

Marsh's Library and the Irish Catholic tradition

Narcissus Marsh (1638-1713), the founder of the first public library in Ireland, was of what Patrick Comerford, Catholic bishop of Waterford (1629-52) called 'the new fetch'd in religion'.¹ So were Edward Stillingfleet (1635-1699), Elias Bouhéreau (1642-1719) and John Stearne (1660-1745), whose collections, with Marsh's own, form the core of Marsh's Library. These four collected material, in manuscript and in print, at a time when confessional differences, in Ireland, England and Europe, were hardening into political, social and cultural divisions. In this context, it is tempting to assume that Marsh's library, especially its theological works, was collected with the defence of Irish Protestantism in mind.² It might seem reasonable to assume, for instance, that Marsh, who was no theologian himself, acquired the library of the controversialist Stillingfleet in order to provide resources for anti-Catholic controversy in Ireland. Thus, while the will to convert constituted an enduring dimension of the Irish Protestant attitude towards their Catholic countrymen, it was more generally swallowed, especially during the troubled 1690s and the paranoiac 1700s, by a fear of Catholic resurgence and attack.

But things were not as simple as that. Apart from the fact that Catholic and Protestants in Ireland evolved a *modus vivendi* which involved entailed significant social, economic and cultural intercourse, there is also the fact that Protestant attitudes towards Catholicism were distinct from those towards individual Catholics and, in any case, both varied over space, time and according to political circumstances. Narcissus Marsh illustrates this well enough himself. As a convinced Protestant, one of his first

¹ *The Inquisition of a sermon preached in the Cathedral Church of the city of Waterford in February 1617 etc by Robert Daborne by P.C.[Patrick Comerford]* (Waterford, 1645), introduction. Patrick Comerford OSA was bishop of Waterford and Lismore 1629-52.

² For an overview of relations between Trinity College and the Catholic Church see James Lydon, 'The silent sister: Trinity College and Catholic Ireland' in C.H. Holland (ed.) *The idea of a university* (Dublin, 1991), pp 29-53.

projects after arriving in Ireland as provost of Trinity College was to push for the translation of the Old Testament into Irish, to provide for the teaching of Irish to native students in the university and to arrange for preaching in Irish in the university chapel.³ The uncertainty following the accession of James II and the wars which followed were the context for a real hardening of attitude, which found expression, in Marsh's case, in his contribution, as Chief Justice, to the framing of anti-Catholic legislation in the 1690s and 1700s. His diary, which he kept from late 1690 to December 1696 offers intriguing insights into his religious concerns and attitude towards Catholicism.⁴ He was notably concerned about the threat of foreign invasion, writing in April 1691

Lord, preserve us an all thine from the power of that monster Lewis 14 the Tyrant of France, put a hook in the nostrils of that Leviathan... Let him see that there is a God who ruleth in heaven and disposeth of the Kingdom of Men. Amen, so be it, Halleluyah.⁵

The foreign, Catholic threat had its local reflection, as he fretted and prayed in March of the same year

Several Irishmen have been hanged in the Castle of Dublin and in many other places within our quarters of late for robbing and murdering the English. O Lord, put stop to bloodshed both here and throughout Europe, that at length we may serve you in quietness.⁶

Even Marsh's dreams, as he reports them in his diary, offer fascinating glimpses into his religious imagination, coloured by concerns over religion loyalty. In December 1690 he recalled a dream he had over twenty years previously when a man addressed him as the bishop of Granada and he wondered, in his dream, had he become a papist

³ See Nicholas Williams, *I bPrionta i leabhar: na protastúin agus próis na Gaeilge 1567-1724* (Dublin, 1986).

⁴ Marsh MS Z 2.2.3. A typescript of the diary is kept in Marsh's Library. This is the text used in this article, hereafter *Diary* followed by the typescript page number.

⁵ *Diary*, p. 36.

⁶ *Diary*, p. 35.

or had Charles II conquered Spain?⁷ He records another dream from the same period which has him in Rome where

[I] saw the Pope carried into St Peter's Church on men's shoulders, before whom all fell on their knees as he passed by; but I shifted from place to place in the church to avoid it and being taken notice of, but at last seeing that I was observed and eyed by some that watched me I privately got out of the church and entering a house fell into the company of learned men, who raising a discourse concerning religion to ensnare or detect me, as I apprehended, I replied thereto with so much subtilty and maintained the dispute with so much dexterity (defending truth and yet giving them no advantage agt me) that when I awaked I did much admire myself for the subtileness an acuteness of my answers...⁸

Marsh had no control over what books Stillingfleet, Bouhereau or Stearne collected but their insertion into his library must at least indicate that theirs were books he believed appropriate to it. Despite the variety of sources, then, there is a consistency in the collection, reflecting protestant perceptions of Catholicism and indicating the sources, which educated Protestant divines had at their disposal to inform, contradict or confirm such perceptions and their conduct towards the Catholic population.

It was only to be expected that the protestant spiritual generals like themselves would be acquainted with the theological, apologetical, liturgical and historical material generated by the catholic reform, usually to discover their enemy's weakness but sometimes, at least partly, because it was the fruit of a scholarship they admired. Although he almost certainly did not use it, Stearne had copies of the *Breviarium romanum* (Antwerp, 1698) and the *Rheims Bible* (Rouen, 1633), and Marsh possessed a *Missale romanum* (Antwerp, 1682). He also had a copy of *Catechismus ad parochos* (Lyon, 1682), perhaps to form an idea of what the papist clergy were supposed to be doing in Dublin's back streets. Stillingfleet was a hands-on polemicist in England so he needed his copies of *Ordo baptismi pro Anglia, Hibernia et Scotia* (Paris, 1657) and J. Goodman's *A discourse concerning auricular confession* (London, 1684) to

⁷ *Diary*, pp 23-4.

⁸ *Diary*, pp 23-4.

help him set his sights. It was thanks to Bouhéreau that the library acquired a copy of *Le saint, sacré, universel et general concile de Trent* (Rouen, 1613). Stillingfleet was not ignorant of this council's significance either though he armed himself against it with a copy of *The Council of Trent examined and disproved by catholic tradition* (London, 1688).

As one would expect, Protestant divines were not above profiting from catholic scholarship, sharing as they did in a community of learning which crossed religious divides. Stillingfleet's *Doctrina S Augustini de humanae naturae caritate* (Rouen, 1652) is only one of a great number of patristic texts and commentaries held in the library's collections. Interestingly Marsh had a copy of Martin Becan (1550-1624) *Summa theologiae scholasticae* (Rouen, 1657) which may not have been the best representative of scholasticism but it was the most commonly used scholastic text book in the Irish catholic colleges on the continent at the time.⁹ Caesar Baroni's (1538-1607) historical works were too significant not to be included and there are several editions of his *Annales ecclesiastici*. However, in the interests of maintaining perspective there is also a copy of *Roman forgerie in the councils during the first five centuries together with an appendix concerning the forgeries and errors in the annals of Baronius* (London, 1688).¹⁰ The library has a rich collection of Jesuit material, much Bellarmine and Suárez. The Franciscans are well represented too and there is, in the manuscript collection, a summary of the rule of St Francis in Gaelic.¹¹ Luke Wadding's internationally acclaimed *Annales minorum* (Lyons, 1628-48) and his

⁹ Donal F. Cregan, 'Counter Reformation episcopate' in Art Cosgrove and Donal McCartney (eds) *Studies in Irish history presented to R. Dudley Edwards* (Dublin, 1979), pp 85-117, p. 114; Juan José Pérez-Camacho, 'Late Renaissance humanism and the Dublin scientific tradition 1592-1641) in Norman McMillan (ed.), *Prometheus's fire: a history of scientific and technological education in Ireland* (Carlow, 2000); Thomas Wall, 'Seventeenth-century Irish theologians in exile' in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 5th series, lii (1939). Becan was a Jesuit, born in Brabant. He published several works against James I and his supporters in the oath of allegiance controversy. So extreme was his view of papal authority that Paul V was obliged to censure his *Controversia Anglicana* in 1613.

¹⁰ This was by Thomas Comber (1645-99).

¹¹ Marsh, MS Z3.5.3. Printed at Louvain in the early seventeenth century.

Scriptores ordinis minorum (Rome, 1650) are in Stillingfleet's collection. Catholics could have worthwhile things to say also in matters moral. Stillingfleet had a copy of *Saul exrex sive de Saul Israeliticae gentis protomonarchai* (Louvain, 1662) written by the Cork-born Louvain professor John Sinnich (1603-1666).¹² This is a significant work, as it represents the author's attempt to give a general overview of principles of practical morality, distinguished by an exceptional vigilance against any form of moral laxism. Stillingfleet would have appreciated Sinnich's rigorism and his strong Jansenist tendencies, which put him on the wrong side of the Roman authorities. He would not have been insensible either to Sinnich's destestation of Calvinists, which the Corkman ably demonstrated by reference to their supposed approval of falsehood for the good of the Church, citing his countryman Henry Fitzsimons on the matter.¹³

It behoved Protestant divines to acquaint themselves with the intricacies of contemporary Catholic theological debate, even when it concerned what for Protestants were theologically taboo topics like the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Stillingfleet was in possession of Luke Wadding's *Legatio de definienda controversia immaculatae conceptionis*.¹⁴ This book was published with the help of the good graces of the Franciscan founder of St Anthony's, Louvain, Florence Conry (1560-1629) whose treatise on the fate of the souls of infants who die without baptism, included in Jansen's *Augustinus*, is found among Bouhéreau's books.¹⁵ This grim work was the fruit of the author's long study of St Augustine. Though its inclusion as an appendix in Jansen's *Augustinus* suggests that Conry was a minor to

¹² This was Stillingfleet's. There was a second edition in 1665. There was a second edition in 1665. This was the first part of a tripartite work. The second part was published in 1667, the third part was still in preparation at the time of Sinnich's death. See Claeys Bouuaert, 'Jean Sinnich défenseur de Jansenius' in *Ephemerides Theologicae Louvanienses*, xxxi (1955), pp 406-17.

¹³ Henry Fitzsimons, *Britonomachiae* 11, p. 4, no. 5. On the same question he cites Beza, *Epistla* 68 and James I's *Basilicon Doron*.

¹⁴ *Legatio Philippi III et IV catholicorum Hispaniae regum ad Paulum PP et Gregorium XV de definienda controversia immaculatae conceptionis B Virginis Mariae* (Louvain, 1624).

¹⁵ (Rouen, 1652).

Jansen's major, it is still difficult to ascertain which came first, Conry's egg or Jansen's chicken.

Unsurprisingly, the library is well endowed with English recusant works. Stillingfleet's interest in English recusant literature is perfectly understandable but what is more difficult to discern is how he distinguished, if he did so at all, between English and Irish versions of the catholic threat. There is a copy of William Allen's (1532-94) *A defense and declaration of the catholic church's doctrine...* (Antwerp, 1565) and Robert Parson's (1546-1610) *The Christian exercise...* (Rouen, 1582) and his *News from Spayne and Holland conteyning an information of Inglish affayres in Spayne...* Predictably, the library possesses a copy of Richard Verstegan's *A declaration of the true causes of the great troubles...against the realme of England* (Antwerp, 1592). Among the manuscripts there is the 'Primum breve Pontificium Pauli quinti ad Catholicos Angliae 1606'.¹⁶ Stillingfleet had a copy of Nicholas Sanders *Histoire du schisme d'Angleterre* (Paris, 1676-7). The controversial work of Protestant divines on either side of the Irish Sea abounds. William Laud (1573-1645), archbishop of Canterbury's controversial work *A relation of the conference between William Laud...and Mr Fisher the Jesuite* (London, 1639) and a response to it by Thomas Carwell SJ (1600-58)¹⁷ are here. There are two editions of *The guide in controversies or a rational account of the doctrine of Roman Catholics* (London, 1667, 1673) which Stillingfleet co-authored with Abraham Woodhead (1609-78). Stillingfleet's *Fair warning, the second part, or XX prophecies concerning the return of popery* (London, 1663) which also contains material by his predecessor John Whitgift (1530?-1604) is in the collection.

With regard to works dealing with or produced the Irish catholic community, the library collections capture the layered protestant perception of Catholicism in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. The fundamental theological differences are never far from the surface, however benign the particular circumstances. A seventeenth-century manuscript, from about the year 1656, in the commonplace book of John King, minister and dean of Tuam throws interesting light

¹⁶ Marsh MS Z 3 4 27 (4).

¹⁷ *Labyrinthus Cantuariensis or doctor Lawds labyrinthe, beeing an answer to the later archbishop of Canterburys relation of a conference between himself and Mr Fisher* (Paris, 1658).

on the doctrinal origins of the religious conflict inherited by Marsh and his contemporaries.¹⁸ This purports to be an account of a disputation between George Dowdall, (1534-58) archbishop of Armagh and Edward Staples, (1530-54) bishop of Meath in the presence of Sir John Crofts, lord deputy of Ireland in St Mary's Abbey, Dublin, on 6 June 1552.¹⁹ The conference was arranged, according to the manuscript, to convince those who 'dissented from the King's edict for the establishing of the liturgy of the church to be read or sung in English.' Dowdall reportedly complained that 'ye have demolished the Masse to bring in an other of England's making',²⁰ to which Staples is said to have retorted that the new prayer book was nothing other than the Mass reformed and cleansed from idolatry. Dowdall replied, the manuscript continues, that the way to unity was not to alter the Mass and engaged an argument over St Ambrose's theology of the Eucharist. To which Staples supposedly riposted that Dowdall's proof texts from Ambrose were interpolations, calling on no less an authority than Erasmus to support his argument. Dowdall is said to have next enquired if Erasmus were more powerful than the council of the Mother Church, to which Staples responded, rather too cleverly, perhaps, not more than the holy Catholic and yet more than the church of Rome. Dowdall reminds Staples of his episcopal consecration oaths, which, Dowdall claimed, he was now dishonouring. Staples concluded that it was impossible to reconcile fidelity to these oaths with loyalty to the king, whose oath of supremacy had superseded them all.

This text is not genuine but it has the virtue of exposing the real points at issue between the established church and what was becoming the church of the majority. While many in Ireland, especially among the Old English elite, had supported the royal supremacy in the middle of the sixteenth century, and indeed had profited from the monastic confiscations, they remained attached to the Mass. In the early days, it was possible to accommodate the two but the royal supremacy presumed a definite religious option which, by the 1560s the merchants of Waterford, for instance, were reluctant to take. It would appear that this was due, not only to an understandable, possibly lazy adherence to traditional religion but also an appetite for reformed Catholicism. For the merchants of Waterford, the traditional trading trips to the

¹⁸ Marsh, MS Z3.1.11, unpaginated.

¹⁹ See Brady, *Arch. Hib.*, viii (1941) pp 236-7.

²⁰ Marsh, MS Z3.1.11, Dowdall and Staples conference, f° 2.

continent were more than commercial exchange. Continental traffic exposed them to the practices and the demands of the new Catholicism, which, by an intellectual symbiosis no one appears to have nailed down, permitted them to explain and justify political decisions and civic activity which brought them into conflict with the royal administration. One also gets the impression that, for them, the new Catholicism appeared more satisfying and convincing than the protestant alternatives then available. Further, the trade links provided the means of maintaining the religious option, specifically by opening a route to the powerhouses of reformed Catholicism, the Tridentine seminaries. A trickle of students, mostly from Old English Leinster and Munster, no longer at home in Oxford, Cambridge or Scotland, began to make their way to the mainland and found as well as they could, places in already existing diocesan seminaries or among their English and Scottish recusant confreres. In Paris, six clerics came together under the Waterford-born priest John Lee about 1578 and found lodgings in the Collège de Montaigu and later in the Collège de Navarre. By the late 1580s the Clonmel-born Jesuit Thomas White (1556-1622) was attempting to set up a college at Valladolid but he had to wait until 1592 to see his efforts bear fruit, at Salamanca. The Meath priest Christopher Cusack was responsible for a number of small foundations in the Spanish Netherlands, beginning with Douai in 1594. By 1607 the Gaelic Irish, largely through the Franciscans, had made their break for the continent. In that year Florence Conry (1560-1629) founded St Anthony's in Louvain which spawned a number of Franciscan foundations principally at Rome, under the patronage of Luke Wadding, and also in Prague. Although many of these foundations were impoverished, riven by internal feuding (largely between the Jesuit supported Old English and the Franciscan backed Gaelic Irish) and at the mercy of local political and ecclesiastical whim, they provided the Irish catholic church with a steady supply of well-educated clergy and, in the seventeenth century, with an altogether remarkable bench of bishops. Just as significantly, they assisted migrant Irish clergy in integrating themselves into local political and intellectual patronage networks, internationalising the clergy and an elite segment of the catholic laity to an unprecedented degree. While it may be anachronistic to speak of the development of 'imagined communities' in the first half of the seventeenth century, there is no doubt that the literature produced by these individuals and so richly represented in this library, was perceived by contemporary protestant divines as worthy of acquisition because deserving of attention. Here was something Irish Protestants could easily identify as objectionable.

All the more so as it fitted Irish Catholics into a European frame of reference and magnifying the danger they represented for the Protestant Irish state.²¹

The protean colleges network produced a theological, hagiographical, apologetical and historical output which gave literary shape to the religious and political options which were being taken by a large number of the king's Irish subjects. At the same time it constituted an important contribution to contemporary European scholarship and an Irish catholic intellectual renaissance. By the mid-seventeenth century it was possible for Irish protestant divines to keep abreast of the latest developments in practically all areas of Catholic thought by reading the literary produce of the Irish colleges, secular and religious and their milieux. The fact that the purpose of this frenetic literary activity by Catholics was the preservation of Catholicism in Ireland put off only the most narrow-minded of Protestants and familiarity if not dialogue with this tradition was imperative. In this light, the penal laws expressed not the strength but the weakness of Protestantism in Ireland, an admission, on the part of all but the most zealous evangelicals among them that the Irish were not fit for conversion. It was the penal legislation which ensured that the continent the beating heart of Irish Catholicism, until the Irish Parliament's foundation of the Royal Catholic College at Maynooth in 1795. By the eighteenth century every priest in Ireland had been on the continent as part of his training.²²

In retrospect, this looks like a case of the necessity of protestant victory in Ireland being the mother of catholic cultural enrichment. Needless to say, the continental arrangement was perceived by contemporary Catholics as very much a second or third best option. In 1645 Thomas Bourke, the Waterford printer wrote:

According to S Jerom, books are the lively image and everlasting representations of the wit and learning of their authors; but without the print may either ly hidden in obscure angles or are moth eaten in old desks, or hutches or finally buried in perpetual oblivion. I might therefore say much of the incomparable good and benefit that doth redound to the commonwealth by

²¹ *Diary*, p. 36.

²² There is also John O'Reilly, baron of Mulaghmore's *Philosophiae cursus* (s.n. 1732), defended under Peter Archdekne, of the Irish college in Prague.

the print, of which the Catholiks of this kingdom were deprived since the revolte from the true religion which was not the lesse of their sufferings or the meanest prejudice done to their learned men; our adversaries being not ignorant that the natives of this kingdom are of a pert, acute and quick understanding and very prone to learning and to literature; wherefore it was contrived and plotted that they should be debarred and hindered, not only from the ways of achieving to learning and literature but also deprived of all means to publish their learning which by much toyle and study they acquired in foraine countries.²³

For Irish protestant divines, the most accessible, useful literature produced by the expatriate Irish Catholic community was historical in nature. It was acceptable because it was good history and it was interesting because it dealt with a country they viewed in a proprietorial fashion. Stearne had a copy of one of the earliest printed work from a native author, Richard Stanyhurst (1547-1618) *De rebus in Hibernia gestis* (Antwerp, 1584).²⁴ Although Stanyhurst left Ireland in 1577 amid political suspicions about his connections with Kildare and Edmund Campion and later enjoyed the patronage of Philip II before becoming a Jesuit, his book is a classic Old English view of Irish history, with what must have been a reassuring anti-Gaelic feel to it. This is why it was so roundly condemned by Philip O'Sullivan Beare (1590?-1660) a copy of whose *Historia catholicae Ibernicae compendium* (Lisbon, 1621) Stillingfleet possessed.²⁵ Stearne had a copy of O'Sullivan's *Patritiana decas...* (Madrid, 1629)

²³ See Comerforde, *Inquisition*, introduction. In the same work is a version of the Nag's Head 'fable' (p. 55ff).

²⁴ There is also a copy of his *The first and second volumes of chronicles* (1586) among Stillingfleet's books.

²⁵ *Patritiana decas sive libri decem quibus de diva Patritii vita, purgatorio, miraculis, rebusque gestis: de religionis Ibernicae casibus, constantia, martyribus divinis, de Anglorum lubrica fide, de Anglohaereticae Ecclesiae sectis copraesulibus, iubileis plenissimis, liturgia, sacra pagina, caeremoniis et institutis accurate agitur.*

and his *Archicorniger mastix* (Madrid, 1629) which were published together.²⁶ The *Patritiana* contains a detailed account of the life and achievements of St Patrick which makes no concessions to possible protestant reservations regarding miracles, a fact which may have helped convince the Protestant reader, if he needed it, that even educated Catholics were prey to the fabulous and the extravagant. If he had been especially observant, the same Protestant reader would have noticed that O’Sullivan described the conversion of Ireland, province by province, providing, it would seem, a historical justification for the fierce inter-provincial rivalries, which so disturbed the Irish colleges and indeed the migrant Irish catholic community in general.

Interestingly, O’Sullivan’s *Patritiana* also deals with the visions of St Patrick which had been included in the twelfth-century life of the saint compiled by Jocelin of Furness. He cites Jocelin’s account of the vision of the future of the Irish church given to St Patrick. Unlike his Old English contemporary, Peter Lombard, who also discusses the vision and admitted that it gave itself to a variety of interpretations, O’Sullivan saw it as a simple foretelling of the pillaging of the ancient Irish church by the Reformers.²⁷ Unlike many of his Old English contemporaries, O’Sullivan saw no good at all in the lords of Ireland. Indeed he argued that Pope Adrian IV never intended to confer the Lordship of Ireland on the English kings, but merely to appoint them to collect papal dues or ‘smoke money’ as some Protestants preferred to call it. For these arguments James Ussher called him, in the *On the religions anciently*

²⁶ *Archicornigeromastix sive Usheri Haersiarcae confutatio descriptioque accessit opus artificio scribendi, sermonis nitore, rerumque varietate, vicissitudine, mirabilitate pulcherrimum, cum duplici indice, altero capitum, alter rerum.*

²⁷ ‘In Anglorum Regum potestatem redacta [Hibernia] quamvis fidem retinuerit quia tamen variis iniuriis, clamitatibus perturbabatur et omni malorum clade affigebatur, religionis divini cultus, pietatis studium et facta cum charitate sanctitque coniuncta non minime parte languerunt vitiorum maculis opera inficientibus. Aetate nostra infoelicissima, qua Anglorum inhospita barbarios truculenta tyrannis, tartarea superstitio eo furoris processit, ut sacrosancta templa prosanet, christianae religionis publicas caeromonias tollat, ecclesiasticos laniet, Evangelicam veritatem divino Christi ore sancitam ex hominum animis evellere coelestem pietatem penitus extinguere et delere conetur...’ p.136.

professed a ‘block heade’ and worse,²⁸ epithets which drew O’Sullivan’s furious riposte *Archicornigeromastix*. Here O’Sullivan expresses his disbelief that Ussher has stooped to using vulgar English to propagate his lies and insults and thanks God that the circulation of such literature as Ussher’s is forbidden in Spain. The fact that he has not read Ussher’s work, he continues, does not absolve him from the duty of refuting it, a task he energetically undertakes in the remainder of the work.

O’Sullivan’s strong views on the nature and consequences of the English conquest made him intolerant of other viewpoints, a fact that explains his endeavours to have Stanyhurst’s work banned in Portugal, having complained about it to the Inquisition. It is tempting to explain the interpretative gulf between Stanyhurst and O’Sullivan Beare in terms of Old English-Gaelic Irish antagonism. However, this explanation suffers from the presence in the collection of another Irish historical work, this time from an Old English pen. In Marsh’s own collection there is a copy of *De regno Hiberniae sanctorum insula commentarius* by Peter Lombard (1554-1625) which was compiled in Rome in 1600 and published, with considerable revisions, in Louvain in 1632.²⁹ Lombard was, in a way, more representative of the new Catholicism than either Stanyhurst or O’Sullivan. He, unlike Stanyhurst and O’Sullivan, was a professional theologian, trained in Louvain and was well versed in the grace debate, which had been going on in Louvain, and other catholic universities, since the 1560s. Indeed, in 1598 Lombard was send by his university to represent its case at the congregation recently set up by Pope Clement VIII to investigate the orthodoxy of the Jesuit Molina’s teaching on grace. While in Rome his diplomatic

²⁸ *Discourse*, pp 123, 128-9. Ussher cites O’Sullivan’s *Historia*, tome 2, lib 1, cap 7, *ibid*, cap 4.5, lib 2 cap 3. On p. 128 he writes of O’Sullivan ‘like a little fury flyeth upon the English-Irish priests of his owne religion which in the late rebellion of the earl of Tirone did not deny that hellish doctrine detcht out of hell for the destruction of catholickes that it is lawful for Catholickes to beare armes and fight for hereticks against Catholices and their country.’ *Historia* tom 4 lib 3, cap 5 fol 263. Usher also mentions the 1603 Salamanca censure regarding the rebellion, p. 129.

²⁹ Also included in the collection is his *Patritiana decas sive libri decem, quibus de divi Patricii vita...Archicorniger mastix, sive Usheri haeresiarchae confutatio, discriptio accessit* (Madrid, 1629). His entry ‘de S Mochua Ballensi sive Cronano’ is in Baronius’s *Acta sanctorum* (Antwerp, 1643).

services were sought by agents of Hugh O'Neill who was anxious to secure the pope's support for his war in Ireland, the appointment of a papal nuncio and a decree of excommunication against his Catholic opponents in Ireland. Lombard, whatever his political colour up to then, agreed, and, acting along with Andrew Wyse as O'Neill's agent, composed the *Commentarius*. While the work's overt political purpose was to convince Clement VIII to prevail on Philip III and other Catholic princes to assist the Northern earls engaged in a holy war against Elizabeth, it contained substantial historical sections which would have been of interest to the antiquarian and historian.³⁰ Notably, from an Old English viewpoint, it presented a re-reading of Irish history, which was severely critical of the English monarchy even before the Reformation and appears to have influenced a generation of writers, mostly based on the continent, in the seventeenth century.³¹ His influence or that of the position he articulated found later, eloquent echoes in Ireland, among those who sought to explain Ireland's constitutional arrangements and how they might be reformed. A Waterford contemporary of Lombard was even more lucid on the matter. In his *Inquisition*, Patrick Comeforde interprets the reforms of Henry VIII, Edward VI and Elizabeth I as breaches of the original papal grant of Ireland to the kings of England, which was intended

to enlarge the bounds of the Church, augment there the true Christian religion and defend the right of the Church according which pact and covenant, the citizens of Waterford persuaded themselves that they might make publicke profession of that church and religion that the Pope Adriane did meane³².

³⁰ Marsh's own manuscript collection contains a document entitled 'Franciscus Brocardus Allarm to all Protestant Princes'. Brocardus was secretary to Clement VIII and wrote this in 1603. It was published as *Francis Broccard his alarm to all Protestant Princes with a discovery of Popish plots and conspiracies after conversion from popery to the Protestant religion* (London, 1679).

³¹ See Richard Conway's *Breve relación de a presente persecucion de Irlanda* (1619); Philip O'Sullivan Beare's *Compendium* (Lisbon, 1621). On the *Breve relación* see Clare Carroll 'Breve relación and the Irish college at Seville' *idem, Circe's cup* (Cork, 2001).

³² *Inquisition*, pp 29-30.

Comerforde's musings on *Laudabiliter* had their origins in the mundane, repeated refusal of the Dublin government to sanction early seventeenth-century mayoral elections in the city. The refusal of elected representatives to take the oath of supremacy was met by government refusal to sanction their election, resulting in municipal paralysis in Waterford for several years. Comeforde argued that because the officials were elected and not royal appointees they were not bound to take the oath. Ussher thought this sort of argument worthy of a reply, which he delivered in *A speech delivered* (1622). Although the mood is combative there is a thirst for argument and justification, which points to the still-evolving nature of the Irish religious environment and to the stark fact that a battle for souls, in this case of the citizens of Waterford, was in train.

David Rothe (1573-1650) in his *Analecta* (1617-9) gave fuller expression to Comerforde's arguments and an annotated copy of the work is found in Stillingfleet's collection. Rothe's primary purpose was to articulate Catholic disappointment over the election of the 1613 parliament and its manner of proceeding, to castigate the Dublin administration and to present to a learned audience the evidence of religious persecution in Ireland and its foremost consequence, the production of martyrs. Its presence in Stillingfleet's collection is not surprising. This work appears to have circulated fairly widely and its first part provoked a response from Thomas Ryves (d. 1652) which appeared in 1624. His *Regiminis anglicani in Hibernia defensio adversus analecten* takes up Rothe's charges in detail and, taken along with the *Analecta*, offers a unique insight into how the position of Irish Catholics in the evolving Protestant state was argued in legal terms.³³ In the time when these works were produced, the law remained, to some extent, accessible to Irish Catholics, if not to practice at least to argue.

Irish Protestant reception of Rothe was not completely polemical. Stillingfleet and Stearne both had copies of the Kilkenny man's *Hibernia Resurgens* (Rouen,

³³ Ryves was also author of another Irish-interest text, *The poore vicars plea delcaring that a competencie of meanes is due to them out of the tithe of their severall parishes notwithstanding the impropriations* (London, 1620). This is also in the library as is a reprint, alongside Sir Henry Spelman (1564-1631) *De non temerandis ecclesiis* (London, 1704). This latter volume is Stearne's.

1621), a work in which he sets out to rebut Thomas Dempster's (1579?-1625) claim that the adjective *scotus* indicated an affinity or origin in contemporary Scotland, a claim which deprived Ireland of most of its historical glories.³⁴ Given the community of historical interest, which joined the Church of Ireland and the Catholic Church against common enemies,³⁵ it is not surprising that the library contains some of the great hagiographical works of the Irish Catholic Reform. Thomas Messingham (c.1575-1638?), the Douai-educated third rector of the Irish college in Paris originated the concept of a concerted recovery and presentation and liturgical implementation of the cults of native saints. In March 1623 he met three Irish Franciscans in Paris, who had come south from Louvain to investigate the possibility of setting up a Franciscan college in the city. He enticed them into his project. Hugh McCaughwell (1571-1626), Patrick Fleming (1599-1631) and Hugh Ward (1593-1635) agreed to collaborate and though contact appears to have broken down between them, their joint efforts produced the most important Irish hagiographical texts of the seventeenth century, the Messingham edited *Florilgeium* (1624) in Paris. *Acta sanctorum veteris et maioris Scotias seu Hiberniae sanctorum insulae tomus secundus* (Louvain, 1647) compiled by John Colgan (1592-1658) is in Stearne's collection as is the *Collectanea sacra seu S. Columbani Hiberni abbatis...* (Louvain, 1667) compiled by Patrick Fleming's (1599-1631). The historical community of interest between Irish Catholic writers and Protestant scholars went beyond theological polemics and hagiography and included common concerns over ecclesiastical precedence. Stearne may not have had his eye on the see of Armagh but he did possess a copy of Oliver Plunkett's *Jus primatiale*

³⁴ The library contains a fair selection of Dempster's work. Bouhéreau, Stillingfleet and Marsh had copies of his *Antiquatatum Romanum* (1613); Stillingfleet had *Apparatus ad historiam Scoticam...nomenclatura* (1622), *De iuramento lib iii* (1623) and *Historia ecclesiastica...* (1627).

³⁵ See Messingham to Monsieur, Dec. 1634, Shellfield Archives WWM Str P 14 (279). William O'Sullivan, 'Correspondence of David Rothe and James Ussher, 1619-23' in *Collectanea Hibernica*, 36-7 (1994-5), pp 7-49.

(London, 1672).³⁶ There are also copies of Peter Talbot's *Primatus Dubliniensis* (Lille, 1674) and Hugh MacMahon (d. 1737) *Jus primatiale Armacanum* of 1728.³⁷

The Irish colleges network's more strictly philosophical and theological output features in the collection. The Irish Franciscans in particular made an important contribution to scholastic scholarship, notably in Scotist studies.³⁸ Wadding features strongly in the catalogue. The third volume of his *Opera omnia* of Duns Scotus (Lyon, 1639) was in Marsh's own library. Also included in the collection are Hugh MacCaughwell (1571-1626) *Sententiarum quaestiones subtilissimae* (Antwerp, 1620) and his *Vita Joannis Scoti* (1644). Marsh had a copy of *Quaestiones reportatae seu repititae...* (Cologne, 1635) also by MacCaughwell and Hugh Magennis.³⁹ There are several philosophical and scriptural works by MacCaughwell in the collection, including *Quaestiones super librum Aristotelis de anima* (Lyon, 1625) and *Concordantiae sacrarum bibliorum hebraicorum* (1748-9). Among Stillingfleet's books there is also a copy of Richard Archdekin 1618-93) *Theologia tripartita* (Antwerp, 1682). Peter Wadding's *Tractatus de incarnatione* (Antwerp, 1644) is found among Marsh's own books. Marsh also had a copy of Francis O'Molloy's (f. 1660) *Sacrae theologiae* of 1666.⁴⁰ While the Franciscans tended to favour Scotist scholasticism, there were Irish advocates of Thomism represented in the library. While Michael Moore is notably absent, there is a copy of Peter Talbot's *Blacklonae*

³⁶ There is a manuscript of this work in the library, dated 1672, MS Z 3 2 7 (2). *The condemnation of Oliver Plunkett titular primate of Ireland and likewise of Mr Ed. Fitzharris for high treason June 15 1681* (Dublin?, 1681).

³⁷ *Jus primatiale Armacanum in omnes archiepiscopos, episcopos et universum clerum totius regni Hiberniae* (s.l., s.s., 1728)

³⁸ Cathaldus Giblin 'Hugh MacCaughwell OFM and Scotism at St Anthony's College, Louvain' in *De doctrina Ioannis Duns Scoti* (4 vols, Rome, 1968), iv, pp 375-97; L. Ceysens, 'Francis Porter OFM' in *Catholic Survey* I (1951-3), pp 76-112; idem, Patrick Duffy OFM in *Catholic Survey*, I (1951-3), pp 228-66).

³⁹ He was bishop of Down and Connor from 1630-40.

⁴⁰ *Sacrae theologiae: tomus primis: dialecticae breviarum complectens* (Rome, 1666). There are also a copies of his *Lucaena fidelium seu fasciculus decerptus ab authoribus magis versatis qui tracturunt de doctrina christiana* (Rome, 1676) from the presses of *Propaganda fide*.

*haeresis...*⁴¹ This is an attack on what Talbot perceived to be the compromising aristotelianism of John Sergeant and Thomas White, who, in the interests of arguing for toleration were ready to water down Aristotle-backed arguments for monarchical absolutism. Talbot's work points to the developed awareness among the expatriate Irish elite of the political and religious consequences of changes of philosophical allegiance.⁴²

Controversial work by Irish catholic writers is abundant in the Marsh collections. Christopher Hollywood SJ *Defensio decreti Tridentini et sententiae Roberti Bellarminii* was published in Antwerp in 1604.⁴³ It is among Stillingfeet's books and contains Hollywood's *De investigandi vera et visibili Christi Ecclesia libellus* which includes the 'nag's head' tale, a criticism of Anglican orders destined to have a very long life indeed.⁴⁴ Henry Fitzsimon SJ (1566-1643) wrote *A catholike confutation of M. Iohn Riders clayme of antiquitie* which was published in Rouen in 1608. It is in Stearne's collection.⁴⁵ Many of Ussher's polemical texts are in the

⁴¹ *Blacklonae haeresis olim in Pelagio et Manichaeis damnatae, nunc denuo renascentis, historia et confutatio* (Gent, 1675).

⁴² On these and related questions see Liam Chambers, 'Defying Descartes: Michael Moore (1639-1726) and Aristotelian philosophy in France and Ireland' in Michale Brown and Stephen Harrison (eds) *The medieval world and the modern mind* (Dublin, 2000), pp 11-26.

⁴³ This was a response to William Whitaker's criticism of Trent and Bellarmine's views on the authority of the Vulgate. Theologically, Hollywood's position was more lax than some. For instance, his benign interpretation of the fate of infants who die without baptism (*infantes morientes ante Baptismum non salvantur: fruuntur tamen naturali beatitudine*), p. 60 was far less severe than the position adopted by Ó Maolchonaire in his treatise devoted to the question and included in the first edition of Jansen's *Augustinus* (1640). On Hollywood, see James Corboy, 'Fr Christopher Hollywood SJ 1559-1626' in *Studies* xxxiii, 132 (1944), pp 543-9.

⁴⁴ (Antwerp, 1604), pp 17-18.

⁴⁵ His 'De S Fechino abbate Fourri' is in Baronius's *Acta sanctorum* (Antwerp, 1643). See Edmond Hogan (ed.) *Words of comfort to persecuted Catholics written in exile anno 1607 illustrated from contemporary documents by Henry Fitzsimons* (Dublin, 1881).

collection, all of them the fruit of direct confrontation with Catholic doctrine and practice.⁴⁶ Stearne had a copy of *Disputatio apologetica de iure regni Hiberniae pro Catholicis Hibernis adversus Haereticos anglos* (Lisbon, 1645) by the Jesuit Conor Mahony (f. 1650). Richard Archdekin (1618-93) SJ's *Praecipuae controversiae fidei* (Louvain, 1671) is present in four different editions. There is among Stillingfleet's books a copy of Francis Porter (1631/2-1702) *Securis evangelica ad haereses radices posita* (Rome, 1674). Comerforde's *Inquisition*, already mentioned, is, however, the fullest popular Catholic apologetical text published in Ireland in the seventeenth century. Written in 'a plaine stile and vulgar language, suach as [he] could retaine in twenty years absence from [his] native country', Comerforde wrote out of a careful respect of the salvation and credit of the citizens of Waterford to oppose the ugly monsters of errors, falsehoods and slanderous calumnies, lurking in a sermon delivered by John Daberon in the city's cathedral in March 1617. Comerforde does not spare his opponent who, in his words, 'by his monstrous big paunch doth manifest, that his capacitie is better for devouring of fat pigs then for comprehending leane subtilities of divinitie or profound passages of sacred scripture'.⁴⁷ All the points at issue between the two churches are laid bare but the crux is the royal supremacy and, more particularly, its interpretation by the Irish administration, which, Comerford contends, is contrary to the intention of the king.⁴⁸

There existed a small number of Catholics of a different hue who might be entertained if not completely trusted by the Protestant establishment. The very prolific Peter Walsh (?1614-1688)⁴⁹ is one of the very few Irish catholic intellectuals who

⁴⁶ James Ussher, *The fourth edition corrected and augmented from a copy left under the authors own hand an answer to a challenge made by a Jesuite in Ireland wherein the judgement of antiquity in the points questioned is truly delivered and the novelty of the new Roman doctrine plainly discovered* (London, 1686).

⁴⁷ *Inquisition*, pp 10-1.

⁴⁸ *Inquisition*, p. 29. He cites an allocution by the king delivered on 20 June 1617. 'ut iam dixeram in domo Parliamenti possum dilegere personam papistae, qui alioqui vir bonus sit, et honest educatus, aliamque religionem nunquam imbiberit....fateor me non libenter suspendere Presbytorum pro sola religione aut celebratione Missae'.

⁴⁹ Ignatius Fennessy, 'The retraction of Peter Walsh OFM' in *Journal of the County Kildare archaeological Society*, xviii (1992-3), pp 61-86.

enjoyed direct contact with one of the library's collectors, in this case Stillingfleet.⁵⁰ Walsh was, at the very least, a loose cannon. His efforts to have a remonstrance drawn up by Irish Catholics in the 1660s and, more generally, his reservations about papal authority, his insistence on his Old English rather than Gaelic Irish roots and his frequent condemnation by Catholic church authorities in Ireland and abroad assured him the favourable attention of Irish Protestants. For the politicians like Ormonde, encouraging Walsh was a useful means of keeping the Catholic camp divided,⁵¹ though for divines like Stillingfleet, a higher motive may be presumed. Walsh probably disappointed them in the end as he signed a retraction of his errors in March 1688, just days before his death. However, his *Causa Valesiana* was placed on the index on 4 July 1689. Of course, a listing in the *Index* should not be taken as a sure proof of theological subversion. Walsh's confrere, Francis Porter, was placed on the index too, strangely for a collection of church documents condemning errors! Walsh was not an isolated case. He could count on extensive support in Ireland and he had his friends and sympathisers among his own confreres. Raymond Caron is the best represented of these in Marsh's.⁵² Of particular interest was his *Remonstrantia*

⁵⁰ Stillingfleet was an active participant in controversial exchanges, with both Dissenters and Catholics. In connection with the controversy over Jesuit loyalty, Stillingfleet penned *The Jesuits loyalty manifested in three several treatises by them against the oath of allegiance with a preface shewing the pernicious consequences of their principle as to civil government* (London, 1677). Also in the library are *Some general observations upon Dr Stillingfleet's book* by Richgard Ashby SJ (1614-80) (London, 1672) and *Catholic not idolators or a full refutation of Dr Stillingfleet's unjust charge by idolatry against the church of Rome* by Tyrden Godden (1624-88) (London, 1672). There is also a copy of Edward Worsley SJ (1605-76) *Reason and religion...with a refutation of Mr Stillingfleet* (Antwerp, 1672).

⁵¹ This was an important aspect of government policy. For instance, the controversies which divided regular and secular clergy in the city in the 1620s and 1630s were closely followed by the administration which was only too happy to facilitate recourse to law by disgruntled clergy, especially if a bishop was the defendant. An echo of these particular controversies is in MS Z4.2.1. (5).

⁵² *Roma triumphans septicollis, qua nova hactenus et insolita methodo comparativa tota fides romano-Catholica clarissime demonstratur* (Antwerp, 1653); *Apostolatus*

Hibernorum of 1665.⁵³ Richard Bellings (*d.* 1657) John Callaghan (*d.* 1653) and Paul King OFM (*d.* 1655) *Vindiciarum Catholicorum Hiberniae* (Paris, 1650) is among Stillingfleet's books.⁵⁴

The library contains much evidence of inter-Church sniping over converts and perverts.⁵⁵ Nicolas French (1604-1678) *The dolefull fall of Andrew Sall, a Jesuit of the fourth vow, from the Roman Apoltolik faith, lamented by his constant friend* (Louvain?, s.n. 1674)⁵⁶ is in Stearne's collection.⁵⁷ Stearne also had a copy of Peter Talbot's round condemnation of Peter Walsh *The friar disciplind* (Ghent, 1674). Evidence of the Irish element in this strained political situation in England are *The Franciscan Convert or a recantation sermon, preached in London April 6 1673 by Anthony Egan* (London, 1673).

While the present and immediate danger represented by the armed resistance of the local catholic population and their continental allies required military action and sharp polemic, the long-term problem of Catholics was dealt with legally. There were the practical legal difficulties in a kingdom where the majority did not profess the state religion. It took a while to work out a legal framework for the celebration of the Catholic sacraments and the manuscript collection bears testimony to this. There

evangelicus missionariorum regularium per universum mundum expositus (Antwerp, 1653); *Controversiae generales fidei contra infideles omnes iudaeos, Mahometanos, paganos* (Paris, 1660).

⁵³ *Remonstratia Hibernorum contra Lovanienses ultramontanasque censuras, de incommutabili regum imperio, subditorumque fidelitate et obedientia indispensabili* (London, 1665).

⁵⁴ See John Lodge (ed.) *Desiderata curiosa hibernica or a select collection of state papers and historical tracts illustrating...Ireland* (Dublin, 1772). This is also in the library.

⁵⁵ Jacques M. Gres-Gayer, 'An Irish opportunist in Paris: Dr Piers de Girardin' in Nigel Aston (ed.) *Religious change in Europe 1650-1914* (Oxford, 1997), pp 59-74.

⁵⁶ See S. H. Bindon (ed.), *The historical works of the Right Rev. Nicholas French* (London, 1846)

⁵⁷ See Marsh MS Z4.4.15 for French's *Dictata physicalia et metaphysicalia* (1630), signed by Walter Jones in 1650.

is an 'Explanation of certaine objections proponed against the Roman Mass booke'⁵⁸ and a 'Letter from the L'd Lieutenant to the chief barons of the Exchequer...concerning the Roman Catholicks saying Mass...' from 1645.⁵⁹

The Protestant state also had to adjudicate in controversies which divided Catholics. The disputes between regular and secular clergy in the city in the 1620s and 1630s were particularly welcome to the Dublin administration, not only because they indicated Catholic divisions but also because they generated legal action. This resulted in civil cases which exposed Catholic Church organisation in the courts. The long running dispute which set a number of secular clergy against the Franciscan archbishop of Dublin in the 1620s was only the most spectacular of a number of such incidents which left echoes in the library's manuscript collection. Especially significant here is 'Consideranda in libello famoso composito et publicato a fr Edmuindo Ursulano...' from 1629.⁶⁰ Connected with the same affair is 'Articles exhibited by the King's commissioners 11 Caroli I against J Preston a Fran friar' (1635).⁶¹

More important than either of the foregoing is the library's manuscript material pertinent to the elaboration of the penal law corpus, indicating the role of some officers of the library and of his benefactors in the process. There, for example, 'The clause of the act against papist school master and a clause about marriages in the heads of a bill to prevent the further growth of popery'.⁶² Even more interesting is the

⁵⁸ Marsh MS Z4.3.22. (1).

⁵⁹ Marsh MS Z3.2.6. (118), 'Letter from the L'd lieutenant to the chief Baron of the exchequer and the rest of the judges 30 Sept. 1645 enclosing a case grounded on the statute of 2 Eliz: concerning the Roman Catholicks saying Mass, preaching and administrating the Sacs, according to their forms in the churches (2 queries) together with the opinion of the Judges upon the same and their letter of 8 Nov. 1645.'

⁶⁰ MS Z4.2.1. (5). The full title is 'Consideranda in libello famoso composito et publicato a fr Edmuindo Ursulano alias O'Mahon alias Francesco Matheo et a fr. Joanne Preston 1629. (Lib fam. Entitled archtrophilax of Custos Ursi)'. On this see B. Jennings, *Micheal O Cléirigh* pp 186, 190, 208. See also *Archivium Hibernicum* vi pp 34, 110, 124, 126, 147. On Ursul see *Report franciscans* p. 53.

⁶¹ Marsh MS Z4.2.1. (4).

⁶² Marsh MS Z3.1.1. cvi, cvii.

manuscript entitled ‘Reasons humbly offered against the heads of a bill entitled heads of a bill for explaining and amending an act entitled an act to prevent the further growth of popery’.⁶³ This undated petition was submitted by a number of Catholics who feared the practical implications of the heads of bill for a new act to amend the 1697 Banishment Act (9 Will III, c.1). What emerges from this document is how much the legal space in which Irish Catholics could operate has shrunk since the time of the Rothe-Ryves exchanges in the early seventeenth century. While there are arguments here which appeal to basic legal principles, for example, making temporary laws permanent and the right to educate their children at home, most of the petition is a plea for revision of and exemptions from laws whose passage is perceived as inevitable. The tightening of the property restrictions on Catholics, particularly with regard to the inheritance rights of their Protestant offspring is of particular concern to the petitioners as is the proposal that registered catholic clergy be allowed to exercise functions only in the parish for which they were registered.

The legislative response of the Irish parliament to the Jacobite Wars and to subsequent invasion scares, such as that of March 1708 petrified the long standing religious tensions in the country. The anti-Catholic legislation of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries tended to replace the heat of head on conflict, so prevalent in the seventeenth century, with the violent suspicion of a cold war which forced the development of two political mentalities and two codes of legal practice. As revealed by Marsh’s collections, Protestant reactions to Catholics did not develop successively in a temporal frame but were rather a bundle of tendencies, some dominating as others retreated, only to return again as circumstances altered. After the furious debates of the seventeenth century, the penal laws, a reaction to war, became, in peace, an all too successful barrier to exchange which meant that, on the intellectual level, both communities developed without much reference to one another, apart from the customary exchange of annual insults. For Marsh this was surely a great calamity, as is it left the whole Catholic community adrift on a sea of error.

⁶³ Marsh MS Z.2.1.7. (107).