4. New perspectives on the Irish colleges' network, 1560–1800

Thomas O'Connor

I. Contested historiographies

It is unfortunate that the emergence of the Irish college network in Europe followed the council of Trent and its 1563 decree on clerical education, *Cum adolescentium aetas*. This accident of timing made the former seem the consequence of the latter, creating the impression that the foundation of the colleges was the rolling out of a coherent counter-reformation pastoral strategy.[1] At the other end of the colleges' lifespan there was a second distorting temporal coincidence. The colleges' demise, or at least that of a substantial number of them in France and the Austrian Netherlands, overlapped with the French Revolution and the imposition of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. Prima facie, this suggested that the Revolution and its secularist principles brought the curtain down on the Irish colleges.

On these two temporal accidents, Catholic nationalist historiography constructed a mighty interpretative edifice according to which the colleges, as conciliar institutions, saved Irish Catholicism from English state building, the errors

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[1] See T. J. Walsh, *The Irish Continental College Movement: The Colleges at Bordeaux, Toulouse and Lille* (Dublin: Golden Eagle Books, 1973), pp. 28–9, 34.

of the Protestant reform and the allurements of traditional religion.[2] An interpretative

twin, erected on the same foundations by Protestant unionist historians, ascribed

similar historical weight to the colleges but preferred to cast them as Catholic cradles

of political subversion, idolatry and obscurantism.[3] Both interpretations assumed the

colleges' conciliar origins and their late eighteenth century demise, laying the blame

for the latter at the feet of the godless French.

Curiously, neither interpretation accounted for the mundane fact that for more

than half a century after the Henrican suppressions and confiscations, the Irish

survived well enough with no seminaries at all. This was partly, of course, because no

one was entirely clear at the time what a seminary was. But even if they had been, it is

not certain that the Irish laity, who effectively ran what might be called the Irish

Catholic church after the Henrician confiscations, would have seen the need for them.

Like most societies of the time, Irish Catholics made provision for priestly training

through an apprenticeship system, reserving academically structured spiritual, moral

and theological formation, usually in English universities, to a small clerical elite. For

the home-grown majority academic preparation for ministry was minimal. Medieval

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[2] For a summary, see Ó. Recio Morales, 'Irish émigré group strategies of survival,

adapation and integration in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Spain' in T.

O'Connor and M. A. Lyons (eds), *Irish Communities in Early Modern Europe*

(Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), pp. 240–2.

[3] For an overview of contending Irish religious historiographies in the context of the

penal laws see J. Kelly, 'The historiography of the penal laws' in J. Bergin et al. (eds),

New Perspectives on the Penal Laws (Dublin: Eighteenth-Century Ireland Society,

2011), pp. 27–52.

priestly primers, like *Ignorantia sacerdotum*, were in circulation[4] and candidates for

holy orders could sometimes spent preparatory spells in religious communities, a

practice that in parts of the country probably survived the Henrician suppressions.[5]

Mostly, however, they learned on the job, observing the local priest and repeating his

gestures. At least in the towns, sixteenth-century Irish laity seem to have been happy

enough with just a leaven of clerical learning. Liturgically conservative, they could be

doctrinally forebearing, tolerating clerical and lay traffic across fuzzy confessional

lines, at least until the middle years of Elizabeth's reign.[6] It would take nearly seventy

years before they were persuaded to dedicate any of ecclesiastical revenues they

controlled to the funding of seminaries.

Of course, with lay funding came the possibility of lay influence, less in the

management of the colleges, which was largely in Jesuit hands, than in the selection

of their students, who depended, at least in part, on the laity's financial support.

Furthermore, the effective absence of Catholic bishops for most of the early modern

period, except between 1620 and 1650 and after the 1750s gifted default influence to

certain sections of the Catholic laity, especially the nobility, the Pale gentry and port

elites. This influence varied over time and according to social status and political

conditions, but was significant both in the selection of parochial clergy and also in the

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[4] H. A. Jeffries, *Priests and Prelates of Armagh in the Age of Reformations, 1518–
1558* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), p. 52.

[5] Jeffries, *Priests and Prelates*, pp. 38–42;73–6

[6] In the beginning this was possible even at episcopal level. For the notorious example
of Miler McGrath see L. Marron, 'Documents from the State papers concerning Miler
McGrath' in *Archivium Hibernicum,* 21 (1958), 75–189.

control of their pastoral and political activities. Regarding the latter, in the crucial early years of the colleges the majority of these native lay funders were loyal supporters of the Tudor and Stuart monarchy. Moreover, they cherished their traditional governance role in the kingdom. From their point of view, the colleges were intended as anything but schools of sedition and, when it came to politics, they expected their priests to behave as loyally as themselves.[7] Furthermore, lay interests could hardly be strictly aligned with all the objectives of the Catholic reform, particularly if these included the restitution of the confiscated church property held by them since the mid sixteenth century secularization.[8]

The relatively late foundation of the seminaries, the overlooked role of Irish laity in the process and the importance of Irish loyalism complicate the traditional picture of the overseas colleges' early years. College statistics, in so far as they can be reconstructed, further muddle received accounts by relativising the pastoral importance of the colleges. The numbers speak for themselves. By the 1620s, the Irish colleges in Iberia and the Netherlands were capable together of furnishing perhaps thirty priests a year. This is a modest number, when put in the larger pastoral context

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[7] The loyalists had their critics, particularly among sections of the Gaelic Irish clergy and laity. This reflected divisions present in contemporary English Catholicism. See the essay by Michael Questier in this volume.

[8] The reestablishment of Catholicism in Ireland posed a threat to the Catholic owners of confiscated church property and remained a bone of contention in the seventeenth century. It erupted into a major intra-Catholic row during the Confederate period. See J. Kavanagh (ed.), *Commentarius Rinuccinianus*, (6 vols, Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1932-49), vol. 1, pp. 433–4.

of the 800 diocesan clergy active in Ireland in the 1620s, supplemented by up to 200 Franciscans and perhaps 200 other religious. It is clear that in the early seventeenth century only a small portion of the clergy active in Ireland could have benefited from a sojourn abroad, at best a third of diocesan clergy, with huge regional variations.[9]

This was not the only relativising factor. Of the modest portion of Irish priests who did study abroad in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, most seem to have been younger students supported by their families, generally the better off inhabitants of the port towns and their hinterlands. Overall, they appear to have slotted into the new seminary model evolving in Europe. It was a different case, however, for students from poorer families, who could not afford to pay for their education abroad. It was customary to ordain them prior to departure for Europe, permitting them to cover college fees by honouring Mass stipends accepted both at home and abroad.

This is less surprising that it might seem. The practice of ordaining men prior to their formal ecclesiastical studies was fundamentally a continuation of medieval practice. It was only later that it was justified as an emergency response to adverse

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[9] This percentage is suggested for the early seventeenth century by Patrick Corish, *The Irish Catholic Experience: A Historical Survey* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1985), p. 102. A little earlier in 1590 Miler McGrath, Anglican bishop of Cashel, reported that of thirty priests active in the Tipperary area, about five were 'seminary' educated. See J. Brady, 'Irish colleges in Europe and the Counter-reformation' in *Proceedings of the Irish Catholic Historical Committee* (1957), p. 5 and Brian Mac Cuarta, *Catholic Revival in the North of Ireland, 1603-41* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), chapters one and four.

religious conditions in Ireland.[10] Trent, in fact, imposed no obligatory course of studies prior to ordination and, only later in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as clerical formation gradually came to precede ordination in general European practice, did antecedent ordination, as practiced in Ireland, begin to appear irregular to some. The widespread and persistent practice of antecedent ordination meant that from the early seventeenth century, a good number of Irish college alumni, at certain times the majority, were already mature adults prior to their abroad experience. As well as posing a disciplinary challenge to college authorities, who often struggled to regulate their behaviour, these mature males were probably less susceptible to new influences than younger men or boys might have been.

In many cases, the best students failed to return to the home mission, having been siphoned off to foreign ministry, especially through Jesuit and Franciscan networks. In 1609, for instance, there were sixty two Irish men in the Society of Jesus, with just eighteen serving in Ireland.[11] Alleged student subornment was often a bone of contention between the papal bishops and college management. However, in the broader social context, clerical alienation was neither so negative nor so negatively viewed. On the contrary, the colleges were actually intended not only to produce priests for the domestic mission but also to distribute students permanently abroad. A striking early seventeenth century example concerns the Wadding clan, whose most

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[10] For a short discussion see H. Fenning, *Undoing of the Friars: A Study of the Novitiate Question in the Eighteenth Century*, (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 1972), pp. 55–6.

[11] E. Hogan, *Ibernia Ignatiana* (Dublin: Societas Typographica Dubliensis, 1880), p. 228.

talented clerical progeny were systematically recruited by religious orders for foreign service. The Waterford-born Michael Wadding (d. 1644), an alumnus of the Salamanca college, became a Jesuit missionary in the New World and assessor to the Mexican Inquisition.[12] His brother, Peter (1583–1644), was Jesuit chancellor of the University of Prague.[13] Another brother, Ambrose (d. 1619), also joined the Jesuits and taught theology and Hebrew in the Bavarian town of Dillingen. A third (half-) brother, Luke, joined the Jesuits at Villagarcía in 1610 and taught in the Colegio Imperial in Madrid. A first cousin, Paul Sherlock, was assessor for the Inquisition in Valladolid.[14] Luke Wadding OFM in Rome, another first cousin, became official historian of the Franciscans and assessor for the Roman Inquisition. Richard Wadding OSA, yet another cousin, lectured in the University of Coimbra and worked for the local Inquisition.[15]

This was a significant brain drain but not one that the lay members of the Wadding family necessarily lamented. These young men were too talented for the limited opportunities offered by the Catholic Church in Stuart Ireland. College

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[12] See T. Worcester (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); J. A. Gagliano et al. (eds), *Jesuit encounters in the new world: Jesuit chroniclers, geographers, educators and missionaries in the Americas 1549–1767* (Rome: Institutum historicum Societatis Iesu, 1997).

[13] P. O'Dea, 'Father Peter Wadding SJ: chancellor of the university of Prague, 1629–1641', *Studies* 30:119 (1941), pp 337–48.

[14] Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, (hereafter A.H.N.), Inquisition (hereafter Inq.), 1319, (2), deposition of William Casey, 1 Feb. 1644.

[15] Madrid, A.H.N. Inq., 1319 (2)), deposition of John Convey Beare, 6 Mar. 1644.

governance reflected this. The majority of the colleges were under Jesuit rather than secular/episcopal government, operating independently of the hierarchy. In fact, seventeenth-century Irish bishops, like their sixteenth-century predecessors and most of their eighteenth century successors, had remarkably little to do with either the selection or formation of their diocesan clergy. The absence of episcopal oversight in Ireland was taken for granted by the Holy See. A 1626 papal bull allowed the ordination of Irish clerics *sub titulo missionis* (i.e. with no clerical living) on the word of a superior of an Irish college, without the usual letters dimissorial from the candidate's bishop.[16] Not surprisingly, Irish bishops objected as the concession effectively dismantled the link between the bishop and his clerical underlings and inevitably compromised episcopal authority in the diocese, already weakened by absenteeism. This would be a feature of the Irish Church during most of the early modern period. In contrast to England and Scotland, Ireland did retain a Catholic hierarchy but, due to government disapproval, Irish prelates were not free to act as a Tridentine episcopate. If Trent was the council that consecrated the pastoral and governmental role of the bishop in the Catholic renewal, that role was only indirectly reflected in either the governance or the clerical output of the seventeenth century college network.

II. The migration context

These second thoughts about the importance traditionally ascribed to the colleges occur in a larger research context, marked by a general renewal in the study of early modern migrants and migrant activities. This is particularly true of Spain and its

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[16] Walsh, *The Irish Continental College Movement*, p. 48.

territories, home to the bulk of the early Irish colleges. New work there has been recovering the diverse roles of migrant groups in specific areas of Spanish life, notably in trade, banking, engineering and military service.[17] This has helped nuance the traditional picture of Spain as a refuge for exiled Catholics, enriching it with an appreciation of its geo-political complexity. However publicly committed they were to the Catholic cause, the Spanish Habsburgs' varied geo-political responsibilities relativised their religious mission.[18] From the point of view of Irish migrants, these bigger strategic interests meant that any apparent special treatment they received on account of their Catholicism was largely self-interested on the Spanish side. The reality was that Irish migrants, on arrival abroad, competed not only among themselves but also with other migrants, including English and Scottish Catholics, in the scramble for survival, patronage and economic clout in the Spanish world.

Unsurprisingly, competing migrant interests were important in the genesis of the Catholic colleges. [19] Affording these factors their due weight in the colleges' foundation, ties these institutions back into the warp and weft of the international migrant experience, producing a more adequate account of their origins, roles and

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[17] M. B. Begona Villar García and P. Pezzi Cristóbal (eds), *Los extranjeros en la España moderna* (2 vols, Málaga: Ministerio de Ciencia e innovación, 2003).

[18] T. O'Connor, *Irish Voices from the Spanish Inquisition: Migrants, Converts and Brokers in Early Modern Iberia* (London: Palgrave, 2016), pp. 17–32.

[19] For a set of comparative essays see B. J. García García and Ó. Recio Morales (eds), *Las corporaciones de nación en la monarquía Hispánica (1580-1750)* (Madrid, Fundación Carlos Amberes, 2014).

functions in Irish migrant activities across Europe.[20] Accordingly, the various Irish college communities were not merely exile havens and instruments of Spanish strategy but also migrant institutions, components of the broadly spread Irish Catholic world that, long before the mass migration of the nineteenth century, stretched far beyond the physical boundaries of the kingdom.

This sharper migrant focus invites a second look at how the colleges actually came into being. Fresh research on migrant groups, especially those involved in trade and commerce has thrown a spotlight on the role of Irish mercantile networks in hosting the various migrant groups who were associated with the colleges.[21] It is clear that from late medieval times, small mercantile groups, originating mostly in the Munster ports, had begun to settle in Iberian ports.[22] From the middle of the sixteenth century these tiny overseas groups played host to two new migrant strands, both associated with the colleges' emergence. The first were the Irish students who used mercantile networks to access foreign universities. They begin to feature in Louvain and other university records from the 1540s. The second group was composed of the

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[20] On the larger British and imperial contexts for English, Irish and Scottish migration see A. Murdoch, *British emigration 1603-1914* (London: Palgrave, 2004).

[21] Ó. Recio Morales, 'Conectores de imperios: la figura del comerciante irlandés en España y en el mundo atlántico del XVIII' in Ana Crespo Solana (ed.), *Comunidades transnacionales: colonias de mercaderes extranjeros en el Mundo Atlántico 1500-1830* (Madrid, Ediciones Doces Calles, 2010), pp. 313–36.

[22] D. Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation upon the Ocean Sea: Portugal's Atlantic Diaspora and the Crisis of the Spanish Empire, 1492–1640* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 17–39.

papal bishops displaced by the Elizabethan settlement. From the 1560s they started

appearing in Spanish and Portuguese ports, initially on their way to or from Rome.

Both groups played pivotal roles in the complex processes that eventually led to the

setting up of the first Irish colleges.

III. Students on the move

The migrating Irish students did not arrive in mid century Europe totally out of the

blue. Since the middle ages, it had been common for ambitious Irish clerics to travel

abroad, mostly to England, for further studies.[23] However, from the 1540s, Irish

student names start to show up in the registers of Louvain university.[24] A little later

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[23] V. Davis, 'Material relating to Irish clergy in England in the late middle ages' in

Archivium Hibernicum 56 (2002), 7–50; idem, 'Irish clergy in late medieval England'

in *Irish Historical Studies*, 32 (2000), 145–60. For the situation in the Gaelic parts of

Ireland see H. Jeffries, *Priests and Prelates of Armagh in the Age of Reformations*

(Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997); idem, 'Erenaghs in pre-plantation Ulster: an early

seventeenth-century account' in *Archivium Hibernicum,* 53 (1999), 16–9; A. Empey,

'Irish clergy in the high and late Middle Ages' in T. C. Barnard and W. G. Neely

(eds), *The Clergy of the Church of Ireland, 1000-2000: Messengers, Watchmen and*

Stewards (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), 6–43.

[24] J. Nilis, 'Irish Students at Leuven University, 1548-1797' in *Archivium*

Hibernicum, 60 (2006/7), 1–304.

they begin to figure in those of Salamanca,[25] Alcalá[26] and thereafter in Rome,[27] Paris[28] and elsewhere.[29] These early students were a mixed bunch and one can only guess why they preferred these European universities to traditional English alternatives. A rare exception is the Oxford graduate Nicholas Comerford, a native of Waterford, who appears in the Louvain records in 1565.[30] It is reasonable to assume that he quit England with William Allen and other Oxford faculty, who moved to the Netherlands to await the restoration of a Catholic regime in England. For Dermot

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[25] D. J. O'Doherty, 'Students of the Irish college Salamanca (1595-1619) in *Archivium Hibernicum,* 2 (1913), 1–36.

[26] Ó. Recio Morales, *Irlanda en Alcalá: la comunidad irlandesa en la Universidad de Alcalá y su proyección europea, 1579-1785* (Alcalá: Ayuntamiento de Alcalá, 2004), pp. 120–30.

[27] H. Fenning, 'Irishmen ordained at Rome, 1572-1697', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 59 (2005), 1–36.

[28] L.W.B. Brockliss and Patrick Ferté, 'Prosopography of Irish clerics in the universities of Paris and Toulouse, 1573-1792', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 58 (2004), 1–166. See also idem, 'Irish clerics in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: a statistical survey', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 87C (1987), 527–72.

[29] J. Burrieza Sánchez, 'Escuelas de sacerdotes y mártires: los colegios del exilio católico' in E. García Hernan et al. (eds), *Irlanda y la monarquía hispanica: Kinsale 1601-2001: Guerra, política exilio y religión* (Madrid: CSIC-Universidad de Alcalá, 2002), 38–73.

[30] Nilis, 'Irish students', 37.

O'Hurley,[31] another early Louvain alumnus and future martyr bishop of Cashel, the original motivation is less clear. The same holds for Richard Creagh,[32] future archbishop of Armagh, who entered in 1549 and Daniel Farrell, a student there in the late 1550s.[33] Revealingly, both Creagh and Farrell returned to Ireland to set up schools, the first in Limerick and the second in Dublin, suggesting that this may have been the original purpose of their Louvain sojourn.[34]

If so then why the sudden interest in education? On one level, it was probably connected with the growing importance of humanities-based education, common across Europe. In 1537 the Dublin parliament passed an act for 'English order, habit and language', with provision for primary schools.[35] It was a popular measure, welcomed by the port and Pale elites of Norman ancestry as a means of civilising their Gaelic neighbours. There may also have been a more mundane side to this. Like their contemporaries abroad, Irish merchants needed trained personnel capable of providing the secretarial and professional services demanded by more internationalized and complex commercial connections.

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[31] Ibid., 33–4.

[32] C. Lennon, *An Irish Prisoner of Conscience of the Tudor era: Archbishop Richard Creagh of Armagh, 1523-86* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), p. 37.

[33] Ibid., p. 34.

[34] Later, in 1564, Creagh, as archbishop of Armagh, obtained Pius IV's bull, proposing universities and colleges Ireland, financed from the resources of confiscated monastic houses.

[35] 28 Henry VIII, c. 15.

The proposed educational provision by the Tudors, for parish schools in the 1530s and grammar schools in the 1570s,[36] had a civilising purpose. They were also part of a political and religious reformation, the first consequences of which were the dispersal of the local religious houses and the disruption of their charitable and educational activities.[37] These changes concerned local Irish elites, some of whom were wary of the new schools and, when possible, preferred to send their offspring abroad, using existing mercantile networks.[38] Some of the returning graduates were associated with setting up a network of informal grammar schools, a number of which predated the Anglican state schools of the 1570s act, and later competed with them.[39] It was probably on a visit to one of these in 1570 that Edmund Campion noticed the 'lusty fellows of twenty-five years, groveling on couches of straw, books at their noses, themselves lying prostate, and so to chant out their lessons by piecemeal'.[40]

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[36] 12 Elizabeth I, c. 1.

[37] For the diocese of Meath, for instance, see B. Scott, 'Administrative documents relating to the pre-reformation Church in the Diocese of Meath, c. 1518', *Archivium Hibernicum,* 61 (2008), 325–46.

[38] C. Lennon,' Education and religious identity in early modern Ireland' in *Paedagogica Historica,* supplementary series 5 (1999), 57–75: H. Robinson-Hammerstein, 'Aspects of the continental education of Irish students in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I', *Historical Studies*, 8 (1971), 137–53.

[39] On some of the practical difficulties involved see T. M. McCoog, 'Life in Tudor Limerick: William Good's "Annual Letter" of 1566', *Archivium Hibernicum,* 69 (forthcoming, 2016).

[40] Edmund Campion, *Historie of Ireland* (Dublin: Hibernia Press, 1809), p. 26.

However rustic their pedagogy may have appeared to cultivated visitors, these schools provided a basic humanities style formation, equipping their students not only with writing skills useful for book-keeping and foreign correspondence but also with academic passports to foreign universities. It is clear that without these schools it would have been impossible even to conceive later of foreign colleges as, without them, intending Irish students would have been intellectually unprepared for further education abroad.

Abroad, the trickle of Irish students was absorbed into existing educational networks. Jesuits like David Wolfe entrusted students to his colleagues in Rome, Portugal and Spain. Others students who had completed their basic schooling in Ireland followed alternative mercantile networks across England, ending up in the English[41] and Scots[42] colleges in Douai and, a little later, in dedicated Irish hostels. One of the first of these was set up in Douai in 1593, by an Irish priest, Christopher Cusack.[43] This turned out to be the first of a series of small foundations that later

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[41] T. F. Knox (ed.), *The First and Second Diaries of the English College, Douay* (London: David Nutt, 1878), passim; Michael Sharratt, 'Theology and philosophy at the English College Douai: a handlist of sources', *History of Universities* 18:2 (2003), 197–225

[42] T. McInally, *The Sixth Scottish University: The Scots Colleges Abroad, 1575–1799* (Leiden: Brill, 2012) chapters one and two.

[43] J. Brady, 'Father Christopher Cusack and the Irish college of Douai 1594–1624' in Sylvester O'Sullivan (ed.), *Measgra Michíl Uí Chléirigh* (Dublin: Assisi Press, 1943), pp 98–107; B. Jennings, 'Documents of the Irish colleges at Douai', *Archivium Hibernicum,* 10 (1943) 162–210.

included Antwerp (1600), Tournai (1616) and Lille (1610).[44] There was a Paris off

shoot from the Dutch network, accommodated initially in the collège de Montaigu,

but it had a fitful existence until later in the seventeenth century.[45]

IV. Displaced papal prelates

A decade or so after the first Irish student names begin to appear in European

university registers, a small number of Irish bishops start to feature in contemporary

European records. These were papal bishops displaced by Anglican appointees who

began to pass through Portuguese and Spanish ports, initially in transit to or from

Rome.[46] Their exile was financially motivated.[47] After 1560, the appointment of

Anglican bishops in Ireland gradually deprived papal bishops of their sees and

associated incomes. As a seventeenth century government informer later commented:

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[44] T. O'Connor, *Irish Jansenists 1600-70: Religion and Politics in Flanders, France,*
Ireland and Rome (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2008), pp. 78–84.

[45] P. Boyle, *The Irish College in Paris from 1578 to 1901* (London: Art & Book
Company, 1901), pp. 9–10; L. Swords, *The Irish French Connection* (Paris: The Irish
College, 1978); idem, 'History of the Irish college Paris, 1578-1800: calendar of the
papers of the Irish college, Paris', *Archivium Hibernicum* 33 (1980), 3–233.

[46] E. Garcia Hernán, 'Obispos irlandeses y la monarquía hispánica en el siglo xvi' in
Villar García and Pezzi (eds), *Los extranjeros en la España moderna*, vol. 2, pp. 275–
80.

[47] C. Lennon and C. Diamond, 'The ministry of the Church of Ireland, 1536–1636' in
Barnard and Keely (eds), *Clergy of the Church of Ireland*, pp. 44–58.

'But as for the [papal] Bishoppes ... they receave not a penny from out of this land, but are releeved by the bountie of the princes throughout Christendome where they dwell and by the prelates of the Cloysters wherein they receave their orders in order to survive'.[48] Redmund Gallagher, papal bishop of Killala, who arrived in Lisbon in 1566, was not untypical.[49] Others followed, including William Walsh of Meath, who settled in Alcalá. Almost from the beginning, these prelates, some of whom acted as political agents for disaffected Irish nobility, were joined by students, often family members, who were accepted into local, usually Jesuit-run schools.[50] Although they were well received by fellow ecclesiastics, they were viewed with suspicion by the king of Spain. Initially Philip II was hesitant about supporting them, principally due to their associations with rebellious Irish nobility. Up to the late 1560s, Philip was still striving to maintain relations with England and, consequently, gave the rebellious

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[48] B. Mac Cuarta, 'Irish government lists of Catholic personnel, c.1613', *Archivium Hibernicum,* 68 (2015), 84, citing Trinity College Dublin, MS 567, ff 36v.

[49] Rome, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (hereafter A.R.S.I.), Lusitania, 62, fol. 229v, Cipriano Soares to São Francisco de Borja, Lisbon, 6 June 1568, cited in M. Gonçalves Da Costa, *Fontes inéditas Portuguesas para a história de Irlanda* (Braga: no publisher, 1981), p. 132. He was still in Lisbon in 1578. See Rome, Archivio Segreto Vaticano (hereafter A.S.V.), Nunziatura di Portogallo, 1, fol. 216, Portuguese nuncio to Rome.

[50] In 1577, for instance, one of the Irish merchants in Lisbon lodged the eleven-year-old Maurice, son of James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald, who was attending the local Jesuit school. See A.S.V., Nunziatura di Portogallo, 2, fols 280v–281, Coleitor apostólico to the papal secretary of state, Lisbon, 1 Aug. 1577, cited in Da Costa, *Fontes*, p. 177.

Irish and their episcopal agents a wide berth.[51] Later, however, Anglo-Spanish

relations deteriorated, turning militant Irish migrants into potentially useful agents of

Spanish influence. It was only then that the Spanish monarchy began to support

peripatetic Irish bishops and their dependents, usually by setting up small funds

managed by the itinerant prelates to support clergy.[52]

Even with this new strategic interest in the Irish clergy, Philip II was

characteristically hesitant about committing more resources to their support and

education. Consequently, for the foundation of the first Irish colleges in Spain and

Portugal, it was local and Irish initiative that proved decisive. The example from

Lisbon is informative. In the 1580s, the arrival there of increasing numbers of

itinerant Irish youth prompted the local Irish Jesuit, John Howling to organize

temporary accommodation. In 1590, with the help of some Irish and Portuguese

merchants, he set up the Confraternity of Saint Patrick, as a step towards something

more permanent[53] Within two years a premises had been acquired and a small

seminary established, initially run by a board composed of confraternity members.[54]

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[51] E. Garcia Hernán, *Ireland and Spain in the Reign of Philip II* (Dublin: Four Courts

Press, 2009), p. 25.

[52] Cornelius O'Boyle of Limerick had charge of one of these funds. See Hernán,

Ireland and Spain, pp 309–16, 322–3.

[53] K. Schüller, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Spanien und Irland im 16. Und 17.

Jahrhundert: Diplomatie, Handel und die soziale Integration katholischer Exulanten*

(Münster: Aschendorff, 1999), p. 159.

[54] P. O Connell, *The Irish College at Lisbon 1590-1834* (Dublin: Four Courts Press,

2001), pp. 25–30.

Not all the expatriate Irish were content. Howling's success ruffled episcopal feathers and Bishop Cornelius Mulryan of Killaloe's refusal to attend spoiled the opening ceremony. Political and ethnic difference separated the two men and Mulryan may have resented the Jesuit's achievement in establishing a seminary he might have preferred to preside over himself.[55] Killaloe's reaction was symptomatic not only of intra-Irish divisions but also of the exiled episcopacy's failure to secure either management or governance footholds in the emerging continental colleges.[56]

In the genesis of the college at Salamanca, the crucial figure was another Jesuit, Thomas White. In the 1580s, before entering the Society, he brought a number of students to Santiago.[57] They were initially supported by the local Jesuits but later moved down to Valladolid, perhaps in the hope of finding accommodation in the newly founded English college there.[58] Soon afterwards, White secured royal funding for an Irish college, which it was decided to locate in nearby Salamanca.[59]

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[55] See Howling to Strong, Lisbon, 26 May 1592, (British Library, Lansdowne 71, no. 49, fol. 100rv, cited in Da Costa, *Fontes*, pp. 207–10).

[56] The pastoral college in Louvain was an exception. It was established by Archbishop McMahon of Dublin in 1623 but was under Franciscan management until the 1630s.

[57] T. Morrissey, 'The Irish student diaspora in the sixteenth century and the early year of the Irish college at Salamanca', *Recusant History* 14 (1977–8), 242–60.

[58] It took him some time to realize that the Catholic England needed well educated clerics as much as Christian crusaders. See Burrieza Sánchez, 'Escuelas de sacerdotes', p. 41.

[59] M. Henchy, 'The Irish college at Salamanca', *Studies*, 70 (1981), 220–7.

This was the first direct Spanish royal intervention to erect an institution for the education of Irish clerics but it might be extravagant to interpret this as an expression of a coherent geopolitical strategy. Organizing the importunate exiles into collegial communities was primarily a means of removing their nagging presence from the court. Interestingly, the Spanish used a similar strategy to disperse Irish soldiers who arrived in Spain in the 1600s, substituting Irish regiments for seminaries. In other ways too, the religiously high-minded rhetoric of royal foundation decrees hid more worldly concerns. In the 1590s, for instance, short-term military concerns had led the Spanish to support Irish militants like Hugh O'Neill, then in rebellion against Elizabeth I. This gave increased influence to his Irish supporters in Spain, notably Flaithrí Ó Maol Chonaire (Florence Conry), then a student in the fledgling Salamanca college. When he complained about Jesuit management there, alleging a bias against Gaelic Irish entrants, a Spanish government investigation ensued.[60] In the meantime, however, the Ulster earls and their Spanish allies suffered defeat and, in 1604, the treaty of London established peace between Spain and England. This marked the end of direct Spanish military intervention in Ireland and caused an immediate cooling in Spanish relations with O'Neill. In this context there was no question of undermining contested Jesuit hegemony in Salamanca, on foot of complaints from agents of the defeated Ulster nobility. On the contrary, the Society's authority in the Spanish network was actually strengthened. The small collegial institution set up in Santiago in 1605 by Killian McCarthy to cater for the sons of

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[60] Maynooth, Russell Library, Salamanca Archive leg. 52/9; Andrés de Prada, Orden del Consejo al conde de Miranda, 7 July 1604; Archivo General Simancas (hereafter A.G.S.) Estado Corona de Castilla, leg. 199.

exiled Irish military, was soon under their control, despite opposition from other Irish interests.[61] Another college, this time in Seville, founded in 1612 by Thomas Stapelton and originally under secular control, also passed to the Jesuits.[62] In Spain, only the Irish hostel and chapel in Madrid[63] and the college in Alcalá[64] remained outside the Society's control. Across the Pyrenees, in Bordeaux, a small college was set up in 1603 by Diarmuid MacCarthy,[65] essentially a northern extension of the Spanish network. It remained under secular control, along with its twin college in Toulouse.[66]

Spanish disengagement from Gaelic Irish interests after Kinsale was somewhat mollified in 1607 when Philip III approved the foundation of an Irish

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[61] P. O Connell, *The Irish college at Santiago de Compostela 1605–1769* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007).

[62] J. J. Silke, 'The Irish college, Seville', *Archivium Hibernicum* 24 (1961),13–47.

[63] E. Garcia Hernán, 'Irish clerics in Madrid 1598-1665' in O'Connor and Lyons (eds), *Irish communities in early modern Europe*, pp. 267–93.

[64] It was originally founded in 1627; re-founded 1630 and 1645.

[65] T. J. Walsh and J. B. Pelette, 'Some records of the Irish College at Bordeaux' in *Archivium Hibernicum,* 15 (1950), 92–141; Walsh, *Irish Continental College Movement*, pp. 88–119.

[66] P. Ferté, 'Étudiants et professeurs irlandais dans les universités de Toulouse et de Cahors (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles): les limites de la mission irlandaise' in O'Connor and Lyons (eds.), *Irish communities in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 69–84; Walsh, *Irish Continental College Movement*, pp. 120–39.

Franciscan college at Louvain, at Conry's behest.[67] Two further Franciscan foundations were made from Louvain, one in Paris (1617) and the second in Prague (1630). The Paris house ran into local opposition and failed to thrive.[68] The Prague foundation was part of the Habsburg drive to re-catholicize Bohemia.[69] A third Irish Franciscan house was set up in Rome in 1625. It was the result of the emergency handover of a failed Spanish Franciscan institution, Saint Isidore's, to the Irish Franciscan, Luke Wadding.[70] His success there allowed him to influence the setting up of a Roman college for Irish secular clerics in the late 1620s. However, this institution, like so many of its Spanish counterparts, was later placed under Jesuit

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[67] R. Gillespie and R. Ó hUiginn (eds), *Irish Europe 1600–1650: Writing and Learning* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2013). It was also pastorally significant. Over the following two centuries, over three hundred college students were ordained priests in Malines, with two hundred more admitted to orders before being sent off to other Franciscan houses. Their subsequent careers are not known.

[68] B. Millett, *The Irish Franciscans, 1651-1665*, (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1964), pp. 184–95.

[69] J. Pařez, 'The Irish Franciscans in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Prague' in T. O'Connor and M. A. Lyons (eds), *Irish migrants in Europe after Kinsale 1602–1820* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), pp. 102–17; B. Jennings, 'Documents of the Irish Franciscan college at Prague', *Archivium Hibernicum,* 9 (1942), 173–294.

[70] G. Cleary, *Father Luke Wadding and St Isidore's College Rome* (Rome: Bardi, 1925).

management, to Wadding's chagrin.[71] The Franciscans had similarly bad luck in the case of the Propaganda Fide supported college, founded for Irish seculars in Louvain in 1623. Initially under local Irish Franciscan auspices and with an Ulster student intake, it suffered crippling financial difficulties and was removed from Franciscan jurisdiction in 1638.

V. Financing the college network

Every college's foundation was the result of a specific set of circumstances and a distinct group of historical agents, according to diverse social, ethnic and political interests. This was reflected in their funding models. Traditional accounts have stressed royal and papal support for the colleges. There is no doubt that official support was important. Salamanca, for example, enjoyed a royal annuity of about 10,000 reales. However, this grant was insufficient to maintain the college and, like colleges administrators elsewhere, those in Salamanca faced constant financial worries. Necessity obliged them to approach other possible sources, including the Catholic laity back home in Ireland. Accordingly, in 1613 a hostile Irish government report explained

> ...but what in the particuller is sent unto them [Irish students abroad] is the
> porcon theire fathers doe leave them, and some collections that yearely is

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[71] P. J. Corish, 'The beginnings of the Irish College, Rome' in The Franciscan Fathers (eds), *Father Luke Wadding: Commemorative Volume* (Dublin: Clonmore and Reynolds, 1957), pp. 284–94.

taken upp for them, and with this they live togeather with certaine yearely

pensions that is allowed unto the Colledges by the kinge and princes in whose

dominions they are.'[72]

The same informer went on 'The Colledges beyondes are nowe and then releeved by

almes collected uppon the Sonndayes in the Citties and uppon any great meetings by

the directions of the vicar generals.'[73] It appears that funding from Ireland, along with

royal grants, were crucial to the survival of the colleges but together these were not

enough. Even the royal college at Salamanca was obliged to secure supplementary

funding, receiving donations and questing.[74] In a model widely followed in other

colleges, pre-ordained Salamanca students paid fees with their mass stipends. It is

difficult to assess the relative importance of this source but the evidence suggests that

a brisk business in collecting domestic stipends and conveying them abroad.[75]

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[72] Mac Cuarta, 'Irish government lists', 84, citing T.C.D. MS 567, fol. 37r.

[73] Ibid.

[74] A. Castro Santamaría and N. Rupérez Almajano, 'The real colegio de San Patricio de nobles irlandeses of Salamanca: its buildings and properties, 1592–1768' in T. O'Connor and M. A. Lyons, *The Ulster earls and Baroque Europe* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), pp. 223–41.

[75] In a letter written in 1640 Domhnall Mac Suibhne OSA speaks of 600 mass stipends to be shared between himself and an Irish clerical colleague. See É. Ó Ciosáin, P. Ó Macháin and C. O'Scea, 'Two letters in Irish from Domhnall Mac Suibne OSA in Nantes (1640)' in *Archivium Hibernicum,* 68 (2015), 110, 114. Secular clergy probably had similar access to this form of finance.

Targeted fundraising missions to Ireland were also undertaken, like that led of James Archer in 1596. He collected revenues from the Catholic holders of confiscated church properties, operating a system of composition which seems to have been in widespread use at this time.[76] This expiatory method of generating college finances would continue at least into the seventeenth century. In the 1640s, for instance, it formed the basis for certain propoals to fund the reestablished Church, including its educational infrastructure, under the Catholic Confederates.[77] In the case of Salamanca, monies raised by Archer and others in Ireland helped pay for college rent, until the authorities acquired first the ground rent and later the title to certain properties in the city. Only when properly established could the college request funding from bodies like the local Cortes of Castile.[78]

Salamanca's was an especially complex funding model but similarly elaborate means of funding supported the other colleges. In Paris, the third rector, Thomas Messingham, writing in 1634, referred to the devastating financial consequences of France's involvement in the Thirty Years War. Local sources of income had dried up, he reported, restricting college entry to those who could pay for themselves. Very

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[76] Walter McDonald, 'Irish colleges since the reformation', *Irish Ecclesiaxtical Record,* 10 (1873), 360–6.

[77] Kavanagh (ed.), *Commentarius Rinuccinianus*, vol. 1, pp. 433–4.

[78] It was they, not the king, who dictated the device carved over the main entrance of the Salamanca college which ran 'This college was built by the crown of Castile for the sustenance of the Christian religion of Ireland the year the Catholic King Philip III expelled the Moors, enemies of the faith, from the realm, 1610'.

shortly afterwards, a combination of government exactions, galloping inflation and food shortages effectively closed the college.[79]

In Spain, there were supplementary sources of ecclesiastical funding, including the Misión del norte, a fund intended to assist Irish priests' travelling costs back to Ireland on completion of their studies.[80] Officially set up in 1611 and drawn on the revenues of the archbishopric of Cádiz, it could cover travelling expenses for up to half a dozen returning clergy per annum. Because applications were normally vetted by the Spanish authorities, the latter, in theory, controlled the fund. However, the monies were disbursed on the recommendation of college authorities or religious superiors, leading in-fighting among the Irish and also souring relations between them and their English and Scots co-religionists. The Scots in particular resented the 'special' treatment accorded to the Irish. William Semple, co-founder of the Madrid Scots college in 1627, petition for the diversion of Misión funds to the Scots.[81]

VI. Impact of the seminary clergy 1600-1650

Overall, the church property owning Catholics of the port towns and their hinterlands, along with the Pale gentry, dominated the colleges' network in their first century of

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[79] Sheffield Archives, WWM Str P 14 (279), Messingham to Stephen Duffe, Paris 1634.

[80] C. Bravo Lozano, 'La Misión de Irlanda en la estrategia política de Felipe III' in M. J. Pérez Alvarez and A. Martín García (eds), *Campo y Campesinos en la España moderna: culturas políticas en el mundo hispano* (Madrid: Fundación Española de Historia Moderna, 2012), pp. 1157–1566.

[81] McInally, *The Sixth Scottish University*, p. 29.

existence, largely in cooperation with the Jesuits. Later, however, the fact that a significant proportion of the student population came to be drawn from other social and ethnic groups, including the Gaelic learned classes and others, fuelled tensions within some colleges. The Gaelic Irish were better represented in the Franciscan college network and returning friars were more involved in the Gaelic speaking areas. Whatever the differences between returning secular and regular missionaries, their education set them apart from the rest of the clergy. In 1606 Eugene Bernard, arriving in Galway following a spell abroad, found townsfolk attending Protestant service, an error that had arisen, he claimed 'from the stupid ignorance of some priests who were never out of Ireland'.[82] Outsiders noticed the educational gap between seminary and home-reared clergy. In 1613 the Brussels internuncio, Bentivoglio reported to Rome on the educational levels of Irish friars, 'one would hope for more refinement and better doctrine but many of them were ordained in Ireland and consequently lack qualities necessary to the priestly ministry'.[83]

In general, however, the Irish laity got the clergy they paid for as the ministering clergy were supported almost entirely through stole fees. [84] Given lay

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[82] Hogan, *Ibernia Ignatiana*, p. 205.

[83] A.S.V., Borghese, Series I, vol. 269, fol. 85, Bentivoglio to Rome, Brussels, 6 Apr. 1613, cited in *Archivium Hibernicum*, 3 (1914), 301.

[84] 'The ordinarie priests doe live commonly by ministringe sacraments receiving from every howse in theire parishes 12d or at the moste iis, besides ii s for every marriadge, and 12d when the women are churched, and are farr richer then the prelats and preachers whose privie tyethes can scarce releeve them, without privat Almes.'
See Mac Cuarta, 'Irish government lists', citing T.C.D., MS 567, f. 36v.

influence, the absence of bishops and the occasional interference of the state, the returned seminary clergy learned the advantages of keeping a low profile. This seems to have been the way the laity preferred it. Although the government naturally took lay support of their own clergy as evidence of civil disobedience, the laity themselves made much of their loyalty and refused to accept that sending sons abroad to Catholic colleges was seditious. In a way they wanted to have their cake and eat it. For a long time, the relative weakness of both the state and clerical authority permitted them to do so.

This evidence raises interesting questions about the extent to which the colleges assisted in the enculturation of the Catholic reform into native communities across the ethno-social spectrum, but especially among the Gaelic speaking majority. Despite its Gaelic press and its contribution to Gaelic scholarship, Louvain was pastorally and ecclesiastically less unlike its secular and Jesuit-run, largely English language counterparts in Spain than might first appear. In most cases, returning clergy, whatever their ethnic origin, brought a standardized rather than a culturally inflected version of the Catholic reform. In any case, not all of those who returned from a sojourn abroad were competent even to preach in Gaelic, having lost the language while overseas. Even for those who did not, there is little evidence that their time abroad provided them with anything more homiletically challenging than simple translations of standard European texts.[85] Overall, it would appear that the colleges

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[85] C. Mac Murchaidh, 'Text and translation for James Gallagher's "A sermon on the assumption of our Blessed Lady" (1736)', *Archivium Hibernicum,* 62 (2000), 154–82.

struggled to establish and nurture a viable Gaelic Catholic book-based culture.[86] This

was not entirely the fault of the colleges. The authorities did invest in the Irish,

organizing conversation classes to preserve speaking and preaching competence. But

complaints about returning priests' linguist sufficiency were common, with the

bishops frequently chided the Jesuits, alleging that the Society culturally alienated the

students in order to suborn them to the order.[87] Interestingly, the students did not

always agree. In a 1642 anti-Jesuit memorial, Salamanca students complained that

they were prevented from communicating with Castilian students and learning

Castilian![88]

VII. The 1650s watershed

Most accounts of the colleges concentrate on the founding and early years, with

comparatively light coverage of the period after 1650, at least until the flurry caused

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[86] For some of the recent scholarship see A. Ó Corráin, *The Pearl of the Kingdom: A study of* A fhir léghtha an leahráin bhig *by Giolla Brighde Ó hEódhasa* (Oslo, Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 2013) and idem., *The Light of the Universe, Poems of Friendship and Consolation by Giolla Brighde Ó hEódhasa* (Oslo, Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 2014).

[87] Burrieza Sánchez, 'Escuelas de sacerdotes', pp. 56ff. For Santiago see A.G.S., Estado leg. 2750 'El consejo de estado a 3 de septiembre de 1620 Por el seminario de Irlandeses de la ciudad de Santiago'. The Scots had similar problems. See A.G.S., Guerra y Hacienda, leg. 965 'Memorial de Juan de Geddes, rector de los Escoceses a Manuel de Roda', Madrid 19 July 1778.

[88] A.G.S., Estado, Negocios de 'partes', leg. 2752.

by the staggered suppression of the Jesuits, and the French Revolution. However, notwithstanding the inattention of historians, the colleges were transformed during this period as they adapted to the changing needs of the domestic Irish Church and the evolving priorities of their continental hosts. By the early 1650s, the domestic church was in real trouble. Cromwell's conquest was a hecatomb for Catholic landowners and clergy, ripping the heart out of the Catholic towns. There were political implications too. Confederate defeat finally put paid to Irish Catholic pretentions to a governance role in the kingdom of Ireland. Although this claim was briefly revived in the 1680s, it was devastatingly rebuffed first on the field of battle and later through the penal laws. On the continent, the ending of the Thirty Years War and the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) rang significant changes in European geopolitics. The treaty erected the state as the basic sovereign political unit, outlawing mutual interference for reasons of religion.[89] Thanks to Richlieu's diplomatic skills, the treaty's territorial clauses advantaged France. Although the country was subsequently racked by internal turmoil, under Louis XIV France eclipsed Spain to emerge as the undisputed continental power and Catholic champion.

The Irish quickly too note. For their colleges, these domestic and international changes had important consequences. The Cromwellian conquest triggered significant clerical expulsions, with exiled clergy piling up in continental bolt-holes, especially in France. At the same time, thickening currents of permanent migration, initially among Catholic merchants but later including other sections of the domestic Catholic community, led to the formation of new and more complex migrant networks on the continent. These later developed into institutions like the Irish regiments, which

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[89] H. Kissinger, *World Order* (London: Penguin, 2014), pp. 11–48.

helped distribute career-frustrated Irish Catholics to overseas alternatives. The colleges also helped convey ever larger numbers to permanent exile abroad.[90]

There were other challenges too. Because of the level of pastoral devastation of the 1650s returning Irish ecclesiastics faced an uphill struggle to provide educated clergy to Irish parishes. The existing college network, centred in Spain and the Spanish Netherlands, was inadequate to the task, due to limited capacity and entrenched family and regional interests. To supplement Spain and the Netherlands, senior Irish clergy turned to France, which from the 1640s was attracting more and more Irish students. In time, the Paris college was reorganized and new colleges founded in locations like Nantes (1680), Poitiers (1674, under Jesuit supervision), Bar sur Aube (1685) Wassy (1685) and Boulay (1700). Paris was by far the most successful of the French collegial ventures. Thanks to two Irish priests, Patrick Maginn and Malachy Kelly, the Irish student body in the city managed to colonize a defunct Italian foundation, the collège des Lombards.[91] From the late 1670s, this

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[90] For Spain see O'Connor, *Irish voices*, chapter eight. For France see E. Ó Ciosáin, 'A hundred years of Irish migration to France, 1590-1688' in T. O'Connor (ed.), *The Irish in Europe 1580-1815* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), pp. 93–106. For the merchants see L. Cullen, 'Galway merchants in the outside world' in Diarmaid Ó Cearbhaill (ed.) *Galway Town and Gown* (Galway: University College Galway, 1984), p. 63.

[91] L. Swords, 'Collège des Lombards' in Swords (ed.), *The Irish French Connection,* pp. 44–62.

permitted the establishment of a community of Irish priests in a refurbished premises.[92]

Unsurprisingly, the Cromwellian confiscations disrupted domestic sources of income for the overseas colleges, especially those like Paris, which were now expanding. To an extent the colleges compensated through bursaries, often funded by exiled clergy and laity and drawn on French rather than Irish revenues.[93] The influx of Irish military exiles to France after 1690 created more possibilities for this sort of funding, as did the prosperity of the small Irish communities in French and Spanish ports and, of course, the growing number of Irish clergy and professionals who made careers abroad. Reflecting the variety of Irish migrants' needs, burses were not intended for the exclusive use of clergy, they also supported students pursuing legal and medical degrees.[94] The University of Reims awarded medical degrees to no fewer than 598 Irish students in the early modern period, the vast majority from the 1680s onwards. Most of these students studied elsewhere before purchasing degrees at Reims, a facility with attracted Irish Protestants as well as Catholics.[95]

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[92] Boyle, *The Irish College in Paris*, p. 28.

[93] L. Chambers, 'Irish *fondations* and *boursiers* in early modern Paris, 1682-1793', *Irish Economic and Social History*, 35 (2008), 1–22; Walsh, *Irish Continental College Movement*, pp. 46, 169–90.

[94] Nilis, 'Irish students at Leuven University', p. 11; Chambers, 'Irish *fondations* and *boursiers*', p. 15.

[95] Medicine was one of the few professions that remained open to Catholics in Ireland under the Penal Laws. See L. W. B. Brockliss, 'Étudiants de médecine des îles britanniques inscrits en France sous l'ancien régime' in P. Ferté et C. Barrera (eds),

VIII. Rising standards and expectations

In the post Cromwellian period, antecedently ordained students continued to dominate college populations. The practice was formally justified by the student priests' need to generate income from Mass stipends, an agreed portion of which was customarily handed over to college bursars. In time the Lombards college was home to about one hundred of these priests. Paris also attracted younger, un-ordained Irish students, intended for the priesthood, or, failing that, for alternative careers abroad. From 1707 a number of these were admitted to the Lombards college, forming a separate clerical community that at mid century numbered over sixty.

The dual composition of the Paris college expressed some of the contradictions within Irish Catholicism. The antecedently ordained represented the clerical 'establishment', securely financed by stole fees, earmarked for one of the thousand or so domestic parochial positions, little interested in theology and attached to their privileges and autonomy. The younger, un-ordained students, second-class citizens within the college and often without pastoral prospects at home were, it seems, more amenable to college discipline, more academically engaged and understandably better viewed by reform-minded college authorities.

Étudiants de l'exil: Migrations internationals et universités refuges (XVIe-XXe s.) (Toulouse: Presses Universitiaires du Mirail, 2009), pp. 81–104; idem, 'Medicine, religion and social mobility in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Ireland' in J. Kelly and F. Clark (eds), *Ireland and Medicine in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 73–108.

From the 1730s, reforming administrators, anxious to improve the quality of the clergy, found it increasingly difficult to cater to the younger clerics in the face of the entrenched interests of the more privileged student priests. At the same time, developments at home began to favour these 'modernizers'. With the relative relaxation of the penal regime in Ireland came a marked rise in the number of ordained clergy across the kingdom, in part due to episcopal laxity and even venality regarding ordinations. Government sources noted the more plentiful clerical presence. In 1731, the reports to the Lords' Committees inquiring into the state of popery painted the alarmist picture of a priest- and friar-infested Irish countryside.[96]

The bountiful supply of clergy only deepened existing concerns about clerical quality among modernizing strands of Catholic opinion.[97] Certain clergy in Dublin and Armagh feared that a glut of under-employed priests would scandalize the Protestant authorities and unbalance the delicate mechanism of practical tolerance operating under the Penal Laws. These concerns found an echo in the Paris, where college administrators, already frustrated by the autonomy and conduct of the antecedently ordained student body, expressed doubts about the quantity and quality

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[96] 'Report on the state of popery, Ireland, 1731', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 1 (1912), 10–27; 'Report on the state of popery in Ireland, 1731: diocese of Dublin', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 4 (1915), 131–177.

[97] H. Fenning, 'Some problems on the Irish mission, 1733-1774', *Collectanea Hibernica*, 8 (1965), 58–109; idem, 'Clerical recruitment, 1735-83', *Archivium Hibernicum,* 30 (1972), 1–20; idem, Fenning, *The Undoing of the Friars of Ireland*.

of incoming students.[98] They proposed a stay on admissions of pre-ordained priests and favoured preferential treatment for younger clerical students.[99] The Irish bishops balked at the proposal, arguing that seminary facilities were inadequate to allow all priestly candidates a spell in college prior to ordination.[100] Moreover, it was unclear if the Catholic laity, who provided the college clergy and contributed to their support, would willingly wear such a proposal.[101] Episcopal intransigence and possible lay reservations won the day but in the longer term their reluctance to modernize proved irrelevant. Propaganda Fide intervened in 1742 to limit the number of secular ordinations. Later, in 1751, it forbade the religious orders to accept any novices in Ireland.

For reformers this looked like a minor victory and had things remained as they were, the new restrictions would probably have had a small improving effect. They could not have foreseen that their attempts to ensure a better-educated clergy would exacerbate a crisis in the supply of priests. This was because as clerical

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[98] L. Chambers, 'Rivalry and reform in the Irish College, Paris, 1676-1775' in O'Connor and Lyons (eds), *Irish communities in early modern Europe*, pp. 103–129, at p. 114.

[99] Originally, only the community of ordained priests benefitted from the Lombards bourses and accommodation. Following a petition on their behalf in 1707, clerical students were admitted too. See Boyle, *Irish college in Paris*, p. 38.

[100] Walsh, *Irish Continental College Movement*, p. 78.

[101] For a biting and hilarious satire on clerical ignorance at this time, see S. Ó Dufaigh and B. E. Rainey (eds), *Comhairle Mhic Clamha ó Achad na Muilleann*, (Lille: Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1981).

numbers stabilized or grew only slightly, the population of Ireland, in the twenty years after 1750, grew by about 45%. This demographic explosion caused a crisis in pastoral provision that consistently outpaced all efforts to remedy it. Despite a modest recovery in clerical numbers later in the century, the gap between pastoral need and clerical numbers continued to grow for nearly a hundred years.[102] It gradually became clear that the existing collegial infrastructure was too small, too restrictive and too poorly financed to respond to the crisis. Lay and episcopal concerns about pastoral provision grew apace. Neither the Paris administrators nor their friends in Propaganda had an answer to the demographic explosion that was altering the face of Catholic Ireland.

In some dioceses, bishops decided to take matters into their own hands, buoyed up by the 1782 Catholic Relief Act. It permitted Catholics to open schools and although it expressly forbade institutions of a university character, i.e. seminaries, two bishops decided to test the legislation. In 1782, Bishop Thomas Troy of Ossory established a secondary school in Kilkenny, intended to educate young boys in humanities and Christian morals, preparing them for the professions, trade and further education.[103] Initially, college graduates earmarked for priesthood were to be sent abroad.[104] On the outbreak of unrest in France, in the late 1780s, it was decided to expand the programme to include philosophy, a sure indication that a domestic

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[102] E. Larkin, *The Pastoral Role of the Roman Catholic Clergy in Pre-Famine Ireland, 1750–1850* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), pp. 9–41.

[103] F. Ó Fearghail, *St Kieran's College Kilkenny, 1782-1982* (Kilkenny: St Kieran's College, 1982), pp. 21ff.

[104] P. Birch, *Saint Kieran's College, Kilkenny*, (Dublin: Gill, 1951), p. 36.

seminary was now contemplated. In nearby Carlow, Bishop Delaney of Kildare and Leighlin took things further still. Under his supervision, the construction of a college in Carlow was underway in 1785 and, the law notwithstanding, the institution was envisaged as a seminary from the beginning.[105] Three years later Delaney explained to Troy, by then archbishop of Dublin, that he could not spare funds for Paris due to his building commitments in Carlow. Perhaps for the first time, domestic educational establishments were now in direct competition with the overseas collegial network.

This was not the only straw in the wind. In Spain and Portugal, the college network had not adapted to keep pace with domestic needs. This was due in part to inflexible funding arrangements, the colleges' small size and also to their colonization by non-Irish students. At the time of the earthquake of 1755, for instance, the Lisbon college was home to fewer that eight students.[106] Later, in 1767, the Seville college housed four Irish students but over twenty Spaniards.[107] The Iberian network's vulnerability was further exposed by the removal of its Jesuit administrators, following the suppression of the Society, first in Portugal in 1759. Weaker colleges like Santiago and Seville now became vulnerable to rationalization and in due course were amalgamated with Salamanca. Alcalá initially survived a bid to unite it with the Scots college in Madrid, but this was largely due to Scots resistance. In 1785 it too

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[105] E. Derr 'The Irish Catholic episcopal corps, 1657-1829: a prosopographical analysis (2 vols, Ph.D. thesis, Maynooth University, 2013), vol. 1, p. 130.

[106] A.S.V., Nunziatura di Portogallo, 117, fols 289-91.

[107] J. J. Silke, 'The Irish college, Seville', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 24 (1961), p. 118. Silke notes, ibid., p. 122, that the college had a fund, drawn on interest from bonds, to finance return journeys to Ireland by ordained students.

was collapsed into Salamanca.[108] Rationalization, however, did not improve capacity, which for the domestic church in Ireland, lay and clerical, was now the overriding concern.

Nor was Spain the only weak link in the network. Rationalizations in the Empire led to the closure of the Franciscan college in Prague in 1786. In the Netherlands, the pastoral college in Louvain was experiencing difficulty in holding on to its divinity students.[109] About the same time doubts were expressed about the standard of theological formation available to Antwerp students. These were accompanied by dire warning about the nefarious effects of increasing government interference in church institutions.[110] Meanwhile in Bordeaux in 1774, the college rector complained about the difficulties in maintaining discipline due to unreasonable nature of students' inherited obligations to the local church.[111] The old college skins could not take the new wine.

The same held for college finances. Not only were traditional financial sources underperforming, but also the cost of the overseas colleges was becoming obvious to domestic clergy and laity, as they were more frequently asked to cough up. This was especially obvious in Dublin, home to the largest concentration of newly prosperous Catholic merchants and business men, most likely to be solicited by college

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[108] Burrieza Sánchez, 'Esculelas de sacerdotes', pp. 72–3.

[109] Dublin Diocesan Archive (hereafter D.D.A.), Continental colleges, 116/7, Charles Joseph Finn to Troy, 14 May 1788.

[110] Letter to Peter Macve, president of pastoral college, Louvain, undated, in J. Nilis, 'The Irish college, Antwerp', *Clogher Record,* 15 (1996), 29.

[111] Walsh, *Irish continental colleges network*, p. 111.

fundraisers. In 1765 a Douai funding drive raised £430. Four years later £540 was

raised for Nantes. In the same year £100 was collected for Lille and in 1775 £350 for

Lille. Two Lisbon campaigns in 1782 and 1789 yielded £415.[112] These piecemeal

campaigns were not only a drain on good will but also underlined the colleges'

financial vulnerability and the generally un-coordinated organization of the entire

network.

Paris, of course, was something of an exception to the general rule of

dysfunction, underperformance and financial embarrassment. By the late eighteenth

century, the Seine-side complex was the jewel in the overseas crown and by far the

largest of all the overseas institutions, with nearly two hundred students in all. The

domestic church was among the many parties who invested heavily there in the

1770s, funding an entirely new, purpose-built seminary, fit for the sons of the

emerging Catholic urban middle classes.[113] Bursaries, the life-blood of college

finances continued to be established, though revealingly some now made provision

for the possible delivery of education at home.[114] However, even in Paris financial

pressures grew, especially in the 1780s. Structural financial weaknesses were

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[112] See C. Begadon, 'Laity and clergy in the Catholic renewal of Dublin, c. 1750-

1830' (Ph.D. thesis, Maynooth University, 2009), pp. 195–6.

[113] There was a 1772 appeal for funds for this new college in Paris. See D.D.A., Irish

College Paris, papers, AB3/34/16(37)). In 1786 the bishop of Cloyne noted a list of

clerical subscribers to the College des Lombards. See E. Derr, 'Episcopal visitations

of the diocese of Cloyne and Ross 1785-1828', *Archivium Hibernicum,* 66 (2013),

317.

[114] Swords, 'Calendar', 165, 167.

exacerbated by growing state tax demands. Moreover, it is probable that changes in public piety in France, influenced in part by economic hardship and intellectual challenges to traditional practices, reduced income from Mass stipends, customary mainstays of fee-paying students.

In spite of these difficulties, the Paris college was central to the mission of providing priests for the burgeoning Irish Catholic population. It remained so even after the beginning of the French Revolution in 1789. In fact, during the relatively benign early months of the revolution, college authorities were surprisingly upbeat about the future, sharing the general eagerness for change. However, the 1790 Civil Constitution of the Clergy, effectively subordinating the French Church to the state, cooled earlier clerical enthusiasm.[115] During 1791 students melted away, apprehensive about the future, although new comers continued to arrive as late as 1792, no doubt intent on benefitting from their bursaries. Tensions, however, were rising, and not just in Paris. Back home in Dublin, the nefarious consequences of the recent revolution were rehearsed in the excommunication of Robert McEvoy, fulminated by Archbishop Thomas Troy. McEvoy, a priest of the archdiocese, had availed of the new arrangement in Paris to contract marriage, presenting another face of the revolution to shocked Irish conservatives.[116] Worse was to come. September 1792 saw the first mass killings of French clergy. The indefatigable Charles Kearney, superior of the Irish college, wrote to Paris old boy and bishop of Meath, Patrick

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[115] L. Chambers, 'Revolutionary and refractory? The Irish colleges in Paris and the French Revolution', *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*, 2:1 (2008), 29–50.

[116] D.D.A., Troy Papers, AB1/116/5(83), sentence of excommunication of Revd Robert McEvoy, 29 Sept. 1792.

Plunkett, that it was time to think about diverting college income to domestic alternatives.[117]

Growing concerns in Paris and Dublin regarding French radicalism chimed with domestic concerns about political extremism nearer home. The restoration of Catholic parliamentary voting rights thanks to the 1793 relief Act, caused already worried conservatives like Troy to fret about the potential for the radicalization of the newly enfranchised. Given the volatile political atmosphere in Ireland, characterized by increasing religious sectarianism, splits in the Catholic Committee and the meeting of the ominously named Catholic Convention in late 1792, his worries did not seem unfounded. The outbreak of war between Britain and France in 1793 only served to darken the mood further. Accordingly, even before the confiscation of French religious institutions in 1793[118] Troy and others were already considering the possibility of establishing a seminary in Ireland. This might have been nothing more than a pipe dream had not the Dublin government revealed a readiness to cooperate. Dublin officials were anxious to retain Catholic confidence in the face of domestic radicalism and saw a domestic seminary, with appropriate government supervision, as a least of a number of evils, including a continued Irish clerical presence in revolutionary France. A complex deal was cut between government and Catholic hierarchy. The immediate result was the foundation of the royal Catholic college of St

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[117] Charles Kearney to Patrick Plunkett, 2 Sept. 1792' in A. Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath, Ancient and Modern*, (3 vols, Dublin: Joseph Dollard, 1867), vol. 3, pp. 196–7.

[118] The Irish colleges were restored to Irish ownership in 1795 but at that stage were not functioning as seminaries.

Patrick at Maynooth.[119] In the longer term the deal helped secure episcopal condemnation of the 1798 rebellion and their support, in return for expected Catholic emancipation, for the 1801 act of Union.

Maynooth inaugurated a seminary order that durably eclipsed the tottering continental network. However, it was far from a clean break with the past. Following the established continental model Maynooth included a 'lay college', which operated into the nineteenth century. Nor was there any weakening of the French link. A continuing Gallic influence was assured by the repatriation of French based Irish professors and the employment of a number of French clerical émigrés. Unlike the Paris colleges, however, there was now a formal place for episcopal governance, albeit temporarily compromised by the irksome presence of Protestant visitors.[120]

These developments, so crucial to the institutional history of the colleges and so absorbing for historians took place against a deeper set of changes. From the 1750s, improving economic conditions in Ireland had already begun to impact decisively on the traditional social role played by Irish Catholicism's European extensions. With increased domestic prosperity, thanks to free trade, the success of the textile industry and improved Irish access to larger markets, especially in England and the Americas,[121] the range of migrant services provided by colleges' network declined in relative importance. Henceforth there were domestic and international

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[119] P. Corish, *Maynooth College, 1795-1995* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1995), pp. 6–19.

[120] 35 George III Cap. 21.

[121] I. McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland: The Isle of Slaves* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2009), p. 110.

alternatives to traditional military and clerical careers in Catholic Europe. At home, thanks to the growing militarization occasioned by Britain's larger international involvements, British army recruiters began looking to Ireland, especially Catholic Ireland, for cannon fodder. Recruitment of Catholics necessitated the removal of a number of Catholic disabilities, which the government readily facilitated.[122] In the face of Protestant opposition and the rise of domestic radicalism, the Dublin administration quickly lost its appetite for reform but thanks to the French revolutionary wars, the imperial army's appetite for Irish Catholic recruits proved insatiable. The figures speak for themselves. As the revolutionary wars advanced the army grew. By 1801, Irish recruits, mostly Catholic, made up a third, perhaps, of the 300,000 under arms. This opened a whole new set of career possibilities for Irish Catholics of all backgrounds, including the new poor created by rapid population growth. For all of them the old European networks were increasingly irrelevant, as Irish Catholics were drawn more tightly into the economic and military structures of the British imperial system.

Domestic prosperity also permitted the emergence of new domestic sources of Catholic income, which lay and clerical pioneers applied to a range of pious and educational projects, including the establishment of domestic colleges.[123] In a sense, eighteenth century economic prosperity and militarization had begun to transform Catholic Ireland and its continental extensions long before the revolutionary tumults of 1789 and 1798. Ironically, just as early modern state formation and economic dislocation had provided the context for the emergence of the seminaries in the

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[122] Ibid., p. 286.

[123] Begadon, 'Laity and clergy', pp. 196–7.

sixteenth century, so later early modern economic prosperity and empire building rendered the continental colleges largely redundant.[124]

IX. Conclusion

Generalized accounts of college origins, positing big events as institutional triggers, risk robbing the colleges of their historical agency, making them at worse victims, at best instruments of larger, impersonal forces. In line with recent development in the history of migration, this essay highlighted the agency of specific migrant groups. It underlined the domestic as well as international factors that shaped their actions, plumbing the motivation and tracing the activities of groups most involved in the colleges' origins. This worm's eye view set out to identity the individuals and groups behind the organizational and financial efforts to bring these small institutions into being and maintain them in function. From this reworking, the colleges emerge as multi-functional institutions, tied into complex migrant systems that linked back into domestic social structures and networked outwards to host economies. Operating under the sanctions imposed by the confessional Irish state, the overseas colleges educated a portion of the domestic clergy and a much larger number of lay progeny, the latter for abroad careers. Economic prosperity, domestic militarization and politically motivated Catholic relief changed the configuration of this post-reformation Irish Catholic infrastructure, robbing the colleges of their core traditional functions. By the third quarter of the eighteenth century, the colleges had had their day. Some overseas institutions survived but their nineteenth century afterlives were

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[124] McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland*, p. 359.

played out in the shadow of the emerging domestic college network and its newly

empowered episcopal managers.