit, yet at home in their own territories and houses, they use altogether their antique barbarous habit...these Irish lords and their followers should be compelled to breed up their children in the English tongue.¹²⁸

The traditional Irish mantle was obviously repugnant to him, and, even though he himself was proficient in Irish, he did not display any sign of affection for the language. It was quite natural for Mageoghegan to have esteemed his own Irish language and, as we have seen, he was unashamedly proud of it. Burnell, reared close to the heart of the Pale, had used no word of Irish in his play which implies he, like Hadsor, had no particular esteem

¹²⁶ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 41.

¹²⁷ Salvador Ryan, ‘Popular religion in Gaelic Ireland, 1445-1645’ (2 vols, PhD thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2002), ii, 227.

¹²⁸ O’Brien(ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 42.

for the language; whereas Keating, the Old English man from Tipperary, had great affection for Irish and had contemptuously dismissed Stanihurst for being ‘blindly ignorant in the language of the country in which were the ancient records and transactions of the territory, and of every people who had inhabited it’.¹²⁹ It seems that not only was there a difference in cultural terms between the Gaelic Irish and the Old English but also a cultural divide between the Old English of the Pale and those outside the Pale. Canny has suggested that many proprietors and townsmen of the Pale found it expedient to familiarize themselves with the Irish language but that they looked to England as their cultural home and imitated the lifestyle of their English counterparts.¹³⁰ Hadsor certainly seems to fit this description.

Further indications that Hadsor’s cultural connections were immersed in the mores of the Old English of the Pale and that his empathy towards the Old English who lived farther afield was somewhat weaker also occur in his account. In one passage, he strongly condemned the tenurial position in Connacht. He informed their lordships that ‘the county of Monaghan and many parts of Ulster and elsewhere in sundry places, the province of Connacht nor the territory of Thomond in Ireland were never planted...and His Majesty’s title as strong to that as to the parts newly planted’.¹³¹ While his focus here was the small composition that the king received from Connacht landholders, he showed no sensitivity to the dangers of confiscation of Old English estates in Connacht, although there were no concrete plans for such at this early stage. However, the mooted plantation of Connacht was in the air in 1621, and many New English servitors were clamouring for a plantation there.¹³² Hadsor, at work for the commission in Ireland for nine months in 1622, would surely have been aware of such rumours. Having said that, the danger that such a precedent might pose a threat to Old English lands in other parts of the country may not have been fully appreciated in the very early 1620s. The late sixteenth century had seen many Old English landowners as well as New English take

¹²⁹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 43-4.

¹³⁰ Nicholas Canny, *The formation of the Old English elite in Ireland* (Dublin, 1975), pp 3-4.

¹³¹ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 19.

¹³² Canny, *Making Ireland British*, p. 255.

advantage of the Composition of Connacht and acquire estates there.¹³³ Hadsor strongly disapproved of the easy terms granted to Connacht landholders which included low rents and favourable lease conditions, with the land having being granted by ‘soccage tenure’ rather than, as hitherto, by ‘knight’s service’, conditions which he regarded as ‘an extraordinary favour’. He also pointed out that a recent agreement to further extend their tenure to ‘free and common soccage tenure’ had not actually ‘passed the seal there yet’.¹³⁴ This is not to suggest that he wished plantation for any Connacht-based Old English. Treadwell indicates that the proposal for a Connacht plantation did not receive favour when it arose at a meeting between the standing commission for Irish affairs (of which Hadsor was a member) and the privy council in November 1624; and, further, that a clerk of the privy council wrote to the province suggesting they send over a typical patent to be inspected by learned counsel, whom Treadwell presumes to have been Hadsor.¹³⁵ However, Hadsor’s criticisms in his 1622 report were somewhat reckless as they might have proved disadvantageous to Connacht landowners by alerting those in court circles of possible land grabbing opportunities in the province. He further reserved particular censure for ‘many of the English descent there in Connacht, as namely my Lord Dillon, lately styled Sir Theobald Dillon, Sir William Taaffe, Leiuutenant Jones, the townsmen of Galway...[who] have suddenly crept into great estates upon very easy terms, having purchased, as the common report runs, most of their lands from the natives upon broken titles...where if things were thoroughly examined the natives had no right to dispose of them, but only the king was interested in same’.¹³⁶ Hadsor may well have been privy to some details of the shady dealings that took place between Theobald Dillon and the Costello lordship in Co. Mayo which resulted in Dillon acquiring a substantial estate in Connacht.¹³⁷ Hadsor’s zeal for the safeguarding the king’s entitlements and revenue took precedence over any sympathy he may have felt for Old English in Connacht. Conversely, Keating demonstrated a lack of cultural attachment to the Old English of the Pale: he proclaimed that it was not the ‘colonists of Fingall’ or the ‘settlers

¹³³ Colm Lennon, *Sixteenth-century Ireland: the incomplete conquest* (Dublin, 1994), pp 260-1.

¹³⁴ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 19.

¹³⁵ Victor Treadwell, *Buckingham and Ireland, 1616-1628* (Dublin, 1998), p. 268.

¹³⁶ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 19-20.

¹³⁷ Bernadette Cunningham & Raymond Gillespie, *Stories from Gaelic Ireland: microhistories from the sixteenth-century annals* (Dublin, 2003), pp 59-86.

that ever were in the English pale', who had been entrusted with the defence of Ireland over the centuries, but the earls of Desmond, Ormond, Kildare and Clanricard, and these had 'made alliance with the native Irish'.¹³⁸ Keating's loyalties were directed to the Old English nobility whose fathers and grandfathers had wielded great influence outside the Pale and many of whom had married the daughters of Gaelic Irish lords.

In contrast, Hadsor, exhibited much antipathy towards the phenomenon of 'gaelicisation' to which many of the twelfth-century descendants of the Anglo-Normans had succumbed over the centuries and he was proud that residents of the Pale did not marry with the native Irish. In 1604, he asserted that the Old English of the Pale had 'retayned their English language & habitt...and they doe commonly marry within themselves and in England, not with the meere Irish.'¹³⁹ By 1622, his views had not changed and he reiterated, 'not only their gentry in the Pale but the very country peasants speak the English tongue, being originally descended from them. They ever have worn to this present the English habit; match with the English or with one another.'¹⁴⁰ Hadsor's views in many ways resemble those of fellow-Palesman, Richard Stanyhurst, who compiled the Irish section of Holinshed's *Chronicles* a quarter of a century earlier and was highly critical of native Irish customs, although in a later work Stanyhurst displayed more openness to the Gaelic Irish. Stanyhurst had bemoaned the fact that the Irish language and customs had taken root in the Pale which once had been 'addicted to civility' and insulated from 'barbarous savageness';¹⁴¹ and he also asserted that the lowliest colonist living in the English pale would not give his daughter in marriage to the noblest Irish prince, an assertion to which Keating took great exception, as we have seen in chapter two. The concept of degeneracy had been afforded much prominence from planter writers of the late sixteenth century such as Edmund Spenser and Richard Beacon who had denounced it for their own purposes.¹⁴² Hadsor too frowned on this practice and regarded any lapse into Irish ways in a negative light. He stated that some of plantations

¹³⁸ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 33-6.

¹³⁹ McLaughlin (ed.), 'Discourse', p. 345.

¹⁴⁰ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 4.

¹⁴¹ Steven Ellis, 'Centre and periphery in the Tudor state' in Robert Tittler & Norman Jones (eds), *A companion to Tudor Britain* (Oxford, 2004), p. 137.

¹⁴² Canny, *Making Ireland British*, p. 120.

were largely tenanted with the mere Irish who persisted in their rude customs and that ‘only the prime gentry be free from suspicion, who are most of the English descent, yet many of them degenerate from their ancestors’ steps.’ Such ‘degeneration’ was what had caused the dismantling of the plantations of the Old English progenitors:

The dissolution of the ancient plantations of Munster, Ulster and other parts came by matching with the mere Irish women, by reason they followed them in their language and manners and gave themselves thereupon the Irish names which they retain to this day. As the Bourks in Connaught are called MacWilliam... The Mortimers Mac-nemarrowe... and many others.¹⁴³

Such denigration was in contrast to Keating’s approach; Keating had contemptuously condemned Spenser for denying that Mac Namara and Mac Sweeny were Gaelic in origin and had provided the genealogies of both families. Hadsor slavishly followed Spenser or William Camden for his information, not having had access to or perhaps having no interest in original Irish sources. With regard to intermarriage between the two ethnic groups, we know that Keating had no problem with Old English nobility marrying the Old Irish, albeit Old Irish nobility. And Burnell had his native Irish Marfisa marry an English captain, again both characters occupying the same level on the social scale. Neither Keating nor Burnell seemed to have fundamental objections to intermarriage between the two groups as long as the hierarchical social order was maintained.

Surprisingly, but with a different agenda, neither did Hadsor; he actually advocated intermarriage but on very specific terms and not exactly with an alliance of equals in mind. His solution to what he perceived as the problem of incivility and lack of education and learning in the native Irish had echoes of Spenser’s proposed radical methods of ‘ethnic cleansing’, albeit he possessed less self-serving motives. The end Hadsor aspired to was ‘one loving and entire nation whose loyalty and duty could not be doubted...composed and descended of British and Irish blood’. It was in the context of reviewing the state of security and of the army that he put forward his ideas: ‘the body of the army...‘doth consist for the most part of mere Irish’. His recommendation was that if there were an insufficient number of British or reliable Old English to staff the army, those of the principal Old Irish who enjoyed large freehold estates should ‘disperse their

¹⁴³ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 50.

rabble of Irish tenants' to more civil parts of the country; that the 'mere Irish' should 'match their children with the British or English-Irish, especially their male issue, because...the child follows more the mother than any in his language and manners, and therefore by the civil law, *partus sequitur ventrem*, in course of inheritance'; and, furthermore, that 'the nurses be of the more civil English-Irish'.¹⁴⁴ The legal instrument he wished to employ was derived from Roman civil law and stipulated that the status of a child follows its mother. Accordingly, the issue of the Gaelic Irish man and Old English woman would become 'civilised' and, under the civil law, the inherited property would remain in Old English hands. Furthermore, this course of action should be 'performed under grievous penalties' and those who would not conform 'to this order of good discipline and industry to be either banished or condemned as slaves to labour in the common work all the days of their lives.'¹⁴⁵ The logic of his reasoning would seem to be that he wished to dilute the blood of the 'mere' Irish in the interests of achieving a settled and united commonwealth. No doubt, with these Machiavellian sentiments, Hadsor felt that the end justified the means. His overall aims with regard to plantation were to plant order and civility as will be discussed in the next section. However, his thinking revealed the extent of his lack of cultural empathy with the native Irish population in general as well as signalling the absolutist strand in his ideology.

Hadsor was very censorious about native Irish traditional husbandry and their habits and customs. He recommended that livestock and bloodstock should be 'handled after the English manner'. He was critical about the use of the short plough and about the native Irish preference for grazing rather than tillage.¹⁴⁶ As a landowner brought up in the northern Pale, not too far from the Gaelic lands of Farney, he was probably aware of some practical reasons for such practices but he did not see fit to mention any extenuating considerations in this respect.¹⁴⁷ He disparaged the Irish tradition of visiting the houses of their friends and relatives, seeing no merit in the practice and claiming it encouraged idleness: 'they that prove to be gentry amongst the mere Irish...though they have not

¹⁴⁴ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 49-50.

¹⁴⁵ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 50.

¹⁴⁶ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 33-4.

¹⁴⁷ Nicholls, *Gaelic and gaelicised Ireland*, p. 134.

sixpence to live on, they disdain to follow any trade...they press to other men's houses of their acquaintance or alliance...who there perpetually be pestered with such guests. The inveterate customs and their abuse have strengthened this for a law of hospitality amongst them.'¹⁴⁸ A sharp variance between Pale and Gaelic Irish culture is evident here, and, what Hadsor considered a vice, was in Mageoghegan's eyes a virtue. Mageoghegan cited the evidence of a poet who had sojourned in the houses of both Donell Roe McCarthy, 'the worthyest for hospitallity...of all Irishmen', and Don Maguire, 'the prince of Fermanagh, the best of all Ireland for hospitallity', in order to 'know which of them surpassed the other'; and he revealed that Maguire won the contest because 'Down eatayneth in his house twice as many as Donell doth'.¹⁴⁹ Keating also admired this tradition of hospitality. While making sure to include the 'old foreigners' in his praise, he stated, 'it cannot truthfully be said that there ever existed in Europe folk who surpassed them, in their own time, in generosity or in hospitality'; and he even quoted Stanyhurst in support of his views.¹⁵⁰ A further substantial cultural divide is evident between Hadsor and Mageoghegan. Hadsor looked negatively on the native Irish preoccupation with their ancestry implying it disrupted the social order; he referred derisively to 'their factious emulacions & contencions for superiority, each greate family being discended of the said petty kinges, holding themselves not inferior one to an other'.¹⁵¹ In contrast, genealogy was extremely important for the Gaelic Irish, and Mageoghegan, as we saw, was obviously very proud of and engrossed in the ancestry and genealogy of his own and other families and especially in that of the contemporary Gaelic nobility and gentry.

Hadsor was very definite that the Gaelic form of inheritance was the cause of much trouble and violence: 'many greate families of the meere Irishe holde their seignories & landes by their auntyent Irish Custome called Tanestrie...whereof growth much bloodshed & rebellion by contencion for the seignorie every discent...which incyteth

¹⁴⁸ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 43.

¹⁴⁹ Murphy, *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 259.

¹⁵⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 5-6.

¹⁵¹ McLaughlin (ed.), 'Discourse', pp 349-50.

them to comitt outrages'.¹⁵² Keating had taken a more understanding view of the tradition. He held, although no longer suitable for Ireland, it had been *because* there had been 'harrying and plundering' of one territory on another that the nobility and *ollamhs* initiated the system of tanistry, in order to have 'an efficient captain' to defend the districts. He further defended 'gavalkind', the 'fraternal partnership in the land', stating that 'the kinsman who had the least share of it would be as ready in its defence.'¹⁵³ Hadsor saw no merit at all in the old Gaelic system of law, asserting it had allowed for the overtaxing of the populace; he stated that lately, the 'mere Irish...exact unreasonably of their tenants by colour of their patents, as being the chief of their surname and kindred, because their house and they used the same exactions in former times when their tanist and Brehon laws were in force there.'¹⁵⁴ As we have seen, Mageoghegan had great respect for 'the brehon law in Irish called *fenechus*' and Keating criticised John Davies for finding fault with the native jurisprudence which Keating said was necessary at the time it was established.¹⁵⁵ Hadsor also disparaged the Gaelic system of referring to the lords of countries solely by surname: 'And they do yet glory at this day to be saluted by the Irish surnames, as O'Donnell, O'Connor, O'Rourke...which in their case sounds of lordly sovereignty, singularity and preeminance above others. And this should be abolished with the habit.'¹⁵⁶ Mageoghegan frequently referred to O' Connor or O'Donnell or O'Neill, and Keating, when listing the various inauguration sites of Irish kings, had no problem referring to Ó Neill, Ó Domhnaill, Ó Briain and so on.¹⁵⁷

Hadsor showed no goodwill either towards native Irish forms of celebration and he esteemed neither native poets nor musicians. He described as 'wonderful' [i.e. amazing] the Irish christenings, marriages, funerals and other solemn meetings, 'whither sometimes flock three or four hundred horse and double as many foot to feast and riot...these meetings be called in Irish Banishes and Cosheries; where never are absent certain routs of idle and loose rogues, by them termed bards, caroughs, rhymers, Irish harpers, pipers

¹⁵² McLaughlin (ed.), 'Discourse', p. 346.

¹⁵³ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 66-9.

¹⁵⁴ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 18-19.

¹⁵⁵ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 280; Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 69-71.

¹⁵⁶ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 42.

¹⁵⁷ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 105, 175, 252; Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 13-16.

and others of their kind.’¹⁵⁸ Again, this was the antithesis of Mageoghegan’s attitude, who had, as we have seen, esteemed the Irish poets and musicians. Mageoghegan viewed these people, not as idle rogues but as performers. He had sung the praises of William O’Kelly for inviting ‘all the Irish Poets, Brehons, bards, harpers, Gamesters or common kearoghs, Jesters, & others of their kind of Ireland to his house... where every one of them was well used during Christmas holy Dayes.’¹⁵⁹ Keating robustly defended the skill involved in Irish music and harp playing against the disparagement of Stanyhurst and, in support, even quoted Cambrensis, ‘Their melody, says he, is perfected and harmonized by an easy quickness, by a dissimilar equality, and by a discordant concord.’¹⁶⁰ Burnell was not totally averse to Irish culture either; he obviously enjoyed watching Irish dance and included the Irish jig, ‘The Whip of Dunboyne’, in his play.

However, even though Hadsor used somewhat extreme and uncomplimentary language to describe the native Irish and their customs and habits, as can be seen in the preceding paragraphs, it does not mean that he held any feelings of animosity or ill will towards them on a personal level. Much of his rhetoric stemmed from a sense of hierarchy, and his usage of the terminology ‘mere Irish’ was often a synonym for those at the lower end of the social ladder. On several occasions he advocated that tenants should hold their holdings directly from the crown instead of being tenants-at-will of the great lords without any rights, and, although his priority was the maintenance of law and order and the reduction in the power and influence of the Gaelic lords, it is likely that he also had the interests of the native Irish tenants in mind.¹⁶¹ In the concluding paragraph of his 1622 report, he did have some favourable, if stereotypical, remarks to make about them: ‘there lives not a people more hardy, able, active and painful when once they break off from sluggishness; neither is there any will endure the miseries of war, as are famine, watching heat, cold, wet, travel and the like, so naturally and with that facility and courage that they do.’¹⁶² Furthermore, his commissioner’s report on the midlands plantations, as mentioned above, sought redress for those natives who had been defrauded

¹⁵⁸ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 44.

¹⁵⁹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 298.

¹⁶⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 37-42

¹⁶¹ McLaughlin (ed.), ‘Discourse’, p. 351; *CSPI, 1599-1600*, pp 139-40.

¹⁶² O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 58.

of their rightful entitlements and with whose plight he seemed to have genuine sympathy.¹⁶³ In his professional life, he had many native Irish clients; for instance, in 1600 he was engaged by 'Ha. Foxe' to have the queen sign the grant of the seneschalship of his country for him (Hubert Fox, chief of his name, of Lehinchie, Kilcourcy Co. Offaly¹⁶⁴) and, in 1629-31 he acted for O'Connor Sligo regarding a re-grant of his lands.¹⁶⁵ He even petitioned for some who had been recently in rebellion including Turlough O'Neill and Sir Neale Garbh O'Donnell.¹⁶⁶ His office at the Inns was obviously open to the Gaelic gentry and they apparently had no compunction about consulting him.

Hierarchy & Social Order

Order in all facets of life was what Hadsor most coveted for society. His conventional flattering reference to the monarch in his 1622 report encapsulated his vision:

...under the glorious reign of our most happy and gracious sovereign that now rules, who of a confused chaos hath brought that land by his wisdom to that form and order it now is in, and will in time raise it to the former, if not to fuller perfection.¹⁶⁷

The order and civility of lowland England was the type of society to which many early-modern Old English of the Pale aspired.¹⁶⁸ Hadsor was particularly concerned with the maintenance of the social order. He was fearful that because 'the office of the King's Herald at Arms' was neglected, 'few would know their own arms, their descent, pedigree or matches of their houses, no not the nobility'.¹⁶⁹ With his attitude here, he displayed similar assumptions to Burnell, Keating and Mageoghegan who, as we saw, all felt uncomfortable with any disturbance in the proper hierarchical ordering of society. Hadsor was utterly dismayed at the disruption in the social order caused by absentee planters who 'bestow their proportions upon their footmen and other of their meaner

¹⁶³ Treadwell, *Irish commission of 1622*, pp 742-4; also O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 13-14, 22.

¹⁶⁴ O'Donovan (ed.), 'Covenant between Mageoghegan and the Fox', p. 185.

¹⁶⁵ H.M.C. *Salisbury*, x, 5; *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1625-32*, pp 607-8.

¹⁶⁶ H.M.C. *Salisbury*, xii, 661; xv, 145.

¹⁶⁷ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 2-3.

¹⁶⁸ Stephen Ellis, 'An English gentleman and his community: Sir William Darcy of Platten' in Vincent Carey & Ute Lotz-Heumann (eds), *Taking sides? Colonial and confessional mentalités in early-modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2003), p. 20.

¹⁶⁹ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 48.

servants, and these are seated now and then in the principal seats and dwellings of the prime natives, who perhaps were born vassals under some of these gentlemen's tenants'; and, in addition, he observed that the natives themselves disliked this overturning of the social order because these lesser individuals 'overtop them with more sway and authority than their lord and master would...[which] grieves them more than the loss of their estates; say they'.¹⁷⁰ This last comment supplies further evidence of how important hierarchical status was to the Gaelic Irish, which was apparent in Mageoghegan's disapproval of commoners who had gained the kingship, those not of 'the blood Royal'; also evidenced, as noted in previous chapters, by Gaelic poets' disparaging references to the trend of upward social mobility; and, as shown, Keating and Burnell no less disliked such social confusion. Therefore, early-modern gentlemen of all traditions shared similar attitudes in this regard.

Stepping above one's rank in life was anathema to Hadsor. He recited a long tirade against the 'monster of excess' such as 'delicately made dishes, quaffing and gluttony used in taverns and other places of that kind there', and it is clear that he considered it highly inappropriate that the ordinary people should indulge themselves thus. His view was that 'the commons and meaner people should be tied under penalty...not to feed on the daintiest cakes and delicately made dishes'. Hadsor did not approve of anyone stepping out of their allotted level on the social scale. Such luxuries should be available only to those in the highest or lowest echelons of society: 'none should wear silks or richer stuffs nor gold or silver lace...but either noble men or minstrels or ladies of honour of great state or whores; and it were fit than none ride in coaches but such; and then it would soon appear who kept coaches between these two extremes.'¹⁷¹ In the early modern period, clothes distinguished one social group from those both above and below and were precise indicators of status and degree. To transgress the codes governing dress disrupted an official view of the social order.¹⁷² While Mageoghegan, Keating and Burnell were also uneasy with any meddling with a person's place in society, such upward mobility seemed to irk Hadsor to an even greater extent. Perhaps in the Pale

¹⁷⁰ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 14.

¹⁷¹ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 55.

¹⁷² Jean Howard, *The stage and social struggle in early modern England* (London, 1994), p. 98.

there was more of an inflexible adherence to a rigid hierarchy in the social order than elsewhere. He devoted a disproportionate portion of his 1622 report to the subject, fervently urging that ‘riot in apparel and meat’ should not take hold with ‘the common sort’.¹⁷³ He considered that ‘only men of rank’ should have the privilege of hunting and fishing.¹⁷⁴ (He was fond of hunting himself and importuned Secretary Lake in 1617 to procure a warrant in his own name from the king to allow him to hunt a buck.)¹⁷⁵ Therefore, Gaelic Irish and Old English men were all uncomfortable with any signs of people inappropriately climbing above their station in life, but perhaps maintenance of the social order was even more important to those in the Pale.

Hadsor also obviously subscribed to the commonwealth notion of the public good. His final wish was that God would grant ‘perpetual good content and honour’ to his Majesty and posterity as well as ‘the universal welfare and felicity of that realm for many and many generations’.¹⁷⁶ He referred to the concept on several occasions but always including both king and inhabitants in his phrasing. As we have seen, the public good featured prominently in Burnell’s thinking with emphasis placed equally, if not more so, on the good of the subject; and it also featured in Keating’s account and perhaps to a lesser extent in that of Mageoghegan.

In this social hierarchical chain, Hadsor had no doubt that it was the Old English who were the best qualified to be leaders of society, serving the crown as a matter of honour rather than for recompense. As long as the descendants of the ‘Noble & worthie English men’, who had been first installed by Henry II, ‘were imployed as principall officers & Councillors of estate...the Realm was well governed & daily increased in civilitie, & yelded some proffitt to the Crowne of England without chardge.’¹⁷⁷ Hadsor may have looked down condescendingly on the native Irish but, with regard to the New English, he was unequivocal in his opinion that many of these *arrivistes* were of inferior status and not worthy to be in positions of authority over the Irish. It was upon the newcomers that

¹⁷³ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 48.

¹⁷⁴ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 34.

¹⁷⁵ *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1615-25*, pp 164-5.

¹⁷⁶ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 59.

¹⁷⁷ McLaughlin (ed.), ‘Discourse’, p. 346.

he firmly laid the blame for the retarded growth of the commonwealth. He constantly complained about their fraud and corruption; for instance, regarding the underpayment of crown rents, he asserted, ‘this abuse I take comes from two roots...ministerial officers there, as be the under surveyors, escheators, feodaries, clerks of the Crown’.¹⁷⁸ He had to be politic and specify that those whom he meant were ‘the subordinate officers’, for fear of treading on the toes of those currently in high office who were favourites of Buckingham or of the king himself. However, he was not afraid to proffer oblique criticism of these officers, albeit by association. He claimed that the escheator-general, and also the surveyor general, William Parsons, had farmed out their duties to deputies and he feared that ‘the gross abuses and frauds of the under-surveyors and deputy-escheators in their duty to the king have damaged him’.¹⁷⁹ He did not refrain either from apportioning blame to those who had recently served on the Irish council. Condemning the re-passing of patents under the auspices of the commission of Defective Titles to those not entitled to them, he declared, ‘this Commission...got to the King’s Council there (whose invention this was upon pretence to raise His Majesty’s rents) and like wise to the clerks there an incredible sum of money...and yet the king little advantaged.’¹⁸⁰ It was not that Hadsor did not want newcomers to come into Ireland; he did indeed recommend an influx of English and Scots as tenants for the plantations, as discussed below, but it was the Old English whom he considered possessed the integrity to be in positions of authority. Keating and Burnell, as we saw, were similarly alarmed at New English intrusion and were of the same mind as Hadsor. It is not easy to discern Mageoghegan’s opinion of the New English as allusions to sixteenth-century or seventeenth-century newcomers did not arise in *AClon*. Regarding the English in Ireland up 1408, the extent of the period covered by *AClon*, Mageoghegan did not interpolate on his sources and viewed the newcomers as just another tribal group in Ireland. It is obvious though that, for Hadsor, Keating and Burnell, the Old English were superior to the New English in terms of honour, status and leadership qualities. As noted above, Hadsor recommended in his 1604 discourse that ‘Noblemen and cyvill Gentry of quality Natives of the Country...may be used as Councillors of estate’ and he was almost

¹⁷⁸ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 9-10.

¹⁷⁹ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 46.

¹⁸⁰ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 10.

certainly referring just to the Old English here, as is evident from the tenor of his account in general.¹⁸¹ Keating, as we saw, in his preface, took it for granted that it was the Old English who were in the supremacy of the country, not really taking into account the fact that greater numbers of Old Irish were being returned to parliament in the early seventeenth century. While Mageoghegan gave no indication of being perturbed by Old English hegemony, there is no doubt that he enthusiastically looked forward to parliamentary success for his ‘worthy and of Great expectation’ brother-in-law, Terence Coghlan, whom he wished ‘good success in all his affaires’, signifying that the Old Irish were becoming more confident and ambitious and aspiring to participate at the upper levels of society.

Hadsor cherished typical early-modern hopes for a perfect commonwealth which encompassed visions of an ideal social order incorporating civility and the public good. At the outset of his 1622 report, he proposed to advise their Lordships of ‘the rubs and impediments which...hinder that realm from flourishing, and the diseases wherewith the sick body of that now rising commonwealth is daily pestered... [and] to lay down...remedies for the advancement of His Majesty’s profit and the kingdom’s welfare.’¹⁸² The Old English of the Pale in the sixteenth century increasingly adopted humanist thinking current in Renaissance Europe and had seen it as their role to bring the Gaelic Irish to English civility by means of conciliation. Hadsor inherited this ideology. He recommended the erection of schools which would ‘advance much learning...which is the nurse and mother of virtue, civility, order and perfection.’¹⁸³ Keating was also imbued with Renaissance humanism, extolling learning and ‘cultivation of the arts’¹⁸⁴ and, as we saw, putting great store by the civilising qualities contained in Cormac mac Airt’s book. Mageoghegan was also conscious of such humanist ideas associated with the idea of commonwealth. In his preface, he had imbued Brian Boromha with such early-modern philosophy: ‘the said K. Bryan seeing into what rudenesse the kingdom was fallen...caused open schoole to be kept...to Instruct their youth, which by the sd.

¹⁸¹ McLaughlin (ed.), ‘Discourse’, p. 350.

¹⁸² O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 3.

¹⁸³ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 36.

¹⁸⁴ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 71-4.

Long wars were growne rude and altogether illiterate'.¹⁸⁵ This suggests that the Gaelic Irish were also in touch with these humanist aspirations towards civility. However, Hadsor's main strategy regarding the inculcation of refinement and enterprise was the system of plantation which he saw as the means of introducing newcomers among the native Irish in order to increase civility. He explained,

first His Majesty's end being more for the plantation of civility, order and industry than of planting and peopling the land there, yet the undertakers...suffer the ruder sort of mere Irish to inhabit their lands...and there will be little industry or civility settled there [and]...neither trade or traffic can there increase, which were the way to make them happy and to advance highly his Majesty's revenue there.¹⁸⁶

He had a clear-cut vision of what an ordered plantation should produce and looked forward to a time when, 'as that civility and art begins to spread there, especially in the northern parts, let the other provinces anciently planted and all the rest share with the latter in this blessing and orderly reformation and industry.' His vision for the future was positive; he envisaged a time when the native Irish would become civilized:

And that which adds much to the speedy flourishing of any land, the natives there are as apt to learn as any nation, as capable of discipline, as hardy to endure, as able men, as active, and now for the most part as willing to embrace good government, civility and thrifty precedents of their neighbours, the English and Scots.¹⁸⁷

While there is no doubt that he was sincere and well-intentioned here for the betterment of the natives and the continued prosperity for the country, his argument constantly hinged on the incivility of the native Irish. Keating had taken a much different approach. While he doubtless considered that those to whom he referred as 'inferiors and wretched little hags' lacked civility, the general feeling of respect and goodwill that he displayed towards the *Gaeil* in general contrasts greatly with Hadsor's somewhat denigrating attitude.

Hadsor had been a proponent of plantation as an agent of social and political change from an early stage. Early on, he envisaged both newcomers and Old English partaking in

¹⁸⁵ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 7.

¹⁸⁶ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 12.

¹⁸⁷ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 58.

plantation projects. He suggested to the earl of Essex in January 1599 that he should obtain warrants from the queen to confiscate rebel lands in Ulster once he had completed his conquest there, which would ‘encourage many gentlemen, both English and of English race there, to venture their lives with their followers’ to join his military campaign.¹⁸⁸ In 1604, he spoke approvingly of the twelfth-century plantation; he explained that, at the time of the conquest, Henry II had taken the course of ‘planting Noble & worthie English men in all partes of the Kingdome, & English Collonies especially at Dublyn’.¹⁸⁹ He further advised that colonies should now be planted in Ballyshannon and ‘other uncivill places’ which in the recent wars had given ‘the Rebels advantage’. As mentioned, the word ‘colonial’ had a different connotation to that which was understood by the terminology in later periods; and plantations, were not always driven by top down change but instead developed as a result of agency among native and settler populations on the ground.¹⁹⁰ Accordingly, Hadsor’s enthusiasm for plantation is not an indication of a desire on his part to displace the Irish with New English, especially at this early stage in 1604. By 1622, of course, plantation was government policy for Ireland, and Hadsor, being a servant of the crown, would have been constrained to agree with it. In any case, the Old English had not really been opposed to plantation in Ireland until the 1620s. They were aggrieved in 1622 that they themselves had not benefitted to a greater extent from the Ulster plantation in 1609 but, although in favour of existing plantations remaining in place, they wanted no further plantation schemes.¹⁹¹ Accordingly, although Hadsor strongly recommended further plantation in his 1622 report, he was mostly referring to Old Irish lands which had already been earmarked for plantation but had not been yet completed. The principal thrust of the 1622 commission was to produce extra revenue for the crown and plantation featured as a large part of this undertaking. Accordingly, Hadsor did mention, but only in passing and without elaboration, that ‘half of Munster and Ossory were never planted and are defective.’¹⁹² It is not clear whose lands he meant here; in Munster, he may have been thinking of Old Irish lands such as those of O’Kennedys and Mac Brian of Arragh which were being

¹⁸⁸ H.M.C. *Salisbury*, ix, 19.

¹⁸⁹ McLaughlin (ed.), ‘Discourse’, p. 351.

¹⁹⁰ Gillespie, ‘The problems of plantations’, pp 59-60.

¹⁹¹ Canny, *Making Ireland British*, pp 257-8.

¹⁹² O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 20.

targeted by New English officials and servitors for plantation. Ossory, however, was the lordship of the earl of Ormond which may account for the brevity of Hadsor's allusion, and for his uncustomary lack of enthusiasm for plantation there, the land being the domain of the prominent Old English lord and his tenant lords; in addition, professionally he had been associated with the earls of Ormond in his law practice.¹⁹³ In 1632, in his set of 'Propositions' offered to Charles I, he was still urging that any 'surplus lands' in the Munster plantation which had not hitherto been planted should now be planted with English settlers.¹⁹⁴ The introduction of more New English settlers into areas outside the Pale did not seem to cause Hadsor as much unease or disquiet as it surely would have done at this stage to those Old English landowners who lived in the provinces.

The importance of law and order played a significant role in Hadsor's vision for the creation of this perfect commonwealth. While the ideology of the Old English of the Pale in the sixteenth century had been directed towards assimilation through conciliation with the Gaelic Irish, neither they did not balk at coercion as an option in the absence of peaceful solutions.¹⁹⁵ Hadsor's recommendations reveal that he inherited this dual approach in his philosophy. In connection with those of the native Irish gentry who protected and secured pardons for 'vagabond caitiffs and rogues' referred to above, he implied that they should be dealt with severely; if such gentlemen, who protected 'exorbitant knaves and rebels there were punished for example it would strike more near and work more good than the hanging of one hundred of the meaner fellows or rebels.'¹⁹⁶ As mentioned, Hadsor's family had personal experience of native Irish aggression: in the sixteenth century, Turlough Luineach O'Neill had 'spoiled my father's living in the county of Louth.' (Hadsor was, however, prepared to petition on behalf of Turlough's grandson, stating in a letter to Cecil in 1603 that 'in furtherance of her Majesty's service I am content not to take notice of the wrongs done me', a further sign that it was not an ethnic animosity but rather prejudice that he felt towards the native Irish).¹⁹⁷ The people

¹⁹³ *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1600-1*, pp 311-12; *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1601-3*, pp 280-1.

¹⁹⁴ *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1625-32*, pp 680-1.

¹⁹⁵ Ciaran Brady, 'Conservative subversives: the community of the Pale and the Dublin administration, 1556-86' in Patrick J. Corish (ed.), *Radicals, rebels and establishments* (Belfast, 1985), pp 14-15.

¹⁹⁶ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 41-2.

¹⁹⁷ H.M.C. *Salisbury*, xii, 661.

of the Pale had always felt particularly vulnerable to native Irish raids and Hadsor was at all times preoccupied with the danger of the threat of rebellion. In the early years of the seventeenth century in the still-continuing war situation, his strong advice to Sir Robert Cecil was ‘to nourish and continue’ the factions of the ‘mere Irishry’ in order to weaken them, and in 1604 he diagnosed that it was the failure of the ‘meere Iryshe...to unite themselves together in one body’ that prevented their victory in the Nine Years War.¹⁹⁸ There is no doubt that the stereotype of belligerency being a trait of the native Irish was the received wisdom in the seventeenth century. Hadsor reckoned that the native Irish believed that it was the ‘worthiest man who draweth most bloode, which incyeth them to committ outrages’;¹⁹⁹ Keating described them waging ‘war and conflict between every two of their territories, so that they were usually slaying, harrying and plundering each other’;²⁰⁰ Burnell, as we saw, showed his native Irish character to be markedly more feisty than his Old English characters; and in 1653 the Old English priest, John Lynch, averred that ‘all authorities are unanimous in describing the Irish as a most warlike people’.²⁰¹ Doubtless some of them were referring to earlier ages but none qualified their assertions by recognising that most societies were more violent in medieval times. Keating had denounced the ‘evil deeds’ of the first five Norman leaders but assured the reader that the Normans who followed them such as the Butlers and Fitzgeralds had been exemplary in their conduct from then on.²⁰² Mageoghegan, on the other hand, had commented that, as far as he could gather from the sources, there were ‘more Disscentions, strifes, warres, and Debates betweene the Englishmen themselves in the beginning of the Conquest of this kingdome than between the Irishmen’.²⁰³ Mageoghegan may have been attempting to counter this stereotypical view of the warlike Irishman when declaring that his ideal king Cormac mac Airt was ‘valiant, & mild’ and ‘not Given causelessly to be bloody’.

¹⁹⁸ H.M.C. *Salisbury*, xi, 8; *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1600-1*, pp 311-2; H.M.C. *Salisbury*, xii, 394; McLaughlin (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 349-50.

¹⁹⁹ McLaughlin (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 346.

²⁰⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 55-8.

²⁰¹ John Lynch, *Cambrensis eversus* (1662), ed. Matthew Kelly (3 vols, Dublin, 1848-51), iii, 269.

²⁰² Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 358-70.

²⁰³ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 266.

Hadsor was hawkish in his proposals for remedying any breakdown in law and order. He believed that it was ‘Idle men without any trade, which encourageth men there to enter into Rebellion’ and he feared that these would be followed by ‘dissolute persons who are redye to take armes for spoile when ther ys any occasion offered.’²⁰⁴ He was particularly anxious about the province of Ulster, which, in 1604, he labelled, ‘the fountaine of the Rebellions of that Kingdome, which is inhabited with the most uncyvill people of that Realme, & the strongest faction of the meere Irish.’²⁰⁵ Accordingly, as well as promoting the introduction of British newcomers through plantation in order to promote order and industry as noted above, he had, in 1604, advocated that ‘the turbulent loose and unprofitable men of your Kingdomes may be weeded out especially of Ireland employed abroad in your highnes service in forraine Countries, to thende they may not be ynstruments of Rebellion...whereof there are a greate Number at this tyme, who were lately Rebelles there’; and in 1622, because ‘it may well be feared that so great a multitude of beggars do not break forth to some sudden mischief’, he proposed that they be sent off to Virginia ‘or some other of the newly discovered lands’.²⁰⁶ Such recommendations again reveal the absolutist strain in Hadsor’s philosophy.

However, in Hadsor’s view, the ‘chief causes of commotions and rebellions’ were largely due to the fact that ‘inferior officers’, were appointed to official posts which alienated ‘the hearts of the subjects’.²⁰⁷ By these he obviously meant the New English ‘sharks’; those sheriffs who owned no lands in the county where they served,

such as buy their Sheriffwicks...and abuse their power in executing justice...carry away their misdemeanours, without yielding recompense to the people for their oppression and wrongs. This abuse the people, being for the more part rude and uncivil, ascribe to the law, alleging that law to be unjust...so they grow to mutinies and rebellion.²⁰⁸

His sentiments here resonate strongly with the picture Keating portrayed of the Irish rebelling against the law due to the first wave of tyrannical Norman invaders mistreating

²⁰⁴ McLaughlin (ed.), ‘Discourse’, p. 349.

²⁰⁵ McLaughlin (ed.), ‘Discourse’, p. 350.

²⁰⁶ McLaughlin (ed.), ‘Discourse’, p. 353; O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 44.

²⁰⁷ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 51.

²⁰⁸ *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1599-1600*, pp 345-6.

them: ‘it was not through evil disposition on the part of the Irish that they often rebelled against the law, but through the rulers often failing to administer the law justly to them’. Keating then immediately pointed out that there were other leaders who came in the beginning of the Norman invasion, as mentioned above, who ‘did much good in Ireland, naming the ancestors of prominent Old English families, the implication being that the Old English would administer the law justly.’²⁰⁹ Correspondingly, Hadsor considered that the Old English were rightly the ones who had the moral authority to fight the rebels and was confident they would do so were they not disadvantaged. He held that many of the ‘better sort of English race in the English Pale, and elsewhere in that realm were discouraged from prosecuting Her Majesty’s service’ and exposing themselves to danger because the heirs of those who died in the campaigns were not allowed the benefit of their own wardships. The wards policy in Ireland produced an ongoing source of bitter complaint from the Old English who saw corrupt officials amass much money to themselves and their wards not even being awarded to their own kith and kin.²¹⁰ Hadsor claimed that ‘if this were remedied...all the dutiful gentlemen of ability and sufficiency in that country will serve voluntarily, upon their own charges, to the uttermost of their power, against these miscreants’.²¹¹ Hadsor was continually urging that responsibility for security should rest in Old English hands; what his ‘father in his lifetime, with the loss of his blood, voluntarily without entertainment from her Majesty, hath done in the field’.²¹² In 1601, petitioning Cecil for Mr Plunkett of Rathmore, he urged, ‘it is better, in my view, to employ [as officers] him and a number of sufficient gentlemen of the Pale who have lost greatly in these wars and are known to the state to be loyal, than any of the mere Irish, of whose disloyalty we know so much’; and he regretted that ‘the gentlemen and inhabitants of the Pale are unarmed and unable to defend themselves’.²¹³ It is quite likely that Hadsor collaborated with Sir John Bath when Bath was negotiating with the crown for the Old English on the ‘trained bands scheme’ in 1626. Bath had been a contemporary of his in his student days.²¹⁴ In addition, Bath’s first wife, Janet Dillon,

²⁰⁹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 365-9.

²¹⁰ Victor Treadwell, ‘The Irish court of wards under James I’ in *IHS*, xii, no. 45 (Mar., 1960), pp 6-8.

²¹¹ *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1599-1600*, pp 345-6.

²¹² H.M.C. *Salsibury*, ix, 19-20.

²¹³ *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1601-3*, pp 133-4.

²¹⁴ Treadwell, ‘Richard Hadsor’, p. 325.

who had died in 1605, was a kinswoman of Hadsor, being the daughter of the Thomas Dillon, 'my kinsman, chief Justice of Connaught', for whom Hadsor had importuned Cecil in 1598.²¹⁵ Furthermore, Bath may well have been advised by Hadsor in the compilation of the demands which resulted in the 'Graces'. Treadwell has pointed out that about half of the twenty-eight items related to ideas formulated or at least strongly implied in Hadsor's writings.²¹⁶ And in 1632, Hadsor was still advocating the adoption of the system of trained bands as a means of security. In his 'Propositions', which were probably intended as advice for the incoming Wentworth, he urged, 'Trained bands and companies of horse and foot should be raised in each county as provided by 10 Henry VII. Cap. 9 (Ireland). The army may be reduced or increased as necessary.'²¹⁷ Although he did not specify which section of the community he considered should participate in such a scheme, it is likely he was certainly thinking of the inclusion of the Old English. It is an indication that at this late stage the interests of the Old English remained close to his heart.

Religion

Hadsor, despite the fact that he devoted a special section to ecclesiastical affairs in his 1622 report, had little to say about devotional religion. He did employ conventional platitudes like 'by God's permission' or 'may the Omnipotent Lord grant', but he did not refer to religious tenets. Unlike the majority of the Old English, Hadsor was no longer a Catholic. At some stage, perhaps soon after he went to study in Oxford and London, he had transferred to the reformed religion, no doubt in order to further his legal career in England. Only influential courtiers and favourites of the king could afford to remain openly Catholic in Stuart England. In any case, he could not practise as a barrister until he took the oath of supremacy, which he duly did on 12 February 1603.²¹⁸ It might be thought that, because Hadsor was not a Catholic, he was not representative of a typical Old English attitude to religion. However, switching to Protestantism did not necessarily

²¹⁵ H.M.C. *Salisbury*, viii, 312.

²¹⁶ Treadwell, 'Richard Hadsor', p. 325.

²¹⁷ *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1625-32*, pp 680-1.

²¹⁸ John Bruce (ed.), *Diary of John Manningham of the Middle Temple and of Bradbourne, Kent, barrister-at-law, 1602-1603* (London, 1868), p. 131.

mean that his attitudes in respect of religious beliefs were greatly different to those he had held growing up as an Old English Catholic. Although, in the last two decades of the century, a puritanical streak of Protestantism did develop among Protestant churchmen and administrators, up to the 1580s tolerance had been the hallmark of the approach in establishing the Reformation in Ireland.²¹⁹ Therefore, Hadsor probably did not come under the influence of the more fundamentalist Protestantism.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Burnell, Keating and Mageoghegan all showed signs of a providential outlook in line with early-modern man and woman's understanding of their relationship with God and his divine hand at work in all aspects of their lives. Hadsor similarly displayed such a providential frame of mind; like Mageoghegan, who was relieved that 'God prevented' Cathal Crobhdhearg O'Connor being killed; Keating, who reported that God gave the Picts and Scots victory over the Britons; and Burnell's Christian character, who believed heaven would avenge the wrong done to him, Hadsor attributed the Gaelic Irish failure to win the Nine Years War to God's providence. If the 'meere Iryshe' had united together and forgotten their 'factious emulacions & contencions for superiority...which some of their principall heads earnestly desired & could never effect by gods divine Providence', the kingdom would have been lost.²²⁰ Similarly, just as Mageoghegan, Keating and Burnell all understood that God's wrath would be visited in retribution for sin, Hadsor held an identical belief. He regarded the thatched houses of the 'common sort of the mere Irish' within walled towns as, first of all, rather unedifying, an 'eyesore' for strangers and country gentlemen. However, an additional worry was that they were the cause of frequent fires; bemoaning the dearth of stone or brick houses, he declared, 'I persuade me, the divine justice hath chastised that land...to warn and admonish them of their improvidence and sluggishness'; and he knew of no other land except Turkey that 'endured so many several brunts of casual fires, which is one of the greatest plagues and scourges that man is ordinarily chastised with by the heavens'.²²¹ Therefore, no differences are apparent in this providential aspect of Old English and Gaelic Irish thinking.

²¹⁹ Lennon, *Sixteenth-century Ireland*, pp 318-20.

²²⁰ McLaughlin (ed.), 'Discourse', pp 349-50.

²²¹ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 36-7.

While there is no indication that Hadsor practised church papistry or was a feigned conformist, he displayed no puritanical prejudice against Catholics and in fact his account betrays a tolerant disposition. His references to recusancy were not religiously-inspired. Instead, his worry was that the fines for non-attendance at Sunday service were largely going to a 'private purse' rather than to the king, and that they were a burden on the poor.

The fines of 12d. the Sunday taxed upon the recusants there will amount to well nigh the king's now revenue there, most of them being recusants...and I know when I lived there such as were presented were compelled to pay their fines if they would not go to church, be they never no poor; but without question the clerks, sheriffs and their like do make an extraordinary hand this way.²²²

He was anxious to point out that the Catholics were paying their tax, the majority of which was levied against his fellow Old English. Even when he presented his section on ecclesiastical affairs - which he asserted to be the most important element of his commissioner's report, proclaiming, it 'was first in my intention yet last in execution' - he never once mentioned religion in the sense of religious worship. Indeed, it is quite possible that in his heart he still adhered to the religious perspective of his earlier years. In any case, his focus was on the institutional church and he gave no hint of anti-Catholicism. What disturbed him was the fact that the 'commissary officials and other subordinate officers of the bishops there vex the country much with their too frequent courts'; there were often two hundred people presented for 'burials, christenings or marriages made by Papist priests', and these people having to pay at least £3 each in fines, with all this money going 'to the private purse'.²²³ He referred to these Catholic ceremonies without any hint of censure and a note of sympathy with the harassed Catholic population is discernible. Mageoghegan, Keating or Burnell, however, might not have made reference to 'papist' priests. Further, Hadsor was one of the dissentient commissioners who refrained from signing an initial draft of the church certificate concerning recusants' fines, although he did sign the final unaltered certificate.²²⁴ He may have had a subconscious reluctance to enforce the tax on Irish Catholics. An added

²²² O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 15-16.

²²³ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 54.

²²⁴ Treadwell, *Irish commission of 1622*, pp 249, 295.

reason for his reluctance to sign may also have stemmed from his being unhappy with the situation of the sheriffs and clerks, whom he strongly distrusted, having the responsibility of collecting the fines. In 1617, he had relayed a proposal from the Old English to Secretary Lake on this same issue.²²⁵ The Old English made that very point again in their ‘humble petition of nobles and gentlemen’ to the 1622 commission: ‘Recusancy doth occasion that shrievalties and justiceships of peace are conferred upon many who are unworthy of those places and thereby justice is eftsoons deluded and his majesty’s accounts ill discharged’.²²⁶ Hadsor was perfectly in accord with the Old English, his priority being with the mechanics of collection of the recusancy tax, and he did not concern himself with the ideology behind it. As Treadwell pointed out, he regarded it as a reasonable fiscal benefit for the crown rather than a severe harassment of private consciences.²²⁷

Nevertheless, Hadsor was interested in furthering the interests of the established church and frowned both on pluralities and the lack of learned clergymen: ‘some doe holde Three and others Twoe Byshoprickes...to the greate hinderance of the preferment of learned men and decaye of the State ecclesiasticall’.²²⁸ However, his priorities in this regard were the promotion of moral living and civility: he advised advancing ‘learned men to all spirituall dignities & lyvings whose doctryne life & example may edifie the people...whereby the people may be reduced to know their duties to God & your Matie & become civill’.²²⁹ Keating had a similar esteem for evangelizing, although stressing the spiritual element: the churchman on whom he had heaped most praise, Cormac son of Cuilleannan, was ‘the wisest of the men of Ireland in his time...and a most virtuous chaste, pure, prayerful, pious archbishop, leader in teaching in true wisdom and good morals’.²³⁰ Mageoghegan’s churchmen, on the other hand, were not seen engaging in education or preaching. Hadsor was not an admirer of impropriations; he heaped scorn on those who had benefitted from the dissolution of the abbeys for not supporting the

²²⁵ *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1615-25*, pp 164-5.

²²⁶ Treadwell, *Irish commission of 1622*, p. 7.

²²⁷ Treadwell, ‘Richard Hadsor’, p. 309.

²²⁸ McLaughlin (ed.), ‘Discourse’, p. 349.

²²⁹ McLaughlin (ed.), ‘Discourse’, p. 351.

²³⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 211-14.

clergy; ‘the parsonages and other church livings appropriated to the late dissolved abbeys and other religious houses there amount yearly to an incredible sum, yet will one of these that enjoy an impropriation worth perhaps £500 per annum hardly part to his curate £5 by the year’.²³¹ Keating did not approve of impropriations either, although of course from a different confessional perspective. Conscious of Tridentine principles, he had not failed to point out that at the synod of Rath Breasail in 1100, ‘the churches of Ireland were given up entirely to the bishops free for ever from the authority and rent of the lay princes’.²³² Mageoghegan had reported at AD 1210 a convocation of the clergy of Connacht who had convened ‘for the taking away the Termine lands or Cowarb lands and annexing them to the bushopricks of the diocess where they lay’, indicating that he had a general interest in the practice of church lands perhaps being in lay hands, but he expressed no censure on the practice. In addition, he interpolated to point out that although Syonan in Kineleagh (Mageoghegan country) translated to English as the ‘seat of Adawnan’ (St Adamnan of Iona), the place included ‘noe Church land as I take it’.²³³ Hadsor was further critical of ‘My Lord Bellfort’ who, having been granted the recusancy moneys in Co. Monaghan and ‘made £500 per annum’ from the levy, had not yet attended to the repair of churches as was required of him under the terms of his grant.²³⁴ Whatever his inner confessional leanings, Hadsor, like Keating, displayed a strong religious ethic and high sense of morality. Theologically, there was probably little difference between many Old English Catholics and Old English Protestants. Whereas a confluence of approach can be gleaned between Keating and Hadsor to a certain extent, no hints at all are present of any connection between Hadsor’s religious attitudes and Mageoghegan’s old style religion which encompassed relics and fantastic miracles.

With regard to marriage, Hadsor revealed himself to be something of an ascetic and showed no empathy with the married state. The ‘mere Irish...affect to marry timely...and do feed altogether on moist meats, they abound with more children than

²³¹ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 53.

²³² Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 299-300.

²³³ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 224, 111-12.

²³⁴ O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 16.

such as take pains to dry their superfluous humours'.²³⁵ It is likely that he was himself unmarried, as he does not mention a wife or children in his will,²³⁶ and he betrayed a faint contempt (perhaps tinged with some envy) for married men. He considered that soldiers in the army should not be married because, being 'clogged and burthened' with family, these 'ancient servitors having acquired large estates and living in all delicious pleasures in their own houses with their wife's issue and family are so mollified and made effeminate with the sweet and long peace and quiet' that they were not hardened enough to face the hazards of war.²³⁷ He was utterly critical of bigamy. He asserted that many of the British inhabitants and the natives kept two wives, and he laid particular stricture on the native Irish practice of dispensing with any ceremony: 'the mere Irish ordinarily, after a private contract, or sometimes without any condition but liking both sides, cohabit with single women in public as their wives and never solemnise any other marriage with them'. It is likely though, that aside from his religious convictions, his concern also stemmed from the disruption in the social order which would ensue; he continued, 'thereupon their issue, that by common report were held legitimate in their father's lifetime, after his death are found to be bastards, and that amongst the chief men of rank.'²³⁸ As we have seen, both Keating and Burnell, probably influenced by the tenets of the Counter Reformation, opposed bigamy whereas Mageoghegan was unconcerned at a man having multiple wives. Hadsor advised that the law on bigamy, in force in England, should be established in Ireland. As discussed in the last chapter, the state too was anxious to see the act on bigamy passed in Ireland in the interests of maintaining the social order, but no doubt also on religious grounds. Hadsor may well have inherited his views on this issue from reformed Catholic teaching but, in any case, there appears to have been no difference between Protestant and Catholic theology on this question. The Gaelic Irish mindset seems to have lagged behind the new guidelines regarding marriage.

National Identity

²³⁵ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, pp 43-4.

²³⁶ Treadwell, 'Richard Hadsor', pp 305-6.

²³⁷ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 51.

²³⁸ O'Brien (ed.), *Advertisements*, p. 54.

We have seen in the presentations of Mageoghegan and Keating a strong indication of a nascent common sense of national identity. The correspondence of ideas emerging from their manipulation of sources, whether deliberately or unconsciously, coupled with an obvious display of goodwill on behalf of both towards the other's community, pointed to a common train of thought and a coinciding aspiration of aims existing among the Old English and Gaelic Irish in the early seventeenth century. Signs of inchoate nationhood were also detected in Burnell's creative *oeuvre*.

A sense of national identity can also be gleaned from Hadsor's writings but signs of inclusiveness of the native Irish in his vision are evident to a much lesser extent than were visible in the accounts of Keating and Mageoghegan. Hadsor had a definite sense of *patria* and he loved his country; he described it as 'a Lande so fertile as wanteth nothings serving for the necessity use or pleasure of man'.²³⁹ He had a stake in Ireland, owned some land and had family there, and he looked forward to a bright future for the country. His vision encompassed an Irish kingdom ruled by the English king in his role as king of Ireland and this attachment to the crown was crucial for him. He wanted equal status for Ireland within the Stuart three kingdoms. Hadsor inherited the desire of the so-called 'commonwealth men' of the Pale of the sixteenth century who, as part of their developing sense of nationality, aimed to bring the native Irish to 'civility' by persuasion rather than coercion, as discussed previously. In the early sixteenth century, as Brendan Bradshaw saw it, it was the humanist aspiration towards the betterment of society, centring on the commonwealth, which gave rise within the Anglo-Irish to the concept of a general reformation, a scheme of political and social reform that would embrace not only the colonial community but the community of Irishry; although as mentioned earlier, not all historians agreed that the motivation of the Anglo-Irish was so idealistic; Bradshaw himself made the qualification that not all Anglo-Irish were motivated by nationalist sentiment.²⁴⁰ However, Aidan Clarke maintained that the old colonial settlers were not really united until the Jacobean period when those of the Pale Old English reached out and made new connections with the rural colonial gentry of Munster and

²³⁹ McLaughlin (ed.), 'Discourse', p. 352.

²⁴⁰ Brendan Bradshaw, *The Irish constitutional revolution of the sixteenth century* (Cambridge, 1979), pp 267-87.

Connacht.²⁴¹ As mentioned before, Clarke described a community which had diverged into different colonial streams over the centuries. Now, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, in the interests of their own survival in the face of anti-Catholicism from the government, they were creating a new colonial identity encompassing Tridentine Catholicism and reuniting as ‘Old English’, which included distancing themselves from the native Irish.²⁴² However, despite their regrouping for political expediency, the feelings of solidarity which the Old English of the marches had over the centuries developed with the native Irish, however tenuous, would not have been completely lost. Hadsor, from the Pale, despite his wish to incorporate the native Irish into civil society, displayed much antipathy towards Gaelic traditions and Gaelic culture and his portrayal generally suggested that they were much further down the hierarchical chain than the Old English. It seems he had a sense of national identity with the native Irish but one that did not embrace much of a feeling of solidarity with their community. It is possible that the early sense of nationhood of sixteenth century Palesman, which had encompassed the bringing of their fellow islanders to civility, developed more slowly than that of the Old English of the provinces. The national sentiment of the latter, due to them living in closer proximity to the territories of Gaelic Irish, seems to have evolved into a more developed sense of joint national identity. Therefore, the stronger sense of mutual national feeling discerned from the accounts of Mageoghegan and Keating contrasts with the weaker illustration of such feeling apparent in the writings of Burnell and Hadsor.

Conclusion

Hadsor’s royalism showed acceptance of the type of ‘absolutist’ rule exercised by James I and his son Charles I (in accordance with the description of Stuart ‘absolutism’ outlined in the introductory chapter). Although partly accounted for due to his official position, this also indicates that many in the Pale, for whom Hadsor was so obviously an apologist, were more inclined to be fully acquiescent of summary measures issuing from the crown than were the Old English, like Keating, based in the provinces. Prior to the introduction

²⁴¹ Aidan Clarke, ‘Colonial identity in early seventeenth-century Ireland’ in T.W. Moody (ed.), *Nationality and the pursuit of national independence* (Belfast, 1978), pp 59-60.

²⁴² Clarke, ‘Colonial identity in early seventeenth-century Ireland’, p. 57-71.

of restrictions against Catholics, it had been mainly members of the Pale who occupied official positions and participated in government. Therefore, despite Old English oppositional tactics used during the 'cess' and 'mandates' protests (replaced, after 1614, as discussed above, by a strategy of appealing to the king's 'grace'), the traditional and instinctive inclinations of many Palesmen may have been towards acceding to the wishes of the monarch. The pressure of the Wentworth regime in the 1630s and the different set of circumstances prevailing in the 1640s would impact on such ideologies and strain such unreserved loyalty. The more anti-absolutist royalist tendencies of Burnell, also from the Pale, writing at this later period, show the effects of the extra decades of discrimination leveraged against the Old English. What is strongly inferred from Hadsor's writings is the sense of immediate connection Palesmen felt with the king. The fulsome treatment accorded to the institution of parliament, with his focus on the king-in-parliament, emphasises this personal link, and also reflects the fact that Palesmen traditionally supplied the majority of members. The absence of reference to parliament by Mageoghegan was consistent with Gaelic Irish lack of experience in the institution. It is possible that, consequently, the Old English may have generally taken it for granted that hegemony in public life was in their domain. Hadsor's unequivocal antipathy to a Gaelic way of life is remarkable. Such strong prejudice is not apparent in the accounts of the other three men. His close contact with, and obvious sympathy for, the Gaelic Irish from Longford, King's County and Wexford with whom he dealt in 1622, did nothing to dilute his criticism and lack of affinity with Gaelic practices and customs. Over the eighteen odd years between his two reports, his negative attitude diminished not a whit, as one might have expected. Perhaps Gaelic raids against the Pale Old English of a county such as Louth, which bordered the Gaelic lands of Ulster, traditionally more vulnerable to incursions than the more insulated areas like Burnell's Castleknock, closer to the centre of Dublin, might explain the difference in degree between Hadsor's cultural hostility and Burnell's mild prejudice. In addition, it may have been during the period between 1622 and 1640 that an appreciable increase in the level of rapport between the Old Irish and Old English developed as the realization grew that working together would be advantageous to both groups in their quest to counter their joint problems. This was the period also during which the returned continentally-educated clergy consolidated their

efforts in their pastoral ministry and propagated the ideas of nation which they had brought home from Europe. The mid-sixteenth century aspirations of Palesmen of bringing the native Irish to civility was apparently still alive in the seventeenth, attested to by Hadsor's almost obsession with the initiative, and was obviously largely influenced by considerations of law and order. Nevertheless, the social order provided a strong meeting point for the Old English and Old Irish elite. Their attitude to a hierarchical society is reflected by the consonant fundamental assumptions of all four men in this area. Substantive variations in Hadsor's attitude to religion were not evident. Despite his alternative confessional allegiance, his religious approach differed little from Keating and Burnell, indicating that conformation to the state religion did not change the essential cultural traits of those who did conform. Finally, a weaker sense of collective identity with the Gaelic Irish than that which was visible between Keating and Mageoghegan points to a greater divide between the Old English of the Pale and the native Irish than prevailed elsewhere in Ireland. It is likely that, if this division persisted, some Old English, active in the confederacy, particularly those of the Pale, would encounter difficulties in working alongside their fellow confederates of native Irish background through a lack of mutual cultural understanding.

Chapter 6

Author of *Aphorismical discovery of treasonable faction*

The confederate period in Irish history has been so well documented that a brief and general account will suffice here as background context to this chapter. In October 1641, rebellion broke out in Ulster, led by members of the Ulster Gaelic Irish gentry due to discontent caused variously by economic woes and political disillusionment. These were quickly joined by leading members of the Old English community in Ireland who, discriminated against by the state for a half century and, following the rising, threatened anew because of their Catholicism, feared for their own livelihoods. What resulted was the forming of a confederate government, consisting of a supreme council and an assembly, of Old English and Old Irish Catholics sworn to fight for their religion, king and country which oversaw the waging of a war against royal, Scottish and English parliament forces over the next twelve years. Unfortunately, division and disagreement disrupted the partnership, the principal bone of contention being the terms of any religious settlement that would be acceptable to the different protagonists. A section of the confederates adhered to the clergy which required a more or less full degree of religious freedom whereas an opposing section was prepared to accept somewhat less than the open worship of their religion, terms which were at times on offer from the king through the royal representative, the duke of Ormond. The majority of the former tended to be from the Old Irish grouping while most of the Old English were content with the more pragmatic solution of limited religious concessions. Thus the confederation, which at its foundation had stipulated unity between all Irishmen, Gaelic Irish and Old English, was riven with strife and eventually split with much bitterness on both sides.

The work known as *Aphorismical discovery of treasonable faction*, written by an anonymous author, related a history of the wars in Ireland during the confederate period covering the years from 1641 to 1652. The author, whose identity is putatively suggested below, was almost certainly of native Irish descent and his political ideas and ideology

are juxtaposed with those of the Gaelic Irish Conell Mageoghegan, the Tipperary Old English Geoffrey Keating and the two Pale Old Englishmen, Henry Burnell and Richard Hadsor. We have already seen in the outlooks of these four early-modern Irishmen a clear and explicit royalist ideology albeit with different emphases as well as a committed adherence to a hierarchical system of social order. In terms of religion, although all Catholic, except for Hadsor who had conformed to the state religion, the native Irish Mageoghegan clung to older pre-Counter Reformation religious beliefs whereas the others showed the more modern influences brought about by the Council of Trent. Cultural differences were more marked with Keating culturally closer to Mageoghegan than the other two Old English gentlemen of the Pale who showed little interest in Gaelic civilization. However, despite some divergences in their respective outlooks, a sense of joint national identity of varying degree has been apparent between these four early seventeenth-century Irishmen.

The *Aphorismical discovery of treasonable faction* has been edited by John Gilbert in three volumes from the only known manuscript which is preserved in Trinity College Dublin.¹ It was written from the perspective of one who adhered to the stance of that section of the clergy which agreed with the policies and opinions of GianBattista Rinuccini, archbishop of Fermo, and papal nuncio to the confederate Catholics of Ireland. In brief, the author maintained an uncompromising position with regard to what he regarded as a fundamental *sine qua non* for a solution to the conflict: the preservation of Catholicism in Ireland and freedom for Irish Catholics to practise their religion. The book, probably compiled on the continent in the 1650s, was dedicated to General Owen Roe O'Neill who remained a central figure in the book up until his death in November 1649 and who had also adhered to the principles of Rinuccini. It seems, however, that the author may have commenced the work in Ireland either before 6 November 1649 when Owen Roe died or before the author heard of his death. The dedication addressed Owen Roe, in the present tense as if he were still alive, extolled his virtues and denounced the unworthy supreme council who 'ever lay in waite of misconstruinge your

¹ J. T. Gilbert (ed.), *A contemporary history of affairs in Ireland from 1641 to 1653* (3 vols, Dublin 1879); TCD MS. 846.

godly actions unto a reprobate sense.’ Nevertheless, the author seemed to have been aware of the impending death of Owen Roe signaled by the air of finality surrounding his encomium as he drew his dedication to a close: ‘live then in heaven, the earth beinge not worthy of such a masterpeece, to get...a crowne of glory for your religious intentions.’² It seems probable then that the work was revisited and completed later after the war had ended, most likely in Rome, indicated by the author’s reference to one of his sources from ‘Biblioteca Vatican, Rome’.³

Indeed, the *Aphorismical discovery* may well form part of a body of literature written on the continent in the 1650s to vindicate the stance taken by the clergy during the confederate wars, the likelihood of which will be discussed below in the ‘Religion’ section of this chapter. The treatise is a polemical work and presents a decidedly biased and one-sided view of the events and personnel of the confederate movement, albeit a view sincerely and passionately held. Accordingly, the author treated favourably those who adopted an inflexible attitude towards any peace that did not include full religious toleration whereas he directed abuse and unconcealed contempt at those who obviously believed that the only way to achieve their goal was to settle for a more pragmatic solution. The former group he regarded as ‘well-affected’ whereas he referred to the latter as ‘refractory’ and part of the ‘faction’. In addition, his account exhibited a decided bias in favour of the Gaelic Irish who, he simplistically implied, all adhered to the clergy and to Rinuccini’s view of affairs while, conversely, he inferred that those who followed the duke of Ormond and the supreme council were all Old English and were members of his ‘treasonable faction’. One of the members of his offensive ‘faction’ was Sir Richard Bellings (c.1603-77), secretary to the council for most of the duration of the confederacy, who like many of the members of the council, was accorded much vitriolic criticism from the author. Bellings, an Old English lawyer and poet, was born and raised in the Pale and was son-in-law to Richard Butler, Viscount Mountgarret who was president of the council between 1642 and 1646. In the 1670s, Bellings wrote an alternative version of the history of the confederate wars and, in contrast to the account of the author, his bias

² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, pp 7-8.

³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, p. 2.

was directed towards Ormond, the supreme council and the Old English.⁴ As well as being a history of the wars of the 1640s, however, Bellings' account can also be seen as a commentary on the events of the early 1670s when Irish Catholics faced renewed pressures.⁵ Nevertheless, his attitudes and opinions surrounding the confederate period are compared and contrasted with those of the *Aphorismical* author.

It has sometimes been assumed that the *Aphorismical* author was a soldier⁶ but this was perhaps to misinterpret his mode of expressing early-modern English, which in effect resembled a quaint, later middle English. In his address 'To the reader', he explained his motivation for setting down his history:

I must confesse my whole scope is onely the discoverie of faction, and not a whole historie of all the proceedings of this war, not that I want knowledge of the passadges, but as alienat from my beinge of sworde carier, doe researve the same to its genuine authors of better abilitie and leasure.⁷

According to the Middle English dictionary, one of the meanings of 'alienat' is 'secluded' or 'aloof'.⁸ Therefore, what the author was explaining was that, as he was not a soldier, he reserved a full history of the war to those who were better qualified than he to report its episodes. Alternatively, the author was much more likely to have been a member of the Franciscan order, a conclusion I had reached independently of Pádraig Lenihan, who noted that the anonymous author of *Aphorismical discovery* was 'probably a Franciscan friar'.⁹ The *Aphorismical* author's detailed knowledge of the statutes and customs of the Franciscan order, his obviously close familiarity with so many Franciscan priests and brothers ministering in Ireland at the time, together with his devotion to St Francis all point to this deduction.¹⁰ Another reason why it might have been thought that

⁴ J. T. Gilbert (ed.), *History of the Irish confederation and the war in Ireland* (7 vols, Dublin, 1882-91).

⁵ Raymond Gillespie, 'The social thought of Richard Bellings' in Micheál Ó Siochrú (ed.), *Kingdoms in crisis: Ireland in the 1640s: essays in honour of Donal Cregan* (Dublin, 2001), pp 216-17.

⁶ Deana Rankin, *Between Spenser and Swift: English writing in seventeenth-century Ireland* (Cambridge, 2005), pp 119, 126.

⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 10.

⁸ Kurath, Hans (ed.), *Middle English dictionary* (15 vols, Ann Arbor, 1952), i, A-B.

⁹ Pádraig Lenihan, 'Catholicism and the Irish confederate armies: for God or king?' in *Recusant History*, xxii, no. 2 (October, 1994), p. 186.

¹⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 1-2, 71-2, 142-4, 33-4, 54, i, 277-9, 108, ii, 46.

he was a soldier was that he showed such a detailed knowledge and obvious interest in the mechanics and ethics of warfare; however, this would not preclude him from being a friar. The sources which he cited throughout the book attest to his having perused authors who wrote on military matters such as Polybius and Vegetius. In addition, in Flanders, where the author had likely been stationed (he revealed much familiarity with soldiers returned from there), the religious communities attached to the Counter-Reformation colleges had close links with the Irish military group.¹¹ Chaplains provided religious services in the presence of the army, accompanied the soldiers on their campaigns, lived under tent and followed them to the field of battle.¹² In Ireland, in the confederate wars, many clerics were also involved at all levels including actively fighting in the campaigns.¹³ Consequently, taking these considerations into account, it is reasonable to assume that the author was a member of the Franciscan religious order.

It is very likely also that there has been a misconception in historiography which assumed that the author hailed from Ulster.¹⁴ This conclusion is understandable given the author's devotion to Owen Roe O'Neill and his praise and respect for the Ulster army especially. However, his adulation for O'Neill and admiration of the Ulstermen may be accounted for by his having ministered to an Ulster division in Flanders, a territory he variously referred to as 'that Vulcanian forge and martiall theater', and 'the martiall academie of Christendome.'¹⁵ On occasions, he referred to Ulstermen in the detached manner of an outsider: when the plot on Dublin Castle by the Ulster lords was thwarted in October 1641, he related that 'the rest of the kingdome' wavered, not sure what to do, 'judging the revolution of the Northeren people, rather inative in them then of any settled grounde'; elsewhere, he described how an Ulster party failed to defend Toghhar Castle at Finea, on the Westmeath border in Co. Cavan, because 'the towne did abounde with meate and drinke, and specially with aquavitae (liquor too well beloved of the northern people).'¹⁶

¹¹ Gráinne Henry, *The Irish military community in Spanish Flanders, 1586-1621* (Dublin, 1992), p. 21.

¹² Henry, *Irish military community*, pp 100-1.

¹³ Lenihan, 'Catholicism and the Irish confederate armies', pp 183-4.

¹⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, x; Rankin, *Spenser to Swift*, p. 118.

¹⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 7, ii, 61.

¹⁶ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 12, ii, 136.

There are stronger indications that point to the author being a native of the midlands area of Co. Westmeath rather than of the north. His knowledge of the geography of the midlands is much more detailed than that of Ulster. When he discussed the various battles or skirmishes in Ulster, he mostly just specified the larger centres such as Charlemont, Mountjoy, Dungannon and Armagh or else referred generally to the counties of that province.¹⁷ For instance, while he could describe in some detail the defeat of Sir Phelim O'Neill by Sir Robert Stewart at the battle of Glenmaquin in June 1642, he could only name the location of the battle as 'Tyrconnells skirmish.'¹⁸ On the other hand, he made no such omission when describing the battle at Rathconnell in 1642, an area just about two miles from Mullingar where he provided a detailed account of even the minor incidences of this 'Roconnell skirmish.'¹⁹ He exhibited a much more intimate knowledge of both the bigger towns as well as smaller villages and townlands of the midlands, especially south Westmeath and north King's county, but also of Co. Laois and Co. Kildare.²⁰ He alluded to at least seven baronies in the counties of Westmeath and King's county mentioning the barony of Moycashel on six occasions.²¹ Conversely, he did not specify baronies in any other counties (except once, in Co. Leitrim).²² One further sign of his more extensive knowledge of Co. Westmeath is apparent from his obviously detailed knowledge of the gentry of that county. In the early days of the war, after the initial oath of confederacy was sworn, he listed the principal families of the various counties who rose to arms. For each county, he enumerated one, two or perhaps three families but in the case of Westmeath, he specified no less than fifteen different gentlemen.²³ Furthermore, the Westmeath Dillons received extensive (unfavourable) attention from him, the Nugents somewhat less so, but, for the members of the Geoghegan family (the 'Mac' was dropped increasingly in the seventeenth century) of south Westmeath and north King's county, descendants of the chieftains of Kineleagh, he reserved the highest respect and veneration.

¹⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 23, 25.

¹⁸ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 42.

¹⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 57.

²⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 208, 240, 269, 47, 83-4, 16, 28.

²¹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 56, 138, 232, 240, 241, ii, 129.

²² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 119.

²³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 17.

It is the argument of this thesis that the most likely candidate to have been author of *Aphorismical discovery of treasonable faction* was Anthony (Mac) Geoghegan, Franciscan friar, bishop of Clonmacnoise (1649-1657) and bishop of Meath (1657-1664). From a study of the primary and secondary sources on Geoghegan, his sentiments are closely in commune with those of the author of *Aphorismical discovery*. The treatise, as mentioned, was most probably compiled on the continent in the 1650s by one who was uncompromising in his religious principles.²⁴ Geoghegan was a militant Counter-Reformation priest and had been educated in Louvain, Spain, Rome and Prague.²⁵ He was resident in Ireland from 1639 until 1652 when he was able to escape to Spain, where he remained for some months, arriving in Rome in December 1653 where he lived until 1658.²⁶ There are hints that the work, although commenced in Ireland, was revisited and completed in Rome; one of the sources cited by the author was in the archive, ‘Biblioteca Vatican, Rome’, which appeared as a marginal (it is clear from elsewhere in the book that the marginals were the author’s own additions); he cited also ‘Sanderus de schismate Anglicano’, a work which Nicholas Sanders wrote while in Rome in 1572-3, and where a copy may have been accessible.²⁷ Soon after his arrival in Rome, Geoghegan presented a *relatio* on the state of Ireland to the pope, Innocent X.²⁸ This report might well have been preliminary to a later expanded *Aphorismical discovery*. While in Rome, Geoghegan was translated to the diocese of Meath in April 1657, returning to Ireland in 1659 where he remained until his death in 1664. He opposed the Remonstrance to Charles II in 1662 as a heretical document and continued to minister as bishop in the, religiously speaking, unfriendly environment of Restoration Ireland.²⁹ Bishop Anthony Geoghegan, born Niall, was the son of Hugh MacGeoghegan of Castletown, Co. Westmeath and Ellen Tyrrell, daughter of Walter Tyrrell of Clonmoyle, Co. Westmeath,

²⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, vii;

²⁵ H.M.C. *Report on Franciscan manuscripts preserved at the Convent, Merchants Quay, Dublin* (Dublin, 1906), pp 216-18; Terry Clavin, ‘Anthony (Niall) MacGeoghegan’, *DIB*, www.dib.cambridge.org.

²⁶ Clavin, ‘Anthony (Niall) MacGeoghegan’.

²⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 2, 4, 213; T. F. Mayer, ‘Nicholas Sanders’, *ODNB*, www.oxforddnb.com

²⁸ Padraig I. Ó Maoileachlainn, ‘Anthony MacGeoghegan (1598-1664)’ in *Teathbha*, i, no. 3 (Dec., 1973), p. 300; Stanislaus Kavanagh (ed.), *Commentarius Rinuccinianus* (6 vols, Dublin, 1949), v, 110-13.

²⁹ Ó Maoileachlainn, ‘Anthony MacGeoghegan’, pp 300-2.

and grandson of Connla, last chieftain of Kineleagh.³⁰ The *Aphorismical discovery* abounds with references to various members of the different branches of the Geoghegan clan.

Of all the members of this family, Major Charles Geoghegan, the nephew of Bishop Anthony, was accorded the most extensive coverage in the book.³¹ On the occasion of his death, which occurred during an attempt by the confederates to retake Carrick-on-Suir from Cromwell in November 1649, the author took the opportunity to provide a summary of the major's career on the continent and revealed his detailed knowledge of the minutiae of Charles' experiences there. The ensuing eulogy runs to three pages of Gilbert's edition. 'This Charles was son unto Art Mc Huigh Geoghegan, of Castltowne in Kinaliagh [and], havinge scientifically learned his humanitie and the rudiments of logicke, thought himself not satisfied with any arte soe suiteinge his inclination as that of Mars'. He went on to describe Charles' various misfortunes while serving abroad, such as having a bullet in his body for six years, having to feed on starving horses and asses when provisions were exhausted, and fighting a duel with 'inactive' honour, which was 'more deere unto him then all the caducat [perishable] goods of Europe'. When he died, 'the Majors corps was carried alonge to Kilkeny, and honourably interred there in Our Lady Churche, with both the ceremonie of Church and militarie, with the consternation of both friend and foe that was ever acquainted with him.'³² Many more members of the Geoghegan family received similar encomies. For instance, Lt. Col. Barnaby Geoghegan 'made a general confession and received' before going into action against the enemy, 'behavinge himself more like a gyant then an ordinarie man', but was nevertheless killed. The author continued with a fond eulogy: 'after the death of this brave gentleman, as every one loved him in his life, soe eache one bemoaned his untimely death...his corps was carried with great honor (as became one of his place and familie), accordinge to the reits of holy Church.'³³ Shortly after, Barnaby's brother, Capt. Art Geoghegan, was also

³⁰ Paul Walsh, 'Antony Mageoghegan, bishop of Clonmacnois' in *Irish Book Lover*, xxvii, no. 3 (May, 1940); Edmund Hogan (ed.), *The description of Ireland and the state thereof as it is at this present in anno 1598* (1878), p. 108.

³¹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 131, 156, ii, 11, 45-6, 57-9.

³² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 57-9.

³³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 107-8.

killed, who had proved himself ‘a brave gentleman, as not degeneratinge from his noble prediccissors...and was interred with pomp and honor beseeminge a Catholicke captain, with his said brother in S. Francis Abbey in Limbricke.’³⁴ Apart from a heartfelt eulogy and tribute to Owen Roe O’Neill and the O’Neill clan, no other family was accorded such accolades in the *Aphorismical discovery*.

Bishop Anthony Geoghegan was first cousin once-removed of Conell Mageoghegan, the subject of chapter two, and that branch of the family also received honourable mention from him. He was cognisant of, and may have read, Conell’s ‘annuals’, and spoke favourably of his son, ‘lieutenant Conly McConnell Geoghegan.’ He accused Fr Peter Walsh (who will be discussed in ‘Religion’ section below) of falsely betraying Conell’s uncle, Ross Geoghegan, bishop of Kildare, to ‘the Protestant State of Dublin, in time of persecution against an apostolicall prelate, a true child of Dominicks Order, Rochus Geoghegan...to exasperate herby the State against this holy prelat.’ He also commended Capt. Richard Geoghegan, ‘heire of Moycashell’ (therefore, of Conell’s branch), for refusing to swear an ‘irreligious oathe’ against the censures of Rinuccini.³⁵ Yet another section of the Geoghegan family was accorded much space. Conly Geoghegan, landlord of Donore, Co. Westmeath and first cousin once-removed³⁶ of Bishop Anthony, was absent when Ormond spent the ‘holy daies of Christmas’ in his castle, and the author, perhaps anxious not to give the impression that Conly adhered to Ormond, was careful to mention that ‘Ormond [was] mightie inquisitive of this gentlman.’ Later, on the occasion of the parliament forces attacking and commandeering Conly’s residence, he exhibited great pride in describing it as ‘a very rich place...with all kinde of comoditie, Gould, silver, plate, broad-cloath, cambricke, Holland, diaper, linnin, gallant sutes, as for meate, drinke, and corne in abundance, non such did the enemie see since he came to Ireland.’³⁷ The foregoing extracts are just a selection of many more favourable references to other members of the Geoghegan family. Further, he recorded (mostly all favourable) allusions to families related or connected to the Geoghegans, viz. the Fitzgeralds of Lacagh, Co.

³⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 121.

³⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 2, 106, 276, 197-8, ii, 46.

³⁶ Paul Walsh, *The Mageoghegans* (Mullingar, 1938), p.45.

³⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 137, iii, 133-4.

Kildare, the Tyrrells of Westmeath, the Dempseys of Clanmalier and the Foxes and Molloyes of King's county.³⁸ Finally, after the death of another member, Capt. Marcus Geoghegan of the Moycashel branch, he took the opportunity to summarise his thoughts on the family:

I have noted (in my opinion) a thinge worthy observation in the onely familie of the Geoghegans, that I see never a name or familie in all the kingdome that soe duely, honorably, and totally miscarried as they, never a one of them was ever killed other then like a brave souldier, and in commaunde, in action...these 10 Geoghegan comaunders perished to the world, but to future ages lefte sufficient matter of honourable imitation of both courage and fame, and noe marvayle, as eache endued with such extraordinarie noble qualities, as well infused as acquired, of extraction, bridinge, and comelinesse of persones...this I doe not write of them as any way alive unto either of them more then unto many others here mentioned, but to give a sweete relish unto the rest of theire name, that dranke of the bitter potion of these eternished cavalliers deathe, whose life is soe celebrated in heaven, as we hope in God.³⁹

Even though he claimed here that he was not biased towards anyone in particular, the fact that he provided, without exception, commendatory comment on the Geoghegan family from Co. Westmeath and King's county, is an indication that he himself was a member of that family.

The style and tone of writing of *Aphorismical discovery* is forthright, colourful and quite extreme with its accusing and condemnatory content. It can be compared with a letter written by Bishop Anthony from Kilkenny in November 1642 to Luke Wadding in Rome.⁴⁰ The sentiments and tone are quite similar. In the letter (translated from Latin by the editor), Geoghegan protested, 'But alas! among Ireland's ungrateful sons there will perchance be found a brood of vipers, Christians but in name and luke-warm Catholics, infamous by the name of neutrals.'⁴¹ In *Aphorismical discovery*, the author, railing against a number of clerics, addressed them as 'O vipers broode'; he referred to those confederates who agreed with a cessation with Inchiquin as 'colde and tepide Catholicks'; and, to those who were instrumental in expelling the Nuncio, as 'venemous

³⁸ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 70, 254, 16-17, 61.

³⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 65-6.

⁴⁰ H.M.C. *Report on Franciscan manuscripts*, pp 216-8.

⁴¹ H.M.C. *Report on Franciscan manuscripts*, p. 217.

vipers and pharisaycall Christians.⁴² Again, in the letter, Geoghegan, as early as 1642, had made up his mind that Clanricard was not wholly supportive of what Geoghegan and the unyielding clergy stood for: ‘the Earl of Clanrickarde, that most infamous neutral, to the very great and grievous weakening of the Catholic cause, affords them [the English] some help against us, and draws in his train to the same shipwreck others not a few of the planets of Connaught.’⁴³ In the book, Clanricard was one of the author’s *bêtes noires* whom he regarded as a prime member the ‘faction’. He accused ‘Clanricards archbishope’, John Bourke, the archbishop of Tuam, of retracting his allegiance to the rest of the clergy, ‘himself alone with his fewe Conatian tribunes, and privat influence of that predominant planet Clanricarde.’⁴⁴ Other sentiments in the letter concur exactly with those in *Aphorismical discovery* including a concern for the return of their monasteries to the Mendicants and a proposal for excommunication of those who ‘do not stoutly adhere to the Catholic side.’⁴⁵

There are, of course, arguments against Geoghegan’s authorship of the text. First, the initials appended to the author’s dedication read P.S. or R.S. However, this is of little significance. Many writers used pseudonyms in the early modern period and, as a bishop intending to return to minister in Ireland in the dangerous protectorate era, Geoghegan would certainly not have wanted to identify himself. Indeed, this reluctance would have been wise as, after the Restoration, on 22 June 1663, a warrant by the duke of Ormond was issued from Dublin Castle for the apprehension of Anthony Geoghegan, ‘pretended Bishop of Meath.’⁴⁶ A second problem arises where, in a passage in which the author placed himself in 1649, he related that he was ‘then a member of that armie’ (the Leinster army).⁴⁷ This might seem unlikely as Geoghegan had been consecrated bishop at Easter 1649; however, the author’s dates were not always accurate and the episode may have occurred a little earlier. In addition, as has been pointed out above, clerics and even bishops themselves served in the confederate army; Heber Mac Mahon, bishop of

⁴² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 276, 187, ii, 51.

⁴³ H.M.C. *Report on Franciscan manuscripts*, p. 218.

⁴⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 147.

⁴⁵ H.M.C. *Report on Franciscan manuscripts*, p. 217; Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 291-3, 195 *et passim*.

⁴⁶ Bodleian Library, Oxford, Carte MS. 165, f. 119.

⁴⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 26.

Clogher succeeded Owen Roe O'Neill as commander of the Ulster army in 1650.⁴⁸ Further, according to the author, in 1650, 'a partie of militarie forces gathered together for the clergie service...under the comaunde of Edmond Dempsie, Bishope of Laghlin, and Anthony Geoghegan, Bishope of Clunmacnose' to give effect to a clergy declaration and excommunication of Ormond and his adherents.⁴⁹ Thirdly, it might be thought strange if the author were Anthony Geoghegan that he would refer to himself fairly frequently in the *Aphorismical discovery*. However, Anthony Geoghegan could not have been omitted as he was one of the bishops who stuck rigidly and constantly to the stance of Rinuccini and who opposed the more pragmatic approach of the supreme council. In addition, the author, although he spoke at all times approvingly of Geoghegan (for instance, 'a Seraphicall childe, and consequently most observant to the Sea of Rome', and, along with the bishop of Leighlin, 'chiefe sticklers of religion'), he did not accord him the same effusive and elaborate praise that he reserved for the rest of the Geoghegan clan; were the author not Anthony Geoghegan, there would have been no reason for him to be somewhat restrained in his acclaim of the bishop, when he so obviously fully agreed with his principles.⁵⁰ Therefore, it may be that a natural modesty prevented him from overstating his own qualities. In the case of the memoir of the 1640s by Richard Bellings, it is significant that Bellings does not ostensibly appear in his own narrative, referring to himself as 'the secretary' to the supreme council.⁵¹

I realise that the evidence of the above hypothesis for the authorship of the *Aphorismical discovery* is circumstantial and time and opportunity have prevented me so far from establishing the case more conclusively. However, further research in this direction may yield more fruit. I have consulted a letter of his held in UCD archives⁵² and found that the handwriting does not match with the writer of the manuscript of the *Aphorismical discovery* in TCD; however, that manuscript may very well be a copy and not the original. In any case, if the author was not Anthony Geoghegan, it is very likely to have

⁴⁸ T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin & F. J. Byrne (eds), *A new history of Ireland*, iii, *early modern Ireland, 1534-1691* (Oxford, 1976), p. 238.

⁴⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 114.

⁵⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 148, iii, 133.

⁵¹ Gillespie, 'Social thought of Richard Bellings', p. 215.

⁵² UCD archives, Franciscan MSS, DI series, ff 509-10.

been some other member of or connection to the Geoghegan family, who was a Franciscan friar, who was in Rome in the 1650s and who held the very same views as the bishop of Clonmacnoise. Accordingly, it will be instructive and interesting to compare the author's views with those of the previous four protagonists, the Gaelic Irish Conell Mageoghegan and Old English Geoffrey Keating, and of Palesmen, Henry Burnell and Richard Hadsor. It is likely that he knew Conell but apart from that he apparently respected both his work and Keating's *Foras feasa*. In his dedication, he suggested that 'the curious reader', if he wished further information on the history of the Vikings in Ireland, should consult 'the antiquarists...Dr. Keatinge in his Irish monuments, [and] Connall Geoghegan in his Englishe annuals.'⁵³

Royalism

The concept of royalism, as understood in this thesis, comprehends attitudes of sympathy and loyalty to the king, with various strands of royalism being exhibited by the different authors, ranging from an acceptance of absolutist kingship to an expectation of kingship with limited powers. The author of the *Aphorismical discovery* displayed the latter outlook with regard to his royalism.

By the 1640s, it seems that the constitutional title of kingdom had now become the normal attribute to apply to Ireland, indicating an increasingly widespread acceptance by all sections of the community of the country's status of kingdom ruled by the Stuart kings. Throughout the *Aphorismical discovery*, the term 'kingdom' is the author's preferred term to refer to the country of Ireland and the expression the 'three kingdomes' seemed to fall naturally from his pen.⁵⁴ We have seen that Mageoghegan imposed the 'kingdom of Ireland' on his chronicle and that Keating similarly used the term anachronistically for his history, indications that both were conscious of contemporary concerns; for Hadsor too Ireland's status as kingdom was of the utmost importance, as it was for Burnell. However, aside from the expression enjoying common currency now by mid-century, it is likely that the author also consciously chose to employ the appellation.

⁵³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 2.

⁵⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 2, 11, ii, 85, iii, 101.

This was doubtless a deliberate strategy on the part of the confederates, stressing their royalism, particularly at this time when royalty was being challenged and its demise bound to have crucial repercussions for its supporters in Ireland. Additionally, there is no doubt that the author's sense was that of an Irish kingdom under the reign of the English king ruling as king of Ireland. He related that the prelates of the kingdom who met at Jamestown in 1651 accused Ormond of committing '16 articles of treason against his Majesty, and this his kingdome of Ireland.'⁵⁵ From the very outset of the troubles when they had met at Kells in March 1642, the clergy had made it clear that this was a just war waged in preservation of their religion and of the king's prerogatives.⁵⁶ The author's attitude to the entity of the kingdom of Ireland is clearly seen further when, in detailing one of the articles of agreement of his Highness, the duke of Lorraine, with regard to his proposed protectorship of Ireland, he stated, 'His Holinesse [sic] doe promise to asiste and helpe his Majesty, the Kinge of Britaine... against his adversaries, now the Parliament of Englande, and will desire nothinge of his royall right in the kingdome of Irelande.'⁵⁷ In fact, Charles II was reported to be infuriated by the intervention of Lorraine seeing it as undermining his sovereignty in Ireland.⁵⁸ However, the author's contentment, in common with the other four authors, with the contemporary constitutional position was clear.

Similarly, like the previous protagonists, his aspiration to establish the island of Ireland as a kingdom independent of the parliament of England is clear. This can be seen by the account that he supplied on the very first page of the work when he gave the background context to events leading up to the outbreak of the rebellion in October 1641. Referring to the Irish parliamentary committee which went to represent Irish grievances to the king and negotiate with him for concessions in the first half of 1641, he gave his interpretation of the constitutional situation, and revealed his satisfaction at the initiative. He related, because of 'some favourable winde [that] blasted in the parliament of Ireland', by which

⁵⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 100.

⁵⁶ Patrick J. Corish, 'The rising of 1641 and the catholic confederacy, 1641-5' in Moody et al (eds), *N.H.I.*, iii, 297.

⁵⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 155 [an obvious error, should read 'His Highness'].

⁵⁸ Jane Ohlmeyer, 'Ireland independent: confederate foreign policy and international relations during the mid-seventeenth century' in Jane Ohlmeyer (ed.), *Ireland from independence to occupation* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 106.

a Catholic majority was able to outvote the English and Protestant government, Catholic agents were despatched to England to have Poynings' Act 'putt out of the fyle of records.'⁵⁹ Poynings' Law, which had been enacted in the fifteenth century, required that all draft Irish legislation had to be approved by the English Privy Council before it could be introduced into the Irish parliament.⁶⁰ The author continued, their appeal to the king being successful, the agents arrived back in Dublin, 'loaden with his majesties royall graces', and showed their letters of grace, signed and sealed by the king, 'to be inacted in the parliament of Irelande, without any dependencie of England'; and he denounced the delaying tactics of the lords justices who succeeded in frustrating their efforts by denying them parliamentary confirmation of the king's prerogative grant.⁶¹ Irish parliamentary legislative independence of its English counterpart has assumed a heightened significance in the early 1640s as the English parliament increasingly strove to spread its tentacles over the Irish legislature.⁶² These claims to Irish parliamentary independence formed part of a checklist of complaints known as the 'Queries' compiled in February 1641. This initial affirmation of relative autonomy in the area of parliamentary legislation was followed by a confirmation of the Irish position delivered in a speech by Patrick Darcy to a conference committee of the Lords and Commons of the Irish parliament in Dublin Castle on 9 June 1641.⁶³ It is instructive that the author's opinion, in this respect, agreed with the case made by Darcy and indicates that this was the received opinion of both Old Irish and Old English. However, it is unlikely that he was aware of Darcy's involvement in the debate. First, he did not mention the fact, and secondly, he regarded Darcy negatively as one of the 'faction', as will be seen below. Later, he again showed that he shared the frustrations of Irish politicians at the way Poynings' Act hampered the Irish parliament's independence. He included a speech by a 'yonge gentleman', but one with 'the behaviour of a grave councillor', who declared, "when I obsearve how many large subsidies the Catholicks of this kingdome, over and above theire abilities, bestowed on his sacred Majestie in the last peace, to haue Poynings acte onely suspended, and admitt

⁵⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 11.

⁶⁰ Raymond Gillespie, *Seventeenth century Ireland: making Ireland modern* (Dublin, 2006), p. 58.

⁶¹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 11-12.

⁶² Aidan Clarke, 'Patrick Darcy and the constitutional relationship between Ireland and Britain' in Jane Ohlmeyer (ed.), *Political thought in seventeenth-century Ireland: kingdom or colony* (Cambridge, 2000), pp 44-5.

⁶³ Clarke, 'Patrick Darcy', pp 35-44.

us to privat masses, it transcends my capacitie.’⁶⁴ Among the many insults that he hurled at his *bête noir*, Ormond, was the accusation that he ‘aimed at the royall crowne of Ireland’.⁶⁵ Such an allusion suggests that the author envisaged a distinct kingdom under the king’s stewardship. This understanding of the separateness of the kingdom of Ireland from the kingdoms of England and Scotland is further reinforced by an allusion he made while citing the list articles of agreement made in 1651 between the duke of Lorraine and confederate agents, an allusion which implied the independent agency of an Irish parliament. He stated that the duke would doubtless condescend to allow his armies to be employed ‘if it seeme expedient unto an assemblye or kingdome councell to send succours unto his Majestie against his enemies in other his kingdoms.’⁶⁶ There is no doubt that the author cherished the notion of an Irish kingdom, with its own independent parliament, distinct from the kingdom and parliament of England. In this assumption he was in tune with the previous four writers, and, given that the thorny issue evolved to have a greater significance over the previous two decades, he articulated his case even more plainly than the others had.

As well as the separateness of the kingdoms being completely clear to the Irish and the king of England being regarded as integral to the kingdom of Ireland, the concepts of ‘kingdom’ and ‘nation’ seem to have been interchangeable concepts for Irish Catholics at this stage. The author taxed Ormond and his ‘refractory peeres’ with plotting to ‘deliver the kings sworde and forts...in all the kingdome unto the common enemye, thereby to disenthroned royaltie in Ireland and consequently to extirpate the Irish nation in bringing in the maine power of a potent enemy the Parliament of England.’⁶⁷ Ó Buachalla has pointed out that the concepts of the Irish nation, the kingdom of Ireland and the crown of Ireland were central to seventeenth-century Irish political thought with the Stuarts occupying an unassailable position as kings of Ireland as well as an unquestionable right to the crown of Ireland.⁶⁸ It is clear that the author saw kingdom and nation as mutually inclusive. He maintained that Ormond had shown his true colours in the very first

⁶⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 120.

⁶⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 290.

⁶⁶ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 155-6.

⁶⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 145-6.

⁶⁸ Breandán Ó Buachalla, *The crown of Ireland* (Galway, 2006), pp 38-40.

assembly and that his faction had even then been obvious to all, but that ‘understanding witts’ turned a blind eye, sure that he ‘would never be against either kinge or nation, as beinge farr to interested therein himself.’⁶⁹ Following an oath published by the supreme council binding all confederate Catholics to abide by the treaty made with Inchiquin, he railed, ‘there is noe man acquainte with the kingdome of Ireland and its people’ who could not but admit that the commonwealth was not in perfect health.⁷⁰ Such a comment reveals that his conception enveloped kingdom, nation and commonwealth. And in citing a set of lengthy answers written by Fr John Ponce in opposition to points made by Fr Peter Walsh, he claimed that Donogh O’Brien, earl of Inchiquin, who had been fighting on the side of Parliament against the king, had incurred the hatred of true Irish Catholics by ‘havinge shewen himself soe unnaturall to his cuntrymen.’⁷¹ Again, in 1652, after peace had been concluded between some of the confederates and Parliament, he showed his conception of the kingdom of Ireland embracing all the Catholics of the country; he quoted a declaration of the clergy of Leinster against the ‘most unjust and wicked peace...between the confederate Catholicks of this kingdome and the Parliament of Englande...contrary to the reall intention [of]...the most parte and soundest witts...in this kingdome of Ireland: by some detestable ministers, treacherous and disloyall to both nation and sacred association.’⁷² His terminology referring to nation and to the people of the kingdom suggests that the closeness of the Gaelic Irish and Old English had increased further by 1641.

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the Old English sought to protect their interests through the benign exercise of the royal prerogative. During the decade of the confederate wars, their royalism was reinforced, as the king’s ability to prevail against Parliament was crucial to the confederate cause. The Old Irish leaders of the rising in October, 1641, whatever the truth of their loyalties, also believed that it was to their advantage to claim to be fighting for the king rather than against him, an attitude

⁶⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 39.

⁷⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 223.

⁷¹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 6.

⁷² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 110.

that was consistent with that of the Old English in the 1640s.⁷³ Richard Bellings listed this espousal of loyalty to the king as a principal cause for the Old English allying with them in November: ‘the assurance Roger Moore gave them that the Ulster men noe way intended to decline the obedience due from them to the King, but rather meant by fighting to the last man for his rights and prerogatives....to establish the liberty of their religion and nation.’⁷⁴ However, the author seemed to display a genuine sense of loyalty towards the king and always protested Irish loyalty towards the crown. He cited an incident involving ‘that humane-bloudsucker, Sir Charles Coote’ whom he portrayed throughout the book as utterly cruel and dastardly. The duchess of Buckingham, the wife of the earl of Antrim, berated Coote for shedding much innocent blood, averring that, ‘the Irish was more loyall to the crowne of England’ than he.⁷⁵ The author constantly professed his respect and concern for the king and repeatedly accused those factionists, especially Ormond and Clanricard, of disobedience and ‘perfidious’ treachery to the crown; of instead adhering to Parliament and plotting the downfall of royalty. Under the year 1643, he related that the factional supreme council, which had favoured Ormond for lord lieutenant, had torn up the king’s letter appointing Antrim to that office instead. He expostulated, ‘what doe you judge of this action? Or what doe you think of this Councell, that durst handle the royall instruments...with such exorbitancie? I am confident they would noe better use his Majestie (if upon indifferent grounde they had him as the English and Scotts have don).’⁷⁶ His astonishment here at the destruction of a letter emanating from the king himself is reminiscent of the importance that the populace attached to the document which Sir Phelim O’Neill purported to be a genuine commission from the king authorising the rising.⁷⁷ Whatever about the truth of the story about the letter, Ormond did strongly disapprove of the king’s use of envoys like Antrim, regarding them as ‘interlopers’.⁷⁸ A further instance that suggests the author’s loyalty was not purely pragmatic is revealed by his condemnation that the council ‘did reject and villipende the King’s authenticke letters’ a second time; he was askance that the earl of

⁷³ Clarke, ‘Patrick Darcy’, 46-7.

⁷⁴ Gilbert, *History of the Irish confederation*, i, 35.

⁷⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 31.

⁷⁶ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 80.

⁷⁷ Gillespie, *Seventeenth century Ireland*, 145-6.

⁷⁸ Jane Ohlmeyer, *Civil war and the restoration in the three Stuart kingdoms: the career of Randal MacDonnell, marquis of Antrim, 1609-1683* (Cambridge, 1993), pp 131-2.

Glamorgan, ‘this greate peere of England and extraordinarie ambashadour from his Majestie’, whose ‘power was immediat from his Majesty’, was detained temporarily in custody at Dublin Castle; and he stated his belief that the ‘particular priviledge of such a peere...could not be imprisoned, other then under the greene canopy.’⁷⁹ He did not contemplate the possibility that the king might not have had the interests of the Irish Catholics at heart. His total conviction in the bona fides of Glamorgan’s mission and his confidence in the king’s honourable intentions towards Irish Catholics confirm his unreserved trust in the king: ‘observe...how pliable his Majestie was to graunte the Confederats good conditions.’⁸⁰ Michelle O’Riordan finds similar sentiments contained in five ‘political poems’ (so labelled by their editor Cecile O’Rahilly) by Gaelic poets written c. 1650s, and concludes that these poems were largely written with the conviction that devotion to Catholicism and recognition of the sovereignty of Ireland by Charles I were in no way incompatible.⁸¹

The *Aphorismical* author seemed to truly believe that the king wished to grant the Catholics all the concessions that they looked for and that Ormond wilfully withheld them. He averred that ‘his Majestie...sent him full authoritie to conclude peace with the Catholick subjects of Ireland, upon any conditions’, but Ormond desisted, ‘never actinge anythinge accordinge his royall desire.’⁸² All the woes and disappointments of the confederate Catholics were attributed by the author to Ormond and his factional adherents but never to the king. As mentioned in the first chapter, the MacGeoghegan family had a history of both rebelling and of cooperating with the crown. Regarding Bishop Anthony Geoghegan’s father and two uncles, Paul Walsh, (writing before revisionist historiography), asserted that ‘all three were notorious adherents of the English,’⁸³ which attests to Gaelic Irish as well as Old English support of the crown. The author certainly exhibited a positive attitude in his loyalty to the king.

⁷⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 100.

⁸⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 93.

⁸¹ Michelle O’Riordan, ‘Political poems in the mid-seventeenth-century crisis’ in Ohlmeyer (ed.), *Ireland from independence to occupation*, pp 112-13; Cecile O’Rahilly (ed.), *Five seventeenth-century political poems* (Dublin, 1952, reprinted 1977).

⁸² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 92.

⁸³ Walsh, ‘Antony Mageoghegan, bishop of Clonmacnois’, p. 205.

Even so, it is hard to credit that he could have been so naïve as to believe in his own assertions that the king was so sincere in his intentions that he authorised Ormond to ‘conclude peace with the Catholick subjects of Ireland, upon any conditions,...[and Ormond] never actinge anythinge accordinge his royall desire.’⁸⁴ The *Aphorismical discovery* was a highly coloured account and many of his pronouncements were designed to blacken Ormond and others of the faction. Although the author’s loyalty to the king does seem genuine, the caveat must be entered that the alternative to the king was the extremely anti-Catholic parliament from whom no religious concessions could be hoped for. The author cited a letter from the clergy to Clanricard in November 1651 stating that they conceived that the ‘onely preservation of Catholick religion and his Majestie’s intreste in this kingdome’ was the agreement with the duke of Lorraine, the syntax of which signifies his priorities.⁸⁵ He belonged unquestionably to the camp which agreed with the stance of Rinuccini and which was uncompromising on demands regarding religion. He quoted from another letter written in the same month from Paris from ‘soe goode a hande’ as that of Dr Edward Tyrrell, ‘a most zealous and true man’ and a ‘grave father’. Dr Tyrrell was confederate agent at the French court and was a kinsman of Bishop Anthony, signing himself as such, and he urged the acceptance of the duke’s offers:

Our kinge, God be prayسد, is here safly, and of his owne much inclined to helpe us, if it were Gods pleasure to enable his Majestie with power proportionable to his good will, for which wee must acknowledge our behouldingnesse to sticke to his intreste, as farr as they may not be destructive to our religion, which wee are to preffer to all humaine consideration, because it is our duetie to our God and principall Master, whoe is our kings Master allsoe, as well as ours.⁸⁶

Therefore, it can be seen that, despite the author’s obvious loyalty to the king, religion was the priority. He did not appear to see any conflict between these two considerations because, as already stated, he seemed to be fully confident of the king’s best intentions as regards concessions to Irish Catholics. There could, of course, have been a degree of pragmatism in his protestations in this regard. In 1653, while in Paris, Charles II made approaches to Pope Innocent X offering to remove legal disabilities against Catholics in

⁸⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 92.

⁸⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 16.

⁸⁶ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 198-9.

return for diplomatic assistance, the offer being rebuffed with the Pope demanding his conversion. In the 1650s, around the time of writing the *Aphorismical discovery*, the king was in exile in the Spanish Netherlands. In March 1656, Charles held talks in Brussels with King Philip IV's viceroy in the Spanish Netherlands where they concluded an alliance, the terms of which included, in return for troops for the invasion of England, the suspension of laws against Catholics and the implementation of Ormond's 1649 treaty with the Irish.⁸⁷ That alliance fell through, of course, but rumours of such negotiations may have circulated through ecclesiastical networks on the continent. Mary Ann Lyons has detailed the very close connections that existed between the three pivotal Irish Franciscan colleges on the continent, St Anthony's, Louvain (established 1607), St Isidore's, Rome (1625) and Immaculate Conception, Prague (1629). Many Irish Franciscans both studied and taught at all three colleges and the Franciscan network was very effective at conveying information throughout the entire order. Luke Wadding, founder of St Isidore's Franciscan house in Rome, who remained there until his death in 1657, and who wielded substantial influence with successive popes, was in constant communication with Louvain.⁸⁸ Accordingly, it is extremely likely that news of Charles' negotiations in the Spanish Netherlands would have leaked to interested parties in Rome. Therefore, the author's blind faith, hardly credible at times, in Stuart good intentions towards Catholics, may have had an ulterior motive as the exiled clergy held out hopes for future concessions from a restored Charles II.

Furthermore, notwithstanding his obvious loyalty to royalty throughout the text, a somewhat different tone emerged in the dedicatory epistle addressed to his hero, Owen Roe O'Neill. There, the legitimacy of the rule of the kings of England over Ireland was questioned, certainly of those kings who reigned prior to the Stuarts. Supplying a résumé of some of the monarchs of England since the twelfth century, he explained that Henry II and his posterity had enjoyed the entitlement of 'lords of Ireland' until the time of Henry VIII, 'though not without opposition...rather it was somewhat wincked at'; Henry VIII 'nominated himself kinge of Ireland, which none of his predicessors thither unto offered

⁸⁷ Paul Seward, 'Charles II', *ODNB*, www.oxforddnb.com.

⁸⁸ Mary Ann Lyons, 'The role of St Anthony's College, Louvain in establishing the Irish Franciscan college network, 1607-60' in (eds), Edel Bhreathnach et al (Dublin, 2009), pp 29-44.

to doe'; Edward VI did not surrender 'the usurped royaltie of Irelande, to its inheritors'; Mary I recalled what had been done in terms of religion, 'though, not what was usurped in Irelande'; and he was equally condemnatory of 'Semiramiz' Elizabeth (so-called by him after the queen of Babylon who had instigated a false religion).⁸⁹ Interestingly, in view of his royalism, he had neither anything derogatory nor complimentary to say about James I or Charles I in this dedicatory section, merely glossing over their reigns; however, he did point out that Owen Roe had sworn the oath of the confederate association and that this 'did importe for the propagation of holy religion, defence of his majesties just prerogatives and libertie of the Irish nation', although stressing 'the restauration of religion'.⁹⁰ Therefore, while he certainly showed his allegiance to the reigns of James and Charles I, and now presumably to that of Charles II, a note of close identification with the English monarchs is decidedly absent from the dedication. In addition, the author had no compunction about stressing the ancient regality of the family of O'Neill. Iterating that the pope had sent 'a costly sword' to Owen Roe (although he did not suggest that it was the sword of Hugh O'Neill, earl of Tyrone, as some had believed), he addressed his dedicatee, 'this, Sir, is the justice of your cause, the equitie of your warfare and the antiquitie of your regall claime, which no other nation...can bragge of so long continuance in actuall possession, as your predicessors, hearde upon 3000 yeares, except 99 yeares, which is between the stilinge Henry the 8 kinge of Ireland, and the beginninge of the now war 1641... all the best sort of antiquarists and historiographers doe hould you for bloude noe lesse then royall.'⁹¹ Such rhetoric would have been considered seditious during both the Stuart and Tudor reigns but, writing and revising his work now in the 1650s, and safely ensconced on the continent, the author could give vent to voicing a nostalgia for the ancient kings of Ireland descended from the sons of Niall. In the heat of composing his dedication to the now dead Owen Roe, it may be that he was just indulging in over-blown rhetoric due to deep emotion because it is clear from the bulk of the main body of the text that he gave full allegiance and loyalty to the contemporary legitimate king of Ireland. Nevertheless, the tone of the dedication certainly does not reveal any feelings of affinity with the memory of previous English

⁸⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 3-5.

⁹⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 7.

⁹¹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 7-8.

monarchs. It would perhaps point to a degree of pragmatism underlying the enthusiastic royalism shown throughout the text itself.

This attitude towards previous English monarchs is borne out by his understanding of the Norman invasion. We have seen how the coming of the Normans was something to be celebrated for Keating and Hadsor whereas Mageoghegan, while fully accepting the outcome of the invasion, did not deal with it in the same positive fashion. In seventeenth-century Ireland, the twelfth-century conquest was obviously seen as a watershed by writers and commentators; not only did Hadsor, as noted before, punctuate his potted history of Ireland with ‘before’ and ‘after’ the conquest, but even Mageoghegan, in his title page, ‘A Booke’, delineated the main periods of his annals with ‘untill the conquest of the english’, and ‘after the conquest of the English.’⁹² The author’s narrative of the circumstances of this seminal event, contained in his dedicatory prologue, is very clear and his understanding of the situation is closer to Mageoghegan’s version of events than to Keating’s interpretation. It is worth looking at their respective accounts of the circumstances of the gift that the successor of Brian Boromha brought to the pope in the eleventh century. The *Aphorismical* author reported that,

Morogh McBrian (or his successor accordinge some authors) making challenge unto royaltie, though not thrivinge, havinge in his possession the crowne of Ireland, stole away...caried the same alonge to the pope of Rome, (as if powerfull) makinge donation thereof to his holinesse.⁹³

Mageoghan’s much briefer version also made clear the doubtful constitutional position of the son of Brian and, furthermore, he inferred that it had been the need to do penance which was the main reason for his going to Rome:

Donnogh mcBrian Borowa was king, some say, and was soon deposed again (and went to Rome), to Doe pennance...Hee brought the Crowen of Ireland with him thither.⁹⁴

However, Keating had a different interpretation of the nature of Donnogh’s donation:

Donnchadh, son of Brian Boraimhe, and the real nobles of Ireland...bestowed with one accord the possession of Ireland on [Pope] Urbanus.⁹⁵

⁹² Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 4.

⁹³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 2.

⁹⁴ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 179.

⁹⁵ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 347-9.

Both Gaelic authors insinuated the absence of constitutional power on the part of O'Brien whereas Keating asserted his legitimate mandate. The author of the *Aphorismical discovery* continued, elaborating in some detail; he asserted that the pope left the 'manadginge' of Ireland to the former kings and their posterity, as 'lawfull successors of that diademe', just holding on to the crown himself and retaining 'a kind of chiefree.' Then, in a marginal, citing his source from 'Biblioteca Vatican, Rome', he explained that, some years later, Pope Adrian IV, an Englishman, 'to indeere himself to his contry and quondam soveraigne the king of England...bestowed on him...Ireland as chiefry...this was all ye popes donation and all that he could graunte.'⁹⁶ Mageoghegan agreed that the crown 'remained with the Popes', briefly adding that Pope Adrian 'gave the same to king Henry the second that conquered Ireland.'⁹⁷ However, Keating, as we saw, had no doubts about the legitimacy of the Norman conquest: 'the Pope of Rome had possession of and authority and sovereignty over Ireland from that time to the time when Adrianus, the fourth Pope of that name, assumed the successorship...[and] bestowed the kingdom of Ireland on Henry II., king of England.'⁹⁸

In contrast, the *Aphorismical* author clearly did not regard the conquest as wholly legitimate. His portrayal of the progression of events saw Diarmuid Mac Murrugh, who was at war with Rory O'Connor and his adherents, going to England to request military aid from Henry II, 'as an indifferent judge (as was thought)'; aid was granted but 'not as mercenarie auxiliaries (as was suggested) but as conquerours'. Stating that Diarmuid returned to Ireland with an army of 'base and mecanicall men', he then set out in detail the many underhand means employed by the newcomers to gain a foothold here, and concluded:

by this strategeme and division of the natione by the dayly supplies sent from England under the vizarde of honestie, indifferencie and umperage, soone became masters...of Ireland, not by any force of armes (as they give out that it was a conquered nation), but what was won, was by the policie and crafte of the one,

⁹⁶ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 2-3.

⁹⁷ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 179.

⁹⁸ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 347-9.

and lost by the simplicitie and disunion of the other...[and] by these intrusive pretences the kinge of Englande intituled himself lord of Ireland.⁹⁹

Further, the author insisted that while the English continued to hold sway in Ireland, it was ‘not without opposition...rather somewhat winked at and forborne by many of the Irish’, and this only while the two nations continued to be obedient to the See of Rome.¹⁰⁰ Mageoghegan’s version showed Dermot engaging the aid of the Anglo-Norman leaders on foot of recommendatory letters sent by Henry II to the prince and the bishop of Wales, and stated that it was when Henry II heard of ‘the good success of the said englishmen’ that he came over himself and ‘made a final end of an intire conquest in Ireland.’¹⁰¹ Therefore, while Mageoghegan did not seem to have any problem with the conquest, he did not address the question of its legitimacy. Keating, as elucidated before, was wholly positive about the conquest and, by stressing that not only all the nobles of Ireland but the entire clergy as well gave their submission to Henry II, he left his readership in no doubt that it was a legitimate conquest. In like manner, as we saw, Hadsor had averred that the kings and chieftains of Ireland had sworn allegiance to Henry II and his successors.

Therefore, the Old English Keating and Hadsor were very definite about the lawfulness of the twelfth-century conquest. The Gaelic Irish Mageoghegan accepted the reality of the conquest and did not commit himself on its legality. However, the *Aphorismical* author voiced very strong historicist concerns about the methods employed by the twelfth-century English ‘mercenaries’ and released ‘prisoners’ and, in his prologue, he strongly intimated that the illegal actions of the Norman conquerors lent a justification for the wars of the current decade. Perhaps the catastrophic events of the 1640s caused some of the Old Irish to think about what had brought them to this remove, concentrating minds on the conquest of the twelfth century, and leading some to reflect on their material position *vis-à-vis* that of their now fellow Irishmen.

⁹⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 3.

¹⁰⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 3.

¹⁰¹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 208.

Despite those historicist reflections, however, in the text itself, his royalism is revealed to be undoubted. He showed his abhorrence at the execution of Charles I. He denounced laws that had been ‘conceived of late...to patronize horride treason against Gods anointed, judginge it a lawfull and gratfull sacrifice to beheade a Christian Kinge, and offer his inocent bloude...on the theatre of humaine bloodsuckers.’¹⁰² Moreover, his preference for kingship as against reign by Parliament is reiterated with this denunciation of Ormond: ‘the ugly face of his hydeous treason against his Sacred Majestie in deliveringe unto the comon enemye all the royalties of Irelande doe hide until due time, though knowen to the Christian world, how basely and treacherously he abused his Majestie in the lowest ebb of his fortunes.’¹⁰³ Monarchy for the author was the only desired constitutional position for Ireland. The Scottish parliamentary commander in Ireland, General Monro, who received negative comment from him, had been ‘independent of either kinge or parliament.’¹⁰⁴ There had been kings in Ireland since time immemorial and the author did not countenance any other system. He extolled Owen Roe O’Neill for his victory at Benburb, ‘whereby gave a rubb unto the finall distruction of all the Irish and regalitie in Ireland.’¹⁰⁵ One gets the definite sense here that he conceived the present monarchy as a continuing progression of the kingship that had traditionally existed in Ireland from ancient times.

The author did not adhere to absolutist beliefs as regards kingship or rulership. As seen, the tone and content of his dedication indicates that he did not incline towards the absolutist pretensions which the Stuarts had attempted to impose in the first half of the seventeenth century. In the text, there are neither signs of patriarchalism nor of majestic imagery of pomp and ceremony. The tone of the following passage also suggests that he disapproved of a king having absolute powers. He taxed the factionists in the supreme council for its intentions regarding elevating Ormond to be king: ‘the factious councell...made him greate...not onely in the nature of a man...but by the zeise of an absolute monarche, which I doe verily believe was noe lesse in his aime, or their idea,

¹⁰² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 276.

¹⁰³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 282.

¹⁰⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 25.

¹⁰⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 119.

this was soe publicke that many of his faction did brute that ere longe the verie highest cedars in Ireland would soone submitte themselves upon their kneese unto Ormond, which ceremonie onely competeth to kings and monarches.’¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, he was not very happy at the lack of success achieved by the agents sent to petition Charles in 1643; although he provided excuses expressing the king’s inability to grant concessions at that time, his loyalty did not blind him from seeing the reality of the outcome; he stated that the agents were ‘8 or 9 weekes absent arrivinge unto Kilkenny with onely thrivinge as formerly suggested, in expectation onely of future concessions.’¹⁰⁷ In any case, despite his loyalty and adherence to the crown, religion was his first priority, and God almost invariably preceded the king when he quoted the motto, *pro Deo, regi et patria*. Furthermore, he had the height of respect for the king of Spain and was not averse in expressing it. He was indignant in 1648 that the council, while appointing two agents to the Pope and three to the king of France, nominated only one ‘for Spaine, Sir Richard Blake onely, though the Kinge of Spaine their verie best benefactor...but Blake was never sent to Spaine, or other in his place, either for the compliance for the Assembly vote therein, or satisfaction of the Most Catholicke Kinge.’¹⁰⁸ This is not to suggest any disloyalty to the monarch in London, but his elaborate praise for the Spanish king in a much longer passage than is quoted here is symptomatic of a Gaelic Irish penchant for the ‘Catholic Majesty’. There were two principal confederate groupings who influenced foreign policy with responsibility for sending diplomats abroad; first those who mainly supported Ormond, composed mainly of the Old English, who preferred to look to France for support; and second those consisting mainly of Old Irish and the clergy who favoured Spanish patronage and aid.¹⁰⁹ It is clear that the *Aphorismical* author belonged to the latter grouping. In addition, his willingness to be so forthright in his admiration for the king of Spain also indicates that the Stuart absolutism was not a philosophy to which he adhered.

Parliament & government

¹⁰⁶ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 284.

¹⁰⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 65-6.

¹⁰⁸ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 184.

¹⁰⁹ Ohlmeyer, ‘Ireland independent: confederate foreign policy’, pp 102-3.

The author definitely favoured monarchical government and in this respect he was no different to Mageoghegan, Keating, Burnell and Hadsor. Citing a warning contained in a letter from Dr Tyrrell written from Paris in May 1648 regarding the appointment of Ormond as viceroy (who, the author continuously reminded the reader, really supported Parliament and not the king), he cautioned, ‘the Presbyterians doe declare for the kinge for their owne ends...and introduce the Presbyterian Government opposit you know to monarchye, looke to your selves, and be not deceived.’¹¹⁰ Apparently, this was a current perception of the tactics of the English parliament. The English poet and royalist, Sir Richard Fanshawe, who seems to have numbered many Catholics as his close friends, both in Ireland and on the continent, made this accusation as well. In the autumn of 1648, he had been in Ireland on a mission to endeavour to reverse the desperate state of the king’s fortunes in England. Fanshawe claimed, in one of his works, that those on the Parliament side ‘hung out the Kings Colours’, using the royal name as a charm to win over the people by claiming to fight for the king as well as Parliament.¹¹¹ The author was also convinced that Parliament used such tactics. To underline his point further, he immediately followed Dr Tyrrell’s letter with another alleged to be from a Major Mortimer, also at the French court, one intimate with Ormond, who lamented that

the Presbyterian faction, which brings in Ormond as Viceroy to the kingdome, with the consent of Prince and Queene, moved therunto, by pollicie of the Hugonett faction of this kingdome and their beloved bretheren the Puritants of Englande, to whom Ormond continually and really adheres, and whoe...gives large testimonies of their loyaltie, towards the kinge, whereas their whole armie is to exclude monarchy and erect a free state, with the suppression of Catholicke religion.¹¹²

There was the widespread belief among confederates that the English parliament meant to extirpate Catholicism,¹¹³ but apart from this consideration, the author’s adherence to monarchical rule, as opposed to ‘free states’, seems to have been born of deep-seated conviction and the idea of a free state was anathema to him. When Conell Mageoghegan

¹¹⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 210-11.

¹¹¹ David Norbrook, ‘Bards and republicans: Marvell’s “Horatian ode” and the war of the three kingdoms’ in J.M. Dutcher & A. Lake Prescott (eds), *Renaissance historicism: essays in honour of Arthur F. Kinney* (Cranbury, 2008), 294-6; Peter Davidson, ‘Sir Richard Fanshawe’, *ODNB*, www.oxforddnb.com

¹¹² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 212.

¹¹³ M. Perceval-Maxwell, *The outbreak of the Irish rebellion of 1641* (Dublin, 1994), p. 108.

in *Annals of Clonmacnoise* had reported at AD 1022 that Ireland was governed like a free state after the death of the last high king of Ireland, Maolseachlann Mór, he saw nothing amiss with this situation: ‘the Realme was governed by two learned men...like a free state, & not like a monarchy.’ In August 1642, Geoffrey Baron, describing the setting-up of the supreme council to his uncle Luke Wadding in Rome, stated that ‘the whole affairs of the kingdom shall in nature of a free State be governed, till the present tumults be accorded.’¹¹⁴ However, in both cases, these men were merely using the term to describe what they regarded as a temporary situation where circumstances had dictated the absence of the king. The author of the *Aphorismical discovery*, on the other hand, writing in the 1650s when Commonwealth rule had become a reality, rejected such non-monarchical government. Although he had probably spent many years as an exile on the continent, he had not developed the radical views that some Gaelic Irish *émigrés* had, but instead retained the conservative attitudes that prevailed at home. Perhaps the author had in mind the ‘free state’ regime of the Dutch United Provinces whose independence from Spain had just recently been confirmed in 1648 under the peace of Westphalia, and where there was extreme intolerance for non-Calvinist Christianity, especially Catholicism. Indeed, he repudiated any suggestion of a popular regime, indicating further that he believed that monarchy was the system which produced effective government. He related an instance where the junior officers and the common soldiers of the Ulster army ‘cried out for battle’ on a particular occasion when the prospect of victory was not optimistic. Owen Roe, along with his senior officers, reasoned with them at the council of war, and ‘behaved themselves in this businesse like monarchall goverment, and not like free states...where plurality of voices overswayes the strongest and best grounded reasons’; and to reinforce his argument, the author cited a passage from Plutarch which claimed that ‘geometricall’ proportion was more consonant to government than ‘arithmetically’ proportion.¹¹⁵ As speculated above, Burnell, writing not long before trouble broke out in England and Ireland, could perhaps possibly have been referring to the extremist oppositional element in parliament in England when he warned the king to beware ‘fools or madmen’ who would offer ‘mischief ‘gainst a good prince’ whereas, if

¹¹⁴ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p.173; H.M.C. *Report on Franciscan manuscripts*, p. 171.

¹¹⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 267-8.

he were just and virtuous, the king would not need to fear ‘poison, poniards or conspiracy.’¹¹⁶ It can safely be assumed that the author was in tune with the majority of Old Irish and Old English for whom government overseen by monarchy was an unquestioned assumption.

The author’s belief that the quality of representatives in government was preferable to quantity was further made clear when he described the new council appointed by Ormond following the confederate split after the Inchiquin peace.

The former government of the Confederat Catholicks was farr better reigled then the present, as of lesse mixture...but now by the accesse of Ormond, mixture was made of these two simples, optimacie and democracie, but disproportionall, this later [latter] beinge hott in the highest degree, have the predominancie...the nobler parte...have had lesse authoritie then was fitt, yett the populasse...this fecall parte intrudeth unto all deliberations of weightiest consequence, whereof were incapable.¹¹⁷

It is obvious he believed that the élite were the only members of society which had the capacity and moral authority to participate in parliament and government. Keating, as we saw, depicted the ‘nobles and the ollamhs’ at the feis/parliament of Tara. Hadsor deplored the use in ministerial offices of ‘sharks...that be of obscure fortunes, birth and quality’. Burnell’s political heroines were drawn from the elite. Conell Mageoghegan too valued the nobility in government in *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, adjudging, at AD 1383, Hugh Óg O’Neill to be ‘a nobleman worthy to govern a monarchy for birth, manhood & other good quallities.’¹¹⁸ However, the author did not specify which section of the community, whether Old English or Old Irish, he considered would be best suited to participate in parliament or government but it is clear that he regarded those who did sit in government, viz. the more recent *arrivistes* of New English, to be intruders. While comfortable with the overall jurisdiction of Stuart monarchy, he strongly inferred that Ireland should be governed by Irishmen, which to him meant Irish Catholics. He explained that in the month of October 1641 the kingdome of Ireland ‘stood in fairer tearmes of hapinesse and prosperitie’ than it had been for five hundred years, and was

¹¹⁶ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 66.

¹¹⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 13-14.

¹¹⁸ George O’Brien (ed.), *Advertisements for Ireland* (Dublin, 1923), p. 5; Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 309.

enjoying ‘the sweet fruits of a longe peace, full of people and riches,’ except that it was ‘comaunded by forraigners, and the maiestie of religion ecclipsed.’¹¹⁹ As we saw, Keating strongly inferred the desirability of the magnate earls being in government. Hadsor specifically aspired to the hegemony of the Old English to hold the reins of power. Burnell also favoured the involvement of the Old English elite. Richard Bellings, the Old English secretary of the Supreme Council of the Confederation, had no doubt about Old English entitlement to supply counsel to government. When the lords justices refused to reassemble parliament in November 1641, he expressed his astonishment that ‘his Majestye’s ministers deny them a priviledge which they may clayme as their birth-right...their ancestours upon farr lesse occasions were called upon to meete to give their advise.’¹²⁰ Conell Mageoghegan, like the *Aphorismical* author, did not indicate which section of society he considered should govern, but, covering the period up until the early fifteenth century, had nothing derogatory to say about Old English lord deputies such as Edmond Butler and Morish Fitzthomas, earl of Desmond.¹²¹ Therefore, in common with our previous Gaelic Irish author and the three Old English authors, as well as Bellings, with regard to the composition of parliament, the *Aphorismical* author did not express any dissatisfaction at the concept of Old English hegemony in that institution. In the specific circumstances of the confederation, however, he severely criticised the supreme council, where there was a predominance of Old English, most of whom he regarded as being ‘factious’ and not conforming to the narrow confines of his understanding of freedom of religion, which included an entitlement to worship openly.

He was very emphatic also that no parliament was valid without the participation of the spiritual lords. He was firm that both clergy and laity should make up the council. Listing one of the points made by the clergy in their ‘Vendication’ of a declaration which had been issued against them by a number of lay members of the supreme council - ‘a malignant, perjured partie’ - he explained that the supreme council was a body that ‘the kingdome hath appointed to be a mixture of spirituall and temporall of Catholick Prelats,

¹¹⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 11.

¹²⁰ Gilbert, *History of the Irish confederation*, i, 28.

¹²¹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 261, 299.

and of the laytie.’¹²² (Indeed, a strong theme running throughout the author’s account is one of clerical authority being superior to that of the laity which will be discussed later.) Keating had been clear about a central role for the clergy in government; he proclaimed that between the rule of Donnchadh, son of Brian Boromha and the coming of the Normans, ‘the prelates and nobles of Ireland organized three national councils in Ireland in which laws pertaining to the clergy and laity were laid down and approved.’¹²³ Conell Mageoghegan also understood the clergy to be an indispensable part of parliament. He showed Brian Boromha assembling the nobility of the kingdom, ‘as well spirituall as temporall’, and having the definitive version of the Psalter of Cashel signed by himself and also by the kings of the five provinces and ‘all the Bushops and prelates of the K.dome.’¹²⁴

However, while the author was certainly not in favour of those lower down the social scale having much influence in the assembly, he did adhere to the notion of the confederation being a representative body. He was uncompromising in his opinion that power should be the shared responsibility of all those elected to the assembly and not reside in the hands of the chosen few, in other words, in the hands of the faction which he constantly denounced. The clergy, as the only Catholic body with an existing national structure, had taken the initiative in early 1642, and instigated the setting up of a confederate government.¹²⁵ Describing the inauguration of the first assembly, he explained that the ‘kingdome’, having being summoned by the clergy to appear at Kilkenny, were ‘sitting assemblywise, which resembles a parliament’, and that the supreme council which was there elected ‘received power from the assembly.’¹²⁶ In the model of government designed by the confederates, the supreme council, although a powerful executive, ultimately answered to the legislative assembly.¹²⁷ Throughout the book the author restated his conviction that the supreme council was ‘subordinat to the kingdome assembly.’ Conell Mageoghegan had not interpolated any reference to a

¹²² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 216-8.

¹²³ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 356-7.

¹²⁴ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 7-8.

¹²⁵ Micheál Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland, 1642-1649* (Dublin, 1999), pp 39-41.

¹²⁶ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 39-41.

¹²⁷ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, p. 49.

representative parliament; his reported assemblies were the traditional Gaelic king's gatherings concerned either with war or with the forced submission of vassal lords.¹²⁸ Burnell depicted his nobles giving advice to the king. Hadsor believed in a representative parliament while stressing the role of the king-in-parliament. Keating, on the other hand, was very definite about decisions being made on a collaborative basis between the nobility and the king. The author obviously also believed decisions made in parliament should be by the vote of all the representatives and was constantly berating the factious cabal for assuming powers for which they did not have authority. When agents were despatched for France in early 1648 with instructions from the whole assembly to negotiate with those at the French court, including the queen, he accused the council of secretly giving private instructions to two of the three agents (Lord Muskery and Geoffrey Browne) to act as they pleased. He asked rhetorically, 'lett any man judge whether those agents resembling ambassadors should obey this distinctive instruction of a fewe withered and obnoxious members of the comonweath, then the authenticke resulte and sense of the whole bodie polliticke?'¹²⁹ Such comments certainly indicate his belief that government should abide by decisions passed by the elected parliament. Later, in 1648, following the publication of an oath by the supreme council binding confederates to accept the truce between the confederates and Inchiquin, the author queried, 'why should any man conceave that this oathe, Cessation or declaration was by the whole nation indifferently embraced, signed or accepted, whereas the vote of all the clergie and best note of the laitie was never desired, or if desired never obtained.'¹³⁰ Therefore, even taking into account the heightened tensions of 1648 between the opposing views of what are often broadly referred to as the 'clerical party' and the 'Ormondist party', the author articulated a belief in a collaborative system of government to a much greater extent than the others, with the exception of Keating who held similar views in this respect. This is another indication of a growing self-confidence being exhibited by an increasingly politicised Gaelic Irish group inspired by a continental-educated clergy. Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin maintains that the Irish hierarchy, who had been appointed in the decades before 1640, and who had such a substantial influence on confederate Catholics, all

¹²⁸ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp 303, 308.

¹²⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 185.

¹³⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 223.

trained in seminaries in Europe, were in many respects closer to the template set down by the Council of Trent than any other episcopate in Europe.¹³¹ Elsewhere, Ó hAnnracháin has shown, using the examples of the dioceses of Ossory and Ardfert, how Catholic reform in the localities was organised by the seminary educated bishops, making use of cadres of continentally trained clergy. In the latter diocese there was, by the 1630s, a pool of perhaps fifty seminary-educated priests presided over by Bishop Richard O'Connell who was sufficiently in touch pastorally-speaking to be able to sway the local population in the difficult period after the outbreak of the rebellion.¹³²

Alongside his belief in a representative parliament the *Aphorismical* author opposed autocratic rule. His views on arbitrary government are evident as he later directed a fairly vicious tirade at the council and assembly for accepting the triumphant return of Ormond to Kilkenny as viceroy and in the process berated the two French agents mentioned above for their part in Ormond's appointment. He protested, 'those thought themselves validly impowered to oblige a whole nation, the best and most parte wanting and opposing'; he continued, upbraiding the council, 'remember, you sitt not in a royall chaire, nor the absolute kindome styrers [steerers], but subordinat'; and he branded the assembly a 'seeminge' assembly that behaved 'more like subjects unto their soveraigne [i.e. Ormond], slaves unto their masters, then any way like free borne nation unto their fellowe subjects'. He concluded by criticising the commissioners of Leinster for summoning a select few delegates of that province to an assembly at Garvencie in Clanmalier - 'none was called, other than such as was best suted to their purpose; those onely did regulate the house as absolute in power.'¹³³ It is quite clear from his attitude here that he rejected the sort of arbitrary government that had been practised in Ireland over the previous few decades, the sort of conduct that he had previously condemned in the lords justices who had wilfully withheld his majesty's 'royall graces' from Irish

¹³¹ Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, 'Lost in Rinuccini's shadow: the Irish clergy, 1645-9' in Ó Siochrú (ed.), *Kingdoms in crisis*, pp 176-7.

¹³² Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, 'A typical anomaly?: the success of the Irish Counter-Reformation' in Judith Devlin & Howard B. Clarke (eds), *European encounters: essays in memory of Albert Lovett* (Dublin, 2003), pp 82-4.

¹³³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 23.

Catholics.¹³⁴ He expected those in government to acquiesce in the will of a constitutionally elected parliament. It is also clear that, apart from his obvious bias towards the clergy view, his deep resentment against the council for making decisions without the agreement or perhaps the direction of the clergy, stemmed from an ideological belief in participative government. Conell Mageoghegan, although approving of just and peaceful rule, had not inserted any expression of unease with autocratic government but he had been writing before the Wentworth era when a degree of toleration pertained. However, the *Aphorismical* author's years on the continent had obviously imbued him with a more self-confident and assertive approach in respect of participation in parliament and government. Keating too had been very condemning of the 'tyranny and wrong' committed by the first batch of Norman rulers and professed himself sure that there would not have been as much resistance by the Irish if 'the law were justly administered to them'.¹³⁵ Burnell had tellingly referred to 'this poor kingdom' being beset with 'tyranny and troubles.'¹³⁶ Hadsor, as we saw, abhorred injustice in administering the law and was not afraid to criticise corrupt practices in government.

With regard to a legislature, although confederates were careful not to refer to the assembly as a parliament (not wishing to appear disloyal to the king who alone had the power to convene a parliament), the assembly carried out all the functions of a parliament and was generally regarded as such.¹³⁷ The author just made a passing reference to the notion of members of parliament as legislators. After the supreme council had made peace with Ormond in September 1643, he derided the assembly, charging those 'lawe makers' with being 'lawe breakers' for not 'punishing those factions and treacherous proceedings.'¹³⁸ The casual nature of this single reference indicates parliament as a legislature was not a concept that he dwelt upon, indicating perhaps that he had not a great familiarity with the business of parliament. Conell Mageoghegan alone of the previous figures under discussion was apparently unconcerned as regards the making of

¹³⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 11-12.

¹³⁵ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 368-9.

¹³⁶ Burnell, *Landgartha*, p. 31.

¹³⁷ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 44-5.

¹³⁸ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 77.

law. Keating had been unequivocal that parliament was the forum for making law. Burnell specified that the king did not claim this role to himself. And Hadsor, the lawyer, was definite about this constitutional role of parliament. However, although the author may not have been aware of the full intricacies of Poynings' law, he did understand that 'noe acte conceaved in the Parliament of Irelande would be of any force or validitie unlesse confirmed by the kinge and parliament of England.'¹³⁹ He was aware of the constitutional role of the king in parliament and he was cognisant of the fact that the laws of England applied to Ireland, shown by a comment he made when registering his intense opposition to the supreme council having made peace with Inchiquin. He asserted that Inchiquin was 'a publicke traytor against God, Kinge, and Kingdome, by the lawes of England have forfeited his honor, life and estate, and cannot be restored, other then a lease from his royall Majestie for soe many yeares, or perpetually by both Kinge and Parliament.'¹⁴⁰ However, the dearth of comment in the book regarding any detail of parliament activities attests to his lack of significant contact with that institution. Interestingly, both the author and Conell Mageoghegan referred to 'the laws of England' whereas many commentators in political discourse in the early seventeenth century referred to 'the common law'. Further, when referring to infringements of the law that he frequently lay at the feet of his *bêtes noires* of the faction, the author referred to the 'civil law' rather than 'common law'.

Indeed, the legal concept that really seemed to inform the author's political thinking was the 'law of nations' or *ius gentium* to which he constantly appealed. The law of nations provided the framework for the interpretation of positive law in its various national forms. It consisted both of a law common to all *gentes* and a particular law for each nation.¹⁴¹ It influenced most native legal systems in Western Europe apart from England, and Ireland was no exception; Kenneth Nicholls reveals that in the later medieval period, the brehons did not use the ancient texts for their everyday legal work. Instead, Irish law was strongly influenced by the *ius commune*, the 'common law' of Europe (as distinct

¹³⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 11.

¹⁴⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 190.

¹⁴¹ Donald R. Kelley, 'Law' in J. H. Burns (ed.), *The Cambridge history of political thought, 1450-1700* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 85.

from the common law of England) which was a combination of civil (Roman) law and canon law.¹⁴² Therefore, as well as having attained familiarity with civil law from his time on the continent, the author was perhaps informed by the system of laws which had been used by the Gaelic legal profession. He seems to have conceived the laws of the kingdom as analogous to the laws of nations. He denigrated Clanricard, who, he admitted, had been at one time, ‘a martiall man of honor and intrest’, but that now, he

in justice and equitie, may be exempted from eache these denominations by the lawes of both kingdome, nation and armes, first by the lawe of the kingdome, Ormond, Clanricarde and others their adherents did forfeite their creation and estates, for their severall treasons committed against his Majesty since those commotions, and consequently their honor, which cannot be recalled other than by both kinge and parliament, which I suppose alsoe the lawe of nations.¹⁴³

Again, it is clear that the author was conscious of the king’s role in parliament but he seemed to view the law through the eyes of the laws of nations rather than common law. He was not a lawyer so would not have been familiar with the English legal system of the common law and his understanding of law probably stemmed from his reading of classical history and perhaps knowledge of Irish law passed down from previous generations.

Of ancient Roman devising, the law of nations was the product of military and commercial contacts between Rome and those from outside the Roman empire.¹⁴⁴

Again, the author seemed to equate the law of nations with the law of arms; not to comply with agreed quarter on surrender was ‘against the lawe of armes and nations.’¹⁴⁵

He certainly understood it to cover military conduct; he constantly accused the enemy of failing to honour agreements made during negotiations for surrender. Sir Symon Harquett, ‘against the lawe of nations’, executed the first man to leave the besieged castle, having promised ‘a faire quarter, to marche away armed, with bagg and bagadge’. Indeed, the author maintained that this was the policy of the state of Dublin which followed the ‘false maxeme, that in case they promised, nay sweare a quarter to the

¹⁴² Kenneth Nicholls, *Gaelic and gaelicised Ireland in the middle ages* (Dublin, 2003), pp 50-1.

¹⁴³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 10.

¹⁴⁴ Kelley, ‘Law’, p. 85.

¹⁴⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 174.

royalists, they were not obliged to comply with, which doctrine was of late invented by some ungodly and antedivines of Parliament ministells.’¹⁴⁶ Like the author, Conell Mageoghegan’s familiarity with law probably arose from his knowledge of classical sources. Queen Macha would not execute her noble kinsmen as it was against ‘the Laws of armes that men of their condition should be put to death’ whereas Keating’s Queen Macha merely said it ‘would be contrary to law.’¹⁴⁷

However, there was one legal system with which he was very familiar, and that was canon law. He cited it on many occasions; Dr Fennell of the supreme council tore copies of the clergy’s excommunications from the doors of two churches in Kilkenny and trampled on the pieces on the ground, ‘an excommunication is by the Canon Lawe anexed to such an acte.’¹⁴⁸ In citing the points made in the clergy declaration from the congregation at Waterford in 1648, he enumerated in detail all the infringements committed by the council which incurred the excommunications of *Bulla Caena* and canon law.¹⁴⁹ However, what he was most anxious to assert was the immunity of clerics from lay authority. Fr Anthony Geoghegan, prior of Conallmore, Co. Kildare and apostolic delegate (and kinsman of Bishop Anthony’s), had been accused of treason and imprisoned by Clanricard. The defendant himself along with other priests solicited for his release,

pleadinge their ecclesiasticall priuiledges, imunities, and exemptions not to be tryed by a secular judicature, anouncinge seuerall excommunications to be anexed unto the contemners therof, and specially by Bulla Caena Domini, denounceinge such to be ipso facto excommunicated, as assuminge the power unto themselues to bring any ecclesiasticall person before their laicall judicature, not onely to be tryed as aforesaide, but to be questioned in any criminall cause.¹⁵⁰

The clergy, although expecting the laity to be subject to canon law in any cause related to religion (which basically included everything to do with the war), claimed immunity themselves from the civic authorities.

¹⁴⁶ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 26.

¹⁴⁷ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 41; Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 154-5.

¹⁴⁸ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 195.

¹⁴⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 288-9.

¹⁵⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 53-4.

Asserting that ‘lawes are the ligaments of every state, the sinewes of societie, the firme bands of unitie and comon concorde, and the high marshall of discipline and all comely order’, he brought the fourth book of *Aphorismical discovery* to a close by charging Ormond with turning the ordered, former [clergy-appointed] government ‘topsi-torvye.’ Hitherto, the rich man could ‘sleepe securely, leaveing his chest wide open’ while the ‘poore labourer’, though he may sigh under the burden of drudgery, could work hard to ‘enlarge the smale talent of his fortune.’ But now, Ormond had dispensed with the judiciary, and all business ‘was don by paper petitions’ resulting in Ormond and his ‘Puritant Secretarie’ granting what they pleased and enriching themselves at the same time. He claimed to have had personal knowledge of such injustice, stating, ‘of severall such orders grannted by him, I was an eye witsesse to my grieffe, for some of my deere freinds were inocently left beggers by the bargaine.’¹⁵¹ Conell Mageoghegan did not dwell much on theories of justice but had admired king Duach Dallta Deaghaidh who had reigned ‘uprightly and justly.’¹⁵² For Keating, ruling with justice was a priority. Burnell had included a long speech advocating just and merciful rule. And Hadsor, a lawyer himself, believed in the constitutional dispensing of justice. The five writers were broadly in agreement in this respect. To be ruled with justice and fairness was something to which all early-modern people aspired but a right that had been denied to many in Ireland in recent times.

However, although he had respect for the law, lawyers seemed to have been anathema to him, and he referred to them variously as ‘double-tongued’ barristers and ‘venomous vipers’. He blamed Patrick Darcy, ‘a haltinge barrister, a perfidious member to his nation, for moving the proroguing of parliament in 1641 thereby preventing the king’s graces from taking effect, a claim which Micheál Ó Siochrú maintains is not valid.’¹⁵³ Richard Bellings in his memoir of the 1640s did not mention Darcy in connection with the proroguing but put the blame at the feet of the lords justices.¹⁵⁴ Darcy, as mentioned above, was instrumental in putting forward the Old English parliamentary position in

¹⁵¹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 294-5.

¹⁵² Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 47.

¹⁵³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 12, 22; Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, p. 32.

¹⁵⁴ Gilbert, *History of the Irish confederation*, i, 20.

1641; he was also a prominent member of the confederate government and sat on the council. The author regarded Darcy as a lackey of Ormond and member of the 'faction'.¹⁵⁵ The lawyers whom he mentioned in the book were all Old English (except Patrick Bryan, whom he claimed was 'more truly Byrne', and Darcy, 'more truly' Dorchy - the inference being that they were portraying themselves as Old English).¹⁵⁶ He further accused two lawyers of being both anti-religion and anti-ancient Irish. Thomas Tyrrell was 'a barister, publicly known to be averse unto all that concerned either Catholicke religion or ancient Irish', and George Barnewall, 'a peece of a lawyer...envious to the ancient Irish, a toade in poison.'¹⁵⁷ Tensions existed between the clergy and the confederate lawyers over ecclesiastical encroachment upon secular jurisdiction about which the former students of common law at the English Inns were very uneasy.¹⁵⁸ In addition, discriminatory laws had obstructed the path of the Old Irish to the qualification of law up until recent times so perhaps there was an element of unfamiliarity with the profession as well as some degree of envy among the now more self-confident Old Irish towards the Old English members who practised law. The author poured scorn on Richard Bellings for going on campaign to Munster, calling him a 'lunaticall poet' and a 'petty-tongue-tyed barrister, one of that Councell, whoe never sawe a sworde drawn in the field'.¹⁵⁹ He had already disparaged the character of Bellings calling him a 'tode in faction and a creature of Ormond', accusing him of cheating the kingdom of £30,000 and pointing out that his father, Sir Henry Bellings, a 'Provost Marshall in peace time to hange poore people' had 'sucked the bloud of thowsands of inocents in Ireland.'¹⁶⁰ The *Aphorismical* author had no esteem for the legal profession at all and he considered that lawyers were not qualified to sit at the helm of the confederate government. The supreme council was controlled by a handful of individuals, mainly former parliamentarians and lawyers, who dictated confederate policy.¹⁶¹ According to the author it was the lawyers, 'pedlers and baristers' along with

¹⁵⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 22.

¹⁵⁶ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 165, i, 12.

¹⁵⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 90, 35.

¹⁵⁸ Jane Ohlmeyer, 'Irish recusant lawyers during the reign of Charles I' in Ó Siochrú (ed.), *Kingdoms in crisis*, pp 82-3.

¹⁵⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 204.

¹⁶⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 78-9.

¹⁶¹ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, p. 226.

the ‘factionists’ of the confederacy, who promoted an oath to enforce the cessation of 1648.¹⁶² It totally irked him that such men were appropriating the leadership, a role which belonged to the clergy. Denigrating the supreme council after they had agreed to that cessation, he taxed them with ‘being (as truly they are) illiterate, without the least qualification, in any art or science, onely of the mechanicall of druggists, barristers, peddlers and poets, altogether laymen, doe assume unto themselves supream ecclesiasticall power, to frame oaths, expounde, comute, dissolve or binde the same, se solo, by laicall authoritie, at pleasure, which are acts of religion and to onely ecclesiasticke belonging.’¹⁶³ In the early modern period, the only two professions which were really available to Irish men were law and the church and perhaps part of this animosity towards barristers resulted from a degree of rivalry between these two educated groups. The author certainly reserved both antipathy and contempt for lawyers.

Culture

Given that *Aphorismical discovery* was chiefly concerned with the history of the wars in Ireland from 1641 to 1652, the author did not deal with cultural matters. During the war period, the artistic social life of the community was probably at a minimum in any case and furthermore the author had apparently left Ireland at a young age to study at a continental seminary and his tastes had doubtless diversified. Further, having recently endured a long and harrowing decade of war and hardship, his thoughts were focused more intently on the recent past. Nevertheless, influences from his Gaelic heritage penetrate the text.

An interest in genealogy was evident when he commended the papal agent, Scarampi, who ‘proved his witt and dilligence’ by becoming ‘soe learned in the petegrees of the respective Irish families.’¹⁶⁴ Mageoghegan, as we saw, was extremely engaged by the lineage of the native Irish, as indeed was Keating, while Hadsor scoffed at what he saw as a pretentious interest in their ancestry. A favourite motif in Gaelic literature was the

¹⁶² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 223.

¹⁶³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 225.

¹⁶⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 78.

‘spouse’ of Ireland.¹⁶⁵ The author, after the ‘treacherous yeldinge’ and surrender of Athlone to parliamentary forces by Viscount Dillon of Costllo-Gallen, employed this old Irish analogy; he bemoaned the disastrous consequences of rendering free passage to the enemy of the ‘saide Shanon, the Irish bulwarke and loyall spouse of the nation.’¹⁶⁶ He was also very conscious, as Mageoghegan and Keating had been, of the mystique of the ‘royall seate of Taragh...that had been in ancient time the seate of the chiefe monarche of Ireland.’ He poured scorn on Preston, ‘alias Ormondian Taragh’, whom Ormond had created Viscount of Tara and averred that the kings of England had never admitted anyone to be ennobled with that title. If this were indeed the case, it is likely that the crown’s reasoning was to avoid rekindling memories of ancient Irish kings, but it is a further indication of the author’s royalism that his naïve interpretation of their intent was that, ‘in tender respecte to that place, that had been in ancient time the seate of the chiefe monarche of Irelande, this very decorum...was ever unto this daie kept unto the Earldome of Tyron by the respective kings of Englande, which insinuats some hidden misterie of greatnesse.’¹⁶⁷ Enshrined in this comment too, of course, was a note of homage to the ancient family of Owen Roe O’Neill.

Fosterage had existed in Ireland from ancient times and it persisted certainly down to the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries especially among elite families for reasons of political alliance. As far back as the fourteenth-century statutes of Kilkenny, alliances between the ‘English colony and the Irish’ were forbidden and the practice was later regarded very negatively in official New English circles, being seen as strengthening the ties of loyalty between lords and their clients and therefore prejudicial to the power and prerogative of central government.¹⁶⁸ The author perceived no such negative connotations attached to the practice but, on the contrary, revealed an appreciation of the loyalty and emotional ties that resulted from fostering. He was critical that despite the fact that Sir Gerrott Moore ‘did foster the late Tyron Shean Oneyll’, his grandson, Gerott Moore, lord of Mellifont, ‘was no whitt the better affected towards that noble familie.’

¹⁶⁵ Ó Buachalla, *Crown of Ireland*, p. 38.

¹⁶⁶ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 161.

¹⁶⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 51.

¹⁶⁸ Fiona Fitzsimons, ‘Fosterage and gossipid in late medieval Ireland: some evidence’ in Patrick J. Duffy et al (eds), *Gaelic Ireland, c.1250 - c.1650: land, lordship and settlement* (Dublin, 2004), pp 138-41.

He related that Sir John Pigott, whose mother was a Hovenden, foolishly would not surrender his castle to Owen Roe's army being confident of being able to withstand attack, and 'confiding too much...in the ancient friendship of the house of Tyrone (whereof was fosterer, by his mother's side, of the Ouentons).'¹⁶⁹ Such allusions suggest that the author fully comprehended and valued the closeness which frequently resulted from the experience of being fostered. Conell Mageoghegan, as we saw, greatly appreciated the custom of fosterage and assured the reader that children who had been fostered 'for ever after would call them fosters and love them as well as their own natural father.'¹⁷⁰ Keating related countless instances of fostering from earliest times and also displayed a favourable disposition towards the custom: Lúgh Lámhfhada instituted the games of the Fair of Tailte as a memorial to his foster-mother; Eithne told Cormac mac Airt that it was her foster-father who must give her his permission to marry him; and Cu Chorb made his foster-son the leader of his army.¹⁷¹ Hadsor did not specifically mention fostering but from his disapproval of other Irish customs and traditions it is likely he would have had no affinity with the practice.

Signs of pride in his Gaelic heritage also emerge in the brief history Ireland which the author gave in his dedicatory introduction to his work. Some of the detail that he supplied of the earlier history of Ireland was somewhat faulty, probably accounted for by his long absence from Ireland (he placed the ninth-century Viking king Turgesius in the eleventh century after the death of Maelsheachlann Mór in 1022 and also mistook the fifteenth-century eighth earl of Desmond for the sixteenth earl of the following century.)¹⁷² However, he was more versed in the history of the century leading up to the present day. Writing now in the 1650s, from his account of the progression of events, he clearly showed his understanding that the events of the previous century had contributed to and impacted on the catastrophic situation in which the country had found itself during the wars of the last decade. He devoted particular attention to the turbulent events of the Tudor reigns especially those involving the O'Neill dynasty leading up to the wars at the

¹⁶⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 66-7, 129.

¹⁷⁰ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 41.

¹⁷¹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 221-1, ii, 189-91, 309-10.

¹⁷² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 2-3.

end of the sixteenth century and the flight of Tyrone and Tyrconnell in the early Stuart reign, and in doing so, he revealed his respect and affinity for the traditional title of Gaelic lords. Ferdinand O'Neill was, by the policy of the queen, created lord baron of Dungannon, 'onely to foregoe that honorable title of Oneyll'; his son Hugh O'Neill was brought to England to be 'bred in courte, to civillish him, as they tearmed it'; followed by Hugh himself being 'by the queene created earle of Tyron, any promotion they would give him, in exchance of that fatall name (as they tearmed it) Oneyll.'¹⁷³ Hadsor, as we saw, roundly condemned the Gaelic Irish custom of referring to the chieftains by their surname whereas this Old Irish author was proud of the tradition.

It was noted above that Keating exhibited a fascination with the intricacies of the Irish language in the manner of a scholar whereas Conell Mageoghegan's casual use of Irish indicated that it was his native tongue. Like Conell, it is likely that Irish was the author's first language, and he obviously esteemed it. In commending a brave young captain, Teige Conor, he described him in his marginal as 'alias *Tadhg an tsloathín*'; a Connachtman, Dowaltagh *caoch*, who remained true to the confederate cause to the end, was accorded his soubriquet; and many other Irish words were scattered throughout the text. Although, relative to the entire work, there was not a lot of Irish used, whenever he needed to ironically underline the iniquitous behaviour of an adversary, he resorted to an Irish proverb.¹⁷⁴ In addition, during his most impassioned passages, the language crept in. In summing up the 'betraying of a whole nation' by Clanricard, he quoted the maxim, '*mas feall filfethar*', which Gilbert translated as, 'if he be frail, he will betray'; and in bringing his whole work to a close, he accused those peers and agents who brought the nation to 'an ungodly end' of 'dishonestie, unworthynesse and basenesse... which shall survive to future ages, as a monument and memorial testimonie, or in Irish, *faluil*, of treasonable faction.'¹⁷⁵

Of course, what distinguishes the author of *Aphorismical discovery* from our other four authors is his frequent reliance on Spanish or French and some Italian words when it

¹⁷³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 5.

¹⁷⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 33, 48.

¹⁷⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 125, 134.

seemed as if the foreign word was more suitable to his meaning or perhaps if he could not recall the term in English. For instance, he referred to the ensign rank in the army as *alferes* (Spanish) and to a mercenary as *ganopanne* (*gaigne-pain*, French); he referred to raw and inexperienced recruits in the Spanish as *bisonos* and he frequently used the French *affye* (*affier*, to have confidence in someone). He was obviously more proficient with using these less commonplace terms in the languages he had been in contact with during most of his adult life. His early language was likely to have been Irish which is probably why Rankin considered that his use of English was ‘faulted’.¹⁷⁶ However, whatever about the accuracy of his English or indeed his Spanish and French, when it came to Latin, he made no mistakes. Being a cleric, his Latin was faultless and he employed it liberally.

J. J. Hogan considered that the type of English used by the author of the *Aphorismical discovery* was that which was spoken within the confines of a seventeenth-century Irish town where the Old English predominated.¹⁷⁷ However, the fact that his mother was probably a Tyrrell of Clonmoyle, near the town of Mullingar, may account for his style of using the language. The text itself was delivered in a more formal tone than that of *AClon* and exhibited an extensive English vocabulary complete with copious descriptive adjectives and high-flown language. Curiously, the tone of his dedication is somewhat more colloquial. In this regard, Rankin has shown that the author had not only sourced his aphorisms from Robert Dallington’s compilation of Guicciardini’s collection (which Dallington published in 1613 and 1629), but had ‘slavishly copied’ them, hardly altering them at all. In addition, he had lifted verbatim part of his address ‘To the reader’ from Dallington’s preface; and, further, for any given aphorism, his narrative frequently echoes Dallington’s selected illustration taken from Guicciardini’s ‘History of Italy’.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, the author even imitated the writing style of Dallington in his interpretation of Guicciardini. This perhaps accounts for the difference between the often stilted, formal tone of the text of *Aphorismical discovery* and the more colloquial tone of his dedication. Therefore, it seems likely that the sometimes conversational tone of much of the

¹⁷⁶ Rankin, *Between Spenser and Swift*, p. 118.

¹⁷⁷ Jeremiah J. Hogan, *The English language in Ireland* (Dublin, 1970), pp 57-8.

¹⁷⁸ Rankin, *Between Spenser and Swift*, pp 132-7.

dedication, not totally unlike the middle-English style of prose of Mageoghegan, was representative of the author's own natural writing style rather than the formality of the text.

Hierarchy and social order

Like the other four authors, the author had an acute sense of the appropriate hierarchical layers in society - 'nobilitie, gentrie, comons or pleybeyance,'¹⁷⁹ and like them he declaimed disruption to the social order. In the seventeenth century, the Catholic hierarchy was conservative and abhorred social dislocation.¹⁸⁰ Echoing the bishops, he condemned the supreme council for not appointing the nobility to the civil government of Munster, choosing instead those of lesser status:

My Lord Roche, Ikyerie, Kilmalloge, Dunboyne, Castlconnell, and severall other such, of nobilitie, gentrie and prelats, the verie best members in all the province, were discountenanced, secluded from the handlinge of any publicke affaيرة, and poore mecanicall people, pedlers, dumbe-baristers, attorneys, and route-banck-merchants promoted to the managinge of civill and ecclesiasticke government (extravagant of their beinge, and transcendent to their breedinge) onely because refractorie, and the others, reall, faithfull, noble and well-affected.¹⁸¹

Seventeenth-century attitudes to social status which viewed those occupying a higher rank in society taking precedence over those in an inferior social position, prevailed among Gaelic Irish and Old English alike, and the author was perfectly in tune with such sentiment. Conell Mageoghegan, as we saw, was extremely respectful to those in the higher echelons of society, going so far as to include the genealogies of three of the most prominent peers in his book and enumerating their ancestors right back to pre-historical times. Keating, Burnell and Hadsor no less regarded the nobility and gentry as those best fit to be in positions of authority. The *Aphorismical* author elaborated; it was not men 'hatched in ignobilitie' but the nobility and gentry who had the honour and moral fibre to be in positions of authority:

Those should be preferred before the others, in any dignitie or degree sutable to honor, as more honorable, more learned, better practised, more conscionable,

¹⁷⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 195.

¹⁸⁰ Gillespie, *Seventeenth century Ireland*, p. 155.

¹⁸¹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 207.

having more either to loose, gaine, or deffende, then the former invested with none of those qualities.

As noted before, in the seventeenth century, honour was considered an essential quality in those who held the reins of society and it is clear that the author agreed that both honorable status and honorable conduct ought to be present in those who ruled. Richard Bellings and the author shared the same attitudes with regard to honour. Bellings was horrified that the lords justices, in suspecting Mountgarret of conspiring with the rebels (before he had actually joined with the Lords of the Pale), had cast ‘soe odious a blemish...upon a nobleman’ and he claimed the reason for Mountgarret combining with them was because of his apprehension at ‘the height to which the meaner sort of people might grow up against the nobility and gentry.’¹⁸² Keating’s attitudes coincided, as we saw, favouring the ‘honourable...noble earls’ for governing; Burnell had highlighted the honourable conduct of his Old English characters; Hadsor’s, ‘noble & worthie English men’ were most suited to serve the crown; and Mageoghegan’s, Queen Macha ‘behaved herselfe very honorably’. In addition, the peers whom the author mentioned above were all Old English so he obviously had every respect for those Old English nobles of Munster whom he considered to be ‘well-affected’.

As mentioned before, the Old Irish were extremely status-conscious. Brendan Fitzpatrick has pointed out that the earl of Antrim’s treatment of Wentworth was rather casual, regarding him as socially inferior to him.¹⁸³ The maintenance of the social order of Old Irish hierarchy seemed to be of even more importance to the author than that of the Old English elite, and disruption of it frequently offended his sensibilities. The fact that it was alleged that Sir Phelim O’Neill took upon himself the title of earl of Tyrone received negative comment from him; he judged that consequently he was, ‘in the mouth of all people, charactered with that ugly denomination of an ambitious intruder.’ When Daniel O Cahan arrived from Spain, he was ‘madd angrie’ that Sir Phelim ‘did style himself with the title of earl of Tyron...nothing sutable to his beinge’, and gave him ‘a round checke

¹⁸² Gilbert, *History of the Irish confederation*, i, 64-5.

¹⁸³ Brendan Fitzpatrick, *Seventeenth-century Ireland: the war of religions* (Dublin, 1988), p. 86.

for his too, too exorbitant presumption.’¹⁸⁴ Thus the hierarchical order of the family of O’Neill was obviously of great importance to the *Aphorismical* author whereas Bellings saw it differently. He discounted that the animosity which existed between the two O’Neill patriarchs had anything to do with ‘right of that ancient greate family of the Oneales’ but that it had been partly material gain and that motivated Sir Phelim.¹⁸⁵ Other instances occur of the author’s dismay at any upset in the Gaelic social order. He considered it an affront that Owen Roe was ordered by the council to go Kilkenny, ‘to sweare an oathe, unto poets, baristers, and drugists’; and when the enemy took Bryan .Roe O’Neill prisoner, and promised him a fair quarter, he appeared scandalized that they ‘inhumanly used such a noble gentlman, gave him to reede on an ould jade, tooke his coate of buffe, casocke, hatt, and bootes of him.’¹⁸⁶ It has been noted previously how the native Irish were not approving of social-climbing especially within their own community. As we saw, Mageoghegan exhibited such reservations. Similarly, the *Aphorismical* author denounced ‘Donogh Mc Sheane Mc Mortagh, of the descente of Gowlanakirkie, whoe pretends to issue from that noble familie of the Towhills, but is truely and really of baser extraction, by name Fowly.’¹⁸⁷ As we have noted before, there is no doubt that the Gaelic Irish reserved strong criticism of anyone in their own community attempting to rise above their station.

Indeed, as well as displaying disapproval of native Irish attempts to rise above themselves, the author also made sure to dispel any notions of inappropriate grandeur that the Old English may have harboured about themselves although, it must be said that in this he had his own hidden agenda, as the families whom he chose to disparage were those whom he counted as of the ‘faction’. As mentioned in the previous chapter, many Old English were wont to refer to England as the mother country and to themselves as being of English descent, and the author did not fail to point out the contradictions inherent in their stance. When some fourteen members of the council, mainly Old English, had written to the parliament-governor of Dublin, Colonel Johns, warning him

¹⁸⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 34-41.

¹⁸⁵ Gilbert, *History of the Irish confederation*, i, 115-16.

¹⁸⁶ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 206, ii, 19.

¹⁸⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 126.

not to consort with Owen Roe and his party, the author ridiculed these council members for ‘baptising...themselves with that title of Englishmen, British nation, or English extraction’. He then proceeded to elaborate on what he viewed as the ridiculousness of their position:

...why should such as are onely borne in Ireland, by the succession of many ages, 200, 300, and 400 yeares, and heard upon 500 yeares others, call themselves Englishmen? Those did finde faulte with any Irish that did make or conceive any difference or distinction betweene them and the ancient Irish, but in the present addresse you see what they call themselves.¹⁸⁸

These remarks show that the tactics of some Old English in claiming to be both Irish and English were fully transparent to the author and probably to the wider community in seventeenth-century Ireland as well and it is clear that the charge of social climbing was not one leveled only at the native Irish. His remarks further indicate that the tactics such as those employed by Keating, of incorporating the Old English into the native Irish origin legend, did not go unnoticed either. The author proceeded then to comment on the lineage of some of the main signatories of the letter: he noted that neither Pierce nor Luke Fitzgerald was ‘borne in England or any where out of Ireland’; as for the Dillons, there was ‘noe mention made of them in any English chronicle that ever we sawe to any purpose’; the Butlers got the same treatment – ‘neither did wee see or finde any thinge note worthy in the Englishe chronicles of those Buttlers...those gott the said name Buttler, by the exhibition of the said trade or office to some gentlman or other’; and as for the family of Robert Talbot, although admitting they derived ‘theire pedigree from the said noble familie of English Thalbotts...[they] were onely reputed and ranked between the poorest and lowest of his owne very name in this kingdome.’¹⁸⁹ However, the fact that he considered it worth his while to snipe at the Old English for what he regarded as their rising above themselves, and for denying their Irishness, obversely indicates the extent to which a sense of national identity had advanced between the two groups at this stage which will be discussed later.

¹⁸⁸ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 243.

¹⁸⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 244-5.

Indeed, the author did not appear to possess any animosity in a general way towards the Old English and in fact displayed much goodwill towards many members of that social group. Shortly after the outbreak of hostilities in Ulster, he denounced the treatment meted out to Old English MPs who, having been summoned by the state to attend parliament, were apprehended and imprisoned. He voiced his disgust that Mr King of Clontarf, ‘as inocent a man as the contrie could affoorde, and never havinge any hand in this commotion or other such in his life’, had suffered like this and had his property burned down; similarly he declaimed the fact that Dunsany and other MPs, who had placed too much confidence in ‘theire proper loyaltie’, were committed into custody.¹⁹⁰ In the early stages of the conflict particularly, he commended many Old English for their contribution; James Fleming of Cabra for ‘good services’ against adjoining garrisons; ‘that noble sparke...Finglasse’ who deserved ‘imortalle fame’ for his behaviour against the enemy; and he acclaimed Barnewall of Kilbrue for his ‘censeritie to his conntrie’ in sending intelligence to his kinsman, General Preston, regarding the number and the calibre of the Scots army marching towards Leinster prior to the battle of Lince Hill (Preston ignoring his warning with disastrous consequences).¹⁹¹ On another occasion, he expressed regret at the loss of two prominent Old English peers who died in the early part of the wars: ‘at this time died in Kilkeny the two best peeres of Linster, for witt and loyaltie, Viscount Gormanstowne, by surname Preston, a nephewe to this generall Preston, but nothing like, the other was Lord Baron of Slane, both yonge and reasonable.’¹⁹² Therefore, there did not appear to be any ideological obstacles to his relationship with the Old English, frequently referring to them as the ‘recent Irish’.

Nevertheless, despite the author displaying no antagonism towards many individuals among the Old English, the attitude in the *Aphorismical discovery* on balance, as exhibited by him, showed definite signs of a certain amount of division and prejudice between the Old Irish and the Old English. He displayed enormous resentment and indignation at what he perceived as constant belittlement of the ‘ancient Irish’ by many of the Old English, those of the ‘faction’ in the confederation who were mainly those in the

¹⁹⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 13.

¹⁹¹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 26, 109, 154-6.

¹⁹² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 52.

supreme council. This aggrieved attitude towards some of the Old English is a constant theme running through the *Aphorismical discovery* and, while it could be a sign of an inferiority complex on the part of the native Irish, it is perhaps obversely indicative of the growing confidence of the Old Irish elite and educated classes who were no longer prepared to be classed as second-class subjects. In previous centuries, the Gaelic Irish had moved within their own society and had their own system of social hierarchy, and were not perhaps greatly bothered by the negative rhetoric directed at them from the New English or from some Old English, particularly those of the Pale who participated in government. However, for the past eighty years or so, the old Irish had to operate under a centralized political entity and legal system and were participating increasingly in national public life. Therefore, old condescending attitudes towards them perhaps rankled more than before and they were no longer willing to ignore any suggestions of inferiority from their fellow Irishmen. New English opinion did not seem to perturb the author unduly; he reported, without comment, that, at the outset of the troubles, the ‘state of Dublin havinge some confidence in the ancient Englishe...gave armes unto severall of them.’¹⁹³ However, he strenuously objected to any instances of what he perceived as unfair treatment meted out to Gaelic Irish confederates from Old English sources. For instance, he claimed that a frigate, laden with arms from the Spanish king, was ‘the fruite of fr. Francis Sullevan’s suite in the Catholicke court’; however, the council ‘did falsly father it upon one fr. James Thalbott an Augustine unoculus yonge frier, but, beinge Thalbott, and the other an ancient Irish, must cede him in heroycke actions.’ Further, that the council, in the division of those arms, ‘bewrayed some strangeness towards the ancient Irish’, hardly affording them a single musket, but, ‘to severall of the recent Irish, they bestowed great sumes.’¹⁹⁴ In a passage, flagged in the margin, ‘Daniell oge Kevanagh how by the Councell abused’, he related that this ‘yonge man son and heire to Sir Morgan Kevanagh, was at schoole in Dublin in the begininge of those comotions, never actinge any the least thinge on either side, onely beinge of the ancient Irish stocke’, but that he was nevertheless imprisoned by the state; and, even though under the terms of the recent cessation of hostilities he was entitled to be released, the council spoke not a

¹⁹³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 17, 18.

¹⁹⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 49-50.

word on his behalf and he had to pay £500 in order to gain his freedom.¹⁹⁵ Therefore, while harbouring good will towards the Old English in general, it appears as if the Gaelic Irish were very sensitive to any perceived slights directed at them from that quarter.

Accordingly, taking into account, on the one hand, the author's reasonable approach in attributing credit to Old English figures where he considered it was due, and, on the other, his much more numerous attacks on those Old English whom he regarded as being in the faction, it is obvious that on balance he possessed, whether consciously or not, some prejudice against the Old English. With regard to his perception of Ormond and Clanricard, he felt he had legitimate political reasons, which he articulated on many occasions, for his condemnation of these two peers. Ormond was neither a fellow-Catholic nor a confederate; the author believed that he frustrated confederate efforts to achieve royal concessions and he also seemed fully convinced that Ormond was actually in league with Parliament against the king's interests. His main objection to Clanricard was probably that he had not adhered to Rinuccini; in addition, he viewed Clanricard's performance as army commander as dismal and accused him of working against the Ulster army; and he asserted that he also was for Parliament and against the king. Indeed, his invective against Clanricard was, if anything, even more bitter than that which he pitched at Ormond, due to the fact that Clanricard was a Catholic, his crimes in the author's opinion therefore being the greater. In addition, both peers had been resident in England which he did not fail to point out, and, whether consciously or subconsciously, he may not have regarded them as fellow-Irishmen.

Instead, it was towards members of the Old English group who emanated from his own county of Westmeath or its environs that he directed most of his caustic abuse and vitriol. Prejudice towards members of a particular social group locally might exist whereas more tolerance might be exercised towards that group on a national level. His account indeed showed signs of the presence of local tensions and jealousies within localities. With regard to the gentry of Meath, in the heart of the Pale, the author, while being close to them geographically, revealed himself miles apart from them culturally and socially. A

¹⁹⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 74-5.

touch of irony might be detected in his comment that, having been refused a safe conduct to attend parliament in the immediate aftermath of the insurrection, the nobility of Meath, ‘never yett noted of any refraction’, protested in their letters to the state, ‘setting fourth their unfained obedience.’¹⁹⁶ He continued in the same vein, inferring the half-hearted commitment to the confederate cause of those in his neighbouring county: ‘The nobilitie of Meath obsearving in what a poore takinge they were exposed, must either tender their necks unto the mercillesse doome [judgment] of their kinge’s enemie, or joine with Sir Phelim Oneyll. Of these two evils, as they thought, they choose this last, being the leaste.’¹⁹⁷ From his perspective, the reluctance of the Old English nobility did not reflect particularly well on them whereas, for Bellings, it was completely understandable. His interpretation was that when the Ulster Irish had their early victory at Julianstown in November 1641, ‘soe neere Dublin, in the heart of the Pale...[it] made the Lords of the Pale to think of contracting friendship with them at whose mercy their persons, their estates, and fortunes, then lay.’¹⁹⁸ The author reserved a particular contempt for the bishop of Meath, Thomas Dease; he was a man ‘that ever yett spent his time in jolitie, composinge of Irish reemes...an ill-affected member unto...both king and kingdome, bearinge an inveterate hatred and malice to the ancient Irish.’ When Dease died, he remarked disparagingly, ‘his continuall jolitie was not capable to prolonge his dayes...[and he] must apeere before that Supream Judge to give an account unto him of his disloyaltie towards his dellegats.’¹⁹⁹ Although not harbouring any prejudice or animosity towards the Old English population on an intellectual level, these constant sniping attacks by the author leveled at the Old English gentry in his locality could be indications that there were underlying prejudices present in the Old Irish community towards their fellow-Irish inhabitants of the island, especially those in their immediate vicinity, and these feelings became manifest during a period of catastrophe and crisis for both communities.

¹⁹⁶ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 13.

¹⁹⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 14.

¹⁹⁸ Gilbert, *History of the Irish confederation*, i, 34.

¹⁹⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 278.

Similarly, his animosity towards ‘those upstarte Dillons’²⁰⁰ may have been personal and an indication of some latent resentment towards sections of the social hierarchy in his local area. The Dillon family network spread throughout south Co Westmeath bordering on MacGeoghegan country and not far from Castletown-Geoghegan. Although the author was also hostile to Richard Nugent, the young second earl of Westmeath, counting him one of the faction, he still regarded the earls of Westmeath as being superior in rank to the Dillons. He had had great respect for ‘ould’ Westmeath, also named Richard, the first earl, ‘thitherunto the onely champion in Ireland for religion.’²⁰¹ He explained that it was due to ‘distraction of that noble familie...whereof they are sensible unto this verie day’ that the Dillons had gained the confederate government of Co. Westmeath instead of the Nugents, and he accused Viscount Dillon of ‘unworthyly challenginge the gouernment of that countie in disrespekte of this mans predicessors’, and that he had ‘claimed right therunto, which neuer any of his familie could doe.’²⁰² The author continuously insinuated that Viscount Dillon, and also Dillon’s first cousin, Viscount Taaffe, were for parliament and not for the king, ‘as they gave out.’²⁰³ No doubt he was aware that Sir Theobald Dillon (d. 1624) father to Sir James and grandfather to Viscount Dillon, had amassed enormous estates both in Connacht and in Leinster, and he probably also had knowledge that Viscount Taaffe’s grandfather, Sir William Taaffe (d. 1630) had similarly been granted vast amounts of land for his service to the crown against the native Irish. Both grandfathers had improved their social standing and acquired their titles in this fashion. It will be recalled that Hadsor had noted that ‘Sir Theobald Dillon [and] Sir William Taaffe... have suddenly crept into great estates upon very easy terms, having purchased, as the common report runs, most of their lands from the natives upon broken titles.’ It will also be remembered from the previous chapter that the O’Farrells of Longford had complained bitterly to Hadsor that Robert Dillon of Canorstown, kinsman of Viscount Dillon and also married to his aunt (and Terence Coghlan’s father-in-law), had cheated them out of a proportion of their lands in the plantation of 1620 and had

²⁰⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 233.

²⁰¹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 35.

²⁰² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 161.

²⁰³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 36,76.

enriched himself thereby. Therefore, local jealousies and resentments probably accounted for a certain amount of division between the Old Irish and Old English groups.

Interestingly, on one occasion, the author raised the subject of land which was no longer in native Irish hands. This is an indication that the Gaelic Irish were not only fully conscious of the loss of their lands over the last century but also resented the situation, which had been caused variously by insolvency or perhaps unredeemed mortgages and indeed by plantation, the beneficiaries often having been the Old English. These sentiments surfaced in a lengthy passionate passage in which the author was railing against what he perceived as Clanricard's trenchant opposition to any involvement in Ireland by the French duke of Lorraine. He asked rhetorically,

Why is Clanricarde, and the rest of his faction...soe stiffe against the articles of transaction...For reason, I saye, to oppose those articles that warranteth, in the firste place, restauration of religion and restitution of birth right to the natives, is conformable to the principle of factionists. What did they ever goe about to undoe, diminish, and destroye, other then those two points, luster of religion and the juste title of the native? for you shall find non of the faction but have either Churche livinge, or the natives right, or both, as Ormond, Clanricarde, Westmeathe; Costllagh, Insichuayne, Taaffe, etc.²⁰⁴

Church land which had been wrested from Protestant church livings at the outset of the troubles was a recurring contentious issue throughout the decade and its retention vigorously defended by the clergy in any negotiations between the confederates and Ormond.²⁰⁵ However, it is clear from the above that the author was fully cognizant of the fact that, as well as the Old English nobility and gentry having been granted much church land at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII, they had also acquired many estates over the centuries which had once been in the domain of the Gaelic Irish lords and landowners. The author, later, under the year 1652, listed ten instructions from the provincial assemblies to the negotiators of peace with Parliament. Following the first two stipulations which dealt with religion, the author placed as number three of ten instructions the demand for a reversal of all plantations since the crowning of James I and, although this included the qualification, 'unless ratified and

²⁰⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 7.

²⁰⁵ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 90, 199.

confirmed by mortgage or other free donation of the proprietors', it is clear that the issue of land was of major importance not just to the Old English, as it had always been, but now to the Old Irish as well.²⁰⁶ It is quite possible that the Old Irish did not trust the Old English to look after their interests when it came to negotiating terms with Parliament with regard to the allocation of lands after peace was agreed. He condemned the 'factious Comissioners', mostly Old English, for frivolously conferring with parliament figures, officials who had no authority to grant what was demanded, attempting to negotiate 'specially of their reall estates, which was the maine of their busines.'²⁰⁷ At the end of a sombre passage which detailed executions by the parliament army, he summarised the dismal outcome of the commissioners' efforts, concluding, 'I know none that submitted in virtue of Kilkeny articles (that was of any standing forces,) can laye any claime unto any reall estate in the foresaide three provinces, except Bryan McPhelim in Linster, Mortagh O Bryan in Monster, and some Kellyes in Conaght.'²⁰⁸ Presumably what the author meant here was that the vast majority of the Old Irish commanders who submitted were denied any claim to their estates resulting in the loss of their patrimony.

As explained above, the author in general gave due respect to both Old English and Old Irish nobility but he perhaps displayed more warmth and esteem when discussing some of those of native Irish extraction. His affection for the Geoghegans has been discussed earlier and he also, not surprisingly, expressed his esteem for the family of his hero Owen Roe O'Neill in heartfelt manner. After the death of the Irish general's son, Henry Roe, he delivered a moving and poetic lamentation, acclaiming that 'this most noble familie of the Neylls is now left a relicte dowager of moane and griefe...her beauteous cheekes besmeared with saltrie teares', and he assured the reader that God would never forsake 'that noble Macheyan familie...and benemerittinge a stocke.'²⁰⁹ He also afforded much space to the O'Briens of Thomond. We have seen how Mageoghegan respected the O'Brien family to the extent that he included the lineage of 'Lord Henrie earle of Thomond' in his table of genealogies. Even though the *Aphorismical* author regarded the

²⁰⁶ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 87-88.

²⁰⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 91-2

²⁰⁸ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 136.

²⁰⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 89.

two principal representatives of the O'Briens, Henry O'Brien, earl of Thomond and Murrough, baron of Inchiquin, as members of the faction, it is obvious that he still considered the O'Brien family to be one of the most noble in Ireland. Inchiquin he regarded with loathing, 'this poore waveringe panther...with soe many jumpes and leapinge from Kinge to Parliament, from Parliament to Kinge...degenerating from his noble predicesors in both loyaltie and religion, the onely Nero in persecutinge Catholicke Church', and he castigated him for his tyrannical behaviour at Cashel where he executed among others thirty clerics 'to the blemishe of his predicesors.'²¹⁰ He reserved a certain amount of contempt too for the earl of Thomond, but he still considered it highly inappropriate that, 'though a Puritant himself...the possession of his proper patromie was refused him, for nothings else then as beinge of the ancient Irish, of the Brians'. He regretted also the fact that Thomond, who, having been tricked out of his seat of Bunratty by Ormond, Inchiquin and Muskerry, and having gone to England expecting to be welcomed 'by the Parliament with great honor...was received, or looked with dishonor or disdain, where he lives most beggarly, O brave Peers, that cheats a nobleman to his destruction.'²¹¹ However, despite his dislike of these two peers, he held the O'Briens in great esteem. At the outset, when the oath of association to confederacy was being circulated to the nobility of the provinces, the first family he listed were 'the Brians in the countie of Clare' who would have 'thought it a blemishe in their honors not to be conformable thereto, in defence of religion, kinge and kingdome'; and he on many occasions referred to members of the O'Brien family as 'noblemen.'²¹²

However, it was not just the nobility of the native Irish for whom he displayed respect. Like Mageoghegan and in contrast to Hadsor, he employed the term 'meere' Irish in a positive way in the sense of being 'pure' Irish, instead preferring terminology like 'countrie peysants' or 'poore people' to refer to the ordinary population.²¹³ As elucidated above, he displayed much negativity against many of the Old English. There is no doubt that he nearly always implied that the 'well-affected' equated solely with the ancient

²¹⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 182.

²¹¹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 77-8, 105, 122-3.

²¹² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 15, 96, 230, iii, 53, 127.

²¹³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 5, 58, 79.

Irish, and the ‘refractory’ whom he denigrated seemed to consist mostly though not exclusively of Old English. Further, he constantly inferred that it was only the ancient Irish who sided with the clergy. With regard to military commanders and their regiments, with some exceptions, those whom he lauded were Old Irish, like Owen Roe O’Neill, Roger Maguire, Mortagh O’Brien and Brian and Hugh MacPhelim O’Byrne. He was lukewarm towards Antrim, although not connecting him with the faction; nevertheless, he heavily criticised the supreme council for an affront to this ‘noble peere.’²¹⁴ In addition, although not considering Antrim himself competent in the military field, he had the height of praise for the Scottish soldiers who adhered to the earl, those ‘warrlicke’ and ‘valiant’ Redshanks, the ‘Irish Scott’, from whom their enemies ‘would rather fly to the very devill...then fall unto their hands.’²¹⁵ In any case, the *Aphorismical author’s* attitude to the order of society was very much in tune with all four of the previous protagonists for whom a hierarchical system was a natural assumption.

Religion

While the author stated that his only consideration in penning his history of the wars was ‘the discoverie of faction’, his principal preoccupation throughout the wars had really been the preservation of the Catholic religion in Ireland. The official confederate position of a just war with its motto of *pro Deo, rege et patria* certainly had religion as its focus but it also encompassed the recovery of possessions and the arrest of further inroads into livelihoods, and such secular concerns were quite understandably paramount in the minds of many confederates.²¹⁶ For the author, however, this holy war was first of all about religion. His views are clearly revealed in Owen Roe’s motivating oration to his soldiers before the battle at Benburb in 1646, a speech perhaps reconstructed and no doubt highly embellished by the author, expounding a passionate defence of the righteous justice of the cause.

Such as will perish in this battle, said he, lett him be sure of eternall blissh, havinge for our objecte in this battle, as prime motive, the defence of our holy religion...Our quarrell is juste; wee offer to maintaine the religion taught by Our Saviour, preached by the Apostles, planted in Ireland by our holy patron S.

²¹⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 89.

²¹⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 33, 155-6, 89.

²¹⁶ Conor Ryan, ‘Religion and state in seventeenth-century Ireland’ in *Archiv. Hib.*, xxxiii (1975), p. 125.

Patrick, and held ever since by our predicesors. Our lives and fortunes and liberties wee challenge in the seconde ranke...Those that you see before your faces, there readie to spill your bloude, are those that prophane your churches, turned your aulters and sanctuaries to beastly mangers, to stewe houses, and other barbarous uses.²¹⁷

He constructed this speech in rousing and epic language as was appropriate for a description of the greatest victory of his hero, Owen Roe, but the sentiments expressed ring true as the author's own sincerely held beliefs. He was no doubt familiar with Rinuccini's instructions to army chaplains which directed them to remind soldiers that the war was just, fought for religion, country and king (in that order), and that if they died fighting, they could hope to go to heaven.²¹⁸ In any case, the author's religious priorities were borne out further when he reported the call of the Leinster congregation in September 1651 for a renewal of confederacy. Religion was the most important issue here though this did not mean there was any clash with the concomitant commitments to king and country. The congregation's instruction was for

an oathe of association and declaration for religion (noe mention to be made of any other motive)...[but] lett none conceave that beinge onelye declared for religion, doe derogate any thinge from his Majesties juste prerogatives, or nation libertie, for whoesoever is faithfull and true to God should be deemed faithfull to kinge and countrye.²¹⁹

Both these passages illustrate the overriding priorities of the author; the principal character and hero of his historical drama, Owen Roe, explicitly stating that the defence of religion was paramount, and the author's paraphrase of the Leinster clergy declaration stressing that no other motive entered the equation. Therefore, religion being his prime concern, his constant berating of the faction really entailed an attack on those who did not adhere to the clergy's viewpoint.

With regard to his personal religious beliefs, it is clear they consisted of a mixture of the reformed devotional practices recommended by the Council of Trent and the older popular traditions which stubbornly persisted in Gaelic Ireland.

²¹⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 112.

²¹⁸ Lenihan, 'Catholicism and the Irish confederate armies', pp 184-5.

²¹⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 13-14.

As noted before, people in early-modern society were providential in their outlook. The author, like our previous four protagonists, saw God at work in the world at every turn. Enemy roundheads, having jeeringly donned the habits of nuns who had fled their convent at Lough Ree, were afterwards surprised by a confederate ambush and were all slaughtered: ‘see how those were payed, for plunderinge the nunrie, and for gyringe the holy weede.’²²⁰ As noted in a previous chapter, in early modern times the hand of God was also seen in determining the outcome of battle and soldiers regularly prayed beforehand.²²¹ Instances in the *Aphorismical discovery* are symptomatic of this belief. When the confederates were defeated at the battle of Ballibegg, the author viewed the result providentially: ‘the Irish lost there the field, lives, armes, and honour, and worthyly, for they confided onely in their owne strength, in their multitude and comaunder, and not in God, whoe is the giver of victories.’²²² Later, before confronting the enemy at Benburb, Owen Roe examined ‘the secret retirements of his witte’ to try to come up with a good strategy for a difficult battlefield; however, he decided not to rely on his own experience or resources but instead, ‘addressed himself for proper safetie to the secure rocke of stabilitie...God Almightye’; he then commanded his men to kneel down to pray and make their confession and he authorised their chaplain to grant a general absolution and plenary indulgence.²²³ Following the resounding victory, the author attributed the low mortality rate of the confederates together with the rich booty acquired from the enemy camp to ‘the fruite of prayers, holy money and plenary indulgence.’²²⁴ It is notable that the views of Mageoghegan, Keating, Hadsor, Burnell and the *Aphorismical discover* all synchronised in relation to a providential God.

Additionally, in crediting the Benburb victory to prayer and in focusing on confession and plenary indulgence, the author showed definite signs of having imbibed the thrust of the Counter-Reformation theology. However, while he frequently showed his awareness and approval of many of the reforms stipulated at the Council of Trent, at the same time he cherished beliefs in traditional forms of devotion popular in Gaelic Ireland. The

²²⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 58.

²²¹ Gillespie, *Devoted people*, pp 51-5.

²²² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 62-3.

²²³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 110-11.

²²⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 116.

Franciscan friars at Louvain were compiling catechisms in the early seventeenth century for dissemination to the Irish faithful containing the ethos of the reformed Tridentine approach to Catholicism but they were nevertheless retaining in their works much medieval devotion which both they and the people of Gaelic Ireland held dear.²²⁵ The author espoused many Tridentine ideas but he also clung to much of the older tradition as well.

Nevertheless, he was enthusiastic about many of the newer recommendations. Trent had put great emphasis on the importance of catechesis and in order to catechise there was a need for an educated clergy who could impart the tenets of religion to the people. However, it was clear to many in the church, for instance to the Franciscan scholars of Louvain, that there was a lack of sufficiently learned priests in Ireland.²²⁶ The author was well aware of the desirability of having educated priests. He had great esteem for highly educated clergy and was fairly dismissive of those less learned, and he often blamed their support of the faction on their ignorance. He was obviously very impressed that Fr Anthony Geoghegan, apostolic representative, was ‘both learned and taught (in imitation of S. Augustin, the lanterne of Gods Church, and holy doctors) philosophic, logicke...in the prime Universitie of Paris.’²²⁷ Conversely, he castigated some ‘poore and illitirat priestes and friers...voide of all scientificall motion of Divine theologie’ who had supplied their signatures in certification of Preston and thereby allowed him to cover up his public treachery and perjury.²²⁸ Similarly, another friar, Thomas Babe, a good and simple man, but ‘of the ranke illiterat to be called Divine’ had put his name to Fr Peter Walshe’s ‘Queries’ (a defence of the position of those adhering to the cessation with Inchiquin in 1648) and, when questioned, Babe had admitted that he had signed, never having ‘perused a word of those queres...O poore simple man.’²²⁹ Keating also revealed his appreciation of the need for learned churchmen; he lauded ‘divines’ from Ireland who travelled to Europe to instruct other clergy, quoted a poem to say St Patrick

²²⁵ Salvador Ryan, ‘Popular religion in Gaelic Ireland, 1445-1645’ (2 vols, PhD thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2002), ii, 135.

²²⁶ Ryan, ‘Popular religion in Gaelic Ireland’, ii, 163n243, 200.

²²⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 141.

²²⁸ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 133.

²²⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 278.

consecrated fifty-five ‘learned bishops’ and reported that there were ‘five hundred learned monks’ in the community of Mungairid to which Cormac Mac Cuilleanáin, whom Keating much admired, bore high testimony.²³⁰ The author was also well aware of the ban on priests marrying. As noted previously, Trent came out very strongly against the practice. The author showed his approval of this stipulation and used it to fire a sarcastic salvo at his *bête noir*, Sir James Dillon; he asserted that Dillon, whose ‘greate grandfather was a churcheman, prior of Kilkeny weste...doe realy prove to be descended of such a stocke, such the tree, such is the fruite, for the said prior begettinge children, swarved from his rule, religion and regular obedience.’²³¹ We saw that Keating showed his awareness of the teachings of the church regarding marriage whereas Mageoghgan appeared unconcerned with the older traditions prevalent in Ireland.

The author also disapproved of excessive extravagance that the council of Trent had enjoined on priests to avoid. He denigrated Fr Raymond Caron who, when in Louvain had been reputed a good, learned and religious man, but now in Kilkenny he and his apostate friars were ‘pamperinge themselves upon Ormonds score in disrespekte of all that is religious’ with ‘gould, beefe, and wine, as bribes to putt out Justice eyes.’²³² Keating, in *Trí bior-ghaoithe an bháis*, similarly expressed the requirement for priests to live holy lives.²³³ On other occasions the author showed his disapproval of excessive drinking; he criticised Frs John Dormer and Anthony Sweetman for their fondness of ‘bachanalian’ beverages and he also charged Clanricard for being ‘in a transcendent degree devoted to Bachus.’²³⁴ The Council of Trent also put much emphasis on prayer and the sacraments and, as mentioned, the Franciscan friars at Louvain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in their catechisms were hoping to convey to the Irish faithful the importance of the sacraments especially penance and the Eucharist.²³⁵ Here too, the author displayed a Tridentine slant to his religious thinking. A ‘noble gentlman’, Oliver Stephens, was killed in the battle of Liscarrol against Inchiquin’s troops but ‘we may be

²³⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 151-3, iii, 21-3, 199-200.

²³¹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 234.

²³² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 2, 29.

²³³ Ryan, ‘Popular religion in Gaelic Ireland’, ii, 264.

²³⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 277, ii, 127.

²³⁵ Ryan, ‘Popular religion in Gaelic Ireland’, ii, 53-8, 109n49.

ascertained [this] to be noe death, but chaunce of life, for seaven severall times that day, he did confesse, and once received the holy euchariste.²³⁶ There is no doubt that the views of Keating and the author do coalesce in their exposition of the type of devotion propounded at the Council of Trent. However, this is not surprising seeing that both were educated at continental seminaries where Tridentine reform was strongly promoted. The author, however, in addition, displayed many traits of traditional devotion which was firmly engrained in the Gaelic Irish soul.

It is evident that, sitting side by side in his psyche with his modern outlook on religion, were the older popular beliefs which Tridentine reformers might have frowned upon as superstition. There was no shortage of prophecies in circulation in early-modern Ireland and medieval saints' lives were full of them that could be recycled to suit circumstances.²³⁷ The author told of a Leinsterman, Dermott McDowlin Kevanagh who was killed at the battle of Cnocaterife [Kilrush, 1642]. He related, 'of this gentleman was a prophecie (which I heard meself tell 12 yeares before his death) that he should be killed in that same plaine in a battle between English and Irish;' nevertheless, although knowing this, Kavanagh went into battle, but first 'made a general confession and received the holy sacrament of euchariste...and complied with the said prophecie.'²³⁸ Here, the medieval flavour of his fatalistic belief in the prophecy was presented beside his consciousness of the sacramental priorities of Trent. The author gave an instance of another prophecy where an 'Irish druide or prophett' warned Heber McMahan, bishop of Clogher, at that time general of the Ulster army, not to give battle at a place near Letterkenny [Scarrifhollis, June 1650], as 'there is, said he, a prophecie of that place, that...such as will goe from hence thither, will prove fatall unto those'. The bishop-general refused to listen and catastrophe ensued and both he and the son of Owen Roe O'Neill were captured and hanged. The author criticised Bishop McMahan for ignoring 'the ominous prophecie' of that place. He went on to say that the druid had further

²³⁶ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 38-9.

²³⁷ Raymond Gillespie, *Devoted people: belief and religion in early-modern Ireland* (Manchester, 1997), p. 137.

²³⁸ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 30.

insisted, ‘I assure you this is noe fixion, but a reall one penned by a prime saincte.’²³⁹ Traditionally, as cited before, the Gaelic Irish gave great devotion to particular saints, especially those connected with their own locality, crediting their favourite saint with divine power, although the Counter-Reformation clerics endeavoured to dissuade this type of cult devotion, emphasising the intercessionary powers of saints instead. Conell Mageoghegan had recounted innumerable prophecies connected with the saints²⁴⁰ and he had also given credence to the predictions of other prophets found in Gaelic sources; rounding off a long account of the exploits and talents of Fionn Mac Cumhaill and the Fianna, he had added that he was a ‘very Learned, wise, & a Great Prophett’ and that he ‘prophesyed of the coming of the Englishmen into this land.’ O’Curry surmised that this prophecy was a fabrication composed in a Gaelic poem at the end of the sixteenth-century while perhaps having been elicited from some ‘earlier local fugitive stanzas.’²⁴¹ Mageoghegan also mentioned that Fionn, besides having his dwelling place at Allen in Co. Kildare, had another in ‘Moyelly in Meath, which is now called Foxes contrey’; this is an area adjacent to Mageoghegan country (now Moyally, Co. Offaly), so it is conceivable this prophecy circulated in local sources.²⁴² Keating, in a long relation about Fionn, agreed that he excelled ‘in knowledge and in learning in skill and in strategy, and also in wisdom’ but made no reference to any prophetic talents.²⁴³ In addition, Conell Mageoghegan repeated prophecies of *Beg Mac Dé*, including that ‘lords would loose their Chiefries & seignories, & that men of Little estate & lands would loose their lands, because they should be thought little.’²⁴⁴ Many of the annals record the death of this prophet at AD 558 but, although Beg Dé was a poet and prophet at Tara and the son of a Munster nobleman, Keating, perhaps anxious not to emphasise the older style of religion, made no allusion to him.²⁴⁵

²³⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 84.

²⁴⁰ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp. 74, 80, 92, 138.

²⁴¹ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 62; Eugene O’Curry, *Lectures on the manuscript materials of ancient Irish history* (Dublin, 1995), pp 394-6, 624.

²⁴² Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 62.

²⁴³ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 325-36.

²⁴⁴ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 83.

²⁴⁵ O’Curry, *Lectures*, pp 399, 625; *AB* AD 558; *AT* AD 552.3; *CS* AD 553.

Tridentine theologians also played down stories of dubious saintly miracles and vengeful deeds but such phenomena popular in medieval times continued to be given credence in Gaelic Ireland. The author was reporting on a number of executions of confederate commanders by Parliament at the end of the war and related an incident about Colonel Grady and Colonel McNamara, both men ‘of the faction’ and both involved ‘in the treacherous yielding of Limbricke.’ They too would have received execution had they not instead been punished by ‘Gods wrath’, with ‘a sudaine and unexpected deathe, not knowen how; onely were soe founde un-interred in biviame roade, and none durst move their karcasses thence...for the scent it yelded, which was extraordinarie devillishe.’²⁴⁶ In a similar vein, *Annála ríoghachta Éireann* recorded that Diarmaid Mac Murchadha, King of Leinster died ‘of an insufferable and unknown disease; for he became putrid while living, through the miracle of God, Colum-Cille, and Finnen, and the other saints of Ireland’; while, as noted previously, Mageoghegan had also attributed Mac Murchadha’s death to ‘an unknown disease.’²⁴⁷ In *Desiderius* (1616), Flaithrí Ó Maolchonaire used the trope of a ‘putrid smell’ emanating from heretics to signify the misuse of the bodies to criticise and blaspheme.²⁴⁸ Keating, on the other hand, and for his own particular reasons as we saw, just recorded the death Diarmaid Mac Murchadha without comment.²⁴⁹ Another example of the author thinking along medieval lines arose when he intimated that the sins of Mac Thomas (Pierce Fitzgerald) would be visited upon his descendants. Mac Thomas was adamant about adhering to the cessation with Inchiquin (much to the author’s own amazement and regret; Mac Thomas was cousin to the Geoghegans) and was thereby bringing excommunication upon himself. The Nuncio, having a particular affection for Mac Thomas, in an effort to persuade him otherwise, told him he ‘would rather abide the censure himself then that McThomas should be...charactered for such to future ages, to the noe smale blemishe of his paste, future and presente descent and progenie.’²⁵⁰ Keating, in *Trí bior-ghaoithe an bháis*, had also elucidated such a notion, derived from Exodus 20, stating that the ramifications of sin were seen to appear even to

²⁴⁶ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 135-6.

²⁴⁷ *Annála ríoghachta Éireann*, AD 1171.4; Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 208.

²⁴⁸ Ryan, ‘Popular religion in Gaelic Ireland’, ii, 101.

²⁴⁹ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 341-2.

²⁵⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 197.

the third and fourth generation.²⁵¹ Keating employed this concept also in *FFÉ*, as we saw previously, when he asserted that because of the sin committed by the father of Cormac Conluingeas, Cormac's own three sons had 'no one to-day in Ireland descended from these.'²⁵² Biblical warnings such as these were commonly articulated in medieval times.

Counter-Reformation clerics, while not discouraging the use of sacramentals such as medals and images, were anxious that they should be used in an appropriate way and with the proper worship due to sacred things.²⁵³ In Ireland, the *Agnus Dei* was one focus of devotion in itself with some clerics reporting its miraculous powers.²⁵⁴ The author recounted one such miracle. A captain of horse, who had returned from Flanders with Owen Roe, galloped at the head of his troops and was hit 'with a brase of bullets' but received no hurt; this soldier never armed himself with 'brest plate' and only wore a 'coate of buffe' but always carried with him three *agnus dei*'s encased in silver boxes because he had such confidence in the 'divine vertue' of those holy things. The author attested to the truth of this story having himself seen the coat that only had two little marks as if two coals of fire were laid upon it.²⁵⁵ The Jesuits were in the forefront of teaching Counter-Reformation theology in Europe, and Jesuits missionaries, whose objective was to bring Ireland into the mainstream of reformed Catholicism, urged the correct use of medals and relics. They normally left a supply of *agnus deis* with the communities at the end of the mission obviously appreciating that the proper use of such traditional devotional items could co-exist with the reformed standards of Trent.²⁵⁶ The author recounted another miracle, this time in connection with Our Lady. The Council of Trent stressed the role of Mary as intercessor rather than miracle worker. The Irish had traditionally always had a particular veneration for the Virgin Mary and this continued into the seventeenth century. The statue of Our Lady of Trim, the centre-piece of the late medieval pilgrimage to the town, was reputedly destroyed in the 1540s.²⁵⁷ The author,

²⁵¹ Ryan, 'Popular religion in Gaelic Ireland', ii, 254, 255n188.

²⁵² Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ii, 215-8.

²⁵³ Ryan, 'Popular religion in Gaelic Ireland', ii, 234.

²⁵⁴ Raymond Gillespie, *The sacred in the secular: religious change in Catholic Ireland, 1500-1700* (Colchester, 1993), pp. 22-3.

²⁵⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 54-5.

²⁵⁶ Ryan, 'Popular religion in Gaelic Ireland', ii, 235.

²⁵⁷ Gillespie, *Sacred in the secular*, p. 20.

however, connected its destruction to a miraculous incident involving Sir Charles Coote in the 1640s and his account exhibits no diminution of traditional devotion towards Our Lady in his approach to devotion. Flagged in the margin as ‘not known how killed unlesse by a miracle’, he related a story about Sir Charles, ‘that humaine-bloudsucker’, who had been mysteriously and mortally wounded. His son, Richard Coote, in order to provide a fire for his father, had ‘cutt and cloven in sunder’ an ancient portrait or ‘image of Our Blessed Lady engraven in wood, kept with great veneration...since the supression of holy church in Henry the 8 his time.’ The author surmised that Sir Charles was ‘payed for his firing that night, sure he gave an account in hell for it.’²⁵⁸ He cited a number of other such miraculous incidences connected with domestic accoutrements. Owen Roe, having no boats, could not cross the river Barrow which was so flooded ‘that the natives of them parts never...sawe the like;’ he ordered a huge oak tree to be cut down and some cauldrons to be tied to it; and ‘upon the oke and those caldrons all the armie, amountinge to 9 or 10,000 men...did passe over the river, and non of the whole number miscaried...which I take rather a miracle then any humaine industrie or dexteritie.’²⁵⁹ Mageoghegan, as we saw, was very fond of relating such miracles involving the practical implements of every-day life whereas Keating, if he did report such a miracle, was very careful to stress that prayer to God had been responsible. In another such incident, the author explained how a troop of Preston’s army abused the Franciscan friars at Stradbally, killing their geese, destroying their fruit trees and uprooting their prize bean plants. However, the soldier who had carried off a double portion of the beans choked on the very first grain, which the author providentially attributed to ‘Gods just judgment against this man, whoe desperatly died.’²⁶⁰ Among the clergy in early modern Ireland, the regulars were seen to having access to greater power than others.²⁶¹ The author attributed a further miracle to the power of these Stradbally friars. Instructing the reader to ‘observe the miracle, and Gods indignation’, he recounted what two repentant captains of this unruly troop had ‘deposed upon oath’ to the friars; that five hundred of their party had disappeared, whether dead or not they did not know, but ‘sure, saide they, a world of

²⁵⁸ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 32.

²⁵⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 241-2.

²⁶⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 252.

²⁶¹ Gillespie, *Devoted people*, p. 68.

them died...S. Francis, said the Captains, is offended with this partie. God deffende us from his indignation, and doe desire you to be a mediator betweene us and him.'²⁶²

The patron saints of the regular orders especially St Francis and St Dominick were believed to have been very influential conduits to God. In 1633 a preacher in Limerick claimed that St Francis visited purgatory at regular intervals to rescue those wearing the habit of his order.²⁶³ Such beliefs seem to have been engrained in the author's soul too. He marvelled that Preston assaulted both a Franciscan and a Dominican abbey and, consequently, would have 'both these pillars and luminaries of Gods Church, S. Dominicke and S. Frances, prime grandees and favorittes in the courte of heaven, his sworn enemies.'²⁶⁴ He also cited both saints when describing the burial of Owen Roe: 'being most devout unto all regular Orders in his life, and specially to the holy Order of Saincte Dominicke, weared his habitt, as a sure buckler against the rigor of future judgment, but was intered in the monesterie of Saincte Francis of Cavan, to oblige both patriarches.'²⁶⁵ In 1632, the bishops in the province of Cashel asserted that people placed as much efficacy in the Franciscan habit as in the sacraments and some even regarded it as more important than receiving the last rites.²⁶⁶ The author who had such respect for Lt. Col. Barnaby Geoghegan made sure to include the observation that Barnaby in his will had 'commanded to be interred in the habitt and monasterie of the Seraphicall order.'²⁶⁷ The Franciscans had actively encouraged this practice but by the seventeenth century it had become a source of conflict and in 1671 a national synod set down that no layman could be buried henceforth in the habit of a friar.²⁶⁸ Mageoghegan, in common with the annals, had always made sure to include that the Irish kings were buried in various illustrious monasteries.

Despite their mission to bring the Irish religiosity up to date, featuring in the catechisms of the Franciscans of Louvain alongside the tenets of the reformed religion, was much

²⁶² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 254.

²⁶³ Gillespie, *Devoted people*, p. 68.

²⁶⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 259.

²⁶⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 62-3.

²⁶⁶ Gillespie, *Devoted people*, p. 68.

²⁶⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 108.

²⁶⁸ Gillespie, *Sacred in the secular*, pp 17-18.

devotion that predated the Council of Trent. This included veneration of the instruments of the Passion including the Cross, and such devotion was deeply engrained in the Gaelic Irish soul.²⁶⁹ The author showed that he had great faith in the power of the cross. A soldier fighting on the enemy side, a Moor, ‘an ould beaten soldier, and (as was thought) was either possessed by a devill or a witche’, appeared impervious to the barrage of bullets which showered on his body by the Irish. However, a young Franciscan friar for the Irish side had the idea of making crosses on their bullets; ‘and I undertake said this yongman, if we hitt this rogue, his charmes and black art will litle avayle him against the crosse’, whereupon the Moor fell ‘starke deade to the grounde.’²⁷⁰ Elsewhere, in a lengthy passage, the author showed his contempt for Preston on account of the latter’s blasphemy against the cross. In 1648, during the period when Supreme Council forces and Owen Roe’s army were at war against each other, the Dominican friary at Athy was being besieged by Preston. In order to repulse the attack, the Prior of the abbey planted a ‘greate tough crosse’ on the steeple wall but when Preston was informed of this he scoffed that ‘theire charmes’ would do them no good. The author, scandalised, railed, ‘that holy roode by whom all mankinde was delivered from the iawes of hell and hellish power...Preston doe give it noe better epitome then charmes and withchcrafte, which the rankest hereticke that ever yet blasphemed against it, could not in triple voice ascende higher in its dispargment;’ and as it transpired, this cross emerged unharmed from the assault on it by Preston’s gunner, which was attested to by the author himself who had personally examined it.²⁷¹ This monastery at Athy featured in yet another miracle, this time involving the apparition of a saint. The Council of Trent did recognise apparitions but required them to be investigated by the appropriate authorities and if necessary by the Pope himself.²⁷² Preston, sometime after his first attempt on the Dominican friary, commanded his men to mount a further offensive. The assailants, advancing with petards and other fire power, suddenly retreated, ‘everie one with a stareinge looke, gazinge up towards the top of the steeple’; when questioned by their captains, they answered in trembling voice, ‘doe not you see, said they, the fryer standinge on the battlment

²⁶⁹ Ryan, ‘Popular religion in Gaelic Ireland’, ii, 81-2.

²⁷⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 27.

²⁷¹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 255-6.

²⁷² Donal A. Foley, *Marian apparitions, the Bible and the modern world* (Leominster, 2002), p. 49.

flinging of stones soe dexter, with such fiercnesse...we rather see the strongest enemie...against us then that onely fryer'. The author supplied the reader with the answer to this mysterious friar: 'be sure and certaine there was noe earthly fryer, but the patron of that monesterie, S. Dominicke, or other by his apointment and Gods permission.'²⁷³ The author, while including the acquiescence of God in the miracle, imbued his account with the full traditional medieval flavour.

Therefore, while his descriptions clearly show that at times he conformed to the emphases of Tridentine doctrine which he had ingested in his training in continental seminaries, his penchant for the type of devotion typical of medieval Gaelic Ireland which endured down to the seventeenth century reveals the fundamental traditional influences embedded in the author's psyche emanating from his native background.

Nevertheless, if he did not fully embrace the reformed doctrines of Trent, he did imbibe the militant spirit of Catholicism which arose from that council. He delivered a number of derogatory asides at Protestantism. The Council of Trent had reaffirmed purgatory in response to Protestant reformation critics. The author commented ironically that, in the early days of the war, the English, 'mightie discouraged' at the multitude of Irish, 'perswaded themselves, that they rose from purgatorie (which until then they never believed).'²⁷⁴ Other attacks on Protestantism were more trenchant. In 1648, he heaped disdain on Ormond for the limited nature of his grant of toleration to Catholics in return for the cessation of hostilities with Inchiquin, condemning the offer out of hand as 'nihil onely repetition of words'; and, referring to the Book of Common prayer (the standard for English subjects, following the Protestant Reformation), he asserted that no Catholic would consider negotiating with 'such a petulent intruder of holy religion' who 'calls the Comunion Booke or other prayers used by hereticks divine or holy.'²⁷⁵ Counter-Reformation thinking practically committed Catholics to fight to the end against Protestantism.²⁷⁶ Accordingly, the author would not contemplate any truce with

²⁷³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 260-1.

²⁷⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 24.

²⁷⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 285-6.

²⁷⁶ Ryan, 'Religion and state in seventeenth-century Ireland', p. 127.

Ormond. Ormond had been ‘bred...in the bosome of Canterburie, a Puritant, Protestant or Atheiste’ and educated by ‘that reputed prelate’, the archbishop of Canterbury.²⁷⁷ The author condemned the ‘contrivers’ of that ‘impious cessation’ who then proceeded to accept the ‘hereticke Ormond’ as viceroy. No sooner did Ormond

treade upon Irish grounde...then by a publicke instrument in printe did protest and declare unto the world that he would live and die in the Protestant religion, and the same to his uttermost power would defende and propagat.²⁷⁸

He adopted Rinuccini’s uncompromising stance as regards religion. Throughout the book, he championed Rinuccini and utterly condemned the clergy who did not adhere to him. Having been schooled on the continent, he had imbibed this Counter-Reformation thinking against those ‘tepede’ Catholics who were not wholehearted in their obedience to the Roman church. In highly polemic language, he relayed the clergy’s Congregation Act condemning the cessation:

the authors of that cessation...with the most wicked of the aforesaide, the Baron of Insichuyne, have intred unto a more ungodly and damnable league and societie, against the expresse vote of the Most Illustrious Lord Nuncio Apostolicke, the greatest and soundest parte of both clergie, whoe condemned the saide cessation as pernicious and destructive to Catholicke religion, and with dyrfull execrations did abhor and anathematize it.²⁷⁹

Thus, the author displayed a more extreme strand of Catholicism than any of the other four authors. We have seen Hadsor exhibit a tolerant disposition towards Catholicism. Burnell cautiously promoted the Catholic religion in his play. Mageoghegan and Keating were more forthcoming, both purposely interpolating the word ‘Catholic’ upon their sources. Keating had, in addition, inserted a snide innuendo against Protestantism. Refuting Camden’s assertion that in Ireland priests lived with their concubines and children in their churches, Keating maintained that ‘the time the clergy of Ireland began that bad system was after the eighth Henry had changed the faith.’²⁸⁰ However, none of them was as extreme in their presentations as the *Aphorismical* author was. Of course, Mageoghegan and Keating were writing at a time in which peace and a modicum of toleration reigned in Ireland. Hadsor, who died in 1635, also flourished during this

²⁷⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 144-5.

²⁷⁸ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 188.

²⁷⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 187-8.

²⁸⁰ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, i, 59-60.

period of relative stability. Burnell, on the other hand, the Old English Catholic from the Pale, was writing at the end of the period of seven years of Wentworth's intolerant regime, although before the outbreak of war, but his mild inferences in respect of Catholicism bore no resemblance to the trenchant views of the Gaelic author. The latter brooked no compromise whatsoever in respect of religion.

Conor Ryan described two types of extremist involved in the confederation. First, there were those who had lost their lands in plantations and secondly, those who wanted a full restoration of Catholicism to its former status. Those in the second category also wished to see the Catholic Church restored to a position of political dominance and in addition wanted churches, lands and livings restored to the Catholic clergy.²⁸¹ The author definitely belonged to this second category. He did not display a great deal of interest in the issue of plantation and, although he did, on one occasion, as mentioned previously, allude to land lost to the native Irish, he coupled his grievance with the loss of 'church livinge'. In addition, on several occasions, he inferred his anxiety at the loss of land to the church. His absolute rejection of Ormond's offer mentioned above of the terms to Catholics for the cessation seemed to largely result from the fact that churches and church livings were not part of the agreement. The most important aims of the clergy concerned the right to property and jurisdiction, demands that were reinforced by the arrival of Rinuccini.²⁸² However, at the first general assembly, it had been decided that, although Protestant ecclesiastical livings were to become Catholic ones, church lands and tithes in lay catholic ownership before the troubles would remain with those who joined the confederate cause.²⁸³ At the beginning of the war in 1642, the author explained that the clergy had summoned an assembly at Kilkenny, 'wherof every one was exceedinge glad (except such as enjoyed church livings or land).'²⁸⁴ He dubbed Lord Taaffe a 'seeminge Catholic', who would not 'suffer...the privation of an acer of gleblande for the furtherance of religion.'²⁸⁵ He castigated Sir Robert Talbot for averring that he would

²⁸¹ Ryan, 'Religion and state in seventeenth-century Ireland', p. 126.

²⁸² Ó hAnnracháin, 'Lost in Rinuccini's shadow', pp 177-8.

²⁸³ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, p. 52.

²⁸⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 39.

²⁸⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 76.

not 'loose himself a foote of his estate for all the mythers in Ireland.'²⁸⁶ Not only was the author unequivocal about church lands wrested from the established church remaining in Catholic hands, he was not very accepting either of the terms that allowed lay confederates to retain in their possession lands that had once belonged to the church. We saw that Keating frowned on impropriation although not so stridently as the author; similarly, Hadsor, but of course with regard to the Protestant church instead, and out of concern for the lack of revenue going to the crown; and Mageoghegan was quite conscious of the practice indicating it was a topical issue in the early seventeenth century.²⁸⁷

Indeed, the author had no time for *politique* Catholicism. A total commitment to the cause of putting religion first was what was required in his estimation. Sir Robert Talbot was one of the agents sent to obtain concessions from Charles I in 1643. A 'grave' father who advised Talbot to bear in mind that 'holy religion' was the prime motive of his mission was summarily repulsed by Talbot who swore that he would not 'conteste with his prince...[and] that it was indifferent for him to have masse with solemnitie in Christ or S. Patrick's church, as privatly at his bed's side.' The author railed at 'this agent (already sworne not to sheath his sworde untill he sawe the luster of religion in Ireland, as it did shine in England in Henry the Second's time)', and he asked rhetorically, 'this thinke you was a fitt agent to treat of religion, before a Protestant kinge?'²⁸⁸ He later returned to this theme of indifference in religion when he quoted a long speech delivered before Clanricard and his 'zeudo-Assembly' at Loughrea in 1650 by William Bourke Fitz John of Castleleackan. William was probably the son of the John Bourk of Castleleackan upon whose lands a warrant was granted to create a manor with a court baron in 1617.²⁸⁹ The author greatly extolled this young man for the 'behaviour of a grave councillor, his learninge and maturitie...[and] extraordinarie tallent' and he obviously concurred with all of Bourke's sentiments, maintaining that his speech encompassed 'the prime object of this our historie, nay an evident prooffe therof'. Bourke told this assembly that it

²⁸⁶ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 66.

²⁸⁷ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, 112.

²⁸⁸ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 66.

²⁸⁹ *Cal. S. P.Ire., 1615-25*, p. 165.

transcended his capacity to understand, ‘when I observe how many large subsidies the Catholics of this kingdom, over and above their abilities, bestowed on his sacred Majesty in the last peace, to have Poyning’s acts only suspended, and admit us to private masses’; and further, ‘we never disbursed a £1000 to repair any church since the war began...yet like hypocrites we must be termed Catholics.’²⁹⁰ Rinuccini had been very unhappy with the Irish tradition of the domestication of religious practice and was scandalised that ‘on the very table from which the altar cloth has just been removed, playing-cards or glasses of beer together with food for dinner are at once laid.’²⁹¹ The author alluded frequently in very negative fashion to these ‘supposed’ and ‘zeudo’ Catholics upon whom he placed the blame for the failure of the confederate war effort.

We have seen above that the cessation with the ‘hereticke’ Inchiquin was anathema to our author. Indeed, the issue of the cessation appears to have been at the core of the impasse between his beliefs and those who adhered to it. Richard Bellings quoted the supreme council’s final rejection of Rinuccini’s last ditch propositions to get them to change their mind about going ahead with the cessation, which exemplifies the approach of Bellings and the council.

Until the general assembly of the Confederate Catholics shall otherwise determine, they left themselves liberty to descend to more moderate conditions than of insisting to have the splendour and full lustre of the Catholic religion extended throughout the kingdom as it was in the time of Henry the seventh, or any of his predecessors, and other the privileges, jurisdictions, and possessions voted to be obtained for the secular clergy in the assembly held at Kilkenny, in the year 1646, wherein the peace was rejected.²⁹²

Bellings’ pragmatic stance was the antithesis of the unyielding beliefs of the author. As a result of that cessation, Rinuccini and the clergy handed down excommunications upon those responsible and all who adhered to this ceasefire. Traditionally, including in the middle ages during the height of papal powers, excommunication had been a powerful weapon of the church, entailing among other things denial of rite of burial to the victim, and Catholics stood in fear and awe of the censure. Because of overuse of the penalty for

²⁹⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 120-4.

²⁹¹ Gillespie, *Seventeenth century Ireland*, p. 170.

²⁹² Gilbert, *History of the Irish confederation*, vii, 74.

minor offences, the council of Trent was forced to recommend that bishops and prelates use more moderation in the use of censures.²⁹³ However, the author accorded the restriction of excommunication its full medieval flavour. Castigating the supreme council, those ‘poore fellowes’, who had joined with Ormond and agreed to the alliance with ‘Puritants’, which he maintained was against their oath of association, he informed them of the consequences: ‘in penalty of former perjuries the bipes sword of the fearfull censures of church thunderinge excommunication unsheathed against you, which is a drawing bridge and a firme bulwarke to keepe you from off the sweete breste of your quondam Holy Mother [church].’²⁹⁴ Mageoghegan too had shown a reverential fear of the sentence when he reported in detail the conditions in England during the excommunication of King John (1209-13). He explained that the English deputy in Ireland had gone back to England and ‘was excommunicated by the Pope at once with the king, and all the men and women of England, in so much that during the said excommunication there was noe holy orders given, noe mass celebrated, noe christning or Extrem Unction used, or noe ceremonies performed at burials in any place in England.’²⁹⁵ Keating had made a couple of allusions to excommunication but without elaboration.²⁹⁶ Both Gaelic men appeared to be mindful of the possibility of the terrible power that could be wielded by a vengeful Roman church.

Popes over the centuries claimed the right to indirect powers allowing them to intervene politically in Catholic and Christian countries. This belief amounted to a claim that the church could control and direct the activity of the state in certain matters.²⁹⁷ The author subscribed to the indirect power of the Pope in the temporal sphere. Of course, the fact that this was a holy war, for God, king and nation, and that the oath of association encompassed the vow to achieve a restoration of religion obviously meant for him that the Pope and the church had jurisdiction over all matters pertaining to the war and to the political situation in Ireland. In 1648, the excommunications by the clergy, mentioned above, produced an appeal to Rome against the censures by the supreme council, drawn

²⁹³ *The Catholic encyclopedia*, ‘Excommunication’, www.newadvent.org.

²⁹⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 213-4.

²⁹⁵ Murphy (ed.), *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 224.

²⁹⁶ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 351-2, 365-6.

²⁹⁷ Ryan, ‘Religion and state in seventeenth-century Ireland’, p. 123.

up with the assistance of Fr Peter Walshe, and, when this was rejected by the Pope, Walshe composed his *Queries concerning the lawfulness of the present cessation*. Walshe, an Old English Franciscan priest, was an adversary of Rinuccini and a close adherent of Ormond.²⁹⁸ The author, an advocate of Rinuccini, held Walshe in total contempt. He disparaged his lineage, claiming he was ‘a son unto a poore and beggarly chantler [chandler] in the Naasse, and one Goodie N. his mother a Protestant, an English drabbe’, regarded him as ‘an apostat frier from his Order’, and delivered a viciously derogatory résumé of his defective character.²⁹⁹ Apart from condemning the cessation with Inchiquin, the author also afforded an inordinate amount of space in *Aphorismical discovery* to refuting and condemning these ‘hodgepodge queries’.³⁰⁰ In his view, the appeal itself was invalid and Walshe’s queries were ‘illusorie inductions.’³⁰¹ However, one particular aspect of Walshe’s defence irked him above all. He claimed that among the arguments that Walshe used to justify his opposition to Rinuccini was one predicated on the law of *praemunire* viz. that no foreign authority be allowed any jurisdiction within the English monarch’s domains. This law had been strengthened in England following the Reformation to counter any assertion of papal jurisdiction. However, the author obviously believed that the Pope and his apostolic representative had the power to intervene in affairs in Ireland and he castigated Walshe for asserting otherwise:

All the charge is premunirie sett fourth in the acte of Queene of Elizabeth anno ii^o, against all such as bringe in foraigne jurisdiction (which is knowen to be intended by Papall authoritie), and this same letter doe allowe and confirme the same, by that clause that your Lordship [Rinuccini] intermedle not in any the affaires of this kingdome, directly or indirectly...but how well this hereticall lawe sutes with Confederat Catholicks sworne for the propagation of holy religion lett any man judge. You may obsearve how sathanicall these ante-Catholicks doe abuse the lawe of nations (though never their prime benefactor, nor derived his power from the Pope of Rome, the vissible heade of their quondam mother the churche), banishinge as traytor, against their hereticall and Henrician lawe, the ambassador of a prince, with full power invested, with solemnitie receaved, and sworne to obsearve and obeye.³⁰²

²⁹⁸ M. A. Creighton, ‘Peter Walsh (c. 1618-1688)’, *ODNB*, www.oxforddnb.com.

²⁹⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 238, 275-6.

³⁰⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 272-9, ii, 2-10.

³⁰¹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 10.

³⁰² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 125.

The author diverged completely from the supreme council in their opposition to the Pope's delegate, and the fact that they argued their case based on a discriminatory law designed specifically to stamp out Catholicism fuelled his indignation further. So disgusted was he that he said he was purposely omitting the detail of their application to Rome. He claimed that he was not inserting the substance of the supreme council appeal 'as not to offende, chaste and Catholicke eares with these ranke notes songed by petty-snotty-noses, by scurrillous and spurious-pott-cantors, difusinge their proper venomous poison.'³⁰³ As we saw, Mageoghegan had shown particular veneration for the Pope even down to the curious entry, 'the Pope rained over all the kingdome', whereas Keating had been much more detached in his allusions to the Roman pontiff. It has been noted that Keating's sojourn in France might have imbued him with a Gallican-type attitude to the power of the Pope but the *Aphorismical* author's experience in France did not have a similar effect on him. He had no time for the Gallican Catholicism which many of the French favoured: 'as for France, wee canott denye that ever it had beene in greater glorie...then when it was a refuge to Popes, and hath ever declined soe much as when it hath beene against them.'³⁰⁴ It may be that the traditional Old English loyalty and affinity to the English monarch was an obstacle to them affording the same unequivocal and committed obedience to the Pope that the author and also Mageoghegan exhibited.

The author's continuous support of Rinuccini has been noted above. It would be perhaps appropriate here to digress in order to explore the possibility that *Aphorismical discovery* formed part of a body of material written around that time to justify and defend Rinuccini's actions in May 1648 in excommunicating those involved in the ceasefire with Inchiquin. As mentioned above, excommunication was a serious business in early modern times and those affected were naturally highly anxious to have the interdict removed from their shoulders. Consequently, bitter disputes raged between those who rejected Rinuccini's decision to excommunicate and those who upheld the validity of the censures. This controversy spread throughout the exiled community, especially in Paris and Rome, and a war of words in the form of pamphlets and other written material

³⁰³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 199.

³⁰⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 102.

appeared during the next decade on behalf on one side or the other. It is possible, therefore, that the author's work comprised a contribution to these debates.

A pamphlet in defence of the nuncio's actions written by Fr Paul King, OFM, entitled *Epistola nobilis Hiberni ad Amicum Belgam scripta ex castris Catholicis eiusdem regni 4 Maii 1649*, was published in Louvain in 1649.³⁰⁵ In his article concerning controversies among the Irish in Paris, Patrick Corish reveals that Paul King, a thorough supporter of Rinuccini, gave an 'intemperate and misleading account of what had happened in Ireland in 1648', and that his account contained exaggerations which were even admitted by the pro-Rinuccini authors of *Commentarius Rinuccinianus*.³⁰⁶ The pamphlet was a sweeping attack on Rinuccini's opponents and Corish has enumerated some of King's uncompromising views and the factors he blamed for the confederate defeat.³⁰⁷ From Corish's descriptions, King's understanding of events in Ireland seems to have corresponded exactly with the outlook of the author of *Aphorismical discovery*. It included apportioning blame to 'the machinations of half-heretical English-trained lawyers.'³⁰⁸ The two men may have met in Ireland and indeed again in Rome in the 1650s. In his book, the author had mentioned King in a positive fashion on two occasions: firstly, under the year 1648, he condemned the supreme council who, he claimed, in 'disrespecte of church and its canons', had imprisoned King, a Lector in Divinity and Guardian of the Franciscan monastery in Kilkenny, and, 'by lay authority', had replaced him as Guardian with Fr Peter Walshe; secondly, under the year 1650, he cited approvingly a letter from King, now in Rome, 'a learned man, Reader of Divinitie, Guardian of S. Isidorus in Rome, and Agent for the province of Ireland there.'³⁰⁹ Therefore, the author and Fr Paul King appeared to concur closely in their opinions regarding circumstances in Ireland during the wars.

³⁰⁵ Thomas O'Connor, *Irish Jansenists, 1600-70: religion and, politics in Flanders, France, Ireland and Rome* (Dublin, 2008), p. 300.

³⁰⁶ Patrick J. Corish, 'John Callaghan and the controversies among the Irish in Paris, 1648-54' in *ITQ*, xxi (1954), pp 35, 35n5.

³⁰⁷ Corish, 'John Callaghan and the controversies', pp 40-1.

³⁰⁸ Corish, 'John Callaghan and the controversies', p. 40.

³⁰⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 237-8, ii, 73-4.

Dr John Callaghan, an Irish priest resident in Paris, who championed the supreme council's position in the dispute, was anxious to counter the propaganda advantage the pro-nuncio side had gained with the publication of King's *Epistola*, and his work entitled *Vindiciarum Catholicorum Hiberniae...* appeared in 1650.³¹⁰ The *Aphorismical* author may well have known Callaghan who had preached in St Mary's in Kilkenny in early 1647 during the general assembly.³¹¹ In the *Vindiciarum*, Callaghan defended the legality of the confederate negotiations with Ormond and claimed that the nuncio's conduct was so outlandish that most Irish Catholics chose to ignore the censures. He particularly criticised the Franciscans, some of whom invoked papal infallibility on behalf of the nuncio, as if, he said, such a papal attribute could be applied to Rinuccini's political meddlings.³¹² Callaghan's book found itself on the index of prohibited books in Rome, the *Index librorum prohibitorum*, secured by a decree dated June 1654,³¹³ which would have gained it notoriety among the Irish there. This decree may have been procured by supporters of Rinuccini. Alternatively it may perhaps have been engineered by a different group of Callaghan opponents, those who opposed his theological beliefs. Callaghan subscribed to Jansenism which emanated from a particular interpretation of the writings of St Augustine propagated originally by Jansenius, bishop of Ypres. In the 1650s, disputes were raging in Paris between the Jansenists and the followers of more orthodox Catholicism led principally by the Jesuits, and, in 1650, a group of Irish priests and Irish students in Paris had got themselves embroiled in the crossfire of this theological debate. This controversy spread to Rome with the papacy eventually rejecting 'Five Propositions' of Jansenism via the bull *Cum occasione* in 1653.³¹⁴

These controversies, the one concerning Rinuccini and the censures and the other relating to the Jansenist debate, were naturally lively topics of discussion within the Irish exile community, especially in Paris and Rome, and the two contentious debates tended to get dovetailed together.³¹⁵ While the author did not specifically mention Jansenism, it is

³¹⁰ O'Connor, *Irish Jansenists*, pp 300-1.

³¹¹ O'Connor, *Irish Jansenists*, p. 266.

³¹² O'Connor, *Irish Jansenists*, p. 301.

³¹³ Corish, 'John Callaghan and the controversies', p. 36.

³¹⁴ O'Connor, *Irish Jansenists*, pp 218-29.

³¹⁵ Corish, 'John Callaghan and the controversies', p. 39.

clear that he was aware of the controversy which was at its height while he was probably in Rome in the 1650s. He obliquely referred to this ‘heresy’ when attacking a group of Augustinian friars who adhered to Clanricard, and by a process of association, implicated the Augustinian order in the unorthodox Jansenist movement which, as said, based its beliefs on a particular interpretation of some of the writings of St Augustine. Among those who had supported Clanricard on two contentious points were some Augustinian friars in Galway; firstly, on whether the temporal authorities had any legal jurisdiction over a cleric in criminal cases; and, secondly, whether or not the town of Galway should be surrendered to Parliament forces. According to the author, on the question of a temporal judge proceeding against a priest, all the clergy, both secular and regular disagreed with Clanricard,

except the Augustines, whoe foolishly, erroneously, and heretically held with Clanricarde the affirmative...but those recente-antedivines, by this their Sathanicall assertion...will add to his iniquitie.³¹⁶

Regarding their opinion on the surrender of Galway, he commented,

those Augustine fryers, they are...more prone to shake hands with apostacie, from both religion and habitt, and become a prostitut of all offerred heresie, in imitation of their brother Luther, then continue their once vocation to that holy Order, and followe the light of that splendor of Gods Church, St. Augustine, their now repudied father and fundator.

Therefore, whereas the author may not have been fully informed about the theological points of difference between the Jansenist beliefs and the more orthodox interpretation of doctrinal points, his own preoccupation with the Rinuccini-supreme council dispute had probably alerted him to the other contemporary theological row. As mentioned previously, *Aphorismical discovery* was very likely written in Rome in the 1650s when these disputes were at their highest.

Finally, another substantial compilation which expressed a similar point of view to that of *Aphorismical discovery* is the work known as *Commentarius Rinuccinianus*.³¹⁷ It was written in Florence between 1661 and 1666 by two Capuchin priests, Frs Richard

³¹⁶ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 55.

³¹⁷ Stanislaus Kavanagh (ed.), *Commentarius Rinuccinianus* (6 vols, Dublin, 1949).

O’Ferrall and Robert O’Connell, at the request originally of Rinuccini to O’Ferrall to produce an account of his nunciature in Ireland, and the authors had access to the nuncio’s papers. One of its central points was its criticism of the Old English for being satisfied with an early peace with merely the private practice of their religion, whereas it favoured the Old Irish for being determined to continue the war until complete freedom of worship was obtained.³¹⁸ In Ireland, in 1648, Rinuccini had sent O’Ferrall to his namesake General Richard O’Ferrall to induce the general to join his forces with those of Owen Roe O’Neill.³¹⁹ Rinuccini was close to O’Ferrell, who had been at the Capuchin house in Galway from 1644 to 1648, and, later in 1648, he sent him to Rome to counter the accusations being laid against the nuncio by the supreme council delegate, Fr John Rowe.³²⁰

O’Ferrall remained in Rome throughout the 1650s defending the Rinuccini censures, urging the Pope not to grant a general absolution *ad cautelam* to those affected but rather to have them petition for absolution individually. In 1658, he penned a memorandum to *De propagande fide*, a sweeping attack on his opponents which, although intended as a confidential document, had been circulated and caused a storm of controversy.³²¹ The document was trenchant in its criticisms of the Old English; it accused them of making common cause with the New English against the Old Irish over the previous century; of facilitating laws being passed in parliament against Catholicism; of shunning the Old Irish at first when rebellion broke out and of instead offering their services to the Puritans; and then of continually plotting to regain the friendship of the heretics and working for a peace that was incompatible with the restoration of religion.³²² All of these points mirrored those made by the author of the *Aphorismical discovery* although perhaps expressed less directly than O’Ferrall’s memorandum (which had not been intended for a public airing). It is quite likely that the two authors met in Rome as both were there during the 1650s. We know from the *Commentarius* that soon after Bishop Anthony

³¹⁸ Kavanagh, *Commentarius Rinuccinianus*, i, 5-10.

³¹⁹ Kavanagh, *Commentarius Rinuccinianus*, i, 15.

³²⁰ Kavanagh, *Commentarius Rinuccinianus*, i, 20-1.

³²¹ Patrick J. Corish, ‘Two contemporary historians of the confederation of Kilkenny: John Lynch and Richard O’Ferrall’ in *IHS*, viii (1952-3), pp 217-19.

³²² Corish, ‘Two contemporary historians’, pp 223-4.

Geoghegan arrived in Rome in December 1653 he presented a *relatio* on the state of Ireland to the Pope, Innocent X.³²³ This may well have comprised the bones of what later expanded to become the *Aphorismical discovery* and indeed it is quite possible Bishop Geoghegan and Fr O’Ferrall could have collaborated while both were in Rome. It is also not unlikely that the authors of *Commentarius Rinuccinianus*, Frs O’Ferrall and O’Connell had a copy of the *Aphorismical discovery* manuscript to hand when compiling their own work. The content of both books are indeed very similar. Further, in the *Commentarius* it is stated that the archdeacon of Tuam, Fr John Lynch, (author of *Cambrensis eversus* and *Alithinologia*) was among a group who advised that Galway should make the best terms with Parliament, rather than continue the fight to the last; Corish infers that this reference does not appear elsewhere.³²⁴ The *Aphorismical* author, however, quoting a Fr Teige Egan, included ‘Fa. John Linche, Archdeacon of Tuaimé’ among those ‘Clanricards divines’ who, along with the Augustinian friars mentioned above, voted for the surrender of Galway in 1652.³²⁵

To conclude this comparison of material compiled on the controversy surrounding Rinuccini and the censures in Ireland in 1648, it is clear that there was a large number of writers anxious to justify the decision. However, it was not simply the nuncio’s reputation that preoccupied the authors. Rinuccini had died in 1653; the *Aphorismical discovery* was probably written sometime after this date and the *Commentarius* not earlier than 1661. These writers obviously sought to uphold the decision to excommunicate because of their sincere beliefs in the rectitude of the measure and not simply to preserve the good name of the nuncio. Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin has shown that the Irish clergy were never simply passive followers of Rinuccini. The hierarchy in particular had all been schooled in the Counter-Reformation style religion taught in the seminaries of Europe and had, prior to the nuncio’s arrival, already organised themselves into a leadership role along with lay members of the confederate association.³²⁶ Rinuccini, while providing a strong leadership, broadly led the Irish church in the direction that it wanted to go itself;

³²³ Ó Maoileachlann, ‘Anthony MacGeoghegan’, p. 300; *Commentarius Rinuccinianus*, v, 110-13.

³²⁴ Corish, ‘Two contemporary historians’, p. 226.

³²⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, iii, 73.

³²⁶ Ó hAnnracháin, ‘Lost in Rinuccini’s shadow’, pp 176-7.

according to *Commentarius Rinuccinianus*, in the clash over the first Ormond peace treaty in 1646 between the clergy and the supreme council, the clergy asserted that, in spiritual matters (within which they included the interpretation of the confederate oath of association) they enjoyed not only a separate but an absolute authority.³²⁷ This belief was also held, as we shall see below, by the *Aphorismical* author. Other contemporary reports also indicate the primacy of the Irish clergy especially the bishops.³²⁸ Moreover, the lack of clerical consensus over the censures in 1648 demonstrates that the bishops were not simply pawns of the nuncio. Accordingly, the clerical authors who passionately defended the censures in the 1650s were vindicating their own positions and justifying decisions in which they themselves had participated as well as supporting the nuncio. In conclusion, therefore, it seems that the *Aphorismical discovery* forms part of a particular genre current during and after the wars of the 1640s, and it was not simply written to show loyalty or support to the apostolic nuncio or to stoutly confute opposing views, but was also a genuine exposition of the deeply felt religious convictions of a Counter-Reformation inspired cleric.

To return to the text itself, the author stated explicitly his belief that the spiritual was superior to the temporal. Jesuit thought argued that the priest's power extended indirectly into temporal affairs; the essence of the church is supernatural, that of the state is a natural one; thus, from this difference, results a superiority of the spiritual over the temporal power.³²⁹ Elaborating on the clergy vindication of their stance against the cessation, the author commented that when the laity refrains from infringing upon the power of the clergy, 'then is the power from God well ordered, saide the Canons, when the temporall sworde is subordinat to the spirituall'.³³⁰ He went to emphasise this in more detail:

When the superior power, the Spirituall, commands any thinge contrarie to that which the inferior, or Temporall power comannes, then are the comannes of the inferior power to be neglected, and the comannes of the superior power to be executed...if God comanded one thinge, and man another, in obeying Gods comannes and slighting mans, he may not be said disobedient to man, whose

³²⁷ Ó hAnnracháin, 'Lost in Rinuccini's shadow', pp 184-5.

³²⁸ Ó hAnnracháin, 'Lost in Rinuccini's shadow', p. 85.

³²⁹ Ryan, 'Religion and state in seventeenth-century Ireland', p. 129.

³³⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 218-9.

comannde hath now noe power, which is the Confederats case, in respecte of My Lord Nuncio and clergie power, which is Spirtuall, and the Conncells power, which is Temporall, especially when none of the prelates, who sett in the same tribunal with those seculars, joine in comannde with them.³³¹

He expressed these sentiments on so many occasions that it is clear that in his view the decisions of the bishops should prevail and countermand if necessary any orders made by the lay members of the supreme council. He quoted a ‘Catholicke Englishman’ who wondered why, when the medieval papal bull *Unam sanctam* required that the temporal sword receive its motion from the spiritual, the laity of Ireland perverted this order and forced prelates to obey lay mandates and refused to obey Episcopal decrees.³³² He inferred strongly that it was the clergy who ought to have been in command, be instrumental in making political decisions in confederate government and direct the running of the war. At the outset, when describing the practicalities of setting up the paraphernalia of confederate government, he remarked, ‘they ordained a model of government (accordinge the clergie prescription).’³³³ The clergy and Rinuccini in September 1646, did indeed assume command of affairs when, rejecting a peace made with Ormond, they imprisoned its main proponents, and nominated a new supreme council with Rinuccini as president.³³⁴ The author reported that this ‘newe Councell of both Spirituall and Temporall members’ renewed their oaths and swore ‘to be hearafter most observant of the clergie decrees, and would doe nothings for the future, other then by their consent.’³³⁵ He certainly seemed to see the only route to a successful outcome for the war as one with the clergy at the helm. Keating once alluded to the primacy of clergy over laity when he remarked that before Christianity those who elected kings were the ‘men of Ireland’, but since St Patrick came, ‘with the power of the church’, the bishops, nobles and chroniclers elected kings and lords; however, he limited the duration of this situation to, ‘until the Norman invasion.’³³⁶ Mageoghegan had shown great respect for the prelates of the church, often alluding to the ‘spiritual and the temporal’ but usually just as a synonym for ‘churchmen and laity’ without any underlying significance.

³³¹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 220.

³³² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 177.

³³³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 78.

³³⁴ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, p. 116.

³³⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 128.

³³⁶ Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, iii, 11-12.

It is notable, however, that Mageoghegan chose these terms; this particular terminology neither appears in the annals nor in *FFÉ*. The author, however, used these terms with their full Roman church connotations.

The author gave a summing-up analysis of the terms achieved by the Irish commissioners who negotiated peace with Parliament in 1652. His usual high-pitched invective was replaced with an air of resigned and dispirited acceptance of the fated outcome.

How malaparte soever these articles be, the contrivers had in parte their will, which was the compliance of their faction, to betraye religion, kinge, and ancient Irish; any thinge will please them, soe those be left off, excepted against, and not treated off...but those are pleased (they say) and satisfied in pointe of religion, which is not to permit any churchman in any the three kingdoms; what doe the very Puritants, or the worste hereticks more? The grounds of this war, as well the first yeare as the rest, was warrantable by all lawe, for Religion, Kinge, and Nation, against tyrannie, intendinge the extirpation of the one, disinthroninge the other, and the anihilatinge the thirde; but our agents are satisfied to heare a bloudie verditt published against their sworne freinds, and such as did tender their proper lives and best fortunes to vendicat soe just and godly intrests.³³⁷

According to the author, had this holy war been conducted with the cause of religion as its core objective, the war might have been won but secular interests had contrived otherwise. On several occasions, he had intimated his belief that the war could have been won.³³⁸ He constantly averred that the interests of ‘religion and ancient Irish’ and ‘clergy and ancient Irish’ were exactly coinciding.³³⁹ Therefore, though representing the clergy viewpoint, he purported also to speak on behalf of the Old Irish. Throughout, he certainly inferred that the Old Irish adhered to the clergy whereas the adversaries to the church’s stance were mostly Old English. After the issue of religion, there were two other priorities to which he alluded in the above passage; the preservation of royalty, to which he had aspired throughout the book, having more confidence in obtaining religious concessions from the king than from ‘ungodly and antedivines of Parliament ministells;’³⁴⁰ and the question of ‘nation’, a concept that he referred to continuously and one in which the Catholic religion was necessarily an integral part.

³³⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 99.

³³⁸ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 73-4.

³³⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 43, 186, 189, 203.

³⁴⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 26.

National Identity

We have seen the clearly perceptible signs of a sense of national identity that had developed between the Old Irish and the Old English in the early seventeenth century. Keating and Mageoghegan displayed much goodwill towards members of the other's community, and both, consciously or subconsciously, strove to promote a mutual inclusiveness, particularly in their deliberate celebrations of the legend of Brian Boromha. Burnell also exhibited signs of a sense of national identity through his Gaelic Irish character, Marfisa. Hadsor appeared to possess a weaker sense of national identity than the others; nevertheless, he was still very definite about combining the two communities albeit by having the Gaelic Irish population become 'civil' and conform to the norms of Old English society.

By 1640, this sense of national identity showed signs of having deepened and had become an articulated aspiration. The author exhibited a strong sense of shared identity with all Irish Catholics and stated so explicitly on several occasions. The clergy, of course, realised the importance of unity among all Irish Catholics which they actively promoted. In May 1642, to defuse potential ethnic tensions, they specified in their recommendations that no distinctions should be made between the Old English and 'ancient Irish'.³⁴¹ The author pointed out that when the clergy gathered initially in order to confirm the justice of the war and to prescribe rules for its execution, 'the union between the Catholics was the prime object of this congregation.'³⁴² In the sixteenth century, the Reformation had contributed to an awakening sense of nationality centring upon the wider community; for instance, in Spain stress upon the unity of faith was meant to counter the threat of heresy.³⁴³ In the Irish context, in the seventeenth century, as noted previously, Cunningham has shown that the Franciscans in Louvain, complementary to their drive to promote the Counter Reformation in Ireland, were

³⁴¹ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, p. 40.

³⁴² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 35.

³⁴³ H. G. Koenigsberger et al, *Europe in the sixteenth century*, (New York, 1989), p. 268.

creating in men's minds the idea of a Catholic nation.³⁴⁴ The author illustrated this influence succinctly. He stated that, 'though it be against the brevity intended', he could not omit to translate the Congregation Act, penned by six delegate members of the clergy at the end of August, 1651 (of whom bishop Anthony was one), in order that all could appreciate 'how diligent the true pastors and prelates were in the union and association of Catholics'. He proclaimed, 'admired and publicke it was to the viewe of the Christian world, with what alacritie, with what godly union, and with what greate prosperitie our Irish nation, by Divine instincte, have comenced this holy war.'³⁴⁵ He was perfectly here in tune with ethos and sentiments of the Franciscans in Louvain with their Counter-Reformation outlook.

However, even apart from the influences of the church, he did possess a sense of 'nation'. The *Aphorismical discovery* abounds with the rhetoric of nationhood and liberty perhaps derived from classic Roman republican thought which had enjoyed a revival since Renaissance times in Europe. His terminology for the confederate motto *pro Deo, rege et patria* was often expressed as, for 'religion, kings prerogatives and nation libertie.'³⁴⁶ However, this was interchangeable with, for 'religion, kinge and kingdome.'³⁴⁷ It seems 'nation' was a synonym for 'kingdom' and when he spoke of nation he was really referring to the people of the kingdom. This is indicated by some of his comments made when levelling accusations against his *bêtes noires*: Ormond was 'musinge in Dublin, how to avenge himself of both monarche and Irish nation'; and anyone, 'acquainte with the kingdome of Ireland and its people', would confirm that the supreme council had caused the unhealthy state of the body politic.³⁴⁸ His thinking here certainly encompassed the people of the nation-kingdom without distinguishing any particular group. On an intellectual level, at least, he could think nationally and conceive the country as a single entity. In 1643, he reported that agents being sent to England were 'to conclude with his Majestie some conditions behoovfull for the nation, against the tirany of the ministers of

³⁴⁴ Bernadette Cunningham, 'The culture and ideology of Irish Franciscan historians at Louvain' in Ciaran Brady (ed.), *Ideology and the historians* (Dublin, 1991), pp 22-3.

³⁴⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 183-7.

³⁴⁶ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 283.

³⁴⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 15.

³⁴⁸ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 142, 223.

State in Ireland.³⁴⁹ And later, the earl of Glamorgan offered ‘all conditions to the heart’s desire of all nationall and indifferent men.’³⁵⁰ In addition, he revealed himself to have a sense of the public good; he reported that, on the one hand, the clergy, Nuncio, and Owen Roe were all working for the ‘comon good’ whereas, on the other, the members of the faction diffused poison ‘farr unto the whole polliticke of this comonwealthe.’³⁵¹ He professed not to understand how men who had vested interests in the kingdom could work against it, as he saw it. In 1643, Lords Clanricard, Thomond, Costello and Taaffe arrived at the assembly, ‘not to joine with the Irish (though all Irish themselves) but...to adhere unto theire and Ormond’s Presbyterian partie’; and he further asked, ‘seeinge those peeres theire compatriotts, of greatest intrest in the kingdome to infuse unto the peoples eares to forsake this and followe that way, whoe did not judge theire advice to be sounde? theire intentions reall?’³⁵² Similarly, with regard to Ormond, ‘beinge soe farr interested in the kingdome himself, the greatest landed man...why then, saye I, should any man presume to give other verditt of him then loyall?’³⁵³ Nevertheless, his sarcastic rhetoric suggests that he cherished an expectation of a shared national interest by these peers with their fellow countrymen.

Indeed, theoretically and ideologically, he very likely did aspire to a shared national identity with the Old English. As mentioned in the previous section, he recited a long speech of William fitz John Bourke of Castlelacken, who was not a cleric, and with whose sentiments he professed to agree fully. Addressing the confederates at Loughrea, Bourke bemoaned the lack of trust between the Old Irish and Old English:

Distrust swayeth amonge us, the ould Irish families doe diffide in the English, the English families hopeth noe better in the Irish...and if God had been pleased to establishe the Irish Monarchy, could they expulse the English familie, in whom they are lincked, and with whom they have joined and shed theire bloude? And therefore I would have one of eache familie, in the name of the whole, to take the oathe of union and incorporation.³⁵⁴

³⁴⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 65.

³⁵⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 99.

³⁵¹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 35, 106, 130, 170, 171, 183, 185.

³⁵² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 77.

³⁵³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 77.

³⁵⁴ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, ii, 120-3.

In his summing up of Bourke's address, he proclaimed that no-one could 'alledge the least sillable of his speeche not to be true'. However, he did not elaborate further or even comment specifically on Bourke's references to relations between the Old Irish and Old English except to say that the speech agreed with his own history, which was 'fraught with displayinge faction and disunion'. Instead, his praise for the speech singled out Bourke's criticism of the 'high cedars' including Clanricard, commissioners, commanders, deputy and 'recantinge' prelates, in other words those of the 'faction'. This lack of comment suggests a certain reserve on his part to engage intimately with the subject of union between Old Irish and Old English. The new sense of Irishness and patriotic ideology between the two Catholic groups of Irishmen, as discussed by Brendan Bradshaw and cited in a previous chapter, arose from religious discrimination by the state against them together with encroachment on their estates by planters. Accordingly, shared national sentiment stemmed partly from a certain degree of xenophobia. The author did display antipathy towards newcomers; he denigrated the council after the conclusion of the cessation in 1648 because it resulted in 'mercenarie hereticks, traytors, and strangers introduced insteede of natives, Catholics, and loyal Confederats.'³⁵⁵ (However, that is not to say that he was particularly prejudiced against any New English who had been settled in Ireland for a considerable length of time. We have seen his respect for Oliver Stephens whose family arrived in Tudor times and he also praised Anthony Brabazon of Ballinasloe, a 'recent Catholicke, newly reconciled who behaved himself verie well in the begininge of those comotions').³⁵⁶ Nevertheless, taking into account this reluctance to elaborate on William Bourke's suggestion urging unity between the Old Irish and Old English, along with the modicum of resentment and prejudice the author displayed towards the Old English discussed in a previous section, some division between the two groups was evident. It is possible that the impetus for a shared national identity may have been inspired more by practical and intellectual aspirations emanating from the predicament in which the two groups found themselves rather than by an instinctive and naturally-motivated neighbourliness.

³⁵⁵ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 193.

³⁵⁶ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 20.

After all, the tradition in Gaelic Ireland had up until relatively recent times been tribal with the inhabitants of each lordship affording their loyalty to their local chieftain. Cultural differences between provinces still remained and instances of this are seen frequently in *Aphorismical discovery*. Although harbouring no prejudice himself against Ulstermen, for reasons outlined in the introductory section, the author was perfectly cognisant of anti-Ulster feeling among confederates. He related an extremely treacherous episode (perhaps highly exaggerated) where a Leinster section of horse, marching along with the Ulster army against the enemy, disguised themselves whenever they got an opportunity as one of the enemy party and ‘killed without mercie or remorse as many Ulstermen as they could in actual service.’³⁵⁷ Bellings exhibited the same negative feelings towards Owen Roe and the Ulster army; he accused Owen Roe and his army of having ‘broken their faith’ in murdering a certain captain Piggot, ‘after quarter was given him’, while Preston and his army in their conduct ‘acted nothing with violence.’³⁵⁸ The author was often very critical of the Leinster army and its commanders while having the height of respect for its skill and not doubting its bravery;³⁵⁹ however, he was of course extremely contemptuous of Preston, counting him as one of the faction. But then, he himself was not really of Leinster, he was of Meath, traditionally a separate province which took in Westmeath and the northern area of King’s county. In another instance, he accused the council of orchestrating the women of Kilkenny to come rushing to the door of the assembly house, where they gave ‘many forcible out cryes desiringe helpe and mercie, settinge forth that the Ulster armie did undoe us for ever.’³⁶⁰ He was conscious also that, conversely, distrust and prejudice worked the other way too. Captain Arthur Fox, who did not receive his due preferment in Leinster, went to serve for a while in Co. Monaghan; his garrison being besieged by the enemy, he was forced to yield upon honourable quarter, ‘for which some of the northeren comaunders were offended, alleadinge he did not comply with the dutie of a gallant souldier therein.’³⁶¹ He did not particularly rate the Munster army but showed no particular regional bias against

³⁵⁷ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 165-6.

³⁵⁸ Gilbert, *History of the Irish confederation*, vi, 23.

³⁵⁹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 109.

³⁶⁰ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 171.

³⁶¹ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 63-4.

Munster, indeed displaying little knowledge of the province at all.³⁶² However, with regard to Connacht, he exhibited a certain amount of disparagement and bias against ‘those fine, soft-waxed Conaght babies’, referring frequently to the ‘Conatian-refractory clergie’ whom he accused of always adhering to Clanricard.³⁶³ He seemed most comfortable when discussing his own home region of south Westmeath and north King’s county, the geography of which he was perfectly familiar; Geoghegans, Foxes and Molloyes were treated fondly and mostly favourably. Therefore, lack of empathy between provinces, traditional parochialism and residual tribalism emanating from a Gaelic tradition may have militated against a closer integration with the Old English. Micheál Ó Siochrú maintains that an ethnic basis for political divisions between Old English and native Irish in the confederacy was of minor significance, with ethnic boundaries between them having become increasingly blurred through intermarriage, and with the élite sharing a common interest in land and political power.³⁶⁴ However, ethnicity, putative or otherwise, does seem to have been a factor on the crucial issue of the confederacy truce with Inchiquin. With just two exceptions, Old English and Old Irish bishops took opposite sides in that dispute.³⁶⁵ There were many factors, domestic and external, which contributed to confederate disunion in this very complex war, and a simple dichotomy of Old Irish and Old English ethnicity being the cause is recognized now by historians as not being valid, but in the fraught conditions of the confederate period, any tensions, ethnic, regional, or otherwise, would have constituted barriers to confederate harmonious relations.

It is pertinent to ask then why there were such clear signs of a developing sense of national identity between the two groups, as stated at the outset. There is no doubt that there seems to have been a concerted wish of both groups to join together. However, this may have emanated in part from the dictates of expediency rather than from a natural growing together of the two communities. Wentworth’s perspective of making no distinctions between Old English and Old Irish, instead regarding both simply as Irish

³⁶² Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 65.

³⁶³ Gilbert, *Contemporary history*, i, 233, iii, 16.

³⁶⁴ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 102-3.

³⁶⁵ Pádraig Lenihan, *Confederate Catholics at war, 1641-49* (Cork, 2001), p. 108.

Catholics, together with a genuine common apprehension now of persecution from a Puritan-controlled English parliament, probably contributed to propelling the two groups closer together. While there had been centuries of intermarriage between élite families, such alliances were arranged primarily for particular strategic and political reasons, and did not necessarily result in an assimilated community. Had the Old Irish and Old English progressed further along the road to assimilation, they might have had a deeper appreciation of each other's priorities whereas, in a confederation brought together in part through reasons of expediency, cracks were bound to show. In addition, the aspiration of unity imposed by the continentally-educated clergy, while conferring a desire by both groups to seek a shared identity, did not constitute an organic movement providing its own impetus within either group. It is not that there were not feelings of goodwill between them but divisions on cultural levels still remained strong as discussed in the relevant sections above. This is perhaps why it was so difficult to sustain unity between the Old Irish and the Old English in the confederate movement, and the wars exacerbated the fissures in the relationship and contributed to a weakening of the shared sense of national identity which had been developing over the previous fifty years.

Conclusion

This polemic account, although anonymous, was most probably the work of a writer from the Gaelic Irish tradition, a clergyman and one who had spent many years in Europe. His account testifies that, while memories of the concept of early Irish kingship remained alive in the consciousness of the native Irish, no doubt revived by the prevalence of early Gaelic literary material circulating in the seventeenth century, Old Irish royalism and loyalty, in common with that of the Old English, were focused on the Stuarts, the contemporary kings of Ireland. The Gaelic Irish now appeared to visualise the kingdom of Ireland on a national level rather than in terms of individual provincial units. In the fraught period of 1640s and 1650s, the kingdom of Ireland, conceived now in terms of Irish Catholic nation, led by the English king as king of Ireland, acquired an added significance, and the survival of both kingdom and its Stuart incumbent was deemed crucial equally by both Old English and Old Irish. A degree of pragmatism in their loyalty, however, may have existed in the hearts of some of the native Irish but

circumstances presented them with little choice as, whatever limited concessions to Catholics may have been on offer from the king, they could hope for none from a puritanically-orientated parliament. By the mid-seventeenth century, the Old Irish as well as the Old English were convinced royalists, were in no way radical, and the only system of government they would entertain was monarchical government. The Old Irish, not having traditionally supplied a large percentage of the members of parliament, may not have been particularly cognisant of the business of parliament. Nevertheless, they appear to have been familiar enough to value an assembly that was representative of the majority view, and the constant denigration of Old English lawyers by the author, who were dominant in the council, suggests that perhaps the Old Irish were conscious of Old English dominance and felt excluded from decision making. His cultural inclinations were more in tune with those of Mageoghegan and Keating than with Burnell and Hadsor, an indication that the native Irish and the Old English of the Pale had retained their own distinct cultures. Deference and respect for the nobility in general though is evident from the accounts of all five men, a strict adherence to the hierarchical ranking of society was common to both groups, and it is clear both Old English and Old Irish abhorred a person stepping above one's station in life. A similar attitude to the social order, therefore, would have presented few obstacles to relations between them. At this mid-point of the seventeenth century, the Old Irish and Old English appeared to regard each other with respect. It seems that any prejudice existing between the groups was largely due to local rivalries and jealousies. However, the author's trenchant allusion to the reduced landholding of the native Irish, much of which had changed into Old English hands, does show that resentment rankled among some of the Old Irish regarding this transference of land. Such realizations of material loss of possessions probably did create tensions. Furthermore, slights from the Old English towards them were indignantly received. The Old Irish may have been treated as less than full subjects in previous centuries but the present generation was not prepared to accept that the Old English were superior to them in any way.

It is impossible to overstate the importance of religion in the difficult period of the 1640s from the point of view of the group represented by this native Irish man. By way of

comparison, similar to extreme Puritans who genuinely believed that Catholicism was errant and led by the devil, this section of Catholic Irish society, many of whom seemed to be native Irish, were totally convinced of the righteousness of their uncompromising stance towards any settlement with either king or parliament. They adhered completely to the militant Tridentine and ultramontane line, rejecting the *politique* approach of their more moderate fellow-Catholics. Devotionally speaking, the style of religion promulgated at Trent was now embedded in the consciousness of the Irish, especially those who had returned from the continent, while the older forms of popular belief reminiscent of superstition still lingered.

The rhetoric of nation abounded in Europe in the seventeenth century and Ireland was apparently no different. The Old Irish and Old English could now think nationally; each mentally embracing the other's group in a more comprehensive fashion than hitherto, and the notion of a Catholic nation was becoming increasingly accepted and established. This new concept was promoted by Tridentine-orientated literature arriving from the continent as well as by the teachings of returned Irish religious *émigrés*. However, such unifying aspirations and even realisation of their joint disadvantaged positions were not sufficiently established to dispel old cultural prejudices and rivalries, nor was their recently-developed sense of shared national identity strong enough to keep them united throughout the twelve years of complex and bloody wars.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined and juxtaposed the political ideas of the Old Irish and Old English groups in the early seventeenth century. These two sections of Irish society had shared the same homeland for almost half a century but, coming from different political traditions, their society had remained fragmented, and hostility and distrust had often been the hallmark of relations between them. Although studies have been carried out on these two groups separately, their political ideas in tandem had not been addressed and this thesis has attempted to investigate their joint relationship and to establish the extent of its evolution at this stage by interrogating and comparing their political, social and cultural attitudes.

This study has enveloped the texts of five authors, two from the Gaelic Irish tradition and three of Old English background, who set down their thoughts and priorities in the first half of the seventeenth century. The works of these five men have great significance for the study of the history of these two groups of Irish society as, when viewed collectively, their political ideas, their social attitudes and their cultural and religious dispositions can be seen as a microcosm of the philosophical assumptions of the Gaelic Irish and Old English communities at this stage. The state of relations between the two Catholic groups in Ireland would have impacted on the political situation in the early seventeenth century. This study of their attitudes will add to our understanding of the joint imperatives of this majority group of Irish society in this half century. The period began with the quelling of the Gaelic-Irish-inspired Nine Years War and with the extension and strengthening of crown authority across the country, and ended with the amalgamation of these two groups of Irish Catholics in confederacy, fighting for the survival of their livelihoods and religion; an alliance that unfortunately ruptured and fell apart. These five authors were all active in their respective spheres; they were not writing in a vacuum but were reflecting ideas and objectives that were circulating among and between their communities.

The study has found a remarkable consonance of ideas between the Old Irish and Old English. There was a common royalism encompassing loyalty to the Stuart kings as kings of Ireland; equivalent expectations on how Ireland should be governed; and closely corresponding attitudes regarding a hierarchical ordering of society. The effusive welcome given to James I by the Gaelic literati at the start of his reign has been noted by historians and his putative Gaelic ancestry obviously contributed to Gaelic loyalty to the crown. Accordingly, traces of a Gaelic concept of kingship were evident in the royalism of the two native Irish writers. However, a faint note of pragmatism in his royalism was detected in the later-written account of the two, which raises the question if those ostensibly warm tributes to the new king at the beginning of the century had been entirely as genuine as they purported to be, penned as they were by the learned classes whose profession it was to compose encomia to their patrons. Loyalty to the monarch in England had been equivocal of many of the native Irish in the sixteenth century and a totally-committed adherence to the new king, albeit one descended from Gaelic forbears, may not have been as deeply embedded as has been traditionally portrayed. If their loyalty were not built on a firmly solid foundation, it would have been dented somewhat over half a century of frustration and disappointment. This may have been a peripheral contributory factor in the tortuous negotiations that dragged on between the confederates and the king and perhaps hindered a settlement. Nevertheless, like the Old English, the royalism of the Gaelic Irish in general was clear and hope continued to endure that Stuart kingship would deliver a solution to their disadvantaged positions in society. It is clear that there was no significant division in either of their approaches to the social order or in their opinions about government in Ireland. There was deference and respect on both sides for the nobility and élite of both communities and general agreement that they were the ones most suitable to be in government, and the traditional hegemony of the Old English in this respect does not appear to have been an obstacle to the relationship between the groups. Separate cultural inclinations were noted between those of the Pale and those who lived in or near Gaelic Ireland, but such diversity was not a barrier to developing harmonious relationships. Even so, a certain amount of cultural prejudice sometimes militated against a warmer and closer rapport between them. However, this

arose as much, if not more, from provincial and parochial bias as from ethnic difference. Sharing the same religion was obviously going to be a meeting point although it was clear that the new changes introduced at the Council of Trent in the previous century resonated with each group at a different rate. Nevertheless, a sense of shared national identity evolved between the Old Irish and the Old English during the first half of the seventeenth century.

In particular, their shared Catholicism proved to be a strong joint identifier and contributed to the development of a sense of national solidarity between them. This seems to have been substantially propelled by emerging ideas of Catholic nation developing among Irish exiles on the continent. A body of literature encompassing Irish hagiography, catechetical material, martyrology, history and traditional tales and legends, produced on the continent by Irish *émigré* clerics and others, presenting Ireland to a European Counter-Reformation audience as an honourable and ancient Catholic nation, impacted on Irish thought. These works were finding their way back to Ireland, and such ideas were disseminated by priests, educated in continental seminaries and in the Irish colleges that sprang up in Europe since the early century, who returned to minister in Ireland. Since 1610, the Catholic church had been successfully reorganising and rebuilding its structure throughout Ireland and the objective of these clerics was to bring the message of Trent back to the Irish faithful. Equally, the imperative of these Counter-Reformation thinkers and scholars was to encourage and nurture the union of Irish Catholics of different traditional backgrounds, viz. the native Irish and the Old English, in order to counter the spread of Protestantism and to ensure the endurance of Catholicism in Ireland. Although many texts circulated in manuscript through multiple scribal copies, the circulation of texts was also fortuitously aided by the increasing spread of a print culture in the early modern period. Much material, printed abroad, was carried home by returning soldiers, students and others to be distributed among Irish Catholics. The establishment of an Irish-language printing press at Antwerp, serving the Irish colleges on the continent especially Louvain, ensured dissemination of ideas to native Irish speakers. Ideas could be imparted even to those who could not read by oral readings aloud and especially by visiting missionary clerics to revived and revitalised parishes.

Importantly, scholars like the five authors in this study, were open to the spirit of the material emanating on the continent with its ethos of national identity, were communicating with each other, reflecting these ideas in their works and in turn influencing their readers.

The climate for Irish Catholics during the first three decades of the century had oscillated between tolerance and harassment because of their religion. Their privileged positions in society, of the Old English in particular, were systematically eroded and reoccupied by New English intruders, as they viewed them, which led to greater communication between the two Catholic groups in the face of their joint difficulties. Hopes were high that some relief might be forthcoming from a king who was not orientated towards an extreme Puritan abhorrence of Catholicism and, therefore, relatively speaking, not averse to tolerance. Optimism for an acceptable settlement, to alleviate the religious and related discrimination, obtained during the 1620s when concessions contained in the 'Graces' were promised by the king. However, when the most important of these failed to be delivered through ratification in the 1634 parliament, the outlook for Irish Catholics became even more uncertain and tenuous. A sustained campaign against their efforts, waged against them by lord Deputy Wentworth during the remainder of the decade, strained their loyalty and, in 1641, resulted in rebellion followed by the creation of the Confederation of Irish Catholics. By 1640, the sense of joint national identity, which had been growing over the previous four decades, had evolved into a more mature sense of nation, now seen through the lens of national kingdom of Ireland. There were a number of principal determinants that caused this common sense of nationhood to develop. Mutual adversity, caused by discrimination from a hostile state, and the progressive introduction of newcomers encroaching on their possessions and livelihoods, had the effect of drawing the two groups together. In addition, the influences of the growing corpus of literature on Ireland and Irishness, produced on the continent by Irish *émigrés* and circulated at home, together with the urgings of unity by a Counter Reformation-inspired clergy, encouraged integration. Sadly, the level of solidarity and feelings of joint national identity were not strong enough or sufficiently developed to sustain their association under the pressures of a contentious religious war situation. It had been

essentially expediency that brought them together in this confederate experiment: driven as they were by fear caused by the discriminatory onslaught of increasingly anti-Catholic rhetoric and impelled by the exhortations of a church hierarchy to unite, this had not been an entirely voluntary combination. Therefore, their shared sense of national identity was more fragile than it seemed. It had developed to a certain extent on an imperative within each group to find a solution to their problems over the previous fifty years. It did not rest on a bedrock of natural organic growth where people from the one traditional background share a cultural legacy. That there were feelings of goodwill on both sides and a consciousness of the rectitude of a closer relationship is undoubted, but a sufficient period had obviously not elapsed for their good intentions to remain united under extremely stressful circumstances. However, had there been no war situation, the sense of shared national identity, which had developed between these two groups in the first half of the seventeenth century, would undoubtedly have strengthened and progressed towards greater coalescence. Subsequent evolution of joint national sentiment as the century progressed would repay further research.

The emergence of royalism, encompassing ideas of kingship, religion and order, had contributed greatly to the sprouting shared sense of nation of the Old Irish and Old English. By the fifth decade of the century, the extent of their correspondence in political, social and religious ideas had been sufficient to allow them to amalgamate in confederacy. The native Irish and the Old English had not yet achieved assimilation or integration yet a remarkably strong Irish Catholic royalism had emerged among them which would be evident again at the end of the century with the advent of a Stuart Catholic king.

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