

## Irish bishops and clergy in exile in mid-seventeenth-century France

After the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland, hundreds of Catholic priests and religious were forced into exile on the Continent, with many seeking refuge in France, Spain and the Spanish Low Countries. For some, refuge was temporary while awaiting political developments and toleration in the home country; for others, it was permanent. The sheer numbers involved – in the hundreds (see below) – mark this as a new phenomenon in the migration of Irish Catholics to France. Although large numbers of Irish soldiers arrived there in the late 1630s and again from 1651 onwards, as Ireland was cleared of regiments connected with the Confederation of Kilkenny, the volume of priests and seminarians migrating to France had hitherto been on a much smaller scale than that of the military. This changed in the years after Cromwell's campaign in Ireland when groups of diocesan clergy left for France in large numbers – ordained clergy and professed nuns, rather than seminarians – representing a new departure in terms of the migrating population. This article uses John Lynch's *De praesulibus Hiberniae* and Richard O'Farrell and Richard O'Connell's *Commentarius Rinuccinianus*, both contemporary documents by Irish exiles living in France (Lynch and O'Connell resided in Brittany and Paris respectively), to trace the movements and experiences of the prelates and clergy who sought refuge in France, in addition to a range of French archival sources.<sup>1</sup> While it is not possible, given the constraints of space, to study the lives of each of these men in detail, material from Irish, French and Roman sources is utilised to explore the principal issues facing exiled Irish clergy in France. Combining sources from several locations enables comparisons to be made, and the documentation yielded by the various strands of inquiry is mutually enriching, providing a considerable number of significant case studies.

Among Irish exiles in Europe in the early modern period, the educated clergy, and in particular the bishops, constitute a category apart, calling for a specific approach. The exile of an entire hierarchy is in itself exceptional for this period. The conditions and problems encountered in exile also differed substantially from those experienced by the general run of Irish migrants to the Continent at this time. The Cromwellian regime in Ireland laid down conditions that made continuing diocesan activity all but impossible for bishops, and in effect obliged them to go into exile; some, indeed, were deported. This raises the question of whether the bishops' exile can be defined as voluntary. On the other hand, taking into account

<sup>1</sup> René d'Ambrières has previously discussed the exile of the Irish Catholic hierarchy and of John Lynch in 'Les tribulations des ecclésiastiques irlandais exilés en Bretagne' in *Le Pays de Dinan*, xxi (2001), pp 165–89. See also an article by the present authors, 'John Lynch of Galway (c. 1599–1677): his career, exile and writing' in *Galway Arch. & Hist. Soc. Jn.*, lv (2003), pp 50–63, for further contextual material.

their Continental education, the hierarchy and many of the clergy were already suited, if not prepared, for expatriation.

On arriving in France, these clerical refugees encountered three principal problems. First, a problem common to all emigrations, was the issue of financial resources. Solutions in this case were determined by the status of the prelates and the existence of networks within the Church. Seeking asylum and the need for subsidies took up time in the early stages of exile; hence, this article describes the route into exile and the financial circumstances of the refugees in detail, through examples.

The second issue, relations with Rome, was specific to the Irish clergy and merits close attention. During the period of the Confederation of Kilkenny, the Irish Catholic hierarchy had been deeply divided in its attitude to the papal nuncio, Rinuccini. His hostility to a political compromise with Parliament and the lord lieutenant had met with considerable dissent from a large number of clergy.<sup>2</sup> Rinuccini blurred the boundaries between politics and religion, and did not hesitate to use excommunication against those whom he considered to be conniving with the enemy. Several of the exiled bishops who had opposed the nuncio during the war were obliged to clarify their position within a relatively short time of arriving on French soil if they were to remain in communion with the Church. Having suffered persecution and exile in defence of their faith, they were being accused of indiscipline by the emissaries of Rome.

The third and final problem specific to the clergy arose at a later stage: the issue of whether or not to return to their dioceses in the improved circumstances after the Restoration, when there was some measure of freedom to practise their religion, at least until the late 1670s. Should the bishops return to their flocks? After fifteen years of exile, the answer turned out not to be straightforward.

## I

All but one of the thirty bishops ministering in Ireland in 1650 had pursued their studies in philosophy on the Continent, and all were trained in theology at Continental centres of learning (roughly half in Louvain or Douai, and the remainder in France and Spain in equal proportions).<sup>3</sup> Of the ten prelates who sought asylum in France in the 1650s, four had studied there and one at Douai. While the diversity of educational institutions attended by these Irishmen resulted in their being endowed with a Counter-Reformation vision, it could also have inclined them to accept or even prefer exile to the hostile environment of Cromwellian Ireland. Compared with France, Irish dioceses were relatively small. In the province of Connacht, for example, there were barely 1,000 inhabitants residing at Tuam, the seat of an archbishop.<sup>4</sup> The tiny diocese of Kilfenora,

<sup>2</sup> Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic Reformation in Ireland: the mission of Rinuccini, 1645–1649* (Oxford, 2002), pp 235–7, sketches the divisions among bishops and diocesan clergy in 1648.

<sup>3</sup> For the Irish bishops' European education and training, see Donal Cregan, 'The social and cultural background of a Counter-Reformation episcopate, 1618–60' in Art Cosgrove and Donal McCartney (eds), *Studies in Irish history presented to R. Dudley Edwards* (Dublin, 1979), pp 85–117.

<sup>4</sup> Cathaldus Giblin, 'The Processus datariae and the appointment of Irish bishops in the seventeenth century' in *Father Luke Wadding commemorative volume* (Dublin, 1957), p. 559.

presided over by Andrew Lynch, comprised only eight parishes, with possibly less priests than parishes at certain times in the seventeenth century. In addition, many Irish dioceses were in a poor state, with Church buildings in Protestant possession. Revenues of bishops had been affected by the removals of Catholic landowners under plantation schemes, and the continuing possession of former Church lands by Old English Catholics and New English planters. Some bishops described their poverty in reports to Rome.<sup>5</sup> An additional and serious impediment to their endeavours to propagate Catholicism was the prohibition on the foundation of Catholic seminaries in the country.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, a Continental education also meant that many exiled Irish clergy would have been familiar with European languages, as exemplified in several letters written in perfect French by Bishop Andrew Lynch (1596–1681).<sup>7</sup> Needless to say, Latin was the language of the Church for these prelates: Andrew Lynch published a Latin text in praise of Bishop John O'Molony (the elder) while living in Paris.<sup>8</sup>

Apart from ties arising from Irish bishops having studied in France, individual French clerics had cultivated contacts with Ireland, the most notable being St Vincent de Paul, who exhibited a particular interest in Ireland and sent missionaries there. One of the exiled bishops, Francis Kirwan (1589–1661), bishop of Killala, had been consecrated in the Parisian centre of St Vincent's order. Certain Irish dioceses also developed associations with France: Vincent de Paul and John Lynch both state that eight Vincentian priests were dispatched to Limerick in 1646, and claim that the missionaries heard 80,000 confessions and ministered to 8,000 dying persons during the Cromwellian campaign in Ireland.<sup>9</sup>

During the Cromwellian era, all but one of the country's Catholic bishops were compelled to leave Ireland. Many did so after considerable personal hardship, as was the case with Nicholas French (1604–78), bishop of Ferns, whose palace in Wexford town was occupied by Cromwell's troops in October 1649, and who was forced to hide in the surrounding countryside for five months before resorting to

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of the financial and material obstacles facing bishops in Ireland, see Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic Reformation in Ireland*, pp 45–51.

<sup>6</sup> Giblin, 'Processus datariae'.

<sup>7</sup> Archives of the diocese of Evreux, France, Correspondance de M. Boudon (three letters dated 1677).

<sup>8</sup> *Elogium Joannis Mollony*, cited in Père Jacques Le Long, *Bibliothèque historique de la France* (2nd ed., 5 vols, Paris, 1768), iv, 90. This is clearly the printed 'encomium' of O'Mollony mentioned in John Lynch, *De praesulibus Hiberniae potissimis Catholicae religionis in Hibernia serendae, et propagandae, et conservandae auctoribus*, ed. J. F. O'Doherty (2 vols, Dublin, 1944), ii, 184, 206. Searches in major libraries in France, Britain and Ireland have so far failed to locate an extant copy. The subject of the text is Bishop John O'Molony I, as he is styled, who died in 1651, and who supported Andrew Lynch generously during his studies in Paris: see Patrick Boyle, 'John O'Molony Bishop of Killaloe and of Limerick' in *I.E.R.*, xxxii (1912), pp 574–89; James Hogan, 'Two bishops of Killaloe and Irish freedom: John O'Molony I' in *Studies*, ix (1920), pp 70–93.

<sup>9</sup> Lynch, *De praesulibus*, ii, 94. See also Patrick Boyle, *Saint Vincent de Paul and the Vincentians* (London, 1909); Mary Purcell, *The story of the Vincentians* (Dublin, 1973), ch. 1; eadem, 'Saint Vincent de Paul and Ireland 1640–1660' in *I.E.R.*, cii (1964), pp 1–16. For original letters, see *Saint Vincent de Paul: correspondance, entretiens, documents*, ed. Pierre Coste (14 vols, Paris, 1920–25).

an area formerly under the control of the Catholic Confederation of Kilkenny.<sup>10</sup> Under the terms of the treaty that surrendered Galway to Cromwell's forces in 1652, the Catholic clergy were given six months to leave the country, and it was understood that freedom to practise the Catholic religion in public would then expire. The relevant article (IV) affected first and foremost the bishops, who had no real alternative to banishment. Some refused to obey, such as the archbishop of Tuam, John De Burgo [Bourke] (1590–1667), and Francis Kirwan, and both consequently spent long periods of imprisonment before being sent on board ship for France.<sup>11</sup> After the surrender of Galway, the majority of clergy in Connacht were confined to the islands of Aran and Inishbofin off the coast of Connemara.<sup>12</sup> Thereafter, a number of priests were transported to the West Indies, while several vessels sailed for Brittany with scores of priests on board; one conveyed twenty-eight priests to the Breton port of Nantes, while a second carrying thirteen arrived in Les Sables d'Olonne, further south.<sup>13</sup> These forced journeys could, of course, be perilous: the ship carrying Arthur Magennis, bishop of Down and Connor, was attacked in March 1652 by English Parliamentary privateers. Magennis died in the ensuing skirmish and was buried at sea to the accompaniment of funeral hymns sung by the other clergy.

Nine bishops who left Ireland at this time spent their exile in France, the majority electing to take up residence in the province of Brittany. (They were joined briefly by a tenth prelate, who was newly appointed; for details, see Table 1, over.) Bishop Andrew Lynch's petition to the assembly of the French clergy in 1656 mentions the presence of seven Irish bishops in the country; regrettably, he does not record their names. Two other deceased prelates may be added. Five of the bishops in question are mentioned in the text of two resolutions passed by the États de Bretagne in 1653 and 1657 and it has been possible to identify the individuals in question (see Table 1, over).<sup>14</sup> All but one had been consecrated after the establishment of the Confederation of Kilkenny (1642) in the series of appointments that had revitalised the Catholic hierarchy in Ireland. They arrived in France as the rebellion of the Fronde was coming to an end, and at a time when France and England were at peace.

<sup>10</sup> Lynch, *De praesulibus*, i, 356.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 259; John Lynch, *Pii antistitis icon* (St Malo, 1669), p. 201 (a biography of Bishop Kirwan).

<sup>12</sup> James Hardiman, *History of the town and county of the town of Galway* (Dublin 1820), p. 134, indicates that some fifty clerics were detained on the islands and granted a derisory allowance of 2*d.* a day, which left them on the brink of starvation.

<sup>13</sup> Details are known of at least three of these ships. In the case of the first, Bishops Magennis and Lynch sailed together for France, and during the voyage Magennis died on Palm Sunday (Lynch, *De praesulibus*, i, 231–2; ii, 208; *Comment. Rinucc.*, v, 77). In the second instance, a note written for Mazarin c. July 1653 (Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (henceforth A.E.), Correspondance politique, Angleterre, vol. 61, f. 247) indicates that the ship carried thirteen clergy. The third is mentioned in August 1655 in a letter by St Vincent de Paul (*Correspondance...*, ed. Coste, v, 415) in which the vessel is said to have arrived carrying twenty-eight ecclesiastics, including Archbishop Burke and Bishop Kirwan.

<sup>14</sup> Archives Départementales d'Ille-et-Vilaine, C. 2778 (2 Dec. 1653), C. 2780 (8 Dec. 1657), in which Bishops Lynch, Barry, Plunkett, Kirwan and Burke are named.

Table 1: *Irish bishops in exile on the Continent who departed Ireland between 1650 and 1655*

Name	D.O.B.	Place(s) of training	Diocese/nominated	Date of exile/port of arrival	Definitive return to Ireland	Year/place of death
Patrick Comerford (Order of Saint Augustine)	1586	Bordeaux/Lisbon	Waterford & Lismore 1629	Aug. 1650 St Malo	No	1652 Nantes
Robert Barry	1587	Bordeaux/Paris	Cork & Cloyne 1648	July 1653 Les Sables d'Olonne	No	1662 Nantes
Françis Kirwan	1589	Lisbon/Paris	Killala 1645	Aug. 1655 Nantes	No	1661 Rennes
John De Burgo [Burke]	1590	Lisbon/Evora	Tuam/Clonfert 1642	Aug. 1655 Nantes	Yes	1667 Tuam
Anthony McGeoghegan (Franciscan)	1595	Louvain	Clonmacnoise 1647; Meath 1657	Arrived in Rouen c. 1658 After stays elsewhere in Europe <sup>15</sup>	Yes	1664 Ireland
Andrew Lynch	1596	Paris	Kilfenora 1647	Mar. 1652 Brest	Occasional, d. in Ireland.	1681 Ireland (Kilfenora)
Patrick Plunkett (Cistercian)	1602	Douai/Louvain	Ardagh 1647	Late 1652 or early 1653 Probably Nantes	Yes	1679 Ireland
Nicholas French	1604	Louvain	Ferns 1645	1650 via Flanders (maybe)	No	1678 Ghent
Oliver Darcy (Dominican)	1605	Burgos	Dromore 1647	End of 1652?	Yes	1664 Ireland
Arthur Magennis (Cistercian)	1611	Burgos	Down & Connor 1647	Mar. 1652 Did not reach France	No	1652 d. at sea (off Cork)

By mid-1653 it was reported there were fifty-five exiled Irish priests in Nantes, fifteen in St Malo and a large unspecified number in Paris.<sup>16</sup> This was part of a longer-term trend, for in a list of Irish settled in Brittany compiled in 1666, eight members of the Irish Catholic clergy are recorded as resident in St Malo, four in Morlaix and two in Quimper.<sup>17</sup> The whole province of Brittany, and particularly major Atlantic ports such as Nantes and St Malo, and smaller urban centres like Dinan, were obvious havens for exiled Irishmen, both clerical and lay, given the constant trade links between the ports of the two countries. The strength of these commercial connections is borne out in the statistical evidence indicating that in the eleven years of peace between 1680 and 1700, some 360 ships arrived at St Malo from Ireland – an average of one ship every ten days.<sup>18</sup> In addition, individual exiled bishops themselves made explicit allusion to familiarity with these Breton ports being the determining factor in others electing to take up residence there. John Lynch wrote that

the principal cause that Bishop de Burgo [John Burke] settled in Dinan was the connection

<sup>15</sup> Benignus Millett, *The Irish Franciscans 1651–1665* (Rome, 1964), pp 519–20.

<sup>16</sup> See report to Mazarin (A.E., Correspondance politique, Angleterre, vol. 61, f. 247).

<sup>17</sup> A.E., Mémoires et documents, France, MS 1508, ff 329–36.

<sup>18</sup> See Jean Delumeau, *Le mouvement du port du Saint-Malo, la fin du XVIIe siècle (1681–1700)* (Rennes, 1966).

by road to Saint-Malo, where our merchants' ships often called. Through their agency, he could have a more accurate knowledge of the state of his diocese and he could look after his flock through letters (they carried).<sup>19</sup>

Correspondence between Bishop De Burgo at Dinan and England gives precise indication of the speed of post: a letter from London dated 9 January reached him on the 23rd, and he answered on the 30th by the next post to England.<sup>20</sup> Bishop Nicholas French also wrote of these links and their frequency when organising transfers of funds to Ireland.<sup>21</sup>

Again, the presence of Irish merchants in western French ports (especially in Brittany) was a long-term phenomenon. During the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, a handful of Catholic merchant families had emigrated to St Malo and Nantes, where they quickly became integrated into commercial life. In his account of the life of an Old English nun, Margery Barnewall, who fled Ireland soon after her escape from prison in 1580, the Catholic bishop of Ossory, David Rothe (1620–50) remarked on the strength of the relationship between Ireland and St Malo in particular: 'There is constant intercourse between the inhabitants of Saint-Malo and Ireland, the young people of each country being entertained in the other to learn the language and customs of the people, as is still usual in some parts of Ireland.'<sup>22</sup> Rothe's assertion is substantiated by the fact that at least six Lynch families are to be found resident in St Malo between 1590 and 1660. Some had been particularly successful in Malouin commercial and civic life, notably Simon Lynch, who married a kinswoman in St Malo in 1617 and was joint owner with his brother Richard (who lived in Galway) of the *Patrick*, built in that town. By the mid-1620s, he had secured the post of town burgher.<sup>23</sup> The tradition and durability of Hiberno-Breton commercial ties in turn created a favourable context in which Irish prelates emigrated to the province and were afforded an hospitable reception.

The presence of numerous foreigners in St Malo during the 1650s sometimes elicited complaints from the local population and a cautious surveillance by the authorities. When the Malouin authorities learned in December 1654 of the presence of a substantial English fleet off Breton shores, they were apprehensive since 'there is in this town a sizeable number of English and Irish'. They therefore considered it prudent to oblige these residents to withdraw three or four leagues inland.<sup>24</sup> In the event, however, this scare appears to have fizzled out, and a large

<sup>19</sup> Lynch, *De praesulibus*, ii, 259.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Walsh, *The history and vindication of the loyal formulary of Irish remonstrance* (1674), pp 14–15.

<sup>21</sup> He writes that in Nantes, he found a merchant who was prepared to write letters of exchange for transfer of moneys to Ireland, as well as ships that brought information and could be used to transfer moneys on the return journey (letter from Nantes, 24 Nov. 1654 (Cambridge University Library, Add. MS 4878, f. 540)). The authors are very grateful to Jason McHugh, author of a forthcoming study on Nicholas French, for a transcript of this document.

<sup>22</sup> David Rothe, *Analecta sacra nova et mira de rebus Catholicorum in Hibernia* (Cologne, 1617), p. 199; see also Richard Hayes, *Old Irish links with France* (Dublin, 1940), p. 170.

<sup>23</sup> See parish registers for St Malo; also Mary Ann Lyons, 'The emergence of an Irish community in Saint-Malo, 1550–1710' in Thomas O'Connor (ed.), *The Irish in Europe 1580–1815* (Dublin, 2001), p. 111.

<sup>24</sup> A.E., *Mémoires et documents*, France, MS 1508, ff 198–9.

number of Irish continued to reside in the town and the surrounding area into the 1660s. On his arrival at St Malo in the company of other Irish clerics in 1652, Bishop Andrew Lynch deposited the relics of St Constant in the care of the dean of the cathedral chapter. Rinuccini had brought these relics from Italy to Ireland, and had left them in the care of St Nicholas's church in Galway when leaving Ireland in 1649. Given the prevalence of the cult of relics in the Catholic Church at this time, Bishop Lynch was doubtless anxious lest these relics fall into Protestant hands.

Archbishop John Burke settled in Dinan in 1659 and was joined by one of his nephews, Richard Burke, a Jesuit who had previously resided in Spain. Burke drew up a plan for the establishment of an Irish Jesuit house in Dinan,<sup>25</sup> and in 1670 his superiors sought authorisation from the French king to establish an Irish seminary there.<sup>26</sup> (Punitive measures against Catholics in Ireland had been revived by the restored monarchy in the early 1670s, and this resulted in Catholic schools being forbidden by decree in 1673, especially those run by Jesuits.) Archbishop Burke's scheme fell through, however, and was quickly superseded the following year by the establishment of an Irish college and seminary in the Jesuit college of Poitiers.<sup>27</sup> Later still, in 1678–80, a seminary for Irish diocesan priests was founded in Nantes, and its numbers quickly reached some fifty priests and students.<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps contrary to what one might expect, the group of exiled bishops' places of residence were concentrated in the west of France, and their location appears to have relied on Irish family and business networks rather than gravitating towards the Irish educational centres in France (Paris or Bordeaux) or Spanish Flanders (Douai and Louvain). The instability caused by the Fronde, which lasted until 1652 in Paris, may have caused the Irish exiles to avoid the capital (though there were other reasons for this avoidance, relating to Church affairs and the difficult relations between the majority of these bishops and both Rome and the nuncio in Paris).

Other considerations must have prompted the bishops to prefer the west of

<sup>25</sup> De Burgo is the Latin form of Burke, an old Anglo-Norman titled family. For sources on the Jesuit project, see Irish Jesuit Archives, Dublin, McErlean transcripts (c. 1920); Francis Finegan, 'The Irish college of Poitiers: 1674–1762' in *I.E.R.*, 5th ser., civ (July–Dec. 1965), pp 18–35, esp. p. 19; Charles Berthelot du Chesnay, *Les prêtres séculiers en Haute-Bretagne aux XVIIIe siècle* (Rennes, 1974), pp 170, 176–7.

<sup>26</sup> A.E., Mémoires et documents, France, MS 1509, f. 473.

<sup>27</sup> Finegan, 'Irish college'; Pierre Delattre, *Les établissements jésuites en France* (5 vols, Enghien, 1949–57), iv, col. 57.

<sup>28</sup> A memorandum of 1756 listing Irish Catholics at Nantes states that there were between fifty and fifty-five priests and students: Paul Parfouru, 'Les Irlandais en Bretagne aux XVIIIe et XVIIIe siècles' in *Annales de Bretagne*, ix (1893–94), p. 529. It further states that the community of Irish priests had been in existence for some seventy years. Other sources give 1689 as the date of foundation, but there is evidence in the records of the Hôtel-Dieu and parish registers that there was a surge in the Irish clerical presence towards 1676–77, followed perhaps by the foundation of the college. James Ware, in his *Antiquities of Ireland*, ed. Walter Harris (6 vols, Dublin, 1739–64), ii, 255, gives 1680 as the date of foundation. Berthelot du Chesnay cites 1678 as the year a community of Irish priests came together but quotes no sources to support this date (*Les prêtres séculiers en Haute-Bretagne*, p. 170). Léon Maître's *L'Instruction publique dans les villes et les campagnes du Comté Nantais avant 1789* (Nantes, 1882), p. 249, gives 1678 but also with no source. The Irish college was originally located in rue du Chapeau Rouge before moving to Manoir de la Touche; the earliest entry in St Nicolas's parish records concerning an Irish priest at that first address dates from March 1678.

France to Paris – in particular, the number of Irish clergy already in Paris and who lived in straitened circumstances in various colleges in the city, sharing meagre aid that the arrival of the bishops would only have depleted further. Bishop French of Ferns reported that there were ten students in the Irish college and fifty clerics living in Paris. These became involved in the Jansenist controversy of the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>29</sup> The dispute, known as '*l'affaire des Hibernois*', erupted in 1651 when pressure on twenty-seven Irish priests and students to sign a statement condemning Jansenism caused a scandal and a war of pamphlets in the University of Paris. However, Robert O'Connell O.F.M. Cap. (d. 1678), co-author of the *Commentarius Rinuccinianus* who resided in Paris for a longer period than Bishop French, states that at the time of *l'affaire des Hibernois*, there were in all 'two hundred Irish priests in the University, some being Doctors, Licentiates or Bachelors in Theology, others studying Theology or Philosophy'.<sup>30</sup> In the estimation of the present authors, the latter figure is likely to be closer to reality given the numbers reported to be leaving Ireland and numbers in Brittany at the time, as well as the existence of a number of long-term Irish residents in Paris, such as lecturers in theology.

Two bishops did, however, stay in Paris. One of them was Oliver Darcy, bishop of Dromore, who visited the capital during the 1650s. He played an active part in the city's Irish community, 'bathing his fellow-countrymen from a height in the dew of the divine word'.<sup>31</sup> More prosaically, he was reported to have been made senior chaplain to all the Irish soldiers in France by Cardinal Mazarin, but relations with the French government subsequently soured when Darcy was accused of inciting Irish troops to cross over from the French service to Spanish Flanders,<sup>32</sup> presumably at the time of the banishment of the Stuarts from France as a result of the 1655 treaty negotiated by Cromwell and Mazarin.<sup>33</sup> The other prelate, Nicholas French, spent a short period of his exile in Paris<sup>34</sup> and, having returned from a visit to Rome,<sup>35</sup> took up residence in Nantes in early 1654.<sup>36</sup> He subsequently moved to Brest, where some of his flock were living<sup>37</sup> (perhaps influenced by the possibility

<sup>29</sup> *Comment. Rinucc.*, v, 143–4, letter by Bishop French describing the state of Irish seminaries in Europe.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, iv, 521.

<sup>31</sup> Lynch, *De praesulibus*, i, 268. For Rinuccini's view of Darcy, see W. M. Brady, *The episcopal succession in England, Scotland and Ireland, AD 1400–1875* (3 vols, Rome, 1876–77), ii, 345.

<sup>32</sup> Internuncio in Brussels to Propaganda Fide, Mar. 1661 (Benignus Millett, 'Calendar of volume 13 of the Fondo di Vienna, part 2' in *Collect. Hib.*, xxv (1983), p. 36).

<sup>33</sup> For the consequences of most of the Irish troops' change of allegiance from France to Spain in 1655–57, see Éamon Ó Ciosáin, 'A hundred years of Irish migration to France, 1590–1688' in O'Connor (ed.), *Irish in Europe*, p. 101. Darcy would not have been alone in his endeavours, as many Irish commanders and leaders did likewise, from Ormond down.

<sup>34</sup> The letter to Mazarin in July 1653 (A.E., *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, vol. 61, 247), which was certainly written in Paris, indicates that French is living 'here'.

<sup>35</sup> *Comment. Rinucc.*, v, 145.

<sup>36</sup> Lynch, *De praesulibus*, i, 357; A. Walsh, 'Irish exiles in Brittany. III' in *I.E.R.*, 4th ser., ii (July–Dec. 1897), p. 137. This article, published in four parts in *I.E.R.* in 1897–98, refers to a letter written by French to Burke from Nantes on 30 Jan. 1654. He was still in Nantes in 1655, as he was one of the signatories of the letter sent to Rome by four exiled bishops in 1655.

<sup>37</sup> Camb. Univ. Lib., Add. MS 4878. f. 540.



of financial support from successful Wexford privateers then resident in Brest<sup>38</sup>, and thence to Santiago de Compostela.



*Locations of landing, residence and death of exiled Irish bishops, 1650–55*

## II

Financial support was a pressing matter for the exiled bishops. Diocesan revenues had been transferred from Protestant to Catholic bishops in 1642 by the Confederation of Kilkenny.<sup>39</sup> That arrangement ceased during the Cromwellian era, with the result that exiled bishops no longer, or very rarely, received revenues from diocesan benefices and livings. In some cases, the size of dioceses and the death of wealthy Catholics in some parts of Ireland (Ulster for example) meant that such revenues were slim in any case. The Lynches and Kirwans were not among the

<sup>38</sup> Booties of Irish and Royalist privateers enriched the locality of Brest for some years in the 1650s (*Comment. Rinucc.*, v, 242–3). A large number of parish-register entries for the years 1653–56 bear out the existence of a considerable Irish community in Brest during those years, to the extent that one author states that the local priest in the parish of Recouvrance struggled to note all the entries concerning them (Patricia Dagier, *Les réfugiés irlandais au 17ème siècle en Finistère* (Quimper, 1999), p. 10). This work lists entries by family name. The privateers are substantially the same group as that studied by Jane Ohlmeyer in ‘The Dunkirk of Ireland: Wexford privateers during the 1640s’ in *Wexford Hist. Soc. Jn.*, xii (1988–99), pp 23–49; and ‘Irish privateers during the Civil War, 1642–50’ in *Mariner’s Mirror*, lxxvi (1990), pp 119–34.

<sup>39</sup> Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, ‘Lost in Rinuccini’s shadow: the Irish clergy 1645–49’ in Mícheál Ó Siochrú (ed.), *Kingdoms in crisis: Ireland in the 1640s* (Dublin, 2001), p. 178.

wealthy episcopal families, and neither were the Burkes and Barrys, but the wealth of the Darcy and Plunkett families was considerable.<sup>40</sup> In order to compensate for their financial losses in the late 1640s and 1650s, Catholic bishops could only draw on their families' money or make appeals to the generosity of their host countries. Those who fled to France drew assistance from three sources: subsidies officially granted by the États de Bretagne and the assembly of the French clergy, the financial support of fellow priests and religious congregations, and day-to-day hospitality afforded by private individuals of sufficient wealth and charitable disposition; this latter group includes both Irish and French benefactors. The frequent references in the biographies of the Irish bishops abroad to their finances and resources serve as proof of the seriousness and precariousness of their material circumstances during exile. For instance, John Lynch relates that Bishop Francis Kirwan of Killala was forced to sell part of his personal possessions on arrival in Nantes.<sup>41</sup> Bishop Andrew Lynch was extremely active in seeking financial support for the exiled prelates. The wide-ranging intellectual and theological training he had received in Paris no doubt familiarised him with the administrative machinery of the French Church and probably also that of the French kingdom, and facilitated his undertakings. In December 1653 the États de Bretagne granted 1,500 *livres* to each of three bishops exiled in Brittany: Lynch, Barry and Plunkett.

The concern of the États for those Irish prelates living in the province was constant, with further aid granted again in 1655, 1657 and thereafter, and payments to Bishop Lynch recorded as late as 1667.<sup>42</sup> The relatively large sums given are indicative of the special esteem in which the bishops were held in Brittany. In the mid-seventeenth century, 200 *livres* would cover a full year's expenses for a member of a religious order such as the Oratorians, and it is likely that the Irish bishops shared some of what they received with the priests who accompanied them. Bishop Kirwan is said to have distributed a third of the monies he received to the poor.<sup>43</sup> In addition to lending financial assistance to the prelates, the États de Bretagne granted aid on several occasions to exiled Irish priests, 60 *livres* being the standard sum.

Having successfully elicited significant financial support for his compatriots from the États de Bretagne, Bishop Lynch – who was appointed procurator by his colleagues – proceeded to address a memorandum to the general assembly of the French clergy in 1656. His past experience as procurator and treasurer of the German Nation in the University of Paris in the 1620s may have been one reason why his fellow bishops delegated the task to him.<sup>44</sup> The memorandum, written in Latin, described the poverty of the seven Irish bishops then in France, begged for aid in the name of the Church's traditional understanding of solidarity, and alluded to the long history of the Irish Church.<sup>45</sup> The exiles' case aroused compassion, but also some distrust among the French clerical elite. The assembly's first step was

<sup>40</sup> Cregan, 'Counter-Reformation episcopate', pp 95–103.

<sup>41</sup> Lynch, *Pii antistitis icon*, p. 223.

<sup>42</sup> Archives Départementales d'Ille-et-Vilaine, C. 2778, C. 2779, C. 2780; see also Registres Comptables (accounts registers), C. 2983, C. 2984, C. 2985.

<sup>43</sup> Lynch, *Pii antistitis icon*, p. 203.

<sup>44</sup> L. W. B. Brockliss and Patrick Ferté, 'Prosopography of Irish clerics in the Universities of Paris and Toulouse, 1573–1792' in *Archiv. Hib.*, lviii (2004), p. 135.

<sup>45</sup> Factum, undated, in Bibliothèque de Sainte-Geneviève, Paris, E. 4o 1842, inv 1097, pièce 10. The content of this memorandum is authenticated in Lynch, *De praesulibus*, ii, 209.

therefore to consult the papal nuncio in Paris, di Bagno, to ascertain the actual state of persecution in Ireland and to verify that the exiled bishops were in communion with the Holy See. Significantly, to these questions the nuncio answered that 'persecution is not so severe in Ireland as they [the exiles] represent; that Catholics were tolerated there and that bishops and churchmen were permitted to exercise their functions in secret'. Consequently, he advised that 'if the clergy of France wish to grant them some means of existence ... it would be wise to distribute it gradually, and on condition that they return to their dioceses, where their presence was necessary'.<sup>46</sup>

The assembly followed the nuncio's advice and granted the Irish exiles 1,000 *livres* for the time being, with the promise of a further 2,000 'when they are about to depart for their dioceses'. It also ordered that the Irish prelates should not carry out any function in France unless asked to do so by the bishops of France. This was partly a reaction to the assembly's having been informed of breaches of this rule. Bishop Andrew Lynch thanked the assembly for the assistance provided. However, in a move to counter the nuncio's interpretation of events in Ireland, he expressed his wish that

information be gathered about the manner in which the prelates had been banished from their bishoprics, which they had only left under duress and having been subjected to violence and that they hoped the Assembly would do them the justice of believing that nothing would give them greater joy than to be able to return to their dioceses if they had the freedom to do so.

The following year, in response either to Lynch's representations or to independent reports, the French hierarchy, who were much less generous than their Breton counterparts, paid the remainder of the promised sum to the exiled bishops when they acknowledged that these prelates were indeed prevented from returning to their country.<sup>47</sup> The distribution of the remaining 2,000 *livres* was entrusted to Bishop de Neuville of St Malo, doubtless because of his frequent contacts with some of the exiled prelates, such as Andrew Lynch. The assembly's cautious handling of the Irish exiles was very much in keeping with the normal procedures of the Church's leadership. (For example, in Spain, when an Irish cleric was being considered for a position of responsibility, it was not unusual for a Church commissary to be dispatched to Ireland to inquire about his reputation and the attachment of his ancestors to the faith. One such visit in 1674 resulted in the compilation of a remarkably informative genealogical document relating to the Lynch family of Galway.<sup>48</sup>) Considerations of ecclesiastical politics may also have prompted the assembly's reluctance, given that a number of the bishops were not in communion with Rome at this point.

Bishop Lynch's commitment to obtaining financial aid met with criticism, and his contemporaries' judgements of him diverged. When circumstances rendered his return to Ireland feasible in 1665, he again wrote to Rome seeking assistance

<sup>46</sup> Antoine Duranthon, *Procès-verbaux des Assemblées Générales du clergé de France*, 1770, tome iv, 409–11, 1051 (the original minutes of the decisions are in the Archives Nationales, Paris (henceforth A.N.), under G. 8/653).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> James Hardiman (ed.), 'The pedigree of Doctor Dominick Lynch, 1674' in *Miscellany of the Irish Archaeological Society*, i (1846), pp 44–59.

to meet the cost of his travel and lodgings.<sup>49</sup> However, the Franciscan Peter Walsh believed that Lynch managed to ensure himself an income of 3,000 *livres* a year – far more than his poor diocese could yield – which caused Walsh to suspect the motives for Lynch's hasty departure from France for his homeland.<sup>50</sup> While John Lynch remained neutral on this subject, Rinuccini's declaration in 1646 that 'No better man can be found for Kilfenora than Andrew Linch, of whom I continue to hear from every one the most favourable reports' suggests that Walsh's suspicions may not have been warranted.<sup>51</sup> Bishop Kirwan, on the other hand, showed exceptional selflessness and, indeed, provoked dissatisfaction among some of his colleagues when declaring openly that the exiled Irish Catholic nobility, who had given support and aid to the bishops when in Ireland, were more deserving of the sums granted by the French clerical assemblies.<sup>52</sup>

With the passage of time, the assembly of the French clergy exhibited greater awareness of the reality of the situation of these exiled Irish bishops. In 1665 Archbishop Edmund O'Reilly, primate of Ireland, requested aid from the assembly on his return from Rome. He was granted 200 *livres* and returned to Ireland, only to be banished the following year in the aftermath of the remonstrance controversy. He made his way back to France and died in Saumur in 1669. (He was buried in Notre Dame des Ardillers, the town's Oratorian sanctuary.<sup>53</sup>) From 1686 onwards, the assembly granted pensions of up to 600 *livres* per year to certain needy bishops, in a manner similar to the pensions given to former Protestant ministers who had converted to Catholicism. This was normal procedure for such a long-term measure. John O'Molony (Jean de Molony) enjoyed such a pension from 1686, following his translation from Killaloe to Limerick, a diocese that could not provide any income for its Catholic bishop.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, James Lynch, successor to John Burke as archbishop of Tuam, ended his days in the Irish college in Paris, living to over a hundred years of age and receiving a pension from 1710 until his death in 1713.<sup>55</sup>

In addition to these official grants, individual churchmen showed exceptional generosity towards the Irish. Evidence for such acts of charity is sparse, but St Vincent de Paul's letters include accounts of benevolent gestures. St Vincent was well acquainted with the circumstances of Catholics in Ireland through the reports of his missionaries and Irish members of his congregation. He contributed, along with 'some persons of piety,' to the support of Robert Barry, bishop of Cork and Cloyne, who lived in Nantes and with whom he was in personal contact. On at least three occasions between 1655 and 1657, St Vincent sent Barry sums ranging from 100 to 300 *livres*.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Millett, 'Calendar of volume 13 of the *Fondo di Vienna*', p. 46.

<sup>50</sup> Walsh, *Hist.*, p. 747.

<sup>51</sup> Brady, *Episcopal succession*, p. 350.

<sup>52</sup> Lynch, *Pii antistitis icon*, pp 203–7.

<sup>53</sup> Idem, *De praesulibus*, i, 145. The Nantes connection is noted in Walsh, 'Irish exiles. III' in *I.E.R.*, 4th ser. (July–Dec. 1897), p. 153.

<sup>54</sup> Brady, *Episcopal succession*. The published nomination papers mention this absence of resources. See also Francis Finegan, 'Irish pensioners of the French clergy 1686–1778' in *I.E.R.*, cv (1966), pp 73–92.

<sup>55</sup> A.N., dossiers des pensions, G. 8/233, G. 8/247; Finegan, 'Irish pensioners', pp 75, 78.

<sup>56</sup> St Vincent de Paul, *Correspondance*, ed. Coste, v, 414; vi, 133, 152. Not all Vincent de Paul's letters survived, and further letters relating to Irish affairs and individuals no doubt existed.

Finally, thanks to the hospitality of pious individuals with means, the Irish bishops were provided with accommodation befitting their status. Bishop Kirwan was one such beneficiary. After his stay in Nantes,<sup>57</sup> the widow of a councillor of the *parlement* of Brittany, Madame Brandin de Bellestre, gave him lodgings in Rennes for two years, c. 1657–59.<sup>58</sup> Kirwan was subsequently lodged by another philanthropic individual, Julien Le Breton de Béqueneul, clerk of the *parlement*, and after his death, in the house of his son-in-law, M. de la Poterie, in the St Hélier suburb of Rennes.

### III

Like all migrant groups, the exiled Irish bishops brought problems with them from Ireland to their country of refuge, and first among these was their relationship with the central authorities of the Church. Rinuccini's excommunication of those clerics and laymen who accepted the peace proposed by Ormond to the Confederates in 1648 affected some of the exiled bishops, as it was equally applicable in France. On his arrival in Ireland in 1645, Rinuccini had received the support of the Catholic hierarchy. He initially helped the Confederate cause, particularly through use of the papal monies he had brought from Rome, and his actions boosted the confidence of the clergy.<sup>59</sup> However, his intervention created a split in the Irish Church: among the exiled bishops, Barry and Magennis signed the excommunication order, while other bishops appealed to the supreme council of the Confederation and to Rome against the nuncio's decision. Thus, the hierarchy split into two roughly equal groups, with nearly all the bishops of Old English origin opposing Rinuccini.<sup>60</sup> Archbishop John Burke, described in the *Commentarius Rinuccinianus* as 'a stubborn, obdurate man',<sup>61</sup> appears to have assumed the role of leader of the opposition to the nuncio.<sup>62</sup> He was joined in this stance by Bishops French, Kirwan and Plunkett, the two latter being Rinuccini's own appointees.

Since 1648 the position of several exiled bishops in relation to Rome had been difficult. The death of Pope Innocent X and election of Alexander VII in 1655 reawakened their hopes that the decree of excommunication would be lifted. However, on 27 August 1655 the new pontiff published a brief ordering the excommunicated prelates to seek individual absolution from any one of four named bishops; of these, only Bishop Barry was in France. The bishops of Tuam and Killala had no sooner landed in Nantes when, together with the bishops of Ferns and Ardagh, they sent the Carmelite Oliver Walsh to Rome

<sup>57</sup> *Comment. Rinucc.*, v, 278, 280. There are letters from Kirwan dated at Nantes, Oct. 1657, and Rennes, May 1658.

<sup>58</sup> Barthélemy Pocquet's *Histoire de la Bretagne* (Rennes, 1913) mentions her among a group of women whose 'virtue, active charity and intelligent devotion' are deserving of attention. She further demonstrated her philanthropic nature in 1655 when she founded a Magdalen house in Rennes for reformed prostitutes. See Lynch, *Pii antiistitis icon*, p. 207; Frédéric Saulnier, *Le parlement de Bretagne* (Rennes, 1909), notice on Brandin de Bellestre.

<sup>59</sup> Brady, *Episcopal succession*, ii, 346.

<sup>60</sup> Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic Reformation in Ireland*, p. 236.

<sup>61</sup> 'vir pertinax et durae cervicis' (*Comment. Rinucc.*, v, 263).

<sup>62</sup> Ó hAnnracháin, 'Lost in Rinuccini's shadow', p. 182.

to seek an acceptable solution.<sup>63</sup> This deputation was unsuccessful. Burke and Kirwan resigned themselves to requesting personal absolution, which was granted in early 1656 and before October 1657 respectively.<sup>64</sup> The attestation of absolution of Bishop Burke was given shortly before the Irish bishops' petition was submitted to the assembly of the French clergy. One can thus speculate that Burke's attestation may have been a condition imposed by the nuncio in Paris in response to the assembly's enquiries about the Irish prelates' communion with Rome. John Lynch makes no mention of these canonical difficulties either in his history of the Irish bishops or in his biography of Francis Kirwan. He cannot, however, have been unaware of them, though he probably preferred to keep silent on the matter. He wished to restate his total obedience to Rome, no doubt because Rinuccini had criticised his attitude. The closing words of *Cambrensus Eversus* (1662), his first published work, testify explicitly to this:

But my zeal for the defence of my country is not so predominant as to exceed the fervour of my obedience to the Roman and Apostolical Church, to whose decisions I submit myself without the slightest reserve. If, therefore, the ardour of my zeal in defence of my country has elicited from me, in any portion of this work, anything which the church may condemn, I retract it unconditionally, my sole desire being to adhere to whatever may merit her approbation.<sup>65</sup>

#### IV

Each bishop responded to the prospect of returning to Ireland in his own way. From 1665 onwards, all were faced with such a decision, as the Catholic Church in Ireland had, by that time, recovered some of its liberties, and expectations of a *modus vivendi* with the Restoration regime were rising. Bishops Darcy, Plunkett and Bourke chose to return, Bourke being an example of an element within the hierarchy who strove to remain as close as possible to their flock in Ireland. Plunkett was a relative of Oliver Plunkett, and as abbot of St Mary's in Dublin had overseen Oliver's education up to the age of sixteen. The *Commentarius Rinuccinianus* accused him of having feigned loyalty *astutissime* to the nuncio before being made bishop in 1647. His appointment had not been in keeping with custom in the diocese, as Rinuccini reported in 1646:

The clergy and nobles of Ardagh sent me memorials with many signatures, praying me to represent to the Holy See, that Abbat [*sic*] Plunkett, who was recommended by the Council, not being of Leinster, and never having been in those parts, can never be accepted, and they propose in his room Fr Francesco Faral.<sup>66</sup>

Significantly, when Plunkett returned to Ireland, he seems to have preferred to

<sup>63</sup> *Comment. Rinucc.*, v, 254–5.

<sup>64</sup> P. J. Corish, 'Two contemporary historians of the Confederation of Kilkenny: John Lynch and Richard O'Ferrall' in *I.H.S.*, viii, no. 31 (Mar. 1952), pp 217–36; letter from Bishop Kirwan, Oct. 1657, which indicates that he had received absolution from Barry (*Comment. Rinucc.*, v, 278); for Bourke see attestation by Bishop Barry, Nantes, that he absolved Archbishop Bourke from the censures, Feb. 1656 (Millett, 'Calendar of volume 13 of the *Fondo di Vienna*', p. 41).

<sup>65</sup> *Cambrensis Eversus*, ed. Matthew Kelly (3 vols, Dublin, 1851–52), iii, 519.

<sup>66</sup> Brady, *Episcopal succession*, ii, 348.

live in Dublin rather than in his diocese of Ardagh.<sup>67</sup> One might speculate that had Bishop Kirwan of Killala lived long enough to envisage returning to Ireland, he might not have chosen to live an arduous life in a diocese where his nomination had not been popular.<sup>68</sup> After the Restoration, even those bishops who had chosen to remain in France occasionally travelled to Ireland. Andrew Lynch returned in 1666 to attend the assembly called by Peter Walsh to seek an arrangement between the Church and government. He also travelled in 1677 to England and Ireland, where he died in 1681.<sup>69</sup> Archbishop John Bourke of Tuam died, while celebrating Mass, five years after his return to Ireland.<sup>70</sup>

John Lynch wrote about the problems associated with returning to Ireland in a Latin poem composed c. 1667 in answer to O'Flaherty's question, '*Cur in patriam non redis?*' ('Why do you not return to your homeland?'). His answer struck a disillusioned note: he was too old to return and face insidious persecution, and freedom was indispensable to him.<sup>71</sup> This illustrates the importance of the problem for exiled clerics. A letter from St Vincent de Paul to a young Irish priest, urging him to be obedient and participate in the work of the mission that Vincent had founded, formulates the problem as Hobson's choice:

What will you do? If you stay in France, you will run the risk of finishing on the streets, as has happened to so many other Irish priests. And as for returning to your country, what can you do there? Other workers of the faith are hindered there, not only to live there as priests, but to practise any occupation because of persecution by the heretics.<sup>72</sup>

Lynch's poem stressed the freedom he had found in France to practise his faith, in contrast to the threat of arrest, the necessity of saying Mass in an attic for fear of discovery (a stratagem he describes in his biography of Bishop Kirwan), and the occupation of places of worship in Ireland by Protestants.<sup>73</sup> Some of these considerations must have been shared by the exiled bishops, who, like John Lynch, had no great desire to return 'to live under the yoke', as Lynch wrote,<sup>74</sup> although his position was different from theirs as he was not considered responsible for the welfare of a diocese. On the whole, the prospect of return to Ireland must have been viewed by the bishops as a considerable challenge, however honourable a duty: in their lives, they had first seen the freedom to practise their religion and the

<sup>67</sup> Walsh, *History*, p. 749.

<sup>68</sup> Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic Reformation in Ireland*, p. 238.

<sup>69</sup> Walsh, *History*, p. 747. For the 1677 journey, see letter from Bishop Lynch, 5 Oct. 1677 (Evreux Diocesan Archives, France). For his death, see Lyons, 'The emergence of an Irish community', p. 116; John Flanagan, *Kilfenora: a history* (2nd ed., 1992), pp 46–7, quoting a 1979 study by Revd Martin Coen, who traces Lynch's stay in his diocese from 1677 to his death in 1681.

<sup>70</sup> Lynch, *De praesulibus*, ii, 261.

<sup>71</sup> See *Ir. Arch. Soc. Misc.*, i (1846), pp 90–6, from the original manuscript, then in the possession of James Hardiman.

<sup>72</sup> Letter to Luke Plunkett, priest, in Brittany, 19 Apr. 1659 (St Vincent de Paul, *Correspondance*, ed. Coste, vii, 509 (authors' translation)). Plunkett was poorly integrated by all accounts: Vincent de Paul had previously discussed his lack of discipline, and according to the letters, Plunkett's command of French was so limited that he was barely useful to the congregation (*ibid.*, vii, 262). Boyle, *Vincent de Paul and Vincentians*, pp 246–50, includes English translations of two letters to Plunkett.

<sup>73</sup> *Ir. Arch. Soc. Misc.*, i, pp 90–6.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94: '*acerbil rursus ego domini nolo subire jugum*'.

pomp of Counter-Reformation ritual on the Continent during their training, then for some nine or ten years in Ireland after 1641, and again during their last exile. Following this experience, a third return to perilous conditions in their latter years cannot have seemed attractive.

In contrast to Darcy, Plunkett and Burke together with Bishops Comerford, Barry and Lynch represent that cohort of the Irish clergy who had become completely integrated into the dioceses of their host country. With the agreement of the local bishops, they carried out the duties of auxiliary bishops, or *chorepiscopi*, the medieval term used by John Lynch to describe auxiliary bishops who were not in possession of a church living and were not coadjutors. Foreigners could not hold benefices in France unless they had been naturalised by means of letters of naturality, nor administer the sacraments in any diocese without permission from the relevant bishop. Prelates were very conscious of this rule.<sup>75</sup> The Irish prelates were given offices to perform by the bishops of their host dioceses; indeed, shortly after his arrival in St Malo in August 1650, Comerford was delegated to cleanse and bless a church in Dinan that had been 'polluted' by a brawl between drunken butchers and other civilians.<sup>76</sup> Nantes diocese gave refuge to Comerford and Barry in turn, and availed of both men's pastoral services. Both were buried in the cathedral with solemn rites, and each epitaph shows the high esteem in which they were held by the local congregations. Comerford's reads:

Here lies Revd. Patrice de Comerford, bishop of Waterford and Lismore in Ireland. Persecuted in his own country by the seditaries of England, he withdrew to France where he found security and protection. Full of confidence in the goodness of Eternal God, he lived with patience and bore the trials of this life with resignation. He died AD 1652.

Barry's reads:

Messire Robert Barry, by the grace of God and of the Holy Apostolic See Bishop of Cork and Cloyne in Ireland, having taken refuge in Nantes from the persecution of the English heretics, died on 7 July 1662.<sup>77</sup>

Andrew Lynch discharged his duties in the diocese of St Malo and later in Rouen, and consecrated several chapels in both dioceses.<sup>78</sup> Francis Kirwan consecrated churches in the area between Rennes and St Malo.<sup>79</sup> Patrick Plunkett was attached to the diocese of Séez in Normandy before his return to Dublin. As a Cistercian, he took an interest in Perseigne abbey in the neighbouring diocese of Le Mans, as evidenced

<sup>75</sup> The legal situation was often referred to in canon-law texts in *ancien régime* France; see for example Jean Pontas's *Dictionnaire des cas de conscience* (Paris, 1715), under 'bénéfice'. Roman documentation calendared by Benignus Millett, however, suggests that some of the Irish bishops did have Church incomes.

<sup>76</sup> Alain Croix, *Moi, Jean Martin, recteur de Plouvellec: curés 'journalistes' de la Renaissance à la fin du 17e siècle* (Rennes, 1993), pp 145–6.

<sup>77</sup> Walsh, 'Irish exiles. III' in *I.E.R.*, 4th ser., ii (July–Dec. 1897), pp 130, 134, quotes the epitaphs, which have since been destroyed. Barry's epitaph is also quoted in Patrick Hurley, 'A bishop of Cork and the Irish at Nantes' in *Dublin Review*, 3rd ser. (1892), pp 38–51.

<sup>78</sup> Guillotin de Corson, Amédée et al., *Pouillé historique de l'archevêché de Rennes* (6 vols, Paris, 1880–86); he consecrated the chapel in the Capuchin house in Caudebec-en-Caux (near Rouen) on 3 June 1668, according to Abbé Miette, 'Quelques antiquités civiles et ecclésiastiques de la ville de Caudebec' (manuscript c. 1820), (Bibliothèque Municipale, Rouen, M. bt Y. 39). In keeping with the inconsistent spellings of the time, Lynch was said to be variously bishop of Finibor, Fimbor or Dimbar.

<sup>79</sup> De Corson, Amédée et al., *Pouillé historique ... de Rennes*, v, 769.



by the monastery's registers, which noted in 1657 that several received the habit from 'the suffragan bishop of Séez, Bishop of Darda in Ireland, a member of our order'.<sup>80</sup> The fact that he was so described indicates that these bishops had official status, possibly accompanied by an income, in the diocese to which they were attached.<sup>81</sup> Table 2 (facing) summarises the known pastoral duties that they carried out in different dioceses. In spite of the variation in terminology, the functions are identical, though it is difficult to know whether duties were long-term or occasional.

One of the most interesting aspects of the character of the displaced bishops is manifest in behaviour that appears to indicate the holiness of some and the political ambition of others. Kirwan spent his exiled years in devotion, according to the biography written by John Lynch during his own exile. Lynch's life fits a pattern of lives of saintly persons written shortly after their death. Kirwan was consecrated bishop in the church of St Lazare priory in Paris on 7 May 1645 in the presence of thirteen other bishops.<sup>82</sup> He then proceeded to his diocese of Killala. During his last term of exile, he was attracted to the Society of Jesus, and wrote shortly before his death that, although unable to become a Jesuit, he wished to follow the society's rules. He died at Rennes on 26 August 1661 and was buried in the new Jesuit chapel of St Thomas.<sup>83</sup> René du Chemin, a notary in the city, wrote in his diary that 'This good bishop was a man of great virtue, who had been exiled and banished from his country for his faith; his life set such an excellent example to the public that he is thought to be a saint, having lived and died like an angel.'<sup>84</sup> Large numbers of people filed past his coffin, taking relics away with them. His portrait, which confers the appearance of a mystic, and which was probably drawn after his death, was reproduced on the first page of the biography.

Exile in the early modern period could often be the occasion of engaging in greater devotion, and adversity could prompt a deepening of the conviction that such conditions had been sent by God, especially as a trial for those who had fallen from power. James II's French exile is one well-known example. Others of the same political stance as the excommunicated Old English bishops underwent an intensification of religious sentiment while in France: the exiled Ormondist

<sup>80</sup> 'M. le suffragant de Séez, evesque de Darda en Hybernie, religieux de notre ordre' (register transcribed in Frédéric Lemeunier, 'Deux autres Irlandais – les évêques d'Ardagh et de Ferns au diocèse du Mans (XVIIe [siècle].)' in *Province du Maine*, lxxxv (1983), pp 26–7.

<sup>81</sup> Finegan, 'Irish pensioners', p. 76, claims that the suffragan sees were so highly prized that foreigners would not be admitted to them, and that the bishop in question, Richard Piers (in the early eighteenth century) was vicar-general rather than suffragan of Sens. Confusion on this matter is also evident among the writers in French.

<sup>82</sup> St Lazare was the seat of Vincent de Paul's Congregation of the Mission.

<sup>83</sup> His death was registered in two different parishes, in two languages: Toussaints (in French) and St Helier, the parish in which he died, in Latin, which was rare at that time (registers in Archives Municipales de Rennes, Paroisse Saint-Hélier, 27 Aug. 1661, Toussaints, 29 Aug. 1661). See also Abbé Hamard, 'Un prélat oublié, François Kirwan' in *Revue de Bretagne, de Vendée et d'Anjou*, iv (1891), pp 435–49.

<sup>84</sup> 'Journal d'un bourgeois de Rennes' in Paul de la Bigne, *Mélanges d'histoire et d'archéologie*, i (1857), p. 137.

Table 2: *Pastoral duties of exiled Irish prelates in France, 1652–77*

Name	Host diocese	Bishop of the diocese (dates of office)	Function	Estimated period	Source
Robert Barry	Nantes	Gabriel de Beauvau	'Chorepiscopus'	1652–62	<i>De praesulibus</i>
Francis Kirwan	Dol	Robert Cupif (1652–59)	Occasional duties	1658–66	<i>Pii antistitis icon Pouillé de Rennes</i>
Andrew Lynch	Saint Malo/ Dol	St Malo Ferdinand de Neuville (1646–57) François de la Villemontée (1660–70) Dol Robert Cupif (1652–9)	Occasional duties	1655–66 <sup>85</sup>	<i>Pouillé de Rennes</i>
	Rouen	François de Harlay (1651–71) François de Medavy (1671–91)	'Chorepiscopus'	1663?–77	<i>De praesulibus</i>
Patrick Plunkett	Séez	François de Medavy (1652–71)	Suffragan	1657–65	Registre de l'abbaye de Perseigne <sup>86</sup> <i>De praesulibus</i>
Anthony McGeoghegan	Rouen	François de Harlay	Duties of assistance	1657	<i>De praesulibus</i>

Catholics such as the Muskerry McCarthys leaned towards Jansenism,<sup>87</sup> and the *Commentarius Rinuccinianus* reports other examples.<sup>88</sup> However, a more cogent explanation for the flowering of devotion is the practical issue of freedom to practise, which was much curtailed in Ireland at the time, as it had been in the early seventeenth century. In living lives of devotion, adhering to vows and following Counter-Reformation practices, the Irish clergy were simply conforming to rules, and this should not be seen as something exceptional, although for many it did mark a culture change.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>85</sup> It is difficult to give precise dates for the last duties in St Malo and the first duties in Rouen. There may have been periods where Lynch officiated in both. A declaration by the archbishop of Rouen, 27 Mar. 1663, indicates that Lynch ordained an Irish priest at Rouen (*Fr Luke Wadding, commem. vol.*, p. 600). On the other hand, Lynch figures in the St Malo section of the 1666 list of Irish Catholics residing in Brittany (A.E., *Mémoires et documents, France, MS 1508*). There also exists a letter by Bishop Lynch of Mar. 1665 from St Malo requesting subsidies from the Holy See (Millett, 'Calendar', p. 46).

<sup>86</sup> Lemeunier, 'Deux autres Irlandais', p. 26.

<sup>87</sup> The famous Irish Jansenist, John Callaghan, was tutor to the young Muskerrys in France (see Thomas O'Connor, *Irish Jansenists, 1600–70: religion and politics in Flanders, France, Ireland and Rome* (Dublin, 2008)).

<sup>88</sup> Inchinquin's conversion to Catholicism is a case in point (*Comment. Rinucc.*, v, p. 408). See also the reference to the Muskerrys' piety and the devotion of the Roches of Fermoy while in exile (*ibid.*, pp 411–12).

<sup>89</sup> Walsh, 'Irish exiles. I' in *I.E.R.*, 4th ser., i (Jan.–June 1897), p. 320, found the decision

While Andrew Lynch may have been attracted to the easier life he found in France, French showed a marked interest in political affairs. From the early stages of the Confederation of Kilkenny, he played an important politico-religious role, and was sent as a member of a delegation to the Holy See. Made bishop of Ferns in 1645, he used his contacts in Rome to assume positions independent of the nuncio's policy, and supported the 1648 truce, against Rinuccini's advice. Dionisio Massari, dean of Fermo and envoy to Rome in 1646, is quoted in the *Commentarius Rinuccinianus* describing French as 'a most cunning fox'.<sup>90</sup> John Lynch, on the other hand, praised his integrity, faith and talent.<sup>91</sup> French anticipated the defeat of the Irish Catholic cause, and crossed to the Continent in 1650 to seek the protection of Charles de Lorraine for Ireland against Cromwell. When it became apparent that his solicitations were in vain, he moved to France, and subsequently settled in Santiago de Compostela in Spain, and later lived in Ghent in Spanish Flanders, where he died. He produced several works in English on the Irish situation, seeking to justify his own conduct in the allegorical manner of letters of a country gentleman to a lord at court. The first of these works was published in Louvain.

## V

Ecclesiastical emigration led to the French Church, with its Gallican tendency, influencing the Irish Church through refreshed links between clergy from the two jurisdictions. Although knowledge of Ireland remained poor in France down to the mid-eighteenth century, when much of French opinion was based on vague and contradictory clichés about the Irish,<sup>92</sup> within the confines of the ecclesiastical sphere, multiple links were fostered between the two countries. Certain bishops, such as Gabriel de Beauvau and François Harlay de Champvallon, in Nantes and Rouen respectively, took a particular interest in the welfare of the exiled bishops they encountered. Correspondence from Irish clergy exiled in France and their requests for bishoprics or other positions after 1660 were supported by various French bishops and influential figures, such as the king's confessor, Père Annat.<sup>93</sup> Harlay de Champvallon, archbishop of Rouen and subsequently of Paris, was

of the Irish nuns to live a cloistered life laudable and beyond what a rigid theology would require, whereas it would have been in harmony with the ideals of the order. Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic Reformation in Ireland*, pp 247–8, remarks on the cultural difference between the Catholic Church in Ireland and on the Continent.

<sup>90</sup> 'quasi callidissima vulpes' (*Comment. Rinucc.*, v, 264).

<sup>91</sup> Lynch, *De praesulibus*, i, 355.

<sup>92</sup> Éamon Ó Ciosáin, 'Voloumous deamboulare: the wandering Irish in French literature 1600–1789' in Anthony Coulson (ed.), *Exiles and migrants: crossing thresholds in European culture and society* (Brighton, 1997), pp 32–42; idem, 'Attitudes towards Ireland and the Irish in Enlightenment France' in Graham Gargett and Geraldine Sheridan (eds), *Ireland and the French Enlightenment 1700–1800* (Basingstoke, 1999), pp 129–51.

<sup>93</sup> Testimonial in favour of Patrick Plunkett by F. Rouxel de Médavy, bishop of Séz, 5 June 1662 (Millett, 'Calendar of volume 13 of the *Fondo di Vienna*', p. 45); testimonial in favour of John O'Molony by two French archbishops and two bishops, July 1664 (*ibid.*, p. 32); also, petition of John Sweeney, c. 1664, supported by Fr François Annat (*idem*, 'Calendar of volume 16 of the *Fondo di Vienna*' in *Collect. Hib.*, xliii (2001), p. 17).

very close to Louis XIV, whom he advised, and was a highly influential figure in French politics as well as in the Church.<sup>94</sup> The various branches of the Harlay family appear to have supported Andrew Lynch; he was first given functions by Ferdinand de Neuville, bishop of St Malo and nephew of Bishop Achille de Harlay. Lynch subsequently appears to have become acquainted with François de Harlay de Champvallon, who supported both Lynch and John O'Molony, bishop of Killaloe, giving them positions in Rouen archdiocese and providing a testimonial for O'Molony in 1664. O'Molony's supporters among the French clergy in 1664 were major figures of the time: Harlay de Champvallon, de La Motte Haudancourt, bishop of Auch, Faure, bishop of Amiens, and de Maupas du Tour, bishop of Evreux (and friend of Vincent de Paul). O'Molony was consecrated on 6 March 1672 in the archbishop's chapel in Paris, in the presence of other dignitaries such as the bishops of Angouleme, Le Mans and Tournai.<sup>95</sup> O'Molony had first come to notice in Paris as a student in 1648, and during his career had built up political connections in France, later becoming a pensioner of the French clergy. He was also an important figure in settling disputes among the Irish clergy in Paris in the 1660s and Ireland in the 1670s, and was instrumental in setting up the Irish college in Paris.

Andrew Lynch, meanwhile, had been maintained in his position as auxiliary in Rouen by Harlay de Champvallon's successor, none other than François Rouxel de Médavy, who as bishop of Séez had given Patrick Plunkett the position of suffragan. Plunkett had another Norman connection who would later become an illustrious figure in the French Church, namely Armand-Jean de Bouthillier de Rancé, abbot of La Trappe and promoter of strict observance in the Cistercian order. Andrew Lynch blessed Rancé after his profession in 1664, on the day before Rancé took up his position as regular abbot.<sup>96</sup> If John Lynch is to be believed, Plunkett lived an austere life not unlike that which Rancé practised and promoted.<sup>97</sup> This is comparable to the portrait of Francis Kirwan's increased piety and ascetic demeanour in exile.

It is therefore possible to discern a visible French influence in the Irish Catholic Church in this period, alongside the increasingly intermeshed relations between the exiled bishops and the French hierarchy in the 1660s and 1670s. Ireland, like France, belonged to the communion of Catholic European nations. Hence, debates that divided the French Church, such as the Jansenist controversy, also affected the Irish Church. The internationalisation of Irish clerical education favoured the importation of these ideas from France or Flanders. The upshot was that diocesan synods in Ireland debated these questions, condemned extremist tendencies and managed to carry out such activities in spite of the hostile political environment. Correspondence between Ireland and Rome on the one hand, and Irish exiled elements in Paris and Roman authorities on the other, points to similar preoccupations with preventing the spread of Jansenist ideas and forestalling nominations of persons suspected of such sympathies.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>94</sup> See René Pillorget and Suzanne Pillorget, *France baroque, France classique* (2 vols, Paris, 1995), ii, 507–8.

<sup>95</sup> Lynch, *De praesulibus*, ii, 188–9. The Harlay connections were more extensive than discovered by Boyle and Hogan (see above, n. 8), who were mainly following *De praesulibus*.

<sup>96</sup> Lemeunier, 'Deux autres irlandais'.

<sup>97</sup> Lynch, *De praesulibus*, i, 173.

<sup>98</sup> For examples, see Brendan Jennings, 'Ireland and Propaganda Fide' in *Archiv. Hib.*, xix (1956), pp 18, 31–5, 55.

Similarly, the Catholic hierarchy's pursuit of an accommodation with Protestant state authority necessitated 'Gallican'-type solutions.<sup>99</sup> The distinction drawn between the liberties of the local Church and obedience to the king of England on the one hand, and obedience to the Pope in matters spiritual on the other, is indicative of the adoption of Gallican solutions to Irish problems. It cannot have been an accident that among the initial advocates of the remonstrance was Andrew Lynch, French-educated and someone who had considerable contacts with the French hierarchy. Such an approach was tried with a view to preserving a minimum of liberty for the Catholic Church, though in the final analysis, it failed to achieve this objective. Further evidence of French influence in Irish ecclesiastical affairs is to be seen in the tension between supporters of Rome and 'royalists', which resembled the conflict between Ultramontanes and Gallicans in the French Church.

## VI

In the main, the exile of those Irish bishops who fled to France in the mid-seventeenth century was not especially arduous. They earned the respect of the local population, in certain cases quite soon after their arrival. After some years, they had the opportunity to return to Ireland if they wished, once conditions had settled following the Restoration. Those who did return were all over sixty years of age, which indicates a commitment to their dioceses, and in one case to the position of bishop in Ireland. Andrew Lynch, who returned on an occasional basis, maintained a notable level of activity in both countries even at this stage of his life. In general, the Irish clerical community in France was characterised by considerable dynamism. Its members were neither marginalised nor assimilated; the bishops played a particular role, under somewhat unusual conditions, which set them apart from lay emigrants.

The circumstances of their exile were influenced by fault lines within the Irish Church, such as the division between the Old English and Gaelic communities, and the more recent division over Rinuccini's policies in Ireland. The reception afforded them in France also highlights nuances in the national Church, as it is clear that the exiled bishops and other elements were given a cool welcome in Paris, due in part to the attitude of the nuncio and Roman instructions conveyed there, whereas they were well supported by fellow prelates and provincial institutions in the provinces where they chose to live: Brittany and Normandy.

The atmosphere in the French Church may have been more congenial to Old English bishops, several of whom were on mediocre terms with Rome (first excommunicated, then absolved, only to be criticised in the 1660s for tardiness in returning home). Their attitude was arguably closer to the Gallican stance of many in the French Church than it would have been to that of prelates in Spanish lands. Apart from the political considerations, the freedom to practise and the full ceremonies of Counter-Reformation Catholicism in public life that they found in France must have appealed to their Continental training and religious mentality. Their stays in France were in the west and north-west of the kingdom, where geographical proximity and commercial links to Ireland were useful in maintaining

<sup>99</sup> James Brennan, 'A Gallican interlude in Ireland: the Irish remonstrance of 1661' in *Ir. Theol. Quart.*, xxiv (1957), pp 219–37, 283–309.

contact with their dioceses, and the presence of benefactors, both French and Irish, supported them in these regions. Their exile, far from being an interlude, continued into the Restoration period, and was a portent of the future long-term connection between the Churches of France and Ireland.<sup>100</sup>

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