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CATHOLICISM IN THE PROVINCE OF ARMAGH, 1603-1641

TRINITY COLLEGE

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Thesis submitted for the PhD degree

University of Dublin

2004

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SUMMARY

The thesis explores the evolution of Roman Catholicism in the province of Armagh from 1603 to 1641. The ecclesiastical province of Armagh embraces Ulster together with north Leinster, which in the catholic community of the early seventeenth century were areas of broadly Gaelic and Anglo-Irish culture, respectively. The period covered ranges from the end of the Nine Years War in 1603 to the eve of the breakdown of 1641. Four main categories of sources are used. Documentation of catholic provenance includes records of Vatican departments; decrees of provincial synods in Ireland; reports, correspondence, and contemporary histories emanating from the religious orders; wills; catholic correspondence in the State Papers; and contemporary works in defence of the catholic cause. A second category comprises reports, correspondence, and other writings of Church of Ireland provenance. Government records constitute a third category: exchequer papers, presentments of recusants, and the records of the court of castle chamber. The final major category is correspondence to and from government officials, in the State Papers.

The study traces the evolution in the catholic community from the experience of religious coercion, which featured so highly down to c.1620, to the resurgence which characterised the 1620s and 1630s. Cultural differences between Ulster and the Anglo-Irish areas, together with Ulster's experience of plantation, accounted for differences in catholicism in the two regions. The first four chapters treat of catholicism in Ulster: its survival in the pre-plantation period is outlined, the impact of the state church is considered, catholic renewal in the 1610s is presented, and relations between priests and people in the 1620s and 1630s are explored. The extent to which elites in the localities were supportive of the old faith helps to account for the differing situations of catholicism prevailing across plantation Ulster.

Developments in catholicism in the Anglo-Irish areas are treated in subsequent chapters. The modalities of religious coercion, at its most intense in the period down to c.1620, are presented as these affected both laity and clergy. Trends within the catholic community in these years are explored, among which were the persistence of traditionalist clergy, and the emergence of continentally trained clergy. The catholic resurgence thereafter is considered in terms of tensions within the community, which erupted in the Drogheda dispute of the early 1620s, together with the expansion of the religious orders. A final chapter considers lay piety: the forms of piety available to the social elite, the revival of Lough Derg as a pilgrimage venue from the early 1620s, and the endurance of popular forms of devotion and belief.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For generously sharing their knowledge of the sources, and discussing various points, I am grateful to the following: Elizabeth-Anne Boran, Clare Carroll, Monsignor Patrick Corish, Bernadette Cunningham, Tom Desmond, of the National Library of Ireland, Ignatius Fennessy OFM, Hugh Fenning OP, Alan Ford, Raymond Gillespie, Brian Jackson, Rolf Loeber, John McCafferty, Joseph McLaughlin, Benignus Millett OFM, Thomas O'Connor, Jane Ohlmeyer, and Michelle O Riordan. Aidan Clarke's patient, attentive and calm guidance has always brought light, reassurance and resolve.

Jesuit confreres provided much help. In using the Irish Jesuit Archives, I wish to thank the archivist, Fergus O'Donoghue, and for facilitating access to the Milltown Park library, I thank Brendan Woods. I am grateful to Edward FitzGerald and Michael Hurley for assistance in reading Latin texts. The following individuals kindly read the various chapters and their helpful comments have improved the text: Gerard Bourke, John Brady, Gerard Clarke, Charlie Davy, David Gaffney, Henry Grant, Raymond Moloney, and Fergus O'Donoghue. I am especially in debt to Tomaz Mikus for generously undertaking the printing of the thesis.

Staff and students in the Department of Modern History have provided a social and academic context which lightened the isolation of the researcher. I acknowledge support received in the form of a Trinity College Postgraduate Award. For hospitality and encouragement, I thank the Jesuit communities in Leeson St, Dublin, in the Collegio del Gesu, Rome, and in Belfast and Portadown; the community of John Sullivan House, Dundrum, over several years provided an atmosphere conducive to research and writing. The value which the Society of Jesus attaches to learned ministry has always been an inspiration.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ASV	Archivio Segreto Vaticano
BAV	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
BL	British Library
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
IJA	Irish Jesuit Archives
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
NLI	National Library of Ireland
OFM	Order of Friars Minor [Franciscans]
PRO	Public Records Office
PRONI	Public Records Office of Northern Ireland
SJ	Society of Jesus [Jesuit]
TCD	Trinity College Dublin

INTRODUCTION

The renewal of catholicism was a major influence on early modern Ireland. Historians from Bellesheim in the 1890s have outlined the major institutional elements of that process.[1] A chapter of Tadhg O hAnnrachain's Catholic Reformation in Ireland is devoted to institutional developments between 1618 and 1645. F.X. Martin's study of one counter-reformation figure is outstanding in the way in which the author places his subject firmly in the context of catholic developments both in Ireland and on the continent.[2] In perceptive and seminal essays, both John Bossy and Aidan Clarke have explored some of the internal dynamics of catholicism in the early seventeenth century, setting religious trends within a social context.[3] These works take a perspective which embraces the whole kingdom. However, despite the limitations in source material, the subject calls for more detailed treatment, in which trends and insights at the national level are tested against regional or local experience. There are indeed histories for several dioceses within the province.[4]

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[1]. A. Bellesheim, Geschichte der Katholischen Kirche in Irland von der Einfuhrung des Christentums bis auf die Gegenwart, ii, 1509-1690 (3 vols, Mainz, 1890-1); P. Corish, 'The reorganisation of the Irish church, 1603-41', Irish Catholic Historical Committee Proceedings, 3, pp 9-14.

[2]. F.X. Martin, Friar Nugent: A Study of Francis Lavalin Nugent 1569-1635 Agent of the Counter-Reformation (Rome-London, 1962).

[3]. T. O hAnnrachain, Catholic Reformation in Ireland (Oxford, 2002), pp 39-81; J. Bossy, 'The counter-reformation and the people of Catholic Ireland, 1596-1641', in T. Williams (ed.), Historical Studies VIII (Dublin, 1971), pp 155-70; A. Clarke, 'Colonial identity in early seventeenth-century Ireland', in T.W. Moody (ed.), Nationality and the pursuit of national independence: Historical Studies XI (Belfast, 1978), pp 57-71.

[4]. J. McNamee, History of the Diocese of Ardagh (Dublin, 1954); J. Monaghan, Records relating to the Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise (Dublin, 1886); J. O'Laverty, An historical

Nevertheless, their coverage of the early seventeenth century is often sketchy and unsystematic; most were written before the relevant Irish material in the Roman archives, and the Franciscan corpus, were comprehensively edited and published. Their focus was largely on the appropriation by the Church of Ireland of the older ecclesial infrastructure; internal developments within catholicism were largely ignored. Even in more recent historiography, there is a lack of regional studies of Irish catholicism. The religious denomination of the indigenous population hardly features in studies of plantation Ulster. A major exception is the metropolitan area of Dublin, where religious developments in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries are well served by the work of Colm Lennon, James Murray, and the contributors to A History of the diocese of Dublin.[5] Extending the range of this approach, a regional or provincial perspective has been adopted in the present study, for in it the evolution of catholicism in one church province in the early seventeenth century is examined.

The ecclesiastical province of Armagh provides the geographical context. The northern province consisted of the dioceses of Ardagh, Armagh, Clogher, Derry, Down and Connor, Dromore, Kilmore, Meath (together with Clonmacnoise), and Raphoe. It stretched north of a line from the Gormanston district (south of Drogheda) south-west to the area south of Athlone.[6] It embraced all of Ulster, and the counties of Louth, Meath, Westmeath, Longford and the western part of King's County. Northern catholicism was marked by the fact that Ulster and north Leinster differed culturally and socially. Ulster catholicism was rooted in the Gaelic world, with distinctive forms of social and political organisation which continued to influence catholicism there at least down to the start of the Plantation in 1609. The collapse of the traditional elite in the wake of the Flight of the Earls severely limited the patronage which the clergy in Ulster had enjoyed hitherto. From 1603, British settlement, both in east Ulster and under the Plantation, provided a new and in general hostile environment for catholicism.

These developments reinforced the poverty of Ulster catholics vis-a-vis their southern co-religionists. Consequently, fewer clerics in Ulster had a continental education. This

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account of the Diocese of Down and Connor (5 vols, Dublin, 1878-95); P. O'Connell, The Diocese of Kilmore, its history and antiquities (Dublin, 1937); A. Cogan, The Ecclesiastical History of the Diocese of Meath (3 vols, Dublin, 1862-70); J. Healy, History of the Diocese of Meath (2 vols, Dublin, 1908); E. Maguire, A history of the Diocese of Raphoe (2 vols, Dublin, 1920).

[5]. See the extensive list of Lennon's publications in the Bibliography; James Murray, 'The Tudor diocese of Dublin: episcopal government, ecclesiastical politics and the enforcement of the reformation, c1534-1590', PhD thesis, University of Dublin, 1997; J. Kelly and D. Keogh (eds), History of the Catholic Diocese of Dublin (Dublin, 2000).

[6]. See map, 'Dioceses of the Roman Catholic Church 1831-1974', N.H.I., ix, p.60.

accounted for the slower pace of catholic reform, and the persistence of a more traditionalist religion among clergy and laity. By contrast, catholicism in north Leinster enjoyed continued support from the Anglo-Irish landed and mercantile interests, whose wealth was probably increasing in the period under consideration. In shaping northern catholicism as a whole, these social differences in the early seventeenth century reinforced the deeper rooted cultural particularities arising from the Anglo-Norman settlement of north Leinster. Contrasting political loyalties in the 1590s added to the tensions within northern catholicism between the Ulster Irish and the Anglo-Irish; the stresses which were such an explosive feature of catholic life in the 1640s were also perceptible in earlier decades. These considerations suggest a division in the thesis between the treatment of catholicism in Ulster (chapters one to four), and in north Leinster (chapters five to seven).

The period of peace between 1603 and the outbreak of the rising in 1641 provides the chronological parameter; the catholic dimension to the revolt lies outside the scope of the present work. This necessarily limited context precludes the examination of popular religion, as offered by Raymond Gillespie in Devoted People (ranging from the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth centuries), and by Salvator Ryan, in his study of popular religion in Gaelic Ireland from the mid-fifteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries.[7] Rather, this study focuses on the catholic pastoral infrastructure in the localities, on the implementation of anti-recusant measures, on the impact of the state church on the catholic community, and on the shifting balance between traditionalist and tridentine clergy in various localities at different times. The pace of change within catholicism, as with the spread of the reformation, was uneven.

In taking up these themes, the study seeks to complement Alan Ford's The Protestant Reformation in Ireland, 1590-1641, albeit on a provincial scale. While lacking a similar wealth both of sources and secondary literature, the present work also falls within the category of a regional study of catholicism in the early modern period, such as Christopher Haigh has provided for Lancashire.[8] Indeed emphasis in the thesis on the social context of clerical activity, if not of catholicism more generally, in this era, was in part inspired by John Bossy's The English Catholic Community 1570-1850. In The Catholic Community in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, Patrick Corish has indicated the potential of this approach in an Irish context. In the unpublished final section of R. Dudley Edward's thesis, the institutional framework of Jacobean anti-recusancy measures is outlined. However, F.X. Walker's study of this programme in late Elizabethan England highlights the fact of

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[7]. S. Ryan, 'Popular religion in Gaelic Ireland 1445-1645', PhD thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2003.

[8]. C. Haigh, Reformation and resistance in Tudor Lancashire (Cambridge, 1975).

wide variations in implementation.[9] Here, the processes of Jacobean religious coercion as experienced in one Irish church province are presented in chapter five; from this approach a more nuanced picture of this facet of the catholic experience emerges.

Survival, coercion, and resurgence are major themes of the study. In the case of catholicism in Ulster, survival and coercion are explored in chapters one and two. A survey of the state of the catholic infrastructure in Ulster in the years immediately preceding the Plantation reveals the destructive impact of war on ecclesiastical structures. Parish churches were in ruins, religious houses likewise, and their communities were largely dispersed. An exhausted people had little energy for internal church renewal. Nevertheless, apart from east Ulster, particularly devastated, parochial clergy were in place in most parishes across the north. Although eroded by war and creeping secularisation, the herenagh system of parochial provision and maintenance was still widespread. The Franciscans remained, and were adapting to the loss of their network of convents by creating more informal living arrangements in the neighbourhood of their former houses. A further glimmer of catholic renewal was the tradition in a minority of clerical families to send sons for education outside Ulster.

The impact of the state church in Ulster on the indigenous catholicism is the subject of chapter two. Assimilation of the Irish to the state church was largely limited to an initially significant proportion of the diocesan clergy. Even this was merely a minimalist adherence to the new order, and only characteristic of the first two decades of the seventeenth century. More pervasive points of contact with the catholic community were the exactions of state clergy, and the jurisdiction of the established church. These religious and economic pressures gave rise to social tensions, which erupted into violence in 1614-5. This early animosity suggests that Irish aggression towards state clergy in 1641-2 was rooted in resentments which had been simmering since the start of the Plantation. However, Irish experience of state church exactions was not uniform; a mosaic pattern prevailed across Ulster, for in practice strong landlords could limit the effect of ecclesiastical pressures within their territories.

The Plantation era witnessed serious efforts at catholic renewal in Ulster, considered here in chapter three. However the catholic reformers operated within a context where almost all the parochial clergy were traditionalist priests. The poverty of Ulster catholics largely precluded the maintenance required for continentally-trained parish clergy. David Rothe, appointed vice-primate in 1609, devoted much of his attention in the first half of the

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[9]. F.X. Walker, 'The implementation of the Elizabethan statutes against recusants, 1580-1603', PhD thesis, University of London, 1961.

1610s to Ulster. He arranged for the appointment of a cadre of vicars-general in the northern dioceses.[10] Where possible, these were men with some continental education. It was through these that the lower clergy were strengthened in their allegiance to Rome. Rothe's mission to Ulster was hampered by his lack of residence, a consideration limiting the work of the vicars-general, who were based in the more secure environs of the Pale. However through their efforts a catholic diocesan system was maintained, and the loyalty to Rome of clergy and people was ensured. A further pool of catholic reformers was provided by the Franciscans, some of whom were trained in Louvain and were returning to minister in the north. In the crisis years of the early 1610s, the friars organised popular missions across Ulster, seeking to bolster clergy and laity in their commitment to Rome.

The end of sustained pressure on catholicism, characterising the 1610s especially, contributed to making the 1620s and 1630s a time of catholic expansion. In chapter four, this period is considered in the Ulster context. Agents of catholic renewal included the recently-appointed northern bishops, and the continentally-trained among the many Franciscans in Ulster, as well as laypeople and clergy within Scots seigneurial catholicism (most notably in south Londonderry). The latter highlights the need to consider the particularity of catholicism in the various localities, even within plantation Ulster. The achievement of the bishops' reform efforts was limited. Resistance from traditionalist forces within the broader catholic community and especially within the diocesan clergy contributed to the slow pace of renewal, and to some of the difficulties experienced by the northern bishops. The changing social setting of the mass was an index of the evolution of catholicism in the north over the early seventeenth century. Marriage jurisdiction reflected the real but limited nature of catholic reform under episcopal aegis. The Franciscans experienced resurgence in Ulster in these decades and made a significant contribution as the main body of preachers. However, reform efforts were stymied by the paucity of tridentine clergy, arising from the endemic poverty of northern catholics. The growth in number and confidence of the traditionalist diocesan clergy, together with the Franciscans, gave rise to tensions within the catholic community over clerical maintenance.

Coercion against catholicism (treated in chapter five), which loomed so large in the first two decades of the seventeenth century, can best be studied in the context of the Pale and the Anglo-Irish areas. Not only are the sources richer than for Ulster, but in fact the

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[10]. Catholic diocesan leadership in early seventeenth-century Ireland was exercised either by a vicar-apostolic, a papal appointee 'discharging ordinary jurisdiction in a diocese where a bishop has not been appointed', or by a vicar-general, 'appointed by a bishop to assist in the administration of a diocese by exercising ordinary jurisdiction in his name', T. O hAnnrachain, Catholic Reformation in Ireland (Oxford, 2002), p.309.

government's campaigns were largely directed against the wealthier, more anglicised areas. The modalities of pressure on catholic clergy may be explored in the case of the Franciscans of Multyfarnham, County Westmeath. While coercion was at times severe, in practice it was often mitigated by the protection of the catholic community; measures against clergy largely required military intervention for their success. Government drives against catholicism in effect took place in two phases, in 1605-7, and again from 1611 until about 1619. The earlier campaign was focused on the towns, and the gentry in the countryside. Raids in search of priests had a disruptive effect on households. The crackdown on clerics was accompanied by attempts to force laity to attend church. When the pressure ceased, in 1607, lay religious conformity evaporated. The campaign beginning in 1611 was more sustained, and more widespread geographically, embracing Leinster, and south Ulster. Many priests were imprisoned. Of greater impact was the consistent imposition of the recusancy fine on laity, resulting in imprisonment and impoverishment on a wide scale. The examination of how religious coercion was implemented in the 1610s shows its extensive impact on wide sections of the catholic community across Leinster and south Ulster. While large numbers conformed, their adherence was superficial, and most who did so were of the poorer sort. As the pressure eased, the catholic authorities responded with rites of re-integration for those who had temporarily lapsed.

The internal development of catholicism in the Anglo-Irish areas during the decades of coercion down to about 1620 is the theme of chapter six. The role of the nobility and gentry as patrons of the priests and providers of venues for mass ensured for the elite a prominent role within the catholic infrastructure. The beginnings of the evolution from survivalism to a more tridentine-style catholicism may be detected in these years, as continentally trained clergy were gradually replacing the traditionalist pastors. The slow pace of this change may be explored in the case of the diocesan vicars-general. Survivalism was even more characteristic of the lower clergy, as a consideration of their various roles illustrates. Elite support and maintenance contributed to the survival of the Franciscans. Differences between traditionalist and tridentine strands were crystallised in the church's ministry of reconciliation. Survivalist clergy led large gatherings where pardons and indulgences were proclaimed; these gatherings, together with the highly popular relic tours, were viewed with disapproval by reforming priests. The heavy concentration of tridentine clergy in Meath diocese by about 1620 arose in part from the continental schooling of Anglo-Irish youths from 1603, if not earlier. Across the north (including Meath), however, a more typical progress was for young men who had been ordained in Ireland to proceed to studies on the continent. The Jesuit presence in the diocese in the 1610s was a particular expression of Meath's early engagement with reformed catholicism.

The easing of anti-recusant measures from about 1619 contributed to the catholic resurgence which characterised the 1620s and 1630s in the Old English areas. This development is considered in chapter seven. The early 1620s, however, was a period of confessional flux, as coercive measures were still being implemented fitfully; nevertheless, catholics were reclaiming public space, in churches, processions, and public assemblies, in these years. Catholic elan was matched by protestant anxiety. The expansion of catholicism may be seen in concentrated form in the port town of Drogheda, with a multiplicity of groups, a development which the town's mercantile wealth facilitated. However, tensions within northern catholicism were also to be found there in exceptional intensity; in the dispute in the early 1620s, between the vicar-general, and his Jesuit allies, on the one hand, and the Franciscans, on the other, lurked economic competition between catholic groups, and more deeply-rooted cultural and political animosities between Old Irish and Old English traditions within northern catholicism. The legacy of the Nine Years War cast a long shadow. The concentration of religious orders in north Leinster in these decades contributed to making Meath diocese one of the areas of greatest tridentine influence in the kingdom. The vitality and fractiousness characteristic of the religious orders in these decades were reflected in a number of themes: the missionary efforts of the Capuchins, the disruptive medieval legacy of the Cistercians, and the problems posed by the begging of the friars.

In a survey of aspects of the religious mentalite of lay people across the north (chapter eight), a social division of piety emerges. Several considerations lead to the conclusion that tridentine influence was greatest among the Anglo-Irish elite. In this milieu, the influence of English recusants - laypeople and clergy - has been detected. More generally, the elite practised forms of piety which were not available to the poor, namely legacies to religious communities and individual priests, and, for a few, pilgrimage to Rome and Loreto. The presence of tridentine clergy, whether diocesan or members of religious orders, as chaplains in elite households, was another source of tridentine influence. By contrast, the revival of Lough Derg as a pilgrimage from the early 1620s drew pilgrims from all social levels. The broad popularity of pilgrimages such as Lough Derg alerts us to the risk of an over-rigid social classification of devotion. At the lower social levels, a survey of some practices indicates that large areas of popular belief remained untouched by tridentine reform impulses. Catholicism in this milieu embraced a range of beliefs and practices, ranging from the orthodox to the superstitious. While this religious culture cannot be reduced to the narrow range of beliefs and practices considered here, nevertheless, tridentine reformers recognised the endurance of, to them, questionable elements. By 1641, the evidence surveyed suggests that the tridentine impact on the religious sensibility of the vast majority of lay people was limited indeed.

Many of the sources used are of catholic provenance. These include papers of Vatican departments: the Datary, papers of Cardinal Barberini, and, for the years after 1622, Propaganda Fide. Much of this material has been calendared in issues of Archivium Hibernicum and Collectanea Hibernica. One particularly extensive and fruitful source used in this study remains uncalendared. This is the annual 'Per obitum' series of papal appointments to benefices, arising from situations where the incumbent had died, and the appointment had devolved for whatever reason to the Holy See[11]; the volumes covering the years 1603-40 have been examined. Information from these documents throws valuable light on trends within the catholic clergy in early seventeenth-century Ireland; the papers have a broad geographical range, and feature lower clergy as well as prelates. In the 1620s and 1630s there was a tendency to use these provisions to support Irish priests studying on the continent, though how these grants actually benefitted grantees is not clear. The decrees of provincial synods indicate issues of concern within the catholic community, which reformers sought to address. Contemporary works of catholic writers have been useful in exploring the impact of religious coercion on the community. Reports, correspondence, and contemporary histories emanating from the religious orders - chiefly the Capuchins, Franciscans, Jesuits, and Poor Clares - have been especially useful; the Franciscans in particular have been blessed in the diligent scholars in their midst who have edited material in their care. Catholic wills have survived mainly in the records of chancery and exchequer inquisitions. Correspondence of catholic laity and clergy was occasionally seized, and thereby was preserved in the State Papers.

A second strand of material is derived from the Church of Ireland. There are many references to expansionary trends in the Roman church in the reports and other writings of protestant clerics. These reflected the perennial anxiety arising from the minority position of the state church. This material includes visitation reports from 1615, 1622 and 1634, together with the correspondence of ecclesiastics, and contemporary tracts. The records of government administration have also been used; exchequer records, presentments of recusants, and the papers of the court of castle chamber illustrate the processes of religious coercion. Finally, correspondence to and from government officials (principally in the State Papers, but also in other collections) throws much light on state policy towards the Roman church, and on developments within catholicism in Ireland, including the north; reports from those resident in the various localities are particularly valuable.

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[11]. N. Donnelly (ed.), 'The 'Per Obitum' volumes in the Vatican Archivio', Archiv. Hib., 1 (1912), p.28.

Reflecting common usage, in referring to the Roman Catholic Church, its personnel and adherents, the word 'catholic' is used; however, in adopting this term, no exclusive claim to catholicity is implied.

Dating is in new style. References follow the guidelines given in 'Rules for contributors to Irish Historical Studies', in Irish Historical Studies, Supplement 1 (1968).

CHAPTER ONE

CATHOLICISM IN ULSTER ON THE EVE OF THE PLANTATION, c.1603-9

Ulster catholicism, in the immediate post-war years, presented a picture of fragile continuity. Across much of mid- and west Ulster, down to the start of the Plantation in 1609, the reformation had hardly begun; elsewhere it was merely marked by the appearance of a few new state bishops. Superficially, late medieval catholicism, with its own distinct forms of church organisation, continued to shape the ecclesiastical landscape. However, war had an enormous impact. The church shared in the devastation of society arising in particular from the Nine Years War, but also from the unsettled conditions in the south and east of the province from the later sixteenth century. The erosion of traditional church structures occurred in phases, associated with the encroachment of the Dublin administration. It began with the English intrusion on the east coast from the 1560s, and continued in Monaghan in the 1580s. War impacted on ecclesiastical institutions in different ways. It led to the weakening of the traditional lordly 'ius patronatus' of the church livings, and hence to O'Neill's campaign of resumption from the mid-1590s. Parish churches were burnt. The traditional form of parochial maintenance - the coarbship (or herenachy) - was increasingly subject to secularisation. Religious houses across the north - the Franciscans were the most numerous - were destroyed, and their communities dispersed.

The catholic infrastructure on the eve of the Plantation may be explored by considering a number of developments. The Franciscan network experienced destruction and limited survival, while the active political role of the friars and other clergy continued. The survival of the coarb and herenagh system of parochial maintenance and clerical provision into the early seventeenth century will be explored. The Ulster Irish were so exhausted by war that stirrings of church reform and renewal, evident before 1603, were extinguished.[1] Relevant documentation illustrating these various processes arose from the earl of Tyrone's interest in control of the church, and, subsequently, from the interest of British officials and clerics in establishing the nature and extent of ecclesiastical lands in the newly escheated territories. There is a dearth of documentation on church life in Counties Antrim and Down for the same period. This reflected the intense destruction under Chichester, the impact on local society of the collapse of elite families, together with the beginnings of the British colonization of east Ulster from 1603. Nevertheless, the state of institutional catholicism across Ulster in the years between the end of the Nine Years War and the start of the Plantation may be outlined, in terms of destruction and limited survival. The weak state of catholic infrastructure by 1609 provides a context within which the growth in the succeeding decades may be evaluated.

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The immediate post-war years were a period of profound trauma for Ulster catholicism - the scorched earth policy of Chichester from 1602 had intensified the destruction of church fabric and artefacts, while famine, plague and martial law took

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[1]. By 1600, an indigenous reform movement was underway among the clergy of Raphoe diocese, led by the dean, Hugh O'Donnell, possibly the cleric noted in 1609 as the most learned and worthy of the west Ulster clergy, a man who had studied in Glasgow, TCD Ms 10,383, p.12. The reformers, comprising at least half the clergy, wished to depose Neil O'Boyle (bishop 1592-d.1611), alleging that he caused scandal to the better sort of clergy, and the laity; they wished to restore Raphoe cathedral as a pilgrimage centre, after the relic of the cross, and the cathedral books and ornaments, had been destroyed in the burning of the cathedral by the English. Accordingly, they petitioned the pope for a relic of the true cross, chapter and clergy of Raphoe to Clement VIII, July 1600, Archiv. Hib., 2, pp 294-5. O'Boyle survived these attempts to remove him, for he was still catholic bishop of Raphoe at his death in 1611, [C. Hollywood SJ] to Richard Conway, 4 Nov 1611, W. M'D. (ed.), 'Irish colleges since the reformation', I.E.R., 10, pp 290-7. On Raphoe diocese in the 1590s and 1600s, see E. Maguire, A history of the diocese of Raphoe (Dublin, 1920), i, pp 124-32.

their toll of church personnel as of the population in general.[2] In August 1602, the delegate from the Armagh convent to the Franciscan provincial chapter was unable to travel because of fear of attack by crown soldiers.[3] From the start of the Nine Years War in 1594, church buildings across Ulster were being severely damaged and often destroyed by both Irish and English forces. Although lacking the strategic importance which their large size conferred on the religious houses, the parish churches, too, were viewed as potential strongholds. Thus in County Fermanagh about 1599, when the surrounding villages were destroyed by fire and sword, up to 300 people took refuge in the church of Aghaturgher, where the thirty survivors were still living in 1602.[4] In 1594-5, Coll Mac Bryan Mac Mahon's sons, together with the sons of Ever Mac Cooloe Mac Mahon, 'burnt all the churches in Farney [County Monaghan] lest any garrison should be laid in them'.[5] It is probable that the churches in mid-Ulster were destroyed in the campaigns of Sir Henry Docwra in the years 1600-2.[6] As elsewhere in Ireland, after 1603 catholic clergy were under pressure from government officials, state bishops, and marauding soldiers. The earl of Tyrconnell claimed that, over the years 1603-7, clerics in his territories faced harassment from crown officials.[7] Similarly, in 1607 Tyrone

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[2]. The north of Ireland was 'oprest with extreme famine' in autumn 1603; soldiers' exactions added 'to the grief and discontent of the poor inhabitants', there and elsewhere in Ireland, Chichester to Cecil, 23 Nov 1603, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.108; J. McCavitt, Sir Arthur Chichester (Belfast, 1998), pp 13-5; on a two-day journey through County Down, a judge saw almost no dwellings, Sir Robert Jacob to Salisbury, 15 April 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.194; there had been wars, famine and great plague in Ulster, Jacob to Salisbury, 15 April 1609, ibid., p.196.

[3]. In 1602, for the first time in the history of the Franciscans, a provincial chapter was held outside a convent, namely in the countryside near Creevelea, County Leitrim, because convents were either destroyed, impoverished, or threatened by soldiers, B. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947: Donatus Moneyus, De provincia Hiberniae S. Francisci', Anal. Hib., 6, pp 12-138 (here, pp 114-5).

[4]. In an account of O'Sullivan Beare's campaign, an encounter with these wretches in 1602 was described, 'fearful to behold, emaciated by hunger and want'; they implored the visitors for food, 'in honour of Christ Jesus, His Virgin Mother, and all the saints'; they lived on roots; when one person died, 'the survivors feasted by lot on his remains', W.McDonald, 'Irish colleges since the reformation', I.E.R., 10, p.452.

[5]. 'Advertisements received by several spies', 20 Feb 1595, E.P. Shirley, Some account of the territory or dominion of Farney (London, 1845), p.104 (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1592-6, p.299).

[6]. H. Docwra, 'A narrative of the services done by the army employed to Lough Foyle', J. O Donovan (ed.), Miscellany of the Celtic Society (Dublin, 1849), pp 235-86.

[7]. Earl of Tyrconnell to king [1607], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.364; clergy in Donegal under threat from marauding soldiery, ibid., p.373.

asserted that 'severe persecution' was practised in his lordship in the preceding years.[8] In early 1607, Edmond O'Mullarky, a friar, was being detained by Sir Thomas Phillips at Coleraine; another friar, Prior Olun, had been in detention there also, for saying mass, but had been freed by the lord deputy's warrant. Coercion was accompanied by persuasion, as the local authorities sought to elicit conformity from these priests. Bishop Montgomery sought to apprehend Bishop Conor O'Devanny, who was in the company of Tyrone, but O'Devanny evaded the state bishop.[9] Priests were probably among those killed by government forces, both in episodes during the war, and, later, by martial law, under Moses Hill, Ulster provost-marshal from 1603 onwards, and others; their deaths do not feature in the records.[10]

Catholicism in Ulster, as elsewhere in Ireland, was further weakened by the virtual collapse of the episcopal system. On the eve of the Nine Years War, most - if not all - Ulster dioceses had resident bishops.[11] However, by 1600 the northern episcopate was considerably debilitated. Armagh, Meath, Clogher, and Ardagh were vacant. The resident bishops were in poor health or deemed otherwise unsuitable.[12] The attenuation of diocesan life by the early seventeenth century was noted in an informal survey of the Ulster sees made for Sir John Davies by November 1606.[13] Several bishops were

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[8]. Earl of Tyrone's articles [1607], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.382.

[9]. Bishop of Derry to lord deputy, 4 Mar 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, pp 125-7.

[10]. Patents to Moses Hill as provost-marshal of Ulster, 1603, 1617 (for life); he was dead by 1629, Liber mun. pub. Hib. pt 2, p.194; Lord Deputy St John to Sir John Davies, 18 Mar 1617, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.153; according to the Franciscan Donogh Mooney, writing c.1618, Hill had a notorious reputation as persecutor of catholics, Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.28; Lord Deputy Chichester pardoned Sir Fulke Conway, Sir Edward Blany, Sir Toby Caulfield, Sir Francis Roe, and Capt Edward Trevor (several of whom were operating in Ulster), for executions by martial law, 1 Feb 1611, Bodleian, Oxford, Carte Ms 61, fol.523.

[11]. [Edmund] Magauran of Armagh, Redmond Gallagher of Derry, Richard Brady of Kilmore, Conor O Devane of Down and Connor, Patrick MacCaughwell of Dromore, and Neil O'Boyle of Raphoe, signed a joint letter to King Philip of Spain, from Enniskillen, 8 May 1593, Simancas, Estado 2604, quoted in J. Silke, 'Red Hugh O'Donnell, 1572-1601: A biographical survey', Donegal Annual, 5 no 1, p.18.

[12]. Redmund O'Gallagher, of Derry, was over 80 years old; Richard Brady, of Kilmore, suffering from ill-health and age, wanted to resign; Conor O'Devanny, of Down and Connor, was deemed too simple for administration; while Neil O'Boyle, of Raphoe, had been promoted without sufficient examination, Archiv. Hib., 2, p.301 (in English, 'Bishoprics and bishops, Ireland, 1600', Archiv. Hib., 24, p.81).

[13]. Davies to Salisbury, 12 Nov 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, pp 17-8; episcopal succession lists, N.H.I., ix, pp 337-53.

absentees - the primate, Archbishop Peter Lombard (appointed 1601), was living in Rome, while Owen M'Iver McMahon, native of Farney, County Monaghan, alleged bishop of Clogher (he was only provided in 1609), was living in exile in Germany. The three resident papally-provided bishops were all aged men, dependent for maintenance and protection on the impoverished and socially insecure Ulster elite. Niall O'Boyle of Raphoe (bishop 1591-d.1611) was being supported by the earl of Tyrconnell; similarly, the Franciscan Cornelius O'Devanny, bishop of Down and Connor (bishop 1583-d.1612), was staying in Tyrone with Cormac McBarron, the earl of Tyrone's brother, because it was not safe for him to stay east of the Bann, and the Tyrone lordship offered security to clergy at risk elsewhere. Even in mid-Ulster, ecclesiastics were threatened by encounters with state officials: while Davies was in the north in 1606, O'Devanny, dressed in the Franciscan habit, was brought into the camp.[14] Another Franciscan, Richard Brady (d.1607), bishop of Kilmore since 1580, had suffered when captured by English forces in 1600, and wished to retire to a convent of his order; aged and infirm, he was living in the Franciscan convent of Multyfarnham, County Westmeath.[15] So the normative mode of leadership within tridentine catholicism - a resident episcopate, pastorally active - was lacking in Ulster at this time of profound pressure on the catholic community.

War led to the destruction of the once-flourishing network of Franciscan convents; after 1603, a severely attenuated Franciscan presence remained. In the early modern period, the Franciscans were the predominant religious order within northern catholicism.[16] By the mid-sixteenth century, their 13 convents (the last of which, Lisgoole in Fermanagh, was founded in 1583, and all of which had become Observant by 1587) had stretched across the northern ecclesiastical province, in both Gaelic and Anglo-Irish areas.[17] Within Ulster, the secularization of the Franciscan convents was complete in the wake of the Flight of the Earls in 1607, though the friars lingered in the

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[14]. Davies to Salisbury, 12 Nov 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.18.

[15]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.98.

[16]. On the Franciscans in the late medieval period, see C. O Clabaigh, The Franciscans in Ireland, 1400-1534: From Reform to Reformation (Dublin, 2002).

[17]. Gwynn and Hadcock, Medieval Religious Houses Ireland (London, 1970), pp 240-1.

localities, as in Cavan.[18] Dispersal was associated with the extension of English military power, initially in east Ulster. Thus in the late 1560s and 1570s the friaries at Carrickfergus and Downpatrick were seized, and the Carrickfergus friary was then being used as a military store.[19] Similarly in the late 1580s the friary at Monaghan was destroyed by an English force during skirmishing there.[20]

As the largest and most solid buildings in the landscape, even when in ruins, the Franciscan convents were of military interest to both Irish and the incoming English forces. Hence they faced destruction as much, if not more, on strategic as on religious grounds.[21] In Ulster down to 1603 convents were attacked, and friars were killed or executed, as part of military campaigns involving crown forces.[22] However it was in the later stages of the Nine Years War that many friaries, hitherto protected by the Gaelic lords, were destroyed. The years 1598-1603 took a particularly heavy toll on the northern friaries - those of Lisgoole, County Fermanagh, Creevelea, County Leitrim, and the houses at Donegal and Multyfarnham, were burnt.[23] While strategic considerations lay behind the destruction of ecclesiastical buildings, on such occasions

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[18]. Although occupied by an English garrison in the mid-1590s, the friars were once again living in the Cavan convent in 1608, F. MacKiernan, St Mary's Abbey Cavan (Cavan, 2000), pp 10-11; the convent was granted to Theobald Burke, Baron Burke of Castleconnell, by letters patent, 26 Mar 1604, Anal. Hib., 31, p.108; in 1608, the premises were taken over by crown forces, and later destroyed, Gwynn and Hadcock, Medieval Religious Houses Ireland, p.245; some of the convent's valuables remained in the friars' possession, Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.50.

[19]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.37; Gwynn and Hadcock, op.cit., p.247.

[20]. B. Jennings (ed.), 'Brevis synopsis provinciae Hiberniae FF. minorum', Anal. Hib., 6, pp 139-86 (here, p.157).

[21]. In 1596 Hugh O'Neill used the ruins of the Armagh friary to attack the English, Gwynn and Hadcock, op. cit., p.242; in 1601 the Donegal friary was garrisoned by English troops, and was besieged and destroyed by O'Donnell's forces, Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.40, and C. Mooney, 'The friars and friary of Donegal, 1474-1840', in T. O'Donnell (ed.), Franciscan Donegal (Ros Nuala, 1952), pp 3-49; the only buildings of note in County Monaghan in the mid-1580s were the religious houses at Monaghan and Clones, Sir Henry Bagnall, 'The description and present state of Ulster, 1586', Shirley, Some account of the territory ... of Farney (London, 1845), p.79.

[22]. Thus three friars were hanged in Down in 1570, and at least six were killed by English soldiers at Monaghan in 1589, Jennings (ed.), 'Brevis synopsis', pp 157, 174, 176.

[23]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', pp 40, 94, and 'Brevis synopsis', p.161; unroofed churches in city of Armagh, and Franciscan convent of Monaghan, are depicted on contemporary maps, G.A. Hayes McCoy (ed.), Ulster and other Irish maps c.1600 (Dublin, 1964), maps 3 (Armagh), and 9 (Monaghan).

crown forces were wont to rob the costly vestments and sacred vessels of the more prominent churches. In 1595, George Oge Bingham plundered the Carmelite abbey of Rathmullan, County Donegal, and the church of St Columkille on Tory island.[24] The Franciscan convent of Donegal was particularly well-endowed with liturgical artifacts. In the last years of the war, these were taken by Sir Oliver Lambert, then governor of Connacht; the chalices were used as drinking cups, while vestments were cut up and used for various purposes.[25] Valuable liturgical items were sometimes kept with local families. Thus a vestment worth £20, most probably taken from this convent, was deposited with Owen O'Dooveny, on the understanding that it was to be returned to the friars.[26] The famous church at Down, containing the relics of Patrick, Columba and Bridget, was fired, allegedly by Edward Baron Cromwell who was serving with Essex in 1599; the relics were destroyed in the blaze. Cromwell also was believed to have burnt many places of worship in Counties Down and Antrim; he quickly entered the local folklore, notorious for his destruction of the churches.[27] The dereliction of the vast majority of churches in Antrim and north Down, noted in 1622, occurred as a result of the war. Thus by 1603, the religious houses of Ulster lay derelict, while the majority of the parish churches were in varying states of ruin.[28]

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One strategy of Franciscan survival was to arrange for alternative dwellings in isolated areas. It was at this stage that the 'domus refugii' became a feature of Franciscan

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[24]. A.F.M., sub anno 1595.

[25]. The Donegal convent had forty sets of vestments, some worked in gold and silver, and the rest in silk, together with 16 silver chalices, Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', pp 40-1.

[26]. Confession of Donogh Oge O'Gallagher, 6 Nov 1608, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.94.

[27]. W. Reeves (ed.), 'Irish itinerary of Father Edmund MacCana' [1644], U.J.A., 2 (1854), p.51; Edward Baron Cromwell (1559?-1607), DNB; it has not been possible to verify Cromwell's role in the destruction of the churches by reference to other sources; as late as 1622 most of the churches in east Ulster were still ruinous (dioceses of Down and Connor, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, pp 237-61).

[28]. The ecclesiastical situation in post-war Ulster was confused and disordered: the buildings were so defaced, and glebe and bishops' land so obscured, 'as if it were in a wilderness, where neither Christianity nor religion was ever heard of', Chichester's instructions to Sir James Ley and Sir John Davies, 14 Oct 1608, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.64; similarly, the lord deputy wrote of 'that rude and irreligious corner of the North', Chichester to king, 15 Oct 1608, ibid., p.81.

Ireland; this was a residence, of a provisional nature, located in the vicinity of an established convent, used when the friary had been destroyed, or when the friars were threatened there.[29] Such arrangements could be relatively simple and informal. As late as 1622, when the Multyfarnham brethren were expelled from their convent, 15 of them settled in a farmhouse in the locality given them by a local landowner, Andrew Nugent - it would appear that they returned relatively speedily to their original premises.[30]

Other arrangements were more complex and of longer duration. Thus by the 1610s, in Ulster, as elsewhere, the friars had convents built in deserted places and in dense woods, constructed of wood and twigs, with a roof of straw, but laid out as customary with refectory, choir, chapel, and separate rooms. In some instances these were temporary refuges, used at times of active persecution of the friars, for the Armagh convent had one such convent in the woods in Clogher diocese and another in County Down. Even secluded convents were liable to occasional raids - when pursued in one refuge, the friars would flee to another.[31] The situation of the Armagh convent illustrates this process. The medieval convent at Armagh was destroyed by fire in 1566. During the Nine Years War, a subsequent dwelling was also destroyed, and Tyrone arranged for the friars to move to a safer place, where they would be less exposed to English military raids. There they continued to lead a stable religious life, again in a community numbering at least twelve, even after Tyrone's departure in 1607 left the community vulnerable to protestant interference. This was at Brantry, in the O'Neill heartland four miles south-west of Dungannon; the friars erected a house with dormitories, chapel and brewery; they remained there until about 1650.[32]

Thus in the peace after 1603 noble patronage continued to play a key role in the survival of the handful of Franciscan communities which remained in Ulster. Geographical isolation and the support of patrons among the local elite ensured that a

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[29]. B. Millett, The Irish Franciscans 1651-65 (Rome, 1964), p.74.

[30]. R. Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath, c1622', Coll. Hib., 14, p.8.

[31]. B. Jennings (ed.), Wadding Papers 1614-38 (Dublin, 1953), p.41.

[32]. Gwynn and Hadcock, Med.Rel.Houses Ireland, p.242; Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.36; C. Mooney, 'Franciscan architecture in pre-reformation Ireland', R.S.A.I.Jn., 85, p.134; friar O Meallain, author of Cin Lae O Meallain, was a member of this community, and a description of the location, together with the folklore attached to the site, is given by John Hanna, May 1849, at the beginning of a copy of O Meallain's work, TCD MS 1071, ff 2-3.

corporate existence endured in the vicinity of the former convent. In contrast to the dominant pattern of convent dispersal in Ulster and Leitrim by 1603, the four communities of Donegal, Armagh, Cavan and Multifarnham, continued into the post-war period, due in part to the survival of their noble patrons. Similarly the friary of the Franciscan Third Order at Bonamargy on the north Antrim coast remained, arising from the survival, and ongoing patronage, of the MacDonnells (created earls of Antrim in 1620).[33]

The Donegal and Armagh Franciscans owed their corporate continuity to the survival of O'Neill and O'Donnell. While the Flight of the Earls (1607) marked the end of this protection, the Franciscan communities were able to continue. The Donegal friary, numbering forty members in 1601, and patronised by the O'Donnells, was the most eminent in Ulster; its novices rose to prominence in the governance of the Irish Franciscan province. In August 1601 the premises were occupied by the English forces, the friars fled to the woods, and the English were besieged by O'Donnell. Fire destroyed the buildings. In the years following 1603, Rory O'Donnell, created earl of Tyrconnell, was rebuilding the convent. Aristocratic support for the friars on this scale ceased abruptly with O'Donnell's departure in September 1607. Thereafter the friars lived in a community of at least twelve in a 'domus refugii' not far from the remains of the former convent; some were sent to other convents, including, most probably, Multyfarnham. In the 1610s, a Franciscan source reported that the British protestant landowners in Donegal tolerated the presence of the friars, but made it difficult for novices to join them.[34]

Throughout early seventeenth century Ulster, clerics were closely involved with the prominent Irish families. Each chief normally maintained a local cleric as his priest. While the leading families were patrons of the religious, especially the Franciscans, diocesan ecclesiastics, too, served as lordly chaplains; thus in 1602 Cuconnaght O Kenan was priest to Henry Oge O'Neill of Portienaligan, County Armagh, and Donogh

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[33]. The survival of a chalice, with inscription, from 1596, testifies to MacDonnell patronage of the Bonamargy friary, O. Traynor, 'Two historical chalices', Breifne, 6 no 21, pp 5-17; the Third Order friars had abandoned the site by the 1620s, Gwynn and Hadcock, p.269; in 1621, Randall MacDonnell, 1st Earl of Antrim (d.1636), built a vault there, where he was buried, G. Hill, The MacDonnells of Antrim (Belfast, 1873), p.246.

[34]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', pp 40-1.

M'Redie, dean of Derry, was chaplain to Sir Donal O'Cahan.[35] The clergy shared in the hospitality characteristic of Gaelic society; the level of drinking common among the upper classes of the Ulster Irish, including the clergy, shocked one English visitor to south-east Ulster in 1603.[36]

In the years after 1603, the friars in Ulster retained their traditional links with the noble families, while their confreres on the continent welcomed, supported and advised the emigre nobility.[37] Individual clerics continued to play their traditional role within the Gaelic polity as advisers to the gentry - writing letters, acting as emissaries, and serving as reconcilers. Clerics were prominent in the troubled political climate of 1607-8. Thus, in 1607, Owen Grome Magragh, a friar, served as emissary between Tyrconnell, and Barons Delvin and Howth; captured after Delvin's arrest, he was sentenced to death, and only pardoned at the instigation of Delvin, who feared the opprobium which would arise from complicity in the friar's execution.[38] In the long-standing row between Tyrone and Sir Donal O'Cahan, the friar Shane O'Mullan was engaged in effecting a reconciliation between the two men after the sessions at Dungannon in 1607.[39] Clerics served as messengers between Ulster and the continent. John Flewin, from mid-Ulster, travelled with messages to Spain in 1599; thence he moved to Rome and Italy where he stayed for four years, pursuing priestly studies; he travelled to Henry O'Neill in Brussels, staying with Thomas Dease in the Irish college, Paris, en route; carrying letters from Henry O'Neill, Flewin travelled to Bordeaux, but returned from the continent via Calais and London in August 1607. In Ireland, he stayed several months with Art McBarron O'Neill, and attended a great meeting of clergy in

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[35]. Fiants Ire., Eliz., 6735, 6688 (1602); Rory Albanagh, native of Tyrone, and priest, was steward to Henry O'Neill, colonel of the Irish regiment in the Low Countries, information of James Bathe, 7 Oct 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire. 1606-8, p.302.

[36]. 'T]he priests themselves who are holy men - as the abbot of Armagh, the bishop of Cashel, and others, and also noble men - pour whiskey down their throats by day and by night; and that not for hilarity only (which would be praiseworthy), but for constant drunkenness, which is detestable', 'Bodley's visit to Lecale, County of Down' [1603], U.J.A., 2 (1854), p.85.

[37]. M. Kerney Walsh, An exile of Ireland: Hugh O Neill prince of Ulster (Dublin, 1996), pp 53-78; one Conor, Tyrone's Irish confessor, returned from Rome to Ulster, and died there, lord deputy to Sir Ralph Winwod, 15 June 1615, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.69.

[38]. Delvin to Salisbury, 21 May 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.206.

[39]. Examination of Manus O'Cahan, 8 Nov 1608, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.314; lord deputy's narrative of proceedings with Sir Donal O'Cahan, [1608], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, pp 65-7.

Fermanagh, from whence he was carrying messages to the exiled earls when he was arrested in Cork.[40]

In Chichester's view, a strong catholic dimension underlay the O'Doherty revolt in early summer, 1608. As the lord deputy reported, Sir Cahir O'Doherty said that all he did was 'in zeal of the Catholic cause'. Further, Chichester ascribed a major role to the priests, 'the very furies and firebrands of this rebellion'.[41] Priests were indeed active in the revolt. Traditional clerical roles can be noted among the priests associated with the three leading families involved. Phelim O'Dogherty, in all probability a clansman of Sir Cahir, was a close associate of the young lord. A monk (presumably of the Cistercian abbey of Assaroe[42]), he was at Sir Cahir's house in Buncrana at the time of the outbreak. Sir Cahir got him to write a letter to Sir Neil Garv O'Donnell. Chichester believed the monk was a principal counsellor of young O'Doherty, a view supported by the capture of the cleric among the insurgents at Birt castle. In dealing with priests, the authorities were keen to gain their adherence to the state church, and their abjuration of the old faith. In response to such overtures, in summer 1608, probably at the trial of the rebels at the sessions in Dungannon, the monk publicly and voluntarily 'cast off his religious habit and renounced his obedience to the Pope'; this dramatic apostasy was pleasing to the lord deputy, for it served the causes both of political and religious change. As a result, Phelim was granted life and liberty, in place of almost certain execution.[43]

There was a different outcome in the case of Donogh McRedie, chaplain and confessor to Sir Donal O'Cahan, captured 'in rebellion', together with Shane Carragh O'Cahan, the chief's brother. Both were indicted, tried, and convicted of treason, at the sessions in Coleraine, by a jury of O'Cahan's own friends and kinsmen. Faced with similar blandishments from the government, unlike the monk O'Dogherty, McRedie was unyielding. The cleric, drawing on his knowledge of canon law, objected to the

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[40]. Examination of John Flewin, 20 Mar 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire. 1606-8, pp 438-40.

[41]. Chichester to privy council, 19 May 1608, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, pp 524-6; on O'Doherty's revolt, see J. McCavitt, Sir Arthur Chichester, pp 140-5.

[42]. Cistercian abbey of Assaroe, County Donegal, dissolved 1597, Gwynn and Hadcock, Med.Rel.Houses Ireland, p.122.

[43]. Deposition of Phelim O'Doherty, 22 June 1608, HMC Hastings, iv, pp 157-8; Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.16.

proceedings, claiming that the secular power could not condemn a priest for any offence. However this claim was rejected, and both were executed. According to the lord deputy, the priest 'so taught the people better doctrine by the example of his death, than he had ever done in all his life before'.[44] In the wake of the revolt, Chichester attributed the calmness of those facing execution, in part, to the ministry of the priests.[45]

However, perhaps the best documented case of a friar's apostolate among the Ulster elite at this time was that of Edmond O'Mullarkey. A native of Donegal, O'Mullarkey was elected provincial of the Irish Franciscans at the chapter held near Creevelea, County Leitrim, in August 1602, and served until 1606. He was an associate of Sir Neil Garv O'Donnell.[46] According to Sir Robert Jacob, solicitor general, he was 'the first plotter and contriver of O'Doherty's treasons.'[47] As agent on behalf of Neil Garv, he was an emissary between O'Doherty and Neil Garbh at the time of the revolt in May 1608; after the sack of Derry, O'Mullarkey took an inventory, for O'Donnell, of the spoil taken by O'Doherty. Surviving the bloody aftermath of the revolt, in spring 1609 O'Mullarkey was travelling up and down Tyrconnell, together with another friar, Tirlagh O'Gallagher, 'like Satan compassing the earth, seducing the people, and persuading them to run into rebellion'.[48] O'Mullarkey may have been the unnamed friar rescued by the congregation as he was being arrested after mass at Multyfarnham in 1610.[49] Thus a traditional Franciscan apostolate among the Irish gentry in Ulster continued in the years after 1603.

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[44]. Davies to Salisbury, 5 Aug 1608, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.16; on McRedie as catholic martyr, see documents presented, Congregation for the causes of saints, Protocoll no 114, Diocese of Dublin, Cause for the Beatification and Canonisation of the Servants of God, Richard Creagh et al, vol 2 (Roma, 1998), pp 733-51.

[45]. Chichester to privy council, 3 Aug 1608, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.7.

[46]. Sir Richard Hadsor to lord deputy, 1 Sept 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, pp 257-8.

[47]. Sir Robert Jacob to Salisbury, 15 April 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.194.

[48]. Sir Robert Jacob to Salisbury, 15 April 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.194 (quote); deposition of Phelim O'Dogherty, 22 June 1608, HMC Hastings, iv, pp 157-8; examination of Phelim Reagh McDaved, 3 Aug 1608, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, pp 3-4.

[49]. Lord deputy to Salisbury, 11 May 1610, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.445.

The herenagh system of parish maintenance and personnel, underpinning the church in Ulster, survived down to the Plantation, when the herenagh lands were absorbed by the state church.[50] It was an arrangement which intrigued contemporary observers unfamiliar with Gaelic Ireland.[51] The precise status of the herenagh lands claimed an inordinate amount of time of the Plantation commissioners in Ulster in 1609. Crown officials, backed by native jurors, held that these lands were the patrimony of the individual parishes, and not of the bishops, and thus fell to the crown. The state bishops, Montgomery above all, vigorously contested this view.[52] The survival of this system can be traced in the surveys of church lands taken in the escheated counties in 1609. In the county inquisitions, a question was asked concerning the origin of the herenaghs or coarbs. The terminology is vague - in contemporary English documents the terms coarb and herenagh were often used interchangeably.[53] Originally a certain seniority pertained to the coarbs, and echoes of this distinction remained; according to the Cavan jurors, herenagh families were found in all parishes, while the coarbs were more limited in number; a coarb could have several herenagh families under him.

According to the information noted in the inquisitions, by the early seventeenth century the church lands in each parish were in the hereditary occupation of usually one given family (occasionally it happened that three families were the herenaghs of a given parish). In Raphoe diocese, the herenagh lands could represent between 20% and 50%

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[50]. '[T]here is no parish church in Ulster, but is built upon the herenagh lands, and has an herenagh belonging unto it', Sir Oliver St John to Salisbury, 30 Oct 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.303; the issue of the coarbs is located within the broader late medieval church context in K. Simms, 'Frontiers in the Irish church - regional and cultural', in T. Barry et al (eds), Colony and Frontier in Medieval Ireland (London/Rio Grande, 1995), pp 177-200; on the herenagh system in Counties Armagh and Tyrone, see A. Gwynn, The medieval province of Armagh (Dundalk, 1946), pp 89-94.

[51]. J. Ussher, 'Of the original and first institution of Corbes, Herenaches, and termon lands', [1609], in The whole works of ... James Ussher, C. Elrington and J. Todd eds (Dublin, 1847-64), xi, pp 419-45; views of Sir Oliver St John, and Archbishop William Daniel of Tuam, are summarised, TCD Ms 568, ff 78-82; H. Jefferies (ed.), 'Erenaghs in pre-plantation Ulster: an early seventeenth-century account', Archiv. Hib., 53, pp 16-19; Davies, 'A letter ... to earl of Salisbury, touching the state of Monaghan, Fermanagh, and Cavan, ... discourse concerning the corbes and irenachs of Ireland', [1607], in H. Morley (ed.), Ireland under Elizabeth and James the First (London, 1890), pp 343-80.

[52]. Sir Oliver St John to Salisbury, 30 Oct 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, pp 303-4.

[53]. In the case of Fermanagh, in the 1603 inquisition one term was used, while in 1609 the other was employed; in parts of that county, the term 'duaghasa' was used for herenagh.

of all the lands in the parish, though relative to other Ulster dioceses this was probably a high proportion.[54] The chief of the sept, called the herenagh, had the largest share, for the lands were divided among the sept according to the Gaelic practice of gavelkind. In return for these lands, the herenagh families undertook certain duties. They shared the cost of maintaining the church building with the parson and vicar, and they provided hospitality. The bishop of the diocese levied duties and refections on the herenagh lands. The family or sept elected the herenagh, according to Gaelic practice, but the election was confirmed by the bishop.[55] Each parish church typically had a parson and a vicar; these paid proxies to the bishop. Herenagh lands were the inheritance of the families themselves, as distinct from the bishops, who merely received rents from these lands.[56]

Clergy were drawn from the herenagh families, though not exclusively so.[57] The herenaghs were scholars.[58] It was a recognised ecclesiastical dignity. In south Ulster, according to Davies, the coarb was usually in orders, though married; if a son were apt for learning, he would succeed his father; if not, another of the sept was chosen.[59] In Desertmartin, County Londonderry, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, parson

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54. In Raphoe diocese, in the case of seven of the 27 parishes, the herenagh proportion of all lands in the parish can be clearly established. The same denomination was used in referring both to the extent of the parish, and the herenagh lands. In Glencolmcille parish, all the lands belonged to the herenagh, while in Kilcarragh, the herenagh share was just 10%. In the five parishes of Deserteigny, Clounemanny, Donoghclantagh, Toghernegormerkie, and Kilbarron, the herenagh share ranged from 20% to 50%. Ecclesiastical inquisition, County Donegal, Sept 1609, Inq.cancell.Hib.repert., ii; list of acreages of termon lands, by Ulster county, 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.293, Raphoe diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, p.222.

55. Sir Oliver St John to Salisbury, 30 Oct 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, pp 303-4; Davies, 'An abstract of his majesty's several titles' [1610], Derry, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.564.

56. Davies to Salisbury, 28 Aug 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, pp 280-1; ecclesiastical inquisitions, Ulster plantation counties, Sept 1609, Inq.cancell.Hib.repert., ii, Ultonia, passim.

57. In 1591, of 12 named Fermanagh priests, 7 bore family names noted as coarbs in the ecclesiastical inquisitions of 1603 and/or 1609, pardon list (1591), Fiants Ire., Eliz., 5602; Inq.cancell.Hib.repert., Ultonia, Fermanagh; the father of Archbishop Myler Magrath was the coarb or erenagh of Termon Magrath, in Clogher diocese, where St Patrick's Purgatory was located, Davies to Salisbury, 20 Sept 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.288.

58. In County Tyrone (as in the northern counties generally), the church lands 'were in the possession of certain scholars called Herenaghs ...', Davies to Salisbury, 5 Aug 1608, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.16.

59. Davies, 'Letter to earl of Salisbury' [1607], in H. Morley (ed.), Ireland under Elizabeth and James the First, p.365.

and herenagh were different members of the same family, and the parson (or priest) had a son.[60] These arrangements were probably typical of the herenagh system elsewhere in Ulster at this time. A hereditary dimension to priesthood in Ulster survived, accounting in part for the stream of Roman dispensations for priests' sons to become clergy, characteristic of Irish catholicism down to the 1630s.[61] Given their tridentine training, and Anglo-Irish background, the Jesuits took a negative view of the Ulster clergy, based in part on the hereditary framework of priesthood there.[62]

There were coarb or herenagh families across Ulster (west of the Bann) and Leitrim in the early seventeenth century.[63] In County Cavan the herenagh lands were known as termon-lands; reflecting the greater anglicization of this county, which bordered the Pale, the majority of the parishes were impropriate to the abbies either of Kells, County Meath, or of Fore, County Westmeath.[64] By the end of the Nine Years War, however, traditional church structures in Ulster were experiencing sharp change. Several of the coarbships had been secularised by 1606, by virtue of the statute for the dissolution of monasteries, but others continued to be detained by the Irish.[65] As early as the 1580s, they were breaking down in south-east Ulster, partly as a result of increasing English military encroachment, a process replicated in Donegal and mid-Ulster from the late 1590s. However the weakening of the coarbships was not due exclusively to the English soldiers. Under the stress of providing military resources, Hugh O'Neill's officials were

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[60]. Patrick O Doell was herenagh, and Owen O Doell was parson, O. Mather to state bishop of Derry, 22 Sept 1634, Moody and Simms (eds), The bishopric of Derry (Dublin, 1968), i, p.182.

[61]. See chapter four, 'Priests and people in Ulster, 1609-41'; it was not uncommon in late medieval Ulster that clergy had children, as the prevalence there of the patronymics Mcentaggart, Macanaspie, Mac an Abbot, McVicar, and McParson indicate, Fiants Ire., Eliz., index, passim; a disputed Magennis inheritance was conferred on the base son of a priest, king to lord deputy, 22 Sept 1619, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.261.

[62]. 'Sacerdotes qui illic agunt, rudes sunt, et mali exempli ...' [Priests who are active there (the north) are rough, and of bad example], Christopher Hollywood SJ to Jesuit general, 30 June 1604, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, Arch. Prov. Hib., Ms A 24.

[63]. Map, 'Coarbs and erenaghs, 1250-1633', in K. Simms, 'Frontiers in the Irish church - regional and cultural', p.179.

[64]. Out of a total of 28 parishes in County Cavan, eight were impropriate to the abbey of Kells, and twelve to the abbey of Fore, Inq.cancell.Hib.repert., Ultonia, appendix, Cavan.

[65]. Davies to Salisbury [1607], H. Morley (ed.), Ireland under Elizabeth and James I, pp 365-6; TCD Ms 580, ff 14r-15r; J. Barry, 'The distinction between Coarb and Erenagh', and 'The duties of coarbs and erenaghs', I.E.R., 94, pp 90-5, 211-8.

exerting pressure on the coarbships. Thus some time during the Nine Years War, Art O'Hagan, O'Neill's steward, 'violently dispossessed one Patrick O Doell' of the townland of Ballynegawnagh, 'pretending it was for the keeping of Tyrone's horses'. O'Doell was herenagh of Desertmartin, County Londonderry, and the townland traditionally belonged to the herenagh.[66]

A number of ecclesiastical families in north-east Donegal held custody of the various relics associated with Saint Columba. Thus the Cathach or psalter of Columbkille was in the care of the Mac Robhartaigh (McGrorty) family, of Ballymagroarty.[67] The O'Morreeson family, 'who in those days were servants to Columkill' were the abbot's coarb and the bishop's herenagh of lands in Clounemanny parish, in Inishowen, Derry diocese; lands there were given by the O'Dohertys and the O'Donnells to Columcille, 'as a dedication towards his vestiments, when he went to war'. Similarly, in that parish lands were assigned 'to the keeper of the missagh or ornaments left by Columkill'. In neighbouring Donoghclantagh parish, lands were given 'to the keeper of the saint's [Columkille] bell there'. O'Nahan, coarb and herenagh in Gartan parish, 'carrieth Columkillie's read stoane'.[68] Down to 1603, it was the coarb of Colmcille, the head of the O'Firghils, of Kilmacrenan, who inaugurated O'Donnell.[69] These families continued their ecclesiastical roles into the Plantation era, and in general remained as occupiers of their hereditary lands, although even before 1609 in some places the system was being eroded, under the pressure of war and settlement by military.[70]

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[66]. O. Mather to state bishop of Derry, 22 Sept 1634, Moody and Simms (eds), The bishopric of Derry (Dublin, 1968), i, p.182.

[67]. W. Reeves (ed.), Adamnan: Life of St Columbe (Edinburgh, 1874), pp lix-lx; P. O Gallachair, 'Coarbs and Erenaghs of County Donegal', Donegal Annual, 4 no 3, pp 272-81.

[68] Inq.cancell.Hib.repert., ii, Ultonia, Appendix, Donegal.

[69]. A.F.M., sub anno 1603.

[70]. In Derry diocese, the 1607 survey indicates that in eight places there was no erenagh, H. Jefferies, 'Derry diocese on the eve of the Plantation', in G. O'Brien (ed.), Derry and Londonderry History and Society (Dublin, 1999), p.182; the coarbship of Clones, County Monaghan, had been secularised in the mid-1580s, see chapter two.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the parish system was still relatively intact: the 1609 inquisitions reveal a web of parish churches, each with its herenagh family, across mid- and west Ulster.[71] The great majority of churches throughout the province, and even in the Pale, were in ruins.[72] Yet the revival of parish worship was indicated by efforts to repair the buildings : in south Ulster by 1606, a few had been roofed with thatch.[73] With the exception of east Ulster - particularly devastated - similar efforts may have been taking place across the province. Some churches were adorned with the simple wooden statues (presumably of the Virgin Mary) which characterised most Irish churches at this time; even in Ulster some such statues or images may have survived the destruction of war.[74] Liturgical change came late to Ulster. The process of enforcing conformity on the native clergy there only began in the decade after 1603. Indeed in the case of much of west and south Ulster - the area covered by the dioceses of Derry, Clogher and Raphoe - this process only began with the arrival of evangelically-minded state bishops from 1610.[75] Even in Kilmore diocese, the native clergy had conformed, but in the absence of British ministers there was little prospect of liturgical change. Thus it may be presumed that local communities continued to gather for mass in many of these small churches across Ulster, until the buildings were taken over by the state church from the beginning of the Plantation in 1609; even into the

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[71]. Inq.cancell.Hib.repert., ii, Ultonia, appendix; on the eve of the Plantation, there were 39 septs occupying church land in County Armagh, M. Glancy, 'The church lands of Co Armagh: Text of the Inquisition of 1609 with introduction and notes', Seanchas Ard Mhacha, 1 no 1, pp 67-100 (here, p.73).

[72]. In 1606 a commission was issued for the repairing of churches in Ireland, and placing sufficient ministers therein, Davies to Salisbury [1607], H. Morley (ed.), Ireland under Elizabeth and James I, p.360; two unroofed chapels, on the coast east of Newry, are depicted on a contemporary map, G.A. Hayes McCoy (ed.), Ulster and other Irish maps c.1600, map 1, Moyry Pass.

[73]. Davies to Salisbury [1607], H. Morley, (ed.), Ireland under Elizabeth and James I, p.377; the church at Clones was listed as 'unrepaired' in 1606, but in 1608 it had a thatched roof, 'A presentment of clergy etc in county Monaghan', [1606], HMC Hastings, iv, p.155; [Notes on Clones], Essex Record Office, D/Dl Q2, pp 1-3.

[74]. Davies to Salisbury, 12 Nov 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.17; the image of the Blessed Virgin, in a chapel outside Coleraine, which was destroyed Sept 1611, may have survived the war, Thomas Lawndry [pseudonym of C. Hollywood SJ] to Richard Conway, 4 Nov 1611, W.M'D. (ed.), 'Irish colleges since the reformation', I.E.R., 10, pp 290-7.

[75]. Bishop Montgomery was replaced as bishop of Derry and Raphoe in 1610 by the evangelically-minded Brute Babbington and Andrew Knox, respectively, N.H.I., ix, pp 398, 409.

1620s, catholic use of the churches continued in some isolated areas, devoid of British settlement[76]; similarly it is probable that burials continued on these premises.

Further evidence exists of the revival of the parish churches immediately prior to the Plantation. A series of papal grants of privileged altars is extant, procured at the behest of the earl of Tyrone, and of the countess, Catherine Maginnes, shortly after their arrival in Rome in April 1608. The eight churches thus endowed were situated in or on the borders of the O'Neill lordship, and included three churches in the countess's native diocese of Dromore. These papal privileges, together with Tyrone's grant of advowsons in mid-Ulster in March 1609, represented an attempt by Tyrone to strengthen his catholic credentials, in his new situation on the continent. Locally, in Ulster, however, the privileges sought for the churches strengthen the impression of restorationist desires in the years 1603-7 focused on the parish churches, however limited the actual repairs.[77]

As part of the herenagh families, the clergy fulfilled their ritual functions in addition to their farming activities. Following the contemporary European pattern, the vast majority were trained locally by means of apprenticeship with established priests. In the wake of the war, the Ulster clergy shared in the impoverishment of the population as a whole. English observers noted the poverty and ignorance of the Ulster clergy. Davies described those he met in Cavan in 1606 as 'such poor, ragged, ignorant creatures'[78]. In 1622, Bishop Brute Babbington referred to the Derry priests as 'rude, ignorant and vicious fellows'[79].

This view of the clergy as ignorant needs qualification. All had some knowledge of Latin, and they were among the very view in Gaelic society who could read or write.[80]

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[76]. Catholic worship continued in the church of Muckno, County Monaghan, as late as 1622, if not later, TCD Ms 550, pp 182-3.

[77]. Athaghauen, Derry diocese, St Nicholas, Dundalk, and Carnashiel, Armagh diocese, 14 Aug 1608, at request of earl of Tyrone, ASV Secretaria Brevium, Altaria perpetua, vol 14 (1608), fol. 39; St Patrick's (at Iveagh), Cluandallan, and St Broviana of Leggan, all Dromore diocese, together with St Patrick's (at Donaghmore), and St Bridget's (at Benlo), Armagh diocese, requested by the countess of Tyrone, 14 Oct 1608, ibid., fols 296-9; W. Grattan Flood (ed.), 'Bull of Pope Paul V .. to Prince Hugh O'Neill...', 29 Mar 1609, Archiv. Hib., 1, pp 39-45.

[78]. Davies to Salisbury, [1607], H. Morley (ed.), Ireland under Elizabeth and James I, p.377.

[79]. Derry diocese, 1622 Survey, BL Add Ms 4756, fol.206.

[80]. Survey of the bishoprics of Clogher, Derry, Raphoe [1609], TCD Ms 10,383, p.20.

The churchmen's knowledge of Latin facilitated the work of the inquisitions taken in the first decade of the seventeenth century; English hardly featured among them.[81] However, a small minority were better educated than their peers. With a view to selecting existing clergy and talented youths for promotion within the state church, in September 1609 the more promising individuals of the dioceses of Raphoe, Clogher and Derry, were noted. The higher educational attainments thus listed were limited: an ability to speak Latin, and sometimes English, and in the case of a few, some legal training.[82] The proportion of more educated clergy for each of the three dioceses can be tentatively estimated. This is possible by correlating the number of such clergy with the number of churches in each diocese, given the contemporary view that normally each church had a parson and a vicar.[83] Thus, on this reckoning, the more educated (including the few promising youths listed) represented about 11% of the Raphoe clergy, 10% of the Derry clergy and merely 6% of the Clogher clergy.[84] However, these proportions are minimal, for not every church had two clergy, and so the proportion of educated clerics was higher than these estimates.

Clergy were counted among the learned in Gaelic society, and education was valued in their families. Evidence from Fermanagh illustrates the particular link between clergy and learning in Ulster society about this time. Cornelius O Corcran, a Fermanagh priest in the early 1590s, belonged to a sept which counted ten students among its number.[85]

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[81]. In the county of Coleraine, Davies presided over a jury of 15 clerics, 13 of whom spoke good Latin, 'and that very readily', Davies to Salisbury, 28 Aug 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.280.

[82]. In Monaghan, Phillip O Dowie and John Mccardull; one Fermanagh cleric in 1606 was also a brehon, skilled in common and civil law, while Donell McGuire, dean of Lough Earne, in Fermanagh, fluent in Latin and English, was by 1609 a justice of the peace, survey of Clogher, Derry, and Raphoe [1609], TCD Ms 10,383, p.20; dean of Lough Erne, Inq.cancell.Hib.repert., Ultonia, Appendix, Fermanagh; in Derry diocese, John McCollogan had studied in Glasgow, and had expertise in law; Eugenius Mccawell was particularly skilled in civil law, TCD Ms 10,383, pp 10-11.

[83]. In Fermanagh in 1606, in every parish there was both a parson and a vicar, though only the vicar was a priest, Davies to Salisbury [1607], H. Morley (ed.), Ireland under Elizabeth and James the First, p.368.

[84]. Raphoe had the highest proportion of more educated clergy, with six, and 27 churches; Derry had nine such clergy, and 45 churches; and Clogher had only four, with 38 churches, TCD Ms 10,383, pp 10-21; the proportion of educated clergy may have been slightly higher, given that not every church had two clergy.

[85]. Roger O Corcran, student in 1591, may have been coarb of the chapel of Collydea in 1603; similarly, Magonius O Houlltughan, student in 1591, belonged to the coarb family of Aghabegh;

In 1606, Teag O Corcoran, a deacon in the state church, and foster-brother to the Fermanagh lord Cuchonacht Maguire, was serving as the latter's letter-writer; Maguire sought Teag for his fluency in English, necessary to facilitate correspondence with the lord deputy.[86]

Members of clerical families were also pursuing education outside Ulster. Tullius Mccardull, son of the vicar of Tydavnet in Clogher diocese (and thus probably grandson of the rector), was studying in Drogheda in 1609.[87] Seven local men who had studied at Glasgow were living in Derry and Raphoe dioceses in 1609.[88] There were military and cultural links between north-west Ireland and Scotland down to the end of the sixteenth century, when both areas were still part of a common cultural milieu. The break-up of that shared heritage was reflected in the changing destinations of Ulster students.[89] There was a group of Ulster students at Glasgow grammar school in the mid-1590s. In the 1590s, the confessional situation was making Glasgow less attractive to Ulster Irish students. By 1590, students matriculating at the university had to take an oath of religious adherence, which may account for the absence of Ulstermen from the university records in these years.[90] In a further sign of confessionalization, in 1595 the Glasgow presbytery arranged for the university to examine the Irish students at the

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12 priests were noted on a list of pardons, Fermanagh, 1591, Fiants Ire., Eliz., 5602; survey of County Fermanagh, 7 July 1603, Inq.cancell.Hib.repert., ii, Ultonia.

[86]. Examination of Teag O Corcoran, 11 Aug 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, pp 566-8.

[87]. 'A presentment of clergy etc in the county of Monaghan', 25 July 1606, HMC Hastings, iv, p.155; survey of Clogher, Derry, Raphoe, 1609, TCD Ms 10,383, p.20.

[88]. Donatus and Magonius Magonnall, together with Neil Groome and Lughaigh Macsivyne, from Raphoe, and John Ohenie, John McCollogan (son of the rector of Donagh in Inishowen), and Hugh O'Donnell (rector of Donaghmore and Race in Raphoe diocese), from Derry. In 1609, Hugh's brother, Neil O'Donnell, was the schoolmaster at Raphoe, suggesting that Neil, too, may have had an education outside Ulster, TCD Ms 10,383, pp 11-12, 16-17.

[89]. On the rift in cultural ties between north-west Ireland and Scotland in the reformation era, see M. O Mainnin, "The same in origin and in blood': bardic windows on the relationshp between Irish and Scottish Gaels, c.1200-1650', Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies, 38, pp 1-52, here, pp 36 et seq.; on the impact of the reformation on the Gaelic world, see also M. Mac Craith, 'The Gaelic reaction to the Reformation', in S. Ellis and S. Barber (eds), Conquest and Union: Fashioning a British State, 1485-1725 (London/New York, 1995), pp 139-61.

[90]. For our period, there is a list of graduates beginning in 1578, and a matriculation list starting from 1590 (there is a hiatus in the matriculation list from 1558-1590), C. Innes (ed.), Munimenta Alme Universitatis Glasguensis (Glasgow, 1854), iii, pp 3 et seq, 60 et seq; the absence from the university records of those named in 1609 as having studied in Glasgow suggests that they attended the grammar school there.

grammar school about their religious beliefs.[91] Thus it would appear that the Ulster youths were persisting in their catholicism. As the Scottish city was becoming an unwelcoming place for catholics, from the opening years of the seventeenth century, Ulstermen were starting to go to Salamanca and other catholic centres on the continent.[92] Even continentally-educated returnees were appearing in Ulster by 1606, though this as yet was very rare.[93] The commitment of several clerical families to education was illustrated by the fact that some youths and young men were pursuing schooling outside Ulster in the 1590s and 1600s.

In terms of clerical provision and church fabric, considerable variation prevailed across Ulster, a pattern established prior to the arrival of British protestant clergy from about 1610. Down to the early 1630s, priests were still less plentiful in east Ulster, indicative of the particular devastation that area experienced in the war, and the relative density of subsequent British colonization.[94] Thus east Ulster was probably included in the remark that, in the early 1620s, in some areas of the north, there was only one pastor for five or more parishes.[95]

West of the Bann parishes were better endowed with clergy and churches. In most parishes there was a priest. In Fermanagh, Davies reported that there was a priest in every parish, and a broadly similar pattern prevailed in the parishes of Derry diocese.[96]

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[91]. Ulstermen had been students at Glasgow university since its foundation in 1451, and were included in the Rothesay nation there; the men noted in 1609 may have been among the 'Irishmen scholars' studying at Glasgow grammar school, when, in 1595, at the presbytery's request, the university examined their religious beliefs, J.Durkan and J.Kirk, The University of Glasgow 1451-1577 (Glasgow, 1977), pp 42, 360.

[92]. See chapter three, 'Catholic renewal in plantation Ulster, 1609-20'; in 1609, one Gelasius O Lorcan was in charge of a group of poor Irish youths in Rouen, and they wished to form themselves into a college, -- to Cardinal Barberini, Oct 1609, BAV, Barberini Ms 7949, fol.93; O'Lorcan may possibly have been of south-east Ulster origin (Fiants Ire., Eliz., 2485, (1574)), though in the fiants the name was more usually associated with Counties Tipperary and Kilkenny.

[93]. While in Ulster, in summer 1606, Davies met with 'an Irish scholar, who had been bred in France and Spain', in the Irish colleges there, Davies to Salisbury, 12 Nov 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.17.

[94]. Thus in the early 1630s the Newry area was without a catholic pastor, when a Cistercian priest from the locality was sent to minister there, M. Hartry, Triumphalia Sanctae Crucis, ed. D. Murphy (Dublin, 1891), p.279.

[95]. Wadding papers, p.38.

[96]. Based on Montgomery's 1607 survey of Derry diocese, it is estimated that in three of the

Evidence from County Monaghan, Clogher diocese, supports this view: in 1606, over 70% of the parishes had a resident priest.[97] A similar trend emerges in the case of Donegal, derived from the inquisitions taken in 1608: in about 74% of parishes in Raphoe diocese there was a priest.[98] The network of parish churches in Clogher diocese on the eve of the Plantation may be examined thanks to the 1603 inquisition of Fermanagh, and Davies' ecclesiastical survey of Monaghan in July 1606.[99] There were 21 parish churches in Fermanagh, each in the possession of a coarb family (though sometimes several families were associated with the one parish church and coarb lands); in a further nine chapels, similar arrangements prevailed. Thus in Fermanagh there were 30 churches or chapels associated with the parishes. Across the diocese, war had taken its toll of the buildings: in Monaghan, more than half of the 19 parish churches listed were in decay or unrepaired (and the proportion was probably similar in neighbouring Fermanagh). By 1606, a process of reconstruction was already underway, as elsewhere in Ulster, for three Monaghan churches were being repaired. The patrons were Sir Francis Rush (who had also acquired the lands of the coarb of Clones), the state bishop, Montgomery, together with the archdeacon, James O'Dowie, reflecting in part the penetration of the county by informal British settlement.[100]

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four rural deaneries, there was a rector in almost every parish, while in one deanery, five parishes were without a rector; no priest was rector of more than one parish, with the exception of three clerics; there was a resident priest in almost every parish of the diocese; most parish clergy belonged to local herenagh families, H. Jefferies, 'Derry diocese on the eve of the plantation', in G. O'Brien (ed.), Derry and Londonderry History and Society (Dublin, 1999), pp 175-204.

[97]. Five of the nineteen Monaghan parishes (one of these was designated a chapel) had no resident priest; there were three absentees among the clergy, Davies, 'A presentment of clergy etc in the county of Monaghan, 25 July 1606', pp 154-6; Davies to Salisbury [1607], Morley, Ireland under Elizabeth and James, pp 361, 368.

[98]. In Kilmakrenan barony, a parson and vicar were noted in the case of six parishes. In Boylagh and Bannagh barony, clergy were more sparse: in three parishes, only a parson was noted, in one, only a vicar, while four parishes had both parson and vicar. In Tirhugh barony, only one vicar was noted. In Raphoe barony, in five parishes both parson and vicar were listed, 'A book of the king's lands found upon the last general survey within the province of Ulster, 1608', in C. McNeill (ed.), 'Ms Rawlinson A 237 Bodleian Library, Oxford', Anal. Hib., 3, pp 150-218, (here, pp 167-92); 27 parishes in Raphoe diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550, p.222.

[99]. Inq.cancell.Hib.repert., Ultonia, appendix, Fermanagh; as part of the assize circuit in the various counties, a jury was impannelled to inquire of the state of the church, Davies to Salisbury, 12 Nov 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire. 1606-8, pp 17-18.

[100]. On British settlement in early seventeenth century Monaghan, see P.J. Duffy, 'The territorial organization of Gaelic landownership and its transformation in County Monaghan, 1591-1640', Ir. Geography, 14, pp 1-26.

By the early seventeenth century the distinction between clergy and laity in Ulster had becomed blurred. Laymen were increasingly gaining control of church property. Across west Ulster, the rector was generally a layman, and the vicar was the priest who celebrated mass and had the cure of souls. The coarb families supplied a priest to minister in the local church. These rectors - often youths who may in fact have had minor orders - were acquiring the benefices by right of papal provision.[101] The hereditary clan system as the basis of ecclesiastical life was complemented by papal provisions to benefices. It was long customary for Irish clerics, including those from the north, to go to Rome to seek benefices and dignities. This was prevalent among Ulster clergy in the 1590s and 1600s. In Raphoe diocese, it was held in 1609 that all livings had been collative by the bishop, 'except that any man went especially to Rome and procured the pope's bull, and that thereupon the bishop did institute and induct him'[102]. In neighbouring Clogher diocese, papal provision to ecclesiastical dignities was common.[103] Shane O'Conan left Ireland in 1599, and spent three years in Rome. There he obtained a papal bull to be prior of the pilgrimage centre of Lough Derg, County Donegal, in Clogher diocese, a benefice he probably took up, for he was in Ireland in June 1606.[104]

The conservative nature of the clergy across mid- and west Ulster on the eve of the Plantation was exemplified in the case of Clogher diocese. The traditional clerical body in the diocese was still intact: in 1606 there were no British among the 21 named Monaghan clergy. All were local Irishmen, popish priests who had been instituted by bishops appointed by Rome. There were family ties between them; five family names represented about three-quarters of the clergy, reflecting the hereditary quality of clerical life in Ulster; they probably included some fathers and sons. The O Dowie

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[101]. Survey of Clogher, Derry, Raphoe [1609], TCD Ms 10,383, p.4; 'until this day the parsons presented have enjoyed the benefices in this mere Irish country [Fermanagh] by colour of the Pope's collation', Davies to Salisbury [1607], Morley, Ireland under Elizabeth and James, p.365; that laymen were acquiring church property was indicated in the case of the coarbship of Clones, County Monaghan, which MacMahon secured for his son, a minor, in the 1590s, ibid., p.366.

[102]. Inq.cancell.Hib.repert., Ultonia, Appendix, Donegal (7th page).

[103]. In Fermanagh, Shane Mac an Abbot was instituted as prior of Lisgoole abbey in 1593; in 1600 Prior Patrick O'Flanegan acquired the abbey of Devenishe, both by papal authority, Inq.cancell.Hib.repert., Ultonia, survey of County Fermanagh, 1603; O'Flannegan probably belonged to the coarb family of the neighbouring parish of Inismoysoaw.

[104]. TCD Ms 567, ff 31v-32r.

family were preeminent among the Monaghan clergy: the archdeacon, James O Dowie, and Patrick O Dowie, held three and two livings respectively, and Bernard O Dowie was the one rural dean. With the exception of James and Patrick O Dowie, the clergy were attached to just one parish each.[105] Apart from the nomination of Montgomery as bishop in 1605, the reformation had not yet begun in Clogher diocese; because of the long absence in England of the new state bishop, nothing had been done to draw people and clergy to conformity.[106] Montgomery held a visitation in Clogher diocese in March 1614, which would have entailed the taking of the oath of supremacy by the parish clergy (if a visitation had not taken place before this); from that date, if not earlier, only conformist clergy remained as incumbents.[107]

Prescinding from the state of the church fabric, it was the presence of a priest in a given locality which determined whether mass took place or not. That there were clergy in most parishes of the dioceses of Derry, Raphoe and Clogher in the early seventeenth century indicates at least the possibility of a regular sacramental life. Thus on the eve of the Plantation, even in the wake of the massive destruction of the institutional fabric of catholicism, the celebration of mass would appear to have been a regular feature in many Ulster areas.

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By the early seventeenth century, the Ulster lords were the major beneficiaries of the church lands within their territories.[108] However, a feature of Ulster catholicism in the 1590s and 1600s was the attempt by O'Neill and O'Donnell to regain the right of patronage to church livings in their territories, the papally-sanctioned 'ius patronatus'. This campaign culminated in March 1609, when Paul V conferred on the earl of Tyrone the advowson of most of the church livings in the northern, Gaelic part of Armagh

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[105]. Davies, 'A presentment of clergy etc in the county of Monaghan, 25 July 1606', HMC Hastings, iv, pp 154-6.

[106]. Davies to Salisbury, 1607, H. Morley (ed.), Ireland under Elizabeth and James I, p.361.

[107]. [Notes on Clones], Essex Record Office, D/DL Q3.

[108]. King to lord deputy, 8 July 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.245.

diocese, and in Derry diocese.[109] The inclusion of the Derry livings was a facet of O'Neill's struggle to assert overlordship over the neighbouring O'Cahan territory. The papal grant shows that, after 1603, Tyrone was still to the fore in pursuing what he held were the traditional rights of his O'Neill ancestors over the church.[110]

The origins of the 1609 grant lay in the unsettled conditions of the late 1590s. O'Neill's control of church livings was under threat: that he made repeated requests to Pope Clement VIII in the years 1596-1602 for a confirmation of the right of patronage suggests that it was not uncontested locally. His claim, that the papal documents conferring these rights had been burned in the wars against the heretics, was accepted by the Vatican. In a petition to Rome, O'Neill linked the weakening or indeed loss of his church patronage to the lack of bishops in his lands. As a result, he claimed, there were no bishops to whom he could present suitable candidates for the livings. Into this breach of clerical provision stepped the individual clerics, who had been successfully petitioning Rome for nomination to vacant livings, in their own name. This trend O'Neill wished to reverse.[111] Such a 'ius patronatus' - 'as enjoyed in other countries' - was modelled on the Spanish crown's rights of church patronage; this continental parallel reflected the influence of the hispanophile Franciscans in O'Neill's entourage.[112] Tyrone was also mindful of the control exercised by the Anglo-Irish gentry and nobility over the church livings of the areas where they held sway.

The bull of 1609, in theory, vindicated O'Neill's ancestral rights of local church patronage, and prohibited any attempts at filling vacancies which would infringe these rights. The right of patronage was acknowledged by the Holy See in virtue of the

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[109]. List of 79 advowsons, W. Grattan Flood (ed.), 'Bull of Pope Paul V, giving to Prince Hugh O'Neill the advowson of certain rectories and perpetual vicarages in the dioceses of Armagh and Derry, respectively, Mar 29, 1609', Archiv. Hib., 1, pp 39-45; English translation in P. Lombard, De Regno Hiberniae, ed. P. Moran (Dublin, 1868), pp xxxvi-xxxviii.

[110]. On Tyrone's request for the 'ius patronatus' in the context of his diplomatic efforts in the late 1590s, see J. Silke, 'Hugh O'Neill, the Catholic question and the Papacy', I.E.R., 114, pp 65-79; on his consolidation of power within mid-Ulster after 1603, see N. Canny, 'Hugh O'Neill, earl of Tyrone, and the changing face of Gaelic Ulster', Studia Hibernica, 10, pp 7-35.

[111]. O'Neill to cardinal [Aldobrandini], 27 April 1600, Archiv. Hib., 24, pp 78-9.

[112]. O'Neill and O'Donnell to Clement VIII, Aug 1596, Archiv. Hib., 2, pp 289-1 (abstract, Archiv. Hib., 24, p.77); on the hispanic influence of the Franciscans, see Declan Downey, 'Culture and Diplomacy. The Spanish-Habsburg dimension in the Irish Counter-Reformation movement, c.1529-c.1629' (unpubl. PhD diss., Cambridge, 1994), chapter five.

O'Neills' foundation and endowment of the livings. In support of the reassertion of lordly patronage, the Vatican document also referred to the instability of the church in Ulster, arising from the continued struggle against the heretics; it did not however refer to the fact that O'Neill had been in exile for about eighteen months when the bull was promulgated. In conjunction with the lobbying by the earl and countess to have privileges conferred on certain churches in Ulster, the papal grant of advowsons served in theory to increase Tyrone's influence and control over the church there. In the event of his restoration in Ulster - still considered a possibility when these grants were made, in 1608-9 - Tyrone would return with his powers over the church in mid-Ulster considerably increased. However, given that the earl was then in exile, and the Plantation was underway, the effect of the grant was nugatory.

After 1603, Tyrone continued to exercise a supervisory role over the clergy in his lordship. In 1603, he had a man hanged for the attempted robbery of a priest.[113] His authority over the clergy of his territory was such that he could summon them as a body at will, as at Christmas 1605, when seeking a divorce from his wife.[114] Interference with his control of the clergy became a bone of contention between the earl and the new order. The proclamation of 1605, demanding that all conform to the state church, and that all Jesuits and priests were to leave the kingdom, was read, provocatively for O'Neill, in his manor of Dungannon; clerical appointments were a potential source of tension between him and the new state bishop of Derry, George Montgomery.[115] Another point of friction between the two was Tyrone's claim to all the church lands in his own territory, and in O'Cahan's country.[116]

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Several conclusions emerge from this survey. On the eve of the Plantation, catholicism in Ulster was suffering from the ravages of war. Churches lay ruined, though there were modest signs of repair in various places. Religious houses had been

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[113]. Docwra, 'Narration', op. cit., p.276.

[114]. Examination of Sir Neale O'Donnell, 7 Aug 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, pp 568-9.

[115]. N. Canny, 'The Flight of the Earls, 1607', Ir.Hist.St., 17, pp 380-99 (here, p.387).

[116] Bishop Montgomery to Salisbury, 1 July 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.214.

suppressed and were secularised, and their communities dispersed; the Franciscans however remained in the localities of their previous houses, and individuals among them continued their traditional political role. The catholic infrastructure east of the Bann, in buildings and personnel, was decimated. Hugh O'Neill's control over the church in his lordship continued, but was an issue between him and the state bishop of Derry after the latter's appointment in 1605. The papal grant of the 'ius patronatus' to Tyrone in 1609 was a pyrrhic victory.

The system of hereditary parochial maintenance and clerical provision - based on the coarbs and herenachs - survived over much of the north down to 1609, with the exception of the erosion of this system in parts of south Ulster. While most parish clergy were trained locally, a small minority had travelled outside Ulster in pursuit of learning. With the assize circuit of Sir John Davies in Counties Monaghan, Cavan and Fermanagh in 1606, the process of absorbing the clergy there into the state church, at however superficial a level, was underway. To the challenge posed to catholicism by the state church in the Plantation era we now turn.

CHAPTER TWO

ULSTER CATHOLICISM AND THE STATE CHURCH, 1603-c.1630

It was in the 1610s that the protestant reformation took effect across Ulster. The introduction of the reformation had been underway in the Anglo-Irish areas since 1540; this process was concentrated into a few years in the case of Ulster, roughly co-terminous with the establishment of the Plantation. It is proposed to examine the impact of the state church, newly in place throughout the north, on the existing traditional catholicism. An assessment can be made based on a number of themes. The nature and extent of the assimilation of native clergy into the new state church will be examined. A further question concerns the processes by which the recently-established church exerted religious and economic pressure on the catholic community. The roles of iconoclasm, ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and clerical exactions, together with the response of the catholic community, will be assessed. Thus a picture of how the newly installed state church impinged on catholicism in Ulster will emerge. Catholic resentment at the coercive and exploitative nature of the state church's relationship to native society was forged in this decade. Nevertheless, in some areas, the impact of church structures was moderated, in practice, by accomodations between officials and the catholic community.

We begin by exploring the iconoclasm near Coleraine in the summer of 1611. Thereafter the native clergy within the Church of Ireland are examined, together with the decline in status of the coarb families under the new dispensation. The impact of

state church exactions on the Irish population is considered, together with the protest movement which these generated; however, their variable implementation will also be noted. Finally, the impact of state church fees will be explored in the case of one south Ulster locality.

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Gradualism characterised religious change in the Anglo-Irish areas, which by the early seventeenth century had two generations' experience of the spread of the reformation. Processes of both denominational change and accomodation had been underway in the Anglo-Irish localities since the 1530s, where, at least officially, the reformation was to be promoted; in practice, it was subverted by the continuance of the local elites, who in general were firm adherents of the old religion. By contrast, protestantism made a sharp and abrupt entrance on the Ulster stage. There, the impact of the state church on the indigenous catholicism was more sudden. It was closely linked to the massive change in native society inaugurated by the Plantation, though tentative beginnings had been made in the wake of peace in 1603. This encounter was intensified by the sudden loss of most of the local magnates through flight and land confiscation, and their replacement by foreign elites, together with their followers, for the most part alien in religion as well as in culture.

Only with the establishment of the Plantation in 1609 did the state church begin to have a real presence in all Ulster counties. Catholic commentators were aware that northern catholicism was under particular threat in these years[1]. The new ecclesiastical order was being established merely at episcopal level in most of Ulster in the wake of peace after 1603. With the Plantation, and the arrival of colonists west of the Bann, a deepening of the gulf between native society and the established church ensued. George Montgomery, who held the sees of Derry, Clogher and Raphoe from 1605 until his transfer to Meath in 1610 (he retained the see of Clogher), concerned himself almost

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[1]. [Christopher Hollywood SJ] to Richard Conway SJ, 4 Nov 1611, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, Translations, pp 42-52, here, p.47 (printed in W. M'Donald (ed.), 'Irish colleges since the reformation', I.E.R., 10 (1873), pp 290-7); the link between reformation and plantation was highlighted in the 1622 report on Raphoe diocese, where it was noted that the ministers and incumbents had been 'legally instituted and inducted thereunto since the time of his majesty's now plantation of Ulster' in 1609, Raphoe diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550, p.222.

exclusively with the temporalities of his dioceses; under him, the traditional church order remained largely undisturbed in much of west and south Ulster. Initial toleration or rather neglect changed however with the advent of more evangelically-minded bishops in 1610, namely Brute Babington in Derry, and Andrew Knox in Raphoe. From their arrival these two prelates, together with Montgomery in his remaining Ulster diocese of Clogher, were taking steps to ensure the religious conformity of the clergy.[2]

Detailed evidence on episcopal strategies to effect the conversion of the Ulster Irish at this time is limited largely to the Derry diocese. Elements of both coercion and persuasion - 'sword' and 'word' - can be discerned in Babington's efforts. A coercive campaign against the traditional religion was launched in July 1611 by the two new bishops. Their crusade culminated in an act of iconoclasm - the destruction of the wooden statue of the Blessed Virgin kept at a small church or shrine on the road east of Derry, about six miles from Coleraine. By the summer of 1611, Andrew Knox, bishop of the Isles, in Scotland, had visited Dublin, where he pressed the administration for a tougher policy against catholicism.[3] He viewed his new diocese of Raphoe, and conferred with the bishop of Derry before returning to Scotland. The fullest extant account of the episode is from a catholic source. Babington, it is alleged, asked Knox to visit the shrine, situated in Derry diocese, on Knox's homeward journey to Scotland, and have the image destroyed. On arrival at the shrine, Knox's servants (who may have been natives of Donegal) refused to harm the image; thereupon Knox himself pulled it down, and had it carried to the neighbouring town of Coleraine, which was just being built as part of the Londoners' plantation. In a public display designed to underline the power of the new religious dispensation, and the demise of the old, the bishop ordered that the image be destroyed in a large fire laid in the centre of the town. However, according to this account, the image did not burn. Only when a carpenter bored holes in the statue, filling these with small dry sticks coated with powder and tar, did the wood catch fire. It was rumoured that the catholics saved an arm of the statue from the conflagration.[4]

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[2]. Bishop Knox in Raphoe was 'zealously affected to correct and reform the errors and abuses of priests and people; he has done more good in a short time there than his predecessor [Montgomery], in all his time', lord deputy to Salisbury, 13 Oct 1611, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.149.

[3]. Lord deputy to Salisbury, 13 Oct 1611, ibid.

[4]. [Christopher Hollywood] to Richard Conway, 4 Nov 1611, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, (here) pp 50-2.

The Coleraine episode marked a particularly graphic demonstration of the threat posed to the old religion by the representatives of the new. The bishops acted thus, confident of the support of the Dublin administration. The attack took place in the context of Chichester's moves against the recusants prior to the 1613 parliament, the most dramatic episode being the trial and execution of the Ulster bishop, Conor O'Devanny, in Dublin in 1612. The target of their iconoclasm was one of the most renowned shrines in the region, with a reputation for miraculous cures, drawing devotees from the Pale port towns, as well as from the locality.[5] Indeed, we only know of this episode because of Palesmen's resentment at the loss of the statue (they probably supported this chapel by gifts and alms), and shock at the provocative nature of its destruction. It is not clear whether the shrine, exceptionally, survived the widespread destruction at the end of the Nine Years War, or whether the devotion had arisen in the years of peace since 1603. It was located in an accessible area of the Londoners' nascent plantation, and so was particularly vulnerable to official attention.

The destruction of this image, 'renowned for its miracles which was the pride of the Christians of that part of the country', clearly caused great revulsion within the catholic community.[6] This occurred not only within the immediate vicinity, but among the recusants of Drogheda and Dublin.[7] Thus in official eyes, the Coleraine iconoclasm, like the contemporaneous judicial process against the Ulster clerics, Bishop O'Devanny, and the priest Patrick O'Loughran, could serve to intimidate the Old English in advance of the calling of parliament. In both cases however the real effect was the opposite; they reinforced the common catholicism of the Ulster Irish and the Pale recusants, groups hitherto characterised by mutual suspicion, if not hostility.

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[5]. Typical of such shrines, the church was adorned with mementos of those who claimed to have been miraculously cured there. Devotion to this statue by Palesmen took place in the context of trading and business links between Drogheda and north-east Ulster, eg lease of fishings by the Irish Society to Oliver Nugent, County Londonderry, and Richard FitzSimonds, of Drogheda, merchant, 20 Aug 1613, Moody and Simms (eds), The bishopric of Derry and the Irish Society of London 1602-1705, i (Dublin, 1968), pp 96-8.

[6]. [Christopher Hollywood] to Richard Conway, 4 Nov 1611, ibid.

[7]. 'Short account of the present state of Ireland ...1612', Moran, Spicil. Ossor. i, pp 119-20; Philip O'Sullivan Beare, drawing on Conway's letter, incorporated the Coleraine episode into his account of Irish catholic sufferings; it was retold, scurrilously embellished, including an anecdote that Babington had trousers made out of a cope, which promptly caught fire when he put them on, P. O'Sullivan Beare, Historiae Catholicae Iberniae Compendium [1621], ed. M. Kelly (Dublin, 1850), p.288.

Further, the interpretation given to the event in catholic circles was the direct opposite to that intended by the state bishops. Catholic correspondents seized on those features of the story which, for them, highlighted divine displeasure at the burning of the statue. The fact that extraordinary measures were necessary to burn the image was noted. Rumours of the sudden deaths of both bishops shortly afterwards provided proof of divine condemnation - it was held in Drogheda, erroneously, that Knox had drowned while travelling to Scotland, and Babington did in fact die suddenly and unexpectedly; according to one catholic report, he expired on the very day of the iconoclasm.[8] Previous acts of iconoclasm in Ulster had been associated with English soldiers during the Nine Years War.[9] The Coleraine episode, however, was instigated by the state bishops, and thus represented an early and violent encounter between the new church order and native society in north Ulster. What happened at Coleraine was representative of the destruction of relics and statues, and the profanation of sacred vessels and vestments, rampant in the first two decades of the seventeenth century.[10] In an Ulster context, the Coleraine iconoclasm was exceptional, in that Pale devotion to the shrine ensured that contemporary testimony to this event has survived. By contrast, as the state church was taking over what remained of the parish churches, the destruction of the surviving images there went unrecorded.

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Another index of the reformation's impact was the recruitment of local men - clerics and others who were literate - to serve as clergy in the new state church. The process can be noted across Ulster in the early seventeenth century. The surviving documentation however is richest for the dioceses of Derry, Raphoe and Clogher, arising from official interest in the temporalities of those sees, preparatory to the Plantation. From the beginning, the main focus of episcopal efforts at gaining religious conformity was on the existing native clergy; indeed, with some notable exceptions

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[8]. 'Short account of the present state of Ireland' [1612], Moran, Spicil. Ossor., i, pp 119-20; Babington died 10 Sept 1611, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-14, p.103; Knox in fact died in 1633, N.H.I. ix, p.409.

[9]. See chapter one.

[10]. Iconoclasm, and the secularisation of church goods, were widespread, D. Rothe, ['Analecta', 1615], NLI Ms 643, pp 17, 28.

(Bishop Bedell of Kilmore in the 1630s) there is little evidence that any other group was seriously targetted.[11] As the 1610s progressed these Irish clergy became ever more expendable, for replacements could be found among the British clergy arriving with the colonists under the Plantation.[12] There was a paucity of British clergy in the first years of the Plantation; native clergy had then comprised a greater proportion of the state clergy than the first extant survey (that of 1622) indicated. Bishops derived a certain proportion of their income from contributions from their clergy, and clergy faced severe mulcting by their bishops.[13] Thus at this initial stage of reformation it was in the bishop's interest to retain a certain proportion of native clergy, provided they met the minimal criterion for incorporation into the state church, namely, that they would take the oath of supremacy.[14] In this still fluid denominational situation, Irishmen were also serving as lowly church officials, a role that for them was compatible with a traditional devotion to the mass.[15]

The initial encounter between the new state bishops and the local clergy was at the heart of the state-sponsored religious reform. This process was underway in south and east Ulster in the years after 1603, following a period in which the crown had not nominated to these sees. Thus Robert Draper, the aged rector of Trim, was appointed to Kilmore and Ardagh in 1603; by 1607, as was happening across Ulster at the time, a group of the native clergy had been absorbed into the state church. Their new

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[11]. A. Clarke, 'Bishop William Bedell (1571-1642) and the Irish reformation', in C.Brady (ed.), Worsted in the game: losers in Irish history (Dublin, 1989), pp 61-72.

[12]. Already in 1605, Bishop Montgomery brought a group of 19 British clergy to his Ulster dioceses, king to lord deputy, 6 July 1619, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.253; in the early 1610s, Bishop Knox brought seven Scots clergy to his diocese of Raphoe, king's direction in favour of the bishop of Raphoe, [1612], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-14, p.315.

[13]. Bishop Draper of Kilmore was diligent 'in visiting his barbarous clergy to make benefit of their insufficiency, according to the proverb which is common in the mouth of one of our great bishops here, that an Irish priest is better than a milch cow', Davies to Salisbury, on state of Monaghan, Fermanagh, and Cavan, 1607, H. Morley (ed.), Ireland under Elizabeth and James the First (London, 1890), pp 377-8.

[14]. Following the report of Bishop Knox on the state of the church in Ulster, it was recommended that bishops appoint 'fit pastors, or at least for present such as can read the service of the church of England to the common people' in Irish, king to lord deputy, 26 Apr 1611, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.32.

[15]. Thus in County Londonderry in 1615, Brian McShane O'Mullan was a churchwarden, who also sheltered a priest, and had sixteen masses said in his house, examination of Knogher M'Gilapatrick O'Mullan, 10 May 1615, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 54-5.

confessional adherence meant little, for there was 'no divine service or sermon' to be heard.[16] Similar processes were underway when John Todd became bishop of Down, Connor and Dromore in May 1607.[17] The conformity of the clergy was a facet of the Dublin administration's presence in the Ulster localities. Offering the oath of supremacy to clergy was part of the role of the assize judges on circuit in Connacht in these years, and similar procedures may have been taking place in Ulster. Diocesan priests were taking the oath in many parts of Ulster at this time.[18] Indeed, Sir John Davies was confident that the conformity of the Ulster multitude could be easily gained.[19] Military garrisons in Ulster may have influenced the conformity of clergy in this phase. Thus in Carrickfergus, County Antrim, where Sir Arthur Chichester was the local commander, the majority of clergy had conformed by 1605; since the lord deputy's proclamation against popish clergy (July 1605) was published there, the priests were coming to the deputy-governor of the town and offering to conform.[20]

Not all clergy were so complaisant. In Derry diocese by early 1607, Bishop Montgomery had discussions with a friar, Prior Olun; he had been released from detention in hope of his conformity; the friar perused the state service book, in Latin, and agreed to desist from saying masses. But he refused a benefice in the state church, and asked for some land; Sir Henry Docwra gave him a quarter near Derry city.[21] In Armagh, as late as summer 1605, a group of traditionalist clergy were still in occupation of the cathedral, reflecting the lack of effective state control over the church in that

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[16]. Davies to Salisbury, 1607, H. Morley (ed.), loc. cit., p.378; N.H.I., ix, p.405.

[17]. N.H.I., ix, p.403; for a contemporary catholic view of Todd's deprivation in 1612, see D. Rothe, ['Analecta'], NLI Ms 643, p.111.

[18]. Sir John Davies, 4 May 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.468; 'The priests of Connacht submit to the protestant bishops, take benefices from them, attend their meetings, and treat them as they would catholic bishops', Jesuit annual letter 1605, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translation, p.19.

[19]. 'all the people of [Ulster], at least the multitude, are apt to receive any faith if the bishop of Derry [Montgomery], who hath engrossed three great bishoprics in the North, would come and be a new St Patrick among them', observations by Sir John Davies, 4 May 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.468.

[20]. Sir John Davies to Salisbury, n.d. but after July 1605, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.371; similarly, Davies reported that there were no recusants in the towns of Carrickfergus and Derry, observations by Davies, 4 May 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.468; all the inhabitants of Carrickfergus were protestants, points for privy council [1607], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.266.

[21]. Bishop of Derry to lord deputy, 4 Mar 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.126.

county, and the still unhampered survival of Tyrone's influence.[22] However, such survivalism in mid-Ulster came to an end with the proclamation of the edict against popish clergy, in Tyrone's manor of Dungannon, in summer 1605.[23] Thereafter, in the years 1605-7 the oath of supremacy was being exacted of clergy in Tyrone's territories by the state archbishop of Armagh, who was depriving the recalcitrant of their benefices.[24]

This process was largely complete by the end of 1611. In spring and summer 1611 the state bishops in the remaining planted territories were examining the clergy, retaining in their livings those who would conform, and expelling those who refused.[25] Based on the survival of native state clergy in the north-west down to 1622, it would appear that about 1610, a considerable proportion of existing diocesan clergy conformed, as had happened in south and east Ulster from 1603. The relative absence of tridentine clergy contributed to this transition. However, many refused to conform, and were deprived of their benefices.[26] Not until Montgomery's departure as bishop of Derry and Raphoe in July 1609, coinciding with the establishment of the Plantation, were serious efforts made to bring the clergy there to conform; hitherto the prelate was preoccupied with establishing control over the temporalities of his various dioceses.[27] Evidence from Derry diocese illustrates the process, for it is possible to delineate one bishop's initial strategy in seeking to absorb the native clergy into the state church. This material also throws some light on the changing confessional allegiance of a section of the native clergy, in one Ulster diocese, during this early stage of the reformation.

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[22]. Lord deputy to lords [of privy council], 30 Sept 1605, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.317.

[23]. N. Canny, 'The Flight of the Earls, 1607', Ir.Hist.St., 17, p.387.

[24]. Earl of Tyrone's articles [1607], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.374.

[25]. [Hollywood] to Conway, 4 Nov 1611, loc.cit.; the dismissal of the remaining non-conforming priests from benefices was a concern of Ulster state bishops at this time, king to lord deputy, 26 Apr 1611, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.32.

[26]. Illustrative of the campaign against the remaining non-conforming clergy - including those of Ulster - in the early 1610s, Chichester complained of 'the incensings of the priests, who have enough to work on by being removed from the livings to which they have been admitted by foreign authority', lord deputy to Salisbury, 1 Nov 1611, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.166; the lord deputy had ordered bishops to remove non-conforming priests from benefices, 'Proceedings for reformation of religion', 7 Oct 1611, Cal.S.P.Ire. 1611-4, p.142.

[27]. The lord deputy criticised Montgomery for neglecting the reform of his clergy, Chichester to Salisbury, 18 July 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, pp 253-4.

In September 1609, clergy of Derry, Clogher and Raphoe were interviewed, at the time of the commission to distinguish ecclesiastical from crown lands in the northern dioceses. As a result, a potential reform party was identified, based on educational attainment, and drawn from both clergy and educated laymen in the respective dioceses.[28]

Subsequently, in August 1610, Bruce Babington, fellow of Corpus Christi, Cambridge, was nominated bishop of Derry.[29] Babington planned to start the reformation in his diocese by getting his clergy to subscribe to a programme of reform. The attention he gave to the reform of the existing Irish clergy indicates that there were few alternative British clergy available. In his letter to Salisbury, one of his English patrons, Babington stressed the extent of local clerical opposition, partly in order to highlight his own limited success. Nevertheless, clearly the Derry clergy were firmly opposed to the reformation: Babington anticipated 'a tumultuous and general refusal' should they be assembled together.[30] This attitude reflected a high level of awareness of the ecclesial issues involved, the fruit of political and ecclesiastical contacts between the clergy of the north-west and catholic Europe since about 1580[31].

In his pursuit of religious change, the bishop followed the normal contemporary strategy of working on the elite among the clergy, and disregarding 'the unlearned multitude', believing that these would be led by the learned few. He first convened a meeting with a group of the senior and more learned clergy. Here the bishop encountered strong opposition. These were 'very averse and refractory', seeking to parry the bishop's insistence on conformity by holding that local changes should only take place after religious reform had got under way nationally.[32] Seeing little propsect of progress with this large group, the prelate then arranged for a series of discussions with a delegation of three clergy. He was not without hope of success, for within the diocese

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[28]. 'Sir James Ware's survey of the bishoprics of Clogher, Derry, Raphoe', Sept 1609, TCD Ms 10,383.

[29]. Cotton's Fasti, iii, p.316; N.H.I., ix, pp 398-9.

[30]. Babington to Salisbury, 20 Jan 1611, PRO SP63/231/4.

[31]. For these continental contacts, see the short biographies of the bishops of Raphoe, 1562-1611, in E. Maguire, A history of the diocese of Raphoe (Dublin, 1920), i, pp 124-32.

[32]. Babington to Salisbury, 20 Jan 1611, ibid.

a small state-church party was coalescing around Owen McCowell, herenagh of Dunboe, the leader of the trio. Even before Babington's arrival, by September 1609 McCowell had promised his adherence to the representatives of the state church. These noted his exceptional skill in civil law, his fluency in Latin as well as Irish, and his sharp, sly and perverse spirit, together with his greed; it was recognised that he had gone over to the new regime in the hope of further promotion.[33]

This party also included the former dean, William Mcataggard, who was granted two small parishes in the gift of Lord Deputy Chichester, suggesting that Mcataggard may have been politically useful to the state at the time of O'Doherty's revolt (1608).[34] Not all Chichester's native clerical proteges were so fortunate. One Neale King had served as a government spy in the north-west in 1608. On the lord deputy's suggestion, King had taken orders in the state church in the expectation of ministering among the Irish. However, despite petitions to the lord deputy and the monarch, by 1617 King had not secured a benefice, indicative of the poor prospects for Irish clergy in the northern dioceses.[35]

The talks continued in the bishop's study, during which theological books were consulted, presumably using Latin, their common language; these encounters reflected a certain level of theological formation among a few of the Derry clergy at that time. Babington, in his own view, adopted a persuasive, indeed eirenic approach, 'forbearing to press them with such principal differences and grounded points of their religion at the first instance', for he knew 'they would sooner die than yield unto on the sudden'.[36] These Derry priests knew the salient points at issue between the denominations, and seemed willing and able to engage in theological delaying-tactics with the new state bishop.

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[33]. 'Survey of the bishoprics of Clogher, Derry, Raphoe' [1609], TCD Ms 10,383, p.10.

[34]. Derry diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, pp 203-4.

[35]. Nealle King to [ ], [1617?], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 177-8.

[36]. Babington to Salisbury, 20 Jan 1611, PRO SP63/231/4; the account given here is based on this letter.

Within months of his arrival, Babington had thus adopted a persuasive policy, seeking to promote the 'word' through private conversations with some of the clerical elite.

The bishop actively sought a public gesture of conformity as an inspiration to the other clergy. Accepting an invitation to attend church service in Derry, M'Cowell was given a place of honour near the bishop, and, according to Babington, listened approvingly to the sermon. Later M'Cowell spoke positively of the new church order while at table with the bishop and prominent members of the local congregation. Thereafter M'Cowell and the other two participants in the discussions were at work among the rest of the clergy, advocating acceptance of the new ecclesiastical regime.

Babington's gradualism was reflected in the limited nature of the reforms put before the clergy. These included an oath of allegiance to the king; significantly there was no mention of the oath recognising royal supremacy over the church. Liturgical norms followed, embracing the use of the scriptures and the approved liturgical forms as translated into Irish, and yearly communion.[37] Concerning discipline, the clergy were to choose wardens to supervise the people's attendance at church; the clergy were to give up their concubines, or marry them, and were to encourage the laity to do likewise. At a diocesan chapter, the majority of the clergy subscribed to this programme. The bishop saw these measures as a first instalment of reform, and was hopeful of gaining clerical backing for further changes in the future.[38] The prelate's efforts at drawing the Irish clergy to conformity were cut short by his sudden death in September 1611.[39]

Despite initial misgivings, by January 1611 a majority of the Derry clergy (according to Babington) had indicated a willingness to acquiesce in the religious changes. There is no direct testimony which would confirm or deny the bishop's account of these proceedings. However, given the residual native clergy noted in 1622, and the

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[37]. Relevant liturgical texts had been published in Irish by then: Tiomna nuadh [New Testament] (Dublin, 1602), and Leabhar na nurnaightheadh gcomhchoidchiond [Book of Common Prayer] (Dublin, 1608).

[38]. Babington to Salisbury, 20 Jan 1611, ibid.

[39]. Allegedly Babington was about to meet with his clergy, to confirm in their livings those who would accept the new dispensation, and to dismiss those who refused, [Hollywood] to Conway, 4 Nov 1611, W. M'D. (ed.), 'Irish colleges since the reformation', I.E.R., 10, pp 280-7.

fact that measures of catholic reform and consolidation were only taking place in the diocese after 1611, it is possible that a large proportion of the Derry clergy did in fact conform in the years 1609-11. As already noted, evidence from Kilmore diocese, and from Connacht, in the first decade of the seventeenth century, confirms the view that, initially, conformity to the state church among a sizeable proportion of the clergy was common. It is probable that there were similar levels of compliance in the other Ulster dioceses in this early stage of the reformation.

From the late sixteenth century, the friars were noted for their resistance to, and preaching against, the new ecclesial order.[40] However, even apart from the friars, there were signs of resistance to religious conformity within Ulster society, as the career of Tadhg O Corcoran, scribe to the Fermanagh lord, Cuchonnacht Maguire, illustrates. O'Corcoran belonged to a hereditary clerical family in Fermanagh.[41] Reflecting an earlier phase of native acquiesence in the emergence of the state church in Ulster, Tadhg had received deacon's orders from Myler Magrath, archbishop of Cashel, himself a native of Fermanagh.[42] Tadhg was in the service of the archbishop, who bestowed on him a living in Cashel diocese.[43] In summer 1606, Maguire sought O'Corcoran as English-speaker and scribe, to facilitate contacts with the lord deputy. However, the Ulster lord insisted that his secretary abjure the new faith and be formally reconciled to the Catholic church. Thus in July of that year, while travelling towards the Pale, Maguire dispatched O'Corcoran to the Franciscan convent of Multyfarnham; there he was absolved by the aged Franciscan bishop of Kilmore, Richard Brady, and returned to the Catholic church.[44] The episode suggests that the Ulster elite were already committed to catholicism exclusively by then. Franciscan ministry among the nobility in Ulster

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[40]. Pithy anti-protestant rhymes were part of the preaching of friar Owen O'Duffy in south Ulster, B. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947: Donatus Moneyus, De provincia Hiberniae S. Francisci', Anal. Hib., 6, p.50; Franciscan oposition to the reformation in Ulster is noted in K. Simms, 'Frontiers in the Irish church - regional and cultural', in T. Barry et al (eds), Colony and frontier in Medieval Ireland (London/Rio Grande, 1995), pp 177-200.

[41]. O'Corcorans listed as students, pardons, County Fermanagh, 1591, Fiants, Ire., Eliz., no 5602.

[42]. Myler Magrath, DNB.

[43]. Inquisition into Cashel and Emly dioceses, 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.239.

[44]. Examination of Teig O'Corkran, 11 Aug 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, pp 566-8; O'Corkran subsequently joined Maguire on the continent, abuses in dioceses of Cashel, Emly, Lismore and Waterford, 4 Aug 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.239.

doubtless contributed to this denominational awareness.[45] The lower orders, by contrast, were at this stage less concerned about the ecclesial affiliation of the clergy. Further, Maguire was already preparing himself for a move to the Low Countries[46], one of the attractions of which was its strong catholicism; this prospect may have sharpened his concern for an unblemished catholic identity. Thus where the traditional elite was still powerful, that power was being exercised in favour of the old faith. Clerical conformity to the state church in many areas across the north in the early seventeenth century was running counter to the emerging recusancy of the Ulster elite; it was a further indication of the weakening of traditional lordly power.

The number and status (incumbent as distinct from lower grades) of native state clergy across Ulster were at their highest in the early 1610s. However, by the time of the ecclesiastical survey in 1622 the erosion of these Irish conformists was well underway. By then, the proportion of native clergy was highest in the north-west, and south, of the province, namely, in areas of less dense British settlement. In Derry diocese, reflecting their increasing marginalisation, there were merely two Irish incumbents, out of a total of 45 parishes. One of these was Patrick McTally, significantly appointed early in the 1610s, as Bishop Downham noted, 'an Irishman of mean gifts having a little Latin and no English but thought by my predecessor sufficient for a parish consisting wholly of Irish'.[47] There were a further five parishes where an Irish clerk or scholar was employed as curate; these were in parishes consisting almost entirely of Irish, but no Irish attended service.[48] Thus in Derry diocese native clergy were represented only in 20% of the parishes, and then overwhelmingly at a lowly level. Their marginal, survivalist status was emphasised by their anonymity in the 1622 report.

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[45]. In Maguire's case, there had been a friary at Lisgoole, County Fermanagh, Gwynn and Hadcock, Medieval religious houses Ireland, p.254.

[46]. Lord deputy to Salisbury, 26 Jan 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.93.

[47]. McTally was probably a layman before becoming an incumbent, since there is no reference to him being a priest, Derry diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, p.191.

[48]. Derry diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, pp 189-204; the non-attendance of the Irish was exemplified in the case of Killalaughy parish, where the minister used to come every three weeks, but 'no man comes at him, the whole parish consisting of Irish recusants', ibid., p.203; in addition, four of the seven parishes in the unplanted barony of Inishowen had Irish-speaking clergy.

In neighbouring Raphoe diocese, Irish-speaking clergy were assigned to an even larger proportion of the livings (40%), as befitted a diocese which was almost totally Irish-speaking; Irishmen represented one-third of the clergy listed.[49] There were ten named clergy who were competent in the language, including two Scots.[50] Two of the native ministers named were previously catholic priests. The remainder were 'divers Irish scholars who have conformed themselves in religion and are curates in divers parishes under British ministers'.[51] The more detailed evidence from Raphoe confirms the impression from across Ulster that these convert clergy were drawn from traditional clerical and herenagh families.[52]

The term 'Irish scholar' indicates that some with an educated Gaelic background were open to the new possibilities for role and livelihood which the state church offered. Traditional career paths were disappearing with the collapse of Gaelic aristocratic society in the wake of the Flight of the Earls, and the Ulster Plantation. Most of these Irish reading ministers received a small stipend from the parish rector; some few acquired the vicarage itself for their maintenance. Many continued to live on their traditional landholding, now part of an undertaker's proportion. There they were liable for the fines payable by natives, because such lands were meant to be planted with British tenants. In Donegal in 1622, these reading ministers complained that they should be freed from the natives' fines, in view of their work for the church, and that they 'indeavour by all means the conversion of their country people'; there is no evidence of their efforts in this regard.[53]

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[49]. 11 out of 27 livings, Raphoe diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, pp 212-29 (here, p.222).

[50]. Robert Aikyn MA, who understood the language, and Dowgall Cambell, who could teach through Irish, Raphoe 1622, ibid., pp 214-5; in 1605, one Douglas Campbell matriculated at Glasgow University, C. Innes, Munimenta Alme Universitatis Glasguensis (Glasgow, 1854), iii, pp 65-6.

[51]. Raphoe diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, p.229; Owen O Mulmock and Brian O Doweny were listed as convert Irish priests in 1622, while two others, Brian McNelus and Terence O'Kelly, were mentioned among distinguished clergy in 1607, 'Translation of ... Bishop Montgomery's survey [1607]' in A. Alexander (ed.), 'The O'Kane Papers', Anal. Hib., 12, pp 103-4.

[52]. Brian McNelus, reading minister, belonged to a family who were coarbs of Clancollumkill parish; similarly Torlagh O'Kelly belonged to the Mointercally who held the bishop's mensal land in Aghehonchin parish, Kilmacrenan barony, Inq.cancell.Hib. repert., ii, Ultonia, Appendix, Donegal.

[53]. Raphoe diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, p.229.

Unlike the largely negative view of the native reading ministers prevailing in other dioceses, Andrew Knox, bishop of Raphoe (1611-33) had a more positive attitude to these converts who comprised the bulk of his lower clergy. The attainments of the Raphoe native clergy give an indication of educational levels among the Ulster learned class: at least 50% could read in English, as well as Irish, perhaps reflecting the influence of the Donegal and Derry tradition of schooling in Glasgow. The bishop referred to them by name, unlike the anonymous treatment given by the neighbouring bishop of Derry. Owen Congall (one of two sons of a previous bishop, Donal Mac Congal, bishop 1562-1589, who were bishop's collectors in 1609)[54] was 'a very good minister reading in the English and Irish language and of a very good report', while Richard Molyn and Brian McNelus were 'two very good reading ministers in English and the Irish'.[55] The native Irish profile in Raphoe was further enhanced by the fact that the schoolmaster of the diocesan free school was a native Irishman, Brian Moryson.[56] Moryson's career was illustrative of cultural and religious adaptation within native society in Donegal. Like some others belonging to a coarb family, he had acquired a sound education, though, exceptionally, Moryson had become a university graduate, and in 1622 Knox judged him to be 'a very good humanist'[57]; further, following a trend of some from a traditional ecclesiastical family, he conformed, acquired a British-sounding surname, and found employment within the state church.[58] The isolation and poverty of Donegal, its Irish-speaking population, and the late establishment of a state church presence at the local level there, accentuated its unattractiveness for clergy of British origin.[59] Thus the state bishop was compelled to seek the help of conformable

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[54]. Survey of Clogher, Derry, Raphoe [1609], TCD Ms 10,383, p.17; Donal Mac Congal, bishop of Raphoe, 1562-89, N.H.I., ix, p.353.

[55]. Raphoe diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, pp 219, 221.

[56]. In 1622 the school was located at Donegal, far from the main centre of British settlement in the north-east, TCD Ms 550, p.223.

[57]. Raphoe diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, p.223.

[58]. In 1609, Donnogh O'Morreesen was the abbot's coarb and the bishop of Derry's herenagh of three quarters in Clounemanny parish, Inishowen barony, Inq.cancell.Hib.repert., Ultonia, Appendix, Donegal; B. Bonner, 'O Muirgheasain: The bishop's tax-gatherer', Donegal Annual, 43, pp 117-20; in Dec 1618 Brian Morrison was appointed first master and rector of the diocesan Royal School, and was succeeded after his death by James Kennedy in Dec 1629, M. Quane, 'Raphoe Royal School', Donegal Annual, 7 no 2, p.153.

[59]. One index of poverty was the lack of suitable housing: Bishop Knox struggled to find

and literate natives. The west Scottish background of Bishop Knox equipped him to engage with conformable Gaelic-speakers in a more positive fashion than his English neighbours in the see of Derry.

In the south Ulster diocese of Kilmore, the native proportion within the clergy resembled that of the north-west, reflecting the lighter British settlement of these areas, relative to east Ulster and the area around Lough Neagh. This diocese embraced the planted county of Cavan, and a part of County Leitrim, isolated and, down to the mid-1620s, largely devoid of British settlement.[60] In this diocese, native Irishmen had decreased to one-third of the state clergy by 1622, a proportion in line with neighbouring Ardagh diocese.[61]

The status of the Irish clergy in Kilmore was the highest of any diocese in the northern province.[62] Nevertheless ministry to the Irish was not a priority. Nicholas Smith represented the newer strand of native involvement in the ministry, for he was a graduate of TCD; however, his career indicates that these graduates had little pastoral impact in the Gaelic milieux of their origins.[63] The situation in Hanna parish was more typical of the Irish role in the ministry. There, the archdeacon, William Andrews, employed an Irish curate, 'to read divine service in the Irish tongue', in a remote living. It was recognised that there was little prospect of gathering a worshipping community, for the church was ruinous, and unfit to be repaired, given its distance from the planter settlement at Belturbet.

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himself a house, 'not one being left habitable in the diocese', archbishop of Canterbury, and earl of Salisbury, to lord deputy, 7 Feb 1612, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.244.

[60]. A. Ford, 'The Reformation in Kilmore before 1641', in R. Gillespie (ed.), Cavan: Essays on the History of an Irish county (Dublin, 1995), pp 73-98; B. Mac Cuarta, 'The plantation of Leitrim, 1620-41, Ir.Hist.St., 32 no 127, pp 297-320.

[61]. As in Ulster generally, in 1607 the vast majority of Kilmore clergy were Irish priests, Davies to Salisbury, 1607, H. Morley (ed.), loc. cit., p.377; Ardagh diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550, pp 154-65.

[62]. Of the six Irish clergy mentioned, four were incumbents (one suspended), Kilmore diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, pp 142-53.

[63]. Although Smith held two livings in the diocese, and sometimes served the cure himself, he settled in a more lucrative living in neighbouring Meath diocese, Kilmore 1622, TCD Ms 550, pp 146-7; on Smith's career, see A. Ford, The Protestant Reformation in Ireland, p.195.

Among the six native clergy listed, two were convert priests, presumably survivors who had conformed to stay in their livings. Hugh McConnyne had been suspended for unspecified misdemeanours, and a newcomer served in his place; McConnyne's adherence must have been more a hindrance than a help in the attempt to win the Irish for the new religious dispensation.[64] The other converted priest, Shane O Gown, served as vicar in a living where he was resident, and of which the earl of Westmeath was patron. As in other cases where native clergy adhered to the state church, his conversion merely entailed taking the oath of supremacy, and reading the service book in church instead of saying mass; relative to the lowly incomes of native Irish clergy in general, O Gown had a good living, for he received £20 p.a.[65] The survival of native clergy was due in part to relatively light British settlement. It may also reflect the generally conservative tenor of church life in Kilmore, for most of the native clergy were in livings where the Nugents, earls of Westmeath, were patrons.[66] The recusant Nugents were exercising their patronage to ensure that minimalist Irish clergy, and not evangelical British ministers, became incumbents, thus limiting religious change in their localities. The Kilmore conformists confirm the impression that the reforming impact of these Irish clergy on their erstwhile co-religionists was negligible.

Elsewhere in Ulster, native Irish clergy had largely disappeared in the course of the 1610s. This resulted in part from the growth of British communities across Ulster, arising from both formal and informal colonization. The rapid decline is highlighted in the case of County Monaghan. In 1606, all 21 of the named state clergy were local Irishmen[67]; by 1622 however, in the entire Clogher diocese, native Irish accounted for at most three of the clergy listed. Even the curates were British.[68] In 1605, nineteen British preachers were dispatched to Ulster, to serve under Bishop George Montgomery; given

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[64]. TCD Ms 550, pp 144-5.

[65]. TCD Ms 550, pp 148-9.

[66]. Four of the six were attached to Nugent impropriations, Kilmore diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550, pp 144-51.

[67]. In addition to archdeacon James O'Dowie, there were three others of that name; two Cardulls were rector and vicar of the same parish; and two McTrenies were vicars in adjacent parishes, 'A presentment of clergy in the county of Monaghan', [1606], HMC Hastings, iv, pp 154-6.

[68]. The three Irish clergy were in County Monaghan, and two were incumbents (one 'a reformed Irish priest'); Clogher diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, pp 176-87.

the greater inaccessibility of Donegal and Londonderry at the time, it was probable that a majority of these clergy took benefices in Clogher diocese. This influx would account for the rapid demise of Irish rectors in Clogher parishes.[69] By 1622, Clogher diocese had experienced considerable British colonization, embracing Monaghan (an area of informal colonization), and the planted county of Fermanagh (together with a part of Tyrone). As in the Church of Ireland as a whole, the pastoral focus in Clogher diocese was now explicitly on the British settlers.[70] Protestant ministers, almost invariably British, were replacing the survivalist clergy who represented the first phase of the reformation in their localities.[71]

In some parishes, clergy and laity were exclusively Irish down to about 1620. Typical of this earlier phase of denominational change, down to the late 1610s, all the state clergy of the three parishes of Farney barony (south-east Monaghan) were still local Irishmen. By 1622 one of the incumbents was replaced by William Moore, who was probably British, reflecting the loss in status of native clergy which was occurring throughout the region.[72] Nevertheless by 1634 in each of four parishes in Clogher diocese an Irish curate was serving; these would seem to have been recruited in the 1620s. The predominance of Irish speakers, the willingness of native curates to work for less than trained or British clergy, and geographical isolation from British settlers may account for the continued recruitment of some few native Irish to the ministry in such areas.[73]

In 1609, Armagh archdiocese, with the exception of south Louth, was strongly Gaelic. By 1622, in contrast to other areas in Ulster, the absence of Irish-speaking clergy was striking. In counties Armagh and Tyrone, there were hardly any local Irish in

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[69]. King to lord deputy, 6 July 1619, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.253.

[70]. In Mahareclowney parish, County Monaghan, the rector was not resident because there was 'no British plantation'; however he kept an Irish curate, Clogher diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, pp 184-5; A. Ford, The Protestant Reformation in Ireland, 1590-1641, pp 224-6.

[71]. Clogher diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, pp 182-7.

[72]. Flanegan, Felix Cran, and vicar McDonnell were the ministers respectively of Kilanny, Donamaine, and Macheross parishes; after 1619, William Moore replaced Flanegan in Kilanny parish, 'Grievances of tenants .. in Farny' [1622], NLI Ms 8014 (x).

[73]. Manus McMahon, Hugo O Hinan, Teige O Haran, and John Keare; they were not mentioned in 1622; Clogher diocese, 1634 visitation, TCD Ms 1067, pp 497-9.

the ministry, apart from a Mr Casy (probably of a herenagh family), curate in County Tyrone, and a few anonymous curates. Only two clergy were noted who could read the service book in Irish, both curates in Tyrone.[74] Because of the development of English and Scottish settlements by 1622, and the supply of clergy who accompanied the settlers, the church had less need of local clergy. Initially however, as in other areas of Ulster, Irishmen were more numerous in the ministry in mid-Ulster. As noted above, violence against church personnel in 1614-15, especially in mid-Ulster, dissuaded locals from serving in the ministry, and so contributed to the demise of native clergy.

In east Ulster native clergy were even less prominent, given the relatively plentiful supply of Scottish ministers there. By 1622, only one minister of local origin can be identified in Down diocese. The curate Patrick Savage was of the new generation of Irish youths who had received the training of a protestant minister at TCD. All his parishioners were Irish, and his training would have equipped him to read the service in Irish.[75] In neighbouring Connor diocese (County Antrim), the two native ministers would appear to have been survivalist clergy. The diocese of Connor was particularly devastated, with most churches still ruined, and most without any cure, in 1622; the recusant earl of Antrim was patron of many of the livings, reflecting the strong control he exercised within north Antrim.[76] As a staunch recusant, he had no interest in promoting the state church in his territory. The absence of ministers suggests that the earl may have been using tithes to support priests.

By the early 1620s, differences in the distribution of native clergy in Ulster corresponded with the strength of British colonization in the different counties. Where British settlement was sparse, Irish clergy were more numerous. Thus in 1622 native Irish involvement was higher in Raphoe diocese, a largely isolated and inhospitable area (apart from north-east Donegal), than in neighbouring Derry. Similarly, by that date

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[74]. The Muntercasy were tenants to the archbishop of lands in Toaghrany barony, inquisition, 12 Aug 1609, PRONI DIO 4/5/1, p.34; in Termonmagwork, Daniel Hickes 'brought up in the College and reads Irish and English'; in Lessan, Gregory Sturton 'who reads Irish', Armagh diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, pp 32-5.

[75]. Parish of Kilmore Moran, Down diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, p.246; A. Ford, 'Who went to Trinity? The early students of Dublin University', in H. Robinson-Hammerstein (ed.), European universities in the age of Reformation and Counter-Reformation (Dublin, 1998), pp 53-74.

[76]. Donnell O Murry and Hugh McLerrenan, native incumbents, Connor diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, pp 253-60.

there were hardly any native ministers identifiable in east Ulster, and in mid-Ulster (Counties Tyrone, Armagh, Fermanagh, and Monaghan). Conversely they had survived as a significant minority of the clergy within the dioceses of the north-west, and Kilmore in the south.

Irish clergy were merely curates, and, more usually, reading ministers, in parishes where British clergy were in charge. They were generally viewed with disdain by the bishops, but considered adequate for livings where almost all the parishioners were Irish. They were 'tolerated' to read the service in Irish or English, but, reflecting their lowly role, in some instances neighbouring ministers undertook to discharge the other church services.[77] By 1634 the Irish ministers had all but disappeared, replaced by clergy of British background, more clearly protestant.[78] Apart from east Ulster, where intermarriage arising from dense Scots settlement led to some Irish adherence to protestantism,[79] the pastoral impact of the church on the Irish-speaking population was minimal. The active Irish-language ministry pursued in the 1630s by Bishop Bedell in Kilmore was quite exceptional.[80] Even there, however, the isolated and demoralised position of native ministers within Ulster Irish society, by the mid-1630s, was illustrated in the case of the Kilmore minister, Murtagh King (in Irish, O Cionga). His wife and children were catholics. He himself, it was said, used to attend the mass-house. He sometimes neglected to hold service. He did not follow the prescribed formulae in celebrating holy communion or in performing baptism. When his child asked for money, he is alleged to have replied that he, the father, was risking damnation by serving the state church, in order that his family might have maintenance.[81] From the

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[77]. Derry diocese, 1622 survey, TCD Ms 550, p.190.

[78]. There were a handful of exceptions. Two native Irishmen were serving in Connor diocese, one a vicar of a poor living (worth £10), the other a curate, while in Raphoe, Dr Moses O'Neill was a rector. In Clogher diocese, as noted above, there were four Irish curates. Connor, Raphoe, Clogher dioceses, 1634, TCD Ms 1067.

[79]. See chapter four.

[80]. On Bedell as bishop, see A. Clarke, 'Bishop William Bedell (1571-1642) and the Irish reformation', and A. Ford, 'The Reformation in Kilmore before 1641'.

[81]. Murtagh King, vicar of Templeport, worked on Bedell's Irish translation of the bible, but by 1638 he was bullied by a fellow minister, Edward Bayly, into resigning the living; arising from this dispute, King spent several months in prison, Bedell to lord deputy, 1 Dec 1638, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1633-47, p.205; the allegations against him are given in 'Matters against Murtagh King' [1638], ibid., p.206; Bedell to archbishop of Canterbury, 12 Nov 1638, ibid., pp 203-4.

1610s, opposition from within native society in Ulster to Irish ministers was growing. By the 1630s, confessional boundaries were becoming more rigid, with the appearance of catholic bishops, and other tridentine clergy keen to consolidate the exclusively catholic identity of the Irish community. Needed initially, Gaelic ministers were increasingly despised by the state church, and opposed by the community from whence they came.

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The Plantation witnessed the coarb families' loss of their status as independent landholders. Under the Gaelic order their landholding was secure, and they merely paid certain exactions to the local bishop. Under the Plantation in 1609, it was decided that the coarbs' lands belonged not to the church, but to the king, thus falling under the category of religious houses subject to dissolution.[82] However, the king subsequently granted these lands to the bishops. Hence the coarbs initially became regular tenants to the state bishops for their traditional lands. Their decline can be traced in the case of Armagh diocese, based on the episcopal rentals for 1615 and 1620. By 1620 they had been largely replaced as leaseholders by British settlers. This represented a rapid social decline for the ecclesiastical families.[83] With a new layer of British tenants superimposed, the families were being reduced to mere occupiers, losing the independence and security of their landholding under the previous dispensation. By 1641, the traditional coarb or herenagh families had descended to the status of sub-tenants.[84]

The demise of the coarbships can be examined in the evolution of one preeminently wealthy coarbship, that of Clones, County Monaghan, from the 1580s down to 1640. Already in the mid-1580s, the abbey of Clones and the Franciscan convent at Monaghan

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[82]. Inq.cancell.Hib.repert., ii, Ultonia, Appendix; local juries found herenagh lands to be resumed and vested in the crown, as distinct from the bishops, Davies to Salisbury, 5 Aug 1608, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.16; same to same, 28 Aug 1609, ibid., pp 280-1.

[83]. M. Glancy, 'The church lands of Co. Armagh: Text of the Inquisition of 1609 with introduction and notes', Seanchas Ard Mhacha, 1, pp 67-100.

[84]. R. Hunter, 'The Ulster plantation in the counties of Armagh and Cavan, 1608-41' (M.Litt. thesis, University of Dublin, 1969), chapter 12, 'The estates of the archbishopric in Armagh', pp 537-75.

- the only two buildings of note in the county - were in ruins, suggesting that decay in religious life predated the military takeover of these buildings; by 1593 an English garrison was located in the Monaghan convent.[85] By the early 1580s, the lands belonging to the coarb of Clones comprised the great church or abbey of Clones, and 28 tates; these premises were considered part of the monastery of Clones. Crown title had been discovered by Captain Henry Duke, and he acquired the property in 1587.[86] In line with periods of local Irish supremacy, military appropriation of ecclesiastical buildings was sometimes reversed, as happened with the expulsion of the English garrison from the Donegal friary in 1592.[87] Similarly in the mid-1590s the MacMahon chief installed his son, then a boy, as coarb; the 28 tates were considered among the choicest lands in the territory.[88] By the opening decade of the seventeenth century, through marriage the property had descended to Sir Francis Rushe.

A dispute about these lands arose between George Montgomery, state bishop of Clogher (1605-21), and Rushe. While Montgomery was inquiring into the extent of diocesan lands, some time after 1607, the bishop made a deal with one Cahill Duffe O Connally concerning 14 1/2 tates, pertaining to the coarb of Clones. The prelate promised O Connally a lease of four tates if the Irishman would swear that the entire property was bishop's land. O Connolly duly swore accordingly, and acquired a lease for 61 years of the four tates. In March 1622, Cahill Duffe lay dying. He had made his confession to his parish priest and confessor, presumably Henry Maigardle, the priest who witnessed O Connally's will.[89]

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[85]. Sir Henry Bagnall, 'The description and present state of Ulster, 1586', E.P. Shirley, Some account of the territory or dominion of Farney, p.79; Lord Deputy Fitzwilliam to the privy council, 15 Sept 1593, ibid., p.103.

[86]. He was to maintain a ward of six Englishmen to guard the premises, Fiants Ire., Eliz., 5042 (1587); he described its strategic usefulness, 'the only place to lay a garrison for the bridling and reforming of McMahon's country, Maguire's, and the O'Reillys,' Duke to Lord Burghley, 29 Feb 1587, E.P. Shirley, Account of the territory or dominion of Farney, p.80; Duke was sheriff of County Cavan from c. 1584, Fiants Ire., Eliz., 4556 (1584); in the 1590s he was sheriff of County Louth, and based on the Ulster-Pale frontier at Dundalk, H. O'Sullivan, 'Rothe's castle, Dundalk and Hugh O'Neill: A sixteenth century map', Louth Arch.Soc.Jn., 15 no 3, pp 281-91.

[87]. A.F.M., sub anno 1592.

[88]. Davies to Salisbury, 1607, Morley (ed.), p.366.

[89]. Will of Cahill Duffe O Connally, of Maghirarny, County Monaghan, 12 Mar 1622, (copy), Essex Record Office, D/DL/E91.

Cahill Duffe named his cousin, Conn O'Connally, styled abbot of Clones, or Abbot O'Connally, as his executor. The latter was a substantial tenant in the Clones area in the 1630s; however the title may not have implied that he was a priest, but merely that he was the heir of the traditional coarb of Clones.[90] His extensive holding down to 1641 illustrates how this traditional coarb family was able to retain a proportion of the coarb lands of Clones, albeit as a privileged tenant to the New English owners.[91] The case of Clones indicates that elements of coarbship survived down to 1641. While traditional church landholding was radically anglicised, the Clones example supports the view that traditional ecclesiastical families survived as occupiers of these lands. The retention of the title 'abbot' suggests that the status attached to the office survived in the local Irish community.

A similar transformation, with some elements of continuity, may be discerned in the case of other hereditary ecclesiastical families, so characteristic of the church in Ulster down to the Plantation. The traditional landholding arrangements of such families were transformed; however in some cases their social or quasi-ecclesiastical role survived. Under the old order, several families were keepers of relics associated with major saints, under the general supervision of the local bishop; lands and dignity accrued to these families; and despite landholding changes in the wake of the plantation, their role continued into the seventeenth century. The demotion of these hereditary office-holders as church tenants was illustrated in the case of the Mac Moyers. The 9th century Book of Armagh was in the care of its traditional custodian, 'Maor na Canoine' [steward of the canon], of the sept of Mac Maoir, with lands assigned from time immemorial by the archbishop of Armagh, at Ballywire, Fews barony, County Armagh. The sept's traditional landholding, as tenants to the archbishop, was in their possession down to 1615, but they had been replaced as tenants by an Englishman, George Fairfax, before 1622. The family probably remained on the lands, but with reduced security and status. Nevertheless the book remained in the family's possession down to 1680; it was

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[90]. He held 350 acres (or 5 tates - one was rent-free for his life) at an annual rent of £44 in the late 1630s, a holding among the five most valuable of the 37 tenancies in the manor of Clones, Clones rentals (1637-40), Essex Record Office, D/DL E87, E88.

[91]. In 1640 Abbot O'Connolly retained, as tenant, 5 of the 28 tates alleged to have belonged to the great church of Clones, [Notes on Clones], Essex Record Office, D/DL Q3.

consulted by Archbishop Ussher some time before 1641, who may have remunerated the family for this access.[92]

In south Ulster, the tenant occupiers of the church lands were known as termon-men, and enjoyed a certain privilege of clergy.[93] This status was recognised by the state church, at least in the 1610s, during the early years of the English clergy in Clogher diocese. Thus in 1615, Patrick Beddy McPhilip, a Monaghan yeoman, claimed privilege of clergy when found guilty of stealing a mare, a conviction which normally carried the death penalty. The local minister, already by then an Englishman, Lewes Pruderche, was summoned, and as verification of this claim McPhilip was asked to read from 'the book' (presumably the Book of Common Prayer) which he duly did. His claim was accepted by the court, and he was given benefit of clergy, for it was decreed that his left hand be branded, and that he be detained by the ordinary (presumably the bishop)[94].

The early years of the reformation in Ulster, as in the Old English areas, were marked by the willingness of some survivalist clergy to conform. In Ulster, some members of the traditional educated, clerical families were absorbed into the lower ranks of the ministry, and a proportion of these survived down to the early 1620s. The growing identification of the state church with the planter community in the early seventeenth century coincided with the withering of this nativist strand within the clergy.[95] This occurred all the more rapidly in Ulster given the relatively late start to the reformation. Pressure against native ministers from within the catholic community was increasing. With the exception of east Ulster, shortlived careerist engagement in the ministry represented the highpoint of native conformity. Across Ulster, whole parishes were comprised almost exclusively of Irish catholics, corresponding with the emergence of separate areas of British and Irish settlement by 1622. Referring to one living where

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92. J. Gwynn (ed.), Liber Ardmachanus (Dublin and London, 1913), pp cv-cx.

93. In line with the ecclesiastical status of the coarb families, 'termon-men', as such families were referred to in south Ulster, 'had some privilege of clergy', Davies to Salisbury [1607], TCD Ms 580, ff 14r-15r (H. Morley (ed.), p.365).

94. 'Ulster roll of gaol delivery', Monaghan sessions, 1615, U.J.A., 2 (1854), p.26; this individual may have been the Patric Beddi McMahon, of Lattencalle, County Monaghan, who died 10 May 1624, seised of 2 tates, Inq.cancell.Hib.repert., ii, Ultonia, Monaghan.

95. On developments in the Church of Ireland in Ulster, see A. Ford, The Protestant Reformation in Ireland 1590-1641 (Dublin, 1997), chapter seven, 'Ulster: the colonial reformation', pp 127-54.

an English graduate was non-resident incumbent, the bishop of Derry noted what must have been the typical situation: 'in [the British minister's] absence (if any of his parishioners would come as I suppose few or none do) [the cure] would be discharged (after a sort) by his clerk being an Irish scholar'.[96]

Apart from east Ulster, little concern at northern Irish conversion to protestantism is discernible among catholic commentators after about 1620. Such impressionistic evidence of how few Ulster Irish conformed is corroborated by a rare religious census from 1622, relating to Tandragee parish, in north Armagh. The minister claimed to have 13 Irish church-goers, but even this seems exaggerated - the list included two Wedgewoods and one Thomas Tipper, not recognizably Irish names.[97] By contrast, the minister reckoned there were at least 200 Irish catholic families in the parish, which embraced the plantation proportion of Oliver St John, viscount Grandison, the lord deputy. As a staunch protestant, with a penchant for stern coercive measures in religious matters, the number of Irish conformists on Grandison's estate may have been unusually high. Yet in 1622 the proportion of churchgoers among the Irish in this plantation parish was virtually negligible. The evidence from Tandragee parish points to the highly exceptional nature of native conformity in plantation Ulster.[98]

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The exactions of the state church, newly set up in the localities, had a severe impact on the Ulster Irish population. That ecclesiastical structures had been in decay arising from the recent war meant that church impositions were perceived as an unaccustomed novelty, compounding native resentment. Prelates and their proctors, when unrestrained by powerful landlords, were ruthless in making their demands, which were often

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[96]. Derry diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, pp 190-204, quotation p.202.

[97]. 'A true relation of the rectorie and parish of Tawnatalie alias Mounterheyney' [1622], NLI Ms 18,646.

[98]. 'A true relation of the rectorie and parish of Tawnatalie alias Mounterheyney' [1622], NLI Ms 18,646; underlining the exceptional nature of Irish conformity, in the 1622 survey of plantation estates in Fermanagh, 'Teig McMurchie, who received the sacrament and has taken the oath of supremacy', was listed among the 37 Irish tenants on the estate of David Creighton, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.466; some few Irish leaseholders on Ulster estates conformed, A. Ford, The Protestant Reformation in Ireland 1590-1641, p.151; for a more positive view of the extent of Irish conformity in plantation Ulster, see N. Canny, Making Ireland British 1580-1650 (Oxford, 2001), pp 434-5.

arbitrary; different sums were charged under the same heading. Down to 1641, the church courts were used as lucrative sources of income by the state prelates, generally the chancellor of the diocese.[99] Testamentary arrangements, marriage disputes, and sexual crimes, were among the areas within the purview of the church courts, ensuring that episcopal jurisdiction had a real impact on people's lives, and generated much revenue. The novelty of these courts for the Ulster Irish was noted by the bishop of Derry in 1611. On arrival in his see, Bishop Babington quickly established a consistory court, where he himself sat weekly. Marriage cases featured highly. The new bishop was seeking to wrest control of marriage discipline from the priests, by reserving all marriage cases to his own consistory court. Thus the state bishops were in competition with the priests in the area of ecclesiastical jurisdiction.[100] That state prelates were thorough in exploiting the financial possibilites of their courts was suggested by their mercenary approach to diocesan revenues more generally.[101] These trends affected catholic and protestant alike.

In early seventeenth century Ireland, a whole range of measures, bearing on the entire community, including catholics, came within the purview of the ecclesiastical legislation, administered in part by the church courts. Cases affecting recusants, specifically, included their presentment for non-attendance at church, and the charging of priests with exercising foreign jurisdiction. Contemporaries recognised the corruption involved in ecclesiastical administration.[102] In the localities, in addition to the church

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99. The poverty of the Irish in south Ulster arose in part from 'the oppressions of the court ecclesiastical, which in very truth my lord I cannot excuse, and do seeke to reform', Bishop Bedell to Archbishop Ussher, 1 Apr 1630, in W. Prynne, Hidden workes of darkenes (London, 1645), pp 101-2; the chancellor normally presided over the diocesan courts, and it was exceptional for the bishop to do so, Archbishop Ussher to Bishop Bedell, 23 Feb 1629-30, J. Ussher, Whole works, xv, pp 473-6.

100. Bishop Babington to Salisbury, 20 Jan 1611, PRO SP63/231/4.

101. During his short episcopate 1610-11, Babington was involved in the spoliation of the diocese. At the instigation of his wife and Wheeler, his servant, who married her after the bishop's death, the bishop demised 81 townlands to John Rowley, an agent of the Londoners, for a mere £65 p.a.; Rowley also acquired a grant of all the timber of the diocese; under Babington, the diocese's revenues decreased from £400 to less than £100 p.a., Hill, Plantation, p.420.

102. The 1622 commissioners recommended restraining ecclesiastical courts from imposing money fines, return of commissioners to privy council [June 1622], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 354-5; 'many [bishops] being so exorbitant that they have more need to be regulated in the exercising of their ordinary jurisdiction than to have any higher authority committed to them', archbishop of Armagh to bishop of London, 23 Dec 1631, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, p.638.

courts, people were subject to manor courts and sherrifs' courts; it happened that these courts were held on the same day, and individuals were fined for non-attendance at one court, while attending another.[103] The impact of church courts was particularly egregious in Kilmore diocese. In the late 1620s, under the chancellor, Alan Cooke, church court exactions there were so severe that a thousand people fled their homes in a year; given the ethnic balance, most of these were Ulster Irish. One of the Irish council held that this ecclesiastic had been more burdensome to the area even than providing maintenance for the army, a process which had ignited widespread discontent. An indication of popular dread of the chancellor's exactions was that the Irish considered them 'worse than their imaginary purgatory'.[104] Grasping ecclesiastics, exemplified by Cooke, contributed to the crippling poverty prevalent in Cavan at this time[105]; in Bedell's view, the extortionate nature of the courts led the Irish to despise the state church.[106] However, from the beginning the Church of Ireland had to compete with the catholic clergy in the area of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. It was an index of growing catholic confidence that by the late 1620s, in some areas prelates were able to enforce sanctions on those of their flock who had recourse to the courts of the established church. Thus in 1630, an Irishwoman took a case against her husband in the church court at Longford. The catholic vicar-general of Ardagh, John Gaffney, excommunicated her for doing so. She went to mass as usual on a Sunday thereafter, and the priest, Hubert in Calril, denounced her as one excommunicated, and had her put out of the church building.[107]

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[103]. Complaints from Loughinsholin barony, County Londonderry, 1623, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.448.

[104]. Cooke was questioned by Star Chamber (presumably Bedell is referring to the court of castle chamber, as this court was known in Ireland), but escaped conviction; '[a]mong the Irish he hath gotten the nick-name of 'Pouke'. And indeed they fear him like the fiend of hell', Bedell to bishop of London, 7 Aug 1630, PRO SP63/251/48 (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, pp 564-5).

[105]. The payments associated with the Graces imposed a terrible burden on local communities; 'the dead bury the dead, for he that burieth the dead this day lies in the field himself for want of food', petition of Cavan inhabitants to lord deputy and council, [July 1629], PRO SP63/249/19 III (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, p.468).

[106]. 'so long as the officers in our courts do prey upon the people, they account us [Church of Ireland clergy] no better than publicans', Bedell to bishop of London, 7 Aug 1630, PRO SP63/251/48.

[107]. Bishop Bedell to Archbishop Ussher, 15 Feb 1629-30, J. Ussher, Whole works, xv, pp 466-71; the priest may have been Hubert Ferall, dean of Ardagh, petition of clergy and laity of

From the early 1610s, the establishment of a wide-ranging system of state church maintenance across Ulster coincided with the emergence of separate catholic pastors and prelates. These were reliant for maintenance on the local catholic community, who henceforth had to support two ecclesiastical establishments. Catholic clergy, too, were exigent, and faced with competition for maintenance, they fostered resentment against the personnel of the state church.

In some localities, right from their arrival in Ulster, tensions existed between British clergy and the Irish inhabitants. In the early 1610s, Andrew Knox, bishop of Raphoe, brought seven Scottish clergy to his new diocese; because of local animosity, these were obliged to live in the bishop's household.[108] Presumably the ministers were Gaelic speakers, and as preachers had the potential to draw the Irish to the reformed faith. As such, they were viewed as a threat by those local clergy who were becoming recusant. Thus the catholic clergy may have incited the people against the newcomers, in contrast to the toleration shown to the conformist local clergy, many of whom survived down to the early 1620s, and who were probably seen as harmless cyphers.

One reason for native malevolence towards the state clergy was economic. The various church exactions included tithes, recusancy fines, fees associated with the rites of passage, and fines and fees arising from the church courts. Tensions over clerical exactions were particularly severe in Ulster in the Plantation era. The exceptional poverty of the Irish, still coping with the economic after-effects of war, accentuated native action against these levies. Protests took the form of attacks on the state clergy. Isolated episodes against ministers were not unknown in other areas. In County Westmeath, some time before 1622, one British clergyman had his houses upon his rectory 'burnt over his head by some malicious persons'[109]; no explanation was offered, but such attacks elsewhere were linked to clerical impositions.

In mid-Ulster in 1614-5 there was an Irish protest campaign against the personnel of the state church, apparently without parallel in the decades down to 1641. Despite the

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Ardagh, 20 Sept 1629, 'Scritture originali riferite nelle congregazioni generali', Propaganda Fide, Coll. Hib., 10, p.11.

[108]. King's direction for bishop of Raphoe, [1612], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.315.

[109]. Adam Anderson, minister, Meath diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, pp 110-1.

generous provision for the church under the Ulster Plantation, some prelates held that new exactions were due to the clergy there.[110] The ministers in the planted areas (mostly absentees, save some convert Irishmen) were demanding tithes on milk, an innovation, and a cause of particular fury, but an adaptation of tithe to the Ulster economy. This procedure was all the more resented by the Irish given that they had hitherto no experience of the English-style tithe system. Traditional structures of ecclesiastical maintenance had become attentuated from the 1590s, under the pressure of war. Tension between clergy and community in the 1610s arose in part from previous laxity, 'some [laity] labouring to reduce tithes and other personal duties to the rebellious and predatory times of Tyrone and others of that strain'.[111] Right from the start of the state church in the planted areas of Ulster, it was recognised that the clergy there were particularly rapacious: 'the ministers there are much to blame, for exacting their duties so strictly of such men, as never knew what it was to pay tithes, until within these few years'.[112]

In the collection of tithe on milk, the clergy, abetted by the undertakers, focused particularly on the native Irish. The ministers, wishing to maximise their income, farmed the tithes to tithe proctors. These were generally natives, 'certain kern, bailiffs-errant, and such like extortionate people'[113], who, as was customary, added to the oppression of the people by ensuring a profit for themselves. The poor, on whom this measure largely fell, were incensed, for milk was a staple part of their meagre diet.[114] In addition, many Irish of mid-Ulster, including some of the gentry, were imprisoned as a result of the efforts at extortion of the archbishop's officials. The severe winter of 1614-5, when up to 20% of Irish cattle were believed to have died because of snow and frost, added to existing social pressures.[115] The innovative nature of these exactions, the rapacity used in their collection, plus the animosity of the catholic clergy, sparked off a

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[110]. Under the Plantation, 75,000 acres were allotted to the Church of Ireland, N. Canny, Making Ireland British, p.209.

[111]. King to lords justice, 20 Jan 1631, PRONI DIO4/5/1, pp 190-1.

[112]. Francis Blundell to Sir Ralph Winwood, 23 Dec 1614, PRO SP63/232/58.

[113]. Chichester to privy council, 22 Mar 1615, M. Hickson, Ireland in the Seventeenth Century (London, 1884), ii, pp 324-6.

[114]. B. Rich, A new description of Ireland (London, 1610), p.25.

[115]. Sir Thomas Ridgeway to Sir Ralph Winwood, 7 Aug 1615, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.86.

wave of native protest. This tension was at its most acute in Counties Armagh and Tyrone, but occurred in the escheated areas of Ulster generally.

In 1614 and into 1615 this protest took several forms. In lower [south] Tyrone in mid-December 1614, an Irish minister, a former papist, was dragged from his house and murdered by his neighbours, allegedly stabbed 44 times; there was some speculation that this was due to his conversion, but the more probable reason was that he had been 'so severe in demanding of his tithes', and lived in a preponderantly Irish locality.[116] In the same area, another minister almost met a similar fate around this time.[117] In a further case, a minister's servant was killed while defending his master.[118] There were numerous other outrages against clergy and tithe collectors, such that clergy dared not travel unaccompanied. Up to one hundred and twenty men, engaged in these attacks, had taken to the hills by March 1615. Unsurprisingly, priests were also involved in this movement; the people were having to support both the state clergy, and their own priests, and so keen competition for scarce resources was emerging.

The Irish of mid-Ulster chose a delegation of two prominent gentry figures, Captain Tirlogh O'Neill of Tyrone, a leading loyalist, and Con McTurlough O'Neill of Armagh, to bring their complaint to the lord deputy, who received them. Chichester, sympathetic to the Irish on this issue, thereupon issued an order 'for observance of a milder temper hereafter in tithing'[119], and defended his position to the privy council, against the complaints of the Ulster prelates. Thus right from the beginning, tithes were a cause of intense animosity by the Ulster Irish against the nascent state church, an animosity which in this instance erupted into violence. Further, petty mulcting by ecclesiastical officials led to the imprisonment even of loyalists among the Irish, thus quickly alienating virtually all sections of native society against the state church.[120] The protest

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[116]. Francis Blundell to Sir Ralph Winwood, 23 Dec 1614, PRO SP63/232/58; this incident was probably the same as that reported by Chichester to the Privy Council, 22 Mar 1615, M. Hickson, Ireland in the Seventeenth Century , ii, pp 324-6 (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 22-4).

[117]. Sir Oliver St John to Sir Ralph Winwood, 17 Dec 1614, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-14, p.534 (PRO SP63/232/47, 48).

[118]. Chichester to privy council, 22 Mar 1615, M. Hickson, Ireland in the Seventeenth Century, ii, pp 324-6.

[119]. Chichester to privy council, 22 Mar 1615, M. Hickson, ibid.

[120]. Chichester to privy council, 22 Mar 1615, M. Hickson, ibid.; Capt Tirlagh O'Neill, a

movement of 1614-5 suggests that subsequent native attacks on state clergy, as in 1641-2, belonged to a tradition of resentment against the established church which reached back to the early days of the new ecclesiastical order in Ulster.

Another novelty for Ulster catholics was the recusancy fine. The strict imposition of these fines from the early 1610s in parts of Ulster further contributed to native grievance against the state church.[121] Ministers testified at the assizes that divers named parishioners were not attending church; those found guilty were fined or imprisoned. In 1614, one official noted, 'to endite so many in Ulster and Connacht and the remote parts of the kingdom seems as yet unreasonable, by cause they have few churches built and few ministers to supply them, the people rarely understanding English, and very few of the ministers that can speak Irish'.[122] Presentments for recusancy were largely successful in the Ulster assizes. This may be inferred from the relative absence of Ulster jurors in the indictments for not presenting recusants. The implication is that the largely protestant juries in Ulster regularly found those guilty who had been charged with recusancy.[123]

When implemented, anti-recusancy measures could be severe. The impact of recusancy presentments can be traced in the barony of Farney, County Monaghan, on the border with County Louth, in the early 1620s. There in Clogher diocese the minister presented in the archdeacon's court those of his parishioners whom he certified as recusants. This could be extremely onerous for the individual concerned - several were charged 20s each, a vast sum for most of the rural population. Relatively large numbers of the male adult population were affected - sixty-two in Magheracloone parish, and

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grandson of Turlough Luinneach, had fought for the crown against Tyrone, and was granted a total of 3,330 acres mostly in Dungannon barony, County Tyrone, one of the largest grants to natives under the Plantation, Hill, Plantation, pp 316-7; his new home, after transplantation, was at Caslane, in the woods of Brantry, P. O Conluain, 'Benburb and the Powerscourts', Duiche Neill, 1 no 2, p.46; Con McTyrlagh O Nealle was granted 360 acres as a native in County Armagh, one of the 7 largest native grants in that county, T. Moody, 'Ulster plantation papers', Anal. Hib., 8, p.217.

[121]. In 1612, James Dundas, bishop of Down, a Scot, was particularly zealous in implementing the recusancy fine, Jesuit annual letter 1612, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.61; Dundas was consecrated bishop in July 1612, but was dead before 29 Nov 1612, N.H.I., ix, p.401.

[122]. Sir Oliver St John to earl of Somerset, 28 Dec 1614, PRO SP63/232/60.

[123]. Only individual jurors in Counties Down, Cavan and Monaghan were found guilty of not presenting recusants, 'Entry book of orders or decrees of the court of castle chamber [1573-1620]', HMC Egmont, i part 1, pp 40-55.

forty-two in neighbouring Donamaine parish, in one year. It was more common however for a parishioner to bribe the minister or church official not to be presented: Brian O Gallcoll, archdeacon's officer, used to charge 12d for this concession. Felix Cran, the minister in Donamaine, made an arrangement with forty of his parishioners, whereby they paid him a total of £12, to avoid being presented for two years. However, having taken the money, the minister then presented five men, which cost them a total of £7 extra. As a result, in an example of migration due to ecclesiastical charges, at least thirty men fled from the area out of fear of being presented.[124]

Under the 1560 act, provision was made to distribute the recusants' fines among the conforming poor of the parish. However, in 1617 fines from the whole kingdom were granted to the archbishop of Armagh, for pious purposes, in his capacity as the king's almoner in Ireland.[125] By arrangement with the primate, the fines were used to contribute to the cost of repairing and building churches in Ulster. As was the case generally with ecclesiastical dues, the recusants' fines were farmed out to enterprising laymen in the localities, who clearly profited from this engagement. Thus in Derry diocese, Oliver Nugent ('an obstinate recusant') had acquired these fines in two parishes, and was involved in repairing one of the parish churches.[126] For the Palesman, the fines were a natural corollary to his broader involvement in the nascent Londonderry plantation.[127] For the repair of the church in Maghera, the fines from the parish itself were granted, for a limited time.[128] The cathedral churches at Kilmore and Dromore, together with the new church on Grandison's proportion in north Armagh, were also built or repaired with help from the recusants' fines.[129] It is possible that the rebuilding

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[124]. Grievances of the inhabitants of Donnamaine [1622], NLI Ms 8014 (x).

[125]. 'Certificates concerning the church government in Ireland', 1622 Survey, BL Add Ms 4756, fol.23r; Acta Regia Hibernica, 7 Aug 1617, NAI, RC2/6, pp 1-7.

[126]. Derry diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, pp 199-200.

[127]. From the early 1610s Nugent was tenant to John Rowley, agent of the Irish Society, and was exploiting some of the richest resources of the area, namely, the woods of Loughinsholin and the fishings of the Bann and Foyle, Moody, Londonderry plantation, pp 113, 147, 151, 173.

[128]. 1622 Survey, BL Add Ms 4756, fol. 23r; Armagh diocese, 1622 Survey, Tandragee parish, TCD Ms 550, pp 28-9; Camus, Aghadowy, Maghera, Derry diocese, TCD Ms 550, pp 199-201; the £1500 given to Lord Balfour for the erection of the church at Aghenlurker, County Fermanagh, in the 1620s may well have come from the recusants' fines, A. Boswell (ed.), Brief memorial of the life and death of Dr James Spottiswood (Edinburgh, 1811), p.16.

[129]. TCD Ms 550, pp 28-9 (Tandragee, County Armagh), 142-3 (Kilmore), and 1622

of churches across Counties Armagh and Tyrone, underway by 1622, was financed in part in this way.

Yet even in protestant-dominated Ulster, and in a period of intense civil pressure against catholicism, a gap existed between the letter of the law, and its quite variable implementation. Measures taken against catholic ecclesiastics for holding church courts, in some localities at least, were largely ineffective.[130] The implementation of decrees, including writs of excommunication, fell to the sheriffs and their agents. However, while sheriffs were generally protestant, the sub-sheriffs, who actually executed the various orders, were often recusant; this was also the case, at least occasionally, in Ulster.[131] Even in the case of sheriffs, local pressures could tend to vitiate anti-catholic measures, exemplified in the Londoners' policy of tolerating, if not favouring, catholicism on their plantation.[132]

By the early 1620s, anti-catholic legislation, in some Ulster localities, was of limited effect. This was illustrated by the attempt of the bishop of Derry to remove priests, according to the various proclamations for the exiling of catholic clergy. The prelate noted bitterly the lack of support from the civil and military authorities, when the priests' identity and location were known to all. The 'military men' - presumably the provost-marshals - would not help. However it was the attitude of the civil authorities which particularly discouraged the bishop. When he managed to have priests apprehended, convicted and imprisoned, these were soon set at liberty, as a result of bribes to the gaolers.[133]

Visitation, TCD Ms 2629, fol. 1 (Dromore).

[130]. In County Antrim, in the mid-1620s, the writ of praemunire against the priest Brian McTeig did not prevent him continuing to hold a church court, 12 Apr 1627, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.297.

[131]. In County Cavan, in 1632, it was held that protestants were unfairly treated in providing maintenance for soldiers, because the order was implemented by the sub-sheriff, an Irish recusant, petition of protestant inhabitants of County Cavan [1632], W. Prynne, Hidden works of darkness , p.110.

[132]. See chapter four.

[133]. Derry diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550, p.206; similarly, in Kilmore diocese, the state bishop could name the leading priests of the catholic diocese, Kilmore diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550, pp 142-3.

Another procedure was equally fruitless, due to the non-cooperation of local officials charged with implementation. Having excommunicated the individuals concerned (in this case, the priests), the bishop would then procure the writ 'De excommunicato capiendo', whereby the sheriff was to apprehend and imprison the persons named. However none of the sheriffs in the counties comprising the diocese - Donegal, Tyrone, and Londonderry - would arrest the priests so named.[134] Thus despite legislation against catholic clergy, the Derry evidence suggests that even in the early 1620s the priests were relatively undisturbed. Further, more generally, it indicates that the protection of its priests was a priority with the catholic community, and resources could be found to bribe officials accordingly. This trend presumably held throughout Ireland.[135] In the Ulster localities, against the letter of the law, accomodations were being reached between the catholic community and local officials from an early stage of the reformation process.

In Ulster, as elsewhere, implementation was further limited in practice by the varied levels of control exercised by landlords. In an area where the landlord was an absentee, as in the case of the earl of Essex's estates in Monaghan, ecclesiastical jursidiction could be exercised without restraint. By contrast, a determined, resident landlord could protect the tenants from such pressure. Thus in County Longford in the late 1620s, local landlords were writing to the ministers, demanding that their tenants be freed from exactions on the occasion of christenings, marriages or funerals.[136] Landlord exclusion of church jurisdiction was particularly striking in south Down. There, in the deanery of Mourne, the local magnate, Mrs Bagnall, was able to prohibit the exercise of ecclesiastical jurisdiction within her lordship, claiming that this belonged to her by patent. This jurisdiction she exercised by giving commissions 'to several persons to keep several spiritual courts whereof some of them were laymen'.[137] Such independence had

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[134]. Derry diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, p.206.

[135]. Toleration for priests in Donegal, Robert Cartwright to Lord Deputy Falkland, 28 Jan 1626, BL Sloane Ms 3827, ff 62-3, printed in R. Hunter, 'The settler population of an Ulster plantation county', Donegal Annual, 10 no 2, pp 150-2.

[136]. The landlords included Mr Nugent of Granard, whom Bedell believed was a nephew to the earl of Westmeath, and two or three Farrells, Bishop Bedell to Archbishop Ussher, 15 Feb 1629-30, J. Ussher, Whole works, xv, pp 466-71.

[137]. Down and Connor diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550, p.244; in this, the Bagnalls were claiming the ecclesiastical rights and exemptions previously enjoyed by the Cistercians, for their estate was

an impact on ecclesiastical jurisdiction elsewhere in the diocese, for 'several persons have fled from the censure of the bishop's spiritual court ... and there they had immunity and escaped deserved censures because the apparitors [officials] would not nor durst not cite any person in those bounds'.[138]

In this struggle, Mrs Bagnall had the upper hand over successive bishops; one bishop had to send soldiers to try and collect his tithes; the tithe farmers were imprisoned in Newry, and forced to hand over the produce. This prelate's successor took a case at the assizes, and won an order in his favour, but the sheriff, being resident in Newry, and a tenant to Mrs Bagnall, would not execute the order.[139] The exclusion of diocesan jurisdiction was in line with the policy of landlords to keep all external authority out of their territories. In this way their lands were made more attractive to potential tenants, thereby increasing their value, at a time when tenants were in short supply.[140] Conflict between bishop and landlord was probably of benefit to the catholic community. As the Bagnall estate demonstrated, tithes still had to be paid, and ecclesiastical courts continued. However recusants were not being presented. People were fleeing to the Bagnall lordship from ecclesiastical censure elsewhere, indicating that church legislation, including measures affecting recusants, was not implemented in full vigour there. Indeed, the Bagnall estates in south Down were largely devoid of clergy, whether state church or catholic.[141]

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based on the lands of the former Cistercian abbey of Newry, R. Gillespie, Colonial Ulster: The settlement of east Ulster 1600-1641 (Cork, 1985), pp 91-2.

[138]. Down and Connor diocese, 1622 Survey, ibid.; the policy of excluding ecclesiastical jurisdiction continued in the 1630s: '[h]e has taken the ecclesiastical jurisdiction out of the hands of the clergy in six large parishes, in the baronies of Mourne and Newry, and has given it to an unworthy layman who gives divorces for 40s', Mr Bagnall's encroachment on the Church of Ireland, [4 Feb] 1632, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, p.644.

[139]. Down and Connor, 1622, TCD Ms 550, pp 241, 244; the four churches in the area were ruined, and Bagnall control of the church was strengthened by taking all tithes, 'pretending a lease from one Campion long since deprived for non-residence', ibid., p.243.

[140]. R. Gillespie, Colonial Ulster, chapter v, 'Central government and local interests', pp 84-112.

[141]. There was only one curate in the whole barony of Mourne, and the Bagnalls kept no curate at Newry, Mr Bagnall's encroachment on the Church of Ireland, [4 Feb] 1632, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, p.644; down to the early 1630s, there was no catholic pastor on the Bagnall lands, M. Hartry, Triumphalia Sanctae Crucis [1639], ed. D. Murphy (Dublin, 1891), p.279.

Thus by the early 1620s, in various Ulster localities measures against catholic clergy were largely circumvented, and anti-recusant measures were not being implemented uniformly. Nevertheless priests and those harbouring them lived under the threat of more rigorous implementation of existing coercive measures. Informers, who denounced catholic clergy to the authorities, were a threat.[142] More pervasively, the catholic community suffered a considerable financial burden under the exactions of the state church. These included tithes, compounding with ministers for services performed by catholic priests, and cases coming before the church courts, especially recusants' fines and marriage cases. In addition to tithes, the regular church exactions included Easter offerings and a contribution to the parish clerk's wages, fees to both minister and parish clerk for christenings, churching of women, marriages and burials, together with mortuaries on the goods of the deceased. Efforts to regulate church fees in Ulster from the early 1620s indicate that in fact the amounts charged were arbitrary.[143]

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In Ulster and the Gaelic midlands in the 1610s, the catholic community was adjusting to living within parallel systems of pastoral provision. For local clergy, it was a time of denominational flux. As the reformation spread to the localities, initially a proportion of the existing clergy were absorbed within the state church. Some were subsequently recognised once more as catholic priests by the competent authority, either vicars apostolic, or tridentine clergy, such as the Franciscan missioners in Ulster in 1613.[144]. People wanted christenings, marriages and funerals, and looked to their local clergy to perform these rites. Down to the 1610s, it appears that whether traditionalist local clergy had conformed to the state church, or had refused to do so, was not an issue of importance to the people they served. These clergy were of the people, they spoke the language, and the change in confession was not noticeable. However in the 1610s the

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[142]. Informers were to be ejected from the celebration of the sacraments, Statutes of province of Tuam, 1631, L. Renehan, Collections on Irish church history, i (Dublin, 1861), p.494; given the cultural and social affinity between Ulster and Connacht it was quite probable that issues covered in the Tuam statutes were prevalent also in the northern province.

[143]. 'The tything table of Ulster', PRONI DIO4/5/1, pp 190-1 (order of primate for payment of tithes etc, made 1629, 16 Jan 1630, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, p.507).

[144]. See chapter three.

distinction between state clergy and recusant clergy was growing. The advent of British clergy marked a cultural break with the past. The preaching of counter-reformation missioners, especially the increasing numbers of Franciscans, was spreading a growing awareness among the people of the incompatibility of the two sets of clergy. However, even in catholic theory, baptisms and marriages celebrated by the state church were valid - 'they acknowledge these to be lawful and true'.[145] In north Leinster down to 1619, people who had been married by priests were going to the ministers for the baptism of their children.[146] Their reason for doing so may have been to avoid paying a fee both to the priest and to the minister. This trend may have been receding in the Old English areas, under pressure from tridentine clergy, such as the Jesuit missioners. However, it survived into the 1630s in east Ulster, where tridentine clergy were fewer and protestant influence greater.[147]

The state church's understanding was that its clergy held a monopoly on these rites of passage, and hence a composition had to be paid to them for each service performed by the catholic priests. By the early 1620s, enforcement was widespread. Ecclesiastical courts were taking place sometimes twice a year; in one session, up to 200 people were presented, largely for burials, christenings, and marriages at which priests officiated. It was possible to make a composition of £3 in each instance, to the benefit of court officials.[148] Thus as in the Old English areas, from the 1610s in Ulster, too, the people were having to pay both catholic and state clergy for the same service. There was widespread resentment at fees to state clergy for baptisms, marriages and funerals, where priests performed the rites, adding to the unpopularity of the new church order. These charges were especially burdensome in the late 1620s, as local communities were liable for the payments associated with the Graces.[149] State clergy demands for

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[145]. Bishop Bedell to Archbishop Ussher, 15 Feb 1629-30, J. Ussher, Whole works, xv, p.470.

[146]. Jesuit annual letter 1619, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.156.

[147]. See chapter four.

[148]. G. O'Brien (ed.), Advertisements for Ireland (Dublin, 1923), p.54; state bishops taking fines for baptisms and marriages by priests, letter from Dublin, 8 Mar 1623, Moran, Catholic archbishops, pp 304-6.

[149]. It was requested that the clergy 'do not proceed with the great burden and charge they do lay upon the poor people for clandestine marriages, christenings and burials etc', recusants' petition to lords justice, 22 Nov 1630, W. Prynne, Hidden workes of darkenes , pp 102-3.

compounding for pastoral services rendered by priests were all the more insistent given the poor maintenance of most ministers. Often, state clergy were dependent on these fees for their livelihood, when no other provision was made for them by patron or incumbent. Generally the patron or rector received the great tithes, while the vicar made do with the altarages or lesser tithes. However in practice there were many variants, and often the vicar received much less. Significantly, in Clogher diocese the rector or patron was taking two parts of the tithes, with merely one third for the incumbent; in this way the ministers, not to mention the even more poorly paid curates, had to rely on the fees for pastoral services for their maintenance.[150]. This situation was doubtless common across the northern ecclesiastical province. Evidence comes from the Gaelic territories of the south-west midlands, on the borders of the dioceses of Meath and Clonfert, for the 1600s and 1610s. In 1616-17 the bishops there were attacking the practice of compounding, and were extracting heavy fines for the pastoral services by the papist clergy over the previous decade.[151]

In other areas, where most traditionalist clergy had become absorbed into the state church, and tridentine clergy were lacking, the Irish were availing of the pastoral services of the established church. This situation prevailed in south-east Monaghan down to the early 1620s.[152] The reports from the northern dioceses in 1622 suggest that hardly any Irish were attending the regular Sunday services of the state church. Indeed, in many localities devoid of British settlers these services simply did not take place. By contrast, people wanted christening for their children, and a christian burial for their dead, and, perhaps to a lesser extent, a church marriage; for these they turned to the only clergy readily available to them, their local minister; they were prepared to sacrifice

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[150]. 'Bishop Montgomery's survey [1607]', in A. Alexander (ed.), 'O'Kane Papers', Anal. Hib., 12, p. 104; Clogher diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, pp 184-7; Farney complaints, 1622, NLI Ms 8014 (x); in a small living in County Louth the appropriator had 'all tithes small and great', while the curate had 'only Easter offerings and personal duties of marriages christenings and burials', Armagh diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550, pp 44-5; in Clonmacnoise in 1622 the minister had to survive on the funeral offerings of the people, Meath diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550, pp 128-9.

[151]. De Renzy to Lord Deputy St John, c.1617, B. Mac Cuarta (ed.), 'Matthew De Renzy's letters on Irish affairs, 1613-20', Anal. Hib., 34, p.131.

[152]. 'Grievances of tenants and inhabitants [of] earl of Essex in Farny to be preferred to his majesty's commissioners in Ireland [1622]', NLI Ms 8014 (x).

much to have these rites.[153] Such pastoral practice was a survival from the earlier phase of minimal change in local church life. This situation may initially have been quite widespread, but quickly changed as British ministers increased in number and as the tridentine campaign of strict confessionalisation got underway.

Church structures with their attendant fees and fines were, however, merely part of a broader process of extortion, which, as complainants to the 1622 commissioners noted, bore heaviest on the poorer people. In the absence of a strong resident landlord, who would protect the tenants from various exactions, ecclesiastical dues were merely one set among a whole series of impositions which, collected with rapacity, threatened the poor with destitution. As was customary in early modern Europe, the patentees or, in the case of church charges, the ministers, generally farmed out the collection of such exactions to others. Thus it was often locals who took these contributions from their neighbours, enriching themselves in the process. The tenants of an absentee landlord lacked the protection needed to avoid these exactions. The grievances of the earl of Essex's tenants in Farney barony, County Monaghan, in 1622, locate ecclesiastical impositions within this broader context of extortion.[154]

Annual fines were imposed in Ulster (including Farney) for using short ploughs.[155] In Farney, arbitrary amounts could be exacted for the same charge - from five shillings in 1620 to the 13s 4d taken by the soldiers in 1622. Ancillary charges added to the burden. As well as paying 11s 6d for the fine, Donell McGarvie had to give overnight

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153. For a christening in 1621, Catherine Ny Maghan in Magheracloone parish, County Monaghan, paid 1s 8d to the agents of the minister, together with 5s to the dean's officer; given that it was usually the father who paid these fees, Catherine may have been unmarried, or her husband may have died, Farney grievances, NLI Ms 8014 (x).

154. Ministers, clerks, provost-marshalls' men and other officers 'daily oppress and extort upon your suppliants', 'Humble petition of ... inhabitants of Farny', Rich Mss, NLI Ns 8014 (x); the Essex estates were freed of cess by letters patent, but in the years after 1603, Sir Edward Blayney, governor of Monaghan, was levying beeves and provisions on the Essex tenants, adding to their impoverishment, privy council to lord deputy and council, 28 Feb 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.123; lord deputy and council to privy council, 3 June 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, pp 161-4; Ever M'Collo McMahon was the chief tenant to the earl of Essex for the whole barony, 'wherein he [Ever] hath so good a pennyworth as he is grown since the wars to be of greater wealth than all the rest of his name besides', Davies to Salisbury, 1607, in Morley (ed.), p.358.

155. Order by lord deputy against use of short ploughs in Ulster, 'Answer of lord deputy and privy council to petition of recusant lords et al in Ireland', Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, pp 417-8; in 1612, 10s per plough was levied in Ulster, amounting to £870, commission to examine abuses in parliament and country, 12 Nov 1613, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.448.

accomodation and meat and drink to the two collectors, 'together with half a barrell of oats and two fat hens which they carried with them'. Edd O Connolly paid 10s 6d for plough money, and the collectors took a mantle valued at 6s in lieu of their dinner, for 'they would not take of him such meat as he had'. In these cases of additional exaction the collectors were soldiers of Lord Blayny's company, of settler background.[156] It is within this context of arbitrary amounts and ancillary costs that the impact of ecclesiastical charges must be viewed; both clerical charges and the plough fines were regarded as particularly oppressive by the inhabitants, and were often combined in their grievances.

The Essex estate was comprised of three parishes in Farney barony, in south-east Monaghan, bordering on Counties Louth and Meath. In 1622, the livings of the three parishes - Magheracloone, Dunamaine, and Kilanny - were poor: two were worth £12 p.a., and one was worth £20. As was customary in Clogher diocese, two parts of all tithes were being taken by the impropriators, leaving very little for the incumbents, much less the curates.[157] Hence the clergy were keen to maximise what they could take from the people. Church exactions were particularly harsh in Farney. Parishioners were fleeing the jurisdiction of Clogher diocese to avoid the ministers' charges, and the fines for short ploughs.[158] Presentments for recusancy also triggered migration. From one parish, more than 30 fled for this reason.[159] People were fleeing to the neighbouring counties of Louth and Meath, in the dioceses of Armagh and Meath, respectively, suggesting that the regime in Clogher diocese was exceptionally severe. As bishop of Clogher in the years 1605-21, immediately preceding the 1622 Commission, George Montgomery was particularly diligent and energetic in collecting church revenues. Montgomery may have influenced local incumbents accordingly, by exerting pressure on them to meet their contributions to the bishop. The local landlord, the earl of Essex, was an absentee, and so was relatively weak vis-a-vis other authorities in the locality, including the church, thus allowing clergy relatively unfettered powers of exaction over

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156. 'Grievances of tenants and inhabitants ... in Farny', [1622], NLI Ms 8014 (x).

157. The Farney parishes were among the five originally appropriate to the abbies of Louth and St John; in 1622, the impropriators were viscount Moore and Ambrose Aphugh, see Clogher diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, pp 184-7.

158. 'Grievances of tenants and inhabitants ... in Farny' [1622], NLI Ms 8014 (x).

159. 'The grievances of the inhabitants of Donamaine, in Farny', [1622], NLI Ms 8014 (x).

his tenants. What was exceptional in Farney was the degree to which the church officers could demand exactions, for the exactions themselves were widespread. In these years the inhabitants were almost entirely Irish, as were the clergy, together with their agents.

Anger was focused in particular on the local men appointed to collect tithes and charges for pastoral services. Given the hereditary nature of roles within Gaelic society, these agents may have belonged to families with a tradition of service to the church; in collecting dues for the state clergy, they may have been simply continuing their previous function under the pre-reformation church order. The parish clerk collected what the parishioners owed the minister. In addition, the dean of Clogher, too, had a local agent who was active in one of the three parishes. In Donamaine parish the archdeacon's officer was also collecting for christenings and in lieu of presentment in the archdeacon's court. For every christening, marriage and burial, the people had to pay both minister and clerk. In general, the parish clerk was appointed by the minister, but tension could arise over the appointment between the minister and the local notable - in Magheracloone parish one clerk, a settler, was appointed by warrant from Lord Blaney, a powerful local notable, based in Castleblayney, while the minister appointed a local native. Hence the inhabitants had to pay the customary charges to both clerks, instead of to one.[160]

When tithes were taken in kind, if people disputed the clerks' choice, they were liable to be indicted before the dean's court, or the consistory court. Agents were high-handed and arbitrary, demanding cash instead of the customary tithes in kind. They refused to take the tithe wool from Mellaghlen O Hoy, 'but took his garran out of the plough and kept the plough idle a whole day until they had their will in money for the said tithe wool', and similarly with the tithe in turf. In Donamaine parish the minister's agents (among whom was his son) refused to take the tithe lamb (one out of seven owned by a parishioner) and demanded 8d instead. In the same parish the agent took a caddow [cloth] valued at 6s 8d for a sum of 6d owed to him. Residents of adjoining parishes were charged by the agents of a parish not their own. In Kilanny parish, a poor cottier, Teige O Dononny, who lived by labouring for 2d per day (when such work was

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[160]. Clerks took between 4d and 6d on fees, and on tithes, in Magheracloone parish, they took 'for every plough, nine sheaves of corn, and for every churning, a hand of butter', 'Abuses committed by ministers and their clerks', NLI Ms 8014 (x).

available), was charged 6d yearly for tithe turf and hay, he having neither commodity.[161] Tithes in Magheracloone parish included cash payments on cows as well as on sheep and goats, and from every tradesman (12d, whether he was working or not), and in lieu of wood, turf and hay. In Donnamoyne parish the agents used to take a hog for tithe, and subsequently the parishioner would have to pay 10s under this heading.[162]

According to the Farney inhabitants, Felix Cran, vicar of Donamaine parish, was particularly rapacious, a view shared by the 1622 commissioners, for they intended to call him before the commission; he himself, together with his son, was actively involved in collecting tithes. Cran exemplified how parishioners could be financially abused by a minister. He presented for recusancy individuals who lived outside his parish. He sometimes took the customary fee for a christening, and then refused to perform the rite. Occasionally, poor parishioners had to pay several clergy for the one service. An extreme case was that of Edd O Hoy, not worth 20s, who in March 1622 paid vicar McDonnell of Carrickmacross - a converted catholic priest - and his clerk, 2s 6d each for a christening; in addition he paid 12d to Brian O Gallcoll, officer of the archdeacon, for the christening and for not presenting him in the archdeacon's court, presumably for recusancy.[163]

Charges on the occasion of death, known as mortuaries, were particularly vexatious - in origin they were in lieu of tithes which the deceased may have failed to pay during life.[164] These were among a whole series of customary duties in Ulster, which gave rise to much complaint to the 1622 commissioners.[165] In Magheraclone parish, if a wife

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[161]. 'Grievances of the inhabitants of Donnamaine, in Farny', NLI Ms 8014 (x).

[162]. Clergy bringing tithe disputes to dean's court, 'Abuses committed by ministers and their clerks', NLI Ms 8014 (x).

[163]. Cran was also charging excessively for christenings, ranging from 11s to 17s 6d; he also once charged 15s for a wedding; Donamaine parish grievances, 'Grievances of the tenants ... in Farney', NLI Ms 8014 (x); vicar McDonnell, Clogher diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, pp 186-7.

[164]. In late medieval Ireland, this charge bore most heavily on the poor, H. Jefferies, Priests and prelates of Armagh (Dublin, 1997), p.31; a measure against ministers' unjust exactions for mortuaries was among the proposed legislation for the forthcoming parliament, 'Acts in next parliament', [1611] Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.191; king to lord deputy, 17 Oct 1615, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.94; in 1607 death duties reserved to the bishop were levied at one fifth of property in Derry, and one third in Rapho; they were not fixed in Clogher, 'Bishop Montgomery's survey', loc. cit., pp 101, 103-4.

[165]. These included 'a mortuary of goods after the death of a t[ene] covert Temmne hangst of

died, the parson and minister took a cow from the husband, and all the cloth which had been acquired to make the wife's clothes. Thus on 8 May 1622 the parish clerk, Patrick Birne, and others, took a milch cow from Taadie McGallaghie because his wife died. Dumnagh Mc Conill, of Killany parish, died in 1621, owning three cows. The minister's agents - three members of the O'Birne family - left him unburied in the church until they got one of the three cows. A fortnight later Dumnagh's wife died. The agents demanded 10s in lieu of the cow they claimed was due to the clergy. In general, for the burial of a person with goods the clergy charged 4s 6d. Beggars were not exempt. The Farney clergy would not allow beggars to be buried unless they got 2s 6d, usually from the householder in whose dwelling the poor person died. About 1619, Flanagan, the minister of Killany parish, refused burial of a penniless woman, Evelin FitzSimons, until it was agreed that he be paid 3s by the men of the area; in 1622 he was still harrying the householder, where she died, for the money.[166] This clerical exaction on the death of beggars was widespread in the 1630s; it was reported that some poor householders were closing their doors to dying vagrants, lest the 'dead money' be rigidly extorted.[167]

The death of newborn infants could be particularly onerous; for death, and so burial, followed very soon after christening, and the parents were liable for both charges at the same time. In Kilanny parish, as well as the local minister, the dean's officer also took an exaction in this situation (perhaps because the official may have lived locally). In 1620, the child of Patrick McMaghon of Killrick was christened and buried within two days - for these services the father paid 5s to the agents of the minister, and 2s 8d to the dean's officer. In Farney, clerical exactions for burials were so onerous that the inhabitants were carrying their dying relatives into adjacent areas of Louth and

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2s or 2 sheep as a legacy for the soule [;] St Patrick's ridges: Proportions of meat and flesh at marriages and burials, Mary gallons, [and] Trade moneys', 'Certificates concerning the church government in Ireland', 1622 Survey, BL Add Ms 4756, fol.22r; 'Mary gallons' refer to 'a gallon ale from every brewing', K. Nicholls, 'A calendar of salved chancery pleadings concerning County Louth', Louth Arch. Soc. Jn., 17 no 4, p.257; in view of the adequate provision for the church in Ulster, the commissioners recommended that these exactions be abolished, 'Answer to the Postiles', Church, no 7, NLI Ms 8014 (i).

166. Exactions of parsons and ministers, Kilanny parish, NLI Ms 8014 (x).

167. J. Lynch, Cambrensis eversus, ed. M. Kelly (3 vols, Dublin, 1851-2), iii, p.123; Lynch was drawing on his pastoral experience in Tuam diocese in the 1620s and 1630s.

Meath.[168] The desire to avoid the exactions of ministers and clerks more generally, and the short plough fines, also led to migration. The situation in Farney in the early 1620s, while severe, was not exceptional. Such movement in response to the pressure of clerical exactions was occurring elsewhere in Ulster.[169]

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During the 1610s - its first decade of effective presence in the Ulster localities - the state church impacted on the northern Irish in a number of ways. Most dramatically, its introduction was accompanied in some places by a continuation of the iconoclasm prevalent towards the end of the Nine Years War. Across Ulster, the break in ecclesiastical life was also represented by the dismissal of non-compliant local clergy. Apart from intermarriage with British settlers, and the conversion of a few surviving landed families, chiefly in east Ulster, the church won few native adherents. Exceptionally, some members of traditional clerical and learned families, and some of the tiny number of Ulster youths educated at TCD, became lowly reading ministers or curates in Irish localities. While this native strand within the ministry may have formed a significant proportion in 1610, the influx of British ministers as the plantation developed quickly rendered the Irish redundant. In areas where the traditionalist but conformist ministers were the only clergy, the local community looked to these men to officiate at baptisms, marriages, and funerals. In Ulster the native strand within the ministry was on the wane by the early 1620s. The erosion of the Ulster Irish within the state church was further reflected in the transformation of the Armagh coarb families. From independent freeholders under the Gaelic dispensation, they had become leaseholders of the archbishop by 1615, and soon thereafter they were losing that status as British settlers were replacing them as leaseholders. This marginalisation illustrated

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[168]. 'Connor McEnrievie of Carrickneyrone was driven to carry his father Patrick McEnrievie being sick and like to die in April 1622 unto Meath that he might die there for fear of the minister's exactions and died and was buried there', Kilanny parish, 'Exactions of parsons and ministers', NLI Ms 8014 (x); there was a similar case in Magheracloone parish.

[169]. A total of eight men fled from Kilanny and Magheracloone parishes, Kilanny parish grievances, 'Grievances of the tenants ...in Farny'; Dromore 1622, TCD Ms 550, pp 241, 244; in Tyrone, tenants were leaving one parish because of 'excess charges' imposed for church building, 'Petition of parishioners of Donoghenry [1622]', NLI Ms 8014 (i); migration into Bagnall lordship, County Down, and from Kilmore diocese, discussed above.

the lack of interest the church evinced in the conversion of the Irish, and their option for an English-speaking ministry to the planter population.

A more pervasive point of contact with native society was the social and economic impact of the exactions and jurisdiction of the state church on an impoverished population. These led to social tensions from the beginning, as in the attacks on church personnel in mid-Ulster in 1614-15. Wide variations in clerical exactions were prevalent. The social pressure arising from state church impositions was compounded by the need to maintain a separate and increasingly numerous catholic clergy. Native resentment was exacerbated by the anti-protestant polemic of the catholic preachers. Thus Irish animosity towards the established clergy, so much a feature of Ulster in 1641-2, was of long gestation.

Anti-recusant measures, and the burden of maintaining the state church, were not uniform in Irish communities across the north. An uneven, mosaic pattern prevailed. Local circumstances served to moderate the church's impact on these communities. At one extreme, in Donegal in the early 1620s, parishioners were unwilling to pay for the rebuilding of the churches; because of their nomadic pastoral lifestyle, the ministers were unable to collect tithes on cattle; in Raphoe diocese as a whole, the people refused to contribute to the maintenance of the parish clerks.[170] Because of the poverty of Donegal, the resources were simply not there for the state church to exploit. In Derry diocese, the Londoners' desire to maximise rents by retaining Irish tenants as much as possible contributed to their tolerant attitude towards catholicism. Catholicism in Derry diocese was protected and furthered by Scots catholic undertakers, the Hamiltons, in Strabane.[171] More generally, strong landlords, catholic or protestant, could limit the ability of church officials to burden their tenants, thereby attracting migrants from other areas. However, where tenants were less protected, church impositions could be more ruthlessly exacted. The Farney grievances provide a detailed vignette of this dynamic. Complaints touching clerical exactions in this one Ulster locality provide evidence of arbitrariness and rapacity in their collection by proctors and clergy, pressures so great that they caused migration out of the area affected. The Farney clerical exactions may

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[170]. Raphoe diocese, 1622 Survey, TCD Ms 550, pp 226-8.

[171]. See chapter four.

have been exceptional in degree, but not in kind. Thus generalisations about the impact of ecclesiastical exactions on the catholic population in Ulster, as elsewhere in Ireland, can be misleading.

Similarly, measures taken at national level against catholic clergy were subject to local variation in their implementation. Sheriffs were protestant, but their subordinates, who implemented measures, were often catholic, thus vitiating efforts to detain priests. Bishop Downham's frustrating efforts to enforce the law against priests in Derry diocese demonstrated the limits of religious coercion. There, the Londoners' desire to maximise rents, together with the protection afforded by the catholic Hamiltons, combined to weaken moves against the priests. By the early 1620s, Irish loyalty towards their priests, together with official leniency towards catholicism, led to local accomodations between catholic community and officialdom. The celebrated iconoclasm of Bishops Knox and Babington in 1611 belonged to an earlier, more belligerent and short-lived phase of confessional relations. The Derry evidence suggests that as early as 1620, a de facto toleration of catholic clergy had emerged, even in the planted province of Ulster. Protestant failure with the Ulster Irish was also a reflection of catholic success; to the catholic counter-attack in Ulster in the 1610s we now must turn.

CHAPTER THREE

CATHOLIC RENEWAL IN PLANTATION ULSTER, 1609-c.1620

The allegiance given by local pastors in Ulster to the emerging new ecclesiastical order, in the years after 1603, indicated the risks for catholicism in the post-war situation. The absorbtion of many of the existing clerics into the state church was characteristic of the first stage of the reformation in the northern dioceses.[1] Ulster catholicism was in crisis in the spring and summer of 1611, as the state bishops in mid- and west Ulster were enforcing conformity on the clergy. This development in the north was a cause for alarm in catholic circles. By the early 1610s, clerical adherence to the newly-introduced state church galvanised a catholic response. Thus in autumn 1611, the vicar-general of Armagh sent an anguished message south to Christopher Hollywood, superior of the Jesuit mission in Ireland, to the effect that the newly-installed state bishops were turning out of their livings those priests who refused to conform; the prelate was asking for help.[2] Tridentine ecclesiastics led the ensuing renewal of catholicism. Although traces of catholic reform may be discerned from the Nine Years War, it began in earnest in 1609. David Rothe was appointed Primate Lombard's delegate in Ireland, and quickly the strengthening of catholicism in Ulster became one of his major concerns. Shortly thereafter, the first teams of Ulster Franciscans arrived from Louvain; and a few Jesuits were also working in the north in those early years of the Plantation. However, the innovative responses of these relatively few tridentine figures must be seen in the context of the pastoral norm: the

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[1]. See chapter 2.

[2]. [Christopher Hollywood SJ] to Richard Conway SJ, 4 Nov 1611, W. M'D., 'Irish colleges since the reformation', I.E.R., 10 (1873), pp 290-7.

widespread survival of traditionalist clergy in the parishes, a proportion of whom were under the aegis of the state church. In seeking to make the northern province's catholicism strong against the protestant threat, the tridentine defenders of catholic Ulster were struggling to change a traditionalist religion; they were attempting to bring marriage jurisdiction, and the practice of clerical celibacy, in line with the more rigorous standards of Trent. In this they had very limited success. More successful was the goal of maintaining clergy and laity loyal to Rome.

In this chapter it is proposed to assess the nature and extent of catholic re-organisation in the Plantation era. The main focus will be on the clerical agents of catholic reform. Ulster poverty - relative to Leinster and Munster - limited the numbers of continentally-educated clergy which the northern province could support. Nevertheless, under David Rothe, vice-primate from 1609 until Archbishop Lombard's death in 1625, the survival of catholicism was ensured by the appointment of continentally-trained clergy as vicars-general in a number of northern dioceses. These men were the product of Ulster involvement in the Irish colleges by the early seventeenth century. A further reforming influence were the few Jesuits who were active in Ulster, some of whom ministered to the catholics among the Scottish settlers; culturally and ecclesially, the Jesuits were close to the vice-primate. However, the Franciscans were the largest and most influential group of religious in the province. Tensions existed between Rothe, Old English in background and outlook, and the friars, with their close identification with Ulster Irish society. The friars experienced survival and incipient revival in these years, and counted both traditionally-trained and continentally-trained men among their number. In this chapter, the internal development of Ulster catholicism in the Plantation decade will be outlined. Reform efforts were only partially successful. The movement of Irish clergy to the state church was halted, and a functioning catholic diocesan system was in place in most parts of Ulster by the early 1620s.

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The exceptional role of the few catholic reformers must be seen within the context of the normative role of the parochial clergy, overwhelmingly locally-trained and hence traditionalist in outlook. The basic organisational feature of catholicism was the parish, with local clergy as pastors. The parish network varied in strength across Ulster, depending in part on the survival of the local Irish gentry. Even in the turmoil of the early 1610s, some parishes in parts of the north were functioning: the collection for the recusant delegation to London in 1613 was organised locally by the priests in the parishes. This

situation prevailed in areas where the Irish gentry survived.[3] In contrast, by about 1620 the parish system in many localities was quite attenuated. In the northern province as a whole, in many areas there was only one pastor for five parishes; this situation was more typical of Ulster than the Old English areas, where gentry support for catholic clergy was largely uninterrupted.[4] The scarcity may have been due in part to a widespread movement of clergy into the state church in the early years of the Plantation; the church surveys taken in the years 1606-9 reveal that in mid- and west Ulster there were priests in most parishes.[5] Until the growth in numbers from the mid-1620s, priests in east Ulster, especially, were few. By then, there was a priest in at least 20% of the County Antrim parishes and in at least 30% of the County Down parishes; actual numbers may not have been much greater than these figures.[6] The lands of former religious houses, where the religious community had the cure of souls, were particularly bereft. Thus the Bagnall estates in south Down originally belonged to the Cistercian abbey of Newry; with the departure of the monks, no priests were ministering there until the beginning of the 1630s.[7] This reflected the relatively small and scattered Irish population east of the Bann, in the wake of famine and violence arising from the later stages of the Nine Years War, which were particularly severe in this part of Ulster.

By contrast, west of the Bann, there was a greater provision of priests: in Derry diocese in 1622 there was a priest in every parish.[8] Franciscans, too, were ministering in Ulster in this decade: they numbered about ninety in the Armagh province by 1623, spread across both north Leinster and Ulster, and a considerable minority were designated as preachers, many of whom studied on the continent. Preaching in Ulster was largely confined to the friars.[9] Given the shortage of pastors, distinctions in role between diocesans

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[3]. Deposition of Teag Modder M'Glone, 21 Oct 1613, PRO SP63/232/21, 22 (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, pp 429-31).

[4]. Wadding papers, p.38.

[5]. See chapter one.

[6]. For the catholic diocese of Down and Connor, estimates for the proportion of parishes with priests may be made by collating the number of parishes listed in the Church of Ireland 1634 Visitation (TCD Ms 1067, pp 77-87), with the list of priests and their parishes given in a petition of the Down and Connor clergy of May 1624 (Wadding papers, pp 73-4); thus at least 11 pastors may be assigned to Connor diocese in 1624, which had 56 parishes in 1634, and Down had at least 14 pastors, with 47 parishes listed in 1634.

[7]. M. Hartry, Triumphalia Sanctae Crucis [1639], ed. D. Murphy (Dublin, 1891), p.279; Gwynn and Hadcock, Med. rel. houses, Ire., p.142.

[8]. Derry diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550, p.206; on clerical provision in Derry diocese earlier in the century, see H. Jefferies, 'Derry diocese on the eve of the Plantation', in G. O'Brien and W. Nolan (eds), Derry and Londonderry: History and Society (Dublin, 1999), pp 175-204.

[9]. Wadding papers, p.36; in 1618, in Ireland as a whole, there were 120 friars; of these, 35 were

and friars were blurred. It is against this predominant background of clerical survivalism, and gaps in pastoral provision, that the engagement of the small number of tridentine clergy in Ulster must be viewed.

A major step in catholic reorganisation in Ulster took place in August 1609. Primate Peter Lombard appointed David Rothe as his delegate in the province of Armagh, with the title of vice-primate. His nomination as 'protonotarius apostolicus' - to hear and determine all ecclesiastical causes in Ireland - was aimed at dealing with the many clerical disputes which were endemic in the country.[10] Rothe, a native of Kilkenny, came from a similar cultural and social background to Lombard. He had been rector of the Irish College, Douai, when he was summoned to Rome as Lombard's secretary in 1602, where he remained until returning to Ireland as vice-primate in 1609.[11] Rothe was unsympathetic, if not hostile, to the political aspirations of Ulster catholicism. As a catholic loyalist, he was opposed to the northern chiefs, O'Neill and O'Donnell, in the Nine Years War; indeed, it was alleged that he supported the confiscation of their territories after the Flight of the Earls.[12] In the early 1610s, Rothe spent much time in the north, but in 1618 he was appointed bishop of Ossory and thus was based chiefly there.[13] As was customary among many catholic ecclesiastics with responsibility for northern dioceses in the 1610s and 1620s, Rothe conducted business while staying in the northern Pale. It was held against him that he merely visited Drogheda, or occasionally, Dundalk, at the southern limits of the archdiocese, once or at most twice a year. While he issued many decrees for the celebration of the sacraments, and the reform of mores, he was not there in person to supervise their implementation.[14]

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preachers, B. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947: Donatus Moneyus, De Provincia Hiberniae S. Francisci', Anal. Hib., 6, p.18.

[10]. 'A commission from Peter Lombard archbishop of Armagh to David Roth to be his vicar-general in that province', TCD Ms 567, fol.60r-v; he was appointed 'protonotarius apostolicus', with power to adjudicate in disputes among the clergy, [Primate Lombard] to clergy and people of Ireland, 12 Aug 1609, BAV, Barberini Latini Ms 2693, fol. 24r-v.

[11]. David Rothe, prefect of studies, Irish College, Douai, visiting Rome, Spanish nuncio to Cardinal Aldobrandini, 14 July 1602, Archiv. Hib., 24, p.101, ibid., 4, pp 227-8; on Rothe's career, see P. Corish, 'David Rothe, bishop of Ossory 1618-50', Butler Soc. Jn., 2 no 3, pp 315-23.

[12]. Wadding papers, p.166.

[13]. About 1613, it was reported that David Rothe was 'a most seditious instrument who was sent from Rome since Tyrone's abode there, he takes upon him the name and authority of Protonotarius Apostolicus, to hear and determine all ecclesiastical business for the kingdom of Ireland, and he has been in the North since his arrival, but is now (for the most part) in Munster', TCD Ms 567, ff 42v-43r.

[14]. Enclosure, nuncio at Paris to Cardinal Mellini, 5 Dec 1625, Wadding papers, p.130; it was alleged that Rothe never came within 40 miles of Armagh city, Wadding papers, p.166.

His ecclesial outlook reinforced the aversion towards Ulster catholicism inherent in his anglophile upbringing. The vice-primate's tridentine vision of a strengthened parochial structure - much weakened especially in Ulster in the long years of war - inevitably entailed a diminution of the role of the regulars, specifically the Franciscans. Rothe's antipathy towards the Franciscans was evident in the decrees of the Synod of Drogheda, 1614. Admonitions against political involvement by the clergy featured in the context of the continued role of some friars as advisers to the Ulster chiefs[15]. There were strictures against questing, when this would cut across the maintenance of the parish clergy. There was an attempt to limit and control the relic tours being organised by the Franciscans and Cistercians in the north at this time.[16] Such efforts at controlling the friars earned Rothe the soubriquet, a second Richard of Armagh.[17]

By contrast, in the Jesuits, Rothe saw suitable allies in his goal of transforming Ulster catholicism in a tridentine mould. However, their involvement in Ulster was largely peripheral, both to Ulster and to their own mission in Ireland. Nevertheless, the crisis in northern catholicism in 1611 elicited their help. Several of the fathers were in the north at that time. In 1611, Robert Nugent spent Lent working in Ulster, while in September, James Sall, just returned from studies on the continent, was in Coleraine at the time of Knox's iconoclasm.[18] Their presence comprised limited missions by individual men. Rothe appreciated their contribution. Indeed, they enjoyed a warm relationship; while in Rome, the Irishman earned the friendship and admiration of the Jesuit leadership.[19] Such regard was reciprocated. In the early 1610s, the vice-primate asked that some fathers be sent to aid him while on his visitation of the Ulster dioceses. In March 1616 his request was acceded to, and henceforth a yearly excursion into Ulster was part of the mission of the

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[15]. Thus a friar was a confidant of those disaffected mid-Ulster Irish gentry who were involved in the 1615 Conspiracy, fulfilling the traditional role of writing letters, making peace between the estranged, and proposing tactics, examination of Dermot Oge McDonne, 3 Apr 1615, M. Hickson, Ireland in the Seventeenth Century (London, 1884), ii, p.257; however, diocesan clergy, too, were caught up in the political turmoil of those years, for a priest, Laughlin O'Laverty, of Moyagh, County Antrim, was hanged arising from the trial of those involved in the 1615 Conspiracy, T. Gogarty (ed.), 'Ulster roll of gaol delivery 1615', Archiv. Hib., 6, pp 83-4.

[16]. 1614 Drogheda synod, in L. Renehan, Collections on Irish church history (Dublin, 1861), i, pp 130-1; Cistercian relic tour, 1607, Hartry, Triumphalia sanctae crucis, pp 131-5.

[17]. Wadding papers, p.320; on the conflict between Richard FitzRalph (c.1300-60), archbishop of Armagh, and the friars, see K. Walsh, Richard FitzRalph in Oxford, Avignon, and Armagh: a fourteenth century scholar and primate (Oxford, 1981).

[18]. [C. Hollywood] to R. Conway, 4 Nov 1611, W. M'D., 'Irish colleges since the reformation', pp 290-7.

[19]. Jesuit general to Maurice Roche, 31 Mar 1609, 'List of documents, 1540-1829', IJA, MacErlean Transcripts; Jesuit general to Rothe, 8 June 1613, ibid.

Jesuit based in Drogheda.[20] On his return from studies on the continent about 1611, the Drogheda native Robert Bathe was engaged in pastoral work in Ulster, presumably preaching and hearing confessions. From his base in Drogheda, Bathe regularly travelled across the north, facing many perils.[21] The attempt to secure a more stable presence in Ulster led to the establishment, in 1625, of a house there, consisting of Robert Bathe and another companion. Because of the fear of attracting hostile attention, it was decided to limit the community to two men. Thus Jesuit involvement in Ulster was limited to a handful of individuals, and their influence was correspondingly small. Drawn largely from Old English families of Leinster and Munster, they lacked a kinship network in the province, which was regarded as essential to minister there; in the early 1610s, John Barnwall and Henry Cusack were considered suitable for work in Ulster precisely because their maternal kindred were rooted in the north.[22] Catholic communities among the Scots settlers were a focus of their ministry, reflecting patronage of the order by Scottish catholic landlords, such as the Hamiltons, earls of Abercorn, in Strabane, and Randall MacDonnell, Earl of Antrim.[23]

Faced with adherence to the state church by a proportion of the parish clergy, Rothe took action to reform and strengthen the leadership of the individual dioceses. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, catholic diocesan leadership across Ulster was weak or non-existent.[24] From his arrival in Ireland, about 1609, Rothe's priority was the reorganisation of the northern clergy, spending his first years as vice-primate chiefly in the northern province. The reorganisation of the clergy featured highly in the decrees of the provincial synod of Armagh, at which Rothe presided, held at Drogheda, over several days in February, 1614.[25] In place of a pastorate which included the free-floating ministry of wandering clergy, he wished to establish a diocesan clergy which would be strictly territorially based on the parish. The clergy were to be accountable to superiors: parish priests would be subject to supervision by vicars forane, each of whom was in charge of a deanery, and all diocesan clergy were under the general supervision of the vicar-general.

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[20]. Jesuit vicar-general (during interregnum between two generals) to D. Rothe, 7 Mar 1615-6, 'List of documents, 1540-1829', IJA, MacErlean Transcripts; Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.74.

[21]. E. Hogan, Chronological catalogue of the Irish members of the Society of Jesus, 1550-1814 (n.d., n.p., copy in NLI)

[22]. Jesuit annual letter 1611, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.38.

[23]. Scottish catholic communities are treated in chapter four.

[24]. See chapter one.

[25]. On the catholic synods in the early seventeenth century, see A. Forrestal, Catholic Synods in Ireland, 1600-1690 (Dublin, 1998), pp 33-74, 132-53.

The reformers were keen to build up the role and power of the vicar-general over the clergy. He was to appoint parish priests, and to choose rural deans. Those admitted to the administration of the sacraments were to promise him obedience. Only oils consecrated by the bishop and distributed to the parish priests were to be used in baptism. In order to curb the activites of the vagabond clerics, laity and clergy alike were to exercise caution in allowing an unknown priest celebrate mass in their area - the parish priest was to give licence to say mass only to priests known to him.[26] There was a shortage of preachers who could preach and catechize the people; pastors were enjoined to encourage those regulars who were willing and able to help in these areas.[27]

The appointment of vicars-general in the northern dioceses was one of Rothe's major preoccupations. During the 1610s, some few vicars-general were local men, based in their dioceses. Thus Bernard McOuagh was appointed vicar-general of Derry diocese by Rothe, and Murtagh Gergan (or McCernga) was vicar-general of Kilmore.[28] However, in this decade many within the northern diocesan leadership were based in Counties Meath and Louth. Tridentine clergy were particularly at risk from the increasing protestant presence across Ulster, while the remaining Irish gentry were poor, and declining in influence, and so unable to provide protection. Thus the rigour of the law was at least occasionally enforced against those who harboured priests.[29] For these considerations, together with the greater possibility of security and comfort under gentry patronage, diocesan ordinaries were based in the catholic heartlands of the Pale. Ecclesiastics usually travelled to their dioceses in summer.[30] During these years, while largely resident in his native Kilkenny, Rothe used to visit Drogheda, and from there acquired first-hand knowledge of the situation and catholic clergy of the north.

Patrick Duffy was vicar-general of Clogher diocese from 1612, and on his return to Ireland was probably living under the protection of the baron of Slane. Duffy subsequently maintained a residence in Navan, County Meath, which served as a centre for priests travelling to and from Ulster. It was suitable for entertaining clergy, including Jesuits, and

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[26]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections, pp 117-21.

[27]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections, p.118.

[28]. Derry diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550, p.206; Kilmore diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550, pp 142-3; Wadding papers, p.62.

[29]. In 1617, Tirlagh McHugh, of Carrinderick, County Fermanagh, was imprisoned for six months, in lieu of the 100 mark fine, for abetting Donell McEoiganie, a priest, revenue abstracts, exchequer orders, Michaelmas 1617, NAI, Ferguson Mss, 1A.49.141, p.219.

[30]. P. Matthews to M. O'Hegarty, 19 Mar 1622, T. Moody and J. Simms (eds), The Bishopric of Derry (Dublin, 1968), i, pp 143-4.

was provided with stables for their horses.[31] Similarly, Bernard Mornin (or Morin), served as vicar-general of his native diocese of Raphoe from 1612. However, in 1610 Mornin secured the archdeaconry of Meath, by papal provision, and was probably living at Kells, County Meath, from that time.[32] John Rogers had been vicar-general of Dromore for some period before 1626; he was probably the cleric of the same name who was established in several parishes in County Louth in the 1610s.[33] Patrick Hanratty, the Clogher cleric appointed vicar-general of Down and Connor in 1615, had papal grants of parishes in County Louth and Meath diocese since 1609, perhaps initially as a form of support for his studies in Bordeaux; these interests suggest that he too had a base in the Pale.[34] Papal provisions to parishes in Counties Louth and Meath provided some support to the northern prelates in the 1610s and into the more settled conditions of the mid-1620s; the impoverished condition of Ulster at this time precluded adequate maintenance of the prelates by the catholics there.

While a necessary precaution in the coercive atmosphere of the 1610s, this enforced absence limited the effectiveness of the prelates, and contributed to the quarrelsome spirit of the clergy. In theory, diocesan vicars assigned priests to the various parishes.[35] However, in practice there were limits to these powers; in the early 1620s, a row over the appointment of a vicar-forane erupted in Derry diocese between the vicar-general and the outgoing incumbent. The frequent absence of diocesan vicars from their dioceses contributed to clerical insubordination; in this instance Matthews, the vicar-general, was

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[31]. Clergy list, c.1613, TCD Ms 567, fol.42v; an indication of Duffy's links with Navan was his titular grant of the Augustinian abbey there, July 1611, ASV, Dataria apostolica, Per Obitum, vol 19 (1611), fol.167v; Duffy's house, R. Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', Coll. Hib., 14, p.9.

[32]. Bernard Mornin, who had served as vicar-general of Raphoe c.1612-24, and was archdeacon of Meath in 1624, was living at Kells, County Meath, in 1622, Wadding papers, p.68; ASV, Dataria apostolica, Per obitum, vol 18 (1610), fol.151r; Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', p.8.

[33]. Wadding papers, p.144; in 1622 he was of similar rank to Patrick Matthews, vicar-general of Derry, Moody and Simms (eds), The bishopric of Derry (Dublin, 1968), i, p.144; grants of Stabannon parish, County Louth, and Clonmore, Armagh diocese, ASV, Dataria apostolica, Per obitum, vol 19 (1611), fol. 5r; he held St Nicholas parish, Dundalk, by papal provision, before 1621, ASV, Dataria apostolica, Per obitum, vol 26 (1621), fol. 16r.

[34]. P. Moran (ed.), Spicilegium Ossoriensis (3 vols, Dublin, 1874-84), i, pp 127-8; parish of St John Baptist, Castellen, Armagh diocese, ASV, Dataria apostolica, Per obitum, vol 17 (1609), fol. 2r; Balleidi parish, Meath diocese (with exemption of residence), ASV, Dataria apostolica, Per obitum, vol 20 (1612), fol. 153v; St Mary's parish, Carlingford, County Louth, ASV, Dataria apostolica, Per obitum, vol 28 (1623), fol. 4v.

[35]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections, p.118; Derry diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550,, p.206.

writing from Dundalk, and it was only envisaged that he, or a deputy, would travel north to the affected parties after Easter, presumably because travel was easier in early summer.[36]

A further form of absenteeism was exemplified in the case of Heber MacMahon, vicar-general of Clogher diocese 1627-42. In the early 1630s he was simultaneously president of the Irish college for secular clergy in Louvain, and residing there.[37]

Where suitable graduates of the Irish colleges were available, these were Rothe's preferred candidates for promotion as vicars-general or vicars-apostolic within the northern dioceses. The core of the new-style diocesan leadership comprised Patrick Duffy, Patrick Hanratty, and Patrick McMahon (or Matthews), Monaghan men who had studied on the continent, and in the case of the first two, in the Irish college, Bordeaux. Thus northern tridentine leadership in the Plantation decade was the fruit of the continental education of a handful of south Ulster clerics, in the early years of the seventeenth century. Some of these men may have studied in the Low Countries before moving to Bordeaux.[38] They were diligent in the exercise of their duties, and of upright life. These men sought to restore ecclesiastical discipline and to reform mores among clergy and laity in the wake of the social and ecclesial breakdown of the war. This they attempted by visitations, admonitions, and statutes, though the work was limited by the pressures of a hostile environment, especially in the 1610s. In the 1620s and 1630s, the prevalence of disputes among the clergy, and between clergy and laity, testified to the limited success of the diocesan ordinaries.

Reflecting the poor choice of available candidates, and the importance Rothe attached to a leadership with tridentine training, in 1612 Patrick Duffy was sent back as vicar-general of Clogher even before finishing his studies in Bordeaux.[39] His presence in Bordeaux, presumably already a priest, illustrated how traditional clerical families in south Ulster were beginning to embrace continental education from 1603 onwards.[40] Duffy was

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[36]. Patrick Matthews to Maurice O'Hegarty and priests of Inishowen deanery, 19 Mar 1622, Moody and Simms (eds), Bishopric of Derry, i, pp 143-4.

[37]. Acta, July-Nov 1631, Propaganda Fide, Archiv. Hib., 22, pp 58-60.

[38]. Patrick Hanratty had a doctorate in theology from Toulouse ('Tolosanus'), Wadding papers, p.145; on the academic careers of the more eminent among the Irish clerics on the continent in the 1610s, see G. F., Hiberniae sive Antiquioris Scotiae Vindiciae (Antwerp, 1621), p.36; on the formation of Irish clerical students at Bordeaux at this time, see B. Cunningham, The world of Geoffery Keating (Dublin, 2000), pp 25-31.

[39]. The vacancy arose from the translation of Bishop Eugene Matthews (or MacMahon) to Dublin in 1611, a move which Matthews sought, D. Rothe to ?, 1612, BAV, Barberini Latini Ms 8928, fol.32; on Duffy's appointment, Wadding papers, p.37.

[40]. There were apparently two Patrick Duffys, Ulster priests, who were alumni of Bordeaux

among the most prominent leaders of the catholic clergy in Ulster in the 1610s. He often travelled throughout the northern province, and was regularly consulted by senior clergy of various dioceses. In Navan, his base, the catholic resurgence was attributed to him, evident by the early 1620s in that the papists there 'carry a cross openly in the streets before the dead, being carried to burial'.[41]

Another of Rothe's proteges, Patrick Hanratty, was appointed vicar-apostolic of Down and Connor in spring 1614, after the execution of the local bishop, Conor O'Devanny, in 1612. Indicative of the pressures on the catholic community, particularly in east Ulster, in December 1615 Rothe noted of Hanratty that 'he attends his charge the best he can with labour and diligence, and not without danger'.[42] At this difficult time of loss, persecution, and adjustment to large-scale settlement by Scots protestants, Hanratty offered courageous leadership to the scattered catholic communities of east Ulster. Within his diocese, he enjoyed the trust and appreciation of priests and people; in 1624 clergy and laity petitioned Urban VIII for Hanratty to be bishop; continued pressure on catholicism, into the mid-1620s, precluded the form of election prescribed by canon law. Hanratty also enjoyed Rothe's continued trust and approbation.[43] Yet another of this generation of Ulster prelates, also of Monaghan background with a continental education, was Patrick Matthews (or MacMahon), noted as a good preacher; he was vicar-general of Dromore before 1622.[44]

In the 1620s, several of these pioneering continentally-educated prelates subsequently served as ordinaries in other northern dioceses. In this way tridentine influence, however weakly, was disseminated across Ulster. Thus by July 1625, Hanratty had become vicar-apostolic of neighbouring Dromore diocese, where he served until his death in 1630.[45] In the early 1620s, tridentine influence in Derry diocese was strengthened by the appointments of the Palesman Luke Rochford as vicar-apostolic, and of Patrick Matthews as vicar-general; these were among the first prelates of the diocese with a continental

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before 1619, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 318-22; the other was prior of Holmpatrick, north County Dublin, and was being supported by Nicholas Fitzwilliams, Burdungan, County Dublin, ibid., and HMC Egmont, i pt 1, p.47.

[41]. Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', p.9.

[42]. Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 318-22; Rothe to Archbishop Peter Lombard, 18 Dec 1615, Wadding papers, p.4.

[43]. Petition of clergy and laity of Down and Connor to Urban VIII, 10 May 1624, Wadding papers, pp 73-4; David Rothe and Thomas Messingham, in favour of Hanratty, Aug-Sept 1624, ibid. pp 74-6.

[44]. Derry diocese, TCD Ms 550, p.206; Wadding papers, pp 36, 56, 137.

[45]. Wadding papers, pp 73-4, 3; N.H.I., ix, p.348.

education.[46] An indication of Matthews' popularity as diocesan administrator was his election in 1626 as vicar-general of Armagh by the chapter there, where he served ably until his death in 1637.[47] In 1621, John Cullenan was appointed vicar-apostolic of his native diocese of Raphoe, having studied for a doctorate in Rheims; he served as bishop from 1629 until his death in 1657-8.[48] Thadeus Clery, of the Donegal literary family, was educated in Spain in the early 1620s. He served as vicar-general in Down and Connor during the episcopal vacancy of 1628-30, appointed by the vice-primate, Thomas Dease, bishop of Meath.[49] Thus from the early 1610s the leadership cadre of the northern dioceses was gradually being permeated by clerics whose continental education disposed them to share the tridentine vision of the church in Ireland, however weak its implementation in their dioceses.

Their achievement was limited but crucial. The pastoral leadership of these tridentine clergy contributed to the survival of catholicism in Ulster, especially in the critical second decade of the seventeenth century. The prelates' key role was in ensuring that, despite initial uncertainty, the majority of the clergy opted for Rome. Further, by about 1620, if not earlier, thanks to the efforts of the ordinaries, a diocesan structure was in operation, with the vicar-general appointing priests to parishes, and a vicar-forane in charge of each deanery.[50] However, they exercised a fragile discipline over the clergy in their charge. Under the impact of the Plantation, parish priests could not be appointed, and parish boundaries were ill-defined, a confusion which contributed to strife within the catholic

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[46]. Derry diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550, p.206; Luke Rochford as vicar-apostolic, 1622-c.1626, N.H.I., ix, pp 344-5; J.Brady, 'Archdeacon Luke Rochford and his circle', Repertorium Novum, 3 no 1, pp 108-20.

[47]. Wadding papers, p.144; Matthews: 'virum opprime doctum longae experientiae, et multae in talibus negotiis praxeos', Bonaventure Magennis, bishop of Down and Connor, to Cardinal Barberini, 10 May 1637, BAV, Barberini Latini Ms 8626, ff 21-2.

[48]. Cullenan entered Salamanca university in 1605, aged 20, Archiv. Hib., 2, p.17, and had a doctorate from Rheims, Wadding papers, p.145; he was appointed vicar-apostolic of Raphoe diocese, 1 Sept 1621, Moran, Spicil. Ossor., i, p.128; he was bishop of Raphoe, 1629-1657/8, N.H.I., ix, p.353.

[49]. He was probably the Thadeus Clery who was a student in Valencia in 1619, Wadding papers, p.13, and who entered the Irish college, Salamanca, in 1622, Archiv. Hib., 3, pp 87-112; doctor of theology, Paris, Coll. Hib., 12, p.17; by the early 1630s he had been elected procurator of the Ulster bishops in Rome, but en route to Rome he was detained by the earl of Tyrconnell in Flanders, and appointed head chaplain to the Spanish forces in the Netherlands, Archiv. Hib., 1, p.80.

[50]. Derry diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550, p.206; the list of priests exercising jurisdiction in Kilmore diocese indicates a similar development there, Kilmore diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550, pp 142-3; three vicars-forane featured in list of priests, Down and Connor diocese, 1624, Wadding papers, p.74.

community.[51] The practice of some prelates contributed to the confusion of competing jurisdictions which lay at the root of so many tensions among the catholic clergy. Thus in 1630, while in Louvain, Heber MacMahon, vicar-general of Clogher, supervised the appointment of a priest of Raphoe to a parish in Elphin diocese.[52] The weakness of ecclesiastical discipline in catholic dioceses was reflected in the area of marriage jurisdiction; in Derry diocese, and doubtless across Ulster, the frequent granting of divorces for small fees was part of the remit of a vicar-forane, in charge of a deanery.[53] Similarly, that catholic clergy were taking parishioners to court in the late 1620s for non-payment of dues was indicative of weak diocesan jurisdiction.[54] In sum, the diocesan ordinaries in the north presided over a clerical body which remained traditionalist and unreformed. The prelates' authority over the priests was limited, rendering them frequently unable to contain or resolve disputes among clergy, and between clergy and laity, much less advance significantly the progress of tridentine reform.

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A further response to the threatened state of catholicism in Ulster came from the Franciscans. The popular mission was a strategy favoured by catholic reformers, including the Franciscans. The mission involved a large assembly of people, gathered in the open air, starting with mass in the early morning, followed by preaching, generally on the subject of making a good confession. Hours of individual confessions ensued, often covering a person's whole life. A Jesuit initiative about 1610 was the extension to Ulster of their popular missions, already the basis of their apostolate in Leinster and Munster over the previous decade. While some few individual Jesuits were engaged in missions in Ulster, there the Franciscans were to the fore. The Louvain Franciscan mission to Ulster, from 1612, brought new impulses to the friars' traditional apostolate; these tridentine friars co-existed with their survivalist and traditionalist confreres who remained at home. There was a clear concern to strengthen the confessional loyalty of clergy and people to catholicism, faced with the pressures to conform to the state church. There was a renewed emphasis on preaching, and on the sacrament of confession. The reform of the local clergy was another focus.

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[51]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections, p.436.

[52]. John Kearuil appointed to Drumclion parish, Archiv. Hib., 15, pp 4-5.

[53]. Derry 1622, TCD Ms 550, p.206.

[54]. See chapter four.

In combating protestanism in the Ulster heartlands in the 1610s, the Louvain Franciscans were in continuity with their confreres of an earlier generation. These were already preaching against protestantism in south Ulster as the new ecclesial order was making a tentative appearance in County Cavan in the later decades of the sixteenth century. There, friar Eugenius Dughy (or Duffy) was renowned for his polemical preaching, seasoned with pithy Gaelic verses against the reformed faith.[55] The use of popular Gaelic culture in the service of combating the protestant threat was characteristic of Franciscan preaching at this time.[56]

In response to the apparent advances of protestantism across Ulster, and because a supply of friars trained in Louvain was emerging, small groups or teams of Franciscan missioners were being sent to the north from about 1611 onwards. This development marked a new stage of Franciscan activity in Ulster. This phase lasted until the early 1620s. By then, the onset of toleration facilitated the re-emergence of a fairly stable network of Franciscan convents there, and a pastorate markedly freer of civil interference. These missioners were Ulstermen, with some few from the Pale, familiar with the people and the Ulster Irish dialect. The port towns of Dundalk and Drogheda, County Louth, provided convenient entry points for the friars returning from the Low Countries, together with the support of catholic merchants and gentry in the surrounding areas.[57]

One account illustrates this stage of Franciscan missionary activity. By early 1612 two young friars had been sent from Louvain to preach across the whole of Ulster. Thomas Fleming OFM - the name suggests he was a native of Meath - was apparently in Dublin around the time of the execution of his confrere, Bishop Conor O'Devanny, and Patrick Loughran, 1 February 1612. Thereafter, by special order, instead of traversing Ulster, he remained in Dundalk for Lent, where there was great demand for his pastoral services, as was typical of catholic missioners in early seventeenth century Ireland. His companion was one Robert.[58] In Dundalk, by 1612, and probably earlier, there was a mass-house which

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[55]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', pp 49-50, 155.

[56]. On tridentine preaching in Ireland, see B. Cunningham, "Zeal for God and for souls': Counter-reformation preaching in early seventeenth-century Ireland', in A. Fletcher and R. Gillespie (eds), Irish preaching, 700-1700 (Dublin, 2001), pp 108-26.

[57]. For one instance of Drogheda as the northern friars' contact point with the continent, see R. Greame to lord deputy, April 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.453.

[58]. Perhaps Robert Geoghegan OFM, educated at the Irish college, Bordeaux, and subsequently Franciscan vicar at Drogheda in the early 1620s, Irish clerics educated at Bordeaux (1603-19), Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 318-22; this Thomas Fleming is different from the man of the same name received as novice at Louvain, 19 Apr 1612, Louvain papers, pp 54-8, son of the baron of Slane, who subsequently became archbishop of Dublin in 1623; I am grateful to Fr Benignus Millett for this clarification.

accomodated 600; there Fleming preached on Sundays and on feast-days. At other times he visited the surrounding countryside, in south Ulster and north Leinster, addressing crowds in a variety of locations, including outdoors. There, in the company of a local cleric, he used to give a homily on what was a staple theme of the missioners, namely, the correct way of making confession, mentioning the attendant indulgences. In line with the experience of many contemporary missioners, his message elicited a deep response from his hearers; often the two priests would spend an afternoon, evening, and the following morning until midday listening to confessions. Many of these covered the person's entire life. This enthusiastic response arose from the lack of preachers hitherto, the pastoral neglect of previous decades, and the spiritual hunger of the people in the wake of a decade of war.[59]

The Louvain Franciscan mission to Ulster had begun. Further light on the friars' approach may be gleaned from accounts of the mission of 1613. Doubtless arising from representations to the Brussels internuncio from the Ulster community in the Spanish Netherlands, including friars and soldiers, by the summer of 1613 three friars had been sent by Pope Paul V to preach to the people of Ulster.[60] Henry O'Mellan, native of the Dundalk area, was a theology graduate of Salamanca who had joined the Irish Franciscans as a priest in 1610[61]; Terence or Tirlogh McCroddan (c1582-1616), from near Dungannon, County Tyrone, was one of the first to enter the new Irish Franciscan novitiate at Louvain, in November 1607; and Hugh M'Kale was a native of Iveagh, County Down. Their mission in Ulster was pastoral; in the summer and autumn of 1613, and into 1614, they moved about the province, covering their home areas: McCroddan in mid-Ulster, McKale in south Down, and in Monaghan, and O'Mallon in Louth.[62]

On these missions, the friars did not rely exclusively on their preaching to consolidate the attachment of the Ulster Irish to catholicism. In early seventeenth century Ireland, popular devotion was excited by relic tours, which attracted large crowds, who gave

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[59]. Thomas Fleming OFM to cleric at Louvain, 25 Apr 1612, P. Moran (ed.), Spicil. Ossor., iii, pp 32-4.

[60]. On the role of the internuncio in the sending of an Irish Franciscan mission to the west of Scotland, see C. Giblin (ed.), The Irish Franciscan mission to Scotland, 1619-46: documents from Roman archives (Dublin, 1964); on the Ulster community in the Spanish Netherlands, see G. Henry, 'Ulster exiles in Europe, 1610-1641', in B. Mac Cuarta (ed.), Ulster 1641 (Belfast, 1993), pp 37-60.

[61]. HMC Franciscan Mss, p.94.

[62]. Louvain papers, p.54; deposition of Teag Modder M'Glone, 21 Oct 1613, PRO SP63/232/21, 22 (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, pp 429-31); on McCroddan's Tyrone background, see E. O Doibhlin, 'Domhnach Mor', Seanchas Ard Mhacha, 3 no 1, pp 213-4, and C. Mooney, 'The Franciscan First Order Friary at Dungannon', Seanchas Ard Mhacha, 1 no 2, pp 72-93.

generously to the organisers. In the early 1610s, a relic, purported to be from the True Cross, was brought from the continent (presumably the Low Countries), and was carried by a group of six or seven friars around County Cavan. This strategy was particularly successful, for by this means very large crowds gathered and listened to the friars.[63] The Franciscans preached in Irish at large outdoor gatherings, normally of up to a thousand people. Their mission was to fortify the catholicism of the Ulster Irish, threatened by the compulsive powers available to the recently-imposed state church. Their preaching attempted to address theologically the disasters that had befallen the Ulster Irish, and to offer a response rooted in the tridentine emphasis on the reform of laity and clergy. To assist them in their task, they had been granted special ecclesiastical jurisdiction, yet another continental response to the absence of catholic bishops in the north by the early 1610s. To what extent this Brussels-inspired Franciscan mission impinged on the jurisdiction of David Rothe, the vice-primate, sent from Rome, remains unclear. Given the immediate crisis, the scarcity of priests, and the recent arrival of the vice-primate, it is possible that questions of competing church jurisdiction, so prominent later, did not feature highly at this stage.

Arising from the close ties between the Franciscans and the Gaelic lords, this mission was organised around the secluded estates of some of the surviving Ulster Irish gentry. In early plantation Ulster, such venues helped minimise the unwelcome attentions of the provost-marshals and other authorities who threatened catholic clergy. The mission comprised a series of large open-air day-long gatherings. These were held under the patronage of the native gentry of the place - the Fermanagh event was held in a glen in the Maguire territory of Magherastephana, and the chief, Connor Roe, together with his heir, were present for all the proceedings; Iveagh, County Down, where friar McKale was active, was the lordship of the Magennises. Similarly, the barony of Loughinsholin was a wooded area of south-east Derry, where the native population were relatively undisturbed by the Plantation; a part was granted to Brian Crossagh O'Neill.[64] An adjacent venue was the estate of Captain Turlough O'Neill, recently settled on his plantation proportion (as a native) in the Largy, in north-east Tyrone, where the Franciscans already had a secluded convent, or 'domus refugii'; one of these O'Neills was friar McCroddan's guide and companion on the way from the Largy to Maguire's country.

The mission was facilitated by the local contacts of the individual friars; thus Tirlogh McCroddan stayed some days with Owen Oge O'Hagan, given one of the larger native

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[63]. Sir Robert Jacob to earl of Northampton, 28 Feb 1614 [ns], HMC Hastings Mss, iv, pp 14-15; allegedly up to 3000 or 4000 people attended each gathering.

[64]. Map, N.H.I., iii, pp 198-9.

grants of 120 acres in Dungannon precinct, County Tyrone.[65] In such ways the traditional lordly patronage of the friars was adapted to the vastly changed circumstances of the 1610s. Some of these gatherings took place on Sundays, beginning with morning mass; thereafter the friar preached for most of the rest of the day. In line with contemporary accounts of missions elsewhere in Ireland, the large crowds mentioned in the accounts of these Ulster missions (estimates of up to a thousand were given in the case of two meetings) indicate that people had walked from a wide area in order to attend. The large attendance, and the popular welcome given to these missioners, suggest that a religious revival was taking place among wide sections of native society in Ulster, as elsewhere in Ireland.[66]

Hostile commentators noted the role of returning priests in stiffening Irish resolve against the religious policy of the administration. Further, in plantation Ulster these clergy were seen as one of the main links between the exiled earls and the native population. By their frequent reports from the continent, the clerics sustained Ulster Irish hopes of O'Neill's return, leading to unrest and instability in the plantation localities. The friars enjoyed a prominence within Ulster catholicism, bolstered by their continental contacts, together with their close identification with the cause of O'Neill. These considerations made the Franciscans the leading exponents of a revanchist catholicism within Ulster from the Plantation onwards. This Ulster catholicism, closely aligned politically with O'Neill's cause, was anathema not only to English administrators, but also to catholic reformers of Old English background such as vice-primate Rothe. Within the northern province, the strictures of the Synod of Drogheda (1614) against the political involvement of the clergy were a reflection of the contrasting political alignments of Old English clerics and the Ulster Franciscans.[67]

The political dimension of Franciscan preaching can be explored based on reports of friar Tirlagh McCroddan's addresses at gatherings in mid- and south Ulster in 1613-4. The collapse of the native Gaelic order with the Flight of the Earls, and the establishment of the Plantation soon after, represented a crisis for native Ulster society.[68] Not surprisingly, the

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[65]. G. Hill, An historical account of the plantation in Ulster (Belfast, 1877), p.321.

[66]. This discussion of the 1613-4 Franciscan mission in Ulster is based on the following two accounts, 'Deposition of Teag Modder M'Glone .. 21 Oct 1613', PRO SP63/232/21-2, and 'The examination of Shane McPhelomy O Donnelly taken ... 22 Oct 1613', BL Cott Mss, Tit.B X, fol.236 r-v.

[67]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections, pp 118-9.

[68]. Already an Ulster poet, Fear Flatha O Gnimh, was offering a theological interpretation of these calamities, in the poem 'Mo thruaighe mar taid Gaoidhil', discussed in B. Cunningham and R. Gillespie, 'The east Ulster bardic family of O Gnimh', Eigse, 20, pp 106-14; M. Caball, 'Providence and exile in early seventeenth century Ireland', Ir.Hist.St., 29 no 114, pp 174-88.

Franciscans in their turn addressed this theme in their preaching. Friar McCroddan ascribed the calamities facing the Ulster Irish - the intrusion of foreign, heretical settlers, the gentry's loss of lands, and the new ecclesiastical dispensation - to God's anger at the sins of the people, their drunkenness, whoredom, lack of devotion and zeal. That political disaster was God's retribution for the evil-doing of the people was a view widely held in Ulster Irish society.[69] In response to this divine retribution, the friar exhorted them to reform their lives by giving up evil-doing, to repent by fasting and praying, and to hold firm to the hope that they would be restored to their lands before long.

There were two further strands to the political dimension of their preaching. The friars endorsed the pan-catholic alliance in support of the Old English parliamentarian delegation who had travelled to London in 1613 to advance the Irish catholic cause.[70] The defence of their common catholicism through parliamentary endeavour was to be the bond between the different ethnic groupings. The Ulster Irish, according to McCroddan, could lend their support by their prayers and fasting, and giving willingly their contribution to the national collection. Thus the action of the parliamentarians was financed by a nation-wide collection reaching down into the localities, embracing both Old Irish areas such as Ulster, as well as the Old English milieux of the parliamentarians. This procedure indicated co-operation at the highest level between parliamentarians and ecclesiastics, doubtless with the blessing, if not outright encouragement, of David Rothe. The initiative was indicative of the vibrancy of the catholic community at this time, even within Ulster, pointing to considerable organisational resources involving the co-operation of catholic gentry and clergy.

In the north, the collection was organised in different ways, according to the influence exercised by the catholic community in the various localities. In mid-Ulster, the priests organised the collection locally in the parishes. The relatively small sum of 4d per couple was demanded. This procedure pointed to a functioning parish network served by local clergy. By contrast, in Fermanagh this money was being collected by the sheriff's bailiffs.[71] The Fermanagh procedure arose from Irish preponderance at the lower levels of local administration, and the residual influence of the remaining lordly family, the Maguires. Thus even in Ulster the machinery of local government could be used to support the

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[69]. In Fermanagh, in 1602, a spokesman for a group of people, left starving by the destruction of their villages, explained their plight by reference to their sins, 'prevented by our own and our parents' sins, from reaching the other parts where food might be had', quote in W. M'D., 'Irish colleges since the reformation', I.E.R., 10, p.452.

[70]. On this delegation, see N.H.I., iii, p.215; the lord deputy was instructed to prohibit collections at this time, king to lord deputy, 8 July 1613, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.382.

[71]. Examination of Shane McPhelomy O Donnelly, 22 Oct 1613.

proscribed religion; such a scenario throws light on how anti-recusant policies were unevenly implemented across the localities. This collection too was commended specificially by the Franciscan missioners in Ulster. The parliamentary delegation were viewed as 'good men who were gone into England for the cause of religion'.[72] The friars' commendation helped increase the collection, for in mid-Ulster it was noted that the people gave most willingly after their address.

Alongside this advocacy of rational political strategy for the advancement of catholic interests, implicitly involving co-operation with the Old English, there was a more apocalyptic strand to the Ulster friars' preaching. There they expressed native yearnings through the mediums of prophecy and politically motivated rumour. This contrasting discourse reflected more narrowly Ulster Irish aspirations. In various scenarios, the friar held out the prospect of the end of English rule; this was to occur 'within a year and a quarter', for thanks to the king of Spain, O'Neill was to return at the head of 18,000 troops, expel the English, and have Ireland for himself. Prophecy, too, was invoked, in that the friar quoted from a book he claimed to have read in Rome, to the effect that English rule should cease when a bridge was built over the river Liffer. All in all, the preacher held out the prospect of the end of English rule in Ireland within two years.[73] Prophetic discourse was probably a staple of Franciscan preaching in Ulster in the early seventeenth century. It contributed to the diffusion of an apocalyptic view of politics among the ordinary people, and, in particular, a messianic view of deliverance from the English by Hugh O'Neill, returned from continental exile. In contrast to the co-operation among catholics of various backgrounds fostered in the collection for the parliamentary delegation, this rhetoric implicitly reinforced the atavistic antipathies of the Gaelic Irish against the Old English.

Catholic attitudes to the state church were formed in part by what people heard in the course of popular preaching. This motif featured prominently in Ulster Franciscan preaching in the early 1610s. In place of early unclarity and temporising by a proportion of Ulster clergy, the friars promoted a clear confessional identity among Ulster catholics. Warning the people against attending these state church services was the theme which friar McCroddan expounded with greatest urgency. That he needed to do so suggests a certain initial confusion or ambiguity in native Ulster society towards the nascent state church. Catholic reformers were seeking to replace a survivalist religion, which could encompass nominal adherence by clergy and people to the new church order (though remaining

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[72]. Deposition of Teag Modder M'Glone, 21 Oct 1613.

[73]. Examination of Shane M'Phelomy O'Donnelly, 22 Oct 1613.

liturgically and pastorally unchanged), by an unambiguously catholic confessional identity.[74]

In seeking to foster allegiance to catholicism, the Franciscans deployed a number of arguments. McCroddan spoke of the pope's care of and interest in the Ulster Irish. The pope had sent him, McCroddan told his listeners, to give them hope and to comfort them, and to persuade them not to change their religion; further, he would continue to send 'holy men' to them every year. Indicative of the pressures to conform, and the probability that some Irish were in fact doing so, the preacher emphasised that they were to resist fear, and the lure of gain, and hold out against going to 'the English service'[75]. He reiterated, only slightly rhetorically (for the memory of the execution of the Ulstermen Bishop O'Devany and Fr Patrick Loughran the previous year was still fresh, and the preacher doubtless referred to these local martyrs), the stark possibilities they might have to face, in order to be true to their faith: to stand on their keeping, to go into rebellion, or death by hanging, drawing and quartering (as was the fate of O'Devany and Loughran).

Using a counter-reformation motif that linked Luther with the devil, the preacher warned of the satanic consequences of attending the state church services: the English ministers spoke 'the devil's words', and 'all should be damned that hear them'.[76] This anti-protestant message was positively received: in Fermanagh, one hearer exclaimed 'we will rather go into rebellion and be eaten with dogs and [...] rather than go to your English service to hear the devil's words'.[77] Thus in the 1610s the friars were following the anti-protestant furrow ploughed by Franciscan preachers in the later sixteenth century. Friar Owen O'Duffy used compositions in Gaelic verse to re-inforce this message.[78] Popular antipathy to the new religion was fostered and strengthened with renewed vigour by the friars in the plantation era. As a result, a negative view of protestantism was deeply etched in the popular consciousness.

Franciscan missioners and the new diocesan ordinaries shared a common concern for the reform of the local clergy. Patrick Duffy, Clogher vicar-general in the years 1612-24,

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[74]. A similar confusion prevailed in Connacht and Thomond, Jesuit annual letter 1605, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, pp 16-19.

[75]. Deposition of Teag Modder M'Glone, 21 Oct 1613.

[76]. Deposition of Teag Modder M'Glone, 21 Oct 1613; on the devil and protestantism in Gaelic catechesis, specifically Mac Aingil, Scathan, see M. Mac Craith, 'The Gaelic reaction to the Reformation', in S. Ellis and S. Barber (eds), Conquest and Union: Fashioning a British State, 1485-1725 (London and New York, 1995), pp 139-61, (here, pp 151-3).

[77]. Examination of Shane M'Phelomy O'Donnelly, 22 Oct 1613.

[78]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.50.

paid tribute to the help of the friars in reforming clergy and laity, and in church government in his diocese.[79] The missioners were endowed with special ecclesiastical jurisdiction which enabled them to summon the clergy and conduct a visitation: in October 1613, for example, all fourteen clergy of the Loughinsholin district, Derry diocese, appeared before McCroddan. The continentally-trained friars and Babington, the state bishop of Derry, were united in wishing to abolish the practice of clerical concubinage. Thus an effort was being made to bring clerical life in line with tridentine aspirations. As part of the Franciscan mission, measures to reform the local clergy were taken publicly, before all the people. Many clergy were deprived of their benefices on several grounds. All priests were to put away their wives, or be deprived of their livings, and deemed ineligible to say mass. Others were deprived because they were irregularly ordained; these doubtless included many of the vagabond clergy; those marriages, at which they officiated, were deemed invalid, and the couples involved were compelled to get married again.[80] One consequence, no doubt intended, was to obviate any grounds for divorce because of uncertainty touching the priest's competence to witness the marriage, a common ground for divorce in the north. Thus the laity were made aware that clerical reform was to be part of the new catholic order.

Pluralism was another abuse. McCroddan deprived several pluralists of all livings, but on their submission in some cases he restored the priest to one benefice. These reform efforts had limited impact on the Ulster clergy. Many remained recalcitrant, and so were deprived - at the south Derry gathering, McCroddan deprived one priest for having two benefices, and another for persisting in keeping a woman. Given the lack of effective ongoing disciplinary mechanisms at the disposal of the catholic reformers, it was probable that reform efforts in many instances remained ephemeral.

The need to reorganise clerical maintenance was a further area of catholic reform. In the absence of tithes (just recently appropriated to the use of the state church), the payment of the catholic clergy in Ulster, as elsewhere in Ireland, had to be regulated afresh. A system of fees, payable to the priests for various services, was emerging as a major source of clerical income. Thus at the gathering in south Derry, friar McCroddan decreed that henceforth every couple was to pay 2 shillings p.a., plus Easter offerings and other perquisites, to the local clergy.[81]

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[79]. Patrick Duffy's testimonial to the Franciscans, from Navan, 1 Apr 1624, Wadding papers, p.60.

[80]. Deposition of Teag Modder M'Glone, 21 Oct 1613.

[81]. On fees to priests in early seventeenth century Ireland, see R. Gillespie, 'Catholic religious practices and payments in seventeenth century Ireland', Archiv. Hib., 47, pp 3-10.

Since the 1590s, contributions to the maintenance of the Irish colleges on the continent were a feature of catholicism in the Old English areas. By the early 1610s, requests for alms for the colleges were a normal feature of preaching throughout the northern province. Catholics in Ulster were contributing to the Irish Franciscan college in Louvain. In the early 1610s, the Louvain friars were concerned that their convent would not have enough resources to feed all the new novices; in 1613 the subsidy previously granted by the king of Spain to the college had been suspended.[82] Hence there was a real need for the donations from Ulster and elsewhere in Ireland. At the Franciscan preaching sessions, individuals gave according to their means. Among the better off, gifts took the form of cattle and sheep. Two gray merchants - local cattle dealers - were part of the friars' entourage as they travelled about Ulster. These supervised the collection of the cattle, and arranged for their droving to the port towns of Louth. There, as the friar was wont to tell his audience, they were slaughtered and the meat salted, prior to shipment to the convent in Louvain.[83] The sheep, being less valuable, were held for the friars by the local clergy, until they could be sold. At each gathering, the number of cattle given could range from forty to sixty, though at the gathering in Maguire's country they were given over 200 cattle and garrans, perhaps reflecting the munificence of the Maguires, Gaelic lordly survivors. The number of sheep was reckoned double the number of cattle. The poorer sort used to give 12d.[84]

Even during the 1610s, the normal parish ministry of the local clergy, where these existed, may have been largely undisturbed by the authorities. However, those sheltering the friars and other missioners were incurring some risk, and vigilance was needed. Informers, who disclosed the whereabouts of catholic clerics to the authorities, were a threat.[85] Reflecting the pervasive anxiety arising from the government's proclamation banning the return of exiled clergy[86], friar McCroddan used to conclude every sermon with a blessing on those who came to hear him, and a curse on those who would inform the English about him. Owen Oge O Hagan sheltered McCroddan, together with the abbot of

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[82]. Donnchadh O Maonaigh to father minister, Antwerp, 12 May 1610, in P. Walsh (ed.), Gleanings from Irish Manuscripts, 2nd ed. (Dublin, 1933), pp 53-8, here, p.56 - I am grateful to Michelle O Riordan for this reference; papal secretary of state to internuncio, 24 Aug 1613, Archiv. Hib., 4, p.282.

[83]. Licence granted to the Louvain friars to import salted meat, and other foodstuffs, from Ireland, and to send books there, 9 Sept 1617, C. Giblin (ed.), Liber Lovaniensis (Dublin, 1956), pp 58-9.

[84]. Deposition of Teag Modder M'Glone, 21 Oct 1613; for Fermanagh, examination of Shane McPhelomy O Donnelly, 22 Oct 1613.

[85]. In 1631, the synod of Tuam decreed that apparitors or informers were to be deprived of the sacraments, Renehan, Collections, p.494.

[86]. Proclamation against catholic clergy, 13 July 1611, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-14, p.83.

Armagh[87], for four days. While in O'Hagan's house, McCroddan said mass every day, but only preached once, for he was more or less in hiding. His presence, if discovered by the authorities, would draw trouble on his hosts. Because of the threat from the authorities, catholic clerics in the early seventeenth century generally wore secular dress. The young friar was disguised as a gentleman, wearing English dress over his friar's habit, and a rapier by his side. Similarly, while a friar was celebrating mass in a house in County Tyrone in 1614, two guards were placed at the entrance.[88] Nevertheless these measures did not inhibit the welcome afforded the returning friars; McCroddan's stay with O'Hagan was marked by many visitors who wished to meet the friar, and by warm hospitality, 'great cheer after the Irish manner'.[89]

Fears of intervention by crown officials were greater in those areas, such as Ulster and the midlands, where the local catholic gentry were under threat from the process of plantation with its attendant government scrutiny. Down to about 1620, the mere presence of mainly protestant British settlers impeded the ministry of regular clergy in the north. Thus the Franciscans were inhibited from visiting many parts of Ulster at this time, though a few, knowing English, managed to visit British converts to catholicism living in garrison areas.[90] It was in isolated places, far from British settlement, that large crowds of people gathered in the open air to hear the preachers from the continent, venues chosen for their seclusion and distance from the authorities.

Provost-marshals were among the officials engaged in the pursuit of catholic clergy, and some priests were probably among those executed by martial law; this was all the more likely in plantation Ulster, where catholic notables, protectors of the clergy, were less prominent.[91] Legal measures against priests and those sheltering them were enforced in Ulster in the 1610s, however unevenly. Pressure on households sheltering priests grew when the incentive to discover them was increased, as happened in 1617; it was decreed that the discoverer should receive half the fine levied for harbouring clergy.[92] This measure

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87. Referring to the suppressed Augustinian house of SS Peter and Paul, in Armagh city, Gwynn and Hadcock, Medieval Religious Houses Ireland, p.153.

88. Examination of Dermot Oge McDonne, 3 April 1615, M. Hickson, Ireland in the seventeenth century (London, 1884), ii, p.257.

89. Deposition of Teag Modder M'Glone, 21 Oct 1613.

90. Wadding papers, p.40.

91. The execution of a priest by martial law, on the borders of Meath in 1606, is discussed in chapter five; executions by martial law were taking place in Ulster in the mid-1610s, pardon to Sir Moses Hill, provost-marshal, 18 Mar 1617, HMC Hastings, iv, p.48.

92. Proclamation by lord deputy, 25 Oct 1617, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.169; Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.76.

had an impact in Ulster. Thus in south Antrim in 1617, a Jesuit missioner en route to the catholic Scots on Sir Randal MacDonnell's lands evaded capture by the provost-marshal and Sir Arthur Chichester's steward, thanks to a warning from the steward's wife, a protestant.[93] In 1617, too, Tirlagh McHugh, of Carrinderick, County Fermanagh, was imprisoned for six months for abetting the priest Donell McEoiganie.[94]

Even seigneurial protection, at times, was of limited effect. Thus some time before May 1621, Alexander Boyd, a Scot, denounced to the authorities the Scottish Jesuit, Patrick Anderson, who had been staying with the earl of Antrim, and Sir James Hamilton; the lord deputy was merely instructed to levy a fine on the two landowners, which was to be paid to Boyd.[95] The Jesuit was taking refuge from persecution in Scotland. The pursuit of Anderson in various catholic households in Ulster caused great disruption, leaving these families loath to shelter priests thereafter.[96] However, the Anderson episode was indicative of the closing phase of sustained official harassment against catholic clergy. Thereafter, from the early 1620s, with the exception of the anti-catholic campaign under the lords justice in the early 1630s, and some localised episodes, toleration prevailed, though the threat of renewed pressure remained.

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In the 1610s, Roman catholicism in Ulster faced a severe threat from the state church, now established across the northern province in the wake of plantation. In this chapter, we have seen how a small number of continentally-trained clergy made a crucial contribution to the survival of catholicism. Under the direction of David Rothe, the vice-primate, from the early 1610s diocesan leadership was strengthened by the appointment of ordinaries across Ulster, most of whom had some continental training. The reform effort was limited, given that down to 1641 the vast majority of parochial clergy were locally trained. As a result of the new appointees' vigilance and exhortation, the slide towards conformity among the local clergy was halted. Some semblance of clerical discipline was restored.

Simultaneously, the work of the Irish Franciscan college in Louvain (founded 1607) was beginning to have an effect in Ulster. Franciscan missioners were returning to the north, and their preaching fostered a renewed catholic identity among the Ulster Irish. Like

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[93]. Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.83.

[94]. Exchequer orders, Michaelmas 1617, NAI, Ferguson Mss, IA.49.141, p.219.

[95]. Royal pardon to earl of Antrim for receiving priests into his house, 22 May 1621 Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.324; king to lord deputy, 6 Oct 1621, ibid., p.337.

[96]. Jesuit annual letter 1620, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.6.

the vicars-apostolic, the missioners, too, strengthened clerical adherence to Rome. By their preaching, and hearing confessions, the friars responded to the spiritual needs of the people. Apart from the returned friars, and the diocesan ordinaries, there were virtually no other preachers in Ulster. In this decade, catholic reform was handicapped by the coercive civil atmosphere, which placed severe limits on catholic life, especially in areas of British settlement. Catholicism in Ulster, as elsewhere in Ireland, became more expansive with the onset of a more tolerant climate from the early 1620s. To a consideration of the internal dynamics of northern catholicism in the changed climate of the 1620s and 1630s we now must turn.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRIESTS AND PEOPLE IN ULSTER, c.1620-41

The evolution of northern catholicism in the 1620s and 1630s is the theme of this chapter. By the mid-1620s the catholic revival in Ulster was well underway. Toleration set the context for expansion and increasing confidence, and so the chapter opens with a consideration of the civil climate within which the Roman church operated in these decades. The state of catholicism, particularly in Ulster, varied from locality to locality, depending on the density of British settlement, and the degree to which the local gentry were prepared to tolerate or indeed favour the old religion. A particularly striking example of this confessional localism was the seigneurial catholicism of mainly Scottish lords, which merits special attention. In this Scottish catholicism in plantation Ulster, tridentine clergy were especially prominent. The main agents of tridentine renewal, however, were the recently appointed northern bishops. Their struggles with traditionalist clerics will be discussed; the changing social context of the mass, and attempts to impose new norms in marriage jurisdiction, will be considered as indices of the limited nature of reform. These themes, while not exclusive to the north, merit consideration in an Ulster context. The Franciscan resurgence will be explored, focusing on the maintenance of the friars by the catholic population, and noting their prominent role as the main body of continentally trained preachers, within the northern clergy as a whole. However, progress in renewal was strictly circumscribed; given the enduring

poverty of Ulster catholics, the limitations on the numbers and influence of tridentine clergy operating in the north are emphasised. The growth in number of largely traditionalist diocesan clergy, and the continued paucity of tridentine priests, were severe obstacles to the progress of catholic reform. Together with the resurgence of the Franciscans, this expansion of the clergy in number and confidence posed a strain on the tenuous resources of the impoverished catholic community; the resulting tensions between priests and people will be explored.

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Within a few years, the civil climate regarding the continentally trained clergy, even in Ulster, had changed. Down to the early 1620s, catholic clergy, diocesan and religious, were dressed in lay attire, often as soldiers, wearing their hair long.[1] While lay dress remained the clerical norm, in the wake of the toleration of the early 1620s, the harassment of priests by the local authorities was receding. As an indication of the improved environment for catholicism, by 1630 Hugh O'Reilly, the catholic primate, was living in the same parish as the protestant bishop of Kilmore, while Eugene Sweeney, catholic bishop of Kilmore, lived in another parish.[2] There were some exceptions to this trend, as in the wave of political unrest in Donegal in 1627. In spring 1627, Lord Deputy Falkland had the Raphoe priest Glasney O'Cullenan arrested and brought to Dublin castle, because of his role as promoter of Tyrone's cause in the north-west; among books seized on Glassney's arrival in Drogheda from the continent in November 1626 were manifestos pledging support for Tyrone from the Spanish crown.[3] There were occasional raids on religious houses. At the lord deputy's command, Sir Basil Brookes of Fermanagh led a raid on the Franciscan convent at Bundroes, south

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[1]. Promotion of Eugene Sweeney to Kilmore, 1628, C. Giblin, 'The Processus Datariae and the appointment of Irish bishops in the seventeenth century', Franciscan Fathers (eds), Luke Wadding Commemorative Volume (Dublin, 1957), pp 546-8; promotion of Hugh MacCaughwell to Armagh, 1626, ibid., pp 539-42.

[2]. Bishop William Bedell to Archbishop Laud, 1 April 1630, in Mant, History of the Church of Ireland, i, pp 435-7.

[3]. Lord deputy to viscount Killultagh, 29 Apr 1627, PRO SP63/244/650 (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, p.227); on Glasney as political agent, abstract of letters to lord deputy, Mar-Apr [1627], PRO SP63/241/20 (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, p.5, wrongly attributed to 1625); O'Cullenan had acquired a papal grant of a Raphoe parish in Feb 1626, ASV, Dat. ap., Per obitum, vol 32 (1626), fol. 279v.

Donegal.[4] This was probably the raid which occurred in 1626, in which the friars escaped, with the exception of a former provincial, Maurice Dunleavy, who was brought as a prisoner to Dublin.[5] Several Ulster bishops were arrested in the 1620s and 1630s, largely as a result of charges brought by their own recalcitrant clergy.[6] Edmund Dungan, bishop of Down and Connor 1626-9, was accused of high treason by a priest, Patrick Mulvany, who alleged the bishop was in contact with the earl of Tyrone. The bishop became a fugitive, and those who sheltered him were denounced, and imprisoned. To spare these lay people, Dungan presented himself to the lord deputy in Dublin on 28 February 1628, where he remained in prison in the Castle until his death.[7] There were suggestions that Dungan's fate arose at least in part from the fact that he did not have a powerful family who could protect him.[8] Religious houses in Ulster, as elsewhere, together with mass-houses, faced temporary closure in the anti-recusant campaign of 1630-2.[9] Similarly, in 1632, St Patrick's Purgatory, in Lough Derg, County Donegal, was destroyed by order of the lords justice.[10] However, by 1633, with Wentworth's advent as lord deputy, measures against catholicism had largely ceased.

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[4]. Petition of Sir Basil Brookes to Lord Deputy Falkland, n.d., BL Sloane Ms 3827, fol. 201r; on the convent, see C. Mooney, 'The Franciscan friary by the Drowes', Donegal Annual, 3, pp 1-7.

[5]. Hugh MacCaughwell, archbishop of Armagh, to [? Francesco Ingoli], from Rome, 31 July 1626, Coll. Hib., 10, p.40.

[6]. Archbishop Hugh O'Reilly, Bishops John O'Cullenan of Raphoe, and Edmund Dungan of Down and Connor; Bishop Eugene MacSweeney was brought before a court, T. O hAnnrachain, Catholic Reformation in Ireland (Oxford, 2002), pp 42-3; on Archbishop O'Reilly's arrest and imprisonment in 1637, see S. O Mordha, 'Hugh O'Reilly (1581?-1653), a reforming prelate', Breifne, 4 no 13, pp 26-30, 38-9.

[7]. John Roche, bishop of Ferns, to Cardinal Bentivoglio, 11 Aug 1628, Coll. Hib., 11, pp 15-16; Lord Deputy Falkland to Lord Conway, 28 Feb 1628, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, p.315; Mulvany later confessed that he had falsely accused the bishop of treason, 5 Feb 1630, ibid., p.515.

[8]. O hAnnrachain, op.cit., p.46.

[9]. The religious were dispersed, seeking maintenance in the homes of friends or kinsmen, T. Strange OFM to F. Matthews OFM, 24 Nov 1630, Wadding papers, pp 440-1; the situation in Waterford was probably representative of the campaign throughout Ireland, 'the forfeit of all our public oratories, and a cessation from sermons, communialties, and all publicity in our functions', Bishop Comerford to Wadding, 26 Aug 1630, Wadding papers, p.404; the lords justice ordered bishops to take possession of mass-houses, Bishop Bedell to Archbishop Ussher, 18 Sept 1630, J. Ussher, Whole works, xv, p.538; as part of this campaign, religious houses in Raphoe town were subject to the state primate's scrutiny, R. Mant, History of the Church of Ireland, i, p.430.

[10]. On the destruction of Lough Derg, see chapter eight.

More characteristic of official attitudes at local level was a growing reluctance to pursue catholic clergy. Thus in Donegal in 1625-6 it was well known that two leading notables of the county, catholics, were sheltering priests returning from the continent. The provost-marshal did not feel able to move against the gentlemen on that score. When he did arrest them on grounds of maintaining companies of idle people, the solidarity of the county gentry was illustrated in the freeing of the two by their British neighbours. Thus in the plantation era, the emergence of county communities embracing the landed gentry, and including the surviving Irish landowners, may have facilitated the growth of religious toleration for catholics. Already by 1625 catholic clerics were increasing in number in the Ulster localities, and their previous caution in areas of British settlement was no longer necessary; in Donegal they were starting to frequent the towns and garrisons, even drinking there, and it was easy to ascertain where daily mass was being said. That an anti-catholic provost-marshal would not consider moving against catholic clergy without seeking the lord deputy's prior approval was a further sign of the toleration which reigned in Ulster by the mid-1620s.[11]

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In contrast to the dominance of the catholic aristocracy and gentry in the Old English areas, the catholic elite in Ulster was relatively weak. Consequently, in most northern localities seigneurial support for catholicism, embracing maintenance of secular and religious clergy, together with protection of priests and mass venues, was much more tenuous than in Leinster and Munster. Nevertheless, in this as in so many areas of catholic life, a differential rate of change prevailed in the various localities. As late as 1617 in north County Down, a form of gentry catholicism still prevailed; on the occasion of a gentleman's funeral, one of the priests rode on his horse at the head of the funeral procession.[12] Even in Ulster, lordly support of catholicism influenced the

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[11]. Robert Cartwright, provost-marshal, to lord deputy, 28 Jan 1626, BL Sloane Ms 3827, ff 62-3 (printed in R. Hunter, 'The settler population of an Ulster plantation county', Donegal Annual, 10 no 2, pp 150-2).

[12]. One of the priests 'was receiving the benevolence and devotion of divers gentlemen and others ... and upon receipt of every gift the aforesaid priest caused the women to cry many blessings upon the soul of some of the parties friends deceased of him that did send the gift, and as the gift was in greatness so did the priest cry more blessings', 'Examination Touching a Popish Funeral' (San Marino, California, Huntington Library, Hastings MS 15,385), quoted in Canny,

denominational landscape in some areas. Down to 1641 there were four catholic peers in the north, two Irish (Maginnis created viscount Iveagh in 1623, and Maguire, created baron Enniskillen in 1628) and two of Scottish background (Randal MacDonnell, created viscount Dunluce in 1618, and earl of Antrim in 1620, and the Hamiltons, earls of Abercorn since 1606).[13] With the exception of the Hamiltons, who favoured the Jesuits, these families were patrons of the Franciscans. The friars were tutors to their children, some family members joined the order, and these families were patronising the literary endeavours of the Franciscans. The protection which a noble could provide a catholic bishop was a consideration in the appointment in 1630 of viscount Iveagh's nephew, the Franciscan Bonaventure Maginnis, as bishop of Down and Connor.[14]

Similarly, the support and maintenance which the earl of Antrim could offer a bishop moved the northern prelates to ask that the earl's natural son, the Franciscan Francis MacDonnell, be made bishop of Clogher.[15] The MacDonnells earls of Antrim had strong links to the friars; the family patronised the convent of the Third Order at Bonamargy, and the first earl chose to be buried there, while his natural son Francis became a Franciscan.[16] The earl was renowned for the support he gave catholicism in his territory of north Antrim, maintaining priests in his residences there.[17] In County Antrim in the mid-1620s, the priest Brian McTeig, educated in Spain, was preaching to large crowds gathered in the woods. McTeig was attracting greater numbers to his ecclesiastical court, where he was offering divorces, than attended the state bishop's court. Perhaps because of the earl's protection, legal measures against such men were

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Making Ireland British, p.447.

[13]. G.E.C., Complete Peerage.

[14]. D. Cregan, 'The social and cultural background of a counter-reformation episcopate, 1618-60', A. Cosgrove and D. McCartney (eds), Studies in Irish history presented to R. Dudley Edwards (Dublin, 1979), pp 85-117 (here, pp 92-3).

[15]. Petition of northern bishops, 22 July 1632, G. Hill, MacDonnells of Antrim (Belfast, 1873), pp 223-4, 232.

[16]. The first earl died in 1636, and was buried at Bonamargy, Hill, The MacDonnells of Antrim, p.246; C. Giblin, 'Francis MacDonnell OFM', Seanchas Ard Mhacha, 8 no 1, pp 44-54; Wadding papers, p.487.

[17]. The earl was 'a zealous protector of religion, and has deserved well of the church', petition of northern bishops for promotion of Francis MacDonnell to see of Clogher, 22 July 1632, Hill, MacDonnells of Antrim, pp 223-4, 232.

largely ineffective. An indictment on a charge of praemunire did little to curb McTeig's activities.[18]

Communities of Scots catholics were emerging in Ulster from the 1610s, the result of settlement on the estates of Scots noblemen, as on the lands of Sir Randall MacDonnell, Earl of Antrim, in north Antrim. The earl welcomed the ministry of Jesuits to the Scots in his lordship, where an Irish father was working in 1617.[19] Around 1621, Patrick Anderson SJ (1575-1624) was staying with the earl in his castle at Dunluce.[20] Indeed Anderson was also visiting at the home of Sir James Hamilton, in Killyleagh castle, County Down. The distinguished Jesuit's stay with this leading Scottish planter reflected their common social and cultural background; Anderson's reputation or family background in Scotland, transcending the denominational divide, may have accounted for his reception; further, the planter's intellectual interests led him to cultivate the company of the learned, which could also account for the Scottish Jesuit's visit.[21] Such sojurns afforded opportunities for conversions to catholicism, especially among women and servants. It is possible that Jesuits ministering to the Scots in north Antrim also visited their fellow-countrymen on the Hamilton proportions in south Londonderry.

A particularly well-developed form of seigneurial catholicism was to be found in the Scottish plantation settlement in Strabane barony, County Tyrone, under the Hamiltons, the chief of whom was the first earl of Abercorn.[22] However, it was Sir George Hamilton, the first earl's brother, who was acknowledged to have been 'the first

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[18]. [From lord deputy's letters], 12 Apr 1627, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, p.297; McTeig (or McTiegue) may have been the Bernardus Thadeus, who along with Thadeus Clery and Manutius Haeneus were Irish students at Valentia in 1619, Wadding papers, p.13.

[19]. Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.83.

[20] King to lord deputy, 6 Oct 1621, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.337; Anderson was appointed first rector of the Scots College, Rome, in 1615, H. Foley, Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus, vii part 1 (London, 1882), p.9.

[21]. Sir James Hamilton welcomed strangers and scholars at Killyleagh, T. Lowry (ed.), The Hamilton Manuscripts (Belfast, [1867]), p.31; Killyleagh castle, Hill, Plantation, p.452.

[22]. Several generations of the family were catholic: Lord Claud Hamilton, youngest son of the Duke of Chatellerault, was received into the Roman Catholic Church by a Jesuit, James Tyrie, in 1580; his son and heir, James Hamilton (d.1618), was created earl of Abercorn in 1606, whose son and heir, James, died in 1670, W. Forbes-Leith (ed.), Narratives of Scottish Catholics under Mary Stuart and James VI (Edinburgh, 1885), pp 372-3.

and chief planter of popery in the barony of Strabane'.[23] As a result of the conglomeration of five proportions in Sir George's hands, by the late 1620s he was the leading man in Strabane barony; under his leadership the barony was becoming a Scottish catholic colony.[24] The heirs of the earl of Abercorn and Sir Claud Hamilton (two Strabane undertakers, both brothers), were in the guardianship of Sir George, who reared them as catholics; thus the Master of Abercorn and Sir William Hamilton were catholic owners of proportions in Strabane barony in the late 1620s.[25] In 1629 there was a rumour that the earl of Annandale was about to sell his proportion to Sir William Hamilton. Sir George Hamilton's brother-in-law was expected to take over another proportion, that of Sir John Stewart. These anticipated landownership changes reinforced the fear of a growing catholic preponderance in the Strabane area.[26] At a lower social level, Scottish catholic migration to Strabane featured in the 1620s. The earl's brother actively promoted catholicism, welcoming exiled Scottish papists, who included converts to catholicism, together with priests and Jesuits. Under Sir George's influence, active proslytism took place among the Scots settlers. He himself sought converts in the Ulster areas where he resided.[27] Similarly, Michael Chamberlain, the Irish Jesuit staying with Sir George about 1629, was noted as 'a pernicious Jesuit who has perverted many'.[28]

Pressure on protestants to convert took a variety of forms. It was believed that landlords, such as the Master of Abercorn, favoured catholics at the expense of protestants. This policy was strengthened by the fact that several undertakers' agents

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[23]. Bishop Downham of Derry, 'Informations concerning the Scottish recusants in the barony of Strabane', 9 Jan 1630, PRO SP63/250/22 VI (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, pp 512-3).

[24]. Short biography of Sir George Hamilton, M. Perceval-Maxwell, The Scottish migration to Ulster in the reign of James I (London, 1973), p.346; bishop of Derry to lord chancellor of Ireland, 21 Dec 1629, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, p.510.

[25]. Bishop of Derry to lord chancellor of Ireland, 21 Dec 1629, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, p.510.

[26]. Earl of Cork to Dorchester, Jan 1630, PRO SP63/250/22.

[27]. Bishop of Derry, 'Informations'; bishop of Derry to lord chancellor, 21 Dec 1629, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, p.510; Sir George Hamilton made many converts in the areas where he had lived, both in Strabane, County Londonderry, and Killybegs, County Donegal, deposition of Thomas Plunkett, 'lately reclaimed from popery', 4 Jan 1630, PRO SP63/250/22 V (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, p.512).

[28]. Bishop of Derry, 'Informations'.

were Scots papists.[29] Other prominent recusants included the physician, Dr Barkley (and his wife), 'an apostate from the true religion'; like many of the Scots religious exiles, Barkley actively promoted catholicism in the barony, with regular masses and clergy meetings in his house. Exploiting his professional contacts, the physician sought deathbed conversions to catholicism. As an educated layman, he was a vigorous and articulate opponent of protestantism. By about 1620, the merchant, James Ferrall, was playing a leading role in Strabane catholicism. It was in his house that mass was most regularly said, and there too priests most usually stayed.[30] Thus it was feared that, faced with the combined religious pressure of these landlords and other worthies, the Scottish colony in Strabane would become overwhelmingly catholic.[31]

As in the Old English areas, in Strabane barony the continentally-trained clergy (the vicar-apostolic, and the Jesuits) habitually celebrated mass in the halls of the local gentry, who were the Scottish planters. Michael Chamberlain, while staying with Sir George Hamilton, used to say mass twice on Sundays, once in or about Strabane, at the house of either James Ferrall or Robert Anger, attended by about forty Scots, in addition to the Irish. The Jesuit used to say a second mass at Sir George Hamilton's.[32] This was in contrast to the Londoners' proportions, where by 1630 a network of mass-houses had been established, under the direction of the local priests. Most exceptionally in Ulster, because of the Hamiltons' patronage, tridentine clergy were probably the norm in Strabane barony.

Sir George favoured the Jesuits, both Scottish and Irish, inviting them to minister on the Ulster estates. The choice was based partly on the family's Jesuit connections in Scotland, going back to 1580, and partly on the need for clergy able to minister to both landlords and tenants, English-speaking Lowland Scots. Hence some of the priests and Jesuits were Scottish. Active proselytism was encouraged. Sir William Hamilton sought the conversion of his wife (a daughter-in-law of viscount Ards) by means of Michael

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[29]. James Crayford, agent of countess of Abercorn; Robert Anger, Sir George Hamilton's steward; bishop of Derry, 'Informations'.

[30]. Bishop of Derry, 'Informations'.

[31]. Bishop of Derry to viscount Loftus, 2 Dec 1629, PRO SP63/250/22 II; Cork to Dorchester, Jan 1630, PRO SP63/250/22.

[32]. Deposition of Thomas Plunkett.

Chamberlain (alias Blackney), the Drogheda-born Jesuit active in Strabane, who also effected the conversion of her maid.[33] Thus, within northern catholicism, down to 1641 the Scots catholics were a distinctive group, and were ministered to accordingly. Nevertheless, congregations at mass were comprised of both Scottish and Irish.

Further, the Scottish colony contributed to the flourishing condition of catholicism within Derry diocese in the 1620s and 1630s. Attracted by the security afforded by the Hamiltons, Strabane barony served as a centre for catholic clergy. In the early 1620s, the Derry ordinary, Patrick Matthews, was based in Dundalk. However, by the late 1620s, the vicar-general was living among the Scots of Strabane: both Eugene MacSweeney ('Owen McSwyne') and his successor, Tirlogh O'Kelly, were living at the house of James Ferrall, where there was daily mass. In a further sign of catholic normality, regular assemblies of the Derry clergy were taking place in Strabane barony, perhaps as often as twice a year. Between sixty and eighty priests used to attend. A clerical gathering took place there for a week in May 1628, many staying at the home of James Ferrall, and the remainder about the town of Strabane.[34] Arrangements for the financing and sending of agents to Rome were made at the meeting.[35] Similarly, a large convocation of local priests (together with the handful of visiting Jesuits) took place in November 1629, at which Tirlogh O'Kelly, just returned from studies at the Irish college, Rome, was installed as vicar-apostolic of the diocese, in place of Eugene MacSweeney, who was promoted bishop of Kilmore. Political news also featured. O'Kelly reported on the readiness of the Irish regiment in the Low Countries, under its leaders, the sons of Tyrone and Tyrconnell, to invade Ireland. At the same gathering, a Franciscan, Conor McLaughlin, was appointed to ascertain the level of support for the Irish regiment, were it to land in Ireland; the friar had already travelled through much of the kingdom, and, in the spring, he was to take his report from Drogheda to the Netherlands and Spain.[36]

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[33]. Bishop of Derry, 'Informations'.

[34]. Deposition of Thomas Plunkett.

[35]. From Sir William Stewart's letters, 30 June 1628, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, p.355.

[36]. Deposition of Thomas Plunkett; viaticum for Tirlogh O'Kelly, alumnus of Irish college, Rome, acta, 8 May 1628, Propaganda Fide, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.47.

By about 1620, partly due to the influence of the Hamiltons, the more coercive measures against catholicism in Derry diocese were effectively in abeyance. Around 1621, George Downham, bishop of Derry, excommunicated the aforementioned James Ferrall, and in due course Ferrall was in theory subject to the writ 'De excommunicato capiendo'; nevertheless, the sheriffs failed to implement the measure. The full extent of Hamilton protection of catholicism, however, was demonstrated during the anti-catholic campaign of 1629-30. In the bishop's visitation of November, 1629, presentments were made of many British recusants, and of the Master of Abercorn as their leader. No action was taken by the civil authorities.[37] On foot of the proclamation against catholic clergy (April 1629), Lord Deputy Falkland had instructed Bishop Downham to have the vicar-apostolic together with the Jesuit, Chamberlain, arrested. However, in the exercise of episcopal authority, the support of the civil power was usually absent, and in consequence the prelate's authority was negligible. Those called to appear before the bishop merely ignored the summons.[38] When the bishop, and the provost of Strabane, sought to arrest the priests, the vicar-apostolic was taking refuge with the Master of Abercorn, the earl's heir.

Ultimately, the security of Strabane catholicism rested on the court connections of the Abercorns. This consideration was recognised by the different parties to the denominational struggle. Leading local recusants argued that, as catholics were tolerated at court, those in remote areas, such as themselves, should not be questioned.[39] Bishop Downham, and even Lord Justice Cork, not to mention the provost of Strabane (to whom the implementation of anti-catholic measures fell), recognised the threat which the royal connections of the Hamiltons represented. They feared the court influence the Hamiltons could bring to bear in defence of catholicism, and against those seeking to enforce the anti-recusancy measures in their Ulster territories.[40] Nevertheless Sir George Hamilton was detained in Dublin, about Christmas 1629, probably at the

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[37]. Bishop of Derry to viscount Loftus, 2 Dec 1629, PRO SP63/250/22 II.

[38]. In the absence of a letter from the lords justice, such as the bishop had previously from Falkland, 'scarce any of the natives, or any of the British recusants will appear at my court', bishop of Derry to lords justice, 9 Jan 1630, PRO SP63/250/22 IV (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, p.511).

[39]. Bishop of Derry to viscount Loftus, 2 Dec 1629, PRO SP63/250/22 II.

[40]. Earl of Cork to Dorchester, Jan 1630, PRO SP63/250/22.

instigation of the bishop of Derry.[41] It was believed locally that the Master of Abercorn had been speedily alerted from Dublin about the crackdown on priests in his locality, and was hurrying to court to seek a stay of execution.[42]

The Londoners' plantation, too, was included in Derry diocese. The Londoners likewise were favouring catholicism on their plantation - by the early 1630s a mass-house had been erected on each proportion, under the priests' direction. The Londoners treated the priests as social equals, and on their plantation catholic clergy were favoured in their lawsuits.[43] Given this exceptionally benevolent climate for catholicism in Derry diocese, it was not surprising that in the 1630s the vacant see of Derry was a position sought after by catholic prelates.[44]

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However, across Ulster the catholic infrastructure was weak, at least down to the mid-1620s. There was a shortage of diocesan clergy in the wake of the Nine Years War, and in some parts at least this lasted down to the early 1620s. In places, up to five parishes were being served by one priest. In this way the cost of maintenance was spread over a larger number of people, although with a consequent lessening of the availability of the sacraments. The Franciscans were often the only priests ministering in these areas. Indeed, given the paucity of continentally trained diocesan clergy for the entire period down to 1641, the Franciscans provided the vast majority of preachers in Ulster.[45] By the mid-1620s the situation was changing. A plentiful supply of priests in the Ulster parishes was emerging about 1630, and probably earlier. Distribution was still variable. In the diocese of Kilmore and in County Londonderry each parish had at

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[41]. [William Bellew] to [Wadding], 4 Jan 1630, Wadding papers, p.331.

[42]. Bishop of Derry to lord chancellor of Ireland, 2 Dec 1629, PRO SP63/250/22 II (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, pp 510-1); bishop of Derry to lords justice, 9 Jan 1630, PRO SP63/250/22 IV.

[43]. 'The diocese of Derry in 1631', Archiv. Hib., 5, pp 5-6.

[44]. In 1636, Eugene Sweeney, catholic bishop of Kilmore, was seeking a transfer to the see of Derry, acta, Propaganda Fide, 30 Dec 1636, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.102; John Cullenan, bishop of Raphoe, desired a similar move, R. Nugent to Jesuit general, 15 Sept 1636, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.226.

[45]. Down to the early 1620s, apart from a few diocesan ordinaries, the friars were the only preachers in Ulster, Wadding papers, pp 32-3, 37-8.

least one priest, and sometimes several.[46] By contrast, in the early 1630s, south-west Down - under the jurisdiction of the former Cistercian abbey of Newry - was without a pastor, until two Cistercian monks, natives of the area, were sent to minister there.[47] With the appointment of catholic bishops in Ulster from the mid-1620s, if anything the numbers of priests being ordained was increasing.[48]

One index of catholic revival was the renewed diocesan leadership. By 1630, the revived catholic episcopate in Ulster was still in its infancy.[49] Only with the advent of resident bishops in a couple of northern dioceses from the mid-1620s was sustained attention to clerical reform possible, and then only in those dioceses; leadership for reform was not present in equal measure across the province. Poverty precluded the appointment of bishops in all the northern dioceses.[50] The government campaign against catholic clergy in 1629-30 impeded the exercise of episcopal authority.[51] Exceptionally, in Raphoe diocese, unusual stability and continuity in administration was ensured by the long tenure of John O'Cullenan (d.1661). He had been appointed vicar-apostolic in 1621, and promoted bishop in 1629.[52] In some instances, diocesan leadership was

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[46]. Bedell to Laud, 1 Apr 1630, Mant, History of the Church of Ireland, i, pp 435-7; in the dioceses of Kilmore and Ardagh, there were 66 priests, as well as the catholic primate and the bishop of Kilmore, Bedell to Ussher, 18 Sept 1630, J. Ussher, Whole works, xv, p.535; Derry 1631, Archiv. Hib., 5, pp 1-6.

[47]. M. Hartry, Triumphalia Sanctae Crucis [1639], ed. D. Murphy (Dublin, 1891), p.279.

[48]. In the early 1630s, Bishop Eugene Sweeney (or MacSweeney) of Kilmore was ordaining 'many priests' in his diocese, Kilmore 1634, Archiv. Hib., 5, p.83.

[49] Armagh had a resident bishop from 1628, while Kilmore had one between 1626 and 1628, and a bishop was only appointed again in 1630. Effective episcopal leadership began in the diocese of Down and Connor with the advent of Bishop Bonaventure Maginnis in 1630, for the previous incumbent, Edmund Dungan, bishop 1626-9, spent much of his episcopate evading arrest and in jail; N.H.I., ix, pp 341-8.

[50]. Propaganda noted that there was a superfluity of bishops in Ireland, and that the required dignity was missing because of a lack of the necessary maintenance, acta, 16 Mar 1633, Propaganda fide, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.67; down to 1641, bishops were appointed only to Armagh, Kilmore, Raphoe, and Down and Connor, N.H.I., ix, pp 337-53.

[51]. In Jan 1630, Patrick Cahill, the Dublin priest, was committed to the Castle for arranging to have seals of office for Primate Hugh O'Reilly and Eugene Sweeney, nominated as bishop of Kilmore, graven in the city, Lismore papers, iii, p.14; Bonaventure Maginnis, recently appointed bishop of Down and Connor, complained to Propaganda that the activity of heretics inhibited him in using the breviary, acta, 22 Nov 1630, Propaganda Fide, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.55.

[52]. John O'Cullenan, N.H.I., ix, p.353; a collection of Gaelic praise poetry in his honour survives, John MacErlean (ed.), 'Eoin O Cuileannain bishop of Raphoe 1625-61', Archiv. Hib., 1,

limited by the fact that ordinaries were not resident. In the early 1630s Heber MacMahon, vicar-general of Clogher diocese 1627-42, was simultaneously president of the Irish college for secular clergy in Louvain, and living there; his substitute in the diocese was a local priest who was probably educated in Spain, Thomas McKiernan (or McKearnan).[53] The confusion of competing jurisdictions lay at the root of so many tensions among the clergy. Thus in 1630, while in Louvain, Heber MacMahon supervised the appointment of a priest of Raphoe diocese to a parish in Elphin diocese.[54] No ordinary was named for Dromore diocese, 1630-47; this vacuum may account for the inordinate number of papal provisions 'per obitum' made in the diocese in the 1630s.[55] Some bishops appointed at the behest of the northern earls were considered unworthy or useless, and the complainants may have had one or several of the northern prelates in mind.[56] Thus even with the partial re-establishment of the hierarchy in Ulster by 1630, diocesan leadership varied in quality. Nevertheless, by the mid-1630s the structures of diocesan and provincial governance - regular meetings of the clergy and bishop, and of the bishops of the northern province - were in place.[57] It was noted in 1632 that the catholic prelates in Ireland, in their exercise of spiritual jurisdiction, 'doe

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pp 77-121.

[53]. Hugh O'Reilly, archbishop of Armagh, and Thomas McKearnan, to cardinal protector, 11 Mar 1631, Wadding papers, p.486; McKearnan may have been a student at the Irish college, Seville, in the late 1610s, HMC Egmont, i, pt 1, pp 56-7; MacMahon as president, Irish college, Louvain, acta, July 1631, Propaganda Fide, Archiv. Hib., 22, pp 58-9.

[54]. Heber MacMahon, vicar-general of Clogher diocese from 1627 until his transfer as bishop of Down and Connor in 1642, N.H.I., ix, p.341; D. Cregan, 'The social and cultural background of a counter-reformation episcopate, 1618-60', p.93; John Kearuil appointed to Drumclion parish, Elphin diocese, Archiv. Hib., 15, pp 4-5.

[55]. N.H.I., ix, p.348; in 1630, Bonaventure Maginnis, bishop of neighbouring Down and Connor, asked Propaganda to be administrator of Dromore, acta, 23 Dec 1630, Propaganda Fide, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.56; between 1630-40 there were 16 papal provisions 'per obitum' in this small diocese, in contrast to 7 in Kilmore diocese, ASV, Dataria ap., Per obitum, 1630-40.

[56]. Acta, 16 Mar 1633, Propaganda Fide, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.67; Paul Harris, an English secular priest based in Dublin, virulently anti-Franciscan, has left this portrait of Bishop Maginnis 'a man in his behaviour more like an Italian Bannito, or some debosht Russian, than a sacred bishop, as may well be seen by his fantastic acoutrements coupled to his Ultiq manners, having his locks hanging over his rich face, and down his shoulders, even to the center of his back, strouting himself at every third word upon his tiptoes, as if he were angry at his parents for not making him a foot longer', P. Harris, Fratres sobrii estote (n.p., 1634), p.65.

[57]. Kilmore 1634, Archiv. Hib., 5, pp 82-4; Down and Connor 1639, Archiv. Hib., 5, pp 105-7; acta, 4 Mar 1638, Propaganda fide, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.106.

usually keepe sollemne and open courte, and hear and decide causes, and tax and fine the king's popish subjects at their pleasure'.[58] However, in this regard, a distinction is probably necessary between the relative security enjoyed by catholic ecclesiastics in Old English areas, and the more precarious conditions still prevailing in Ulster.

Poverty was endemic. In 1630, in south Ulster, it was noted that the people were very poor, especially because of recent shortages of corn, and illness in cattle.[59] In the late 1620s, south Ulster experienced a wave of thefts, fuelled by poverty, which affected the poorer inhabitants in particular. One correspondent referred to 'the borderers who it seems have sharp hungry stomachs that will steal lean sheep at this season of the year'.[60] Another writer noted '[t]he daily outcries of the poorer sort of the inhabitants of the counties of Meath and Cavan ... exclaiming against the many stealths now more than formerly committed on them'.[61] Against this background of widespread stealing on the borders of Ulster and the Pale, the bishops shared the concerns of the local elite, and attempted to stamp out drunken carousing, robberies and thefts. Their efforts at promoting social harmony were appreciated by the local protestant community.[62] Bishops were involved in settling quarrels among the nobility, the rest of the laity, and among the clergy.

The acute poverty of these decades had an impact on relations between clergy and laity, and made it all the more difficult for the catholic community to support the increasing number of priests. Donegal catholics were particularly impoverished. The limited scope of one Ulster bishop in the 1630s may be noted in the case of the bishop of Raphoe. In 1636, because of the poverty of his diocese, John Cullenan, bishop of Raphoe, was seeking a transfer to the vacant diocese of Derry. Cullenan complained that his diocese was full of protestants and puritans, both English and Scottish, leaving

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[58]. Lord Aungier to Wentworth, 28 June 1632, Sheffield City Libraries, WWM, Str P 1, ff 43v-44r.

[59]. Bedell to Laud, 1 April 1630, in Mant, History of the Church of Ireland, i, pp 435-7.

[60]. To Sir William Windsor, 15 Feb 1628, BL Sloane Ms 3827, fol.122r.

[61]. Sir Robert Forth to [Lord Deputy Falkland], 26 Jan 1629, BL Sloane Ms 3827, fol.155r.

[62]. Kilmore 1629, Archiv. Hib., 5, p.81.

him scarcely any maintenance, and there was not a family to receive him.[63] By autumn 1638, the bishop, old and in poor health, was living in the Pale, for he had no permanent abode; if freed from the obligation to present himself to the justices, he would leave Ireland, for he felt he could not work in his diocese.[64]

In the 1630s, the sacrament of confirmation was administered by the handful of recently appointed bishops at large outdoor gatherings, held in their own and neighbouring dioceses; these ceremonies were drawing huge crowds of children and adults.[65]

By 1630, preaching, also, would appear to have been on the increase, and bishops themselves were among the preachers. Popular missions were another episcopally-inspired means of reform - these were taking place frequently in Kilmore diocese in the early 1630s.[66] While preachers were drawn from both secular and regular clergy, returning from their training on the continent, the missions were generally directed by the regulars, principally the Franciscans.

Perhaps the greatest problem facing the Ulster bishops in the 1630s arose from the recalcitrant among their clergy, still overwhelmingly traditionalist. From the early 1620s, clergy numbers were increasing dramatically in Ireland. However, the quality was poor. By the early 1630s, the growing number of priests was becoming a problem, leading to impoverishment of existing catholic clergy. The bishops were seeking to exercise some control over admission to orders, with limited success. Numerous candidates were still being ordained under the older, less rigorous regime for ordination that prevailed in Ireland, when there were few resident bishops.[67] Many ordinandi were

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[63]. Robert Nugent to Jesuit general, 15 Sept 1636, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.226.

[64]. Bishop Cullenan to Philip Clery, his nephew, at Rome, 28 Oct 1638, Coll. Hib., 12, pp 42-3.

[65]. In the late 1620s, Bishop Hugh O'Reilly of Kilmore claimed to have confirmed over 1500 people each day, in a three-week period, and his successor was also busy confirming there and in neighbouring dioceses; in the years 1635-9 Bishop Maginnis of Down and Connor claimed to have confirmed more than 20,000 people, Archiv. Hib., 5, pp 80-4, 106.

[66]. Kilmore 1634, Archiv. Hib., 5, p.83.

[67]. Acta, 19 Jan 1635, Propaganda fide, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.90; it was customary for these candidates to get Irishmen in the Roman curia to sign the required testimonial letters, which were accepted by the Datary, acta, 1 Sept 1635, Propaganda fide, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.95.

deemed ignorant and unfit, and as candidates had been rejected by their own ordinaries; the bishops protested regularly to Propaganda about the practice of ordaining these men. Given the prevalence of continentally educated priests in Meath diocese since the 1610s, these less suitable clergy were a feature of the poorer, Gaelic dioceses of the north and midlands. These men were a cause of scandal in the catholic community, and of ridicule among the protestants.[68] For example, in 1632 Gerald Offeral of Ardagh diocese received papal permission to be ordained, even though he had been guilty of bigamy.[69] The bishops were angry that many unsuitable men were being appointed to parishes by papal provision.[70] These appointments, without consultation with the ordinary, led to frequent rows.[71] Thus Bishop Maginnis was asking that benefices in his diocese of Down and Connor be conferred at Rome only on those clerics who had letters of recommendation from him.[72]

Into the 1630s, the custom continued whereby sons were following their fathers into the priesthood. Some bishops were concerned at this trend.[73] Propaganda fide complained of the large numbers of dispensations being granted to Irish ordinandi who were sons of priests.[74] The trend was particularly noticeable in Ulster, reflecting the survival of the ecclesiastical role of the herenagh families. Direct evidence of individual cases is rare. Bernard Gowan, a priest of Clogher diocese in the early 1620s, was the

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[68]. Acta, 28 Aug 1634, Propaganda fide, Archiv. Hib., 22, pp 84-5; memo for Propaganda, [1635], Coll. Hib., 10, p.23.

[69]. Apostolic letter, Urban VIII, Archiv. Hib., 19, p.139.

[70]. Acta, 5 Aug 1630, Propaganda fide, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.54.

[71]. Acta, 16 Mar 1633, Propaganda fide, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.69; these problems were not confined to traditionally gaelic areas: in the mid-1630s, Bishop Comerford of Waterford and Lismore was complaining of this trend, and that too many priests, ordained abroad ad titulum missionis, unlearned and unzealous, were returning to Ireland; these were vagrants, attached to no diocese, and a cause of great scandal, M. Olden (ed.), 'Episcopal comments on the 'Decreta pro recto regimine ecclesiarum Hiberniae', 1635-6', Archiv. Hib., 27, pp 3, 5.

[72]. Bishop Maginnis to F. Ingoli, 31 July 1633, Coll. Hib., 12, p.22; same to cardinals of Holy Office, 1 June 1634, Coll. Hib., 10, p.10.

[73]. The Vatican Datary should be slow to grant dispensations to Irishmen, sons of priests, who wish to be ordained, John Roche, bishop of Ferns, to [?Cardinal Ludovisi], 12 Nov 1627, Coll. Hib., 11, p.15.

[74]. Acta, 16 Mar 1633, Propaganda fide, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.69; 16 Dec 1633, ibid., p.79.

son of a priest[75], as was Philip Dychan, a priest of Connor diocese in the late 1620s.[76] Indirect evidence is more plentiful. Instances of clerical concubinage were to be found across the north in the early seventeenth century.[77] In the small diocese of Dromore, there were at least eight members of the McDonnagan (or Dungan) family who were priests in the years 1609-36.[78] John Magin was dean of Dromore. On his death he was succeeded in 1633 by Patrick Magin; in the same year, John, William, Arthur and Thady Magin - all priests - also acquired benefices in the diocese by papal provision.[79] It is possible that these were sons of the late dean. Similarly, in Derry diocese, the three members of the O'Hegarty family who were priests in the early 1630s were probably related to Manas O'Hegarty, secretary to Bishop Redmund O'Gallagher (d.1600), vicar of Fahan by 1609, and vicar forane of Fahan deanery by about 1620.[80] Sonship may have been present where one family member succeeded another in ecclesiastical office.[81] Priests with families to support had special reason to insist on clerical dues and fees. Other aspects of clerical behaviour in Ulster, as in Ireland more generally, gave

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[75]. Clogher diocese, ASV, Dataria apostolica, Per obitum, vol 30 (1624), fol.72r.

[76]. Connor diocese, ASV, Dataria ap., Per obitum, vol 35 (1629), July [no pagination]; the priest Denis Dychan may have been another son, ibid., Aug.

[77]. Concubinage (and marriage in a few cases) were grounds for deprivation cited in the 'Per obitum' provisions: Derry 1608, vol 16, fol.81v, Derry 1610, vol 18, fol.75r, Dromore 1615, vol 22, fol.76v, Raphoe 1615, vol 22, fol.217r, Clogher 1616, vol 23, fol.57r, Clogher 1619, vol 24, fol.66v, Armagh 1624, vol 30, fol.2r, Raphoe 1626, vol 32, fol.280v.

[78]. Dromore diocese, ASV, Dataria ap., Per obitum, vol 17 (1609) to vol 39 (1636): Donal MacDonnagan (1609), Patrick McDonnagan (1611 - Down diocese), Martin Mcconnagan (1615), Thomas Donnagan (1615), Donatus Donnagan (1636); Edmund Dungan, bishop of Down and Connor 1626-9; in 1633, Maurice Macoganan was deprived of a Dromore parish, and was succeeded by a priest of the same name, ASV Dataria ap., Per obitum, vol 38 (1633), fol. 101; Cormac O'Sheil died, and was replaced as archdeacon in 1633 by Thomas O'Sheil, ibid., fol.100r.

[79]. Dromore diocese, ASV, Dataria ap., Per obitum, vol 38 (1633); Manas Magin, who acquired a titular grant of the Cistercian monastery in Dromore diocese in 1611, was probably another family member, ibid., vol 19, fol.81r.

[80]. Derry 1631, Archiv. Hib., 5, p.3; 1609 survey of Clogher, Derry, Raphoe, TCD Ms 10,383, p.11; Manas O'Hegarty, Moody and Simms (eds), The bishopric of Derry (Dublin, 1968), i, pp 143-4.

[81]. ASV, Dataria ap., Per obitum: Derry, 1609, vol 17, fol.56v, Ardagh 1612, vol 20, fol.2v, Clogher 1621, vol 26, fol.62v, Raphoe 1622, vol 27, fol.273r, Clogher 1625, vol 31, fol.95r, Dromore 1633, vol 38, fol.100r.

reformers cause for concern. The low status of clergy was reinforced by their socialising in taverns, in the company of women and heretics.[82]

However, by 1630 the beginnings of episcopal attempts at reform in Ulster can be discerned.[83] One means of clerical reform was the selection of suitable candidates for ordination; while bishop of Kilmore in the late 1620s, Hugh O'Reilly claimed to have ordained only these; one criterion of suitability was being born of lawfully married parents, though because of the contemporary confusion over valid marriage, criteria of legitimacy may have been less than clear as a result. Dispensations from illegitimacy among ordinands were common.[84] Episcopal efforts at selection were probably weak; in the 1630s, Bishop Eugene MacSweeney of Kilmore claimed to have ordained many, and consequently selection doubtless suffered.[85] Most of the reform effort had to focus on the existing clergy. In the absence of adequate maintenance, an attempt was being made to improve the lowly social standing of the majority of the diocesan clergy, by insisting on decent dress, and on giving up scandalous behaviour. Such behaviour included drunkenness, and concubinage. Among the means used by bishops to promote clerical reform was regular visitation of the parishes - in the early 1630s the bishop of Kilmore used visit twice a year. Further, bishops were beginning to hold regular meetings of the diocesan clergy.[86] In this setting, the bishop used to proclaim statutes touching the reform of clergy and laity, and in the twice-yearly synods held in Down and Connor by the late 1630s, the prelate was wont to examine the doctrine and mores

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[82]. Priests and ministers as drinking companions, as noted in Ireland (including Ulster) in 1619, W. Lithgow, The total discourse of the rare adventures (London, 1632), p.435; acta, 11 July 1633, Propaganda fide, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.72; 16 Dec 1633, ibid., p.82.

[83]. On the reforming efforts of one Ulster bishop down to 1641, see S. O Mordha, 'Hugh O'Reilly (1581?-1653), a reforming primate', Breifne, 4 no 13, pp 1-41.

[84]. ASV, Dataria ap., Per obitum, Eugene Chiauil, Clogher, 1612, fol.59v; Patrick Fleming, Armagh 1619, fol.12r; Patrick Matthews, Armagh 1626, fol.16r; James Falgan, Armagh 1627, fol.17v; Donald Macheonani, Down diocese, 1632, 'Vatican archives: Instrumenta miscellanea', Archiv. Hib., 19, p.139.

[85]. Kilmore 1634, Archiv. Hib., 5, pp 82-4.

[86]. The assembly in Raphoe held by Bishop Cullenan about 1629 may have been one of these, Mant, History of the Church of Ireland, i, p.430; similarly, twice-yearly clergy meetings were taking place in Derry diocese in the late 1620s, testimony of T. Plunkett [1630], PRO SP63/250/22 V; Sir William Stewart, 23 June 1628, PRO SP63/246/84 I; diocesan synod for Armagh, [1633], Bedell to Lord Deputy Wentworth, [5 Nov] 1633, W. Knowler (ed.), The earl of Strafforde's letters and despatches (London, 1739), i, p.148.

of the clergy with the help of the synodal examiners. By 1639, he was reporting considerable progress in the reform of the clergy, though it is not possible to verify his assertion.[87] Provincial synods of the northern province were a further instrument of reform. Under the chairmanship of the primate, Hugh O'Reilly, provincial synods were held in 1632, in Ardagh, and in 1637.[88]

Efforts at clerical reform met stiff resistance in the course of the 1630s. The bishop, where he could, used to deprive recalcitrant clergy, or expel them from the diocese, as happened in Kilmore under Bishop Hugh O'Reilly. This left a legacy of discontent which erupted under his successor in the early 1630s. At this initial stage of reform, the bishops had first to assert authority over the existing clergy, grown lax in the absence of effective episcopal rule since the outbreak of war in the 1590s. In consequence, the pace of reform was slow and uneven, and clerical resistance led inevitably to disputes between bishop and clergy. In the 1630s, these tensions erupted into lawsuits taken by priests against bishops in the civil courts. Bishop Eugene MacSweeney of Kilmore faced opposition from his own clergy, and the state authorities, in the early 1630s. The anti-recusant campaign of the lords justice was underway when he was consecrated bishop, in 1630, and hence it was with great difficulty that the ceremony was arranged. The pressure on MacSweeney from within his own diocese was intense. His detractors frequently brought lawsuits against him in the secular courts, and in a stance which exemplified the conflict between civil and Roman jurisdiction, he regularly ignored these citations, in order to uphold ecclesiastical immunity. Consequently he faced the prospect of being exiled, and in any case he had to lie hidden, and on occasion came close to being forced to withdraw from the territory of the diocese; nevertheless he was able to remain.[89] Unsurprisingly, MacSweeney, too, asked for a transfer to Derry diocese.[90] Indicative of the pressure on catholic prelates from within their flock, down to 1641, the bishops were granted the faculty of excommunicating the disobedient and

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[87]. Down and Connor 1639, Archiv. Hib., 5, p.106.

[88]. O Mordha, 'Hugh O'Reilly (1581?-1654)', p.26.

[89]. T. O hAnnrachain, Catholic Reformation in Ireland (Oxford, 2002), pp 41-5; Kilmore 1634, Archiv. Hib., 5, p.83.

[90]. Eugene MacSweeney, bishop of Kilmore, to Cardinal Barberini, protector of Ireland, 14 July 1636, Coll. Hib., 10, p.57.

contumacious, where a danger existed that the bishops would be brought before the secular courts.[91]

Continentally trained clergy were proportionately fewer in Ulster, relative to Leinster and Munster. The low participation rates of Ulster students in the Irish colleges abroad reflected the close provincial affiliations of the colleges, and the early involvement of clerics from the eastern and southern towns in their founding. More significantly, it arose from the relative poverty of Ulster, which militated against northern involvement in the founding and sending of students to such colleges. Nevertheless from the 1590s Ulstermen were travelling to the continent for education, and by the 1600s a few were returning to their native province.[92] From 1603 onwards, Ulster participation in the continental colleges was growing. In the Irish college, Salamanca (founded 1592), based on the 100 surviving admission papers between 1595 and 1619, 19% of the student body was drawn from the northern ecclesiastical province. The Pale areas (Meath diocese, and County Louth) accounted for just over half the northern entrants. Thus in this period a mere 9% of recorded entrants were drawn from Ulster, confirming the contemporary impression that its student body was drawn overwhelmingly from the south and east.[93] Within the Ulster group, the Raphoe contingent was by far the largest; these six youths, drawn chiefly from the traditional literary families of Ward and Clery, proceeded to Salamanca mainly in the years 1610-26 after initial studies in Connacht, suggesting links between schools there, and Salamanca.[94] Glasgow was the destination of the handful of Donegal youths who sought

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[91]. Acta, 30 Jan 1638, Propaganda fide, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.104.

[92]. Shane O Conan sailed from Sligo about 1599, and after spending several years in colleges in France, Spain and Italy, had returned to Ireland by June 1606, with a papal bull for the priory of Lough Derg, TCD Ms 567, ff 31v-32r; a scholar who had studied on the continent was in south Ulster in 1606, J. Davies to Salisbury, 12 Nov 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.17.

[93]. In 1602, the northern lords complained of the Munster bias of the Jesuit rector of the Irish college, Salamanca, saying that no students from Ulster or Connacht were being received, and asking that half of the places be reserved for men from those provinces, and that Thomas White be replaced as rector by a Spaniard, O'Neill and O'Donnell to king of Spain, 1602, in W. McD. (ed.), 'Irish colleges since the Reformation', I.E.R., 10, p.363; in reply, the Jesuit provincial asserted that an equal number of suitable candidates from the north and west did not present themselves, I.E.R., 10, p.455.

[94]. There was one student each from the dioceses of Armagh (excluding County Louth), Kilmore and Clogher. Raphoe students first mentioned in Salamanca: John Culenan 1605, Moylerus Clery 1610, Hugh 1612 and Ferdinand Ward 1615, Thadeus 1622 and James Clery

further education down to the 1590s. However, the emergence of sharper confessional identities dictated that by about 1610 a continental centre such as Salamanca was the preference of the new generation. The small proportion of Ulster youths in some continental colleges is confirmed in the case of Bordeaux and Rome: from its foundation in 1603 until 1619 a mere 7% of the Bordeaux alumni noted were from Ulster;[95] while in 1628, Ulstermen represented about 14% of the students in the Irish college, Rome.[96]

By contrast, in the years 1602-41, it appears that Ulstermen attended the colleges in the Low Countries in larger numbers. It was precisely because there were large numbers of Old Irish - from Ulster and Connacht - at the Irish college, Douai, that a split was threatened there in the early 1610s.[97] Ulster names represented about 20% of the Irishmen listed on the Malines ordination registers for those years, indicating that they had studied in Louvain prior to ordination; just over half of the Ulster Louvain ordinands were Franciscans, and the remainder were clerics from Ulster dioceses.[98] Suggestive of the increasing organisation of Ulster catholicism, from the early 1620s a number of northern clerics studying in the Low Countries were obtaining 'per obitum' grants of Ulster livings.[99] Presumably the grants enabled the clerics to claim some

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1626, D. O'Doherty (ed.), 'Students of the Irish College, Salamanca (1595-1619)', Archiv. Hib., 2, pp 1-36, and 'Students of the Irish College, Salamanca (1619-1700)', ibid., 3, pp 87-112.

[95]. Alumni list of clerics educated in the Irish college, Bordeaux, 1619, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 318-22.

[96]. Names and provinces of 28 of the 29 students at the Irish college, Rome, were listed, 1628; while 6 were designated as from Ulster, two of these - Johannes a St Laurentio, and Christopher Chamberlin – bore County Louth names, Wadding papers, pp 282-3.

[97]. Internuncio to papal secretary of state, 12 Apr 1613, Archiv. Hib., 4, pp 284-6; Ulster and Connacht students at Irish college, Douai, to archduke, 4 July 1614, Archiv. Hib., 10, pp 175-6; Morfanos Celly, Thomas Derrye, William Ovington, Felim O'Neale, some Ulster students in Douai in mid-1610s, 'Students in Dowai departed from the North', TCD Ms 567, f.40v.

[98]. B. Jennings (ed.), 'Irish names in the Malines ordination registers', I.E.R., 5th series, vols 75-7.

[99]. Bernard McNamee, alumnus, Irish college, Douai (pre 1622), Archiv. Hib., 14, p.78, and ASV, Dataria ap., Per obitum, Raphoe 1612, fol.225r; Eugene Davet, deaconed 1622, Jennings (ed.), 'Irish names in the Malines ordination registers', I.E.R., 76, pp 128-40, and Per obitum, Derry 1622, fol.98v; Terence Firghil, minor orders 1622, Jennings (ed.), op.cit., pp 128-40, and Per obitum, Raphoe 1622, fol.273r; Edmund Laverty, minor orders 1622, Jennings (ed.), op. cit., pp 222-33, and Per obitum, Derry 1622, fol.98v; Bernard Duffy, priest, in Flanders, Per obitum, Clogher, 1622, fol.92r; Donal Gavan, Kilmore, a sub-deacon in Rome, 1623, C. Giblin. 'The

revenues from these parishes as maintenance during their studies. In addition to these youths, some northern diocesan priests were also travelling for studies to the continent.[100] Strong contacts existed between Clogher diocese and Antwerp in the 1610s and 1620s.[101] Under the scholarship established by Archbishop Matthews (or MacMahon) for the Irish pastoral college, Louvain, in the early 1620s, one of two places was reserved for Clogher students; in the early 1630s, Heber McMahon, vicar-general of Clogher, was president of the college, and there were several Ulster clerics in the college at that time.[102] Ulster preference for the Low Countries may reflect existing migration patterns, based on the Irish regiment (founded 1605), and the Franciscan college in Louvain.[103]

Differences in the origins of continental college students highlight regional imbalances in the distribution of tridentine clergy throughout the early seventeenth century. Their relative paucity in the north may be accounted for by the poverty of Ulster catholics; relative to the south and east, Ulster catholicism lacked the material resources to train and support a tridentine clergy, with the exception of the Franciscans. Elite support was essential to the training and subsequent maintenance of a tridentine

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Processus Datariae' p.528, and Per obitum, Ardagh 1623, fol.1r; Patrick Heenan (or Hercanus), Dromore priest in Rome, 1630, C. Giblin. 'The Processus Datariae', pp 554-7, and Per obitum, Dromore 1630, fol.101r; Thomas Brady, priest, Irish college, Louvain, 1630, Archiv. Hib., 15, p.5, and Per obitum, Kilmore 1630, fol.88r; Thomas Maclea, minor orders, 1634, Jennings (ed.), pp 222-33, and Per obitum, Down 1633, fol.102r; Philip Clery, alumnus, Irish college, Rome, Per obitum, Raphoe 1636, fol.213v, and 1640, fol.246v; Philip Clery translated a catechism into Irish, and wanted to have it printed, probably in Rome, acta, Propaganda fide, 2 Apr 1640, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.112.

[100]. Hugh Byrne, Dromore priest, was studying in Douai by 1608, T. Dery to E. Morgan, 16 Oct 1608, PRO SP63/223/24O, Per obitum grant of deanery of Dublin, 1609, Archiv. Hib., 1, p.30; he may have belonged to the clerical family of the same name in Down diocese, TCD Ms 567, fol.40v, Wadding papers, p.74; Thady Lynch, Kilmore priest, in Rome, 1623, C. Giblin, 'The Processus Datariae', p.528.

[101]. Two generations of a Clogher family were studying there: Edmund Canellus [presumably Connolly] was ordained priest in 1616, as was William Canelle in 1617, and Hugo Canellus in 1629, J. Nilis, 'List of Irish names in the ordination registers of Antwerp' [1595-1794], Clogher Record (1996), pp 38-86; also Bernard Duffy, ASV, Dataria ap., Per obitum, vol 27 (1622), fol.92r.

[102]. Edmund Reilly, priest, in Irish college, Antwerp, Aug 1626, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, pp 167-8; Hugo Connaeus, student of theology, and the priests Hugh Gallchur and Thomas Brady, 1630, Archiv. Hib., 15, p.5.

[103]. G. Henry, 'Ulster exiles in Europe, 1610-1641', in Mac Cuarta (ed.), Ulster 1641, pp 37-60.

clergy. This support was severely curtailed in Ulster in the wake of the Flight of the Earls and the native losses under the plantation. Even when Ulstermen acquired a continental education, only a proportion returned to serve in northern dioceses. These considerations account for the strength of a survivalist religion in Ulster, and the lack of progress of tridentine catholicism there. While still on the continent, some Ulstermen arranged to be appointed by papal provision to church livings in Ireland. Thus Shane O'Conan sent his bull of appointment as prior of Lough Derg to Ireland, before his return some time before June 1606.[104] When in Louvain in 1630, John Kearuil, a priest of Raphoe diocese, and presumably an alumnus of the Irish pastoral college there, was appointed pastor of Drumclion parish, in Elphin diocese.[105]

From the mid-1620s, priests were returning from the continent in greater numbers, but the diocesans among them still represented only a small fraction of clergy in Ulster. Networks were in place to facilitate their return. The port of Drogheda, with its strongly recusant merchant community, served as conduit, while returning clergy found shelter with the surviving catholic landowners in Ulster.[106] By 1618, Rose Ny Galhore, daughter of the late earl of Tyrconnell's chief follower, had come back from Spain; in her native Donegal, she was 'a great supporter of Jesuits and priests, securely and plentifully'.[107] The higher positions in dioceses - vicar-general, and dean - were often occupied by continentally trained diocesan clergy.[108] Thus, while proportionately few, continentally trained diocesan priests were beginning to feature on the Ulster scene.

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[104]. Examination of Shane O'Conan, 14 June 1606, TCD Ms 567, ff 31v-32r.

[105]. Appointment of John Kearvill to Drumclion parish, 19 Aug 1630, Archiv. Hib., 15, p.4.

[106]. Robert Cartwright to [Lord Deputy Falkland], 28 Jan 1626, BL Sloane Ms 3827, ff 62-3, printed in R. Hunter, 'The settler population of an Ulster plantation county', Donegal Annual, 10 no 2, p.151.

[107]. Neale King's information against Edmund Oge O'Donnelly [1618], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 179-81.

[108]. Thadeus Clery DD had served as vicar-general in Down and Connor, and Raphoe, by 1636, Archiv. Hib., 14, p.17; James Fallaganus, deaconed, 1619, Jennings (ed.), 'Irish names in the Malines ordination registers', I.E.R., 76, pp 136-7, appointed dean of Armagh in 1627, ASV, Dat. ap., Per obitum, Armagh 1627, fol. 3v.

The limited progress of catholic reform in Ulster may be considered by examining marriage jurisdiction, and the evolving social context of the mass. The tridentine reform of marriage featured prominently in the catholic missionary endeavour of early seventeenth century Ireland. The implementation of the council's decree against clandestine marriage, and the honouring of the prohibitions against marriage within certain degrees of kindred, exercised catholic reformers. Hence they attached importance to seeking dispensations from the latest church law on marriage.[109] Marriage was one area of conflict between catholic reformers and traditionalist clergy, and between catholic and protestant diocesan jurisdictions. Confusion abounded. As early as the 1560s, gentry in Ireland were concerned about the validity of their marriages, given the confessional changes of the previous 25 years; it was held that the validity of the marriage depended on the validity of the orders of the witnessing priest; it was feared that marriages were invalid because the priest may have been a heretic. Some of these couples were petitioning the pope for validation of their marriages.[110]

In the tridentine understanding, the validity of marriages depended in part on the authority of the priest who witnessed the marriage. Strictly speaking, only those marriages were valid which were witnessed by the parish priest. In Ulster, during and after the Nine Years War, many were getting married before a vagabond priest, due to a weakening of the normal parochial structures, and the absence of parochial clergy; even if these were available, the itinerant clergy were probably charging less for this service. Uncertainty surrounded the promulgation of the decrees of Trent in the northern dioceses, including the decree on marriage. The decrees had been promulgated at the synod of Clogher in 1587, before a large gathering of clergy, attended by most of the Ulster bishops; it was ordered that the decree on the reformation of marriage be published in every parish.[111] However, war intervened, and implementation did not

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[109]. This featured in the mission accounts of the Jesuits, eg [Christopher Hollywood] to Jesuit general, [12 Feb 1611], IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, pp 38-9; on the tridentine legislation itself, see Council of Trent, Session 24, 'On the sacrament of marriage', N. Tanner (ed.), Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils (London and Washington, 1990), ii, pp 753-9.

[110]. Brian Jackson, review of A. Fuller (ed.), Calendar of entries in the papal registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland. Papal letters vol. XVII part I: Alexander VI (1492-1503... (Dublin, 1994), in Ir.Hist.St., 30 no 118, pp 270-1.

[111]. The 1587 synod was attended by the bishops of Derry, Raphoe, Down and Connor, Clogher, Kilmore, Ardagh, and the Connacht diocese of Achonry, Renehan, Collections, p.435; at

occur as envisaged; by the early seventeenth century it was recognised that confusion was widespread regarding whether the marriage decree had been sufficiently promulgated in the parishes. The collapse of episcopal authority compounded the problem, for the diocesan vicars who were filling episcopal vacancies were unsure of their own powers, in marriage jurisdiction as in other areas. Thus, in the light of Trent, the many marriages contracted in the absence of the pastor could be viewed as invalid. The parish clergy (in Derry diocese by c.1620, the vicars-forane), in exchange for a fee, used to divorce such couples and allow them remarry.[112]

While these practices may also have been current in the Old English areas, contemporaries considered that they were inordinately common in Ulster. In 1611, the newly arrived state bishop of Derry decried the lack of ecclesiastical supervision over the sexual mores of the inhabitants: 'their unchaste fornications, adulterous divorcements, and irregular marriages, with two, three or more at once ...' The local clergy, he noted, had a vested interest in these loose marriage arrangements: 'the priests for gain, shamefully [to] abuse the country by making unlawful divorce over frequently, and [ ]ing new matches thereupon incontinently'.[113] However, such shock was not limited to state church figures. The Jesuit Robert Nugent, who spent Lent 1611 ministering in the north, also noted the frequency of divorce there, observing that the usual reason given was to say that the marriage took place before a wandering priest, and not the pastor. The Jesuit superior complained about this laxity to David Rothe, the vice-primate. The problem, according to the Jesuits, was one of deficient ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the localities. As late as 1614, in some places in the north, married clergy were exercising jurisdiction in marriage cases, among other areas.[114] The missioners

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a diocesan synod in Raphoe in 1592, the tridentine decrees were promulgated for that diocese, Anal. Hib., 2, p.35.

[112]. [Christopher Hollywood SJ] to Richard Conway SJ, 4 Nov 1611, W. M'D., 'Irish colleges since the reformation', I.E.R., 10, pp 290-7; Bishop Babington to Salisbury, 20 Jan 1611, PRO SP63/231/4; Derry diocese 1622, TCD Ms 550, p.206.

[113]. Babington to Salisbury, 20 Jan 1611, PRO SP63/231/4; a similar situation prevailed in the Gaelic midlands in the 1610s: 'if any couple do but fall out and desire a divorce the [state] bishop never seeks to make any further reconciliation between them, but streightly for money is ready to divorce them and marry them to others, also to marry such with others as have yet wives and husbands living', Matthew De Renzy to [Lord Deputy St John], [1617], Anal. Hib., 34, p.132.

[114]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections, p.121.

wanted to strengthen and clarify the marriage jurisdiction of the clergy, thus obviating grounds for confusion which left an opening for the granting of divorces. To this end the Jesuits were petitioning for the privilege of granting special licence to clergy to adminster the sacrament of marriage, in areas where the tridentine decree annulling clandestine marriages was deemed to be sufficiently promulgated and in force.[115]

Marriage reform similarly exercised the Franciscan missioners. In the course of their mission to mid-Ulster in 1613, as part of the reform of the clergy, Tirlagh Croddan OFM deprived many clergy of their benefices, including some who were invalidly ordained. In order to emphasise the importance of valid ordination, and to prevent a customary ground for divorce, the returned friar declared invalid the marriages performed by such clergy; he ordered the couples to get married again, which happened.[116] In the early seventeenth century, neither protestant nor tridentine reformers managed to suppress the granting of divorces by catholic diocesan clergy. Down to the early 1620s this practice prevailed in Derry diocese, to such an extent, the state bishop averred, 'that there is scarce any man of years, but he has more wives living, and few women which have not plurality of husbands'.[117]

The prevalence of frequent divorce was due at least in part to the ignorance and avarice of the catholic diocesan officials, a view shared by both state and Roman bishops. Ignorance of, and resistance to, the tridentine marriage norms were widespread.[118] Within the catholic diocesan system, divorces were granted by the diocesan officials, usually the vicars-forane, each of whom was in charge of a deanery; down to the early 1620s (and probably later), these prelates were granting divorces frequently for small fees; this was the case in Derry diocese. Doubtless similar arrangements prevailed across Ulster, based on clerical poverty and the lack of effective, reform-minded, ecclesiastical control.[119] By the late 1620s, however, in

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[115]. [Christopher Hollywood SJ] to Richard Conway SJ, 4 Nov 1611, W.McD., 'Irish colleges since the reformation', pp 290-7.

[116]. Deposition of Teag Modder M'Glone, 21 Oct 1613, PRO SP63/232/21, 22.

[117]. Derry diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550, p.206.

[118]. Kilmore 1629, Archiv. Hib., 5, pp 80-2; Derry diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550, p.206.

[119]. Derry 1622, TCD Ms 550, p.206.

bishops, the requirements against clandestine marriage were beginning to be enforced. By insisting on the publication of notice of marriage, before the ceremony, a leading ground for divorce was being curbed. This was a norm long fallen in desuetude, and central to the tridentine stance against clandestine marriage.[120] Progress in implementation was slow. By the mid-1630s some measure of compliance was being reported. In east Ulster, Bishop Maginnis of Down and Connor was claiming that the requirement to publish intention to marry was at last being respected by laity and pastors alike.[121] The bishop's report to Rome may have been unduly sanguine; by 1641, given the continued predominance of traditionalist clergy throughout Ulster, it was probable that observance of tridentine marriage norms was still at an initial stage.

Down to the mid-1630s, in parts of Ulster at least, it was not uncommon for catholics to turn to the state clergy for christenings and marriages. This may have been to avoid the fees payable to the state church when these rites took place with the involvement of a catholic priest. This was also happening in parts of the Pale down to about 1620, when tridentine clergy were keen to suppress the practice.[122] Its survival in Ulster was indicative, in part, of the paucity of continentally trained priests in the north. In Derry diocese, many catholic couples were getting married before the state clergy, even though there was a plentiful supply of catholic priests to hand.[123] In many areas, as in Farney, County Monaghan, some native clergy conformed early in the seventeenth century. Denominational confusion prevailed. People sought the services of the conformist native clergy for christenings, marriages and burials. Yet mass continued to be celebrated, presumably by those local clergy who did not conform. In the many areas where British settlers and tridentine clergy were absent, mass may even have been celebrated by traditionalist ministers, down to the early 1620s, by which time the native state clergy were dying out, and the denominational divide was becoming more rigid.[124]

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[120]. Kilmore 1629, Archiv. Hib., 5, pp 80-2.

[121]. Down and Connor 1639, Archiv. Hib., 5, p.106.

[122]. Jesuit annual letter 1619, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.156.

[123]. Charges against Londonderry plantation, 1635, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1647-60, p.199.

[124]. Petitions from inhabitants of Farney, County Monaghan [1622], Rich Mss, NLI Ms 8014 (x).

In areas of dense British settlement, such as east Ulster by the 1630s, at the lower social levels the denominational distinction between catholic and protestant was blurred. Mixed marriages were frequent. These were even celebrated, with blessing, in the presence of the parish priest. Individual arrangements were being made for the baptism of the offspring; sometimes the priest, and sometimes the minister performed the rite.[125] Another aspect of this relaxed denominational situation in some localities was the shared socialising by the lower clergy of both denominations. A traveller in Ireland (including Ulster) in 1619 suggested that as a result, the minister used to allow the catholics to use the parish church for services.[126]

However, from the late 1620s, the catholic clergy were asserting an exclusive control over marriage jurisdiction. One means of control was excommunication. Thus by 1630, in Kilmore diocese the catholic diocesan officials were in a position to excommunicate those papists who attended the ecclesiastical courts of the state church, including those individuals involved in marriage cases.[127] Further, within the catholic community, recognition of state church marriages was being witheld. In Derry diocese, by about 1630, couples were being divorced by the catholic authorities because the marriage was not performed by a priest.[128]

Marriages involving catholics and protestants, a trend emerging in Ulster from 1610, posed a new challenge to catholic jurisdiction. The practice of relaxed intermarriage lasted down to the mid-1630s, in east Ulster, and probably elsewhere.

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[125]. Down and Connor 1639, Archiv. Hib., 5, p.106.

[126]. The traveller deprecated the poor quality of the state clergy in some parishes, 'mechanic men', and 'rude bred soldiers'. He described their socialising with the priests: 'The alehouse is their church, the Irish priests their consorts, their auditors be fill and fetch more, their text Spanish sack, their prayers carousing, their singing of psalms the whiffing of tobacco, their last blessing Aquavitae, and all their doctrine, sound drunkenness. And when soever these parties meet, their parting is Dane like from a Dutch pot, and the minister still purse bearer, defrays all charges for the priest. Arguments of religion .... they succumb [avoid], their conference only pleading mutual forbearance; the minister afraid of the priests wood-carne, and the priests as fearful of the ministers apprehending, or denoting them; contracting thereby a Gibeonized covenant, yea, and for mere submissions sake, he will give way to the priest, to mumble mass in his church, where he in all his life made never prayer nor sermon', W. Lithgow, The total discourse of the rare adventures (London, 1632), pp 434-5.

[127]. Bedell to Laud, 1 April 1630, Mant, History of the Church of Ireland, i, pp 435-7.

[128]. Charges against Londonderry plantation, 1635, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1647-60, p.199.

Catholics were participating in the rites of baptism and marriage administered by the ministers, and protestants similarly were participating in these rites but administered by the priests.[129] From the start of his episcopate in 1630, these arrangements were the object of sustained opposition from Bonaventure Maginnis, catholic bishop of Down and Connor. In his diocesan report of 1639, the bishop claimed he had stamped out this practice. There were other signs of movement between the denominations in the north in the 1620s and 1630s. While not an episcopal prerogative, receiving converts from protestantism was another concern of the bishops - in the early 1630s, the bishop of Kilmore was receiving on average 15 converts per annum, which may have represented the total of conversions for the diocese, given the diocesan remit of the report. Catholics in east Ulster were also converting to protestantism, presumably arising from mixed marriages - in the years 1635-9, in the diocese of Down and Connor, more than forty of these onetime catholics who had converted to protestantism were regained for catholicism.[130] Outside east Ulster, such movement from catholicism to protestantism, though not unknown, was probably less; exceptionally, in a survey which referred to conditions in 1640, only three native landholders were listed as Irish protestants in each of the counties of Donegal and Londonderry.[131]

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Over the course of the early seventeenth century, the social setting of mass was evolving, in Ulster as elsewhere in Ireland. Mass was habitually celebrated in isolated areas, in woods and on hills.[132] The provisional and sometimes furtive nature of liturgies in the 1610s in Ulster, as elsewhere, may be discerned in the 1614 Drogheda synod decrees. These reflect the disruption and instability characteristic of catholicism in most localities in the early decades of the seventeenth century. The altar cloths were sometimes torn and dirty, chalice and paten were occasionally broken, the bread and wine sometimes stale and impure. It was envisaged that in some parishes the people

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[129]. Down and Connor 1639, Archiv. Hib., 5, p. 106.

[130]. Down and Connor 1639, Archiv. Hib., 5, pp 104-7.

[131]. Civil Survey, viii, pp 103, 106-7, 205, 235, 237.

[132]. Promotion of Eugene Sweeney to Kilmore, 1628, C. Giblin, 'The Processus Datariae', pp 536-8; Hugh MacCaughwell to Armagh, 1626, ibid., pp 539-42.

would be too poor to procure these themselves. Viaticum - communion apart from mass, usually for the sick - was brought wrapped in a corporal, or even concealed in a book; the reformers wished that it be carried at least in a container made of tin. On occasion mass was celebrated in cattle sheds, or in smoky buildings, where there was a danger of dirt falling on the altar. Because of a large crowd, or because of persecution, mass was often celebrated outdoors, where the altar was exposed to wind and rain.[133]

These however did not exhaust the range of situations in which mass was celebrated. Catholic peers in Ulster were few. The dwellings of the Ulster Irish gentry were more modest than those of their counterparts in the Pale; hence the absence in the north, by and large, of a seigneurial catholicism serving the local community based on the hall of the gentry residence. However, it was customary to celebrate mass and baptism in private houses, and to keep vestments there, probably throughout the period down to 1641.[134] From the 1610s, mass was celebrated in the homes of the surviving gentry by visiting Franciscans. In the 1610s, these events were generally small family gatherings, held in real fear of being discovered by the authorities. Thus in County Tryone in summer 1614, mass was celebrated by a friar while staying with Art Oge McDonnel O'Neill; the door was shut, and two men were on guard outside the house. One of the congregation challenged a visitor who arrived and left as the mass was in progress.[135] Similarly in summer 1613 Tirlagh McCroddan OFM spent four days secretly at the home of Owen Oge O'Hagan in County Armagh, saying mass daily in this small domestic setting.[136] In these settings, a traditional view of the mass was maintained under the changed circumstances of the 1610s. With the dispersal of the religious houses, it was no longer possible to make the customary provision of masses for the deceased. In 1615, Brian McShane O'Mullan, from the Limavady area of County

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[133]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan (ed.), Collections, p.123.

[134] Promotion of Eugene Sweeney to Kilmore, C. Giblin, 'The Processus Datariae', pp 546-8; Bonaventure Maginnis to Down and Connor, 1630, ibid., pp 554-7; Hugh MacCaughwell to Armagh, 1626, ibid., pp 539-42.

[135]. The attendance of eight included 'Ould' Donnel O'Neill and his three sons (including Art Oge, together with his wife, Sheely ny Hosye), and Brian Crossagh O'Neill; and MacMurphew, a local priest, examination of Dermot Oge McDonne, 3 April 1615, M. Hickson, Ireland in the Seventeenth Century (London, 1884), ii, p.257.

[136]. Deposition of Teag Modder M'Glone, 21 Oct 1613, PRO SP63/232/21, 22.

Londonderry, was harbouring a priest named abbot Gillecome M'Teig. O'Mullan arranged for the abbot to say a series of sixteen masses in his house, presumably for someone who had died. In return, O'Mullan gave the priest a white cow.[137] Apprehension surrounding these domestic masses arose from the fact that the priests concerned were members of religious orders, a category specifically targetted in the legislation. It is possible that the local traditionalist clergy were not at risk to the same extent. However, even in Ulster, by the early 1620s this phase of clandestine mass celebration was drawing to a close.

Down to the onset of the Ulster Plantation in 1610, catholic worship was taking place in the mostly-ruined churches; thereafter, mass was sometimes celebrated in the open air, or in rough and unseemly premises. In some areas, in Ulster as elsewhere, catholic worship was still taking place in the parish churches, nominally under the control of the new ecclesiastical dispensation. Such local arrangements in the 1610s were based in part on understandings between minister and priest.[138] This was happening in some of the many parishes where there was little or no British settlement.[139] In the mid-1620s, in Farney barony, County Monaghan, the inhabitants, all Irish, were using the churches in two parishes for mass. By early 1629, 'through misconceived hope of liberty of conscience', in these they had erected large altars of stone and lime. The sense of isolation of the newly-arrived British ministers was expressed in their plea that power be given to a governor or sheriff to demolish the altars, noting that it was 'almost impossible for the petitioners to stand in opposition

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[137]. Examination of Knogher M'Gilpatrick O'Mullan, 10 May 1615, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.54; the abbot may have been associated with the former Cistercian abbey of Macosquin, between Coleraine and Limavady, Gwynn and Hadcock, Medieval Religious Houses Ireland, p.139.

[138]. For priest and minister as drinking companions, and catholic use of parish churches, William Lithgow, The total discourse of the rare adventures (London, 1632), (referring to a tour in Ireland 1619, pp 426-37), here, p.435; the reference to wood-kern suggests this sharing of churches was taking place in Ulster; catholic use of parish churches in Kilmore, Bedell to Laud, 1 April 1630, Mant, History of the Church of Ireland, i, p.436.

[139]. This featured in Raphoe diocese, promotion of John Cullenan to Raphoe, 1625, C. Giblin, 'The Processus Datariae', p.535; also Down diocese, promotion of Edmund Dungan to Down and Connor, 1625, ibid., pp 536-7.

with such a multitude'.[140] In other cases the parish church was transferred to where the British settlers lived, leaving the catholics in occupation of the original building.[141]

By the mid-1620s, these arrangements were being superseded by the emergence of the mass-house. These centres of catholic worship had been appearing in the towns by the early 1600s, if not earlier. In County Cavan, a mass-house (occasionally several) had been erected in each parish, beginning in the episcopate of Hugh O'Reilly (1625-8). Similarly on the Londoners' plantation, by 1631 a mass-house had been erected on the various proportions under the direction of the catholic parish clergy. The appearance of the mass-house in Ulster was but the most striking feature of a concern to improve the liturgical life of the community. Down to the early 1620s, and probably later, gatherings for mass in rural areas were noisy and boisterous, arising from the custom of giving sheep and other animals to the clergy, both diocesan and Franciscan, while mass was in progress. Franciscan reformers wished to improve decorum at liturgy. In the early 1620s the friars were enacting decrees deferring this giving to the end of mass, so that the celebration would not be disturbed.[142] However, change in practice was slow. By the mid-1620s, the recently appointed bishops were concerned to improve the quality of liturgical ceremonies, and were putting pressure on the parish clergy accordingly.[143] By the late 1630s episcopal control over the clergy in east Ulster had progressed to the point where the condition of the liturgical artefacts in the individual parishes was a matter of inspection by the vicars-forane; those vessels and cloths deemed unsuitable were to be removed, and repaired with the aid of fines (presumably imposed on the pastors).[144] With the reinvigoration of catholic life from the 1620s, even in Ulster, it is probable that regular mass attendance was becoming increasingly common: in south-

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[140] Petition of Archibald Areskin and Robert Boyle, clerks, to lord deputy and council, 16 Feb 1629, PRO SP63/248/39 I; the council ordered Lord Blayney, governor of Monaghan, to demolish the altars, and place new locks on the church doors.

[141]. For example, Muckno parish, Clogher 1622, TCD Ms 550, pp 182-3.

[142]. Wadding papers, p.40.

[143]. Responsibility for buying and having gold or silver chalices and decent altar artefacts was being placed on the individual parish priests, Kilmore 1629, Archiv. Hib., 5, pp 80-2.

[144]. Down and Connor 1639, Archiv. Hib., 5, p.106.

east Ulster by 1625, it was taken for granted that a wide section of the local community were attending mass at fixed times.[145]

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A major strand within the catholic resurgence from the second decade of the seventeenth century was the revival of the friars, and in particular the Franciscans. As noted in chapter one, in the early modern period the Franciscans were the predominant religious order within northern catholicism. Down to about 1620, the friars in Ulster faced dispersal and survival in the context of the collapse of Gaelic society, and in particular of the elite families, to whom the friars were closely allied by ties of kinship and patronage. Throughout the region they were targets of persecution by the state and the established church. However, by the mid-1610s, a revived network was emerging, with smaller communities living in informal premises, whereby the Franciscan presence was strengthened or was reintroduced in the localities of the previous convents. From 1607, some Irish Franciscans were being trained in the tridentine mode in St Anthony's College, Louvain. As discussed in chapter two, by early 1612 continentally-trained friars were being sent from Louvain to give missions in Ulster and the borders of the Pale, offering a counter-reformation response to the collapse both of elite Gaelic society and of the traditional church. By about 1620, the Franciscans had come through a period of dispersal and survival, with clear signs of revival already evident.

Even allowing for the destruction of the Ulster friaries by the end of the Nine Years War, after 1603 the north continued to feature prominently within the Irish Franciscan province. In a list compiled for the provincial chapter of 1612, three of the eight communities deemed large enough to be governed by guardians were located in the northern ecclesiastical province; indeed Armagh, Donegal, and Multyfarnham were the only convents estimated to contain a sufficient number of friars (usually twelve).[146] Northern prominence in leadership roles was a further indication of continued

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[145]. Proclamations were made to the tenants of the earl of Essex, in Farney barony, County Monaghan, 'at market days and at the Mass, the most of the tenants being papists', chancery suit of Thomas Petre (1625), in E. Shirley, Some account of the territory or dominion of Farney (London, 1845), p.126.

[146]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.122.

Franciscan strength in Ulster.[147] Provincial tensions among the Franciscans at this time were reflected in the stipulation of the 1615 chapter that the one responsible for accepting novices - the guardian of St Anthony's Louvain - should accept indifferently from all the Irish provinces.[148] Given the prominence of northerners as leaders, both in Louvain and in the Irish province as a whole, this stipulation was suggestive of resentment at northern dominance. Recruitment was another index of northern pre-eminence. Between 1607 and 1617 a total of 68 novices were received in St Anthony's College, Louvain; of these just under half (32) were from the Armagh province. Of the northerners admitted, at least six had already studied theology, and most were ordained. Reflecting the close ties between the Pale elite and the Franciscans, four of the 14 Meath entrants came from noble families. A further entrant, Bonaventure Magennis, was nephew of the future viscount Iveagh.[149] Thus in this decade the northern Franciscans were attracting recruits from the clerical and social elite of the region. These backgrounds account for the connections and support which the friars enjoyed, not only in Ulster, but also among the Old English nobility and gentry. Indicative of the widespread social breakdown arising from war, some friars had been born out of wedlock, and on entering had procured dispensations from the tridentine norm against admitting those of illegitimate birth to the priesthood. Reflecting the spirit of reform in the 1610s, the 1615 chapter sought to restrict admission to those born within marriage.[150]

Elite involvement in the northern Franciscans needs to be balanced by the broader profile. Friars with continental training were a minority. In 1617, in Ireland as a whole, there were 120 friars, and of these merely 35, or less than one-third, were preachers. The proportion of preachers was probably increasing: of the total of more than 160 Irish Franciscans in 1617, there were in excess of 40 students in Louvain.[151] Franciscan numbers in Ireland, including the Armagh ecclesiastical province, were growing rapidly

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147. List of ministers provincial, Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', pp 108-111.

148. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.122.

149. B. Jennings (ed.), Louvain Papers, pp 54-8; D. Cregan, 'The social and cultural background of a counter-reformation episcopate, 1618-60', pp 90, 92.

150. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.125.

151. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.18.

in the 1610s and 1620s. In 1623 it was estimated that there were over 90 friars in the northern ecclesiastical province. These were divided among six convents, the majority in traditionally Gaelic areas (Donegal, Cavan, Armagh, and, probably, Creevelea, County Leitrim), together with Multyfarnham and Drogheda. Many of the friars were unlearned; these were instructed in confessional cases by their more educated confreres, so that they would be suitably prepared for catechising, and hearing confessions, among the ordinary people.[152] Rapid recruitment in the 1620s posed problems. The Franciscans recruited across the social spectrum, admitting men from elite families, but also 'serving men, taylors, and horse-boys', together with urban apprentices. The lack of an effective formation programme in Ireland led to problems of indiscipline given this 'multitude of rude and licentious youths'. Arising from the resulting abuses and scandals, concerned catholics in Ireland petitioned Rome, and a ruling was made against accepting novices in Ireland for the religious orders, a ruling ignored by the friars.[153]

Concern at the weakening of Franciscan community life under the dislocations of war and the harassment of the early seventeenth century gave rise to legislation enacted at the 1612 and 1615 provincial chapters.[154] Inevitably, given the dispersal of most traditional convents, many friars were living outside of religious communities. Such lifestyles could lead to a weakening of the vow of poverty, as individuals accepted gifts of money for their own use, contrary to the spirit of the order. Some friars were engaged in buying and selling, and holding money; under Franciscan norms, all these were the purview of the syndic, the layman appointed to handle the material transactions of the convent. A balance had to be struck between faithfulness to their identity as religious - expressed in wearing the habit - and prudence in avoiding the unwelcome attentions of the authorities. Where it was deemed too dangerous to wear the habit openly (as in Drogheda and Dublin), the brethren were to wear a simplified form of the habit under their lay attire.[155] Vagabond friars were prominent in Ulster down to 1641, and in the

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[152]. Wadding papers, p.37.

[153]. Paul Harris, The Excommunication (n.p., 1632), pp 49-50.

[154]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', pp 122, 125-6.

[155]. Jennings, 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.32.

early 1610s were deemed worthy of surveillance by the state bishops.[156] These men were among those friars taking fees for baptisms and marriages, thereby causing tensions with the secular clergy. Reflecting the ministry of some friars among the upper classes, there was a Franciscan injunction against wearing linen shirts. By about 1630, some friars were living in the style of contemporary gentlemen, wearing fine clothes, riding on horses, and accompanied by foot-boys.[157]

We know something of the maintenance of the rural convents in Ulster about 1620, together with the hospitality they offered. In the case of one convent, it was estimated that the friars received about ninety small sheep or lambs, with total value of about 150 'julii', over the course of a year.[158] These fruits of questing were used to cover all the expenses of the community - feeding and clothing friars, servants, and workers, maintaining workshops, and welcoming guests. Questing made possible the Franciscan style of hospitality, which strengthened the bonds between the friars and the surrounding community, and fitted easily within the expectations and practices of Gaelic kinship. Hospitality at specific times was part of the pastoral practice of the friars. At these isolated refuge-convents the people of the surrounding area gathered for mass and a sermon on the major feastdays. It was customary that sometimes the friars would feed the congregation from the convent's own resources - some people had travelled from afar, and were at risk of faintness from hunger. At times more than 20 small sheep were consumed in this form of entertainment; on the feast of St Francis the numbers attending could double, with the result that the offerings of sheep were totally consumed in feeding the visitors.[159]

As in other areas of catholic life, a Franciscan revival was underway in the 1620s and 1630s. A network of Franciscan convents across Ulster was re-emerging from about 1616 onwards, and particularly in the 1620s.[160] The former Third Order house at

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[156]. King to lord deputy, 26 Apr 1611, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.32.

[157]. 1615 chapter, Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.125; P. Harris, The Excommunication p.71.

[158]. Wadding papers, p.41; a julius was a gold coin in use in Rome.

[159]. Wadding Papers, pp 41-2; K. Simms, 'Guesting and Feasting in Gaelic Ireland', R.S.A.I. Jn., 108, pp 67-100.

[160]. By 1630, convents had reopened in Cavan, Lisgoole (County Fermanagh), Armagh,

Bunamargy, County Antrim, was a base for the Irish Franciscan mission to the west of Scotland in the mid-1620s, itself a further sign of Ulster Franciscan revival.[161] The friars continued to enjoy the patronage of the surviving Ulster Irish elite, one expression of which were gifts of chalices to specified convents.[162] Even in east Ulster, the Carrickfergus convent was sufficiently endowed to acquire a chalice of precious metal in 1632; the return of the friars to this protestant stronghold reflected the extent of toleration throughout Ulster by about 1630.[163]

However, the growth in the number of designated Franciscan convents in Ulster in these years does not refer to the emergence of stable religious communities. Arising from the still uncertain civil situation, and the poverty of the catholic community, convents were 'domus refugii', or provisional residences, without all the normal forms of common life. In effect, the friars were living in small communities, dispersed among the population.[164] From the 1620s, the maintenance of the growing number of Franciscans was another severe burden on the impoverished catholics of the north. In 1630, William Bedell, state bishop of Kilmore, observed of his diocese: 'Friars there are in diverse places, who go about though not in their habits, and by their importunate begging impoverish the people ...'[165] Collections were a regular feature of friars' preaching: according to Bedell, people 'flock in great numbers to the preaching of new superstitions and detestable doctrines such as their own priests are ashamed of, and at these they levy collections three, four, five and six pounds at a sermon'.[166] Support of

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Carrickfergus, Down, Donegal, Monaghan, and Creevelea, County Leitrim, not to mention the revived use of the former Third Order Franciscan friary at Bunamargy, County Antrim, C. Giblin (ed.), Liber Lovaniensis (Dublin, 1956), pp 4-7.

[161]. C. Giblin (ed.), The Irish Franciscan Mission to Scotland 1619-46 (Dublin, 1964).

[162]. See chapter eight.

[163]. T. O Fiaich,.'From Creggan to Louvain' [Three Franciscan letters, 1627], Seanchas Ard Mhacha, 2 no 1, p.107.

[164]. Religious communities in Ulster in the 1620s were small-scale and provisional: in 1629 there were several religious houses in the Donegal town of Raphoe, Mant, History of the Church of Ireland, i, p.430; similarly, the Franciscan convent of Armagh was based in part in a dwelling in the Creggan area of south Armagh, T. O Fiaich, 'From Creggan to Louvain', pp 90-111.

[165]. Bedell to Laud, 1 Apr 1630, Mant, History of the Church of Ireland, i, pp 435-7.

[166]. Bedell to Lord Deputy Wentworth, [5 Nov] 1633, Knowler (ed.), The earl of Strafforde's letters and despatches, i (London, 1739), pp 146-50.

the friars included substantial popular contributions for their college at Louvain. By 1627, the Franciscans based at Creggan, in south Armagh, had collected £80 for the Louvain college, presumably in the space of a year or two, at most.[167] The friars were criss-crossing the north on questing tours, regularly visiting each area in search of alms, with the exception of solidly protestant districts, as in parts of east Ulster. By 1630 these donations were becoming codified, yet one more charge on the country people, a trend discernible on the estates of the Old English gentry from earlier in the century. In County Londonderry, for example, the Franciscans used to arrive twice a year, and in addition to their begging, a customary scale of dues was in operation: 8d from each couple every year, 20 sheaves of corn from every ploughland, and a churning of butter from every churn.[168]

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Across Ireland, with the increasing number of priests, the burden of maintenance was growing, and by the 1630s, clergy were becoming poorer.[169] This economic pressure accounts in part for the sometimes aggressive relations between priests and people. As well as the parish clergy and the friars, vagrant priests had to be supported. Wandering clerics provided services for those who could not afford the fees charged by the parochial clergy. Many in the north were getting married before these vagrants, in preference to the pastors, down to the 1630s. In some areas the vagrants represented over a fifth of the catholic clergy of the locality (excluding the friars).[170]

Among the Ulster parish clergy, some priests were substantial tenants. In the Londonderry plantation, the agents favoured the priests as tenants, because they paid higher rents; the agents treated them as social equals.[171] In addition to any landholding

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[167]. T. O Fiaich, 'From Creggan to Louvain', p.102.

[168]. Derry 1631, Archiv. Hib., 5, p. 4.

[169]. The number of catholic clergy has greatly increased, and daily they are being reduced to greater penury, 'Status bonorum ... Ecclesiae Hibernicae', Coll. Hib., 6 and 7, p.29.

[170]. Derry 1631, Archiv. Hib., 5, pp 1-6; [Christopher Hollywood] SJ to Richard Conway SJ, 4 Nov 1611, W.M'D., 'Irish colleges since the reformation', I.E.R., 10, pp 290-7.

[171]. Of the 25 catholic pastors listed, 9 were tenants to the Londoners, Derry 1631, Archiv. Hib., 5, pp 1-6.

individual clergy may have held, their income was derived from a variety of dues, and fees for specific priestly services, as noted by a number of early-seventeenth century observers. Figures from the Londoners' plantation in 1631 give some idea of the nature and extent of their maintenance in one Ulster area. This comprised annual dues (2s per married couple, 6d from each single person), offerings collected at mass at Christmas and Easter, ranging from 2d to 12d (everyone gave something), and fees for specific services, including marriages, extreme unction ('caor olla' - the sheep given for anointing), and burials; there were tithe-like levies of corn sheaves and butter, mortuaries (levies, after death, of a beast, or of something less in the case of the poorer sort, together with the main garment), and levies for the support of poor clerical scholars, including those studying abroad.[172] These forms of clerical maintenance were probably more thoroughly exacted in Londonderry than elsewhere, because of the support the priests enjoyed from the local administration. Nevertheless, similar forms of maintenance prevailed across Ulster.

By the late 1620s, with the decline of persecution, the catholic clergy were increasingly assertive in demanding their dues from the local community, in Ulster as elsewhere. In contrast to catholic Europe, Irish clergy were dependent for their maintenance on fees given for priestly services. In the early 1630s, complaints were surfacing probably from across the kingdom that clergy, secular and religious, were refusing the sacraments to those who could not pay, and were neglecting the poor in favour of the rich.[173] With Ulster Irish poverty increasing, social tensions between clergy and laity were growing. At the death-bed, priests could exert considerable pressure on testators to bequeath money to clergy. Thus in 1622, Cahill Duffe O Connally, of Clones, County Monaghan, left one shilling to each of the parish priests of Clogher, together with twenty shillings each for his own parish priest, and the friars. The clergy may have been willing to pursue such legacies by legal means, for a copy of this will was made at least six years later, witnessed by Hugh O'Reilly, primate from

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[172]. Derry 1631, Archiv. Hib., 5, pp 3-4.

[173]. Eg acta, 11 July 1633, Propaganda fide, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.72; acta, 19 Jan 1635, ibid., pp 88-9.

1628, suggesting that the legacies may not yet have been paid, and were still being pursued.[174]

Clerical demands could reach to bringing recalcitrant parishioners before the civil courts. In some Ulster localities, the catholic clergy enjoyed not merely toleration, but also the active support of the local civil authorities. This was particularly true in the case of Londonderry. As early as 1622, the state bishop of Derry was complaining that he could get no support from the sheriffs of Counties Londonderry, Donegal and Tyrone in his efforts to prosecute the catholic clergy.[175] Conflict used to arise over the payment of dues by parishioners to the clergy. In County Londonderry, the local magistrates, especially the sheriff, Richard Kirby, used to support the priests, in line with the mutually beneficial relationship between the Londoners' agents, and the catholic parochial clergy. The priests employed both spiritual and civil power against allegedly defaulting parishioners. Thus Cormac O Mullan was excommunicated by his pastor, Donnogh O'Cahan, for over two years; O'Mullan was probably one of four parishioners prosecuted by the priest in the sheriff's court for non-payment of fees.[176]

Similarly, by 1630 the Derry clergy were in a position to take severe action against laity who would dare bring a suit against one of their number. Excommunication, involving a form of ostracism from the local community, was a powerful weapon at the clergy's disposal. In Londonderry, Owen O'Quigg was owed a debt by the priest Thomas O'Lunnan. In pursuit of this debt, O'Quigg got a decree against the priest in the court of King's Bench. However, in line with the favoured treatment of the catholic clergy in the Londoners' plantation, the decree was not enforced; the vicar-general, Torlogh O'Kelly, excommunicated O'Quigg for claiming the debt off the priest. Wishing to have the excommunication lifted, O'Quigg approached the vicar-general, who summoned a gathering of twenty priests in the Skinners' proportion. There it was decided that O'Quigg should be reconciled to the church, but first he was to be whipped, which duly happened, 'and he was told to beware how he meddled with priests again'.[177]

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[174]. Will of Cahill Duffe O Connally, 12 Mar 1622, Essex Record Office, D/DL/E91.

[175]. Derry 1622, TCD Ms 550, p.206.

[176]. Derry 1631, Archiv. Hib., 5, p.5.

[177]. Derry 1631, Archiv. Hib., 5, pp 5-6.

These practices were not limited to County Londonderry. In the parish of Aynehelt (or Annahilt), County Down, the catholic pastor, James a Ronow, held that his parishioners owed him monies in lieu of tithes. He clearly enjoyed a good relationship with the county sheriff, James McCartan, a local Irishman and possibly his kinsman. In June 1629, at the suit of the pastor, the sheriff entered actions for these monies against thirty individuals at a county court in Down. A jury was duly impannelled, and on hearing the evidence they held that the pleas were baseless, and refused a trial. The sheriff proceeded to intimidate the jury, holding them without food, and threatening them with imprisonment, unless they found for the priest, which they did; the sheriiff then fined the jury. Subsequently, in a case taken before the court of castle chamber at the instigation of Rory Oge McGennis, the jury foreman, the sheriff was duly condemned.[178] The case reflected the lack of effective ecclesiastical discipline, together with means of arbitration for disputes, within catholic dioceses. Given this vacuum, both clergy and laity were prepared to resort to the civil courts. It also shows how the Ulster Irish were part of the machinery of local government, and were willing and able to use the common law to pursue their grievances.

Thus by the late 1620s, priestly power was increasing, not only vis-a-vis the state church, and the local authorities, but also within the catholic community. Disputes between priests and people point to the social pressure engendered by the burden of maintaining the growing numbers of the various branches of the catholic clergy, at a time of acute poverty. This was in addition to tithes and church court exactions of the state church, not to mention landlords' rents and extortion by soldiers.[179]

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In the 1620s and 1630s, catholicism in Ulster enjoyed a period of expansion and consolidation. With the exception of the anti-recusant campaign of 1630-2, chiefly

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[178]. Court of castle chamber, 6 Nov 1631, TCD Ms 852, fol. 86v; Annahilt was in Dromore diocese, 1634 visitation, TCD Ms 1067, p.108.

[179]. A traveller in Ireland in 1619 noted of the common people, 'of all things (besides their ignorance) I only lamented their heavy bondage under three kinds of masters: the landlord for his rent, the minister for his tithes, and the Romish priest for his fees', William Lithgow, The total discourse of the rare adventures (London, 1632), p.430.

affecting religious houses, a growing civil toleration provided the context for catholicism in Ireland. A largely continentally trained diocesan leadership - including resident bishops in four northern dioceses - supervised this expansion. Under diocesan leadership, a small but steady stream of students proceeded to the continental colleges. Their subsequent careers are more difficult to trace. The poverty of Ulster, together with its substantial British settlement, had little to attract well-trained catholic clerics. From c.1610, Ulster clerics were migrating to serve in the more secure and prosperous environment of the Pale.[180] It is probable that only a small proportion returned to serve as priests in Ulster, and some of these served as higher clergy in the dioceses. These migration patterns served to reinforce the conservatism of those clergy who remained in their native province. The Franciscans were exceptional; they recruited in Ulster, trained their men in Louvain, and sent them back as preachers to the north. Thus, apart from the Franciscans, continentally trained clergy at work in Ulster were few in number, and represented a small proportion of the diocesan clergy.

There were variations in the social profile of catholicism within Ulster, depending on the density of British settlement, and the religious adherence of the local elite. In poor, marginal areas, largely devoid of British colonists, such as parts of Donegal, and south Down (which included the Magennis lordship), the greatest continuity in traditional catholicism prevailed. In County Londonderry, although an area of dense British settlement, catholicism flourished, thanks to the support given the priests by the Londoners' agents, and the vigorous seigneurial catholicism promoted by the Hamiltons in Strabane barony. To a similar but lesser extent, catholicism also thrived in the Mac Donnell lordship of north Antrim.

In areas where British settlers in considerable numbers were living close to the Irish, in the 1610s informal sharing was taking place in the religious sphere. The poor education of both ministers and priests may have accounted for this stage of co-existence. Lowly ministers and traditionalist priests were apparently making local

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[180]. For Ulster diocesan ordinaries living in Pale, see chapter three; four northern clerics secured 'per obitum' grants of livings in Dublin archdiocese, 1608-11, N. Donnelly, 'The 'Per Obitum' volumes in the Vatican Archivio', Archiv. Hib., 1, pp 28-38; on becoming bishop of Meath in 1622, William Dease expelled the northern priests from his diocese, Wadding papers, p.167; the vicar-general of Meath, James Plunkett, invited Thady Lynch, Kilmore priest, to minister in Meath diocese, 1622-3, C. Giblin, 'The Processus Datariae', p.528.

arrangements for the use of the parish churches. The Ulster Irish were willing to have conformist Irish ministers, and, in east Ulster, perhaps British ministers, officiate at the rites of passage - baptism, marriage, and burial. Marriages between Irish and British were common. This trend was most noticeable in south Antrim and north Down. As a result, there was a steady flow of Irish converts to protestantism.[181] However, the arrival of continentally-trained clergy, starting with the Franciscans in the early 1610s, led to the strengthening of catholicism, and to clear catholic opposition to religious involvement with the ministers. This cause was taken up by the newly resident bishops from the late 1620s.

From the mid-1620s, a clearer catholic identity was emerging, under the leadership of increasingly assertive clerics. The era of confessional ambiguity was passing; the catholic monopoly on the rites of passage was growing. With the passage of time, priests were more able to demand maintenance from the catholic community; in some places, they could do this with the backing of the law. Provision was made for the maintenance of the diocesan students abroad. A change in the habitual venue of mass may have represented an increase in priestly authority within the community. Mass was increasingly celebrated in specially-built mass-houses, where the priest was in charge, as distinct from gentry homes, where authority at the gathering was shared between the priest and the master or mistress of the house. Bishops' supervision of the clergy took place by means of twice-yearly synods, and by the end of the 1630s, some reform of the diocesan clergy was being reported.

However, all efforts at religious reform were stymied by the persistence of the traditionalist clergy, who continued to represent the bulk of the diocesan priests in the northern dioceses. Down to the 1630s, sons continued to follow fathers into the priesthood. While continentally trained priests were indeed returning to Ulster in greater numbers from the 1620s, it is probable that most of these were friars. Numbers of clergy grew rapidly from the mid-1620s. This posed problems of maintenance for the hard-pressed Ulster catholics. Further, it added to indiscipline among the clergy, augmenting

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[181]. Note on diocese of Down and Connor, 10 Feb 1642, BAV, Barberini Lat. Ms 2888, fol.25.

the problems of jurisdiction and territory which bedevilled relations between all branches of the clergy.[182]

[182]. See the row between Bishop Maginnis, bishop of Down and Connor, and Archbishop O'Reilly, over the appointment of Edmund Cardell as prior of the Culdees in Armagh city, Bishop Maginnis to [Ingoli], 23 Dec 1636, Coll. Hib., 10, p.57; same to cardinals of Propaganda, 10 May 1637, Coll. Hib., 12, p.34; same to Cardinal Barberini, 10 May 1637, BAV, Barberini Latini Ms 8626, fols 21-22.

CHAPTER FIVE

RELIGIOUS COERCION IN THE ANGLO-IRISH AREAS 1603-c.1620

The accession of the Scottish king, James, as king of England and so of Ireland, in March 1603, unleashed widespread hopes among Irish catholics that religious toleration would be granted. In the Anglo-Irish areas, catholic clergy were appearing in public in towns and countryside with increased confidence. Hopes of toleration were diffused among the laity by the priests.[1] These expectations were being aired at the customary meetings of the gentry, as in April 1603, at the gathering of the nobles and gentry of Meath at the abbey of Navan.[2] However, throughout the early seventeenth century, popular preaching by the clergy ensured that concern for the civic welfare of catholicism was widely diffused throughout the catholic community, and not just among the traditional political classes. Collections organised for the various recusant

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[1]. Lord deputy and council to lords [of privy council], 2 July 1603, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.66; on tensions within state policy towards catholicism, see R. Asch, 'Antipopery and ecclesiastical policy in early seventeenth-century Ireland', Archiv fur Reformationsgeschichte, 83, pp 258-301.

[2]. Robert Rochford stated that it was an opportune time to send a recusant delegation to London, Henry Dillon's accusation against Rochford, 13 Apr 1603, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.69; similarly, in June 1603, George Caddell, a gentleman of County Dublin, spoke with one of his poorer neighbours of his hopes for the return of 'the old religion', matters to charge George Caddell, 16 June 1603, Cal. S.P.Ire., 1603-6, pp 68-9; on 8 April 1603, a Drogheda citizen expressed the hope to have mass soon in St Peter's church there, mayor of Drogheda to [lord deputy and council], 13 Apr 1603, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.17.

delegations to London, taken at masses, were a particular occasion for popular preaching on hopes for toleration.[3]

In the Pale generally, a restorationist mood prevailed: mass was being celebrated not only in gentry houses and mass-houses, but, in remoter areas, even in the churches. The Jesuits, however, adopted a cautious stance, advising against too public expressions of catholicism, lest a government backlash ensue.[4]

In Drogheda, unlike the towns of the south and east, the succession did not herald the takeover of the churches by the catholics - mass there was not celebrated in either of the two parish churches, but continued to be held in the accustomed chapel. Indeed the civic authorities, though themselves recusants, were at pains to demonstrate their loyalty by emphasising this fact; they dealt severely with those who expressed hopes of a catholic occupation of the churches. This stance reflected in part the degree of control exercised by the mayor on the citizens, and the pride of the Drogheda patricians in their ancestral loyalty to the administration; further, the Drogheda citizens may not have experienced the same frustrations with the Dublin government that drove the southern towns into revolt. Significantly, Henry Ussher, the state archbishop of Armagh, resident near Drogheda, pleaded with the mayor to release the individual who expressed the hope that mass would soon be celebrated in the parish church; doubtless the prelate was concerned for civic harmony in this volatile situation.[5]

However, contrary to initial catholic hopes, the first two decades of the seventeenth century witnessed particularly severe state pressure on catholicism.[6] Religious coercion

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[3]. Collections for recusant delegations were taken up in 1603, lord deputy and council to lords [of privy council], 2 July 1603, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.66, and, for Sir Patrick Barnewall's visit to London, in 1606, lord deputy and council to lords [of the council], 23 Apr 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.447; reference to commission to priests from Archbishop Lombard for collection in aid of agents in England, lord deputy to Salisbury, 4 July 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.513.

[4]. Thus they forbade their gentry friends from restoring chapels, except in their homes; the Jesuit superior insisted with the vicar-general of Meath that the Jesuit working in the diocese should not preach in any of the churches there, Jesuit annual letter 1605, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, pp 1-4.

[5]. Stephen Duff, mayor of Drogheda, to [lord deputy and council], 13 Apr 1603, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.17; A. Sheehan, 'The recusancy revolt of 1603: a reinterpretation', Archiv. Hib., 38, pp 3-13.

[6]. For examples of catholic commentators' treatment of persecution under James I, see remarks

was particularly pronounced and systematic in the wealthier, anglicised areas, including much of north Leinster, the focus of this and succeeding chapters. Government attention to these areas in its religious campaign may be explained in part by the leading role of the towns, and of the Anglo-Irish areas generally, in official thinking on the catholic question. Officials viewed Leinster as more amenable to government control, enjoying a more developed state church structure which might offer a real alternative to the old religion; proximity to Dublin, the seat of government, gave Leinster a role as an example to the rest of the country.[7] Measures against clergy were based on the 1605 royal proclamation, renewed in 1611, which decreed banning and exile for seminary priests and regular clergy. The laity, too, were affected by these decrees, for they contained sanctions against those guilty of sheltering the proscribed clergy.[8] Laity were explicity targeted in the anti-recusant provision in the 1560 act of uniformity, whereby a fine of 12d was to be exacted of every man who did not attend worship on Sundays and holydays in his local parish church. This legislation was vigorously enforced in the towns during the mandates campaign, 1606-7. Thereafter, juries were refusing to present recusants. Focus on securing the religious conformity of the laity sharpened as a result of the 1611 proclamation. In addition to repeating the 1605 text, the 1611 measure directed jurors at the assizes to present 'notorious and professed recusants'.[9] This procedure was widely enforced down to 1623, but its implementation was less consistent from 1619, in line with vagaries in government policy on toleration.

The catholic community in the Anglo-Irish areas experienced severe if interrupted religious coercion in the first two decades of the seventeenth century. Measures against clergy had an impact on the gentry, who were their main harbourers. In this chapter it is proposed to explore the modalities of religious coercion, as these affected both clergy and laity in north Leinster. However, the survival of the Franciscan convent of Multyfarnham, County Westmeath, illustrates the limits of this coercion in one isolated location. These limits included the sustained support of the catholic community,

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of Hugh MacCaughwell OFM, in internuncio to secretary of state, 28 July 1615, Archiv. Hib., 4, pp 287-8.

[7]. Oliver St John to Somerset, 28 Dec 1614, PRO SP63/232/60.

[8]. Royal proclamation against priests and Jesuits in Ireland, 4 July 1605, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, pp 301-3; proclamation against catholic clergy, 13 July 1611, Lambeth Palace Library, Carew MS 629.

[9]. Proclamation, 13 July 1611, ibid.

especially the gentry, the intermittent nature of implementation, and the need to maintain some degree of confessional harmony in the absence of sustained military pressure. While anti-recusant measures were in place in these decades and beyond, in practice they were implemented in two distinct periods, the mandates campaign of 1606-7, and the more extensive campaign of 1611-9. A study of these two phases will show how religious pressure was directed at the towns, chiefly, in 1606-7, and across the region more generally, in 1611-9. The impact on gentry and populace, especially of the latter phase, in terms of harassment, imprisonment and impoverishment, will be explored, as will the re-integration of those who had temporarily abjured the old faith.

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In the early seventeenth century, the religious orders became a renewed target of coercion by church and state. The Franciscans were the largest and most widespread order.[10] By 1603, in north Leinster, the dissolution of religious houses, and the dispersal of religious communities, was complete, with the exception of the Franciscans of Multyfarnham. Down to the relaxation of measures against the orders under Lord Deputy Falkland in the early 1620s, towns provided a particularly hostile environment for religious communities. By the late sixteenth century Trim and Athlone (the centre of the Connacht presidency since 1569) had become administrative centres with a strong New English presence, rendering both towns inimical to Franciscan survival. The Franciscan convent in Trim and the Dominican convent in Mullingar had become the administrative centres respectively of Counties Meath and Westmeath; in 1618 Trim 'was now almost totally inhabited by English heretics'.[11]

How the catholic community of one locality dealt with religious coercion can be explored in the case of the Franciscans of Multyfarnham. Uniquely among the former Franciscan houses of the northern ecclesiastical province by the mid-1610s, the friars

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[10]. By the early 1620s, it was estimated that there were 200 Franciscans in Ireland as a whole, in contrast to a few Cistercians, Augustinians, and Capuchins, together with more than 20 Dominicans, and 40 Jesuits, Archbishop Matthews, 'Brevis informatio ... de statu religionis in regno Hiberniae', 4 Feb 1623, P. Moran, History of the Catholic archbishops of Dublin (Dublin, 1864), pp 288-93.

[11]. B. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947: Donatus Moneyus, De provincia Hiberniae S. Francisci', p.92.

continued to occupy their medieval premises, even though these were largely in ruins. This was due in part to its isolated setting, 'surrounded by bogs and lakes, long distant from inhabitants and public roads'.[12] Further, it enjoyed the protection of the Nugents, barons Delvin (created earls of Westmeath in 1621), and the economic support of other elite families. Nugent protection made this part of Westmeath a convenient haven for priests in the early seventeenth century.[13] Friars noted the hostility of state clergy, and indeed the suppression of the surviving religious houses within their dioceses was part of the remit of state bishops.[14] However, in practice, bishops showed a reluctance to pursue the friars. It was rather at the instigation of military and civil authorities that prelates were occasionally prodded into taking action against the convent, and individual friars.

For a raid on a friary, it was necessary for the bishop to procure a warrant from the lord deputy, directing a local military commander to raid a particular religious house; state clergy were also involved in raids on Multyfarnham from time to time.[15] Thus in 1601 Bishop Thomas Jones of Meath procured a warrant to have the premises burnt, and the friars there arrested; as a result, Sir Francis Shane raided the convent on 1 October 1601. The prelate however only took this step under royal pressure, for in 1600 Queen Elizabeth had directed that it was incumbent on the bishop to suppress this friary; in Jones' own words, he wished to clear himself from any insinuation of acquiescence in 'the maintenance of that or any such monument of idolatry'.[16] Bishop Jones may have shared in the official reluctance to offend the convent's patron, the lord of Delvin; Sir Francis made a slightly veiled criticism of the bishop in noting that the

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[12]. ibid., p.92.

[13]. About 1610, the lord deputy issued a warrant for the arrest of Morrishe Ultagh, a Multyfarnham friar returned from the continent; through Sir Christopher Nugent, 'the principal countenancer of the friars of Multifarnham', a safe pass to the lord deputy was procured for the friar, 'A note of divers priests and friars, ... in or near the borders of Westmeath', TCD Ms 567, ff 42r-v.

[14]. In 1611, it was recommended that state bishops apprehend seminary priests and vagabond friars, and present them before the lord deputy, king to lord deputy, 26 Apr 1611, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-14, p.32.

[15]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.93.

[16]. Queen's instructions to lord deputy and council, June 1600, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1600, p.274; Sir Francis Shane to Sir Robert Cecil, 22 Feb 1601, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1600-1, pp 197-8; (quote), Bishop Jones to Cecil, 20 Oct 1601, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1601-3, pp 136-7.

destruction of the convent had often been proposed to the state, 'but the fear of offending the lord of Delvin hath been always the let', and noting further the tendency in official circles to place the 'fear of men before the service of God'.[17]

The protection of Lord Delvin was not sufficient to prevent the convent's destruction by Shane in 1601.[18] The degree of religious antipathy of individual local military commanders may also have influenced the extent of pressure on the friars. This is suggested by Shane's active promotion in official circles of the destruction of Multyfarnham; however the Franciscan house may also have been a pawn in a struggle for local influence between Sir Francis and Baron Delvin.

In 1604 the partially-repaired friary was again burnt by another military band, under Sir Francis Rush.[19] In a sequel, by Christmas 1604, several Multyfarnham friars had been imprisoned in Dublin castle by the lord deputy, for daring to erect a convent within the Pale - presumably referring to the repaired premises.[20] Henceforth the friars were living in simple wooden huts within the grounds. Because of its isolation, and the protection afforded by the local inhabitants, aged and infirm friars from other Franciscan communities, especially those destroyed in Ulster, were sent to Multyfarnham. Local support enabled the Franciscans to continue in this location, despite the capture of friars at least seven times between 1601 and the recall of Grandison as lord deputy in summer 1622.[21] On the last occasion, the friars moved temporarily into a farmhouse placed at their disposal by one of the local gentry, Andrew Nugent. Numbering up to 15 friars, in the Jacobean period Multyfarnham remained the largest Franciscan convent in the northern ecclesiastical province.[22]

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[17]. Sir Francis Shane to Sir Robert Cecil, 8 Apr 1600, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1600, p.85.

[18]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', pp 93-4.

[19]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.152.

[20]. Sir John Davies to viscount Cranborne, 6 Jan 1605, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.244.

[21]. Raids occurred in 1590, 1601, 1604, 1610, 1613, 1614, and 1617, Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.152, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, pp 444-5; Bishop Ussher to Grandison, 16 Oct 1622, J. Ussher, The whole works of .. Ussher, eds C. Elrington and J. Todd, xv (Dublin, 1864), pp 180-2; in the view of contemporary Franciscans, Multyfarnham was an especial focus of persecution: '[It] was never more celebrated than from the rise of heresy and persecution, but became almost an ark of persecution', 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.152.

[22]. R. Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', Coll. Hib., 14, p.8.

Episcopal reserve in putting pressure on the friars may reflect the working of a delicate confessional consensus in the localities. This was breached only reluctantly, generally as a result of prodding arising from a coercive policy emanating from the Dublin administration. Thus it was in 1617, during Lord Deputy Grandison's anti-recusant campaign, that William Daniel, state archbishop of Tuam, had a Multyfarnham friar captured, as he was seeking alms.[23] Habitual episcopal caution arose from fear of the catholic multitude, and of powerful local figures, such as the baron of Delvin, among whom the state clergy had to live. These realities were crystallised in the dilatory reponse of bishops to calls from within the administration for tougher action against recusancy. Thus in early 1605, Davies, the attorney-general, opined that existing laws were sufficient to make the Pale gentry conformable, if the bishops would only perform their duty, by excommunicating the recalcitrant; under the common law, these would then be imprisoned without bail.[24] Reluctance to alienate their neighbours derived from the tenuous minority position of the state church in the localities. The 'sword' sermon of Bishop James Ussher of Meath, in Christ Church, in autumn 1622, was widely perceived as a call to religious coercion. Primate Hampton wrote to the bishop of the vociferous complaints he had received from the Pale gentry in the wake of this sermon. The primate suggested to Ussher that he make amends to these aggrieved notables, some of whom, as Hampton pointed out, were Ussher's own relations.[25] The tone of Hampton's letter sugests that at least by 1622 the primate himself was not keen to burden inter-confessional relations with a strongly coercive religious policy.

Unwillingness to pursue officially proscribed priests derived partly from the realisation that, in the absence of a strong military presence, such attempts were doomed to failure. On occasion, those without much experience of Irish conditions acted rashly in this regard. Their conduct was based on the more rigorous norms of religious conformity prevailing in England, and their ignorance of the limits of religious coercion in the Anglo-Irish localities. Thus in May 1603, two friars wearing habits were questing

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[23]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.100; on procedures in tracking down priests in the late sixteenth century, and Archbishop Myler Magrath's role therein, see accounts (1588-91) of Sir Henry Wallop, treasurer-at-war, Anal. Hib., 1, pp 98-9.

[24]. Davies to Cranborne, 6 Jan 1605, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.244.

[25]. Primate Hampton to Bishop Ussher, 17 Oct 1622, J. Ussher, The whole works, xv, pp 183-4.

from door to door in the town of Navan, County Meath.[26] In doing so they reflected the spirit of the de facto toleration prevailing in the late war, doubtless reinforced by the catholic resurgence associated with the accession of King James some weeks earlier. They were accosted by a local rector, Edward Sotherne, not long arrived from England, one of a number of English clergy who were taking up benefices in Meath diocese in the wake of peace.[27] A conversation in Latin ensued between the older friar and the minister, who was in the company of a number of local gentlemen.[28] Sotherne asked the friar about the king; the friar said he was a heretic, as were all those, including Sotherne, whose authority derived from him. Therewith the Englishman charged the priest with treason, and ordered the officer to arrest him, which was done. However, by this stage a multitude of all sorts had gathered, desiring to protect the friar. The crowd protested, jostling the minister. Sotherne received no support from the local worthies in his company. The friar approached the minister, and derided him, in Irish, much to the amusement of the throng.

By then, the serjeant had asked the friar to accompany him to the portreeve, the chief officer of the town. Therewith several men made moves threatening the serjeant. Being asked by the serjeant what he should do with the friar, Sotherne indicated that he should be freed, until a later time. The recently arrived clergyman, alone, humiliated, and in tears, returned to his lodging. Perhaps because of this thwarted attempt to have a friar arrested, the English minister experienced particular animosity in the locality; a year later he was residing 'for his safety' at Navan, two miles from his living of Stacallan.[29]

The incident highlights the limits of coercive action by the state church against priests in Anglo-Irish areas. Faced with popular support for the clerics, their successful

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[26]. These two were probably Franciscans, perhaps based in Multyfarnham, not far from Navan; the account of this episode is based on declaration of Edward Sotherne, 16 June 1603, PRO SP63/215/71 (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.63).

[27]. Survey of Meath diocese, May 1604, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.174.

[28]. James Warren and John Moore bore names of local gentry families, E. Hogan (ed.), The description of Ireland 1598 (Dublin and London, 1878), pp 99, 101, as did Henry Everard (Everhard of Randelston was patron of Killery rectory, Meath diocese, in 1604, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, pp 172-4).

[29]. Survey of Meath diocese, May 1604, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.174.

apprehension was beyond the scope of a few lowly officials; indeed the use of soldiers, either with a warrant from the lord deputy, or occasionally under provost-marshals, was necessary. The discomfiture of the newly arrived minister, unfamiliar with confessional realities on the ground, highlighted the more prudent line of his confreres. A degree of church papistry among the local gentry may account for the minister associating with several of their number, whom he knew by name. However, any gentry conformity excluded support for measures against priests: John Wafer, who had known the friar for over twenty years, vehemently castigated the minister for attempting to have the friar arrested, 'wishing his curse upon all those that would assist [the minister] in apprehending either friar or priest'.[30] In the Anglo-Irish areas, there were clear limits in practice to the legal measures which state clergy could initiate against catholic ecclesiastics. The disturbance caused by the Englishman's atypical intervention points to the existence of delicate local confessional accomodations, which could be unbalanced by state church action against catholic clergy.

These eirenic attitudes were shared a fortiori by many of the lower state clergy. Commentators noted the ignorance and lowly social standing of the ministers in many localities; in this they matched the majority of locally-trained papist clergy.[31] These men frequented taverns; probably in an Ulster context, one Scottish visitor in 1619 reported that priests and ministers were drinking companions, careful not to incite the wrath either of wood-kerne against the state clergy, or of officials against the priests.[32]

Under sustained state pressure, in the 1610s many priests were indeed imprisoned. In the absence of such consistency, the Navan episode illustrates how the active support of laity for the clergy stymied the implementation of measures against priests and religious. Regularly throughout the first two decades of the seventeenth century, laypeople sheltered priests in their homes; groups of young men and women rescued

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[30]. Declaration of Edward Sotherne, 16 June 1603, PRO SP63/215/71; Wafer of Grunston was listed among the chief gentlemen of Meath, E. Hogan (ed.), The description of Ireland 1598, p.100.

[31]. One settler in the Gaelic midlands described the state clergy he encountered thus: 'The ministers are kept so poore and bare by them [prelates] that they are not able for to live and go more liker unto beggers apparelled then unto church men ... So they being basely kept must needs follow base company, and from ministers become drunkards ...', Matthew De Renzy to Lord Deputy St John, [c.1617], Anal. Hib., 34, p.132.

[32]. W. Lithgow, The total discourse of the rare adventures (London, 1632), pp 434-5.

them when apprehended by the authorities; and wealthy catholics secured their release when imprisoned.[33] Attempts at arresting catholic clergy brought the law into contempt, and in the absence of soldiers, the populace could prevail over officials. In one episode, the lord deputy's searchers had tracked a Franciscan to Multyfarnham in March 1610. This man had been an adviser to Sir Cahir O'Doherty during his revolt. The searchers, in disguise, mingling with the crowd, apprehended the priest as he was saying mass, and were carrying him off before a justice of the peace. However, the congregation forced the friar's liberation, notwithstanding the agents showed the lord deputy's warrant, and informed the people that the man was a proclaimed traitor.[34] Similarly, occasional efforts at surveillance in the ports had quite limited effect in apprehending clergy returning from the continent.[35]

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Pressure on catholicism in the Anglo-Irish areas was especially virulent in the years 1605-7. The catholic laity in the towns were the particular focus of the mandates campaign of Lord Deputy Chichester.[36] Anti-recusant measures in these years touched the religious interests chiefly of the gentry, nobility, and townsmen. A proclamation banning catholic clergy ordained by foreign authority, with sanctions against their protectors, was issued by the lord deputy in July 1605. In its wake, a wave of terror spread throughout the Pale. Commissions were given to individuals, who were often debtors or otherwise in financial difficulties, with power to raid houses in search of priests. These men used their powers to plunder the homes of the gentry. Many were

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[33]. What the earl of Thomond noted of Munster was true of north Leinster: Jesuits and seminary priests 'are so befriended that hardly any of them can be apprehended', Thomond to Salisbury, 6 Sept 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, pp 258-9; Chichester similarly complained of priests being rescued from the crown forces, lord deputy to Salisbury, 10 Mar 1610, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10 p.399; in 1603, a friar, who had been apprehended, escaped 'through the favour and partiality of the people', lord deputy and council to lords [of privy council], 2 July 1603, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.66.

[34]. Chichester to Salisbury, 11 May 1610, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, pp 444-5; see also rescue of friars en route from Multyfarnham to Dublin, 1601-2, Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.97.

[35]. Chichester to Winwood, 18 Mar 1615, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 19-20.

[36]. J. McCavitt, 'Lord Deputy Chichester and the English government's "mandates policy" in Ireland, 1605-7', Recusant History, 20 no 3, pp 320-35; developments in Dublin are treated in C. Lennon, The Lords of Dublin in the Age of Reformation (Dublin, 1989), chapter 6, 'Recusancy and the defence of privilege, 1597-1613', pp 166-205.

hanged under martial law, including some priests.[37] The notables of north Leinster protested, noting that the measure forbade the private practice of their catholic religion, and exposed them to the penalties provided by statute; they asked that it not be implemented against them and the priests.[38]

However the petitioners were severely chastised. In their appeal for help, catholic spokesmen noted the hopes placed in the local students studying for the priesthood with the Jesuits in their colleges in Belgium.[39]

Further, in view of Drogheda's leading mercantile position, its proximity to the seat of government in Dublin, and the residence of the state primate nearby, the town's patricians were subject to the mandates campaign led by the lord deputy in 1606-7. The leading citizens of Dublin and Drogheda were targeted by measures to enforce religious conformity.[40] Chichester himself visited Drogheda, spending up to six weeks there in spring 1607, and took steps to force some of the leading citizens to accompany him to church. Some complied, albeit with reluctance; the lord deputy, allegedly, had one Mr Barnwall dragged into church to hear the sermon.[41] The recalcitrant were brought before the court of castle chamber. Thus in spring 1607, six leading citizens, including two aldermen, were fined sums ranging from 100 to 200 marks each, and ordered to be imprisoned in Dublin castle; upon conforming, or giving bonds for good behaviour, the fines were remitted, and those imprisoned were set free.[42] The execution of the star

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[37]. Letter signed by a bishop, a vicar-general, a knight, and six priests (no names given), from Dublin, to a Jesuit on the continent, 1 May 1607, in P. O'Sullivan Beare, Historiae Catholicae Hiberniae Compendium, ed. M. Kelly (Dublin, 1850), pp 271-2, in English, P. Moran, Catholic archbishops, pp 231-2, and E. Hogan, Distinguished Irishmen of the Sixteenth Century (London, 1894), pp 270-3.

[38]. Protest signed by nobility and gentry of Counties Louth, Meath and Westmeath, [Dec] 1605, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, pp 362-5.

[39]. Letter of catholic spokesmen, Dublin, 1 May 1607, ibid.

[40]. The mandate involved the addressee attending the mayor to church, appearing before the lord deputy in the church, and remaining there during divine service, 'A defence of the proceedings in castle chamber of Ireland upon the mandates', Sept 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.584.

[41]. From Irish catholic correspondents, W. M'Donald, 'Irish ecclesiastical colleges since the reformation', I.E.R., 10, p.519; for anecdotal evidence of pressure exerted on Drogheda citizens, R. Walsh (ed.), 'Persecution of Catholics in Drogheda in 1606, 1607 and 1611', Archiv. Hib., 6, pp 64-5.

[42]. Thomas Fleming, Stephen Duff, aldermen, and Andrew Hamlen, merchant, 4 Feb 1607; Christopher Worrall, Charles St Lawrence alias Howth, and John Blakeney, 29 Apr 1607, HMC Egmont, i pt 1, p.32; Chichester to Salisbury, 20 Feb 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.112; lord deputy

chamber judgments involved unwonted disturbance and violence by the serjeant-at-arms on the homes of those convicted.[43]

The campaign in Drogheda was not limited to the elite. Simultaneously with measures against the patricians, under a commission of oyer and terminer the attorney-general, Sir John Davies, indicted the ordinary citizens.[44] He implemented the procedures of statute 2 Elizabeth for non-attendance at church, not only against householders, but also their wives and servants, groups not usually subject to these measures. By the end of March 1607, all layers of Drogheda society had been touched by religious coercion: ten aldermen, along with 20 of the chief burgesses, and up to 200 of the commons, had conformed, albeit temporarily.[45] When this pressure eased, however, the citizens withdrew from church attendance. Compulsion provoked a catholic response in that Jesuits were active in encouraging the citizens to continue their adherence to catholicism.[46] While most dramatic in Drogheda, the drive towards religious conformity also took place in the lesser towns of the region. By the strict implementation of the 12d fine, according to Davies, all citizens of Trim, and most of Mullingar, had been reduced to conformity by summer 1607.[47] Similarly, in Ardee, County Louth, up to thirteen recusants were fined in 1606.[48]

While the catholic laity were the main focus of coercion in these years, pressure was renewed on the clergy. In the wake of the 1605 proclamation, and down to the end of the mandates campaign in summer 1607, measures against priests and their lay

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and chancellor to privy council, 1 May 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, pp 142-3.

[43]. Sir Patrick Barnewall to Salisbury, 16 Dec 1605, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, pp 373-4; Henry Fitzsimon, Words of comfort to persecuted Catholics written in exile, 1607, ed. E. Hogan (Dublin, 1881), p.16.

[44]. On Davies and religious coercion, see H. Pawlisch, Sir John Davies and the conquest of Ireland: a study in legal imperialism (Cambridge, 1985), chapter six, 'The mandates controversy and the case of Robert Lalor', pp 103-21.

[45]. Davies to Salisbury, 30 Mar 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.131; a catholic source alleged that in Drogheda all save a dozen attended church in Lent 1607, letter from catholics in Dublin, 1 May 1607, E. Hogan, Distinguished Irishmen, pp 270-3.

[46]. H. Fitzsimon, Words of comfort, pp 1-46.

[47]. Davies to Salisbury, 7 Aug 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.250.

[48]. Pipe summons to [sheriff] to levy 13s 4d due by the vicar of Ardee for recusancy as certified by the archbishop of Armagh in 1606, abstracts of exchequer orders (1609-11), NAI, Ferguson Mss ix, 1A.49.141, pp 79-80.

harbourers were implemented with rigour in the Pale. Informers were active.[49] Law enforcement in the Pale and surrounding counties was tightened. Provost-marshals were appointed in the winter of 1605, as a response to the many thieves and idle people in the localities, but also conveniently coincidental with the measure against priests. In February 1606, the lord deputy, wishing to be seen to follow the lenient line from London, asserted that few searches had been made for priests, 'knowing they should rather fail than accomplish their desires, for every town, hamlet, or house is to them a sanctuary'.[50] However, catholic sources alleged that the provost-marshals went in pursuit of priests, and their raids were particularly dreaded by gentry households.[51] By May 1607, as a result of this campaign, many laity and priests were in prison.[52]

Some priests were among those executed by martial law at this troubled time.[53] Bernard Carolan, a Meath diocesan priest, was accused of striking terror in a protestant minister. Despite being worth more than £40, and enjoying a private income, Carolan was hanged under martial law on Good Friday 1606. His circumstances entitled him to trial under the common law, but doubtless the authorities feared that no local jury would convict him. Catholics in the area believed that religion played a significant role in his execution, for they alleged that the provost-marshal offered him a reprieve if he would adhere to the state church. The execution of such a relatively well-off priest was unusual, as the detailed treatment given this episode in the Jesuit annual letter indicates.[54] In these years the O'Carolans, who lived in north-west Meath, were in

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[49]. H. Fitzsimon, Words of comfort, p.5.

[50]. Chichester to Devonshire, 17 Feb 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.405; in 1609, Lieutenant Tegg O Byrne was dispatched with a commission of martial law into County Louth, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.231.

[51]. 'Doors, chests, cupboards were broken and rifled, and houses ransacked like a fort won by conquest. It was the sport of searchers to behold the tears of householders, the trembling of all the family, and to hear the screechings of women and children. Small boxes and caskets must have been searched for priests; all that came into their nets was fish; our jewels, for being Agnus Deis; our silver bowls, for being chalices; our best attire, for being church ornaments'. H. Fitzsimon, Words of comfort, pp 15-16.

[52]. Letter of catholics, 1 May 1607, E. Hogan, Distinguished Irishmen, pp 270-3.

[53]. Sir Francis Shane recommended punishing the many priests in Westmeath by martial law, Shane to Sir Robert Cecil, 22 Feb 1601, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1600-1, pp 197-8.

[54]. Jesuit annual letter 1605, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.32; relevant excerpt printed in E. Hogan, Distinguished Irishmen, p.434.

revolt. The priest's execution took place in the context both of the political unrest on the borders of the Pale, associated with the conspiracy in which Baron Delvin was involved[55], and the campaign against priests of 1605-7.

In Drogheda, persecution was augmented by the arrival of a detachment of soldiers, under an English puritan, quartered on the town in spring 1607 by Chichester's order. Under pretext of searching for priests, they forcibly entered houses and robbed the inhabitants.[56] Clerics' servants were scourged, so that they might reveal their masters' whereabouts.[57] As a result of this intense pressure on the catholic community, many clergy, though not all, abandoned their parishioners for a while, going away for safety; those who remained went into hiding; priests were no longer welcome in many households.[58] Arrests were probably few relative to the numbers of proscribed clergy; but the intimidation prevalent in 1605-7 caused anxiety both among ecclesiastics, and those harbouring them. Sheltering their clergy could cost some catholics a spell in jail, in addition to houses wrecked by searchers;[59] protecting and defending clergy could entail inconvenience, at least.[60] Thus the campaign against the urban laity was

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[55]. Lord Howth to Salisbury, 21 Aug 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.276; J. McCavitt, Sir Arthur Chichester: Lord Deputy of Ireland 1605-16 (Belfast, 1998), chapter eight.

[56]. Christopher Hollywood SJ, 19 June [1607], H. Fitzsimon, Words of comfort, pp 170-1; based on his experience in the Pale in the early 1600s, another Jesuit substantiates this view: 'O that our reformers would also abstain from all Catholic habitations, in all which Masses undoubtedly have been said. But their quarrel is to the Catholics' substance, for whose idolatry they have no true scruple or repugnance but only in pretence, as is notoriously known to the meanest', H. Fitzsimon, The justification and exposition of the divine sacrifice of the Mass ([Douai], 1611), p.30.

[57]. Letter from catholics, 1 May 1607, E. Hogan, Distinguished Irishmen, pp 270-3.

[58]. H. Fitzsimon, Words of comfort, p.2; letter of catholics, 1 May 1607, Hogan, Distinguished Irishmen, pp 270-3; writing from Meath, a Jesuit noted that he was forced to go to remote parts, to avoid official pressure, 'more troublesome than usual', Christopher Holywood, 19 June [1607], Fitzsimon, Words of comfort, pp 170-1.

[59]. David Kearney, archbishop of Cashel, 'On state of Ireland', [c.1612], BAV, Barberini Latini Ms 4994, ff 47-9; state of Ireland, by archbishop of Cashel et al, 1612, P. Moran (ed.), Spicilegium Ossoriense, i, p.121.

[60]. According to an anecdote from 1607, a solitary friar was attacked on the outskirts of Drogheda by a Mr Stone, presumably a protestant. Several young men came to the friar's rescue, and proceeded to attack Stone. These were arrested, and imprisoned in Dublin until they paid Strong a certain sum, R. Walsh (ed.), 'Persecution of Catholics in Drogheda in 1606, 1607 and 1611', p.65.

complemented by the vigorous pursuit of catholic clergy in Anglo-Irish areas; it was reported that '[D]ay and night, spies are set to ferret out friars and priests'.[61]

The atmosphere of fear and insecurity among clergy and their principal harbourers, the gentry, was heightened by the arrest and trial of a leading catholic ecclesiastic. The apprehension in early 1606, in Dublin, of Robert Lalor, vicar-general of the dioceses of Dublin and Kildare since 1594, throws light on the procedures used in the capture of proscribed priests generally. Lalor was a cleric well known throughout Leinster. His capture was ordered by the lord deputy. The assignment was taken in hand by a leading figure in the administration, Sir Oliver Lambert, based at Kilbeggan, County Westmeath; Lambert may have been given this task because he was familiar with the area frequented by the vicar-general. Significantly, Lalor's arrest was delegated to a provost-marshal, one of Sir Oliver's lieutenants, who watched the cleric's movements, and then captured him.[62] Lalor's arrest, trial and conviction inspired fear among the Pale gentry, protectors of the outlawed clergy.[63]

The anti-recusant campaign of 1605-7 aroused intense resentment in north Leinster, as in other areas of the country.[64] The fruits were meagre. In Drogheda, as in Dublin, a social divide was evident. The upper classes, in general, adhered steadfastly to catholicism, while the lower orders conformed, albeit temporarily.[65] However, in the

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[61]. From Irish catholic correspondents, W. M'Donald, 'Irish ecclesiastical colleges since the reformation', I.E.R., 10, p.523; from this context, an anecdote survives in which Henry Ussher, state primate 1595-1613, was searching for priests in Drogheda, R. Walsh (ed.), 'Persecution of Catholics in Drogheda, in 1606, 1607 and 1611', p.67.

[62]. 'By means of Sir Oliver Lambert who employed Capt Lions one of the provost marshalls ... we have this morning gotten Lawler the priest who writes himself vicar-general of Dublin and Kildare and is so held and esteemed throughout Leinster...', Chichester to earl of Devonshire, 26 Feb 1606, PRO SP63/218/18.

[63]. Davies to Salisbury, 1 July 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.210; for an account of Lalor's trial, see 'Hilary, 4 Jacobi [1607], The case of praemunire, or, the conviction and attainder of Robert Lalor priest ...', in Sir John Davies, A report of cases and matters in law ... now first translated into English (Dublin, 1762), pp 230-77.

[64]. Sir Patrick Barnewall to Salisbury, 11 Mar 1606, PRO SP63/218/32 (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.438); J. McCavitt, 'Lord Deputy Chichester and the English government's "mandates policy" in Ireland, 1605-7'.

[65]. In some County Meath parishes, too, by 1606 conformity prevailed, lord deputy to privy council, 3 June 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.490; observations by Sir John Davies, 4 May 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.468.

absence of systematic pastoral provision by the state church, any losses to catholicism were reversed, once civil coercion ceased. Thus by 1609 the recusancy fine was in abeyance; in the same year it was reported that since the mandates campaign had been halted (in 1607), 2000 people in the Pale had reverted to catholicism.[66] With the end of the mandates campaign, harassment of catholic clergy abated. The campaign caused considerable distress, suffering, and financial loss to the citizens of the towns.

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Since 1605, Chichester was becoming increasingly frustrated by the growing numbers of clerics returning to Ireland from the continent, and bemoaned the lack of legislation against priests similar in severity to that of England.[67] The renewal, in July 1611, of the 1605 proclamation banning and exiling religious, and seminary priests, must be seen in the context of government intimidation of recusants preparatory to the convening of parliament in 1613.[68] As with other anti-recusant measures, attention focused chiefly on the Anglo-Irish areas. Targeting of priests, and of the gentry households where they sheltered, resumed, and was a feature of the anti-recusant policy which prevailed until about 1622. Juries were summoned to make inquiry into charges of relieving priests; jurors were heavily fined for not returning guilty verdicts.[69] In 1611, Jesuits in north Leinster reported having to be more wary and circumspect as a result of the new decree.[70] Their prudence was warranted. In August 1611, an inquisition was

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[66]. W. Thimble to Salisbury, 12 Sept 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.284; Sir Robert Jacob to Salisbury, 8 Oct 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.299.

[67]. Several times Chichester expressed the wish that he had a commission to hang priests by martial law, briefs of remembrance by lord deputy to Lord Danvers, 8 Aug 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.269, and Chichester to Salisbury, 27 June 1610, ibid., p.473.

[68]. N.H.I., iii, pp 211-2; the trial and execution of Bishop O'Devanny and the priest Patrick Loughran in February 1612 represented the most dramatic episode in this campaign, J. Silke, 'Bishop Conor O Devanney OFM c1533-1612', Seanchas Ard Mhacha, 13 no 1, pp 9-32, P. Corish, 'A contemporary account of the martyrdom of Conor O'Devany OFM, bishop of Down and Connor, and Patrick O'Loughran', Coll. Hib., 26, pp 13-19, C. O Doibhlin, 'Giolla Phadraig O Luchrain, c1577-1612', Seanchas Ard Mhacha, 15 no 1, pp 50-96.

[69]. Petition of nobility and gentry of Ireland, 25 May 1622, NLI Ms 8014 (i); Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.96.

[70]. Jesuit annual letter 1611, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.44.

held in Drogheda to assist in the apprehension of priests.[71] Perhaps as a result of such measures, in 1612, four priests were arrested, probably in the Pale, and together with a priest apprehended the previous year, all five were banished in September 1612, having been held in Dublin castle.[72] The exiling of clergy was largely ineffectual, for these men landed in Bordeaux, but by November 1612, two had returned to Ireland.[73] Several exiled seminary priests of Meath diocese were ministering in the diocese once more by the mid-1610s.[74] Banishments, probably few in relation to the number of relevant clergy, were in effect merely temporary. Exile of clergy was a feature of the most severe phase of the anti-recusant campaign, namely, the early 1610s[75]; by the end of the decade, it had lost whatever effectiveness it may ever have had, a further indication of the abatement of the coercion policy by that time. Banishment complemented the imprisonment of catholic clergy, many of whom were being held in Dublin castle down to the early 1620s, including a number from Meath diocese.[76]

The limits of coercion against religious in the early 1610s may be exemplified in the case of the Franciscans in Drogheda, who in 1610 established a community of four in a house there. Towns - including Drogheda, where the state archbishop of Armagh resided - were considered risky places for the friars, because of the concourse of officials and state clergy. Nevertheless, in Drogheda, as in other towns throughout

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[71]. Similar inquisitions were held in Dublin and Limerick, 'A true report of the present state of things in Ireland', 22 Sept 1611; report on decrees of state archbishops [1611]; (both) I.E.R., 10, pp 198, 205-6.

[72]. Jesuit annual letter 1612, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.58; 'some few other popish priests of note within the Pale' had already been arrested by Oct 1611, together with Bishop Conor O'Devany, 'Proceedings for reformation of religion', 7 Oct 1611, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.142.

[73]. Paris nuncio to Cardinal Borghese, 10 Nov 1612, BAV, Barberini Latini, Ms 6807, fol.238.

[74]. William O'Donnogho, 'banished priest ... come lately from Spain', together with Christopher Terell, Murtogh O Sheall and others, in Meath by 1622, Coll. Hib. 14, p.10; Henry Plunkett and Nicholas Garret, in Meath by 1615, BL Add Ms 19836, p.284; the short duration of priestly exile is confirmed in the case of the Waterford friar, Thomas FitzGerald, captured in 1608, and exiled by the lord deputy, but within a year he had returned, Jesuit annual letter 1609, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, pp 35-6.

[75]. In separate episodes in 1613-4, two Multyfarnham friars were arrested, and imprisoned in Dublin; thereafter came exile to France, where one died, but by 1618 the other had returned to Ireland, Jennings (ed.), 'Brussles Ms 3947', p.100.

[76]. As evidence of the onset of religious liberty, in 1622, an Irish gentleman from King's County asserted 'that all the priests and friars in the castle of Dublin were released', [John Ankers] to bishop of Meath, 30 Aug 1622, NLI Ms 18,651.

Ireland, this merely entailed that the friars adopted a lower public profile than in rural areas, by wearing secular clothes, as distinct from the religious habit, when outdoors.[77] In the 1610s Drogheda ranked with Dublin as the two cities where the friars were most careful not to appear in public wearing religious garb.[78] As usual, coercive incidents revealed the consistency and effectiveness of lay support at all social levels. In some convent raids, liturgical vessels used at mass were seized, as happened at the first of the two raids at the Franciscan house in Drogheda (some time between the proclamation against clergy in July 1611, and May 1614, the date of the second incident); nevertheless it was still possible to celebrate mass on the following day; on this occasion, all the friars were absent, suggestive of their fore-knowledge of the manoeuvre. The friars may have been protected on occasion by protestants; the Franciscan chronicler was at pains to note that the convent, together with the names of the friars, was known to protestants in the town, who, he added, respected the friars.[79]

Informers could cause severe disruption. Raids on Franciscan houses in Drogheda, Dublin, Multyfarnham and elsewhere took place in May 1614, as a result of an informer, perhaps himself a friar.[80] In the Drogheda incursion, several friars escaped by secret passages to neighbouring houses. Women played a conspicuous and public role in the mobs defending clergy threatened with arrest.[81] At the raid on the Drogheda Franciscans in May 1614, the aged friar Helaneus, a popular confessor, was apprehended by soldiers just as he had finished saying mass. Word of the arrest spread quickly, and a crowd of women gathered outside in the street, who threw sticks and stones at the detachment of soldiers, and by this means liberated Helaneus. The stand-off was defused when the friar of his own accord went with the soldiers. These brought him for questioning by the lord chancellor, Archbishop Thomas Jones, in Dublin Castle.

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[77]. At the Franciscan provincial chapters of 1612 and 1615, it was decreed that where the wearing of the full habit was deemed imprudent, the friars were to wear an attentuated habit, under secular clothes, Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', pp 122, 125.

[78]. Wadding papers, p.40; 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.32.

[79]. 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.33.

[80]. 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.34.

[81]. On the religious role of women in catholicism in early modern Ireland, see T. O hAnnrachain, 'Theory in the absence of fact: Irish women and the Catholic Reformation', in C. Meek and C. Lawless (eds), Studies on medieval and early modern women: Pawns or Players? (Dublin, 2003), pp 141-54.

He was imprisoned for six months, but released when friends of the friars - presumably wealthy catholics - paid a bribe, together with a bond to the effect that the friar would appear, if summoned. In the course of the same incident, a group of merchants persuaded the soldiers that a young man, dressed in secular clothes, and deemed too young to be a friar, was a Cork merchant freshly arrived from the continent.[82] In fact, the young man was a friar, Bernard Miagh, a native of Cork, just recently landed in Drogheda on returning from his studies at Louvain. By this ruse he escaped arrest. The experience of the Drogheda Franciscans indicates how the catholic community served to subvert attempts to coerce religious; some protestants, too, may have been complicit in this protection of the friars.

In addition to the usually spontaneous pressure of the populace, urban and rural, in support of threatened priests, the rigour of anti-catholic measures generally was more systemically mitigated by the role of landlords. The degree to which anti-recusant measures were implemented depended in part on the power and influence exercised by catholic notables in the various localities.[83] An episode involving the earl of Antrim illustrates this dynamic. The heightening of anti-catholicism in the initial years of St John's viceroyalty was expressed in a proclamation by the lord deputy, 25 Oct 1617: the informer against people harbouring priests, if these householders were found guilty, was to receive half of the fine imposed.[84] By spring 1621, Alexander Boyd, a Scot settled in east Ulster, had discovered that a Scottish Jesuit, Patrick Anderson, was moving between the households of some Scottish notables in Ulster. Boyd denounced the Jesuit to the authorities, and demanded a share of the fine prescribed by law to be imposed on those harbouring him, namely, the earl of Antrim and Sir James Hamilton. The lord deputy was investigating the earl accordingly. However, Antrim sought to evade the penalties by acquiring a royal pardon for receiving priests into his house.[85]

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[82]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', pp 33-4; for the date, ibid., p.181.

[83]. In 1623, Elizabeth Countess of Kildare wrote to Lord Deputy Falkland to secure immunity for her tenants from the lord deputy's religious ordinances, several letters on state of catholicism in Ireland, 1623, BAV, Barberini Latini Ms 8630, ff 147-8.

[84]. Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.77; 'Coppie veritable ... du dernier edict ... imprime dans la ville de Dublin ... le 25 Octobre 1617', [1619], PRO SP63/234/11; 500 copies of this proclamation were printed, suggesting that it was widely publicised, payment to John Franckton, printer, 3 June 1618, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.245.

[85]. King to Lord Deputy Grandison, 22 May 1621, Acta Regia Hibernica, NAI, RC2/7, pp 7-8.

Exceptionally, Boyd made representations in London in order to pursue his claim. As a result, Antrim's royal pardon notwithstanding, the king directed the lord deputy to fix on the sum due to the priest's prosecutor, and to order the earl and Sir James to pay this sum to Boyd.[86] Thus the Antrim incident reveals that noble and gentry families, even on occasion protestant gentry, were receiving proscribed priests; the law against harbouring them was widely ignored, and occasional attempts to implement the law could be circumvented. If the law could be thus flouted in east Ulster, an area of high British settlement, then all the more so was this the case in the Anglo-Irish areas. Boyd's persistence in pursuing to London his claim against the Antrim notables was probably unusual. However, while a noble of Antrim's standing was powerful enough to avoid the full rigour of the measure, by using court contacts, other lesser catholic notables were not so well connected. Priests staying with them may have been arrested, and the householders may have been forced to pay the relevant penalty.

As in all areas of early seventeenth century administration, decrees of the central government were dependent on local notables for their implementation. The nobility could exclude sheriffs from exercising jurisdiction on their estates. This power was used by the peerage, overwhelmingly catholic in north Leinster, to limit the implementation of anti-catholic measures within their territories.[87] Accordingly, on occasion, coercion against priests, and penalties against laity arising from ecclesiastical measures, could be rendered nugatory on their estates. Hence the authorities were forced to rely on provost-marshals to pursue catholic clergy with any degree of success.

Where gentry influence was weak or under threat, there catholicism was particularly vulnerable to state pressure. In 1616, two Jesuits made a notably fruitful missionary journey to Counties Longford and Leitrim. It was hoped to make a return visit the following year. However, on consultation with the local gentry of one county, these indicated that such a visit might add to the pressure they were already experiencing from the authorities, for the government 'was lying in wait for their

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[86]. King to Lord Deputy Grandison, 6 Oct 1621, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.337.

[87]. In 1633, the catholic dowager countess of Kildare advised her nephew, the 16th earl of Kildare, to appoint a seneschal to attend a local court, 'for otherwise the sheriff will enter upon your jurisdiction and trouble my tenants', Elizabeth Countess of Kildare to earl of Kildare, 1 Aug 1633, 'Letterbook of 16th Earl of Kildare, 1628-37', PRONI, Leinster Mss, D3078/3/1/5, p.138.

estates'; preparations were in train for the official plantations of the two counties. The fathers decided not to travel there, for fear of placing themselves and the gentry families, their hosts, in clear danger. The lack of family ties in the locality was doubtless a further inhibiting factor for the Jesuits. These developments in the midlands in the late 1610s illustrate how, in the absence of strong local leadership, communities could be subject to state pressure on several levels simultaneously. Religious pressure accompanied the undermining of local land titles, as evidenced in the appearance of jurors from several Leitrim juries in the court of castle chamber in 1617-8, in recusancy cases, where none were noted before.[88] Similarly, in 1619 a Jesuit ministering in a midland town (presumably in Meath diocese) had to leave, because of the risk to himself and those with whom he was staying, as a result of the influence of powerful protestants in the area.[89]

A certain bias in favour of catholic clergy operated, at least occasionally, in the structures of law and order in many localities. Gaol-keepers in early seventeenth century Ireland were notoriously underpaid, and were susceptible to bribery as a result.[90] Through bribes paid by wealthy laity, catholic clergy were sometimes freed from prison.[91] Further, while the oath of supremacy was being exacted of sheriffs by the early 1610s, the under-sheriffs and other lowly functionaries were often catholic[92]; these were the officials who actually executed the relevant procedures; pressure from the catholic community probably inclined them to leniency towards priests. There was a risk that sheriffs' officers, easily suborned, would let clergy escape, or that the local population would rescue them.[93] Indeed, because of the unreliability of local officials in this regard,

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[88]. Persecution followed the fathers' visit, Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, pp 81-2; B. Mac Cuarta, 'The Plantation of Leitrim, 1620-41', Ir.Hist.St., 32 no 127, pp 297-320; HMC Egmont, i pt 1, pp 54-5.

[89]. Jesuit annual letter 1619, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.149.

[90]. Escape of a prisoner in Longford 'out of a thatch house', exchequer orders, c.1611, NAI, 1A.49.141, pp 122-3; also escape in Meath, ibid., p.165; .

[91]. A Drogheda Franciscan, captured in 1614, was freed in this way, Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.34.

[92]. Lord deputy's report of proceedings for reformation of religion, 7 Oct 1611, Cal. Carew Mss, 1603-24, pp 127-9; De Renzy to lord deputy [c.1617], Anal. Hib. 34, (1987), p.147.

[93]. Answer of lord deputy and council to petition of recusant lords, [Aug 1613], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-14, p.415.

and the consequent risk of rescue, it was recognised that only soldiers could be trusted with the conveying of clergy who were prisoners. Priest-prisoners were expensive to move: about 1615, it cost £10 sterling to pay for the twenty horsemen needed to escort the priests Foxe and Myssett from the castle of Trim, County Meath, to Dublin castle.[94] Normal channels of law enforcement were considered inadequate in dealing with catholic clergy; when in 1606 the Dublin administration decided to arrest a leading Leinster prelate, as noted above, his apprehension was ordered by the lord deputy and delegated to a provost-marshal.[95]

Further, it was presumed that no jury would find a priest guilty as charged. There were some exceptions. In 1609, friar Owen Grome Magrath was found guilty of treason for his involvement in the 1607 plot associated with Lords Howth, Delvin and Tyrconnell. This conviction was achieved by the testimony of Baron Delvin, a fact which was thought highly significant, presumably because it was rare for leading catholics to testify against a priest.[96] However, catholic opprobrium for those who were complicit in the execution of a priest was so great, that Delvin pleaded with the lord deputy for a pardon for the friar; otherwise the baron himself would be accounted responsible for the cleric's execution.[97] The friar's reprieve took place in the context of Delvin's restoration to official favour. Having prevailed upon the baron to testify against the cleric, the lord deputy was content to free the by now innocuous, aged friar, with the suggestion that he reside in Ulster, from where he might provide useful intelligence.[98]

Measures against priests were often vitiated by the support given to the clergy by the catholic community at various social levels. This defence took sundry forms: warning clerics of imminent raids, preventing their arrest, rescuing them from the convoys deputed to convey them to places of detention, securing their release from prison by giving bonds or bribes, offering them shelter in their homes. Outside the planted areas, the vast majority of the population, embracing all levels of society, and

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[94]. Petition of Christopher Fulke, sheriff of Meath, to lord deputy, [c.1615], book of exchequer orders 1613-8, NAI, 1A.49.141, Ferguson Mss, ix, p.193.

[95]. Chichester to Devonshire, 26 Feb 1606, PRO SP63/218/18.

[96]. Lords of council to Chichester, 3 Aug 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.265.

[97]. Baron Delvin to Salisbury, 21 May 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.206.

[98]. Lord deputy to Salisbury, July 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.255.

even many areas of administration, was catholic. This facilitated attempts to ensure that priests did not face the rigours of the measures framed against them.[99]

However, lay protection merely mitigated the threat of imprisonment and exile facing religious, and seminary priests. Down to the early 1620s, that threat was real. Raids on their places of abode, capture and imprisonment, often in Dublin castle, were regular features of the lives of friars and continental clergy. Individual friars were apprehended sporadically, usually while begging among the people.[100] Pressure against clergy and those who sheltered them intensified under Lord Deputy St John in 1617.[101] Down to 1622, jurors who refused to find guilty those charged with relieving priests were heavily fined.[102] In Connacht, many priests were imprisoned in different counties; in one area, when one priest was arrested, all the others left; presumably a broadly similar pattern prevailed in Leinster.[103] Under warrants from the lord deputy, raids on catholic houses, in search of priests, were prevalent.[104] Prison was often an arduous and

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[99]. Rothe noted the lay support of the clergy thus: 'This prudence and wilyness our Catholics have many times very great need to imitate, as the forwardness of the persecutors increases or decreases, and as the danger of hunger after their prey is either more or less, but yet in our greatest extremities, it is a great comfort unto us, that when as the whole people of Ireland almost (excepting the new plantations) are catholic, they can assist one another with mutual aid to make an escape, if at any time the importunity of their persecutors and pursuers would surprise the priest at unawares ...', [David Rothe], [Analecta], (1615), NLI Ms 643, p.65.

[100]. There are several examples from the Franciscan convent of Multyfarnham: in 1614, Sir Oliver Lambert apprehended Fr James McGiolla Marten, and in 1617 Charles Crossan and Didacus Conrius were captured, all while questing in the countryside, Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.100.

[101]. The proclamation of 25 Oct 1617 repeated earlier edicts banning priests and religious ordained by foreign authority, and ordered all officials to search for these clergy, and those sheltering them, promising informers half of the fine imposed on those found guilty of harbouring clergy, 'Coppie veritable du dernier edict ... imprime dans la ville de Dublin ... le 25 Octobre 1617', PRO SP63/234/11; for interest in Spain in these developments, see Breve relacion de la presente persecucion de Irlanda: contiene una carta embiadar de Irlanda por una persona grave: y otra d'el Rey de Inglaterra, con dos editos de su Vicerey contra los Catholicos (Sevilla, 1619).

[102]. 'The juries for inquiry are deeply fined for not finding without proof the relief of priests (though as we conceive) the relief of persons of that kind not offending in other degree is not punishable by statute in this kingdom', petition of nobility and gentry of Ireland to commissioners, 25 May 1622, NLI Ms 8014 (i).

[103]. Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.142.

[104]. Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.98; the threat facing diocesan ordinaries in those years was reflected in the remark of a northern prelate, 'I may not with securitie rest two nights in one place', James Feral to Luke Wadding, 13 Mar 1620, Wadding papers, pp 22-3.

debilitating experience. A Multyfarnham friar, arrested while begging in 1617, died in prison in 1618 from the rigours of his detention in Mullingar jail.[105] Until the relaxation of coercion in the early 1620s, Dublin castle was a particular place of detention for catholic clergy, especially for those of the Pale and adjoining areas; it was relatively secure, and it facilitated interrogations by the lord deputy and lord chancellor.[106] As a result of a raid on Multyfarnham in 1613, the convent vicar, Bernard Gray, was arrested, and spent a year in prison in Dublin, before being exiled. Similarly, in 1614, a Multyfarnham friar was arrested while questing, and was imprisoned first in Mullingar, and then in Dublin, before exile.[107] The religious outlook and temperament of the individual local military commanders and provost-marshals may also have played a role in the intensity with which clergy were pursued; thus Sir Moses Hill, a provost-marshal in Ulster, was noted as a particularly vehement oppressor of catholicism.[108] Along with sheriffs' officers, these military figures implemented the measures against priests, on foot of a warrant from the lord-deputy, sometimes solicited by a state bishop; provost-marshals were less subject to local pressures than were sheriffs and bishops.

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The catholic laity, as harbourers of proscribed clergy, suffered under the state's religious measures. However, they were also the explicit focus of efforts at enforcing religious change by means of the recusancy fines. According to the Irish act of 1560, a fine of 12d was to be levied on everyone who refused to come to their parish church on Sundays and holydays. Provision was to be made to distribute the money so collected among the conforming poor of the parish, or, where there were few or none of these, the money was to be used to repair decayed churches.[109] State efforts at enforcing religious change in the localities can be assessed by examining the impact of recusancy fines, an

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[105]. B. Jennings (ed.), 'Brevis synopsis provinciae Hiberniae FF. minorum', Anal. Hib., 6, p.178.

[106]. In his will dated 22 July 1618, Matthew Archbold left 40s to 'many the priests that are prisoners in the Castle', NAI, RC 5/11, pp 66-71.

[107]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.100.

[108]. In 1618, Donatus Mooney OFM described Moses Hill as 'a most evil heretic persecutor of Catholics', Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.28.

[109]. King's instructions to lord deputy, 5 June 1614, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.483.

exaction imposed intermittently on catholics throughout Ireland under James I, down to their suspension in September 1622. The fines were usually imposed on heads of households. In the first decade of the seventeenth century, apart from the mandates campaign 1606-7, collection of the recusancy fine was de facto suspended. In the early 1610s, there was official concern at the lack of implementation of ecclesiastical censures. This was expressed in the proposal to include an act for the due execution of the English statute 5 Eliz. 'de excommunicato capiendo' [for the capture of the excommunicated person] in the legislative programme of the forthcoming parliament.[110] In Meath diocese in 1611, a certain reluctance of the sheriffs to support the implementation of ecclesiastical censures against recusants may be discerned; Bishop Montgomery had to request that the local officials support the church authorities in this regard, by granting and executing the writ 'de excommunicato capiendo'.[111]

However, in line with Chichester's anti-recusant campaign from 1611 onwards, by the mid-1610s the collection of fines against catholics was vigorous and widespread.[112] A variety of means was used in the actual collection of the fine. Under one procedure, a person of substantial means applied for the patent to supervise the collection of the monies in a given area. Lord Balfour had a royal grant of the fines from County Monaghan, ostensibly to repair the churches of that county. It was reported that he was making £500 p.a. from this levy, though the churches were not repaired.[113] Clerks, sheriffs and various other officials collected the mulcts, based on lists of recusants provided by the parish clergy, and those involved at each level of the collection process took a share of the money.[114] Individuals and parishes could arrange exemption through compounding with officials for the fine. Sheriffs presented a list to the patentee of at

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[110]. 'Titles of certain acts thought fit to be propounded at the next parliament in Ireland, sent out of England', [1611], Cal. Carew Mss, 1603-24, p.159.

[111]. Abstract of bishop of Meath's demands, [Sept] 1611, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, pp 108-9.

[112]. In 1615 David Rothe complained that anti-catholic laws had been recently renewed, and that officials 'seek to enrich themselves with our spoils', D. Rothe, [Analecta], (1615), NLI Ms 643, p.4.

[113]. G. O'Brien (ed.), Advertisements for Ireland [1623], (Dublin, 1923), p.17.

[114]. David Rothe was scathing on the extortion, including recusancy fines, practised by lesser officials: 'those of the meanest rank, as base officers, men of no reputation, being taken up from the highway side ... their wickedness and extortion so goaded a miserable nation ...', [D. Rothe], [Analecta], (1615), p.62; the recusancy fines were 'corruptly transposed into the purses of private men, and into the bags of polling officers', ibid., p.25.

most thirty or forty names of those liable in their area, handed over the amount due, and pocketed the rest of the sums collected.[115]

Under another procedure, churchwardens made presentments of recusants before the ordinary and before the archdeacon of the diocese; in the church court, recusants were excommunicated, and so subject to the writ 'de excommunicato capiendo', involving arrest and imprisonment by the sheriff. This measure was deemed fitting for the richer recusants, for whom the 12d fine was a negligible sum.[116] As early as 1614, however, there was a view in official circles that excommunication was being used too frequently, especially given the glaring deficiencies of ecclesiastical provision in many areas.[117] The 1622 commissioners shared this concern[118], reflecting the widespread belief that this measure tended more to the enrichment of the prelates than to the conversion of the Irish. The case of Robert Travers, vicar-general of Meath diocese, and official in the bishop's court, illustrates this process. In November 1621, Travers was found guilty of bribery and extortion. During the anti-recusancy campaign of the 1610s, he took large bribes from several individuals for discharging them from the writ 'De excommunicato capiendo', thus sparing them imprisonment.[119] Similarly, he took monies from papists subject to questioning about christenings and marriages performed by priests.[120] In fact, due to the weakness of the state church in many localities, there were no churchwardens; even where there were, these were catholics, and were reluctant participants in the coercion of their co-religionists. Thus the presenting of recusants fell to the clergy themselves, thereby adding to popular resentment against the state church.[121]

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[115]. 'Oversights committed in the ... recusant business', [1622], NLI Ms 8014 (i).

[116]. Recommendations of Sir R. Jacob, 28 Feb 1614, HMC Hastings, iv, pp 15-16; on the implementation of presentments, see J. Meagher (ed.), 'Presentments of recusants in Dublin, 1617-1618', Repertorium Novum, 2 no 2, pp 269-73.

[117]. On London's unease with Dublin's harsh religious policy, see king's instruction to lord deputy, 5 June 1614, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.484.

[118]. Certificates concerning the church government in Ireland, [1622], BL Add Ms 4756, fol. 22.

[119]. Travers took £10 each from John Warren and Patrick Halfpenny; he took £15 from Henry Corie, who had been arrested and imprisoned on this writ, to procure Corie's freedom from the sheriff's custody, order of court of castle chamber, 16 Nov 1621, TCD Ms 852, fol.81r-v.

[120]. ibid.

[121]. De Renzy to Lord Deputy St John, 27 Feb 1617, Anal. Hib., 34, p.145; for resentment

Under the statute, the fines were to be used for the poor of the parish. However, because the poor were not conformable, by the early 1610s the monies were being used for repairing churches and building bridges, and other charitable purposes.[122] Recusant spokesmen resented their contribution to the repair of the parish churches from which the traditional worship was excluded.[123] In 1617, as newly-appointed almoner of Ireland, the archbishop of Armagh was granted the exclusive right to recusants' fines in the kingdom, to be used as hitherto for public works and charitable purposes.[124] Concerns were expressed in official circles at the lack of accountability in this arrangement, together with fears at the potential for Irish resentment. There were collectors in all places, yet the collection was treated as a private concern of the primate, without him being answerable either to the parishes or to the Dublin government; it was recognised that extortion was occurring.[125]

By arrangement with the primate, the mulcts were designated for the repairing and building of churches; this actually happened in some parts of the country, but not in others.[126] By 1622, this was occurring particularly in the escheated counties of Ulster, because of protestant congregations who needed church premises - in Maghera, County Londonderry, the arrangement was for a limited time, and the fines were those collected in the parish.[127] However, only a small proportion of the sums levied were used for their

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against clergy regarding recusancy presentments in one area, see Farney complaints, 1618-22, discussed in chapter two.

[122]. Lord deputy's answers to recusants' complaints, [June 1613], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.380.

[123]. Warrant for repairing decayed churches in Pale, lord deputy to treasurer, 29 Jan 1610, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.371; bond taken from local gentry for repair of a church, County Westmeath, Jan 1610, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, pp 375-6.

[124]. Grant of office of almoner of Ireland to archbishop of Armagh, lord deputy to attorney general, 8 Mar 1617, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.151; lord deputy to his majesty's counsel, 5 Aug 1617, ibid., p.168; same grant, 7 Aug 1617, Acta Regia Hibernica, NAI, RC2/6, pp 1-7.

[125]. Sir Francis Annesley to Sir Thomas Lake, 22 Feb 1618, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 185-6; under the primate, the recusancy fine was collected by 'the sheriffs' officers and such others as are employed in that business, the burden is made very grievous to them [recusants]', Irish commissioners to king, [12 June] 1621, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.329.

[126]. R. Walsh (ed.), 'State of Ireland in 1611', Archiv. Hib., 2, pp 157-64; by 1618, the recusants' fines in Munster were being used for repairing some churches, earl of Thomond to English privy council, 28 Oct 1618, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 216-7; by contrast, in the midlands this was not happening, De Renzy to lord deputy, 27 Feb 1617, Anal. Hib., 34, p.145.

[127]. Churches built in Tandragee, Armagh diocese, TCD Ms 550, pp 28-9; Aghadowy, and Maghera, Derry diocese, TCD Ms 550, pp 200-1; the £1500 given to Lord Balfour for the erection

stated purpose. In general, the fines were being appropriated by the state church prelates, without any benefit to the local community. Both New English and Old English complained of these exactions; one protestant settler dismissed them as 'an undoing to the country and an only enriching to the bishops' purses, which is the worst benefits that may be bestowed'.[128]

Contemporaries recognised that the recusancy fines were an egregious form of corruption, falling most heavily on those least able to bribe the collectors. In practice a three-fold social division operated in the enforcement of the fines. Normally, the nobility and principal gentry, together with their dependents, were virtually exempt; officials were afraid of these people. The lesser gentry, farmers and freeholders were also exempt, but these had to bribe the parson. It was on the 'bulk of the meaner sort', the 'poor multitude', that the weight of this exaction fell.[129] As long as the measure was being implemented, many of these attended church rather than pay the fine.[130] The 1621 commissioners described this process, and its impoverishing and criminalising impact: 'The ministers present few or none of the better, but the worse sort, and of these great numbers are presented. These men for the most part are not able at the beginning of their prosecution to pay their fees, much less the penalty, and for that cause are either forced to absent themselves altogether from their appearance [before the court], or to redeem themselves with some small bribes out of the hands of the sheriffs' bailiffs, if they are taken by them, and so shift up and down until they are outlawed. Upon the outlawry, either the bodies of the poor wretches are taken to prison, their goods sold,

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of the church at Aghenlurker, County Fermanagh, in the 1620s may well have come from the recusants' fines, A. Boswell (ed.), Brief memorial of the life and death of Dr James Spottiswood (Edinburgh, 1811), p.16.

[128]. De Renzy to lord deputy, [c.1617], Anal. Hib., 34, p.131, and similarly, 'The [bishops] also make but havoc of the countrie filling their purses and no good done for the reducement of the people nor settlement of a common weale', De Renzy to Lord Deputy St John, Nov 1616, loc. cit. p.127; petition of Lord Killeen and Sir Christopher Plunkett to English privy council, 30 Jan 1614, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.468.

[129]. 'Oversights committed in ... the recusant business', [1622], NLI Ms 8014 (i).

[130]. Petition of Lord Killeen and Sir Christopher Plunkett to English privy council, 30 Jan 1614, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.468; lord deputy's answers to recusants' complaints, [June 1613], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.380; the recent vigorous implementation of the fine gave rise to Sir John Everard's request, in the parliament, for its suspension, Sir Oliver St John to Sir R. Winwood, 28 Nov 1613, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.527.

and they and theirs miserably perish, or else they fly into the woods and there lurk, apt for any mischiefs'.[131]

Thus implementation of the recusancy fine in the 1610s caused widespread social dislocation and impoverishment. This was due to the range of officials with an interest in its collection: 'the penalty inflicted by the statute is not set near so heavy as the exactions of the clerks, sheriffs and other officers for which collection there is in many places bad accompt delivered to the patentee....'[132] About 1623, on hearing that the sheriff's bailiffs were serving writs of 'capias' for recusancy, tenants on an estate of the countess of Kildare immediately fled their homes, 'for fear of being attached by them'.[133] This reaction was common. From time to time in the early seventeenth century, the poor fled their homes in order to avoid ecclesiastical exactions.[134] In County Meath, some time before the end of 1615, the sheriff's oppression of the poor in the matter of recusancy fines was so intense that many were leaving their homes, and hiding in caves and other isolated places.[135] Tenants were threatening to quit their holdings, if their landlords would not protect them from these exactions.[136] In this way, religious coercion contributed to impoverishement: 'servants are driven to run away from their masters, many poor families dissolved, some restrained in great misery, and much land wasted to the ruin and overthrow both of tenant and landlord...'[137]

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[131]. Irish commissioners to king, [12 June 1621], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.329.

[132]. Petition of the nobility and gentry of Ireland to commissioners, 25 May 1622, NLI Ms 8014 (i).

[133]. The countess immediately complained to the lord deputy, who accepted her complaint; he reminded the sheriff of the recent ban on such measures, correspondence of Lord Deputy Falkland, C. McNeill (ed.), 'Rawlinson Mss', Anal. Hib., 2, p.14; several letters on catholicism in Ireland, 1623, BAV, Barberini Latini Ms 8630, ff 147-8.

[134]. For Ulster, see chapter two.

[135]. '... when the wretched country had fines in great sums of money, because they frequented not the protestant congregations, to escape the fury of this exactor [sheriff] fled away from their habitations, to hide themselves in caves and holes, to hide themselves from the rage of his persecution, having first set mastiff dogs after them ...', D. Rothe, [Analecta], (1615), NLI Ms 643, p.12; for another instance of poor people fleeing from ecclesiastical exactions, see Farney complaints, County Monaghan, Rich Mss, NLI Ms 8013.

[136]. Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.86.

[137]. Petition of the nobility and gentry of Ireland, 25 May 1622, NLI Ms 8014 (i).

Great numbers of the common people also responded to such pressure by attending church, albeit temporarily - conformity under these conditions was of short duration, and after one or two visits to church they ceased coming.[138] It was noted of the Gaelic midlands in the mid-1610s, that 'The vulgar sort are most contented to come to church, for they are weary of paying of their monnies'; this trend was widespread.[139] However the state church in virtually all localities was poorly equipped to cope with this sudden influx of new, indigent and Irish-speaking congregations. At least down to the 1620s, in most areas the parish infrastructure was seriously deficient. There were ruined churches with no regular services, confusion as to which was the parish church, and an insufficient number of clergy; even the few services held were in English, which most inhabitants, especially in the outlying regions, did not understand. Nevertheless the clergy imposed the recusancy fine diligently.[140]

In general, these measures depended for success on the readiness of the sheriffs to enforce the penalties. Their willingness to do so could vary greatly across the localities, even in the coercive atmosphere of the 1610s.[141] This inconsistency reflected both the ebb and flow between de facto tolerance, and coercion, within government religious policy,[142] and accomodations, or their absence, between the catholic community and the local administration;[143] bribery of officials by individuals was widespread, further

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[138]. Oversights committed in the carriage of the recusant business, NLI Ms 8014 (i).

[139]. De Renzy to lord deputy, [c.1617], Anal. Hib., 34, p.148; similarly, in Munster, by 1618, as a result of civil and ecclesiastical censures, the monoglot Irish-speaking poor were being forced to attend church, earl of Thomond, president of Munster, to English privy council, 28 Oct 1618, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 216-7.

[140]. The situation in the Gaelic midlands reflects this general trend: '.. many [a] poor man is indicted wrongfully, when as perhaps the minister himself was never at church nor knows not weare it stands, yet great monies are gathered for it...For when a minister shall have 5 or 6 parishes under him, it is hard for people to know to what church to come, and then not understand him neither', De Renzy to lord deputy, 27 Feb 1617, Anal. Hib., 34, p.145.

[141]. In 1618, Andrew Petit, late sheriff of Westmeath, was fined for refusing to present recusants, exchequer orders, 23 June 1618, NAI, IA.49.141, p.234.

[142]. John Eliot, sheriff of Meath, brought in many recusants - on their conformity, they were pardoned without the customary fee, exchequer orders, 1620, NAI, IA.49.141, p.295; in 1624, Christopher Tirrell, late sheriff of Westmeath, was fined £8 for not bringing in recusants when there was a cessation of prosecution against them, exchequer orders, 1624, NAI, IA.49.141, p.299; on the government's vacillating religious policy, see Lord Deputy Falkland's contradictory instructions to sheriffs and bishops, 1622-4, Anal. Hib., 2, pp 13-14.

[143]. By 1622, indicative in part of the Londoners' reliance on Irish tenants, sheriffs in Counties

concentrating the impact of the whole process on the poor. Whatever the mechanism for collection, the fines were subject to fitful and inconsistent implementation, and were an occasion of corruption, and of extortion by minor functionaries.[144] Official dissatisfaction with the low sums accruing to the primate led to the resumption of the archbishop's grant in August 1622 - henceforth the prelate was to be given a sum equivalent to the annual amount he had received from the fines, to be used for pious purposes.[145] By 1622 the recusancy fine had had a major impact on Irish catholics, including those of Ulster, for it was recognised that many recusants had been either outlawed or excommunicated, or both, as a result of not coming to church.[146]

Thus in the 1610s, one way to proceed against recusants was through the ecclesiastical courts, with the penalties of excommunication implemented by the sheriffs on foot of the writ 'de excommunicato capiendo'. Another widespread procedure was to present those accused of recusancy before the assizes, on the evidence of the local parson, a procedure which received renewed vigour as a result of the 1611 proclamation. In addition to repeating the 1605 edict against popish clergy, the proclamation required assize judges to direct jurors to present 'notorious and professed

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Londonderry, Donegal and Tyrone were ignoring these procedures, Derry 1622, TCD Ms 550, p.206.

[144]. In 1617 it was reported that recusants would prefer to pay the fine directly, instead of being subject to the extortions of minor officials, Richard Hadsor to Sir Thomas Lake, 19 May 1617, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.164; it was alleged that under-sheriffs and bailiffs in Leinster, in levying a money charge, used to extract double the sum, keeping the balance for themselves, defects of province of Leinster, 1618, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.229; similar inconsistency in the implementation of the fine was noted by a traveller in 1619, W. Lithgow, The total discourse of the rare adventures (London, 1632), p.432; 'they [recusants' fines] are so neglected in the execution that the hundreth man is not charged with them', H. Leslie, A treatise tending to unity (Dublin, 1623), p.46.

[145]. That corruption was rife was indicated in the relatively small sum of £1000 p.a. accruing to the primate from the recusancy fines, despite vigorous collection, king to Lord Deputy Falkland, 11 Aug 1622, NAI, Acta Regia Hibernica, RC2/7, pp 104-5 (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.388); patronage, rather than piety, determined the use made of the fines, for an annuity of £50 was granted to George Aylmer out of the recusants' fines, king to lords justice, 22 June 1622, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.358.

[146]. King to Lord Deputy Falkland, 11 August 1622, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.388; the lord deputy and primate were ordered to compound with the recusants for the fine, or to pardon and absolve them, do., 6 September 1622, PRONI D10/4/5/1, pp 168-9; defaulters on a range of church exactions, including the recusancy fine, could be cited before the relevant ecclesiastical court; contempt of court included non-appearance and non-payment of fines, and incurred the penalty of excommunication; on receipt of the ecclesiastical writ, 'de excommunicato capiendo', the civil authorities were empowered to imprison the excommunicated person, R. Dudley Edwards, Church and State in Tudor Ireland (New York, 1972), p.186.

recusants', a proceeding hitherto unexecuted because of priestly influence on the jurors.[147] A unanimous verdict by the jury was required for conviction.[148] Such verdicts were normal in areas where a protestant jury could be arranged, or where the minority of catholic jurors did not dare dissent, a situation which was more likely to prevail in areas of British colonization - Ulster and King's County. However, in most Anglo-Irish areas the jury would not present recusants. In these cohesive, self-confident catholic communities, sustained by the influence of tridentine clergy, civic resistance was offered to the government's religious policy. In the catholic community generally, solidarity against involvement with protestantism was strong, at various social levels.[149] At the level of the populace, those who conformed faced widespread mockery, and as soon as pressure to conform eased, they quickly sought to end their isolation by seeking re-integration into the Roman church. At a higher social level, catholic jurors faced strong pressure from their own community against accepting charges of recusancy; it was alleged that those jurors who convicted their co-religionists faced excommunication.[150]

Recalcitrant jurors in recusancy cases were brought before the court of castle chamber, in Dublin castle, often entailing a long, arduous journey.[151] They were charged with perjury, arising from a refusal to find a guilty verdict, in line with the evidence. Those convicted were then fined and imprisoned. They were only freed after

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147. Proclamation by lord deputy and council, 4 July 1611, Lambeth Palace Library, Carew Ms 629.

148. For a rare (if not unqiue) document of this process, see 'A true presentment of such persons as have refused to hear divine service read in the parish church of Killrickill [Athenry, County Galway] the 22th day of July being Sunday anno domini 1632 per me Michael Smyth, vicar ibidem', Marsh's Library, Ms Z3.2.6, fol 55r; it contains a list of 12 names and occupations, and an address to the grand jury, mentioning the vicar's sworn testimony.

149. 'So have I heard many say in this kingdom, If such and such men would go to church, I would go also: but if I should begin, I should have the ill will of all the country', H. Leslie, A treatise tending to unity (Dublin, 1623), p.42; under the tutelage of seminary priests, 'such as are conformed and go to church are everywhere derided, scorned and oppressed by the multitude', lord deputy and council to privy council, 27 Oct 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.310.

150. Commissioners' return, 12 Nov 1613, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, pp 446-7.

151. On the working of this court, see H. Wood, 'The court of Castle Chamber or Star Chamber of Ireland', R.I.A.Proc., 32, sect. C, pp 152-70; see also 'Memos re Star Chamber procedure, with notes of cases heard, c.1612-16', Birr Castle, Rosse Mss (NLI mic. p5650).

entering bonds in the exchequer for the payment of the fines.[152] Thus a campaign of religious compulsion, directed against the laity, was in force from 1611-12 until about 1619; it affected the property-holding classes throughout the region, for it was from this group that jurors and town officials were drawn.[153] In the 1610s, catholic jurors from across Leinster and south Ulster were fined in this way. By 1613, this campaign was having some success, for Lord Deputy Chichester was claiming that as a result juries in every county were presenting recusants.[154] Consequently the monies taken in fines were considerable. In the early 1610s, it was alleged that in County Cavan - one of 'the least, and most unhusbanded counties' - these amounted to 8000 French crowns in one year.[155]

While some recusant jurors bowed under this pressure, Chichester's assessment was overly sanguine, as the duration of the campaign against the jurors shows. Measures against dissenting jurors were underway by the assizes of 1612. In that year a great number of jurors from Meath and Munster were arrested on this charge. Developments in County Westmeath illustrate the process. In August, a Mullingar jury refused to find those presented guilty of recusancy; in November, in the court of castle chamber, the jurors were fined 100 marks each, and the foreman £100, and all were to be imprisoned during pleasure.[156] Fines on jurymen were paid by the local catholic community, through collections supervised by the clergy.[157] The Mullingar fines represented a huge

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[152]. D. Rothe, 'Analecta' [1615], N.L.I. Ms 643, pp 23-4; in some cases, however, it is questionable if the fines were ever paid; in 1618, five Drogheda merchants, jurors, were fined from £30 to £66 each; by 1622, in the case of three men, these sums were still unpaid, HMC Egmont, i pt 1, p.55; 'Monies due, and unpaid, ... of the fines of Castle Chamber', [1622], BL Sloane Ms 3827, fol.22v.

[153]. Jurors were 'reckoned amongst the simpler sort of this kingdom being such as hold their estate from others', D. Rothe, 'Analecta', NLI Ms 643, p.24.

[154]. Lord deputy's answers to recusants' complaints, [June 1613], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.374; 'Apostiles to the articles preferred by the recusants of Ireland to His Majesty', [Aug] 1613, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, pp 418-20.

[155]. This sum was in addition to plough monies, and collectors' fees, D. Rothe, 'Analecta', NLI Ms 643, p.24; fines levied on nine Dublin parishes illustrate the burden on the catholic community from this measure: in one parish, 163 people were fined 32s each; and the total for the nine parishes amounted to £2505. 4s, 'Presentments of recusants in Dublin, 15 July 1617-14 April 1618', Marsh's Library, Ms Z3.2.6, ff 53-4.

[156]. H.M.C. Egmont, i pt 1, p.41; an anecdote refers to a similar procedure in Drogheda in 1611, R. Walsh (ed.), 'Persecution of Catholics in Drogheda in 1606, 1607 and 1611', p.68.

[157]. In Waterford city in 1617, the Jesuits organised a collection for the catholic jurors who had been fined, Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.106.

sum, which was in turn levied on the recusants of County Westmeath.[158] In 1613, there was apparently a stay of such cases in castle chamber, reflecting the government's need to conciliate the catholic community during the opening parliamentary session; the policy was resumed in 1614, when four cases in the region were noted. The parliamentary session, during which the subsidy was granted, may have been the reason for the lack of these lawsuits in the first half of 1615, for they were resumed from the summer.[159] In autumn 1615, the numbers of jurors facing castle chamber proceedings was so great, 'that they were thronged in prison like herrings packed up in a barrell'.[160]

The campaign was directed at the Anglo-Irish communities of Leinster, and to a lesser extent, Munster. In Leitrim and south Ulster, as distinct from Leinster, only some individual jury members refused to co-operate with state religious policy, their presence a reflection of the lesser role of natives in local government in colonial Ulster.[161] Usually only some members of a given jury were charged with refusing to find those presented guilty of recusancy; other jury members returned a guilty verdict. However the verdict had to be unanimous before a conviction could be made.[162] It happened on occasion that officials, themselves part of the local catholic community, were complicit in circumventing the rigour of the law. Even when those charged at the assizes with non-attendance at church were convicted, in some instances these were released without paying the fines due.[163]

In the Anglo-Irish areas, juries were preponderantly catholic. Consequently they were under great pressure from their own community to impede convictions for

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158. A fine of 5000 florins or French livres was imposed on the people of County Westmeath, Jesuit annual letter 1612, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.59.

159. N.H.I., iii, pp 218-9.

160. D. Rothe, 'Analecta', NLI Ms 643, p.24.

161. Counties Cavan, Monaghan and Down, together with County Leitrim; Leitrim may have been affected because of official interest in the county in preparation for the plantation there in 1619, HMC Egmont, i pt 1, pp 40-55.

162. Reflecting the poorer position of the catholic community in County Down, in two juries of 1617 only one juror in each case, John Magenisse and Brian Oge Magrory, refused to join with the rest in convicting recusants, HMC Egmont, i pt 1, pp 50, 53.

163. On the day after the Lent assizes, 1616, William O'Mara, sheriff of County Tipperary, set free some prisoners who had not paid their fines; presumably some of these, at least, had been fined for recusancy, HMC Egmont, i pt 1, p.47.

recusancy. Clerical briefing of jurors and others who faced examination by officials was strongest in the southern towns, but was also prevalent in the Pale and north Leinster.[164] Civic resistance to the religious authority of the state pointed to the influence of tridentine clergy on the laity. By the mid-1610s, this influence was present not only in the Anglo-Irish areas, but in the Gaelic areas of south Ulster and Leitrim. In the case of the Leitrim jurors, their defiance in 1618 may in part be attributed to the mission of the Jesuits in the Leitrim-Longford area in 1616, for issues touching the civic duties of catholics were part of the instruction given by the fathers.[165] Lay resistance to this legal pressure was quite determined: arising from an assizes in County Longford in 1616, where Connocke and James McHubert O'Farrell refused to present recusants, they were fined 20 marks each in castle chamber, '(they having declared that they would do the same again)'.[166] In County Leitrim in 1618, Melaghlen McGranell was twice censured in the court of castle chamber for refusing to find against recusants - on the first occasion, he had entered into a bond, before the lord chancellor, pledging to attend church. On the second occasion, he was to undergo the penalty for perjury, namely, to stand on the pillory 'with a paper on his head', to be imprisoned, and to give a bond for the public acknowledgment of his offence.[167]

The anti-recusancy campaign exacerbated relations between the catholic community and the state church in the localities. The evidence of the ministers and clerks of the parish churches was central to the process of presenting recusants, whether before the church courts or at the assizes. In the 1610s, large numbers were being presented at the assizes, at least in the Anglo-Irish areas. Thus in August 1612, more than one hundred people in the two parishes of Cloine and Castle Ryckard, Meath diocese, were presented at the Trim assizes, based on 'the testimony on oath of Myles

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[164]. Three members of a jury in Clonmel declared that it was against their conscience to return a guilty verdict, 'which answer this court [castle chamber] did absolutely reject and disallow', HMC Egmont, i pt 1, p.42; 'Instructions how to avoid Act 2 Eliz. for recusants', TCD Ms 567, ff 45v-48v; two cases of conscience arising from working of penal laws, especially catholic jurors and magistrates, Archbishop Lombard, Archiv. Hib., 3, pp 324-59.

[165]. Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.91.

[166]. HMC Egmont, i pt 1, p.45.

[167]. HMC Egmont, i pt 1, p.55.

Pemberton, curate of the said parishes'.[168] These were rural parishes; by contrast, in 1606-7 recusancy was being enforced in the Pale towns, and smaller numbers were being charged.

Pressure on the catholic laity could extend to charging men with attendance at mass. Some time before May 1615, from a crowd attending mass in Navan, ten men were arraigned before the court of King's Bench in Dublin; the jury, from Meath, refused to find them guilty.[169] Significantly the celebrant was a priest who had studied on the continent; the raid doubtless involved an attempt to apprehend this cleric.[170] Resentment against the state church grew, and may have contributed to the threats to his life experienced by George Montgomery, bishop of Meath, in the early 1610s, and his decision to have his house at Ardbraccan fortified.[171]

With the advent of Sir Oliver St John (created viscount Grandison in 1621) as lord deputy, in September 1616, the anti-recusant campaign reached its climax.[172] In autumn of that year, there were nine instances of jurors from across the east and south of Ireland brought before castle chamber; in a further aspect of the campaign, the civic officials of Drogheda and Dundalk were penalised for exercising their offices without taking the oath of supremacy, as happened in towns in the south and east generally in these years.[173] Thus the most intense pressure on juries to convict recusants occurred in the first years of Grandison's rule: in north Leinster and south Ulster, between August 1616 and May 1618, members of a total of eleven juries were brought before castle chamber, reflecting in part the known anti-catholic proclivities of the lord deputy.[174] A further

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168. HMC Egmont, i pt 1, pp 41-2.

169. The jurors were brought before castle chamber, fined £3 each, and imprisoned at pleasure, HMC Egmont, i pt 1, p.44; for a similar prosecution of a layman for attending mass, see anecdote recounted in R. Walsh (ed.), 'Persecution of Catholics in Drogheda in 1606, 1607 and 1611', p.67.

170. Richard Mysset had studied at the Irish college, Douai, and was ordained by 1613, 'Irish clergy who had studied at Douai, 1613', Cal.Carew Mss, 1603-24, pp 285-6; Mysset, together with another priest named Fox, was subsequently imprisoned in Trim castle, before being transferred to Dublin castle, NAI, exchequer orders, 1613-8, IA.49.141, p.193.

171. King to lord deputy, 20 Oct 1614, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.512.

172. Sir Olver St John was appointed lord deputy, 2 July 1616, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.128; created viscount Grandison, 3 Jan 1621, G.E.C., Complete Peerage, sub Grandison.

173. H.M.C. Egmont, i pt 1, pp 45-7.

174. David Kearney, catholic archbishop of Cashel, ascribed the increasing severity of religious

refinement of the process, against precedent, was for catholic jurors to be replaced by protestants; the new jurors were suitably compliant. In areas where papists were a minority on the jury, such as south Ulster, they felt victimised on account of their religion. Usually fifteen jurors were selected by the sheriff or other royal representative in the shire; however only twelve were needed to decide any particular case, and several cases were normally listed for the same session. Nevertheless, the few catholic jurors were forced to take part in the recusancy cases.[175]

Under Lord Deputy St John especially, excommunication was yet another onerous procedure used against recusants, urban patricians in particular. In 1617, following the example of the state archbishop of Dublin in the previous year, the archbishop of Armagh together with the bishop of Meath excommunicated the leading citizens of several towns - Drogheda presumably was one. The citizens consulted the Jesuits whether a strategem proposed by a lawyer was allowable; the fathers held that such a course was licit under the circumstances.[176] This may have entailed acquiring a royal pardon, in lieu of receiving absolution from the state bishop; these pardons were being sold by courtiers.[177]

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Inevitably the state's action against dissenting jurors led to strains within the catholic community. Under the threat of fines and imprisonment, some jurors acquiesced in the decision to return a guilty verdict. Papists who were complicit in

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persecution to the new deputy, D. Kearney to Jesuit general Vitelleschi, 26 May 1617, HMC Report 10, App. 5, p.347; on St John's anti-catholic reputation, it was reported that some 'at first were much afraid that your lordship would have been too severe and especially in matter of religion', De Renzy to Lord Deputy St John, [c.1617], Anal. Hib., 34, p.133; H.M.C. Egmont, i pt 1, pp 40-55; fining and imprisonment of two Cavan jurors, Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.75.

[175]. In 1617, a jury in Philipstown, King's County (in Kildare diocese, on the border with the Armagh province) refused to return a guilty verdict on a charge of recusancy; the chief justice dismissed the catholic jurors and replaced them with protestants, who returned the verdict required by the government, Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, pp 75-6; similarly in Waterford city, a new protestant jury was selected, to replace the recalcitrant catholics, ibid., p.102.

[176]. Jesuit annual letter 1617, ibid., pp 90-1.

[177]. D. Rothe, 'Analecta', NLI Ms 643, p.26.

recusancy convictions faced animosity from their own community. In Leinster in 1617, priests held a public theological debate on the legality of a catholic assenting to the prosecution of a co-religionist for his faith. The local vicar-general, working through the pastors under his control, sought to discourage jurors from assenting to recusancy charges. Indeed, the prelate had imposed censures on those who had co-operated in such cases.[178] Thus in a strict catholic view, the compliant jurymen joined the ranks of those who temporised in the matter of their religious adherence. These jurors were viewed similarly to those who, in order to avoid the recusancy fine, went to church, or promised to do so.

While the internal development of catholicism at this time is the subject of the following chapter, it remains to note aspects of the Roman church's response to the serious threat it faced from state religious coercion. The campaign for conformity was particularly severe in the Anglo-Irish areas, but catholicism in Ulster was also under especial threat in the 1610s. For the poor - who comprised the vast majority of the population - the menace of the recusancy fine was real, and its implementation was rigorous. Landholders and the more prosperous citizens of towns were targeted in the measures against jurors. By August 1614, the anti-recusancy measures, forcefully implemented, were driving many catholics of varying social backgrounds, but especially the common people, to a temporary adherence to the state church.[179] The concern of catholic ecclesiastics at widespread attendance at state church services was reflected in the prominence given this trend in their writings. Already in 1606-7, clerics felt the need to procure a papal statement, or breve, condemning catholic participation in these services.[180] This papal condemnation was reiterated by the synod of Drogheda in 1614.[181] In material designed for use in homilies, catholic reformers felt the need to address the phenomenon of religious conformity. For an Irish translation of a Spanish

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[178]. Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, ibid., pp 85-6.

[179]. Richard Daton to Jesuit general, 13 Jan 1616, quoting from letter of Christopher Hollywood, 21 Aug 1614, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.65; in this regard, the catholic archbishop of Cashel struck an alarmist note, D. Kearney to Jesuit general Vitelleschi, Sept. 1618, HMC Report 10, App. 5, p.348.

[180]. Breve, Paul V, to catholics of England and Ireland, 22 Sept 1606, confirmed by another breve, 22 Sept 1607, in T. Burke, Hibernia Dominicana (Cologne, 1762, 1772), pp 613-5 (in English, P. Moran, History of the Catholic archbishops of Dublin (Dublin, 1864), pp 230-1).

[181]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections, p.120.

spiritual text, a translation published in 1616, the Franciscan, Florence Conry, composed a long insertion aimed at refuting the protestant threat to catholicism in contemporary Ireland. While addressing the ecclesial issues involved, Conry felt the need to warn against taking part in the worship of the state church.[182]

The reintegration of those who had lapsed under persecution was an old problem for the christian community, but relatively new, at least in scale, in Ireland.[183] In 1619, a distinct slackening of religious pressure was noted.[184] The campaign came to an end in failure in late 1618 with the onset of the toleration policy - in the extant records of the court of castle chamber, the last cases against jurors in recusancy trials were in May 1618.[185] Especially with the suspension of the more severe anti-recusancy measures, reconciling those who had temporarily lapsed was a major task for the catholic community. Those who, through fear, had compromised their adherence to Rome, by attendance at church or as jurors, were seeking to regularise their position.[186] Receiving their submissions was a particular strand in Jesuit popular missions, but the process was probably administered by other tridentine clerics in a broadly similar way. Even at the height of coercion, in 1617, the Jesuits were involved in this ministry, suggestive of the uneven and intermittent implementation of anti-recusancy measures in different parts of the country; the pattern of persecution, temporary lapse, followed by reconciliation of the lapsed, was taking place in different localities at different times. Strong social pressures were drawing those concerned to return to the catholic fold. These pressures were reinforced by the preaching of tridentine clerics. Rites of reconciliation with the

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[182]. F. Conry, Desiderius, ed. T.F. O'Rahilly (Dublin, 1941), pp 113-6; on the refutation of protestantism offered in this text, see S. Ryan, 'Popular religion in Gaelic Ireland 1445-1645', PhD thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2002, ii, pp 97-103; this theme also loomed large in another contemporary work, Aodh Mac Aingil, Scathan shacramuinte na h-aithridhe [Mirror of the sacrament of penance] [Louvain, 1618], ed. C. O Maonaigh (Baile Atha Cliath, 1952), discussed in M. O Riordan, 'The native Ulster mentalite as revealed in Gaelic sources 1600-1650', in B. Mac Cuarta (ed.), Ulster 1641, pp 84-5; one approach to contemporary Irish catholic thinking on religious coercion is B. Cunningham and R. Gillespie, ' 'Persecution' in seventeenth-century Irish', Eigse, 22, pp 15-20.

[183]. See the Donatist controversy of the 4th century, Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (Oxford, 1997), p.499.

[184]. Jesuit annual letter 1619, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.147.

[185]. At this time, in the context of the continental match being arranged for King James's heir, catholic ecclesiastics were campaigning for religious toleration at least for the kingdom of Ireland, Archbishop Kearney to Jesuit general Vitelleschi, Sept [1618], HMC Rep. 10, App. 5, p.348.

[186]. Jesuit annual letter 1619, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, pp 154-60.

Roman church, held before large crowds gathered to hear the missioner, were not perfunctory. The returnees were to be tested before readmission. The reintegration of the lapsed involved a public acknowledgment of the fault committed, namely, apostasy arising from adherence in some form to the state church, followed by a suitable period of penance. Reconciliations were public acts, designed to reinforce the exclusively catholic identity of the community, as much as that of the penitents.[187]

This rite drew on features of the baptismal liturgy. Perhaps the fullest account of the process comes from a Jesuit, and refers to an unidentified place, probably in Connacht, in 1617. Those who had previously attended state church services begged this missioner to reconcile them to the Roman church. The father had preached across Ireland, so what he described was probably typical of contemporary practice. The lapsed should not be re-admitted, 'until they had first made satisfaction for the scandal given to the people[,] by manifesting clear tokens of sorrow and of a resolution to preserve the faith unsullied. And being obliged to go on various pilgrimages they carried white crosses in their hands before them that by this symbol they might be recognised for penitents and they put on linen garments, rejoicing by this means to reconcile themselves not only to God but to the populace which had been estranged from them'.[188] In areas where tridentine influence was weak or non-existent, down to the early 1630s it happened that some people went to the minister for the baptism of their children, even though their marriage had been witnessed by a catholic priest.[189] Catholic reformers condemned this practice. Perhaps as a result, in one area of north Leinster, those who resorted to the protestant ministers were experiencing animosity from within their own community. In the context of a Jesuit mission in the area in 1619, these people agreed to give up this involvement with the state church, but they wanted the parish priest and whole parish to be informed of their pledge, 'so that all dread of them [apostates] should be dispelled'.[190]

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[187]. For this process in Munster, see Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.108.

[188]. Jesuit annual letter 1617, ibid., p.143; for another description of this rite, see M. Hartry, Triumphalia Sanctae Crucis [1639], ed. D. Murphy (Dublin, 1891), pp 137-9.

[189]. See practice noted in diocese of Down and Connor, chapter two.

[190]. Jesuit annual letter 1619, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.156.

From 1619, measures against catholic clergy together with state pressure to elicit religious conformity were waning; pressure from within the catholic community to avoid participation in the state church was growing. De facto toleration, however, became stable only in 1624, as the extensive complaints about religious coercion at the time of the 1622 commission testify; indeed, in early 1623, priests and others were still in prison arising from anti-recusant measures, though by autumn of that year toleration prevailed.[191] The timing of the softening in religious policy may be attributed to the negotiations over the Spanish match in 1618-19. Thus the implementation of a firm anti-recusant policy in Ireland was sacrificed to the demands of dynastic policy.

However, there were severe internal weaknesses in the anti-recusant campaign. At one level, coercive measures did elicit a limited conformity among sections of the laity, when measures were implemented vigorously, as in the towns in 1606-7, and, more broadly, in the 1610s. The fears expressed by catholic commentators bore testimony to the impact of these measures, especially by the mid-1610s. Yet recusancy fines had a limited and temporary influence, chiefly but not exclusively on the lower orders, whose poverty left them little choice but to conform. The policy failed to effect the compliance of the gentry and the better off, a failure which was crucial in determining the outcome of the reformation, for in Ireland, as in the rest of Europe, it was held that the people would follow the confessional leadership of their social superiors.[192] The policy was faulty also in that it ignored women, for in practice only men were subject to the recusancy measures; thus women were free to transmit their catholicism to the rising generation.[193] Further, the state church lacked the personnel to develop a conformity secured under duress into a long-term adherence.

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[191]. N.H.I., iii, p.233; letter from Dublin, 8 Mar 1623, in Moran, Catholic archbishops, pp 304-6; in autumn 1623, catholic correspondents were noting that religious coercion had ceased, several letters on state of catholicism in Ireland, 1623, BAV, Barberini Latini Ms 8630, ff 147-8.

[192]. 'But if a right reformation were intended, ... they ought to begin with the heads and not with the tail, ... and then there were no need to take much pains with the vulgar, for they believing but blindly will ever be of themselves of what their landlord is.... the chieftains would be sufficient ministers themselves to their people', De Renzy to Lord Deputy St John, [c.1617], Anal. Hib., 34, pp 131-2; a similar view was expressed in 'Oversights committed in the ... recusant business', [1622], NLI Ms 8014 (i).

[193]. De Renzy to lord deputy, [c.1617], Anal. Hib., 34, p.148.

The anti-recusancy campaigns of 1606-7 and the 1610s gave rise to widespread harassment of proscribed clergy, and the gentry, who were their main harbourers. These measures did little to impede the clergy's effectiveness; the policy of exiling priests was a failure. Especially in the 1610s, religious and seminary priests were incarcerated in local gaols, and, presumably for more secure detention, many clerics were brought to Dublin and kept in the castle. However, the catholic community sought to prevent their capture, and to secure their release. The venality of officials and prelates stymied the campaign, facilitating the release of priests, and the exclusion of all but the poor from paying the recusancy fine. Indeed, perhaps the greatest impact of the campaign was in the impoverishment of the catholic community, at various social levels: recusancy fines affected the poor, fines and bonds were taken from recalcitrant jurors, bribes given to officials to avoid exactions, and bribes and bonds given to secure the release of clergy. Through collections organised in support of those under financial pressure from religious penalties, the campaign fostered a growing catholic identity.

Long-term, the coercive measures taken against parishioners, non-compliant jurors in recusancy cases, and the proscribed clergy, were to little avail. Conformity elicited under the pressure of the recusancy fine was of short duration. The religious campaign left a legacy of bitterness against the state church at various social levels. It gave rise to determined opposition from the catholic community, and to some level of support and solidarity with those who suffered from fines and imprisonment in resisting the state's religious campaign. The pressure of the mandates (and attendant coercion) affected Dublin, Drogheda and the smaller Pale towns and surrounding districts in 1606-7. The campaign in the 1610s entailed measures against jurors, touching the freeholders directly, and contributed to the emergence of a self-consciously recusant identity throughout north Leinster and south Ulster. The lay resistance which this policy provoked may be explained, at least in part, by the influence of tridentine clergy. This opposition was one testimony to their pervasive presence in many localities - and not merely the towns - by the mid-1610s, even if only as visiting missioners, as distinct from parochial clergy. The emergence of this tridentine strand needs to be set in the context of the internal development of catholicism in the Anglo-Irish milieu of north Leinster, which is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

PRIESTS AND GENTRY IN NORTH LEINSTER, 1603-20

The evolution of the internal organisation of catholicism in the Anglo-Irish areas is the subject of this chapter. In terms of ecclesiastical geography, north Leinster comprised the southern part of the metropolitan province of Armagh. It consisted of Counties Louth (Armagh diocese), Meath and Westmeath (Meath diocese), west King's County (Clonmacnoise diocese), and Longford (Ardagh diocese). Change from survivalism towards a tridentine catholicism can be traced by considering the diffusion of continentally-trained clergy across the region. The number of these priests in 1603 was negligible. By the early 1620s however foreign-trained clergy were spread throughout the region, and were an established part of the catholic landscape. The change was by no means complete. Even in the Anglo-Irish heartlands, tridentine clergy remained but a thin layer superimposed upon the bulk of the traditionalist local clergy. This development coincided with the period of coercion in the first two decades of the seventeenth century. In the wake of the Nine Years War, many areas across the kingdom were without priests.[1] However, this generalisation doubtless masked wide regional variations. Given that landholding in north Leinster remained stable, a certain continuity in pastoral provision from the late sixteenth century may be presumed. These areas were served as hitherto by a network of parishes, where by the mid-1610s diocesan clergy were reasonably well distributed. The support of the traditional landed elite was crucial to the continuity and

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[1]. Extension of time for Easter communion in Ireland because of shortage of priests, exacerbated by their going into hiding as a result of religious pressure, breve of Paul V, 28 Mar 1607, in P. Moran, History of the Catholic archbishops of Dublin (Dublin, 1864), pp 447-8.

revival of catholicism in Anglo-Irish areas, including north Leinster.[2] The adherence of the vast majority of this elite to catholicism provided a strong stimulus to the lower orders to do likewise. In most localities, social pressure from the landlord existed in favour of catholicism, and against conforming to the state church.[3]

An effective alliance prevailed between the nobility, and gentry, and the recently returned tridentine clergy. This alliance played a crucial role in preserving the localities for catholicism. A gentry or aristocratic catholicism existed over much of the region, in areas where the traditional elite were strong; in the countryside, mass, the focal point of a catholic community, was celebrated in their homes, and they maintained and supported the clergy, both traditionalist and tridentine.

The tension between survivalism and tridentine innovation is a theme in Pale catholicism in these decades, and provides a limited framework for this chapter. One way of exploring this evolution is by considering the leadership offered by various vicars-general, the leading prelate in a diocese. Survivalism can be explored by examining the various roles of diocesan priests in this milieu, noting their dependence on their patrons. Elite support also contributed to the survival of the Franciscans in these difficult years. One area of tension between traditionalist and tridentine strands centered on the church's ministry of reconciliation - catholic reformers disapproved of the large gatherings where clerics proclaimed pardons and indulgences; similarly, tridentine ecclesiastics frowned on the relic tours which were such a prominent feature of catholicism. By way of contrast, the emergence of tridentine clergy in these years will be noted. The continental schooling of gentry boys, and the support of women in elite families, may be considered among the agents of religious change within this milieu. It was from within this social context that tridentine clergy, both diocesan and regular, notably the Jesuits and Capuchins, were drawn, and subsequently ministered. The vowed life of religious women was also affected by the continental contacts of the Anglo-Irish elite. Finally, the growing tridentine influence in Meath diocese in the 1610s may be explored through the Jesuit presence there.

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[2]. 'There are besides a multitude of priests discovered unto us in every particular diocese whereby it appears that every parish in a manner has his particular priest', royal visitation 1615, BL Add Ms 19,836, p.285; the visitation included the dioceses of Meath and Ardagh; elite support ensured that there were many priests, report of Monsigniore Bentivoglio on catholic Ireland, 1613, J. Hagan (ed.), 'Miscellanea Vaticano-Hibernica, 1580-1631', Archiv. Hib., 3, pp 300-2.

[3]. In 1612, Thomas Ram, state bishop of Ferns, remarked that it would be difficult for the common people to break from the catholicism of their landlords, diocesan report, 1 Sept 1612, in M. Comerford, Collections relating to the Dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin (Dublin, [1883]), p.240.

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Before the restoration of a resident episcopate in the northern province, starting with Meath diocese in 1621-2, such control as existed over the clergy and diocesan life was exercised by the vicars-general.[4] In principle, they supervised the clerical infrastructure of the diocese, and appointed priests to every parish.[5] Under these prelates were vicars-forane, or rural deans who in turn were to supervise the parish priests. In line with their concern to promote the diocese and the parish as the centres of catholic life, reformers in the synods of the 1610s were seeking to strengthen the authority of the vicars-general over the clergy.[6] However, indicative of how deeply entrenched was a traditionalist outlook, in the northern province, at least down to the mid-1610s, some of those exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction were married clergy.[7]

The vicar-general convened meetings of the clergy, where issues facing the catholic community - including political questions - were discussed.[8] One focus of priestly political involvement in the localities were the 1613 parliamentary elections. There had been attempts to hinder the election of protestants in different areas, and priests had been active in this regard.[9] It was alleged that priests and gentry in the Pale had orchestrated recusant parliamentary opposition, by sending agents to the other provinces.[10] Arising from these clerical gatherings, and by means of the parish clergy, monies were sollicited at mass, for various causes deemed beneficial to the catholic community. Thus collections were regularly taken to finance the various recusant delegations to London. Lord Deputy Chichester made efforts to prohibit these levies.[11] Other church-related initiatives were

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[4]. Thomas Dease (d.1652), nominated bishop of Meath, May 1621, consecrated, May 1622, N.H.I., ix, p.351.

[5]. 1614 Drogheda synod, L. Renehan, Collections on Irish church history, i (Dublin, 1861), p.118; intelligences, [June] 1610, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.475.

[6]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections, p.120.

[7]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections, p.121.

[8]. The leading priests of the Pale were 'now very lately meddling in state affairs', Sir Toby Caulfield to lord deputy, 27 June 1610, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, pp 474-5.

[9]. Commissioners re Irish recusant grievances, to privy council, 15 Oct 1613, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-14, pp 426-7; royal instructions to 1613 commissioners, 27 Aug 1613, ibid., p.436.

[10]. Sir Robert Jacob to lord deputy, 26 May 1613, Bodleian, Carte Ms 62, fols 241-4.

[11]. Clerical involvement in national collections was illustrated in 1606, when the priests of Waterford under the vicar-general organised a collection for the mission of Sir Patrick Barnwall to London, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.116; ibid., pp 41, 43; king wanting to prohibit levies for recusant delegations, king to lord deputy, 8 July 1613, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-14, p.382; clerical involvement in collections associated with 1613 parliament, ibid., pp 427, 436, 443-4.

also supported in this way. Thus in August 1607, it was alleged that priests, chiefly in north Leinster, arranged a collection for Peter Lombard, archbishop of Armagh, living in Rome, after a gathering of the clergy held to discuss Lombard's proposed visit to Spain.[12] Similarly, by the early 1610s, if not earlier, in Meath diocese the vicar-general and other leading diocesan priests were preaching in support of funds for diocesan students abroad, especially in France and the Low Countries.[13]

On occasion, these prelates sought also to discipline the catholic laity. In the 1610s juries were finding individuals guilty of recusancy, as presented by the local state clergy. Co-operation in this process was the subject of intense debate within the catholic community. In one diocese in 1617, a public theological debate took place among priests, concerning the legitimacy of aiding the conviction of a fellow-catholic on a charge of recusancy. By means of the control he could exercise over the parish priests, the vicar-general condemned the view that catholic complicity was licit. Further, he issued censures against those who co-operated in this process. Thus despite the hostile civil environment of the 1610s, vicars-general were able to exercise a certain level of discipline over pastors and laity in their dioceses.[14]

The role of a catholic prelate in the Pale in the early seventeenth century can be further illustrated in the case of Robert Lalor, vicar-general of the dioceses of Dublin, Kildare and Ferns from 1594.[15] The regulation of marriage pertained to the role of a vicar-general. As noted in chapter 4, as a result of the tension between tridentine and survivalist norms, marriage existed in a legal quagmire, and individuals turned to available competent clerics to regularise their unions. Thus the prelate dealt with marriage issues, particularly of the gentry; these obtained from him dispensations to marry within the prohibited degrees, and divorces.[16] Further, the gentry sought dispensations from their diocesan prelate permitting them to retain the tithes of the church livings in their possession. Through impropriations, the gentry generally exercised control over the parish in their locality. Into the first decade

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[12]. Hugh O'Carolan's discovery, 23 Aug 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.252; in 1625, a similar collection was organised by vice-primate David Rothe for Lombard, though nothing was forthcoming from Counties Louth and Monaghan, Rothe to Lombard, 17 Sept 1625, Wadding papers, p.101.

[13]. 1615 visitation, BL Add Ms 19,836, p.284.

[14]. Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, pp 85-6.

[15]. Arrested in Dublin, 26 Feb 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.416.

[16]. For an example of a marriage dispensation, see grant by Thomas Rothe, vicar-general of Ossory diocese, to Arthur Kavanagh and Mary Fitzgerald, they being related in third degree, 16 May 1631, J. Ainsworth (ed.), 'Survey of documents in private keeping', Anal. Hib., 25, p.22.

of the seventeenth century, even in the Pale heartlands gentry were presenting priests to the vicar-general who then instituted them into benefices. More informally, as trusted clerics, vicars-general were involved in arrangements of a legal nature regarding the property of landowning families.[17]

The state of catholicism can be assessed, in part, by a consideration of the vicars-general. Down to about 1625, at least, a survivalist catholicism prevailed in the diocesan leadership in much of north Leinster, with the notable exception of Meath diocese. Clergy, even prelates, were trained locally, representative of the indigenous catholicism of the late sixteenth century.[18] John Gaffney became vicar-general of the small diocese of Ardagh in 1597, a date which suggests he did not have a continental education. By 1606, indicative of the collapse and confusion of catholic life, he had an uncertain abode, but was known to spend time at Granard, County Longford, presumably sheltering with a landed family there. His long tenure suggests that he was an acceptable diocesan leader.[19]

Balthasar Delahoyd (c.1564-c.1623)[20] personified the localism and narrow ethnic loyalty prevailing within catholicism in north Leinster in the early seventeenth century. With the appointment of Peter Lombard as primate in 1601 (who lived in Rome until his death in 1625), the Armagh diocese was administered locally by a vicar-general. Delahoyd, native of Drogheda, and pastor of the main catholic chapel there, had served as assistant to the vicar-general from the early 1600s. By 1615 he in turn had been appointed vicar-general. Then in his fifties, he was a product of the survivalist catholicism of the late sixteenth century Pale. In his native town, presumably in the 1570s, he received the normal, rudimentary clerical education common in the early modern period. This limitation exacerbated tensions with the continentally-trained friars from the late 1610s. He displayed a self-sufficiency, if not superiority, towards the surrounding Gaelic world, reflective of the cultural elitism of the Pale mentality.

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[17]. Sir John Davies to Salisbury, 1 July 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.210; copies of acts and instruments, mostly in Lalor's own hand, were produced in court at the vicar-general's trial, Davies, A report of cases and matters in law (Dublin, 1762), p.270.

[18]. In 1623, the Franciscans asserted that, outside Meath diocese, there were no preachers among the northern diocesan clergy apart from several Ulster vicars-general, Wadding papers, p.32; do., 1626, ibid., p.146.

[19]. Davies to Salisbury, 12 Nov 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, pp 17-18; appointed vicar-general, 1597, vicar-apostolic, 1622, and died, c.1637, N.H.I., ix, p.339; in 1634 he wrote to Rome, asking to be relieved of his duties, and suggesting that his nephew Cornelius Gaffney succeed him; Moran, Spicil. Ossor., i, pp 129-30; acta, Propaganda Fide, 30 July 1635, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.93.

[20]. Birth, Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p. 29; death, Wadding papers, p.57.

Cultural isolationism contributed to the internal catholic tensions which exploded in Drogheda in the early 1620s. Balthasar Delahoyd had little or no experience of life beyond his native area. Indeed he had hardly travelled outside the Pale - the Gaelic world of Ulster, including its catholicism, was quite alien to him, for he had never ventured north of Dundalk. His knowledge of Irish was so tenuous that in any dealings with Irish-speakers, who represented the vast majority of priests and people in the northern part of the diocese, he needed the services of an interpreter. Such lack of familiarity with Gaelic Ulster was a distinct disadvantage, not only in dealings within Armagh diocese, the greater part of which lay within Ulster, but also in his role as vicar-general of the metropolitan see; Balthasar never visited the ten suffragan sees of the province, where Irish was the language of catholicism. By remaining in Drogheda, at the southernmost tip of the diocese, the prelate placed litigants from Ulster at a disadvantage in terms of long travel, and the expense of bringing witnesses and an interpreter.[21] This reserve towards the northern Gaelic world reflects at least in part the enduring legacy of tensions between the Ulster Irish and Pale society arising from the Nine Years War (1594-1603).

The contemporary dearth of suitable clerical talent in the northern province was highlighted in Delahoyd's appointment. His limited education and purely local experience were adequate for ministry in his home town. However his narrow background became a burden when he was promoted to vicar-general of the primatial see. Going beyond the normal clerical tensions between secular and religious, his difficult personality gave rise to many rows not only with the Cistercians and the mendicants, but also with several prelates. David Rothe, who as vice-primate from 1609 had responsibility for the selection of vicars-general in the northern dioceses, was keen to promote clergy with a tridentine education, as his appointments in the Ulster sees indicate.[22] Balthasar's nomination in 1615 indicates that few, if any, such clergy were then available in the Armagh diocese. Having dealt with many complaints against Delahoyd from a wide range of people, the vice-primate noted in 1625 that Balthasar was appointed 'with a regard of the necessity of the hour and the want of others more able and fit; not without some remorse for his want of language and other his defects'.[23]

While the vicar-general's limitations were obvious, his faithfulness to catholicism during times of coercion doubtless commended him for the role. He ministered through periods of intense persecution affecting Drogheda, during the mandates campaign 1605-7,

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[21]. Wadding papers, pp 29, 32, 39.

[22]. See chapter three.

[23]. Wadding papers, pp 5, 47; (quote), D. Rothe to Primate Lombard, 17 Sept 1625, ibid., p.103.

and in the early 1610s. Had he apostasised, or temporised, under this pressure, the fact would most likely have been mentioned by the Franciscans in the controversy of the early 1620s.

A major function of the vicars-general was to foster unity among the clergy. However, they lacked authority to deal effectively with clerical disputes. Serving in the early seventeenth century, they faced the rigours of a hostile civil climate, however much religious coercion may have varied in intensity in place and time. In these circumstances, the normal channels, procedures and sanctions of diocesan clerical life were impossible to maintain. Nevertheless, in a necessarily limited form, catholic ecclesiastical jurisdiction was in operation in the northern province even at this time. Distance impeded its effective exercise. Thus in the late 1610s, some litigants from the northern Gaelic part of Armagh diocese were travelling to Drogheda to attend the vicar-general, facing danger and expense in undertaking such a long journey.[24] To these structural difficulties of a coercive civil environment and long travel, personal unsuitability could add to the limitations of the vicar-general's role. In this regard, the vicar-general of Armagh was by far the most egregious example. 'Divers complaints I receaved and exceptions of cleargie and laity against him', noted Rothe, the vice-primate, referring also to 'a whole bundell of complaints, instances, and aggravations' touching Balthasar Delahoyd and his nephew.[25] Whereas in the 1610s relative harmony reigned between the different catholic groupings in Drogheda, the nomination of Delahoyd as vicar-general in 1615 contributed to the eruption by the early 1620s of a series of disputes. While the reasons for these disputes were complex, the prelate's temperament contributed to the tensions.

In 1614, as catholic reformers surveyed the state of catholicism in the north, parochial provision in the Anglo-Irish and Gaelic areas of north Leinster was apparently characterised by broad continuity with earlier decades. The distribution of parish clergy was appreciably better than in Ulster, even if virtually all received merely the rudimentary education available locally. This was in contrast to the shortage of priests, confusion and breakdown characteristic of catholic life in Ulster by the early years of the plantation.[26]

In principle, the deployment of diocesan clergy was in the hands of the vicar-general, though in practice this power could vary widely. As evidence of the strength of catholic

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[24]. Wadding papers, p.32.

[25]. D. Rothe to Primate Lombard, 17 Sept 1625, Wadding papers, p.104.

[26]. 'In this disturbed state, not even parish priests can be appointed, nor parishes well defined ...' [in Ulster], 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections, p.436; see above, chapter three.

organisation in north Leinster in the 1610s, the vicar-general could exercise considerable control over the parish clergy in County Louth (in Armagh diocese). There, a recognised hierarchy of parishes existed, based on wealth. The prelate could move clergy arbitrarily from parish to parish. Under Balthasar Delahoyd, some priests were assigned to a parish 'like mercenaries'[27] from year to year, others held their parishes at the whim of the vicar-general, and could be moved by him at will; those who wished to be promoted to a richer parish tried to gain, and keep, his favour. To some few he made an absolute collation of the benefice, contrary to established custom, whereby such collations had been reserved to the Holy See for some time.[28] This degree of control by a vicar-general over the clergy was exceptional. A resident vicar-general, as Delahoyd in County Louth, could exercise direct control over the priests in his charge. By contrast, prelates of Ulster dioceses, based in the more secure environs of the Pale in the 1610s and into the 1620s, were at a considerable distance from their dioceses, which some visited only in summer, when travel conditions were more suitable.[29] The ordinary's greater control over the diocesan clergy was yet another difference between catholicism in the Pale and in Ulster.

From a tridentine perspective, a major lacuna in most Irish dioceses was the lack of preachers among the diocesan clergy. This derived from the failure to send local candidates to the Irish colleges on the continent. It was the vicar-general's responsibility to ensure a supply of suitably trained clergy.[30] The background and outlook of the individual vicar-general had an influence on clerical recruitment in the diocese. Thus a major defect in Delahoyd's administration of Armagh diocese, according to the Franciscans, was his failure to promote the continental education of promising youths.[31] In Meath diocese, by contrast, already by the 1590s there were established links with the continental colleges, especially Paris.[32] Tridentine leadership in Meath was strengthened in the 1610s, by which

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[27]. Wadding papers, p.34.

[28]. Wadding papers, p.44.

[29]. On the Ulster diocesan vicars, see chapter three.

[30]. It was incumbent on the ordinary (vicar-general or vicar-apostolic) to vouch for the education and fitness of candidates for ordination, certificate of worthiness for priestly orders by Robert Barry, vicar-apostolic of Ross, 22 Mar 1622, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.348.

[31]. Wadding papers, p.32.

[32]. Thomas O'Mulkelly, Meath diocese, was travelling to study in France in 1599, HMC Salisbury, ix, p.210; by 1605, Thomas Dease was head of the Irish college in Paris, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, pp 438-40; Thomas Messingham was rector of the Irish college there in the early 1620s, a role which facilitated the entrance of Meath students, Wadding papers, p.75; T. O'Connor, 'Thomas Messingham (c.1575-1638?) and the seventeenth-century Church', Riocht na Midhe, 11, pp 88-105.

time James Plunkett was vicar-general.[33] If Delahoyd typified the survivalist strand in early seventeenth century catholicism, Plunkett represented the new wave of continentally-educated clergy. A close kinsman of the barons of Kileen, he was educated in Salamanca, Spain, before returning to work in his native diocese from about 1599. During the Nine Years War, he had sided with the northern chiefs.[34] His support of O'Neill doubtless facilitated his appointment as vicar-general of the diocese about 1614, given that another Tyrone protege, Archbishop Peter Lombard, was the metropolitan.[35] In line with aristocratic protection of clergy in the contemporary risky climate, Plunkett was based with his Kileen relatives.[36] His own continental background disposed him to support the sending of Meath students to the colleges; making appeals for the support of clerical students studying abroad was part of the role of a senior ecclesiastic in Meath diocese at this time.[37]

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Within the Pale and in the Anglo-Irish areas beyond, survivalism characterised parish life down to the first decade of the seventeenth century; change occurred only gradually, as traditionalist clergy were replaced by those trained on the continent. An unreformed traditionalism characterised the bulk of the lower clergy in the Anglo-Irish areas. Only from the mid-1610s were tridentine clergy appearing in Meath diocese in any number. These represented merely a small but growing proportion of all diocesan clergy. Traditionalist elements remained - even in Meath diocese, clerical families may have persisted into the early 1620s.[38] It happened that simple priests took bribes to utter curses

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[33]. Cornelius Stanley was appointed vicar-general of the dioceses of Meath and Dublin, 15 May 1591, N.H.I., ix, p.351; he was mentioned as vicar [apostolic] of Meath diocese in a papal bull of 29 Mar 1609, Archiv. Hib., 1, p.39.

[34]. Wadding papers, pp 43, 65, 17.

[35]. Wadding papers, pp 65-8; referred to as 'bishop of Meath', Hugh O'Carolan's discovery, 23 Aug 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.252; preacher in Westmeath, Nov 1613, TCD Ms 567, ff 32-5; 'archpriest', on borders of Westmeath, c.1613-4, TCD Ms 580, fol.25r.

[36]. 1615 visitation, BL Add Ms 19,836, p.284; R. Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', Coll. Hib., 14, p.8; he was replaced as vicar-general by Christopher Cusack, under Thomas Dease, bishop of Meath, by 1623, Wadding papers, p.57; Plunkett had died by 1630, 'per obitum' grant, 1630, Archiv. Hib., 1, pp 30-3.

[37]. Those involved were Richard Browne, James Plunkett, Walter FitzJames, and Fergal MacKigan, 1615 visitation, BL Add Ms 19,836, p.284; some of these clerics may themselves have studied abroad; MacKigan was appointed vicar-general of Clonmacnoise in 1615, N.H.I., ix, p.343.

[38]. It is possible that a father and son were serving adjacent parishes in 1622: Sir John Coursey was priest at Duleek, while Sir John Coursey the elder was priest at Laytown, in Julianstown

and excommunications at mass against those suspected of theft or robbery. In confession, some priests imposed long pilgrimages as penances, which, in the case of wives and servants, led to tension with husbands and masters; there were suggestions that women were exposed to abuse as pilgrims.[39] Another sign of clerical disorder, from a tridentine viewpoint, was the prevalence of wandering or vagabond priests, living and ministering beyond the reach of ecclesiastical discipline. While this stratum of clergy may have been more common in Ulster, given the ecclesiastical collapse there in the wake of war and plantation, it was presumably also present in north Leinster as well.[40]

A further traditionalist influence on Meath catholicism was the influx of Ulster clerics from 1603. As noted in chapter three, from about 1610 several northern vicars-general were based in the Anglo-Irish areas. Lesser clergy, too, were also moving south, in search of a more secure and comfortable life than plantation Ulster could offer a catholic cleric.[41] Shortly after his arrival as bishop of Meath, in the early 1620s, as part of his campaign to promote a newer-style, tridentine catholicism, Thomas Dease expelled the northern clerics from the diocese. This move added to the already strained relations between the Old Irish and Old English groupings within the northern province.[42]

Local Irish-speaking clergy, with little or no theological training, and giving a merely formal adherence to the state church, represented a strong element of ecclesiastical and probably liturgical continuity. While they continued as incumbents, communities experienced little change in parish life. Thus in 1607, Christopher Taafe, a landowner of Braganstown, County Louth, presented Neu McVard as vicar in the parish church of St Mary, Monfelston, to the state archbishop of Armagh; as patrons of the livings, this was the practice of gentry families, such as the Taafes, for several generations. Like the patron, the vicar too was rooted in the locality, for he was probably the son of the previous

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parish, Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', p.10; the younger may have been the secular priest of the same name who had studied at Douai before 1622, Archiv. Hib., 14, p.78.

[39]. 1614 Kilkenny synod, P. Moran, Catholic archbishops, p.447.

[40]. [C. Hollywood] to R. Conway, 4 Nov 1611, in W. M'Donald, 'Irish colleges since the reformation', I.E.R., 10, pp 290-7.

[41]. Bernard Hayes, Armagh diocese, grant of a Meath living, ASV, Dataria apostolica, Per obitum, vol. 22 (1615), fol.153v; to Raphoe priest, do., vol.24 (1619), fol.196v; this migration is discernible also in Dublin diocese, 1608-11: 'per obitum' grants to Patrick Duff, 'diocesan priest', Neil Ciarnanus [Kiernan], Armagh diocese, Hugh Brineus [Byrne], Dromore, Rugerus Treinus [Rory McTrein], Clogher, see N. Donnelly, 'The 'per obitum' volumes in the Vatican Archivio', Archiv. Hib., I, pp 30-33.

[42]. Against promotion of bishop of Meath to Armagh [1626], Wadding papers, p.167.

incumbent, John McVard, who had died.[43] The demise of these survivalist clergy within the ministry of the state church - evident in most areas by the 1615 visitation - marked a significant break in parish life. Their replacement by explicitly protestant clergy, generally British, marked a new church presence in the localities, alien both in theological outlook, liturgical practice, and cultural background.

One way in which this transition was crystallised was in funeral disputes. According to an anecdote related by Philip O'Sullivan Beare, in the 1590s, in a village near Drogheda, a corpse was brought secretly to the church for burial. Surrounded by women (because men were afraid of the legal penalties), the priest celebrated mass. The English minister arrived, and proceeded to attack the priest. Thereupon the women threw the protestant cleric into the open grave, and only desisted at the word of the priest.[44] Again, in November 1607, James Barnwall, a local landowner, came to his parish church at Balrothery, on the borders of Counties Dublin and Meath, for his mother's funeral. An attempt was made to perform the funeral rite in the traditional way. A scuffle ensued betwen the minister, Thomas Meredith, an Englishman, and the funeral party, in which the minister was attacked, and the Book of Common Prayer was trampled underfoot. These episodes illustrate how the transition to British protestant clergy could lead to friction, as members of local elites resisted the change to new rites and alien clergy.[45]

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Henceforth, the gentry or noble home was replacing the parish church as the recognised centre of catholic life in the locality. These houses, of varying degrees of grandeur, were dotted across north Leinster, where long-established elite households were the norm.[46] The pace of change was not uniform. Although in some isolated areas, mass continued to be celebrated in the local parish church into the seventeenth century, this was fading rapidly by c.1610; in the Pale heartland of County Meath, a move from the parish church to the hall of the local notable's house as the venue for mass may be discerned from

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[43]. Mrs G. Bellew, 'County Louth records from transcripts of family papers', Louth Arch. Soc. Jn., 8 no 3, pp 358-9.

[44]. M. Byrne, Ireland under Elizabeth ... portion of History of Catholic Ireland by Don Philip O'Sullivan Bear (Dublin, 1903), pp 45-8.

[45]. HMC Egmont, i pt 1, p.33; similarly, in autumn 1604, a minister was interrupted during a funeral in Westmeath; a fracas ensued, for the parties involved were imprisoned in Dublin castle, Davies to Cecil, 8 Dec 1604, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.214.

[46]. See the lists of gentry families, and their localities, in E. Hogan (ed.), The Description of Ireland in 1598 (Dublin, 1878), pp 3-5, 89-116.

about 1600.[47] In this domestic setting, mass was attended by the family, their servants, and the inhabitants of the locality. In the liturgy, the giving of the kiss of peace was habitual; to avoid unspecified abuses, and in line with their promotion of a public, parish-centred worship, the catholic reformers wished to abolish this practice at private masses.[48] Mass in the setting of an elite household, generally in the main hall, was a feature of Pale catholicism outside the few towns, where mass-houses were increasingly common.[49] This change of venue added to the prestige and standing of the notables within the local catholic community. Devotional art of continental provenance was being acquired by these families, partly as a result of travel, but perhaps more frequently as a result of consignments from abroad, only a fraction of which was intercepted by the authorities. These works were probably small in scale, suitable for personal, as distinct from communal, devotion.[50]

The maintenance of catholic clergy pertained to aristocratic and gentry status.[51] A chaplain was part of an aristocratic household. Further, the nobility often maintained the priests of the local parishes. Mary Nugent (nee FitzGerald), dowager Lady Delvin, was noted as a supporter of priests.[52] That the Nugents were strong protectors of catholic clergy was indicated by the presence of no less than 13 priests on the borders of Cavan and Westmeath, an area in which the barons of Delvin held sway. This was in November 1613, when persecution was severe. James Plunkett, the Meath vicar-general, together with other

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[47]. In 1615, catholic priests were the incumbents of two isolated parishes in Ardagh diocese, where Sir Patrick Barnwall was patron, BL Add Ms 19,836, p.248; for examples of Pale catholicism centred on the household of the local notable, see J. Brady, 'Keeping the faith at Gormanston, 1569-1629', Franciscan Fathers (eds), Father Luke Wadding Commemorative Volume (Dublin, 1957), pp 405-1; also the family of Sir Christopher Plunkett of Dunsoghly castle, north County Dublin, see B. Mac Cuarta (ed.), 'Old English catholicism in Chester documents, 1609-19', Archiv. Hib., 57, pp 1-5.

[48]. 1614 Kilkenny synod, P. Moran, Catholic archbishops, p.446.

[49]. The domestic catholicism of Pale gentry houses is adumbrated in M.V. Ronan (ed.), 'Archbishop Bulkeley's visitation of Dublin, 1630', Archiv. Hib., 8, pp 56-98; mass for the people of a Pale locality in the customary setting of the hall of the gentry home was noted by P. Harris, The excommunication (n.p., 1632), p.68.

[50]. Picture of St Margaret, 'in guilde', L. Murray, 'The will of James Hussey of Smarmore, County Louth, priest [1635]', Louth Arch. Soc. Jn., 8 no 4, pp 303-21.

[51]. For this process in neighbouring Dublin diocese, see C. Lennon, 'Mass in the manor house: the Counter-Reformation in Dublin, 1560-1630', in J. Kelly and D. Keogh (eds), History of the Catholic Diocese of Dublin (Dublin, 2000), pp 112-26.

[52]. Lord deputy to Salisbury, 10 Sept 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.269.

seminary priests, were sheltering in this isolated place, where they could also enjoy the Nugents' protection.[53]

The gentry, too, were maintainers of catholic clergy. One form of priestly maintenance was the custom of making bequests for masses for the soul of the testator. In 1604, John Boyar, the exiled English priest sheltering with the countess of Kildare at Maynooth, left legacies totalling £33 to seven named priests, 'to pray for my soul'.[54] Reflecting the civil climate which was inimical towards catholicism down to c.1620, some such legacies were couched in circumstantial terms. Thus in her will of 1610, the dowager lady Nugent left £15 'for pious uses', and £30 'for godly uses, as she will declare in a letter to her son the lord of Delvin'.[55] Similarly, in his will of 1618, Nicholas Archbold of County Meath left a gift to the church, 'as Mr Coyle shall think fit'.[56] Even in the disturbed early decades of the seventeenth century, the Franciscans of Multyfarnham were regular recipients of legacies. Among the friars' benefactors were the merchants of Drogheda. In his will of 1608, Piers Nugent, the Drogheda alderman, desired to be buried in the abbey, and left bequests to the friars. The priest John Boyar left £20 'to the bishop's good company at Multifarnham to pray for my soul'.[57] One can presume that merchant and landed families across Meath and Westmeath were making bequests to the convent of Multyfarnham.

Parish revenues were generally under the control of the nobility and gentry, successors of the religious houses as owners of the impropriations. Even in those parishes where the old dispensation had survived, the priests were poorly paid; all the more so where clergy giving a nominal adherence to the new order (often the existing Irish clergy) were the incumbents. Given the absence of a fixed and regular maintenance, priests needed to charge for their pastoral services in order to survive. Priests' maintenance in the 1610s was described thus by one familiar with the catholic community in north Leinster: 'The ordinary priests do live commonly by ministering sacraments receiving from every house

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[53]. 'A note of divers other priests and friars that live about Rosse the borders of Westmeath', 1613, TCD Ms 567, fol.43r.

[54]. Transcript of will of John Boyar alias Bradley, 22 April 1604, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, sub anno 1604.

[55]. [Nugent papers], Anal. Hib., 20, p.137.

[56]. NAI, RC 5/11, pp 66-71; Thomas Coyle, priest, Meath diocese, educated at Douai (Archiv. Hib., 14, p.77) and later at Bordeaux (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 318-22) was a priest by July 1611 (Archiv. Hib., 1, p.31).

[57]. Transcript of will of John Boyar, 22 April 1604, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, sub anno 1604; Richard Brady OFM, bishop of Kilmore, was living at Multyfarnham until his death in 1607, Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.98.

in their parishes 12d or at the most 2s besides 2s for every marriage, and 12d when the women are churched, and are far richer than the prelates and preachers whose privie tythes can scarce relieve them, without private alms'.[58]

Throughout the northern province, priests relied on the people's offerings at mass. Outside the towns, the parish clergy used to beg during or after mass on Sundays and feastdays, asking the people to exclaim blessings on those about to give.[59] Even this was insufficient, and many sought a livelihood in a variety of other ways. Some clerics were engaged in a range of business pursuits. Others were entertainers and jokers in the service of notables.[60] A few were well-off; in 1605, the Meath priest Bernard Carolan, noted as a good-living cleric, was reckoned comfortable for he was worth more than £40, and could live well on his own means.[61] However, clergy were more usually dependent on the gentry or nobility of the locality. As a result the local priests were generally impoverished. In the Anglo-Irish areas, as in Ulster, many were in effect married.[62] Typically, their impoverished lifestyle, low status, and irregular mores mirrored the situation of the lower clergy of the nascent Church of Ireland.[63]

Many were closely involved in the concerns of their patrons. Counted among the literate few, the clergy - both traditional and tridentine - fulfilled a variety of roles for these families. It was customary for priests to draft wills, and witness them.[64] Some were stewards of properties and lands.[65] Others, among the more eminent, were trusted with

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[58]. 'A note of archbishops and bishops of Ireland consecrated and authorised by the Pope', [1613], TCD Ms 567, fol.36v.

[59]. Wadding papers, p.42.

[60]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections, p.119.

[61]. Jesuit annual letter 1605, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.32.

[62]. A report on the catholic restoration in 1603, focusing on the south-east, notes that many priests were prevailed on to give up their concubines, James White to Pope Clement VIII, July 1604, BAV, Barberini Latini Ms 2377, fol.4.

[63]. Many vicarages were worth less than £2 p.a. - equivalent to wages of horseboys, while carpenters or slaters were earning £30 p.a., [Treatise on appropriations in Ireland, temp. Jas I], County Archives Office, Lincoln, Miscellaneous Books, I, pp 64-5; priests and ministers as drinking companions, in 1619, W. Lithgow, The total discourse of the rare adventures (London, 1632), p.435.

[64]. For example, will of John McHubbert Dalton, County Westmeath, 4 Apr 1608, witnessed by John Murriart[y], priest and curate of Knoghvaie, NAI, RC 5/11, pp 201-2.

[65]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections, p.119; the dowager countess of Kildare entrusted the management of her property to the English priest Francis Barnaby, see earl of Kildare to Salisbury, 8 Jan 1608, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, pp 393-4.

legal arrangements guarding various families' properties. Robert Lalor, vicar-general of Kildare and Dublin in the early 1600s, served as trustee for the properties of several noble families of north Leinster.[66] Many were counsellors to their patrons, advising them in the conduct of public business, locally and nationally. It was customary to ask advice of priests before embarking on projects of a political nature.[67] Reflecting on Lord Delvin's revolt of 1607, Chichester opined that 'as long as there is a traitor or a rebel, there will be a priest to keep his counsel'.[68] Priests were believed to have been active with advice and counsel both in the parliamentary elections of 1613, and during the parliamentary sessions.[69] Resident chaplains served as tutors to the children of the family, and were engaged in frequent travel between different households. At the beginning of February 1618, James Dillon, a Meath diocesan cleric, was travelling to the home of Richard Dillon (presumably a relative), near Trim, accompanied by a little boy, who was one of the priest's scholars. Early the next morning, the chaplain was seen 'at his private devotions in the hall'. The returned cleric's patron was viscount Gormanston, for in 1622 Dillon, together with the priest Verdon, was based in Gormanston's household.[70]

We know something about the quasi-political role of a noble's chaplain in early seventeenth century Meath. By the 1590s David Verdon, a secular priest, was part of the Gormanstown household.[71] He was involved in some capacity in the disturbances between

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[66]. [Lalor was] 'feofee of trust to divers lords and gents of all their lands of inheritance ... Among the rest he is feofee of the greatest part of the lands of the earldom of Kildare and of the barony of Delvin', Davies to Salisbury, 1 July 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.210.

[67]. Thus a Palesman reported that as part of a plot to take Dublin castle, one MacMahon desired to consult a priest, 'were it a godly deed? Or if it were known and he adjudged to die, whether he should be saved or not?', confession of George St Laurence, [14 Feb 1607], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, pp 108-9

[68]. Lord deputy to Salisbury, 2 July 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.344; in this context the priest Hussey was in the entourage of the earl of Tyrone in London in 1603 while an Irish delegation was lobbying for religious toleration, John Boyd to earl of Devonshire, 8 Sept 1603, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, pp 82-3.

[69]. Sir Robert Jacob to lord deputy, Bodleian, Carte Ms 62, ff 241-4; the priest kept by the Dublin merchant William Baggott from 1613 was believed to be involved in offering political counsel during the parliament, HMC Egmont, i pt 1, pp 51-2.

[70]. Alumnus of Douai, Archiv. Hib., 14, p.78; and of Bordeaux, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 318-22; examination of Richard Dillon of Proudstown, 26 Feb 1618, HMC Hastings, iv, pp 182-3; examination of John Welshe, 19 Feb, 25 Feb, 1618, Bodl., Carte 62, ff 441v-442v; Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', p.10.

[71]. The priest was given a legacy of £6 p.a. to say masses for the soul of the fourth viscount, in his will of 1599, J. Brady, 'Keeping the faith at Gormanston', p.407; some confusion exists regarding the chaplain's name: a William Verdon was noted as Gormanston's chaplain in 1615 and 1622, whereas in the case arising from the rumour of 1618 the chaplain is called David Verdon; it

the Pale nobility and the Dublin administration in 1607, for, arising from this situation, in 1609 Verdon offered himself to trial of law.[72] In the mid-1610s the chaplain was living in a house with the viscount's sister, Ellinor Preston (consecrated as a nun), on the Gormanston estate, where they were still living in 1622.[73]

Hostile commentators frequently referred to the role of priests in spreading political news among the Irish.[74] Hearsay touching the archbishop of Canterbury, circulating among the gentry of north County Dublin and Meath in 1617-8, throws light on this feature of catholic life; Verdon was involved. According to this rumour, the archbishop had been imprisoned for treason in the Tower of London, for stating that no Scot was fit to be king of England, and that James was only interested in the Spanish match 'to draw an army of Spaniards to overthrow the English nation'.[75] The earliest reference was in a reported conversation in late 1617, in Dublin castle, in which the imprisoned priest Patrick Duff (based in the north County Dublin area)[76] informed Nicholas Hollywood of the alleged news about the archbishop. Hollywood passed on the tale to two Meath gentry, Richard Caddle and Marcus Draycott.[77] Richard Dillon alleged that he heard the rumour about January 1618 from Gormanston's chaplain, Verdon, at Draycott's house. Dillon then told the brother of the state bishop of Kilmore's servant, while the servant's brother was staying overnight in Dillon's house some weeks afterwards. An agitated Bishop Moigne wrote to the lord deputy on 20 February 1618, who in turn examined Dillon a week later; the lord

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is probable that the same person was given different forenames.

[72]. Lord deputy to Salisbury, 2 July 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.345.

[73]. J. Brady, 'Keeping the faith at Gormanston', p.407; BL Add MS 19,836, p.284; Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', p.10.

[74]. '[M]any a foreigner flying news and tales comes among them [Irish in Gaelic midlands], which is bruted abroad by the priests to hold them in with hopes', Matthew De Renzy to [Lord Deputy St John], c.1617, Anal. Hib., 34, p.134.

[75]. Examination of John Welshe, 19 Feb 1618, Bodl., Carte Ms 62, fol.441v.

[76]. Duff was then in prison in Dublin castle; in November 1616, Nicholas Fitzwilliams, of Burdungan, north County Dublin, was fined in the court of castle chamber for harbouring this priest in his house and openly bringing him to Dublin; perhaps on this occasion Duff had been apprehended, HMC Egmont, i pt 1, p.47. By 1608, Duff was a diocesan priest, Archiv. Hib., 1, p.29; he had studied at Bordeaux, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 318-22. By 1622, a Patrick Duff was priest at Naal, on the borders of Counties Dublin and Meath, Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', p.11.

[77]. Draycott alleged he heard the report from Verdon, who had it from Mr Hollywood's son, of Artane, 'that was beyond the seas', examination of Marcus Draycott, [6 May 1618], Bodl., Carte Ms 61, ff 360-1.

deputy reported the matter to the privy council.[78] In March 1618, reflecting the gravity with which the London authorities treated this gossip, the privy council directed the lord deputy to proceed against Verdon, and the others involved, in the court of castle chamber.

Significantly the privy council highlighted that Gormanston was harbouring a priest, namely Verdon, 'in an open and advowed fashion', contrary to the law, and asserted that the king's justice would reach Gormanston 'likewise with the rest'.[79] Verdon may have been singled out from among those accused because he was chaplain to a peer heavily involved in opposing the government's anti-recusant measures. The priest was faced with the full rigour of the law. On 15 May 1618 in the court of castle chamber, Verdon was fined £500, ordered to be set on the pillory, and to lose both his ears. However, on the word of the archbishop of Canterbury, the cutting off of the ears was remitted. The sheriffs carried Verdon to the pillory in Dublin, on a market day, in June 1618, where he sat for about an hour, before being returned to the castle.[80] Verdon resumed life on the Gormanston estate; he had a certain standing within Meath diocese, for he was the substitute of the vicar-general, James Plunkett, in the early 1620s.[81]

This episode throws light on some of the workings of the catholic community in the Pale in the early seventeenth century. Close social ties existed between gentry and clergy. Priests could move with ease from one household to another, spreading news of a political nature, in Anglo-Irish as well as in Gaelic areas. Indeed it reveals the keen interest taken by the gentry in political developments in London; it reflected the sense of expectation generated in Old English circles by the prospect of a Spanish match, at a time when the government was still pursuing a vigorous anti-catholic policy. In castle chamber, the full weight of punishment apparently fell on Verdon alone. Only the chaplain, it would appear, was convicted, and sentenced to the customary exemplary punishment. Verdon's link with Gormanston may account for this severe treatment; the administration may have seized the opportunity to put pressure on the viscount, one of the leaders of recusant resistance since the start of the reign.[82] The involvement of Gormanston's chaplain in spreading this

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[78]. Bishop of Kilmore to lord deputy, 20 Feb 1618; examination of John Welshe, 19 Feb 1618, (both) Bodl., Carte Ms 62, ff 440-3; HMC Hastings, iv, pp 182-3.

[79]. Acts privy council, 1618-9, 26 Mar 1618, pp 83-4.

[80]. HMC Egmont, i pt 1, p.56; Acts privy council, 1618-9, p.163; lord deputy to privy council, 29 June 1618, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.200; the fine was not paid: monies due, and unpaid, of the fines of Castle Chamber, [1622], BL Sloane Ms 3827, fol.22v.

[81]. Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath diocese c1622', p.10.

[82]. On Gormanston's political career, see lord deputy and council to privy council, 5 Dec 1605, C. McNeill (ed.), 'Harris Collectanea', Anal. Hib., 6, pp 375-6; G. Redworth, 'Beyond Faith and

politically-sensitive rumour contributed to the Dublin administration's jaundiced view of the loyalty of the Old English, and of the catholic clergy. Lingering concerns over Gormanston's political reliability, in the wake of the 1607-8 disturbances, may also account for the special attention given to the peer's chaplain. Reflecting the alarm of the Dublin administration, Lord Deputy St John referred the case to London. It was on directions from the privy council, highlighting the Gormanston connection, that he proceeded against Verdon in the court of castle chamber. Government antipathy to recusant political resistance, symbolised by Gormanston, accounted for the exceptional nature of this priest's treatment.

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The Franciscans were the largest group of religious in north Leinster, as in the rest of Ireland, in the early seventeenth century. They represented both continuity with the traditionalist catholicism of the region, largely Gaelic in culture, and openness to reform influences from the Spanish Netherlands derived from their recently founded college in Louvain. As with the tridentine clergy of the northern ecclesiastical province in general, natives of Meath diocese represented a large proportion of continentally-trained Franciscans. Between 1607 and 1617 a total of 68 novices were received in St Anthony's College, Louvain; of these just under half (32) were from the Armagh province. Meath men comprised almost half the northern novices. Reflecting the close ties between the Pale elite and the Franciscans, four of the fourteen Meath entrants came from titled families.[83]

The revived Franciscan network in the north, starting with a community in Drogheda in 1610, was consciously motivated by a desire to return to localities where convents had existed before the suppression.[84] In the Anglo-Irish areas, the dissolution of the monasteries began largely in the 1540s, with the granting of buildings and lands to local nobility, gentry and merchants.[85] However, secularization did not necessarily signify the end of Franciscan interests in those properties: friars were still living in their convents,

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Fatherland: "The appeal of the Catholics of Ireland", c1623', Archiv. Hib., 52, p.8.

[83]. Christopher Dillon, son of Sir James Dillon; Edward Dillon, son of Sir Theobald Dillon; Thomas Fleming, son of the baron of Slane; John Barnwall, son of Baron Trimleston, see B. Jennings (ed.), Louvain papers (Dublin, 1968), pp 54-8; Theobald Dillon was created viscount Costello Gallen in 1622, Lodge, Peerage, iv, pp 177-9.

[84]. Franciscan developments in Drogheda will be treated in chapter seven.

[85]. 'Tables of property redistribution', in B. Bradshaw, The dissolution of the religious orders in Ireland under Henry VIII (Cambridge, 1974), pp 233-47.

even in the Pale, up to the early years of Elizabeth's reign. Only in the 1560s were the friars finally expelled from their convents in Dundalk, Drogheda, Athlone, and Trim.[86]

In the early seventeenth century, uniquely among religious houses in north Leinster, the Multyfarnham convent survived, numbering between ten and fifteen members.[87] Situated in an isolated area, in north-western Westmeath, surrounded by bogs and lakes, the population was almost entirely catholic, and their warnings helped minimise the effects of raids. People of all classes gave to the friars according to their means. Through raids, temporary dislocation, destruction and rebuilding of premises, gentry support was vital to the survival, and incipient revival, of the convent. The friars could rely on the support of the landowners of the Pale, together with the merchant families of the towns, and of the surviving Irish gentry of Ulster and the Gaelic midlands.[88] In exchange the friars offered indulgences for those who would help in the repair or rebuilding of a friary.[89] After the burning of the convent by a local military commander in 1601, the friars started to repair the roof of a part of the church, and some of the living quarters. In the work of reconstruction they had a gift of timber from the woods of Delvin Mac Coghlan, the Gaelic territory along the Shannon south of Athlone, where Sir John MacCoghlan was lord.[90]

Geographical isolation and popular support were not sufficient to ensure the survival of the convent. The continued protection and maintenance given by different branches of the Nugent family were crucial in Multyfarnham's survival. The Nugents barons Delvin were the major landowners on the borders of Westmeath and Cavan, and consequently exercised considerable power there; they gave the friars the protection and patronage which ensured the convent's survival. A hostile commentator in 1613 noted that the gentry, even within the English Pale, 'have re-edified monasteries, wherein friars publicly preach and say mass'.[91] In these decades of pressure against catholicism, the Nugents were using

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[86]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.28; A. Gwynn and R. Hadcock, Medieval Religious Houses Ireland (London, 1970), pp 243, 249, 260.

[87]. About 1613, seven friars were named (TCD Ms 567, ff 32-5), while in 1622 there were fifteen (Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', p.8).

[88]. A 1606 list of signatories to a petition against the anti-recusant legislation of the previous year gives a profile of the landed interest of the Pale, committed in their catholicism; it contains lords and gentry from Counties Louth, Meath, Westmeath, Dublin and Kildare, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, pp 363-5.

[89]. Franciscan indulgences granted to benefactors, including those who helped build convents, are given in the 'Regestum Pontificum' at end of the volumes of Annales Ordinis Minorum.

[90]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.97.

[91]. 'Brief relation of the passages in Parliament', [July 1613], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-14, p.394.

their influence to protect catholic clergy and facilitate catholic worship, as at the former abbey at Fore, County Westmeath, from the early 1610s.[92]

Landed families were using the profits from their local church impropriations to support priests, including the friars.[93] The Franciscan chronicler, Donogh Mooney, highlighted the benefactions of the family of Richard Nugent (d. 1615) of Donower, County Westmeath. He bought the lands formerly attached to the friary, from the royal grantee, and presented them to the friars, together with many other gifts and even benefices. Richard Nugent was patron of the rectory of Multyfarnham in 1615, which was held by his son in 1622; however Richard may also have acquired leases of benefices, and some of these may have been arranged for the benefit of the friars.[94] His heir Andrew Nugent maintained the family's liberality towards the convent, thus contributing to continuity in its common life and mission. When the friars were expelled from the premises some time before 1622, Andrew Nugent gave them accomodation in a neighbouring farmhouse.[95]

Gentry support of the friars took several other forms. Burial in the vicinity of a Franciscan convent was a major link with elite families; the custom continued at least until the mid-seventeenth century, and indeed beyond, with the attendant gifts and bequests.[96] The benevolence of the Old English landed classes towards the friars was further reflected in another custom. Within the northern province, in certain areas, landlords were imposing a levy of oat-sheaves on their tenants, for the benefit of the Franciscans. This exaction was similar to the tithes of the state church. By the early 1620s, it had been levied 'from of old' - presumably since the dissolution of the monasteries. According to Franciscan theory, this levy was to be accepted by way of begging, with the consent of those giving; in practice however some landlords were more aggressive in making these demands of the tenantry.[97]

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[92]. Lord Delvin had the lease of the abbey, king to lord deputy, 11 July 1612, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.275; Fore abbey mentioned, 'Brief relation of the passages in the parliament' [July 1613], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, pp 393-4.

[93]. Sir James Perrott to Sir Ralph Winwood, 25 Nov 1615, Cal.S.P.Ire. 1615-25, p.98.

[94]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.92; 1615 visitation, BL Add Ms 19,836, p.294; Multyfarnham living valued at £40 p.a., with £20 to the English rector, 1622 visitation, TCD Ms 550, pp 102-3; the bishop of Meath was patron of this living by 1634, TCD Ms 1040, fol.9.

[95]. Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', p.8.

[96]. See chapter eight.

[97]. Wadding papers, p.42.

The Anglo-Irish elite's relationship with the friars could be more problematic. From the beginning of the seventeenth century, lay ownership of secularised religious properties was an issue which was rising within the catholic community. According to catholic reformers, laymen were to receive licence from the competent ecclesiastical authority to hold these properties; however, it was recognised that this was not happening.[98] As with other religious orders, the memory of the Franciscan interest in their former convents was quite alive decades after the friars' departure. The Franciscans were expecting some benefactions from these owners.[99] Presumably the friars aired their expectations in homilies and on other occasions. It was not uncommon for catholic owners to be troubled in conscience about their family's acquisitions, made several generations previously. An arrangement with the owner of the Dundalk friary illustrates the friars' continuous property interests, although they were not formally resident since their expulsion c.1563. Three generations of the Brandon family had owned the site of the Dundalk convent. Disturbed by scruples, in 1616 James Brandon approached Donogh Mooney, then provincial, asking the friar's consent to retain the property. It was agreed that the friars' syndic in the town, a leading citizen, John Cashell, would grant this authorisation. Several conditions were added, indicative of a restorationist mentality among the Franciscans. Brandon was not to alienate the property without the friars' consent, neither was he to allow neighbours to encroach on it; further, he was to assign the property to whoever was nominated by the friars, and he was to give them an alms from the annual revenue, a stipulation perhaps formalising an informal, though not universal, arrangement.[100]

However, the quest, or begging among the ordinary people, played a central role in Franciscan life. An observer in the 1610s noted, 'The poor friars do live only by begging of corn and muttons and such other alms.'[101] Begging friars, singly or in small groups, were a regular feature in the countryside, and, less frequently, because of coercion, in towns. It was often while begging among the populace that friars were arrested and subsequently imprisoned.[102] While some of these may have been attached to the Multyfarnham convent,

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[98]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections, pp 121, 126.

[99]. Donogh Mooney referred to one Aylmer, owner of the Drogheda convent, who sold the premises c.1610, and gave nothing to the friars - 'I write this [says Mooney] so that the memory will stay among the friars', Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.28.

[100]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.35; H. O'Sullivan, 'The Franciscans in Dundalk', Seanchas Ard Mhacha, 4 no 1, (here) pp 35-45.

[101]. 'A note of archbishops and bishops of Ireland consecrated and authorised by the Pope', [1613], TCD Ms 567, fol.36v.

[102]. In Navan, in May 1603, an older friar together with a younger, wearing their habits, were going from house to house, presumably begging, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, pp 62-3.

due to the disruption caused by war and persecution many wandering friars had few if any links with an established Franciscan community.[103]

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One focus of tension between tridentine and traditionalist strands of catholicism lay in the area of the sacrament of reconciliation. After 1603, there was great demand among the populace for pardons and indulgences, promising remission of sins. Clergy claiming to have grants of these - allegedly of continental, if not papal provenance - were able to draw large crowds. Widespread popular interest in these decrees reflected a need for healing in the wake of the social breakdown and stresses of war.[104] Large public assemblies in the open air were customary, where mass was said, and sermons preached. Given the relatively large number of Franciscans, who by then included some with continental training, it was likely that many of these preachers were friars.[105] Some friars were charismatic speakers, who drew large crowds.[106] The absence of individual confession arose in part from the small numbers of clergy in many areas, especially before the 1610s. In general, the educational background of the clergy involved - secular and religious - was low; catholic reformers criticised the unorthodox preaching on indulgences by the 'simple priests'[107] who animated these gatherings. The new-style tridentine clergy found much to fault. They criticised the great frequency with which indulgences and pardons were promulgated, and the fact that they were money-gathering exercises for the priests, leading to contempt for these ecclesiastical measures.[108] In the way pardons and indulgences were presented, an erroneous view of reconciliation was being promoted. The notion of restitution for damage done was ignored. Further, it was claimed that indulgences freed

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[103]. Tensions within the catholic community arising from the begging of the friars will be explored in chapter seven.

[104]. In 1609, allegedly 7000 gathered on the borders of Tipperary, for Roman pardons of all sins and offenses committed since 1593, lord deputy to Salisbury, 15 Apr 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.192; lord deputy to privy council, 4 July 1609, ibid., p.240.

[105]. '.. in the fields seditious sermons are daily preached, whereunto thousands resort', 'Brief relation of the passages in the parliament' [July 1613], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.394; privy council to lord deputy, 10 Sept 1614, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, pp 502-3.

[106]. Fr Thomas FitzGerald OFM, banished by the lord deputy in 1608, but returning the following year, attracted large crowds wherever he preached, chiefly in Munster, but also in parts of Connacht and Leinster, lord deputy to viscount Rochester, 30 June 1613, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.372.

[107]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections, pp 131-2.

[108]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections, p.131; J. Bossy, 'The counter-reformation and the people of Catholic Ireland, 1596-1641', in T. Williams (ed.), Historical Studies VIII (Dublin, 1971), pp 155-70.

from guilt and penalty, without confession of individual sins. There was no emphasis on the moral reform of the individual. Moreover, traditionalist priests were ignoring the framework of ecclesiastical discipline by presuming to absolve from sins and censures which were reserved, generally to the diocesan ordinary; in doing so, they were heedless of the jurisdiction pertaining to dioceses and parishes.[109]

By contrast, continentally-trained missioners, especially the Jesuits, but also the Franciscans, were engaged in a revival of individual confession. They spent long hours hearing confessions, often covering the person's life, indicating the neglect of this practice hitherto. Indeed, preparing their listeners for confession was one of the staple themes of tridentine preachers.[110] Associated with confession, there was an emphasis on catechesis, and on reform of an individual's life. On occasion, Jesuit missioners deferred admission to confession until the individual had learned the basics of the faith.[111] Tridentine emphasis on popular catechesis was also reflected in the distribution in the Pale of catechisms and other simple pious tracts, in English, under Jesuit aegis, in the years after 1603.[112]

A further focus of popular gatherings was the display and veneration of relics. From time immemorial, local relics and other sacred images were being carried about the countryside, for veneration by the faithful.[113] As well as indigenous, largely local cults, Franciscans and Cistercians, too, were involved in this practice, drawing on relics of continental provenance. A Cistercian expedition illustrates the process. It was long customary for the monks of Holy Cross abbey, County Tipperary, to bring their relic of the true cross on tour through the countryside. In August 1607, David Keys, monk of the abbey, brought the relic on a circuit in the Gaelic midlands, on both sides of the Shannon, and County Meath, over the space of about ten days. Gatherings took place of up to three hundred people, in four different venues, with the active participation of local parish

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[109]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections, pp 131-2.

[110]. On the theme of personal reform in contemporary tridentine preaching, see B. Cunningham, "Zeal for God and for souls': Counter-Reformation preaching in early seventeenth-century Ireland', in A. Fletcher and R. Gillespie (eds), Irish Preaching 700-1700 (Dublin, 2001), pp 108-26.

[111]. In Munster, the fathers used to catechise those desiring to confess, explaining briefly the main articles of faith; 'even old women know their catechism well so that they are not (as sometimes happens) sent away from confession on account of ignorance in matters of faith', Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.106.

[112]. A father ministering in the Pale enjoined one of his penitents to pay for these small books, which were then distributed gratis, Jesuit annual letter 1605, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.9.

[113]. The distribution of these cults will be noted in chapter eight.

priests, who presumably shared some of the money gathered. The Cistercian moved from Granard, County Longford, to Elphin, County Roscommon, proceeding then to a venue in O'Connor Roe's country, and returning across the Shannon to an assembly in County Westmeath. The event occurred towards the end of a period of intense persecution in the Pale, though its cessation was unforseen, and thus not immediately evident at the time.[114] That a relic tour, a very public expression of catholic life, could take place in the midlands at this time points to the limited geographical extent of official campaigns against catholicism. It highlights the weakness of government control in these Gaelic localities.

People brought the sick and handicapped to the large open-air gatherings. Seven individual cures were reported, at least one from each venue.[115] It was customary for the monk or friar to give an exhortation before the handicapped were brought forward to touch the relic. The address of the abbot of Holy Cross to a paralytic visiting the monastery in 1626 gives a flavour of the preaching customary at such encounters. The abbot 'piously exhorted him to repent of his past sins and to better his life in future, to put perfect faith and confidence in Jesus Christ and in the virtue of his most bitter death and passion, and to venerate and embrace his holy cross heart and soul and he warned and told him to hope firmly for health of soul and body from it'.[116]

One of the pastoral strategies of the Franciscans was to go on missionary tours in the countryside. Groups of up to six or eight friars used to take part in these events; they were able to use relics and images from the continent. At these gatherings, too, the friars used to publish indulgences. Franciscan preaching tours, involving relics, were taking place along the borders of Ulster and Leinster in the 1610s and 1620s. In February 1614, a group of up to seven friars were moving around County Cavan carrying a relic of the true cross, which they had brought from the continent. Huge crowds attended each session, and many individuals gave about sixpence. The friars were exhorting the people to persevere in their faith, encouraging them with news of support from the pope and the king of Spain, asserting that Tyrone would return that summer.[117] Similarly in October 1623 a Franciscan band of between eight and twelve friars was moving around Counties Cavan and Longford. They held gatherings in local towns or villages, including Cavan and Granard,

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[114]. The mandates campaign came to an end under pressure from London, privy council to lord deputy, 21 July 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.231; J. McCavitt, 'Lord Deputy Chichester and the English government's 'mandates policy' in Ireland, 1605-7', Recusant History, 20, pp 320-35.

[115]. Malachy Hartry, Triumphalia Sanctae Crucis, ed. D. Murphy (Dublin, 1891), pp 131-3.

[116]. Hartry, Triumphalia Sanctae Crucis, p.147.

[117]. Sir Robert Jacob to [Northampton], 28 Feb 1614, HMC Hastings, iv, pp 14-5.

allegedly attracting up to 2000 people at each session, drawn from the surrounding areas.[118]

The relic tour was one ritual which illustrated the tension between the tridentine catholicism promoted by David Rothe, vice-primate, and the traditionalist faith. This latter was represented, though not exclusively, by the established orders, including the Cistercians, but especially the Franciscans. The synod of Armagh at Drogheda in February 1614 was held to promote tridentine reform in the northern province, and to foster internal renewal in the wake of the disruption of war and plantation. The programme had the parish at its centre. Inevitably this entailed conflict with the traditionalist catholicism within which the religious of the older orders, especially the friars, were at home. The lure of relics and indulgences attracted large crowds, and, in the early seventeenth century, these tours, whoever their sponsors, were regarded by reformers as money-gathering exercises. That this was indeed the case was noted ruefully by the Cistercians themselves.[119] The 1614 synod condemned relic tours, holding that they sprang from avarice, and that they led to a cheapening of the sacred objects, and irreverence towards them. Further, they brought the clergy into disrepute within the catholic community itself, as well as among the heretics. The synod, true to its diocesan outlook, sought to place the tours under the control of the ordinary, and to break the link between relics and money. For the carrying of relics for public devotion, approval of the ordinary, in writing, was decreed necessary, and was only to be given for special occasions.[120] As with much of the synod's legislation, in the absence of effective channels of implementation, this injunction was largely aspirational, and had little practical effect.[121]

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It was within this context of traditional catholicism, animated by locally trained clergy, that the limited emergence of tridentine catholicism in the region must be seen. Continentally trained clergy were returning to Ireland in significant numbers, a trend noted

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[118]. Lord Deputy Falkland to Secretary Calvert, 20 Oct 1623, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 432-3.

[119]. The Cistercians of Holy Cross condemned other purveyors of relics of the true cross: 'in our times we have sometimes seen and still oftener heard of some lying persons who, under pretence of piety, used to carry about another cross like ours. This they did to the scandal of the cross of Christ and for shameful lucre sake rather than for the comfort of the faithful', Hartry, Triumphalia Sanctae Crucis, p.165.

[120]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections, p.130.

[121]. English Franciscans carrying an image of St Francis, in Ireland, to the annoyance of the bishops, acta, Propaganda Fide, 30 July 1635, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.92.

with increasing concern by officials from about 1605. Seminary priests first appeared in any significant numbers in the towns of the south and east, in the early years of the seventeenth century, reflecting the close asociations of the Irish colleges in Spain and Portugal with these areas.[122] This trend was noticeable about a decade later in Meath diocese, though here the links were with France. We know of a handful of tridentine clergy in Meath diocese in 1615.[123] Thereafter this number was increasing rapidly. By the early 1620s, it was recognised that Meath had a significant number of continentally trained men in the diocesan clergy.[124] This was in addition to the growing numbers of religious in the diocese, many of whom were trained on the continent. Thus the distribution of tridentine clergy was becoming diffuse within north Leinster; they were spreading outwards from Drogheda and the households of the nobility and gentry, until their influence was reaching ever wider geographically, and, more gradually, ever broader socially.

At the turn of the century, the main group of tridentine clergy in the region were emigre English priests. From the 1590s, laity and clergy were seeking refuge in Ireland from anti-recusant penal legislation in England.[125] By autumn 1605 these were coming to Ireland in significant numbers; some priests were sent to Irish ports by direction of the municipal authorities along the western seaboard of England. Most were not apprehended.[126] The majority however actively sought refuge in Ireland.[127] These naturally

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[122]. On this movement, in the case of one of the most prominent colleges, see T. Morrissey, 'The Irish student diaspora in the sixteenth century and the early years of the Irish college at Salamanca', Recusant History, 14 no 4, pp 242-60.

[123]. In a list of fourteen named prominent clerics, several were educated on the continent: James Plunkett, vicar-general, Maurice Ultagh OFM (Franciscan provincial, and a candidate for the see of Armagh in 1626, Wadding papers, pp 128, 177), Robert Nugent SJ, Fr Dease, Henry Plunkett and Nicholas Garret, though some of the others may also have had a tridentine training; Donogh O Mooney was wrongly described as a Jesuit; 'Names of such Jesuits and other eminent priests as are appointed by the pope, and do exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction', Meath diocese, 1615, BL Add Ms 19,836, pp 284-5.

[124]. Wadding papers, p.32.

[125]. As an example of this trend, in 1594, a group of English schoolboys travelled to Dublin, en route to the continent, B. Mac Cuarta (ed.), 'Old English catholicism in Chester documents, 1609-19', p.1.

[126]. William Aves to Thomas Dease, 1 Sept 1605, PRO SP63/217/54 (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, pp 308-10); exceptionally, two English priests were apprehended having arrived in Drogheda from Liverpool, Chichester to Salisbury, 19 Sept 1606, PRO SP63/219/111 (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, pp 574-5); English emigre priests in Ireland 'do much harm', Davies to Cecil, 8 Dec 1604, Cal. S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.214.

[127]. Proposed act to enforce English legislation against recusants and sectaries from England who seek liberty of conscience in Ireland, c.1612, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.192.

gravitated towards the more anglicised areas, especially Munster, but including the Pale, and some were being maintained by elite families. These English priests were befriended by the gentlewomen of the gentry and noble households, among which the priests were circulating. In February 1607, two letters containing small devotional objects were intercepted en route from Jersey to Munster; both originated with one English priest, in exile in St Malo; a holy picture was destined for Ellinor Fleming, Baroness Slane, while an agnus dei was being sent to Lady Walsh, wife of Sir Nicholas Walsh, the Munster judge.[128]

A series of English seminary priests were maintained as chaplain by Mabel, Dowager Countess of Kildare, at her home in Maynooth castle. By the early 1600s, John Boyar or Bradley was staying at Maynooth, where he probably died shortly after making his will in April 1604.[129] Boyar clearly had warm links with the clergy and the town of Drogheda. He wished to be buried at St Mary's Drogheda, and asked that the Drogheda pastor Balthasar Delahoyd (subsequently vicar-general of Armagh diocese) together with Myles Brackerton, another priest in the Drogheda area, take care of the funeral. As with Irish clergy returning from the continent, Drogheda was an established centre for these English priests, from where they were decanted to different parts. Boyar bequeathed his books to the town of Drogheda, 'for the good of all such priests as shall come hither, and for the better edifying of all the Catholic inhabitants there'.[130] The English priest was wealthy, for he left legacies totalling over £200.

The career of one cleric throws light on the experience of English priests in Ireland. By 1606, Francis Barnaby had succeeded Boyar at Maynooth, where he remained until the peeress died, in 1610. Barnaby (b.1577), native of Yorkshire, started his continental schooling at the age of 14, and was ordained eight years later in the English college, Rome, where he was a student. He was arrested shortly after his return to England, and interrogated in London in June 1599.[131] Shortly after acquiring the king's pardon, 26 Dec

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[128]. Examination of Thomas Myller, 14 Feb 1607, Plymouth and West Devon Record Office, W359/39; the 'Lady Slany' in the text presumably refers to the wife of the baron of Slane; Sir Nicholas Walsh was appointed justice, King's Bench, 1585, F. Ball, The Judges in Ireland, 1221-1921 (London, 1926), i, p.158; an agnus dei [lamb of God] was a wax medallion bearing the figure of a lamb.

[129]. Transcript of will of John Boyar or Bradley, Maynooth, 22 Apr 1604, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, sub anno 1604; Mabel Browne married 11th earl of Kildare in 1554; she was sister of 1st viscount Montagu; she died 25 Aug 1610, G.E.C., Complete Peerage, sub Kildare.

[130]. Transcript of John Boyar's will, IJA, ibid.; one such English priest was Dr Munson, listed as a preacher, residing in County Louth in Nov 1613, 'The names of sundry priests and friars within some dioceses and counties of Ireland', No[v] 1613, TCD Ms 567, ff 32-5.

[131]. Francis Barnaby's confession 13 June 1599, HMC Salisbury, ix, p.200.

1604, he came to Ireland, and became chaplain and confidant of the dowager countess of Kildare.[132] Typical of a chaplain's role in elite households, the dowager countess entrusted Barnaby with all her business affairs. English seminary priests based at Maynooth also had a ministry which reached to the extended family, and especially to the Nugents, barons Delvin (Elizabeth Countess of Kildare and Richard Nugent (1588-1643), Baron of Delvin, were sister and brother). In the early 1610s, Chichester was trying to elicit the loyalty of Baron Delvin by means of Barnaby.[133]

However, the majority of tridentine clergy in the region were the product of the continental orientation of their families from the 1570s onwards, and in particular, of their pursuit of catholic educational opportunities abroad.[134] Both catholic and protestant reformers recognised the importance of schooling in shaping denominational identity. Thus in Meath a diocesan grammar school had been established at Trim by the 1590s, and a series of graduates served as schoolmaster. By the early seventeenth century, there were six pupils. Indicative of the strength of catholic identity by then, as soon as the teacher tried to introduce prayers and church attendance the boys ceased coming to the school.[135] Conversely, by the end of the sixteenth century educational links were well established between the Pale, including north Leinster, and France together with the Low Countries. This migration took several forms. From the 1590s (if not earlier), clerical students from Meath were travelling to study on the continent.[136] Some were already ordained locally. Those with means took shipping from Drogheda. For poorer men, whose families could not support their studies, it was customary to travel through the north, 'to beg gentlemen's devotion towards [their] studies'; a few were travelling via Scotland to France. More

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[132]. Lord deputy to Salisbury, 29 Mar 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.439.

[133]. After the death of Mabel, the dowager countess (Aug 1610), Barnaby went back to England. By Nov 1611 he had returned to Ireland, and was held prisoner in Dublin castle, where he took the oath of allegiance, lord deputy to Salisbury, 20 Oct 1611, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.156; same to same, 6 Feb 1612, ibid., p.244, 7 Mar 1612, ibid., p.253.

[134]. In 1609, it was alleged that heaps of letters were sent daily to Ireland from Spain and the Low Countries, Sir Robert Jacob to Salisbury, 18 Oct 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.299; on the broader context, see H. Hammerstein, 'Aspects of the continental education of Irish students in the reign of Elizabeth I', in T. Williams (ed.), Historical Studies VIII (Dublin, 1971), pp 137-54.

[135]. Archbishop of Dublin and bishop of Meath to privy council, 5 Mar 1604, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, pp 151-3.

[136]. James Plunkett had studied at Salamanca before returning to his native diocese about 1599 (Wadding papers, p.43); Malachy Mac Conuisce (Aquatici) SJ (1574-1646), native of Meath, studied at Jesuit schools at Tournai, Antwerp and Lille, followed by philosophy and theology at Douai, before entering the Society in 1611; he may have been ordained before leaving Meath, for he was a priest on joining the Jesuits, F. Finegan, 'Biographical dictionary of Irish Jesuits', IJA, typescript.

particularly, it was usual for Meath students to solicit alms from Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, by going to visit him at his residence in Dungannon. The impoverishment of the Pale, arising from war, doubtless increased the need for these informal means of funding studies abroad.[137]

Arranging travel to the continent, and maintenance while abroad, involved risk and danger of capture. The educational progress of the more learned diocesan clergy may be illustrated in the case of Thomas O'Mulcloy. O'Mulcloy (or O'Mulclohy) was born in County Meath in 1570, received his basic education with schoolmasters in Drogheda, and was ordained priest. In spring 1599, the cleric travelled to Dungannon, en route for France, to ask alms for his studies. The earl, having dispatched his army into Leinster, was not able to give the customary alms, but, instead, facilitated O'Mulcloy's passage to Scotland. There the student made arrangements to travel to the continent. Having set sail from Dundee, by May 1599 O'Mulcloy had been arrested arising from the information of one Henry Dillon, and was detained in the Bridewell, London, denying any political involvement.[138] He was released, for by December 1599, O'Mulcloy was a student at the Irish college in Douai, where he remained for almost a year. Thereafter he proceeded to Salamanca, where he entered the Irish college in November 1600.[139] From 1603, the diocese itself was playing a central role in supporting the continental education of its seminarians. With the onset of peace, it became customary for prominent diocesan clerics to collect funds for Meath clerical students studying abroad, chiefly in France. This they did by preaching at masses throughout the diocese.[140]

The migration of youths for schooling on the continent was increasing in the early seventeenth century; only a proportion pursued an ecclesiastical career. This movement was a cause of concern to the Dublin administration; in 1609 the king ordered a proclamation forbidding travel to the continent without the lord deputy's licence.[141] Such

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[137]. T. Mulcloy to H. Dillon, 23 June 1599, HMC Salisbury, ix, p.210.

[138]. John Cavelo, Walter Condon, and Richard Brown were his Drogheda teachers, Thomas Mulcloy to Sir Robert Cecil; 'Some interrogatories to be ministered to the Irish priest, Thomas O'Mulckloy', (both), 6 May 1599, HMC Salisbury, ix, pp 155-6; Mulcloy to Henry Dillon, 23 June 1599, ibid., p.210.

[139]. Entrance oath of Thomas Mulclohy, 9 Nov 1600, D. O'Doherty (ed.), 'Students of the Irish College, Salamanca (1595-1619)', Archiv. Hib., 2, p.10.

[140]. Ferall McKegan, Richard Browne, James Plunkett, Walter FitzJames 'exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction throughout the whole diocese of Meath and beg maintenance for students in Paris and other places beyond the seas', 1615 visitation, Meath diocese, BL Add Ms 19,836, p.284.

[141]. King to lord deputy and chancellor, 29 Mar 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.175; lord deputy

measures were nugatory. Merchant and gentry families of north Leinster, and a few from south-east Ulster, were sending their sons to colleges in France and the Spanish Netherlands.[142] Paris was a favoured destination of youths from Louth and Meath. This migration was extensive: in 1608, from County Louth alone, we know of ten young men who were living in Paris, and there were probably many more.[143] Among a variety of networks, trading links facilitated this movement. Patrick Hamlyn, of the Drogheda merchant family, was moving between Paris and the Pale in the 1600s; similarly, mercantile connections may account for the schooling in Douai of sons of Newry merchant families.[144]

The Irish colleges on the continent were characterised by strong regional and kinship affiliations within Ireland. Successful emigre clerics were lobbied by kindred and neighbours to help place boys in educational establishments abroad. That Meathmen were prominent in the Irish colleges of Douai and Paris contributed to the flow of students from the Pale to those centres. Schooling for Irish youths in the Low Countries became more firmly established with the founding of the Irish college in Douai by the Meath priest Christopher Cusack in 1594; Cusack remained a controlling figure there until he returned to his native diocese about 1619.[145] Thomas Dease, another Meath cleric, was established

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to treasurer, 29 Jan 1610, ibid., p.371; Chichester hoped to adapt the recent proclamation issued in England, forbidding people to leave the realm without licence of privy council, lord deputy to privy council, 13 July 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.250; R. Steele (ed.), Tudor and Stuart proclamations (Oxford, 1910), i, p.121.

[142]. In 1608, Thomas Dery, David Keyes, and Hugh Byrne, all with Newry connections, were in the Low Countries, and probably all three were in Douai, Thomas Dery to Edmond Morgan, 16 Oct 1608, PRO SP63/225/240; Byrne was already a priest of Dromore diocese, per obitum grant, Nov 1609, Archiv. Hib., 1, p.30; 'Students in Douai from North' [1613]: Thomas Derrye, William Ovington, Felim O Neale, Christopher Delahoyde, James Barnwall, Mo[rfanos] Celly, TCD Ms 567, fol.40v.

[143]. John [Mc] Grory, Thomas Babe, George Garlon, Patrick [ ], John Rath, John Babe, George Waring, James Bedlow, Nicholas Dowdall: John [Mc]Grory in Paris to John Clinton, last Oct 1608, PRO SP63/225/256; also Michael Chamberlain: do. to William Dease, 28 Oct 1608, PRO SP63/225/252.; in 1626, Patrick Netterville, Nicholas Preston, and John Plunkett, son of the baron of Louth, were students in Paris, letters of Richard Fottrell, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, pp 167-8; a son of the earl of Fingall was also in Paris, T. Messingham to Lord Deputy Wentworth, 16 Dec 1634, Sheffield City Libraries, WWM, Str P 14/278-9.

[144]. Michael Chamberlain, Paris, to William Dease, Drogheda, 28 Oct 1608, PRO SP63/225/252; Andrew Hamlin was mayor of Drogheda in 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.140; Patrick Hamlin, secular priest, studied at Douai pre 1622, Archiv. Hib., 14, p.78.

[145]. J.Brady, 'Father Christopher Cusack and the Irish College of Douai, 1594-1623', in S. O'Brien (ed.), Measgra i gcuimhne Mhichil Ui Chleirigh (Dublin, 1944), p.105; vicar-general of Meath, Wadding papers, p.57.

in Paris by the early 1600s, and by 1605 was head of the Irish college there.[146] William Dease (presumably a relative), a Drogheda merchant, sent his nephew Michael Chamberlain to Paris for his education about this time. In 1608, partly because of the troubled situation of Drogheda during the mandates campaign, and also because he was considering a Jesuit vocation, young Chamberlain did not want to return to Drogheda as planned.[147] The Meath connection with Paris was underlined when, on his nomination as bishop of Meath in 1621, Thomas Dease was replaced as Irish college rector by another cleric of the diocese, Thomas Messingham.[148] These individuals played a significant role in forwarding the continental education of youths from the northern part of the Pale.

Returning clergy actively encouraged gentry families to send their younger sons to the continental colleges.[149] In particular, the Jesuits were recruiting boys from north Leinster for their educational establishments in France and the Low Countries.[150] The majority, it would appear, subsequently pursued secular careers. However, after a training in humanities at these Jesuit colleges (which began about age fifteen), it was customary for several to proceed to priestly studies in Salamanca.[151] Clerical mentors remained in contact with their proteges while abroad. Thus in July 1607, on the dispersal of students from an Antwerp college, Oliver Plunkett applied to Fr Robert Nugent SJ, then in the Low Countries, to secure a place in another college. The Capuchin, Fr Lavalin Nugent, was similarly engaged about this time in providing for these youths.[152] The family's role in the financing of a continental education was problematic. As an enticement to families, the

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146. Examination of John Flevin, 20 Mar 1608, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, pp 438-40.

147. M. Chamberlain to W. Dease, 28 Oct 1608, PRO SP63/225/252; after studies in Douai, Chamberlain entered the Jesuits in 1610, F. Finegan, 'Biographical Dictionary of Irish Jesuits', IJA, typescript; Douai alumni list, pre 1622, Archiv. Hib., 14, pp 81-2.

148. T. O'Connor, 'Thomas Messingham (c.1575-1638?) and the seventeenth century church', p.89.

149. Lord deputy to Salisbury, 10 May 1610, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, pp 444-5.

150. Irish Jesuits were facilitating the education of youths in colleges in Paris, Bordeaux, Douai, Bruges and Antwerp, W. Aves to T. Dease, 1 Sept 1605, PRO SP63/217/54.

151. James Cary, Daniel Conry, Donatus Coghlan, Robert Magencheganus, all from Meath, and John Ruthaeus, from Dundalk - all alumni of Jesuit schools - arrived in Salamanca, 1608-14, D. O'Doherty (ed.), 'Students of the Irish College, Salamanca (1595-1619)', pp 1-36; on the Irish College, Salamanca, see T. Morrissey, 'The Irish student diaspora in the sixteenth century and the early years of the Irish college at Salamanca'.

152. Oliver Plunkett to Robert Nugent, 12 July 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, pp 218-9; F.X. Martin, Friar Nugent: A study of Francis Lavalin Nugent 1569-1635 Agent of the Counter-Reformation (London, 1962), p.94.

priests allegedly promised schooling without charge.[153] In principle, tuition at Jesuit schools was free. However, the youth had to be maintained, and here a contribution from the family may have been expected. However, Pale families were often negligent in paying for their sons' education. Thus in 1605, Jesuits in the Pale found it impossible to gather money for the education of local boys already studying in their colleges. 'All the parents whose children are there are most careless of them here and but very few will send anything there, speaking is in vain, nothing can we obtain'.[154]

Adequate financial support, whether derived directly from the family, or through gaining a free place in a college, was essential for completion of a course of study. In the 1630s, it was estimated that in Paris diet and lodging for an Irish student cost at least £40 p.a.[155] The vicissitudes and struggle entailed in arranging a continental schooling were illustrated in the case of the Barnwall family, of Bremore castle, Balrothery, north County Dublin. By 1608, Patrick Barnwall was a student in Paris. In October 1608, thanks to his father's legacy, Robert Barnwall now felt in a position to further his education on the continent, and asked his brother Patrick to advise accordingly. However, Robert's hopes were rendered precarious because of difficulties in acquiring his legacy from their elder brother James. As a result, Patrick then arranged with his cousin, Christopher Cusack, founder and rector of the Irish college in Douai, for a college place (presumably at Douai) for Robert. Such arrangements were typical, for finance was a major worry for the Irish students, and the threat of having to interrupt their studies because of money difficulties was real.[156] Thus another Barnwall brother was also in Paris at this time; because of financial difficulties he had to return to Ireland.[157] Financial worries predominate in the extant correspondence between Pale students on the continent and their kindred in Ireland.

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153. Lord deputy to Salisbury, 11 May 1610, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, pp 444-5.

154. W. Aves to T. Dease, 1 Sept 1605, PRO SP63/217/54.

155. T. Messingham to Lord Deputy Wentworth, 16 Dec 1634, Sheffield City Libraries, WWM, Str P 14/278.

156. Many students from the Pale, attending Jesuit colleges in the Low Countries, were returning home because of poverty, [Irish catholics to Henry Fitzsimon SJ], 1 May 1607, E. Hogan, Distinguished Irishmen, p.272; Garrett Nugent, brother to Baron Delvin, had to leave France because his mother had stopped his maintenance, privy council to lord deputy, 26 Feb 1608, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.427.

157. Likewise Patrick, (presumably a step-brother or foster-brother), inquisition, 6 Nov 1617, No 34 Jas I, Inq. cancell. Hib. repert., i, Lagenia; Patrick Barnwall to Robert Barnwall, 12 Oct 1608, PRO SP63/225/222.

The exceptionally high level of north Leinster involvement in the colleges is further underlined when the alumni of Bordeaux and Salamanca are considered. These Irish colleges were for the training of priests, as distinct from the education in humanities offered to youths in the Jesuit colleges of the Low Countries. Both establishments were strongly linked to the catholic communities of Munster and the south-east, in that their founders and rectors were southerners; in consequence, the colleges tended to draw students from the same area.[158] Down to about 1620 (at least) the proportion of students from the northern ecclesiastical province was quite small. In the case of the Irish College, Salamanca (founded 1592), based on the 100 surviving admission papers between 1595 and 1619, 19% of the student body was drawn from the northern dioceses. These were chiefly from Meath - the Pale areas (Meath diocese, and County Louth) accounted for just over half the northern entrants.[159]

Trends in Salamanca are mirrored in the alumni list for the Irish college, Bordeaux, from its foundation in 1603 until 1619.[160] The students were predominantly southern in origin. Northerners represented just over 14% of the total. Of the 207 ecclesiastics listed, a total of about 30 clerics (20 priests and 10 students) were natives of the northern province, equally divided between Meath diocese and Ulster. For the early seventeenth century, the evidence is usually insufficient to calculate the proportion of Irish clerical students abroad who returned to minister as priests in Ireland. Exceptionally, it is possible to offer a calculation for the Meath students in Bordeaux. Of the 12 Meath alumni who had been ordained by 1619, half (at least) subsequently ministered in or near their native diocese.[161] The abundance of continentally trained priests in Meath diocese from the late 1610s suggests that the proportion of returnees from Bordeaux may have been representative of Meath continental students in general. In the case of the Irish college, Douai, more than half of the northern province alumni ordained as secular priests by 1622 were of north Leinster origin.[162] A further source of tridentine education to serve the Pale dioceses

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158. T. Walsh, The Irish continental college movement: the colleges at Bordeaux, Toulouse, and Lille (Dublin, 1973), pp 88-95.

159. Meath diocese, 8 entrants; County Louth, 2, see D. O'Doherty (ed.), 'Students of the Irish College, Salamanca (1595-1619)', pp 1-36.

160. Clerics educated at Irish college, Bordeaux [1603-19], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 318-22; the list distinguishes between natives of Ulster and of Meath.

161. James Dillon, Patrick Duff, Charles O Colla, Henry Plunket, clerics educated in Irish college, Bordeaux [1603-19], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 318-22; Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath, c1622', pp 7-12; Robert Geoghegan OFM, Wadding papers, p.53; Thomas Coyle, ibid., p.469.

162. Of about 28 names which can be attributed to the northern ecclesiastical province, less than

(including Meath), was the college at Lille, founded by the Irish Capuchins in 1611. Its student body was limited to students from Leinster.[163] The continental colleges mirrored and reinforced traditional antipathies between Ulster and the Anglo-Irish areas. Thus an examination of alumni background from the Irish colleges of Salamanca, Bordeaux, and Douai, shows a greater participation by students from north Leinster, and especially Meath diocese, than from Ulster.

A further striking index of Meath's pioneering engagement with the counter-reformation is provided by the numbers from gentry and noble families who joined Irish branches of religious orders. The upsurge in Irishmen joining religious orders in the early seventeenth century was due in part to recruitment from among students of the continental colleges. Entrants to the Jesuits marked the beginning of this trend. Between 1597 and 1606, at least 12 from Meath diocese had joined the Society. Some returned to minister in their native diocese, staying for a time with their families, thus reinforcing tridentine impulses there.[164] Similarly, 14 men from Meath diocese joined the Irish Franciscans at Louvain in the decade 1607-17. Both Jesuit and Franciscan entrants from Meath usually joined after completing their schooling on the continent.[165] In addition, natives of Meath were joining the Capuchins in significant numbers at this time.[166] A few were also joining the Dominicans. From about 1615, some of these religious, together with increasing numbers of diocesan clergy, were returning to their native province to serve as priests.[167]

Openness to tridentine clergy was based on the continental orientation of these families from the late sixteenth century onwards. Those links embraced military careers, as well as schooling. In the early 1620s, Captain Tyrrell returned to Fertullagh, County Westmeath, from the continent, where he had been engaged in military service under the Spanish crown. Two priests travelled with him, one of them was probably his kinsman; a

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half (about 13) may be identified as Ulster men: Thomas Brady, Eugene Trener, Bernard Gormly, Terence Finegan, Patrick Quin, Terence Reilly, Peter Neil, Maurice Crodan, William Cavellus, John Cavellus, James Kenanus, John Corcran, Bernard McNamee; even some of these may have been natives of the Anglo-Irish areas; secular priests who studied in Douai pre 1622, Archiv. Hib., 14, pp 76-8.

[163]. F. Martin, Friar Nugent, pp 163-77.

[164]. List of Irish Jesuits, 1617, I.E.R., 10, 527-9; Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622'.

[165]. Novices received at Louvain 1607-17, Louvain papers, pp 54-8.

[166]. We know of 12 men, to whom a background in north Leinster may be ascribed, alumni of Douai, who joined the Irish Capuchins before 1622, Archiv. Hib., 14, p.81.

[167]. List of priests, Meath diocese, 1615, BL Add Ms 19,836, pp 284-5.

further cleric had recently returned from Spain; all three clergy were living in Fertullagh, and supported by the Tyrrells there.[168]

Returned Irish clergy - 'all lusty able young men, and go always well armed' - were dependent on the noble or gentry families who offered them protection and maintenance, and with whom they lived. In 1609 it was alleged that every gentleman kept one or two in his house.[169] These families were using the profits of their state church interests to fund the continental schooling of their sons, and the maintenance of priests in their own localities.[170] Some chantries were still serving to maintain priests.[171] The social continuity represented by the numerous and well-off gentry and nobility of Meath diocese enabled them to offer the necessary shelter, support and maintenance to the outlawed seminary priests. From the mid-1610s, the returning clerics were replacing the traditionalist clergy hitherto maintained in elite households. By 1622, of the 17 households in Meath diocese listed where priests were maintained, in at least 11 of these, one or more seminary priests may be identified, and there may have been more. Significantly, of about 16 tridentine priests identified, about half of these were religious (9 of 16), indicative of the close links between the Anglo-Irish elite and the religious orders.[172] In the Anglo-Irish areas of mid-

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[168]. Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', p.9; one John Tyrrell was a captain in Henry O'Neill's regiment, 1605-10, G. Henry, The Irish military community in Spanish Flanders, 1586-1621 (Dublin, 1992), p.147.

[169]. [Quote], Sir Robert Jacob to Salisbury, 18 Oct 1609, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.299.

[170]. On maintenance of priests by the elite, commissioners on general grievances, 12 Nov 1613, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.447; gentlemen, women and priests have benefit of church livings, Davies to Cecil, 20 Feb 1604, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.143; [revenues from church livings used] 'for the support of priests and recusants there, or of their children beyond the seas in seminaries, as they are for the most part nowadays used', Sir James Perrott to Sir Ralph Winwood, 25 Nov 1615, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 97-8; the Anglo-Irish peerage, especially, had extensive interests in church livings, and these remained stable down to 1641, particularly in Meath diocese and County Louth, 1615 visitation (BL Add Ms 19,836, dioceses of Meath and Ardagh); 1622 visitation (TCD Ms 550); and 1634 visitation (TCD Ms 1067).

[171]. Good store of chantry lands in private hands; statute of Edward VI dissolving chantries not passed in Ireland, lord deputy to mr treasurer, 29 Jan 1610, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.370; as late as 1622, Sir Richard Lee was the priest in 'the college of Killeen', maintained by Baron Killeen, Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', p.11; the Guild of the Blessed Virgin Mary had owned the chantry or college at Killeen, and in 1609, the lands, totalling over 800 acres, were granted to Christopher Plunkett, Baron Killeen, A. Cogan, The Diocese of Meath Ancient and Modern, i (Dublin, 1862), pp 355-6; a martyrology from the college survived into the early seventeenth century, 'Ex vetusto Martyrologio Collegii de Kyllene manuscripto', TCD Ms 568, fol.109r-v.

[172]. Clerics educated on the continent: Ross McGeoghegan OP, George FitzGerald SJ, Nicholas Nugent SJ, James Plunkett (vicar-general), Laurence Nugent OFM Cap, two Jesuits, John Jeffreys OFM (Louvain papers, p.55), Robert Netterville SJ, [Michael] Chamberlain SJ (Finegan, 'Biographical dictionary of Irish Jesuits'), James Dillon (Bordeaux list, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 318-22), James Hussey (Louth Arch. Soc. Jn, 8 no 4, pp 303-21), Nicholas Gerrard, William O

and south Louth, a similar pattern of clerical maintenance prevailed among elite families there.[173]

Through their support of returned clergy, gentlewomen exercised a special role as promoters of tridentine catholicism. 'They [seminary priests] have so gained the women that they are in a manner all of them absolute recusants'.[174] In the Gaelic midlands in the 1610s, women were taking the initiative in confessional matters, by maintaining their own priests, distinct from the survivalist local clergy who had opted for a nominal adherence to the state church.[175] Given their pivotal role in the transmission of religious culture to the rising generation, the winning of these women for the counter-reformation was significant for the progress of religious change in the catholic community. Measures taken by the state to ensure religious conformity largely focused on male heads of households, leaving the womenfolk unhindered to promote catholicism among the young; in elite families, their efforts were aided by the returned priests living in their households.

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Through their close links with noble and gentry families, Jesuits were a significant presence in north Leinster catholicism.[176] Jesuit concentration in Meath diocese was remarkable: between 1615 and 1622, at least eight Jesuits were based for some length of time with various landed families there.[177] Among the Anglo-Irish notables, the fathers were sought-after guests: when a new Jesuit arrived in Ireland, the gentlemen would

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Donogho, Christopher Tyrrell, Murtagh O Sheall, Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622'.

[173]. L. Murray, 'Will of James Hussey of Smarmore County Louth, priest, 1635', Louth Arch. Soc. Jn., 8 no 4, pp 303-21.

[174]. Lord deputy and council to privy council, 27 Oct 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, pp 309-11; T. O hAnnrachain, 'Theory in the absence of fact: Irish women and the Catholic Reformation', in C. Meek and C. Lawless (eds), Studies on Medieval and Early Modern Women: Pawns or Players? (Dublin, 2003), pp 141-54.

[175]. 'The feminin sex stand out for them selfs and keepe their owne Irisch priests', De Renzy to [Lord Deputy St John], c.1617, Anal. Hib., 34, p.148.

[176]. On Jesuits in north Leinster, 1604-c.1620, see F. O'Donoghue, 'The Jesuit mission in Ireland, 1598-1651', unpublished PhD thesis, Catholic University of America, 1981, pp 62-76, 149-51.

[177]. John Barnwall (Jesuit annual letter 1617); Robert Nugent, staying with the baron of Delvin, and dowager countess of Kildare (Meath diocese 1615, BL Add Ms 19,836, p.284); George FitzGerald, with Sir Edward Fitzgerald; Nicholas Nugent, with the earl of Westmeath; [John] Plunkett, with Lady O'Doherty; Robert Netterville, with the earl of Westmeath, [Michael] Chamberlain with Lord Dillon, see Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath, c1622'; Malachy Mac Conuisce, see F. Finegan, 'Biographical Dictionary of Irish Jesuits', IJA, typescript.

immediately make representations to the superior to have the man stay with their family.[178] The mission comprised individuals who were given short-term, even yearly, assignments. The Dublin residence, or territory within which the fathers operated, embraced the Pale and north Leinster. About 1605, when there were merely a handful of Jesuits in Ireland, Barnaby Kearney was working as a preacher in Meath diocese.[179] In the 1610s the number of Jesuits in Ireland was increasing, and consequently there were usually several men active in north Leinster.

There were two main strands in their apostolate. In common with many diocesan clergy in the Anglo-Irish areas, a typical Jesuit ministry was exercised in the elite household, catechising the family, servants and neighbours. In their role as domestic chaplains, seminary priests (such as the Jesuits), celebrated mass and preached in the family's chapel, services which people from the locality attended. Jesuits, in particular, were mobile, less tied to particlular families, moving from house to house in the cause of their ministry.[180] A few fathers had a special concern for the rural poor. John Barnwall stayed with gentry families along the borders of Leinster and Ulster from 1610 until his death in 1617. Preeminently among his confreres, Barnwall gave time and attention to those living in the fields and villages.[181] The gentry sought advice from the Jesuits on questions touching the canonical validity of their marriages. Further, the fathers advised on the political issues facing catholics, such as the oath of allegiance in 1611.[182] Jesuits facilitated schooling on the continent for the sons of these families.

As with the Franciscans, and, later, the Capuchins, the popular mission was another form of the Jesuit apostolate in north Leinster, as elsewhere in Ireland. This entailed large open-air gatherings, where preaching - generally on the topic of confession - preceded confessions. As a group, the Society of Jesus was funded in such way that its members could give their services free. In a northern mission in 1617, after the fathers preached and administered holy communion to a crowd of 300, the people marvelled that the priests did not charge for these services[183], as was customary among other clergy. The Jesuits also

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178. Jesuit annual letter 1619, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.147.

179. Jesuit annual letter 1605, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.4.

180. 'Jesuits hasten from country house to country house, by day and by night, wherever the necessities of the inhabitants call them', Jesuit annual letter 1619, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.148.

181. Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.79.

182. [Christopher Hollywood] to Richard Conway, 4 Nov 1611, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.49.

183. Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.84.

sought conversions from among the protestants. Ending family disputes was a regular feature of their ministry, as was assisting vicars-general in the reform of the clergy. They elicited the co-operation of others in catechising the crowds.[184]

The sudden easing of coercion against catholicism in 1619 presented opportunities which were eagerly grasped by Jesuit missioners. Hitherto the threat of persecution limited their activity in the countryside, in contrast to their apostolate within the secure environs of the gentry house. In 1619 two Jesuits took part in a missionary excursion lasting more than a month, and covering the northern part of the Pale and the areas bordering Ulster. This mission was conducted in close co-operation with the diocesan clergy, four or five of whom were part of the mission team. While individual Jesuits working in north Leinster, and especially Ulster, in the 1610s were fluent in Irish, in 1619 it was noted that only two of the fathers in the Dublin residence could preach in Irish. Thus Jesuit deficiency in Irish may in part have accounted for the co-operation with the diocesan clergy in this mission. Reflecting the recent easing in persecution, some of the sessions were held in the public churches, although the crowds were so great that the buildings could not contain all who came. Receiving back into the Roman fold those who had attended the state church under the pressure of the 1610s featured prominently in this mission. In the same year similar missions, apparently held by Jesuits on their own, were held in different parts of Meath diocese. Rural missions elicited a warm response from the poor people of the countryside. Barefoot crowds used to follow the fathers as they rode along through bitter winds and rain. As they passed through villages, crowds were kneeling in the mud, asking the missioners to dismount and hear their confessions. Workers sowing seed in the fields abandoned their task and followed the fathers in droves from village to village for about eight kilometres.[185]

The Jesuit mission contributed to the emergence of a tridentine catholicism in north Leinster by co-operating with the vicars-general in efforts at clerical reform. The fathers' impact was probably greatest in the network of elite families who formed the infrastructure of their activities in north Leinster. Through popular missions (when local conditions permitted these) they exercised a more limited influence on the rural poor, and contributed to the regaining of those who had a perfunctory adherence to the state church.

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[184]. Because of the crowds wishing to take part in the mission in Dundalk, in Advent 1610, the father taught some boys elements of christian doctrine; these in turn repeated what they had learned to others, James Everard SJ to Jesuit in Portugal, W. M'D., 'Irish ecclesiastical colleges since the reformation', I.E.R., 10, pp 462-3.

[185]. Jesuit annual letter 1619, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, pp 147-61.

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The vowed life of religious women was a minor feature of Pale catholicism in the early seventeenth century, limited to women of the upper classes. A sufficient dowry was needed for this way of life.[186] Women members of elite families who were drawn to a consecrated life were normally accomodated locally in a priest's house. Thus Elinor Preston, sister of Jenico Preston, 5th Viscount Gormanston, was living in the chaplain's house on the Gormanston estate, County Meath, in the 1610s.[187] Official catholic unease at the informal, domestic nature of the vowed life of women, in the disturbed situation of catholicism at the time, was reflected in a synod decree in 1614. Only with the consent of the ordinary were priests to accept women's vows of chastity. Illustrative of the tendency for vowed women to live as part of priests' households, the decree reiterated the traditional church teaching against such arrangements; there was official concern to protect clerical celibacy.[188]

Religious life in community, for women, was virtually unknown. Exceptionally, a small group of laywomen living as Franciscan tertiaries was established in Drogheda. In the 1600s these two or three 'nuns' were living together in one house, to which a small chapel was attached. They were under the guidance of the friars. Visiting Franciscans used to say mass there, a custom they continued when the friars settled in the town once more in 1610. These devout ladies were held in high esteem locally, partly because of their elite backgrounds. Reflecting the precarious and unsatisfactory nature of their domestic situation, the women's house and chapel were raided by the state primate, Archbishop Henry Ussher, about 1610, as he was searching for priests.[189] Further, by 1619 they were living in the house of the leading diocesan priest of the town, the Armagh vicar-general Balthasar Delahoyd. Typical of his difficult relations with many in the catholic community, Delahoyd allegedly treated these women merely as domestics.[190]

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[186]. The abbess of the Irish Dominicans, Lisbon, requested the portion of Elizabeth Shelton, left her by her father, Humfrey, letter of attorney from abbess and sisters of Syen, 1 Dec 1608, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.414.

[187]. Meath diocese 1615, BL Add Ms 19,836, p.284.

[188]. Decrees of synod of Dublin (1614), 'De votis mulierum' [On the vows of women], P. Moran, Catholic archbishops, p.455.

[189]. R. Walsh (ed.), 'Persecution of Catholics in Drogheda in 1606, 1607 and 1611', Arch. Hib. 6, pp 64-8.

[190]. Wadding papers, p.40.

Given the absence of conventional convent life in Ireland, placing women family members in religious houses on the continent was a desirable form of provision among elite Pale families. One example of this trend was the establishment of the Irish Dominican convent of Siena in Lisbon; by 1607, Elizabeth Preston (perhaps a relative of viscount Gormanston) was abbess.[191] As with educational provision for boys, families drew on existing networks to find a convent place for their girls. Palesmen in positions of prominence in the catholic colleges received a stream of such requests. The financing of placements was a major concern.[192] While fathers or brothers normally made the arrangements, women themselves sometimes initiated the quest for a convent place abroad. These desires for a more congenial environment were understandable, given the restrictions and disruption of catholic life imposed by the political situation in Ireland. A further incentive was the solitary and sometimes oppressive nature of these women's role within priests' houses.

A move to a convent required considerable financial resources. Testamentary arrangements among family members could impede a woman's wish to enter a convent. The case of the two sisters, Ismay and Aleson Barnwall, living in Drogheda (perhaps in the community noted above), illustrated some of the difficulties facing women who wanted to join religious life abroad. In the spring of 1608, the sisters wrote to their brother Patrick, then studying in Paris, seeking to enter religious life in a convent abroad. They could contemplate this move because the death of their father in February 1606 entitled them to their portions. Yet money was still a problem. Each would need £120 as a dowry on entering a convent, and in addition £40 to cover them for a year while they were learning the language. Two years after their father's death, they were still experiencing difficulties in gaining control of their portions from their eldest brother James. From Paris, Patrick Barnwall, in consultation with his cousin, the rector of the Douai Irish college, Christopher Cusack, and others, advised the sisters to remain in Ireland. The sisters stayed in Drogheda, and followed a vowed life there. Subsequently, in the 1620s, when Patrick had become abbot of the Cistercian abbey of Mellifont, he received Ismay and Aleson into the Cistercian order.[193] Thus financial difficulties prevented some women from pursuing a

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[191]. Letter of attorney from abbess and sisters of Syen, Lisbon, 1 Dec 1608, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.414.

[192]. William Aves of Dublin wrote both to Christopher Cusack, president of the Irish college, Douai, and to Thomas Dease in Paris about a place for his sister Thomasine; two daughters of Mr Stanihurst were placed in Louvain convents, 'We know not how, nor how cheap', William Aves to Thomas Dease, 1 Sept 1605, PRO SP63/217/54.

[193]. Patrick Barnwall to Ismay and Aleson Barnwall, 27 Oct 1608, PRO SP63/225/250; M. Hartry, Triumphalia Sanctae Crucis, pp 283-5.

convent life abroad, leaving them with the less satisfactory alternative of following the informal style of vowed life available in their own locality.

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During the decades of most intense civil pressure on catholicism, the transformation from a traditionalist to a tridentine catholicism was also occurring. Initially, and perhaps for several generations, this process was limited to the social elite. Change arose from the continental orientation of the landed and merchant families of the Pale and the Anglo-Irish areas. A leading role was played by the sons of these families, schooled on the continent, some of whom subsequently trained as priests in the tridentine mould. On their return from studies, these men found shelter, support and maintenance from their family networks, and through these channels, elements of reformed catholicism were diffused in the localities. The coercive civil situation, together with the gradual transition to explicitly protestant clergy in most localities, led to the emergence of a domestic catholicism, centred on the gentry house. Gentlewomen played a significant role in fostering the new-style faith, especially by their patronage of the returned clergy. These priests' pastoral efforts were focused primarily on the gentry households. However, the popular mission, favoured by the Jesuits, the continentally-trained Franciscans, and, from the 1620s, the Capuchins, brought the new-style catholicism to other strands of society. While tridentine clergy were growing in number, especially in the 1610s, their influence was limited by their small number, and their concentration, especially among the elite families of Counties Meath, Westmeath, and south Louth.

Even in the Anglo-Irish areas, catholicism of the tridentine variety existed as a layer imposed on the more pervasive survivalism. This more pervasive strand was animated by locally-trained parish clergy and friars. In this older-style catholicism, large gatherings featured prominently, in which indulgences, pardons, and relics were promoted. While clergy distribution in the Anglo-Irish areas was higher than in Ulster, as late as 1619, a Jesuit observer could note of the whole kingdom, that priests were still in short supply, a remark doubtless coloured by his experience of other parts of catholic Europe.[194] The suspension of recusancy measures from 1619 marked a change in the civil climate; thereafter a catholic resurgence ensued, and to a consideration of catholicism in this new era we now turn.

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[194]. For every priest in Ireland, five were needed, Jesuit annual letter 1619, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.147.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CATHOLIC RESURGENCE IN NORTH LEINSTER, 1620-41

The informal suspension of measures against catholicism in Ireland in 1619, arising from wider Stuart dynastic policies, set the 1620s and 1630s apart from the preceding decades in the experience of the catholic community.[1] A growing confidence characterised Irish papists in the 1620s. In the localities, a restorationist mood may be detected. Catholics looked forward to further easing of their position under the law. Such optimism was tempered by the continuing disabilities they experienced. These included the exactions and fees associated with the state clergy and the ecclesiastical courts, and the inconvenience caused by occasional state campaigns against catholic clergy. The absence of severe persecution in these decades allowed tensions within the catholic community to surface. Rapid expansion in clerical numbers, including the growth and revival of religious orders, imposed an increasing burden of maintenance on the laity. This was exacerbated by a poor economic climate, and the existing onerous demands of the state church, and the soldiers. Competition for scarce resources inevitably contributed to dissentions among the catholic clergy. While proportionately less of the extant evidence dates from the 1630s, it is argued here that patterns established in the 1620s prevailed down to 1641. The faltering nature of religious tolerance in the early 1620s will be examined. Growth and fractiousness may be conveniently explored in the case of Drogheda; trends in the catholic community more generally may be seen in concentrated form in the major town of the region. The steady process of catholic expansion under the patronage of the Old English elite will be noted. As a result of this support, north Leinster was an area particularly favoured by the

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[1]. On Stuart pursuit of a catholic dynastic alliance, see S.R. Gardiner, History of England 1603-1642, iii, 1616-21 (London, 1907).

religious orders. Jesuit concentration in Meath diocese has already been noted in chapter six. The contribution of the orders in the 1620s and 1630s will be explored in terms of the revival of Cistercian claims to their medieval patrimony, the close links of the Capuchins to the north Leinster area, and the problems associated with the maintenance of the Franciscans.

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The new mood was quickly noted by the Jesuits. Already in 1619 they detected a greater freedom for catholicism than hitherto. While previously in north Leinster they were largely constrained to lurking in gentry houses, in that year they felt secure enough to increase their missions in the countryside.[2] A limited catholic restoration was taking place across north Leinster, fostered by the local prestige of magnates and gentry. In the Pale heartlands, the dense concentration of Anglo-Irish elite homes provided a pastoral network, from whence the growing number of seminary priests, now unencumbered by the persistent threat of apprehension, could minister to the surrounding population. In the more isolated hinterlands of the midlands, gentry houses were fewer and poorer; the support they could offer the visiting seminary priest was less. In response to this pastoral neglect, in these districts, especially, missions were organised by members of religious orders. Similarly, in these isolated and relatively impoverished areas, a certain continuity of catholic worship in the dilapidated churches prevailed, and this increased from 1619. In that year catholics were once again using parish churches in north Leinster.[3] Catholic resurgence on the borders of Leinster reflected the relative weakness of the state church there, and the local control exercised by the recusant elite. Richard Nugent, Earl of Westmeath, and the Dillons of Kilkenny West (near Athlone) were noteworthy in the support they afforded priests and religious.

From the relaxation of coercion in 1619, and into the 1630s, a state of confessional flux featured in some areas of the midlands; church premises were being contested by both catholic and Church of Ireland ecclesiastics. Thus priests were celebrating mass in buildings nominally under the control of the state church. This new-found catholic confidence inspired shock and fear in protestants, as they saw their possession of local churches disputed. John Ankers' anger and resentment were typical of local protestant

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[2]. Jesuit annual letter 1619, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.147.

[3]. On their month-long mission, the Jesuits together with their assistants among the secular priests were able to use the churches without hindrance, Jesuit annual letter 1619, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.152.

anxieties faced with a resurgent catholicism and the vacillating religious policies of the government in the early 1620s.

In the area of west King's County and south-west Westmeath, John Ankers, incumbent of Athlone, complained in 1622 of 'frequent and public conventicles' of friars and priests, 'with the public celebration of mass and sermons not only in corners but in our churches'.[4] One focus of Ankers' concern was the patronal feastday, held in August 1622 at the ruined church of Gallen, a medieval Augustinian friary in the isolated village of Ferbane, King's County. The feastday of an order's founder was a major event in the local calendar, and the event at Gallen was typical of both Franciscan and Dominican practice. A large crowd, drawn from a wide area - 'all the country' - gathered for mass. Although the feast celebrated was that of St Augustine, 'the Patrick of Gallen', Ankers reported that six Dominican priests took part, and Tirlagh Mac Rory Mac Coghlan, a priest from the locality just recently returned from the continent, preached, presumably after mass, as was customary. The proceedings lasted several hours, only finishing at two in the afternoon; mass usually was said in early morning. One Lisagh MacKiggan - most likely a Dominican laybrother from the locality - asked the congregation for beer for the friars.[5] This medieval religious foundation was relatively poor and isolated, and, unlike other religious houses, it had not been converted to administrative or private use by the New English. These considerations accounted for its continued, if only occasional, use for catholic worship in the early seventeenth century.

The gathering at Gallen was merely an annual event, marking the patron saint of the Augustinians. By contrast, the use of a church for catholic worship at Kilkenny West (north-east of Athlone) was probably more regular. On a Sunday in August 1622, Ankers went to this parish church 'to read prayers', only to discover about 500 people on the street outside; they had just come out from mass, and indeed about forty were still inside, receiving holy communion from an aged priest, reflecting the typically small proportion of the congregation who received. Indicative of the recent upsurge in catholic self-confidence,

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[4]. [John Ankers] to [James Ussher], bishop of Meath, 30 Aug 1622, NLI Ms 18,651; although the letter is unsigned, familiarity with the local situation strongly suggests that Ankers was the author, for he was the resident vicar of Athlone from 1615, BL Add Ms 19,836, p.274; 1622 Meath diocese, TCD Ms 550, pp 130-1.

[5]. [Ankers] to bishop of Meath, 30 Aug 1622, NLI Ms 18,651; Gallen was an Augustinian foundation, Gwynn and Hadcock, Medieval Religious Houses Ireland (London, 1970), p.176; that the friars were indeed Dominicans is suggested by Ankers' reference to plans to restore the Dominican friary at Mullingar.

the celebrant asked the minister to leave until the distribution was finished; however, Ankers, in a fury, seized him by the collar and thrust him out of the church.[6]

This building, unusually, was in good repair in 1622, and may have been a venue for Sunday mass partly because of its infrequent use by the state church; the minister, having several parishes in his charge, only visited occasionally. It may be presumed that the local lord (who was also patron of the living), the papist Viscount Dillon of Kilkenny West, supported the use of the church for catholic worship. The numbers attending indicated that people from a large area walked to the mass. Given that Athlone was only three miles away, some of the congregation may have come from the town. A sizeable garrison had been stationed there, which had made Athlone inhospitable for the Franciscans. The town was the headquarters of the Connacht presidency, which may have further impeded public expressions of catholicism, though by the mid-1610s only a few soldiers remained, and many of these had converted to catholicism.[7] Perhaps there was no mass-house there at this time. Thus the catholic community of the Athlone area took the opportunity to have mass in a repaired church within a secluded village, under the patronage of a catholic peer.[8] A further anecdote is suggestive of the contention surrounding church premises in these decades. In County Westmeath in 1631, a priest entered a church to celebrate mass; before starting, the cleric allegedly ordered the people present to dig up the body of a protestant, recently buried there, which they then threw into a bog.[9]

There was widespread interest in the changing religious situation, and a confident assumption among catholics that further amelioration was in prospect. Thus in August 1622, several of the gentry of west King's County expressed 'their hope of the present alteration of times'.[10] This optimism was exemplified in the remarks of Garret Coghlan, heir to the Gaelic lord Sir John MacCoghlan. By way of illustration of the liberty then enjoyed by catholics, he held 'that all the priests and friars in the castle of Dublin were released and all the fines imposed upon jurors for not finding recusants remitted'.[11] As the risk of harassment of catholic clergy receded, their association with the gentry became

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[6]. [Ankers] to bishop of Meath, 30 Aug 1622, NLI Ms 18,651.

[7]. On Franciscan unease in Athlone in the 1610s, see B. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.101.

[8]. Meath diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550, pp 112-3.

[9]. Emmanuel Downing to Sir John Coke, 20 Sept 1631, HMC 12th Report, Appendix 1, pt 1, p.442; the anecdote came from Judge Mayart, presumably from the assize circuit there (I am grateful to Dr Joe McLaughlin for this reference).

[10]. [Ankers] to bishop of Meath, 30 Aug 1622, NLI Ms 18,651.

[11]. ibid.

more open. Protestant unease was growing as a result. As noted by Ankers, previous deference to local protestant sensibilities was evaporating: 'no gentleman shall we meet but a priest or friar or both accompanying him well horsed and well armed and come and walk and converse as familiarly amongst us as our neighbours'.[12] The minister's resentment at the forwardness he detected in the catholic community arose precisely because it was a recent change. Shock and fear led him to write of these episodes to the state bishop of Meath.

Space contested by the confessions was not limited to church premises. Increasingly, public expressions of catholicism were occurring in the Pale heartlands, as in other areas, which added to protestant anxiety. Processions of various kinds exemplified this trend. In 1622, a commentator noted the recent brazenness of the catholics of the town of Navan, County Meath, who, thanks to the leadership of their priest, 'carry a cross openly in the streets before the dead, being carried to burial'.[13] Yet another manifestation of catholic elan by the early 1620s was the ostentatious welcome given to Thomas Dease, the recently-provided bishop of Meath, who arrived in the diocese about November 1621, 'with eight men in liveries'; these were presumably the retainers of the bishop's main patron, Richard Nugent, created earl of Westmeath in the same year.[14] Such a public display reflected the strength of catholicism in Meath, within which the support of gentry and aristocracy played such a prominent role.[15] The prelate's very public arrival in his diocese in 1621 reflected the new era of official toleration of catholicism, and was an assertion that the policy of state repression of catholic clergy had failed.

News of the change in the government's attitude towards catholicism was eagerly disseminated in the localities.[16] The government's wavering religious policy led to

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[12]. ibid.

[13]. The priest in question was Patrick Duffy, vicar-general of Clogher diocese, R. Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', p.9; Wadding papers, p.60.

[14]. Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', p.10; similarly, a report had reached London some time before the end of 1623 that a popish bishop [Thomas Dease] had worn his bishop's robes at 'some church or public place ... and that he had written a letter to the bishop of Meath [Ussher] desiring him not to be so violent against his neighbour bishops', Thomas Earl of Kellie to John Earl of Mar, 5 Feb 1624, HMC Mar and Kellie, Supplement, pp 190-2.

[15]. Deference by catholics to their bishops was yet another feature of the catholic revival which irked and unsettled protestants: 'The pride of these popish archbishops and bishops is grown so great that they be served amongst themselves, with more curious and magnificent ceremonies of honour, than our archbishops and bishops are amongst us', Lord Aungier to Lord Deputy Wentworth, 28 June 1632, Sheffield City Libraries, WWM, Str P1, ff 43v-44r.

[16]. Priests were prominent in spreading hopes of religious toleration, lord deputy and council to privy council, 1 Oct 1622, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.393; writing from Athlone, Lord Wilmot

expectations of a catholic restoration, fed by rumours about a royal match with the Spanish infanta which were widely aired among the populace. At the fair in Kells, County Meath, in October 1623 one Henry Dowdall openly proclaimed that the prince of Wales was married on 17 August, and that the duke of Buckingham carried the cross before the prince.[17] Catholic clergy were now more openly expressing hopes for a restoration, focusing on the return of church property to catholic ownership. Thus in the early 1620s the Dominicans were hoping to restore their former convent in Mullingar, and about 1622 they re-opened a house there.[18] These aspirations were not confined to the religious. About 1622, a secular priest maintained by the earl of Westmeath declared publicly, 'within a twelve-month he would have the parsonage and vicarage of Ramollin' in County Westmeath.[19] These hopes were widespread, leading to fear, confusion and uncertainty among protestants.

The alarmed response of local British protestants to catholic gatherings may be adduced as evidence of increased protestant anxiety. Large catholic assemblies, generally presided over by teams of friars, and attended by the gentry of the region, were a feature of the remoter areas in the early 1620s.[20] This was especially true of the borders of Leinster and Ulster, due in large measure to the influence of the local magnates, the traditionally recusant Nugent family, and its head, Richard Nugent, Earl of Westmeath, leader of the Irish catholics in the 1620s and 1630s.[21] While these gatherings were generally organised by the friars, diocesan ecclesiastics, too, could muster large crowds. The protection which

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complained that priests were especially full of false rumours, Wilmot to Lord Deputy Falkland, 12 Apr 1624, BL Add Ms 11,033, fols 22-23.

[17]. Sir Hugh Culme to lord deputy, [Oct] 1623, PRO SP63/237/53a.

[18]. [Ankers] to bishop of Meath, 30 Aug 1622, NLI Ms 18,651; H. Fenning, 'The Dominicans of Mullingar, 1622-1654', Riocht na Midhe, 3 no 4, p.299.

[19]. The priest was Edmond McEnally, Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', p.9.

[20]. In his choice of sheriffs, the lord deputy dared not select any recusants in the remoter counties, 'considering the great assemblies which their conceit of a general toleration had made them presume to appear in', Falkland to Secretary Conway, 9 Jan 1624, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 455-6; similarly, the proclamation against catholic clergy condemned 'those who before time secretly lurked in sundry parts of this kingdom, have lately more boldly showed themselves in the exercise of their functions in open assemblies', proclamation for banishment of Jesuits etc, 21 Jan 1624, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.459.

[21]. Westmeath was admonished 'to be contented with the private exercise of his conscience, without drawing together any number of priests', Falkland to Conway, 27 Apr, 2 May, 1624, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.489; on the Nugents' recusancy, see H. Coburn-Walshe, 'Responses to the Protestant Reformation in Sixteenth Century Meath', Riocht na Midhe, 8 no 1, pp 105-6; on Westmeath's political career, see Richard Nugent, 1st Earl of Westmeath, D.N.B., and A. Clarke, The Old English in Ireland, 1625-42 (Dublin, 2000), especially chapters 2 and 4.

the Nugents gave to priests was reflected in the gathering which took place in the vicinity of the earl's home on the Friday of Easter week, 1624. Two diocesan ordinaries (they were termed catholic bishops), together with several priests, presided over a large crowd who went to visit the anchorite living at Fore, County Westmeath, about seven miles from the Nugent residence.[22]

More typically, in October 1623, a group of about eight Franciscans were on a preaching tour in Counties Cavan and Longford. They held large open-air meetings at Cavan town, and in the village of Granard, County Longford, both areas of British settlement. Over 2000 people are alleged to have attended each event, comprising mass and preaching, indicating that people walked from a large radius to listen to the friars. Local protestants were dismayed, one correspondent referring to 'the terror of the poor English that dwell in these parts'.[23] Hitherto, catholic assemblies took place in secluded areas, away from the planters, venues chosen to avoid drawing the attention of officials. That the friars held a gathering in Cavan town was unprecedented, reflecting the new permissive attitude of the authorities towards catholicism. Fanning protestant fears of a more general catholic restoration, the friars allegedly asserted that they had official warrant for their proceedings. It was also rumoured that they were going to occupy the parish church of Captain Arthur Forbes, at Newtown Forbes, County Longford. Given the difficulties of communication between the localities and Dublin, not to mention the court at London, protestant fears in the midlands were compounded by uncertainty about official policy regarding catholicism at this time.[24]

A further example of the revival in papist self-assurance was the howl of protest from the Pale elite at Bishop James Ussher's 'sword' sermon in 1622, given in Christ Church, Dublin. Ussher was widely understood to have called for severe state measures against catholicism. Archbishop Hampton, resident in Drogheda, was made fully cognisant of the Pale notables' displeasure. The primate in turn strongly advised Ussher to adopt a more politique stance.[25]

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[22]. Falkland to Conway, 19 April 1624, PRO SP63/238/42 (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.482); 'Patrick O Beglahan, anchorite of Fower, a pernicious fellow exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction', Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', p.9.

[23]. Sir Hugh Culme to [lord deputy], October 1623, PRO SP63/237/53a.

[24]. Captain Arthur Forbes to [lord deputy], October 1623, PRO SP63/237/53, 2.

[25]. Primate Christopher Hampton to James Ussher, 17 Oct 1622, in J. Ussher, Whole works, xv, pp 183-4.

While religious toleration largely prevailed from about 1619, catholics still laboured under disabilities vis-a-vis the established church. Those involved in catholic marriages and baptisms were liable for payments to state church personnel.[26] In the years 1619-24, the catholic community was subject to the vagaries of state religious policy, in which bouts of repression alternated with toleration. Confusion was particularly rampant in the years 1622-4: at times, Lord Deputy Falkland was directing sheriffs to promote proceedings against recusants; at other times he was writing to bishops cancelling such directions.[27] Thus a fragile toleration prevailed, characterised by confusion regarding the execution of the recusancy measures; in 1624, Christopher Tirrell, late sheriff of County Westmeath, was fined for not bringing in recusants when there was a cessation in prosecuting them, as occurred from early 1623.[28]

Religious compulsion took other forms. In the early 1620s, a number of catholics were compelled to listen to the state bishop of Meath, James Ussher, as he preached to them in the courthouse.[29] There were occasional phases of more severe pressure. One began late in 1623, partly in response to local protestant anxieties about the resurgence of catholicism since active coercion ceased in 1619. In the winter of 1623-4, charges of recusancy were once more being brought at the assizes against a wide range of Drogheda citizens; jurors in Counties Louth and Cavan (presumably part of the same assizes circuit) were once again ordered to present recusants. Priests were still being held in prison.[30] It was in this context that Bishop Dease ordained the Derry cleric, Neil Feranan, at mass, held in a private house 'for fear of persecution by heretics', on Holy Saturday, 1625.[31] Coercion in winter 1623-4 was linked with the proclamation against seminary priests published by Lord Deputy Falkland in January 1624, and instructions to him to implement the recusancy laws. The

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[26]. See chapter two, 'Catholicism in Ulster and the state church, 1603-30'.

[27]. Copies of letters of Lord Deputy Falkland, 1622-4, in C. McNeill (ed.), 'Rawlinson Mss', Anal. Hib., 2, pp 13-14.

[28]. Exchequer orders, revenue abstracts, NAI, Ferguson Mss IX, 1A.49.141, p.299; N.H.I., iii, p.225; by autumn 1623, catholic correspondents were reporting an end to religious coercion, R. Netterville to William de Spirito Santo (abstract), 18 Nov 1623, BAV, Barberini Latini Ms 8630, ff 147-8.

[29]. 'He had many Papists in his diocese, whom he endeavoured by private discourses to reclaim, at length they were contented to hear him preach so it were not in a church, he condescended to their exception, and preached in the session house', N. Bernard, The life and death ... of Dr James Ussher (London, 1656), p.52.

[30]. [Fr Hollywood to Jesuit general], 8 Mar 1624, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, pp 200-3 (printed in HMC Report 10, Appendix 5, pp 348-50); for other reports of the impact of these measures, see abstracts of letters from Ireland, 1623, BAV, Barberini Latini Ms 8630, ff 147-8.

[31]. 'Form of an ordination by bishop of Meath', in W. Prynne, Hidden Workes of Darkenes (London, 1645), p.84.

proclamation referred indirectly to the economic hardship caused to the catholic community by having to support two sets of clergy, those of the state church, and an increasing number of catholic priests.[32] However, the pressure was short-lived, for a month later the recusancy laws were suspended.[33]

A further campaign erupted in the first half of 1630. Because of the change in the Dublin administration from Lord Deputy Falkland to Lords Justice Loftus and Boyle, the proclamation of 1 April 1629 against seminary clergy was only implemented from the end of December 1629.[34] From December 1629, religious houses across the kingdom were closed, and communities found it difficult to acquire alternative premises; a Franciscan correspondent described their plight: 'All our houses are taken up for the king, and no man will let us a house to rent now; nor I know no reason why we should demand it, all such houses being subject to forfeiture and we not able to make satisfaction to the landlord'.[35] The situation in Ardagh and Kilmore dioceses was probably typical of the limited impact of this measure: in 1630 the friars there remained in the area, but did not wear religious garb.[36] Some religious communities could rely on the traditional support of well-connected families. Because of a recent bout of persecution, in the late 1620s the Franciscan community at Athlone had to leave their convent, but they merely moved temporarily to a location some miles north-east of the town, on the lands of Viscount Dillon of Costello Gallen; the nomination of George Dillon, son of the viscount, as guardian, in 1629, may have been made with a view to facilitating this arrangement.[37] Under the lords justice, other measures were taken to curb catholicism. Directions were issued to the state bishops

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[32]. Proclamation for banishment of Jesuits etc, 21 Jan 1624, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 459-60.

[33]. N.H.I., iii, p.233; however, the recusancy fines may still have been collected in some localities, for in 1625 the impoverishment caused by the fines was noted, acta, Propaganda Fide, 8 Mar 1625-6, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.35.

[34]. Proclamation 1 Apr 1629, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, pp 444-5; N.H.I., iii, pp 241-2; in catholic Drogheda, the intended solemn effect of the proclamation was vitiated by it being read aloud in public by a drunken soldier, Lord Deputy Falkland to Primate Ussher, 24 Apr 1629, quoted in Mant, History of the Church of Ireland, i, p.429; Irish council to privy council, 31 Jan 1629, NLI Ms 18,667.

[35]. Thomas Strange OFM to Francis Matthews OFM, from Waterford, 24 Nov 1630, Wadding papers, pp 440-1.

[36]. Bishop William Bedell to Archbishop Laud, 1 Apr 1630, in Mant, History of the Church of Ireland, i, pp 435-7.

[37]. By Feb 1628, the Athlone Franciscans were living at Killinure, on the shores of Lough Ree, B. Jennings, Michael O Cleirigh Chief of the Four Masters and his associates (Dublin, 1936), p.59; C. Giblin (ed.), Liber Lovaniensis (Dublin, 1956), pp 4-7; J. Lodge, Peerage of Ireland (Dublin, 1789), iv, p.182.

to seize public oratories or mass-houses across the kingdom.[38] However measures against catholicism were limited - referring to the Pale, the Capuchin superior noted that, with the exception of the cities, the friars were able to preach openly; they administered the sacraments undisturbed in private houses.[39] Religious coercion had eased by December 1632, when the recusancy fine was suspended as part of Wentworth's rapprochement with the Old English.[40] As an illustration of the freedom of worship prevailing in the 1630s, in Dundalk the majority of the inhabitants were catholic, and 'they dare to take the boldness to go to mass openly'.[41]

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Developments in Drogheda, particularly in the early 1620s, illustrate both the rapid growth and the internal tensions characteristic of catholicism in these decades. The port town of Drogheda played a pivotal role in northern catholicism in the early seventeenth century. Set in one of the richest hinterlands in Ireland, after Dublin, it was one of the leading ports of the kingdom. Drogheda had trading links with French ports, as well as with Chester and Bristol.[42] Its merchant oligarchy controlled the corporation, and guarded its privileges jealously.[43] Given the extensive contacts of Drogheda merchants with the continent, it was natural that this port served as the hub linking the northern ecclesiastical province with catholic Europe. Thus the Franciscans, numerous in the north, used Drogheda for their regular contact with catholic centres abroad.[44]

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[38]. Thomas Turner to --, 30 June 1630, Wadding papers, p.428; Patrick Comerford to L. Wadding, from Waterford, 26 Aug 1630, ibid., p.404; order in council against mass-houses in Meath (20 Jan 1630) cited, J. Brady, A short history of the parishes of the diocese of Meath, no 6 (Navan, 1939), p.202.

[39]. Barnabas [Barnwall], Capuchin superior, to [Francis Nugent OFM Cap], from Dublin, 3 Apr 1631, scritture originali riferite nelle congregazioni generali, Propaganda Fide, Coll. Hib., 10, pp 36-7.

[40]. A. Clarke, The Old English in Ireland, 1625-42 (Dublin, 2000), p.73.

[41]. 'Travels of Sir William Brereton in Ireland, 1635', in C. Litton Falkiner, Illustrations of Irish history and topography (London, 1904), p.373.

[42]. Mary Ann Lyons, 'Maritime relations between Ireland and France, c.1480-c.1630', Ir.Econ.&Soc.Hist., 27, pp 1-24; A. Thomas, 'Drogheda, 1574', Louth Arch.Soc.Jn., 18 no 3, pp 179-86.

[43]. Drogheda was governed by a mayor, sheriffs, and 24 aldermen; the majority of the aldermen were catholic; to avoid attending church, when a recusant was elected mayor, he hired a substitute to discharge the role, 'Travels of Sir William Brereton in Ireland, 1635', in Falkiner, Illustrations, p.374.

[44]. Description of journey of two friars from Tyrone to take shipping at Drogheda, Sir Richard Greame to lord deputy, Apr 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.453.

The town's pivotal role for the friars was increasing from the refounding of a convent there about 1610. This was merely three years after the opening of St Anthony's, Louvain, suggesting a link between the two developments. With the opening of their Louvain college, the friars needed regular and reliable access between the northern church province, in which they were so strongly rooted, and their new establishment in the Spanish Netherlands. Thus in May 1614 it was in Drogheda that the newly ordained Corkman, Bernard Miagh, arrived, having just completed his studies in Louvain.[45] Similarly it was to Drogheda, together with the smaller port of Dundalk, that the cattle, collected for the friars on their missions through the north, were sent to be salted, prior to shipment as food for the Louvain convent.[46] Because of his family connections in County Louth, these two ports also featured in the itinerary of Fr Henry Meallan, one of the friars engaged in the 1613 Ulster mission.[47] Thus Drogheda served as a funnel through which friars returning from the continent were decanted throughout the north. Both as a port with extensive continental trading links, and as home to a thriving and well-off merchant community, largely catholic, Drogheda could offer resources, contacts, support and rest to the Franciscans as they travelled to and from Ulster and the Spanish Netherlands.

The Louth town also served as a base for the Old English ecclesiastics with responsibility for the whole northern province. David Rothe, appointed Primate Lombard's vicar in 1609, and Balthasar Delahoyd, diocesan vicar-general down to 1625, rarely, if ever, travelled further north than Drogheda.[48] Thus it was in the port town that the provincial synods of Armagh were held in 1614 and 1618. Similarly it was there in 1626 that bishops for three northern dioceses were consecrated.[49] Into the seventeenth century, Drogheda continued to serve as an ecclesiastical (as well as cultural) boundary within northern catholicism. In this respect, both for the Church of Ireland, and the Roman Church, there was continuity with the late medieval province of Armagh, for it was in or

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[45]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.34; Miagh's uncle was Robert Miagh, vicar-general of Cork, B. Jennings (ed.), Louvain Papers (Dublin, 1968), p.25; the young friar was presumably en route to his native Munster, for there is no mention of his ministering in the north.

[46]. Deposition of Teag Modder M'Glone, 21 Oct 1613, PRO SP63/232/21, 22 (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, pp 429-31); permission for St Anthony's college, Louvain, to import foodstuffs and textiles, for own use, from Ireland, and to send books there, 9 Sept 1617, B. Jennings (ed.), Louvain Papers, pp 58-9.

[47]. Deposition of Teag Modder M'Glone, 21 Oct 1613.

[48]. Wadding papers, p.158.

[49]. Wadding papers, pp 144, 248; suggestive of the clandestine nature of episcopal activity, it was noted that John Cullenan, bishop of Raphoe, ordained a priest at Drogheda, 'in an orchard', Archbishop Ussher's occasional jottings (undated), Anal. Hib., 2, pp 55-6.

around Drogheda that the state primate lived, as did his predecessor before the reformation.[50]

The material underpinning of the flowering of catholic life in Drogheda in the early seventeenth century was provided by a cohesive merchant oligarchy. These were organised in the town's corporation, and had strong familial links to diocesan clergy and the religious orders, with whom they shared the same continental schooling.[51] Drogheda had a chantry into the 1610s, and the revenues may still have been used to maintain one or more priests: there were several continentally-educated priests in the town in that decade, and the fact that no patron was listed for them makes some form of civic maintenance a probability.[52]

A centre for English emigre priests from the late 1590s[53], Drogheda was hosting a growing number of communities of diverse religious orders. Between c.1603 and 1641, at least seven religious communities were established in the town. By the beginning of the century, a group of two or three unmarried women, with simple religious vows, were living a form of common religious life. These were 'beate', or Franciscan tertiaries, living under the rule and special care of the Franciscans. Well-regarded and devout, they were drawn from the upper class of the area.[54] About 1610 or 1611 the Franciscans returned to live in community; through their Rosary confraternity, the Dominicans had regular contact in the town. Two Jesuits settled there in 1619, while the Cistercians opened a novitiate in Drogheda about 1623.[55] By 1633, the Capuchins had a house there.[56] A convent of Poor

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[50]. K. Simms, 'Frontiers in the Irish church - regional and cultural', in T. Barry et al (eds), Colony and frontier in medieval Ireland, (London, 1995), pp 177-200; Primate Hampton built a residence in Drogheda, 'Travels of Sir William Brereton in Ireland, 1635', Falkiner, Illustrations, p.374.

[51]. The education and ecclesiastical career of one Drogheda-born Jesuit, John Bathe (1612-49), are sketched in G. Rice, 'The Five Martyrs of Drogheda' [died 1649], Riocht na Midhe, 9 no 3, pp 102-27.

[52]. Surrender and regrant of all chantry and other lands, now enjoyed by mayor and town of Drogheda, king to lord deputy, 8 Aug 1611, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.93; priests in Drogheda, Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', p.11; chantries were not subject to the dissolution of the monasteries, acts of parliament to be propounded, [1612], Cal.S.P.Ire., 1611-4, p.289.

[53]. Transcript of will of John Boyar (or Bradley), will made 1604, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, sub anno 1604.

[54]. Wadding papers, p.35; Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.67; Mother Mary Brown, 'An account of the establishment of the Poor Clares in Ireland', [c.1650], manuscript in possession of Irish Poor Clares (NLI mic p3500), pp 8-9.

[55]. Hartry, Triumphalia Sanctae Crucis, p.283.

[56]. Nicholas Archbold, 'Evangelicall fruict of the seraphical Franciscan order', BL Harl Ms 3888, fol.125v.

Clare nuns was established, and a house of the Discalced Carmelites, by the late 1630s.[57] In addition, there were a number of diocesan clergy. The variety of religious life was a reflection of the wealth of the merchant oligarchy, and of surrounding elite families. Sons and daughters of these families were among the members of the religious orders in the town. Hence, in the early 1620s, the maintenance which Robert Bathe as a native of the town could garner was one of the arguments made by the Jesuit superior in favour of keeping Bathe in Drogheda.[58]

Patrician support for the religious may be illustrated in the case of the Franciscans. Merchants were leaving bequests to the friars at Multyfarnham, associated with burial in family plots at the convent.[59] The friars' return to Drogheda was doubtless facilitated by the patronage of prominent merchants. One of these was George Peppard, in whose family were several aldermen; he was a supporter of the Franciscans in the bitter dispute with the vicar-general in the early 1620s.[60] The mass and banquet on the feast of St Francis was one occasion on which their elite support was in evidence. The town's friars also enjoyed the patronage of the local nobility. In his will made in 1625, Matthew Plunkett, Lord Louth, left to the friars a red cloak he had acquired while in Spain, to be made into a cope, together with £100.[61]

The Franciscans had a medieval foundation in the town (by 1260), but had no fixed dwelling there since they were expelled in the early 1560s.[62] Occasionally individual men were sent to minister to the catholics, and from time to time the friars were the only priests active there; in 1607, during the most severe persecution, one friar was attacked. From time to time, a friar said mass in the oratory of the house where the Franciscan women

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[57]. The Poor Clare convents will be discussed below; houses of Discalced Carmelites in Drogheda and Ardee, County Louth, and Athboy, County Meath by late 1630s, J. Rushe, Carmel in Ireland: a narative of the Irish province of Teresian or Discalced Carmelites, 1625-1896 (Dublin-London-New York, 1903), pp 60-3.

[58]. Christopher Hollywood SJ to Jesuit general, 6 Mar 1624, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.204.

[59]. In 1608, Piers Nugent, Drogheda alderman, left bequests to the abbey of Multyfarnham, where he wished to be buried, '[Nugent papers]', Anal. Hib., 20, p.135.

[60]. The Peppard family's Drogheda interests in the late 1630s can be traced in a series of documents from 1637-1650, NLI D 16,172 et seq.; for George Peppard's wealth in 1641, see draft petition (c.1650) claiming losses amounting to more than £5000 in the years 1641-50, NLI D 16,181.

[61]. Lodge, Peerage (Dublin, 1789), vi, p.168.

[62]. B. Jennings (ed.), 'Brevis synopsis provinciae Hiberniae FF. minorum', Anal. Hib., 6, p.147.

tertiaries ('beate') lived.[63] This chapel, located at the edge of the town, was an important centre of Franciscan activity; when access was denied, about 1619, arising from the dispute with the vicar-general, the friars set about building a new chapel in a garden which had been given to them.[64] The Dominican confraternity, too, was well-established by the 1610s, and this group had their own spacious chapel; there were no resident Dominicans, and their confraternity was presumably directed by visiting priests. Thus the Franciscans returned to a town which by the early 1610s was already showing signs of a revival in organised religious life.

That the friars viewed the Drogheda initiative as part of a new focus, which started in the opening of their Louvain college (1607), was reflected in the allocation of some of their leading men to the revived foundation. In the 1610s, the Drogheda community usually numbered four. As a group they were exceptionally well-educated, with roots in the elite families of the region. It is striking that Donogh Mooney was the first guardian of the Drogheda convent 1610-15; this native of Meath diocese had served as first guardian of St Anthony's, Louvain, from 1607, and was subsequently minister provincial of the Irish Franciscans 1615-18, before returning as guardian at Drogheda in the troubled years 1618-23.[65] Christopher Plunkett and Robert Geoghegan both had studied at the Irish college, Douai, before 1613, and subsequently joined the Franciscans. Plunkett, linked to the leading families of Counties Meath and Dublin, was son of Sir Christopher Plunkett, who served on the recusant delegation to England in 1613-4.[66] Francis Haelan, an aged priest of a more traditional background, had served in the town for many years, prior to the re-establishment of the convent.[67]

In the 1610s, the friars' main contribution was in preaching, both in their own chapel and in other oratories, and in the surrounding countryside. In early seventeenth century towns, the mass-house was the usual venue of catholic worship. The Franciscan oratory was one of several mass-houses in Drogheda in those years. Located in a secular house, it

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[63]. R. Walsh (ed.), 'Persecution of Catholics in Drogheda in 1606, 1607 and 1611', Archiv. Hib., 6, pp 64-8.

[64]. Wadding papers, pp 35, 51.

[65]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brevis synopsis', p.172.

[66]. Cal. Carew Mss, 1603-24, pp 285-6; Wadding papers, p.38; on this family's catholicism, see B. Mac Cuarta (ed.), 'Old English catholicism in Chester documents, 1609-19', Archiv. Hib., 57, pp 1-5; Robert Geoghegan, Franciscan vicar in Drogheda in the early 1620s, was probably the Meath recollect who had studied at the Irish college, Bordeaux, before 1619, Wadding papers, p.53, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 318-22.

[67]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', pp 33-4; (same), 'Brevis synopsis', p.181.

had a fixed altar, a pulpit for preaching, seats for confession, and a separate section behind the altar reserved for the friars, where they used to say the divine office. Residence and oratory were adjacent, and, in case of raids, there were passages connecting to the neighbouring houses. The oratory was very popular for mass and confessions. There was regular preaching on feast-days. From their urban base, on feastdays some of the friars used to go out and preach in the countryside, before returning in the afternoon to preach in their oratory. According to the Franciscan guardian, Donogh Mooney, the establishment of the Franciscan mass-house, offering regular services, and the friars' influence on the secular clergy, led to a flowering of sacramental practice among the laity. This may have been the case. The earlier severe pressure on catholicism precluded an ordered pastoral approach; priests, largely diocesan clergy, used to celebrate mass in different places and at irregular times, thus limiting participation by the laity, and there was little preaching.[68] However, even in the 1610s the friars were not the only continentally-trained priests ministering in the town; Patrick Barnwall, educated at Douai and Paris, was working there as a diocesan priest, before his entry into the Cistercians, c.1620.[69]

A particular ministry among the urban elite was the lay confraternity. These groups were associated with the different religious orders. Members were inscribed, and committed themselves to attending a meeting, usually once a month, and to receiving the sacraments at regular intervals. The Franciscans re-established the Confraternity of the Cord, which met in the oratory of the friars, 'to be enriched by the customary indulgences', for members gained particular spiritual benefits.[70] Until the founding of the Jesuit sodality in 1619 only the Dominicans and the Franciscans had confraternities in the town. The Dominican confraternity was well established over many years, and had a considerable membership. Their Rosary confraternity had their own oratory, spacious enough to accomodate an exceptionally large congregation and a place deemed suited to solemn liturgy. By about 1620, thanks to the emergence of a more tolerant climate, the Franciscans felt confident enough to start building a new oratory in the garden of a house which they had acquired.[71] Relations with the Dominicans were such that they were able to use the Rosary confraternity chapel for services which attracted larger congregations. Donatus

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[68]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', pp 32-3.

[69]. Hartry, Triumphalia Sanctae crucis, p.283.

[70]. Wadding papers, pp 48 (quote), 51.

[71]. Wadding papers, p.54; by the 1640s the Franciscan chapel in Drogheda was adorned with statues and ornaments, and had several chalices, Peter Taafe OFM to Lord Taafe, 20 Apr 1647, J. Leslie, 'Records of County Louth', Louth Arch. Soc. Jn., 7 no 2, p.277.

Mooney, the Franciscan guardian, had been invited to preach in the Rosary confraternity oratory in Advent and Lent 1622-3.[72]

The patronal feast of the mendicant orders was viewed with suspicion by catholic reformers; the laity, these contended, were burdened with supplying food and drink; they particularly condemned the presence of women and heretics at these events, presumably because of the violation of religious clausura which this entailed.[73] In place of such banquets, reformers recommended the suitable reception of the sacraments of confession and communion.[74] However, the patronal feast was deeply embedded in popular religious culture. People of all classes travelled long distances to attend. The event comprised mass, often in the open, because of the crowds, followed by a sermon from a renowned preacher.[75] Thereafter a banquet ensued. At Multyfarnham, before the destruction of the convent in 1601, it was customary for the surrounding notables to deliver food to the convent several days beforehand;[76] this practice may have continued afterwards. In Ulster, it happened that up to forty small sheep were slaughered to feed the attendance at the Franciscan patronal feast.[77] The Franciscans resumed this custom on their return to Drogheda. On the feast of St Francis in 1622, the friars celebrated vespers and mass in the chapel of the Dominican Rosary Confraternity, solemn liturgies with singing and, exceptionally, instrumental music; Fr Christopher Plunkett OFM preached. As was customary, these ceremonies drew a large crowd of nobility and others who came from many miles, indicating widespread devotion to St Francis at both elite and popular levels.[78] An integral part of these festivities were the large banquets customary among the Franciscans, held also in the Drogheda convent, attended by men and women from among

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[72]. Wadding papers, pp 51, 53.

[73]. In the reformers' eyes, the laity were burdened with supplying cows, sheep, calves, lambs, goats, deer and birds, together with a variety of wines and liquors, 1618 Drogheda synod, in P. Moran, Catholic archbishops, p.274; condemnation of patronal banquets, acta, Propaganda Fide, 11 July 1633, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.72; ibid., 16 Dec 1633, p.82; ibid., 11 Oct 1634, p.89; clausura refers to the practice of separating a part of a religious house to the exclusion of those of the opposite sex to the community, and sometimes refers also to the exclusion of laypeople.

[74]. 1618 Drogheda synod, in Moran, Catholic archbishops, p.274.

[75]. Description of patronal feast at Gallen, King's County, 1622, [John Ankers] to bishop of Meath, 30 Aug 1622, NLI Ms 18,651.

[76]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.94.

[77]. Wadding papers, p.41.

[78]. Wadding papers, p.51; similarly, on St Francis's day 1626, a large crowd (allegedly up to 2000 people) gathered at the Multyfarnham convent, including most of the gentry of the surrounding area, advertisements received, 14 Oct 1626, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, pp 163-4.

the friends, relations and benefactors of the friars. Old English critics of the friars pointed to these gatherings as evidence of decadence.[79]

Another indication of the more settled state of catholicism was the emergence of designated houses of studies among the Franciscan convents. From 1619 onwards, a Franciscan educational apostolate was emerging in north Leinster, centred chiefly in Drogheda. Already in the early 1610s, the intellectual calibre of those assigned to the Drogheda house indicated that the training of priests would feature in the friars' apostolate. The renowned Dr Robert Chamberlain, adviser to Hugh O'Neill, and native of County Louth, was very keen that the Drogheda friars be supplied with books; he left his library to the Drogheda convent, and asked that monies owed him be used for books for the same house.[80] The demand for catholic education in the mercantile towns of Dundalk and Drogheda was reflected in the erection of a 'studia humaniora' (or grammar-school) attached to the convents in those towns in the mid-1620s; indeed, in Dundalk the Franciscans began teaching boys as soon as their convent was opened. In Drogheda, philosophy was taught to young laymen; philosophy was also taught in Multyfarnham.[81] The friars in the port towns were probably merely formalising existing arrangements to impart a grammar-school education to local youths, some of whom may have proceeded to study for the priesthood. In this, they were building on a tradition of catholic education in Drogheda reaching back at least to the 1580s.[82] Further, in Drogheda the friars were engaged in providing the rudimentary training deemed adequate for candidates for priestly ordination. The candidates were drawn from several dioceses, presumably with the active co-operation of the respective vicars-general.[83] It was from establishments such as these, presumably, that the more gifted young priests proceeded to further their studies on the continent. What the friars could offer, with their own continental formation, was an improvement on the apprenticeship system customary among the diocesan clergy. Thus the training of local clergy was one of the priorities of the Drogheda convent in the 1620s and 1630s.

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[79]. Wadding papers, pp 40, 639.

[80]. Will of R. Chamberlain on entering the Franciscans, Feb 1612, in F. O Briain, 'Robert Chamberlain OFM', I.E.R., 5th ser., 40, pp 264-80; text in original Irish, in C. O Lochlainn, Tobar fiorghlan Gaedhilge (Dublin, 1939), p.97.

[81]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brevis synopsis', p.163; in 1629, Peter Darsye and Francis Donaill were appointed as lecturers in philosophy at Drogheda, Giblin (ed.), Liber Lovaniensis, pp 4-7.

[82]. Thomas Mulclohy (b.1570) studied grammar with John Cavelo, Walter Condon, and Richard Brown, Drogheda schoolmasters, Archiv. Hib., 2, p.10.

[83]. Wadding papers, p.66.

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Nowhere were the tensions within northern catholicism more glaring than in the Drogheda dispute of the early 1620s. This occurred between the Franciscans on the one hand, and the vicar-general, guided by the two Jesuits who had come to the town. The dispute was exceptional only in degree; in many places, tensions were arising between friars and diocesan authorities from about 1610.[84] Nevertheless, the Drogheda affair must be reckoned as one of the most virulent. The attempt by the Jesuits to establish the lay sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary led to the emergence of two camps within the town's catholic community. For most of the 1610s, within the Dublin residence or circuit of the Jesuits, it was customary for one or two fathers to spend periods of time every year in Drogheda. From there a yearly excursion of about six weeks was made to the north. By 1619, with the onset of a more favourable political climate, the fathers of the Irish mission were moving towards establishing their sodality in the towns where they were active.[85]

In 1619, Robert Bathe and James Everard arrived in Drogheda. Both natives of the town, and well-connected to the prominent families of the area, they were probably related to the vicar-general, Balthasar Delahoyd; they were based in the prelate's house, using his chapel for mass and preaching.[86] By 1619, Delahoyd, together with his nephew, Christopher Delahoyd, were the leading diocesan clerics in Drogheda; Balthasar had a papal grant of St Peter's parish, while Christopher had a similar grant of the parish of Blessed Virgin Mary.[87] Balthasar quickly came under their influence, and followed their direction closely, particularly in matters coming under his remit as vicar-general, a fact recognised by friend and foe alike.[88] One of the fathers' first initiatives was to persuade

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[84]. In Cashel province, two Franciscans were administering the sacrament of confirmation, against the express wishes of the archbishop, c.1610, Edmond O'Mullarkey OFM to Cardinal Barberini, 18 Mar 1613, BAV, Barberini Latini Ms 8618, fol.73; interdict of James Miagh, Cork vicar-general, against church of Franciscans, 1 Aug 1618, Wadding papers, pp 10-11.

[85]. B.V.M. Sodality founded in Kilkenny, Jesuit annual letter 1619, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.173; the sodality at Drogheda was officially recognised or aggregated to the parent body at Rome, 19 Nov 1621, J. MacErlean, The Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Ireland: A short history (Dublin, 1928), p.11.

[86]. F. Finegan, 'A biographical dictionary of Irish Jesuits (1598-1773)', typescript, IJA, sub Bathe and Everard; Wadding papers, p.58.

[87]. Grants, Nov-Dec 1619, ASV, Dataria apostolica, Per Obitum, vol 24 (1619), ff 15v, 16r; in the same grant, Christopher also acquired the priory of St John of Jerusalem in Dundalk; these papal grants were purely titular, given the secularisation of religious houses, and the use of the parish churches by the state church.

[88]. Wadding papers, p.47; Thomas Dease, bishop of Meath, to Jesuit general, 23 Nov 1623, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.196.

Delahoyd to establish the Jesuit sodality, based in his own oratory. They were able to engage two young diocesan priests as co-workers in running the sodality, namely, Christopher Delahoyd, the vicar-general's nephew, and Patrick Barnwall.[89] The Jesuits, plus these young clerics, together with the willing adherents of the new sodality, formed the nucleus of the vicar-general's faction. Thus an exclusively Anglo-Irish clerical faction emerged, under the nominal leadership of the vicar-general, but in reality controlled by the Jesuit Robert Bathe.[90]

The sodality's early success aroused concern among other religious orders and clergy in the town. The mendicants resented that the Jesuits were taking members from existing lay groups. The launch of the new sodality was preceded by an intensive canvass; some felt pressurised to join, and these left soon after, while others joined willingly. The Jesuits were targeting the more influential section of local society, who had only recently been canvassed by the Franciscans for their Confraternity of the Cord; the Dominicans had the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary; both lay groups were only recently beginning to flourish again, after a period of abeyance due to religious persecution.[91]

However, the new group's rule that members were to confess only to the sodality's priests was the major cause of clerical resentment. The Franciscans were very sensitive to attempts at placing limits on hearing confessions. Earlier in their history, efforts to exclude them by limiting the sacrament of reconciliation to the parochial clergy led the friars to acquire a series of privileges from the Holy See. Further requirements of the Jesuit sodality were held to infringe on the pastoral role of the seculars, for on feastdays the members were to attend mass in the sodality chapel; the monthly meeting coincided with a similar gathering of the Franciscan confraternity, forcing people to choose. Clearly the Jesuit sodality represented competition with the recently restored confraternities of the older orders. In these years of severe economic crisis, rivalry over confraternity membership entailed competiton for the financial, as well as spiritual, loyalty of the laity.

Reflecting the recent relaxation of pressure on catholic activities, and the burgeoning of organized catholicism, the Franciscans were engaged in building a new oratory which

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[89]. Christopher Delahyde (or Delahoyd) was one of the northern students at Douai c.1613, TCD Ms 567, fol.40v; at Douai before 1622, Archiv. Hib., 14, p.77; Patrick Barnwall (d.1644) was probably the secular priest of this name who was ministering in Drogheda at this time, and who subsequently became a Cistercian, and titular abbot of Mellifont, Hartry, Triumphalia Sanctae Crucis, pp 107, 283-5.

[90]. Wadding papers, p.34.

[91]. The fullest extant records of the Drogheda dispute comprise a series of Franciscan documents, Wadding papers, pp 29-58; this account is based largely on this source.

was opened in December 1622. This project heightened the friars' resentment at the threat to their fundraising which the arrival of the Jesuit sodality represented. Indeed rumours were circulating among the laity that the new sodality's restrictive practice touching confession was based on the greed of the Jesuits and their clerical associates. In this crisis, in which competition for resources within the catholic community was prominent, atavistic tensions between Gaelic and Anglo-Irish styles of catholicism surfaced. The vicar-general's party condemned the Franciscans for the hospitality they offered to family, friends, and benefactors, men and women, within their convent. The practice of hospitality was deeply rooted in Gaelic custom, and in Franciscan tradition[92]. However the admission of women to the convent on such occasions offended against newer, tridentine expectations of clerical decorum being promoted by the Old English clerics returning from the continent. In the matter of Franciscan banquets, cultural animosities between Gaelic and Anglo-Irish were being reinforced by the more exacting norms of clerical behaviour emanating from Trent. More explicitly, in his denunciation of the friars, Delahoyd linked them, together with their protector, James Plunkett, vicar-general of Meath, to the earl of Tyrone.[93] Thus the querulous disposition of Balthasar Delahoyd merely accentuated existing tensions between different strands of catholicism.[94] In the row between Jesuits and Franciscans in Drogheda, economic competition, and the contrast between a reformed catholicism and the survival of more traditional ways, overlaid deeper cultural, ethnic, and political tensions.

The dispute began when Donatus Mooney, the Franciscan guardian (or superior), questioned the validity of the Jesuit sodality's foundation, soon after its establishment in 1619-20.[95] There were apparent irregularities, for the sodality was constituted in the name of the vicar-general, though drawing on a privilege granted by Pope Gregory XIII (1572-85) to the Society of Jesus. Mooney and others conveyed their grievances to the vicar-general and the Jesuits via messengers, but to no avail. At Mooney's instigation, both parties agreed to choose an arbitrator; both agreed on the vice-primate, Bishop David

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[92]. On hospitality in late medieval Ireland, see K. Simms, 'Guesting and feasting in Gaelic Ireland', R.S.A.I. Jn., 108, pp 67-100.

[93]. He asserted that it was at the instigation of the friars, and through the patronage of Tyrone, that Plunkett was nominated bishop, B. Delahoyd to Propaganda, 28 May 1624, Wadding papers, pp 637-41; Plunkett's nomination as bishop was abortive.

[94]. The vicar-general was having rows with the Cistercians, the mendicants, some fellow-prelates, and some laity. 'I might send a whole bundle of complaints, instances, and aggravations, delivered unto me this last summer [1625] and the summer before [1624] against Mr Balthasar and his nephew Christopher', D. Rothe to Primate Lombard, 17 Sept 1625, Wadding papers, p.104.

[95]. Jesuit annual letter 1620, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.5; Wadding papers, pp 48-50.

Rothe of Ossory. Before Rothe, the Franciscan guardian argued that the right to found a sodality only applied to a Jesuit school, and the Jesuits had no school in Drogheda. Mooney asked to see the sodality's foundation documents, to check the provision whereby only the sodality priests were to be confessors to the members. Bathe, the Jesuit, refused, saying he was not permitted to show these.[96]

This stalemate persisted for up to nine months. In September 1621, the Drogheda guardian raised the issue at the Franciscan provincial chapter, who chose James Plunkett, vicar-apostolic of Meath, as ecclesiastical protector of the friars, with power to prosecute on their behalf. This choice was endorsed by the Dominicans. Twice Plunkett summoned the Drogheda-based vicar-general, together with the two Jesuits, to appear before him, but they persisted in contumacy for a year. Delahoyd alleged that it was unsafe for him to appear, for the designated place was near the dwelling of a justice of the peace, who had authority to imprison catholic clergy. Finally Plunkett excommunicated the trio.[97] The case was then brought to arbitration by both sides. As a result the sodality confession rules were relaxed in favour of the mendicants (but not other clergy).[98] Thus by about August 1622 it appeared that the quarrel had subsided.

Other groups soon became entangled in the dispute, and it took on the dimensions of an urban civil war. The couple of 'beate', or Franciscan women tertiaries, were living in the vicar-general's household, at least as the dispute with the friars erupted. In the tightly-knit patriciate of Drogheda, there were probably kinship links between the vicar-general and these ladies. Arising from such ties, the women were inevitably drawn into the growing conflict between Delahoyd and the friars. Taking advantage of the temporary absence of the guardian, and incited by the vicar-general and his faction, the women came into the friars' chapel and threw the wooden altar to the ground. This they attempted on another occasion, when Mooney, the guardian, physically restrained them, and so prevented them from reaching the altar.[99]

In the autumn and winter of 1622, stung by the concession wrung by the mendicants - permitting them to be confessors to Jesuit sodality members - the vicar-general's campaign

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[96]. Wadding papers, pp 48-50.

[97]. B. Delahoyd to Propaganda, 28 May 1624, Wadding papers, pp 637-41.

[98]. Bishop Dease to Jesuit general, 23 Nov 1623, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, pp 196-8.

[99]. 'Complaints of the Franciscans at Drogheda against Balthazar Delahoyd, vicar-general (1623)', Wadding papers, pp 29-34; the women accused the guardian of assault, Delahoyd to Propaganda, 28 May 1624, ibid., pp 637-41; 'Answer of the Franciscans at Drogheda to the charges of the vicar-general (1623)', ibid., pp 34-46.

against the Franciscans intensified. The Delahoyd faction was claiming that Christopher Plunkett OFM was professing protestantism in his sermon on the feast of St Francis (Oct 4). This claim won some credence among the laity, for the friars noted the ensuing scandal, and the harm caused to themselves; the damage warranted a refutation by theologians. On 6 October the guardian left Drogheda, summoned to a provincial congregation of his order. Therewith the vicar-general, accompanied by Robert Bathe SJ, visited the principal benefactors of the Franciscans, seeking to dissuade them from their continued patronage of the friars. According to George Peppard, a leading citizen and friend of the friars, Delahoyd and Bathe threatened an interdict on the house and oratory of the Franciscans, and to seize their new oratory, when it would be completed; further, they warned they would have the friars expelled from the town. Peppard immediately informed the deputy-guardian, Robert Geoghegan, who sent word to the Franciscan province meeting. The assembled friars decided to dispatch a group of four fathers with a message for the prelate, offering to forgive what had happened in the past, but calling on Delahoyd to desist from disturbing the friars henceforth; according to the friars, the delegation met with abuse and empty words.[100]

Worse was to follow. On 26 October 1622, the vicar-general sent his nephew, the curate, at night to wreck the oratory of the Dominican confraternity (also used by the Franciscans). Christopher Delahoyd destroyed the altar, taking away the ornaments, and breaking up the pulpit, which had been erected by the laity for use in the preaching customary in Advent and Lent. On 19 December the prelate secretly sent one of the Jesuits to the friars' house, to provoke them to a quarrel; this man verbally attacked the guardian Donatus Mooney in the friars' common room.[101]

About Christmas 1622, the new Franciscan oratory or chapel, erected in the garden attached to the friars' house, was nearing completion. It contained a high altar, and presumably one or more smaller altars. The vicar-general was keen to quash this new focus of Franciscan pastoral activity. On 23 December, Delahoyd wrote to the guardian, prohibiting the saying of mass in the newly-completed oratory, citing the tridentine decree against the celebration of mass in unconsecrated places. The guardian responded by sending three leading citizens, friends of the friars, to Delahoyd, to assert that Trent had not been received in Ireland, that consecrated churches had been suppressed or occupied as a result of the reformation, and that the Franciscans had faculties to celebrate mass on portable altars and in unconsecrated places. However, on the Sunday after Christmas, the

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[100]. Wadding papers, pp 52-3.

[101]. Wadding papers, p.53.

prelate sent a kinsman to the Franciscan oratory with an interdict against saying or attending mass there. This interdict was proclaimed before a large congregation, and many of the Franciscans, gathered for mass; it was proclaimed with strong invective against the guardian, which caused shame among the secular clergy. The guardian insisted that he was going to celebrate mass there.[102]

At first the interdict was widely ignored, for people continued to attend the friars' oratory. Therefore Delahoyd sent his two clerical minions, Christopher Delahoyd and Patrick Barnwall, from house to house through the town. These insisted that it was not licit to resort to the friars, and that the people owed blind obedience to the ordinary (Balthasar Delahoyd) under pain of mortal sin. This intervention was effective, for in its wake the majority complied with the interdict, and stopped frequenting the Franciscans. However, some of the leading citizens remained loyal to the friars; these were in all probability the twelve principal townsmen excommunicated by Delahoyd for persisting in frequenting the Franciscan oratory.[103]

Relations between the two factions were deteriorating rapidly. The Jesuits' followers threatened the guardian with imprisonment in the public jail, under the custody of the heretics, by order of the vicar-general.[104] By this stage, the affair was causing scandal throughout the whole kingdom.[105] The Franciscans and Plunkett, the Meath vicar-apostolic, sent messengers to the other northern dioceses, proclaiming the excommunication of Balthasar Delahoyd. In three sermons in one day, Donatus Mooney accused one of the Jesuits of perjury. Each party procured the excommunication of the other; Jesuits and Franciscans were castigating each other in sermons at mass and funerals. These activities were having a destabilizing effect on the catholic community in varying degrees across the northern province. They caused scandal to catholics, they brought the Catholic church into disrepute among the protestants; ecclesiastical authority was undermined among both laity and lower clergy.[106]

Delahoyd, exercising his authority over the northern ecclesiastical province, convoked an assembly of the clergy of Armagh diocese, together with the vicars-general of the

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[102]. Wadding papers, pp 53-4.

[103]. Wadding papers, pp 55-6.

[104]. Wadding papers, p.58.

[105]. Bishop Dease to Jesuit general, 23 Nov 1623, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, pp 196-8.

[106]. B. Delahoyd to Propaganda, 28 May 1624, Wadding papers, pp 637-41; P. Harris, The Excommunication (n.p., 1632), p.26.

suffragan sees. This took place 20-26 January 1623, presumably in Drogheda. Guided by the Jesuits, as was habitual, Delahoyd sought to get an endorsement of his interdict against the Franciscan oratory. According to a Franciscan account, the Jesuits present - Bathe and Everard - urged blind obedience to the metropolitan vicar. A group representing twelve leading citizens presented their appeal against excommunication (for attending the friars' oratory) which they had made to the Holy See.[107]

The only two theologians among the suffragans, Patrick Hanratty, of Down and Connor, and Patrick Matthews, of Dromore, refused to accept that the Armagh vicar-general had any claim on their obedience in this issue. They held that the interdict against the Franciscan oratory was decreed without their consultation, and prompted not by law but by revenge, and at the behest of the two fathers of the Society. After five days of altercation, Delahoyd and his Jesuit advisers had failed to get the interdict endorsed. Once again prompted by the Jesuits, Balthasar initiated a process against the two recalcitrant suffragans, who in turn appealed to the Holy See; he suspended them, and the Dromore vicar-general was exiled to Derry diocese. Both the Franciscans, and the dissenting suffragans, blamed these disturbances and scandals, which troubled the Armagh province in the early 1620s, on the nefarious influence of the two Jesuits on Balthasar Delahoyd.[108]

Resentment against the vicar-general was not confined to the Franciscans. The Dominican provincial, Ross MacGeoghegan, instigated Delahoyd's excommunication by James Plunkett, vicar-general of Meath, who had been appointed protector of the mendicants. Delahoyd then sought to damage the Drogheda Franciscans at Rome. A disaffected Franciscan, a native of the town, no longer living in community, was staying with Delahoyd more or less as a domestic. The prelate sent this man to Rome to speak ill of the Drogheda friars; both of these, together with another religious (in all probability, one of the Jesuits), tried to have the Franciscans expelled from the town.

The vicar-general's faction strove to weaken and sow division among the friars, so that they might leave altogether. Thus they tried to have the Italian Recollect branch of the order introduced. Robert Bathe, and others, worked on the disaffected Franciscan to this end. Already there were two friars, Fr Michael Miles, and Fr Joseph Everard, who were promoting the establishment of a convent of reformed Franciscans in Drogheda. Animated by the vicar-general, on 27 May 1623 a small group of citizens wrote to Propaganda, in the name of the town, asking that other friars be sent to help these two in setting up a reformed

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[107]. Wadding papers, p.56.

[108]. Wadding papers, pp 36, 56-7; by Mar 1623 Patrick Matthews was vicar-general in Derry diocese, T. Moody and J. Simms (eds), The Bishopric of Derry (Dublin, 1968), i, pp 143-4.

Franciscan community in Drogheda; they mentioned the hopes for the re-establishment of religious life in Ireland in the wake of the proposed Spanish match.[109]

Jesuit influence on the Delahoyd faction continued unabated. Some time after January 1623, the vicar-general became seriously ill, with little prospect of recovery. Bathe and Everard then sought to promote his nephew, the young priest Christopher Delahoyd, who was believed to be totally under the influence of the two fathers, and governed the sodality under their direction. These persuaded Delahoyd to appoint Christopher as his substitute in the office of vicar-general. Thus Christopher became vicar-general of Armagh, and pastor of St Peter's church, Drogheda, in succession to his uncle; by apostolic concession he also became pastor of St Mary's, likewise in Drogheda. The Franciscans alleged that Bathe was also involved in lobbying Rome for other senior diocesan appointments within the Armagh province. In line with Balthasar's efforts to penalise the diocesan vicars who refused to acquiesce in his campaign against the Franciscans, Bathe tried to have a youth in studies appointed as vicar of Dromore. He had James Plunkett, who was involved in arbitrating the Drogheda dispute, replaced as vicar-general of Meath by two clerics, the aforementioned Christopher Delahoyd, together with Christopher Cusack, the returned college founder, by then regarded as aged and unsuitable. Further, Bathe attempted to have Christopher Delahoyd instituted as vicar of Clogher diocese.[110]

The Drogheda dispute had become a cause celebre, widely known and discussed, which in the end had escalated into an affair touching ecclesiastics across the northern province. Jesuit involvement was becoming an embarassment to the Society of Jesus. The Jesuit authorities at Rome intervened. By the end of 1623, in the face of local Jesuit objections, the Society's general had ordered Robert Bathe, the leading Jesuit in the town, and their main protagonist in the dispute, to leave Drogheda.[111] By April 1624, the Franciscan Donogh Mooney had died, and by the following year, Balthasar Delahoyd was dead; thus the dispute drew to a close.[112]

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[109]. Wadding papers, pp 33, 55; petition of Drogheda citizens to Propaganda, 27 May 1623, Annales Minorum, 26 (Quarrachi, 1933), pp 120-2.

[110]. Wadding papers, pp 57-8.

[111]. C. Hollywood to Jesuit general, 6 Mar 1624; J. Everard to same, 20 Apr 1624, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, pp 204, 207-9.

[112]. J. Everard to Jesuit general, 20 Apr 1624, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, pp 207-9.

In the early seventeenth century as a whole, across north Leinster, traditionalist clergy prevailed; by contrast, as noted in chapter six, the distribution of tridentine parochial clergy was linked to noble or elite patronage. In Meath diocese, in the 1620s and 1630s, the proportion of clergy who were continentally trained was growing. This was due to the vigorous leadership of Thomas Dease (bishop from 1621 until his death in 1652)[113], and to the increasing numbers of students graduating from the continental seminaries.[114] By the end of the 1620s, Meath was among the most flourishing catholic dioceses in Ireland. The absence of protestants (by and large) ensured a secure and peaceful environment for the exercise of catholicism. There was an adequate supply of diocesan clergy who approached tridentine criteria, and a solid network of parishes.[115] In addition, by 1641 no less than seven religious orders were active in the diocese.[116]

The wealth and stability of catholicism in the Old English areas in these decades were reflected in the career of the diocesan priest James Hussey (d.1636). Hussey, with roots in north County Dublin, was typical of many tridentine clergy working among the Anglo-Irish in the early seventeenth century. He was part of a wide kinship network, embracing landed gentry families across north Leinster.[117] This extended family provided the framework of his priestly ministry. These priests moved from patron to patron. By 1622, Hussey was one of two clerics serving under the patronage of viscount Netterville.[118] At the end of his life, he was resident in Smarmore castle, County Louth, the ancestral home of Sir William Taafe. Given the priest's family background, and his reputation for learning,

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[113]. On Bishop Dease's episcopate down to 1641, see A. Cogan, The diocese of Meath Ancient and Modern, ii (Dublin, 1867), pp 22-7; J. Lynch, De praesulibus Hiberniae, ed. J. O'Doherty (Dublin, 1944), i, pp 167-71; on the cultural and intellectual world of an Irish bishop at this time, see D. Cregan, 'The social and cultural background of a counter-reformation episcopate, 1618-60', in A. Cosgrove and D. McCartney (eds), Studies in Irish history presented to R. Dudley Edwards (Dublin, 1979), pp 85-117.

[114]. By the late 1630s, about two or three priests were arriving daily at the Spanish chapel in London, travelling between Ireland, and France and Flanders, Theodorus de Pietate OP to F. Ingoli, from London, 10 Dec 1639, Propaganda Fide, Coll. Hib., 12, p.41.

[115]. Report of Bishop John Roche, 1629, P. Corish (ed.), 'Two reports on the Catholic Church in Ireland in the early seventeenth century', Archiv. Hib., 22, p.154.

[116]. Capuchins, Cistercians, Discalced Carmelites, Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits, and Poor Clares.

[117]. Hussey's milieu is explored in L. Murray, 'The will of James Hussey of Smarmore, County Louth, "priest", (1635)', Louth Arch. Soc.Jn., 8 no 4, pp 303-21; gentry catholicism typical of the Anglo-Irish areas generally is adumbrated in M. Ronan (ed.), 'Archbishop Bulkeley's visitation of Dublin, 1630', Archiv. Hib., 8, pp 56-98.

[118]. Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', p.10; similarly, in 1635 the countess of Westmeath was sending the ordination certificate of Neil Feranan to viscount Dunluce in London, HMC Report 12, Appendix 2, p.80.

a continental education was probable. It was part of the ministry of priests, especially those trained in theology, to defend catholicism against representatives of the state church; Hussey was noted as 'a prime controversist'. The support afforded by gentry patrons allowed these men the leisure to pursue their theological interests. Thus Hussey was 'a great peruser of books of this quality [controversial theology]', and even did some writing in this area.[119]

An idea of clerical wealth at this social level may be gained from the fact that the value of Hussey's legacies totalled just over £200. In addition, the artefacts mentioned in his will convey an impression of the material culture of catholicism in this milieu: two sets of vestments, a chalice and missal, an agnus dei enamelled in gold, a crystal reliquary, a silver basin and cruets, a picture of St Margaret, probably in a gilt frame. In addition, reflecting his interest in theology, the priest had some books of his own, and some originally belonging to the Franciscans.[120] By contrast, catholic clergy not enjoying elite patronage were compelled to provide an income for themselves, supplementing fees for pastoral services with other activities, such as farming.[121]

At all levels of clerical life, appointments secured at Rome caused strife with existing incumbents, leading to rows and scandal in the locality. Fergal MacEgan (or MacKegan) had already been a prominent cleric in Meath diocese when in 1615 he was appointed vicar-general of Clonmacnoise, and he was recognised as such by a provincial synod of Armagh. However, Terence Coghlan, a priest of the diocese, and doctor of law, obtained a papal grant of the position, annulling all other appointments. MacEgan contested the appointment, holding that the clause in Coghlan's brief - 'pastoris solatio destituta' - was not true. The dispute was raging between the two since the early 1620s.[122]

Older traditions of clerical laxity survived. As noted in discussing trends in Ulster (chapter four), down to 1641, diocesan ordinaries were resentful that unsuitable candidates, including many sons of priests, were being ordained. This was happening by recourse to Roman dispensations, thus bypassing the need for dimissorial letters from the ordinary.

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[119]. Nicholas Archbold, 'Evangelicall fruict of the Seraphicall Franciscan Order, 1628', BL Harl Ms 3888, fol.9v.

[120]. L. Murray, 'The will of James Hussey of Smarmore, County Louth, "priest", (1635)'.

[121]. The will of James Mellaghlin, priest of Killucken, County Meath, is suggestive of the farming interests of diocesan clergy in that county in the 1630s, for cattle featured prominently, will undated, but proved 7 Feb 1659, G. Rice, 'Extracts from Meath priests' wills, 1658-1782', Riocht na Midhe, 4 no 1, p.68; Meallaghlin was vicar of Killucken by 1631, Wadding papers, p.570.

[122]. Wadding papers, pp 570, 597-9; Archbishop Hugh O'Reilly to a cardinal, 4 Sept 1631, scritture riferite nelle congregazioni generali, Propaganda Fide, Coll. Hib., 10, p.16.

This trend added to clerical indiscipline, and to the low regard in which clergy were held by catholic and protestant alike. Under the strict regime of Bishop Dease in Meath diocese, who had a plentiful supply of continentally-trained clergy, these priests were less prevalent.[123] Survivalism was more common in the western, gaelic parts of the region. Thus in 1632 in Ardagh diocese, a papal dispensation for priestly ordination was granted to a layman who was a bigamist.[124] The increasingly numerous catholic clergy were also growing in confidence. The diocesan vicars-general felt strong enough to excommunicate those of their flock who participated in the ecclesiastical courts of the state church, especially those involved in matrimonial cases.[125]

Mass-houses were appearing in the first decade of the seventeenth century, starting in Drogheda and Dundalk, and their use was spreading to the other smaller towns.[126] By the late 1620s these edifices were to be found in the main towns in Meath.[127] In the countryside, too, as well as mass celebrated by the family chaplain in the gentry or noble household, to which locals were admitted, by the late 1620s mass-houses were being opened. The emergence of the mass-house represented a further break with the parish church, and another step in the consolidation of a distinct, catholic identity. While in towns these were solid buildings, many of those in rural areas were more flimsy structures, provisional shelters, presumably merely offering some protection from the elements to the priest, the altar, and a fraction of the congregation. These were easily erected and just as easily demolished. They could be levelled at the whim of the landlord or the agents, and

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[123]. However, in 1630, in a case at the Drogheda consistory court, Thomasina Blackney was accused of fornication with Sir Charles Tagon (or Fagon), priest, Marsh's Library, Ms Z4.2.1, no 18; Patrick Clery, a priest who had served in several Meath parishes in the mid-1630s, was accused of adultery with a woman servant, c.1660, Marsh's Library, Ms Z4.2.17, ff 30-32.

[124]. R. Dodd (ed.), 'Vatican archives: Instrumenta miscellanea: documents of Irish interest [1260-1805]', Archiv. Hib., 19, p.139.

[125]. William Bedell to Archbishop Laud, 1 Apr 1630, in Mant, History of the Church of Ireland, i, pp 435-7; as an example of a matrimonial case taken before an ecclesiastical court, where the parties were probably papist, see Thomasina Blackney vs Patrick Russell, consistory court, Drogheda, 1630, Marsh's Library, Ms Z4.2.1, no 18; state bishops resented the growing assertiveness of catholic ecclesiastics in the realm of marriage: '... if it be lawful for popish vicars to dispense and divorce at pleasure, and void new marriages upon pretext they were not solemnised by the parish priest according to the Trent Reformation ...', bishops' answers to grievances [1630], W. Prynne, Hidden workes of darknes, p.104.

[126]. The venue where a Jesuit preached in Dundalk in 1610 may have been a mass-house, J. Everard SJ to superior, [1610], I.E.R., 10, pp 462-3; mass-house in Trim, by 1622, Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', p.9.

[127]. Trim, Athboy, Kells and Navan,, order in council against houses of popish clergy in Meath diocese, 20 Jan 1630, cited in J. Brady, A short history of the parishes of the diocese of Meath, no 6 (Navan, 1939), p.202.

were thus subject to confessional change in the landlord's family. By 1634, a mass-house had been erected on the lands of the earl of Kildare in Eglish, west King's County, an area which had been subject to plantation in 1620; the agent, Robert Smith, knowing the protestantism of the young earl, in contrast to the catholicism of the family hitherto, had the structure demolished, creating fear in the local catholic population.[128] Similar shelters were also being erected in south Ulster at this time.

By the late 1620s these buildings had been established in parishes across north Leinster, and it would appear that they survived down to 1641. The emergence of the rural mass-house marked a further stage in the consolidation of catholicism in the 1620s and 1630s. It represented a shift from having mass in the open air, in a secluded venue, to a more stable, if still provisional setting, in line with the end of active persecution. The catholic infrastructure in the dioceses of Ardagh and Kilmore by 1630 was broadly typical of conditions across north Leinster. A network of catholic parishes existed, each with a pastor, and sometimes one or two other priests, with congregations who gathered in one or more mass-houses spread across the parish. In areas of sparse British settlement, mass continued to be celebrated in some churches, though most of these were still ruined.[129]

Tensions between Gaelic Irish (chiefly Ulster Irish) and Old English were a significant feature of catholic life in the early seventeenth century. The ethnic conflict within the continental colleges was an extension of the animosities which existed in Ireland, especially within the northern province. In 1607, the Ulster Irish in the Low Countries complained about the Anglo-Irish preponderance in the colleges. Strife in the Douai college became so severe that in 1614 a proposal was made to divide the college between the Anglo-Irish and the Old Irish.[130] The passage of the bill of attainder against the northern earls in the Irish parliament of 1613-5 was another cause for resentment.[131]

The vacancy in the archbishopric of Armagh in 1625-6 served as a catalyst of resentments between Ulster Irish and Anglo-Irish.[132] The issue of political loyalties in the

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[128]. Robert Smith to earl of Kildare, 18 June 1634, PRONI, Kildare Mss, Letterbook, pp 157-8.

[129]. Bishop Bedell to Archbishop Laud, 1 Apr 1630, in Mant, History of the Church of Ireland, i, pp 435-7.

[130]. Developments in the colleges are summarised in F. Martin, Friar Nugent, pp 165-6.

[131]. From Valladolid, Florence Conry OFM, archbishop of Tuam wrote a letter condemning the catholic MPs involved, Mar 1615, in P. O'Sullivan Beare, Historiae Catholicae Iberniae Compendium [Lisbon, 1621], ed. M. Kelly (Dublin, 1850), pp 329-31.

[132]. Correspondence on the Armagh vacancy, 1625-8, Wadding papers, pp 120-229; H. Kearney, 'Ecclesiastical politics and the counter-reformation in Ireland, 1618-1648', Jn. Ecc. Hist., 2, pp 202-12.

1590s was being recapitulated in the mid-1620s. Thus Old English spokesmen condemned the Old Irish clerical faction in Ulster, mentioning their support from Tyrone and Tyrconnell on the continent.[133] The enduring alliance between Ulster catholicism and the exiled lordly families of O'Neill and O'Donnell was evident. The few submissions emanating from within Ulster suggest that clerical opinion there concurred with that of the continental exiles. Ulster spokesmen insisted that the primate chosen be a native of the province. The Ulstermen resented the fact that Lombard, archbishop from 1602-25, was from Waterford, a man who never set foot in Ulster, for he remained in exile in Rome for the duration of his episcopate. More generally, the northerners gave vent to their anger at the Anglo-Irish for refusing to join O'Neill in the struggle against the crown in the Nine Years War, a struggle which the Ulstermen were portraying as a catholic crusade.[134] Such resentments were still alive in the mid-1620s, and contributed to the internal stresses of northern catholicism.

A particular expression of this tension occurred in the early years of the episcopate of Thomas Dease, bishop of Meath 1621-52. Unlike some clergy from the heart of the Pale, culturally Dease was at home in the Gaelic world. He was brought up in the marcher area of Westmeath, on the border between the Anglo-Irish area and gaelic Ulster; indeed the bishop composed verse in Irish.[135] Dease returned to his native Meath as bishop in autumn 1622. Fairly soon after his arrival, he expelled the Ulster clergy who had been moving into Meath diocese since 1603.[136] Dease's move against the Ulstermen was in line with his policy of promoting tridentine clergy within his diocese - hence his support for the newer orders, the Jesuits and the Capuchins. From before his time as bishop, he was a champion of the Capuchin mission in Ireland.[137] Similarly he supported the Jesuits, and defended them in the quarrel with the Franciscans which reverberated from Drogheda in the early 1620s. In the same conflict he was critical of the Franciscans.[138] With the steady supply of

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[133]. Francis Nugent, the Capuchin, asserted that the Armagh vacancy could well remain, while David Rothe, bishop of Ossory, lived, Nugent to Cardinal Ludovisi, 23 Aug 1628, scritture originali riferite nelle congregazioni generali, Propaganda Fide, Coll. Hib., 10, p.50.

[134]. Correspondence on the Armagh vacancy, 1625-6, Wadding papers, pp 120-229.

[135]. T. Ua Bradaigh, 'Dha dhan le Tomas Deis, Easbog na Mi, 1622-1652' [Two poems by Thomas Dease, bishop of Meath], Riocht na Midhe, 3 no 2, pp 99-104.

[136]. See chapter six; on the expulsion of the northerners, 'Memorial against the promotion of the bishop of Ossory or the bishop of Meath to Armagh' (1626), Wadding papers, p.167.

[137]. Thomas Dease to Francis Nugent, [1618], cited in F. Martin, Friar Nugent, pp 184-5; Dease's testimonial to Capuchins in Ireland, 9 Aug 1629, ibid., p.261.

[138]. Thomas Dease to Jesuit general, 23 November 1624, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, pp 196-8.

clergy returning to Meath from the continent, it was possible to replace the Ulstermen with tridentine clergy, natives of the diocese. This move caused great resentment among Ulster ecclesiastics.[139]

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From the 1620s, a revival among religious orders was taking place across Ireland. By 1641, Meath diocese had one of the highest concentrations of religious in the kingdom. Cistercians, Dominicans, Franciscans, Capuchins, Discalced Carmelites, and Jesuits were active in the diocese. In addition, reflecting the wealth and stability of catholicism in north Leinster, convents of Poor Clare nuns were established on the borders of the diocese, near Athlone, and in Drogheda. However, as noted in the case of Drogheda, the expansion of the orders led to tensions within the catholic community. Strife between different branches of the catholic clergy was endemic in early seventeenth century Ireland.[140] The easing of persecution from 1619 contributed to the increased number of catholic groups, and tensions, hitherto dampened somewhat by external pressure, now emerged more freely. Given widespread poverty, and the weight of other exactions, friction was inevitable between different groupings, all seeking to draw on the same finite resources of the catholic community.

The growth of diocesan structures from the mid-1620s made conflict with the religious orders unavoidable, for these continued to draw on their wide missionary faculties, granted in response to the ecclesial collapse of earlier decades. Significantly, Bishop Dease supported the orders with origins in the counter-reformation, namely the Jesuits and the Capuchins. He did so partly because they were unencumbered with a medieval legacy which, in the case of the older orders, was proving especially fractious in the 1620s and 1630s. After noting the emergence of convents for women, and the Capuchin mission in north Leinster, two of these tensions will be considered here. The revival of pre-dissolution property claims led to friction between various religious orders, and, in the case of the Cistercians, with the lay owners of secularised properties. Further, disputes arose with bishops over pastoral provision in parishes which had earlier been impropriate to Cistercian monasteries. Secondly, the struggle for maintenance of the increasing numbers

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[139]. G. Rice, 'Attitudes to the Counter-Reformation in Meath 1600-1630', Riocht na Midhe, 5 no 2, pp 54-63; Wadding papers, p.167.

[140]. In response, already in 1609 Primate Lombard sent David Rothe as apostolic protonotary with power to adjudicate in disputes in Ireland, Lombard to people and clergy of Ireland, 21 July 1609, BAV, Barberini Latini Ms 2693, fol.24 r-v.

of mendicants placed a strain on the already straitened resources of the catholic laity, and was resented especially by the diocesan authorities.[141]

In the early seventeenth century, the vowed life of religious women in Ireland was limited to individuals living in a domestic setting, or at most two or three together, as in Drogheda. It was a sign of the revival of catholicism in the region that in the 1630s two Poor Clare convents were established. Reflective of Franciscan influence among the Old English elite, the Irish Poor Clares were founded in Dunkirk in 1626, and settled in Dublin in 1629. They were expelled from their convent in the campaign against religious houses in 1630. Thereafter, thanks to the patronage of the Dillon family (Mother Abbess Cecily Dillon was daughter of Theobald Dillon, 1st Viscount Dillon of Costello Gallen) the nuns settled at Killinure, north-east of Athlone, in 1631, living in damp conditions on the shores of Lough Rea; they called their convent 'Bethlehem'.[142] It was an Irish-speaking community.[143] Convents for Irishwomen, including those of the Poor Clares, provided maintenance for daughters of elite families, and substantial dowries were required.[144] By the late 1630s the sisters numbered about 44. In 1639, at the wish of the Franciscan provincial, John Barnwall, nuns from Bethlehem started another Poor Clare convent in Drogheda which was well funded, for a spacious building was under construction.[145]

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[141]. From the mid-1630s, Wentworth sought to undermine catholicism by encouraging dissentions between laity and clergy, R.D. Edwards, 'Church and state in the Ireland of Micheal O Cleirigh', in S. O'Brien (ed.), Measgra i gCuimhne Mhichil Ui Chleirigh (Dublin, 1944), pp 1-20; on issues in catholic life in the 1620s and 1630s, see M. Olden, 'Counter-reformation problems: Munster', I.E.R., 5th series, 114, pp 42-54.

[142]. Mother Mary Brown, 'An account of the establishment of the Poor Clares in Ireland', [c.1650], original manuscript in possession of Irish Poor Clares (NLI mic p3500), pp 1-9; Ellen Dillon, another daughter of viscount and viscountess Dillon, was a nun in the Bethlehem convent, Lodge, Peerage of Ireland (Dublin, 1789), iv, p.184; a wooden figure of the Madonna and child, of medieval provenance, was located in the convent in the 1630s, S. O Murthuile, 'Muire Atha Luain' [Mary of Athlone], Riocht na Midhe, 1 no 2, pp 52-3.

[143]. By Oct 1636, Aodh O Raghailligh OFM and Seamus O Siaghail OFM had translated the rule of the Poor Clares from English into Irish, and Micheal O Cleirigh OFM had provided a clear copy, probably for the nuns' public reading, B. Jennings, Michael O Cleirigh and his associates (Dublin, 1936), pp 150-2.

[144]. The convent in Dublin included daughters of the catholic peers Westmeath, Fingall, Gormanston, and Costello-Gallen, A. Clarke, The Old English in Ireland, 1625-42 (Dublin, 2000), pp 62-3; according to one critic of the Franciscan family, dowries to the Poor Clares ranged from £250 to £700, and their agents collected alms in the countryside, P. Harris, The excommunication (Dublin, 1632), pp 100-2.

[145]. 'An account of the establishment of the Poor Clares in Ireland', pp 7-9; Lady Blayney referred to the nuns in Drogheda in 1641, E. Shirley, The history of the county of Monaghan (London, 1879), pp 244-5; 'We have also lately received information that at Drogheda, there is a house for a nunnery of late erected, with great charge, which is so spacious, as it contains four score windows of a side, and is not yet throughly finished, but great expectations there is of it...', Irish

However, under the stresses of war, the two communities were dispersed in 1641-2, and the Bethlehem nuns regrouped in Galway.[146]

The contribution of religious to building up catholicism in north Leinster in these decades may be sketched in the case of the Capuchins. In Ireland, the Capuchins, an order with roots in the counter-reformation, were small in number, but were concentrated in Old English areas, and especially Meath diocese. They had strong links to the Anglo-Irish elite of the Pale. The founder of the Irish Capuchin mission, Francis Nugent, received seven youths of the Pale, students in the Low Countries, into the order in 1611.[147] The first arrived in Ireland in 1615-6, and typical of the returned continental clergy generally, they were maintained by their extended families. By the late 1610s, Laurence Nugent, one of the first Capuchins in Ireland, was staying with a kinsman resident in Meath diocese.[148] In 1625 the friar travelled to France, bringing two daughters of the earl of Westmeath, his relative, to be educated in convents there.[149] Similarly, Fr Patrick Plunkett relied on the support of his kinsman James Plunkett, of Longwood, County Meath.[150] Between 1631 and 1635, friaries were established in Slane, Mullingar and Drogheda, as well as in Dublin, Cork and Limerick, further highlighting Capuchin links with the Anglo-Irish of north Leinster.[151] Bishop Thomas Dease was a firm friend, and episcopal support contributed to their flourishing in his diocese of Meath.[152]

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council to Secretary Vane, 30 June 1641, PRO SP63/259/44 (Cal.S.P.Ire., 1633-47, p.307).

146. 'An account of the establishment of the Poor Clares in Ireland', p.9 et seq; H. Concannon, Irish nuns in penal times (London, 1931), pp 34-8.

147. Report of visitation of Irish college, Douai, to Cardinal Borghese, 5 Oct 1611, BAV, Barberini Latini Ms 6805, ff 153-4; N. Archbold, 'Evangelicall fruict', BL Harl Ms 3888, fol.38; north Leinster names predominated in the list of Irish college, Douai, students who had joined the Capuchins by 1622: Laurence Nugent, Edward Bath, Barnaby Barnwall, George Blackney, Patrick Plunket, Christopher Kearny, William Verdon, Benignus Fleming, Richard Nugent, Matthew Nugent, Thomas Tuite, Patrick Verdon, Archiv. Hib., 14, p.81.

148. Hunter (ed.), 'Catholicism in Meath c1622', p.8.

149. Archbold, 'Evangelicall fruict', fol.82r.

150. In gratitude, Fr Patrick petitioned for a papal letter of commendation for James Plunkett, Urban VIII to James Plunkett, 18 June 1633, BAV, Barberini Latini Ms 2203, no 138.

151. 1622 list of Douai students who joined Capuchins, Archiv. Hib., 14, p.81; list of Capuchin houses, 1633, Archbold, 'Evangelicall fruict', fol.125v; Cogan, The Diocese of Meath, ii, pp 22-7; the patronage of the Flemings, barons of Slane, led to the foundation in Slane, County Meath, in 1631, ibid., i, p.287.

152. Dease's support was in contrast to the opposition of the Franciscan Thomas Fleming, archbishop of Dublin, attestation of Archbishop Fleming in favour of Patrick Mathew, 29 Nov 1627, Wadding papers, p.257.

Capuchin missionary zeal found an outlet in seeking conversions among protestants. Some of these conversions may be attributed to the denominationally porous nature of Irish society at the upper levels, and the consequent access which zealous missioners had to individuals who were not catholic. Thus the Capuchins claimed the conversion in 1619 of Patrick Foxe, clerk of the council, resident in Westmeath, significantly just when the more coercive measures against catholics were suspended.[153] Sir John Draycott belonged to a New English family settled in Meath.[154] At the suggestion of Fr Barnaby Barnwall, in the mid-1630s Draycott read a celebrated book of catholic apologetics, a work which played a role in affirming the convert's faith.[155] As was the case with tridentine clergy among the orders, the Capuchins were engaged in reconciling marriages with church law.[156] The relatively small number of Capuchins in the 1620s and 1630s were able to minister to native Irish, and to British settlers, as well as to their kin among the Old English.

Jesuits and Capuchins shared a similar background in the gentry and urban families of north Leinster. Their missionary outreach, too, was similar. Like the Jesuits, while concentrated in the more anglicised parts of Leinster, some Capuchins also engaged in missions in the more pastorally-neglected gaelic areas of that province. From the arrival of the friars in Ireland in 1616, individual Irish-speaking Capuchins, natives of the midlands, were ministering in County Longford. Stephen Daly was active as a missioner there until his death in 1620.[157] The arrival of the Capuchins coincided with the threat to native society in the midlands represented by the plantations; the Ardagh vicar-general was

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153. Archbold, 'Evangelicall fruict', fol.126r; Patrick Foxe, of Moyvore, County Westmeath, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1608-10, p.53; on intermarriage in elite families, see D. Jackson, 'Violence and assimilation in Tudor Ireland', E. O'Brien (ed.), Essays in honour of J.D.H. Widdes (Dublin, 1978), pp 113-26; friendships between tridentine clergy and protestant administrators were not unusual: a friar in the Carlow household of Christopher Wandesford (lord deputy, 1640), C. Wandesford to Sir George Radcliffe, 25 Mar 1636, T. Whitaker, The life and original correspondence of Sir George Radcliffe (London, 1810), p.242; Thomas Strange OFM was a close friend of Lord Aungier, master of the rolls, T. Strange to L. Wadding, 5 Aug 1628, Wadding papers, p.269.

154. On the Draycott family, see S. Barnwall, 'Henry Draycott and the Draycotts of Mornington, County Meath', Riocht na Midhe, 6 no 3, pp 68-81.

155. It is not clear which of Zachary Bouer's works Draycott read, Orthodoxa consultatio de ratione verae fidei agnoscendae, et amplectendae (Cologne, 1626), Archbold, 'Evangelicall fruict', BL Harl Ms 3888, ff 8r-9r; same, Demonstrationes fidei catholicae contra Atheistas ([Cologne], 1626), ibid., fol.155r.

156. Faculties to Capuchins to dispense in one special matrimony case, 1619, Archiv. Hib., 23, p.81.

157. Archbold, 'Evangelicall fruict', fol.47r-v; in the late sixteenth century, a branch of the O'Dalys were prominent in Dalton's country, County Westmeath, Fiants Ire., Eliz., no 5431 (1590).

seeking help, and both Jesuits and Capuchins were active in the years of uncertainty preceding the start of the midland plantations in 1619. The missionary outreach of the friars in north Leinster may be adumbrated in the case of Father Colm Glin. Glin was working in Ireland from 1619, and at the request of his superior, he listed the conversions made down to 1633. His was an extremely active and geographically dispersed apostolate, and doubtless exceptional in its intensity.[158] Given that north Leinster was a territory in which both Capuchins and Jesuits were active, this area was particularly well worked by tridentine missioners from about 1615 onwards. Glin engaged in disputations with protestant ministers - in Ratoth, County Meath, in 1625, as a result of a sermon and disputation, 23 townsmen were converted to catholicism. By his own reckoning, he gained 177 converts in the years 1619-32 - the majority of these were Irish catholics who had adhered to the state church under the pressure of the 1610s. However, his British converts were drawn in particular from among the settlers in the recently planted territories of Longford and Ely; English and Welsh also featured among converts in Westmeath, and the Pale heartlands of Louth, east Meath, and north County Dublin.[159]

When staying in gentry households, Glin used to catechise the servants in the kitchen, as they were preparing the evening meal. Reconciling the estranged, together with enforcing restitutions in cases of theft, and promoting reform in individuals' lives, were among his cares. Indicative of the pastoral neglect by tridentine clergy of the Irish-speaking districts, relative to the anglicised areas, huge crowds came to him for confession. Frequently these were general confessions, and, typical of accounts of tridentine missioners in Ireland, the Capuchin was often engaged in these from dawn to dusk. A further indication of ministry among the Gaelic Irish was the fact that he often preached in isolated areas, in mountains, woods and valleys, where large crowds came to hear him. In the more tolerant atmosphere of the 1620s and 1630s, poverty, rather than security concerns, together with the dispersed nature of rural society, dictated that catholic gatherings continued to take place in the open air. In the recently-planted areas of the midlands, catholicism was bereft of the gentry support available in the unplanted areas of north Leinster; consequently the catholic infrastructure was correspondingly weaker.

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[158]. He worked in Connacht, and Munster (as far south as Muskerry), and in the Dublin region, the midlands, and the eastern Pale; this account of Glin's apostolate is based on Archbold, 'Evangelicall fruict', ff 126r-127v.

[159]. One of the earliest Irish Capuchins was a convert, Henry Warren, heir of Sir Henry Warren of Ballybrittan, of the plantation of King's and Queen's Counties, established in the early 1560s, Archbold, 'Evangelicall fruict', fol.38r-v.

From the early 1620s, the revival of medieval claims by orders in the process of reinstating themselves contributed to much of the strife in Irish catholic life.[160] As elsewhere in Ireland, the few Cistercians in Meath diocese were in dispute with the bishop, Thomas Dease, and the controversy was unresolved in 1641.[161] By the early seventeenth century, the network of Cistercian houses in the northern church province was dissolved. However a nominal continuity was maintained.[162] The Cistercian revival in the Drogheda area started with Patrick Barnwall. In the 1610s, Barnwall, a native of a gentry family of north county Dublin who had studied in Douai and Paris, was working as a secular priest in Drogheda. In 1620 he joined the Cistercians, and by October 1623 he together with Malachy Hartry had opened a Cistercian novitiate in Drogheda. There were five novices in 1623-4. As part of the spirit of catholic restoration, by the 1620s the older religious orders, including the Cistercians, were pursuing claims to their former houses with renewed energy. Consequently monks were styled as abbots of former monasteries, and one or two Cistercians were serving as pastors in the vicinity of some of their one-time monasteries; in reality Cistercians were very few in the northern ecclesiastical province.[163] In 1625, as an indication of his standing among his confreres, Barnwall was made titular abbot of Mellifont.[164]

By the early 1620s, this restorative mentality was leading to conflict with the diocesan authorities, especially Bishop Dease of Meath. The monks were claiming rights of presentation to the parishes which were previously impropriate to the monasteries.[165] The problem was especially acute in the northern ecclesiastical province, and particularly in

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[160]. The background, in the case of the Discalced Carmelites, is ably treated in S. O'Mahony, 'The Irish Discalced Carmelites, 1625-53', (unpubl. PhD thesis, University of Dublin, 1978), chapter three; tensions arose over the medieval Carmelite house in Ardee, and between Franciscans and Discalced Carmelites in Dundalk, D. Mac Iomhair, 'The Carmelites in Ardee', Louth Arch. Soc. Jn., 20 no 3, pp 180-9; re Dundalk, 'Attestation of Archbishop Thomas Fleming in favour of Patrick Mathew [Armagh vicar-general], 29 Nov 1627', Wadding papers, pp 256-7.

[161]. The broader context is given in C. O Conbhuidhe, 'The controversy with the bishops', in same, Studies in Irish Cistercian history (Dublin, 1998), pp 198-235; G. Rice, 'Thomas Dease bishop of Meath and some questions concerned with the rights to ecclesiastical property alienated at the reformation', Riocht na Midhe, 6 no 1, pp 69-89.

[162]. Titular abbots of Mellifont abbey, County Louth: James Walsh, 1598-1607, William Furlong, from 1608, L. Murray, 'The last abbot of Mellifont', Louth Arch.Soc.Jn., 8 no 3, pp 355-7.

[163]. Fr Colmcille [C. O Conbhuidhe], The story of Mellifont (Dublin, 1958), pp 174-91; L. Murray, 'The last abbot of Mellifont', Louth Arch. Soc.Jn., 8 no 3, pp 223-33.

[164]. He received the formal blessing as abbot of Mellifont from Thomas Fleming, archbishop of Dublin, in Waterford in 1625, Hartry, Triumphalia Sanctae Crucis, p.107.

[165]. Report of Bishop John Roche, 1629, P. Corish (ed.), 'Two reports on the Catholic Church in Ireland in the early seventeenth century', Archiv. Hib., 22, p.154.

north Leinster, where the Old English elite were owners of the monastic properties and their impropriated parishes; tension with the bishops over the nomination of pastors was compounded by resentment at Cistercian questioning of lay ownership of former monastic properties. In 1633, Primate Hugh O'Reilly raised the problem of parochial jurisdiction, claimed by the monks, with Propaganda Fide in Rome.[166] However, some areas previously cared for by the Cistercians were bereft of any priests by the early seventeenth century, notably where the local elite was protestant, and the revived ministrations of the monks made good a pastoral deficit. Thus in the Newry area, in Dromore diocese, the Cistercians Robert Shiell and Malachy O'Kea were serving as pastors in the 1630s.[167] In contrast, reflecting the greater supply of clergy in Meath diocese, by 1642 diocesan clergy were ministering in the area of the former abbey of Bective, County Meath.[168] A further bone of contention between the monks and the hierarchy into the 1630s were the relic tours emanating from Holy Cross abbey, and reaching across the country; these were viewed as money-making exercises.[169]

The problem of maintaining the growing numbers of mendicant friars loomed large in the catholicism of north Leinster, as elsewhere. An index of catholic revival in these years was the expanding urban network of the mendicants. The Dominicans had returned to Mullingar by about 1622, and to Trim, County Meath, by about 1630.[170] Between 1626 and 1629, Franciscan houses had opened once again in Dundalk, Trim, and Athlone, in addition to the existing convents of Multyfarnham and Drogheda.[171] Expansion was

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[166]. C. O Conbhuidhe, 'The controversy with the bishops'; acta, Propaganda Fide, 28 July 1626, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.39; Primate Hugh O'Reilly to Propaganda Fide, 2 Nov 1633, Spicil. Ossor., i, p.188.

[167]. Hartry, Triumphalia Sanctae Crucis, p.279; however, Patrick Barnwall and Patrick Crollius, Cistercians, were administering the parochial sacraments, probably in the Mellifont area, without licence, and in places subject to interdict, much to the annoyance of the archbishop of Armagh, acta, Propaganda Fide, 19 Aug 1639, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.109.

[168]. In 1632, Anthony Mageoghegan, a priest of Meath diocese who had become a Cistercian, was granted Bective by papal provision, apostolic letter of Urban VIII, Archiv. Hib., 19, p.138; F. Hogan, 'The last monks and abbots of Bective', Riocht na Midhe, 6 no 2, pp 3-15.

[169]. Thomas Walsh, archbishop of Cashel, to Propaganda, 1632, Spicil. Ossor., i, p.171; bishop of Cork against Luke Archer, vicar-general of the Cistercian order, acta, Propaganda Fide, 16 June 1636, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.99.

[170]. 'Attestation of the Dominicans', 4 July 1631, Wadding papers, p. 591; H. Fenning, 'The Dominicans of Trim: 1263-1682', Riocht na Midhe, 3 no 1, pp 15-23; same, 'The Dominicans of Mullingar, 1622-54', Riocht na Midhe, 3 no 4, pp 299-314.

[171]. Dundalk 1626, Trim 1629, Athlone 1626, Jennings (ed.), 'Brevis synopsis provinciae Hiberniae FF. minorum', pp 145-53; J. Moloney (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3410: A chronological list of the foundations of the Irish Franciscan province', Anal. Hib., 6, pp 192-202 (here, p.202).

fuelled in part by elite patronage, derived from close family ties with the orders. The Franciscan presence in the Athlone area owed much to the family of Theobald Dillon, created Viscount Dillon of Costello Gallen in 1622, and his wife Eleanor Tuite. Of their 19 children, two boys became Franciscans, and two girls joined the Poor Clares.[172] At various times, both the Athlone Franciscans, and the Poor Clares (expelled from Dublin in 1629) were established on the family's lands.

The Franciscans were more numerous than the other religious orders.[173] Thus in the contemporary discussion about dissentions among the clergy, the Franciscans featured prominently. Given their numbers, one may presume that the Franciscans were often the targets of the frequent complaints against the regulars which reached Propaganda, and which featured in its decrees. There was a suggestion that in some areas the friars were greater in number than the diocesan clergy.[174] Franciscan numbers had greatly increased in the 1620s, as the growth in the number of convents across the northern province indicated.[175] Rapid expansion in the space of two decades inevitably led to problems of discipline arising from poor training and supervision. The unsettled state of catholicism in Ireland precluded the necessary formation for this large influx of young men. It contributed to the phenomenon of friars living outside the convents. Problems of indiscipline resulted, and the importunate begging of the mendicants was causing widespread resentment within the catholic community.[176] A group of laity petitioned the Holy See to address this

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[172]. Eleanor Lady Dillon was buried in the Athlone Franciscan friary in 1638, J. Lodge, Peerage of Ireland (Dublin, 1789), iv, pp 177-84.

[173]. In the early 1620s, an estimate of clerical numbers in Ireland noted 800 diocesan priests, 200 Franciscans, 40 Jesuits, more than 20 Dominicans, and a few Cistercians, Augustinians and Capuchins, 'Brevis informatio ... de statu religionis in regno Hiberniae', 4 Feb 1624, in Moran, Catholic archbishops, pp 288-93; Franciscan predominance in Ulster, Wadding papers, p.32.

[174]. Regulars more numerous than diocesan priests in Dublin, P. Harris, The excommunication ([Dublin], 1632), p.19; in Ulster about 1620, Franciscans were ministering in some areas where five parishes were in the care of one diocesan priest, Wadding papers, p.38.

[175]. In 1610, there were functioning convents only in Donegal, Multyfarnham, and Drogheda, with the Armagh convent leading an even more precarious existence, Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', pp 28, 36, 41, 92-3; by 1629, there were 12 convents in the northern province with named guardians; in addition, the guardianship of the Monaghan convent was vacant, Liber Lovaniensis, pp 4-7.

[176]. Friars were taking horses from gentlemen, broadcloth suits from merchants, and food from cooks, and frequenting taverns and eating houses, P. Harris, Fratres sobrii estote (n.p., 1634), p.98; as an indication of the increasingly problematic role of the friars, Florence Conry, Franciscan archbishop of Tuam (1609-29), addressed the canonical issue of whether delinquent mendicants, if living outside their convents, were subject to disciplining by the diocesan ordinary, undated paper, BAV, Barberini Latini Ms 1575, ff 238-43.

problem. As a result, Rome ordered that no further novices were to be admitted, where religious discipline could not be observed.[177]

The powerful links of the orders, including the Franciscans, with the elite, especially in the Pale, were a further area of resentment. It was reported as common belief that the local gentry would support the friars against any criticism, however justified, from the parish clergy.[178] An indication of the central and powerful role of the friars within the catholic community was the gathering which took place at Multyfarnham over several days in September 1626, probably in connection with the Graces. A large number of clerics attended, including the archbishop of Cashel, and the bishop of Meath. The ecclesiastics were joined by most of the gentry of Longford and Westmeath.[179] Similarly, the religious enjoyed regular and continuous links with catholic Europe. Rome enjoyed an unusually high level of influence on the church in Ireland, given that the presentation of many benefices had devolved to the papacy. Thus in 1631, the Meath cleric James Mellaghlin turned to the Franciscan archbishop of Dublin, Thomas Fleming, to expedite his petition for a papal bull for his living.[180]

As well as being numerous, the friars and their devotions had great appeal within the catholic community. In their preaching, the more ignorant friars made extravagant claims for the devotional practices associated with their order, the wearing of the scapular, in the case of the Carmelites, or death and burial in the religious habit, as promoted by the Franciscans and Dominicans. Some friars held that habit and scapular were more efficacious than all the sacraments.[181] Such preaching placed the parish clergy at a disadvantage vis-s-vis the friars. Given the friars' prominent role at the death-bed, it was inevitable that they exercised influence on bequests, for the will was generally made at this stage. The testament of Connor Lord Maguire, made shortly before his execution at Tyburn in February 1645, showed the influence of the friars who attended him at that time.

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[177]. P. Harris, The Excommunication (n.p., 1632), pp 49-50; acta, Propaganda Fide, 28 July 1626, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.39.

[178]. P. Harris, Fratres sobrii estote, pp 41-2.

[179]. Beforehand, the gentry sent provisions: 'beeves, muttons, poultry, wheat, malt, usquebagh, pewter, linen and bedding', advertisement received, 14 Oct 1626, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1625-32, pp 163-4.

[180]. Archbishop Fleming to Wadding, Sept 1631, Wadding papers, p.570.

[181]. P. Harris, Fratres sobrii estote, pp 25, 78; in 1635, two English friars were bringing a picture of St Francis about Ireland, probably of Spanish provenance, with claims of extraordinary favours of St Francis to his order, written underneath; the bishops were complaining about these tours, acta, Propaganda fide, 30 July 1635, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.92; J. Jennings OFM (English provincial) and J. [Pickford] OFM to [Ingoli], 20 May 1635, scritture originali riferite nelle congregazioni [Propaganda], Coll. Hib., 10, p.55.

Bequests were made to the Franciscan convents of south Ulster, and Maguire insisted that the friars were to be given their monies prior to settling the debts which the young lord owed.[182] In the context of competition for scarce resources, diocesan clergy resented the friars' influence on bequests.[183]

Linked to the rapid increase in Franciscan numbers were the tensions caused by the friars' practice of begging.[184] These strains were increasing in the 1620s and into the 1630s. Difficulties between regulars and diocesans, and between the different orders, arose in part from the impoverished state of the country for much of the early seventeenth century; in particular, the extreme poverty of the early 1620s must be noted. The maintenance of the regular clergy was yet one more charge on a heavily-burdened community. Franciscan begging impacted in different ways on clergy and laity. The friars were accustomed to beg from house to house, as in Navan, County Meath, in May 1603.[185] A writer inimical to the friars, but familiar with their activities in the Pale in these decades, described the quest, significantly making the comparison between the friars and the officers who used extortion on the people: 'they [Franciscans] pass through the parishes from house to house, not contented to ask their alms at the door .. for that is not gentleman-like, but boldly they will rush into the hall, and from thence into any other part of the house, more like unto officers, than poor beggars. So haunting the richest sort of people for money, wheat, muttons, malt, salt, fish, flesh, for nothing comes amiss, as they forget not the honest farmer, neither shall the poor cotter escape them'.[186] The friars were accustomed to sell the farm produce they were given, and so convert the fruits of the quest into coin.[187]

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[182]. Excerpt of Maguire's will (no provenance given), Mervyn Archdall, Monasticon Hibernicum, ed. P. Moran (Dublin, 1876), ii, p.167; friars assisting in the making of wills, B. Delahoyd to Propaganda, 28 May 1624, Wadding papers, pp 637-41.

[183]. Religious were admonished not to enduce the dying, with promise of eternal goods, to choose burial in their churches, acta, Propaganda Fide, 19 Jan 1635, Archiv. Hib., 22, pp 88-9.

[184]. Acta, Propaganda fide, 28 July 1626, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.39; 16 Mar 1633, p.68; against diocesan and regular clergy who administer the sacraments for money, 13 June 1633, p.72; against religious who neglect the poor in favour of ministering to the rich, and those who travel about on horseback, wearing clothes unbecoming their profession, 16 Dec 1633, pp 80-1; at instance of the archbishop of Armagh, regulars were reprimanded for begging where they did not minister or preach, 20 Apr 1638, p.107.

[185]. Declaration of Edward Sotherne, 16 June 1603, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, pp 62-3; similarly, in the 1610s individual friars were apprehended in the midlands while questing, Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.100.

[186]. P. Harris, The Excommunication, p.67.

[187]. '.. they every year sell and turn into coin, many flocks of sheep, hogs, geese, turkies, hens, cheese, eggs; which through their shameless importunity, they have rather extorted, than begged' from farmers with large families and high rents, P. Harris, The Excommunication, p.93; throughout

In the northern province, a particularly controversial form of the Franciscan quest was the practice of seeking alms at the ordinary Sunday parish masses. It was well-established by the 1610s. Begging at mass could be noisy and intimidating, and collecting sheep, in particular, used to disrupt the liturgy. In a measure which had the Franciscans (among others) in mind, the 1614 synod sought to promote decorum at mass, by restricting clerical begging to the time after mass was ended; thereafter, the Franciscans themselves made a similar statute.[188] As with reform measures in Irish catholicism generally in the early seventeenth century, in the absence of structures of discipline, one may presume that such legislation had strictly limited impact.

The friars were forced to defend this custom in the dispute with the Armagh vicar-general in the early 1620s. They placed this practice in the context of the questing customary among the parish clergy in the rural areas of the northern province, at the parish mass on specified Sundays or feast days. Because of the general shortage of money in Ireland, and the prevalence of pasture in the north, outside the towns the main form of begging practised by mendicants was for lambs and small sheep. In the countryside the people often lived isolated and dispersed, and within a radius of five miles of the parish church; hence it was difficult for them to congregate except for mass, and this was the reason the friars gave for questing then. After the offertory the pastor (or friar) would exhort the people to exclaim blessings on those giving, or having the intention of giving. Blessings on church benefactors came at the end of a list of those for whom prayers were to be offered: the pope, cardinals, bishops and the prior of Rhodes, the four mendicant orders (called satellites of the church), followed by kings and the lay grades.[189]

We have a description of a friar begging at mass in the Pale about this time, which, allowing for its partisan purpose, sheds some light on contemporary practice. Mass was celebrated in oratories (as in the mass-houses which were being constructed in the countryside from the 1620s) and in the halls of gentry homes. The friar, in his habit, used to beg, sometimes before mass. On other occasions, mass having ended, he would order the doors to be locked, preventing people from leaving. Then he would make a begging

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the kingdom, it becomes the mendicants, 'after they have shamed the poor people on a Sunday morning out of their means, the week after to gadd through the parishes, and to gather in their muttons, and herd them together .... and after to expose them to sale one with another at 12 pence the head, in every barony of this kingdom. Gentlemen expecting when the friars' sheep pass by, or where they keep the market, hoping what they got so easily, they will not rate too highly...', P. Harris, Fratres sobrii estote, p.42.

[188]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections, p.130; Wadding papers, p.40.

[189]. Wadding papers, p.42; 'Practice of questing at parochial Masses', Appendix VIII, T. O'Donnell, Franciscan Abbey of Multyfarnham (Multyfarnham, 1951), pp 146-8.

address to the congregation, in Irish, referring to the works of mercy, and laced with apt scripture quotes.[190] He then would give a list of what he wanted. If the congregation was forthcoming, the friar would bless them, turn towards the altar, and on his knees say an Ave Maria. If, on the contrary, the congregation was ungiving, 'then he falls acursing them, accusing the hardness of their hearts, and their small devotion, telling them that it is the very devil that posseses their hearts, and stops their tongues, and still not suffer them to speak'. Various considerations moved the congregation to give - the friar's blessing (and fear of his cursing), and the desire to emulate the generosity of one's neighbours, a particularly strong trait of the Irish.[191]

By the early 1630s the increasing numbers of friars were becoming a strain on the catholic community. Laden down with a variety of exactions, some laypeople were seeking to avoid occasions of questing by the friars. It was alleged that in the countryside, the people 'will rather lose mass upon Sundays and holydays, then they will come within a musket shot of a friar, so much they fear to be pounded up in a gentleman's hall, or in a parish chapel'.[192] A further custom existed in the northern province whereby catholic landlords allowed the friars a levy of barley sheaves, which the friars' agents collected.[193]

Other forms of Franciscan maintenance touched the diocesan clergy more directly. In the Armagh province, by the sixteenth century an offering to the benefit of the friars was imposed on those making their Easter confession. According to the friars, this privilege originated in the desire of the northern bishops to relieve them, in recognition of their service to the people. All pastors were requested to ask for these alms and to give them to the friars at an appropriate time. In practice, sometimes this did not happen. Occasionally individual friars demanded this offering, contrary to its nature as an alms.[194] Thus the church precept of annual confession and communion at Easter was a bone of contention

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[190]. 'Give alms, and all things are clean unto you Luke 11 ... Redeem thy sins with alms-deeds, and thine iniquities with pity to the poor Daniel 4 ..', P. Harris, The Excommunication, p.68.

[191]. The friar's blessing, in Irish: 'Tuggi ver lave, agus tuggi gare vanechte yen var vd', P. Harris, The Excommunication, p.69.

[192]. P. Harris, The Excommunication, p.70; 'during the celebration of mass on feast days when crowded congregations gather at the altars of the parish priests, they [Franciscans] present themselves with backs to the altar, clothed in the cowl of their order with a lay-man's cloak wrapped round their waist and do their begging. They extract measures of wheat, barley and oats, pigs, wethers, sheep, ganders, hens, butter, silver [money], and shoes ... many people, worn out by such unseemly begging and disgust at their way of proceeding, give up hearing mass on feast days', B. Delahoyd to Propaganda, 28 May 1624, Wadding papers, pp 637-41.

[193]. Allegedly, 40 double sheaves were levied on each ploughland, B. Delahoyd to Propaganda, 28 May 1624, Wadding papers, pp 637-41; ibid., pp 42-3.

[194]. Wadding papers, p.42.

between the friars and the parochial clergy. Indeed, the offerings made by people on the altar on the occasion of Easter communion were 'the chief maintenance that the pastor hath for all the year after'.[195] The friars in their preaching held that by reason of privileges obtained from Rome, this precept could be fulfilled by receiving communion from them. Hence, in the week before and the week after Easter, friars in the Pale were accustomed to visit the parishes in their district, hear confessions, celebrate mass, and take the offerings customary on this occasion.[196] That the friars were claiming alms deriving from sacraments intimately linked to the parish - Sunday mass, and Easter confession and communion - inevitably led to tensions with the diocesan clergy.

This was especially the case with funerals. Fear of purgatory was deep-rooted and widespread. It was generally believed that burial in the habit of the mendicant orders, by associating the person with the founder saint of the order, shortened one's stay in purgatory. Hence a prominent part of the mendicants' ministry was associated with dying and burial. The friars, it was alleged, showed a preference for attending the rich, rather than the poor. Disputes ensued with the parochial clergy regarding officiating at the burial, and taking the attendant emoluments.[197]

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After two decades of intermittent state pressure from 1603, catholic life in the 1620s and 1630s was characterised by resurgence, growth, and consolidation. Because of the support and maintenance derived from Old English landed and mercantile wealth, these trends were particularly noticeable in north Leinster, in marked contrast to the poverty which characterised catholicism in Ulster. The years 1619-25 were a time of confessional flux, as catholics began to reclaim public space, by using parish churches once again in some localities, and by holding religious processions on various occasions. The inconsistencies of government policy on recusancy led to fear and confusion among protestants in some areas, but occasional limited bouts of religious coercion inhibited expressions of catholicism, most notably in 1630-2. Developments in Drogheda exemplified the growth and diversity within organised catholicism. Internal tensions were

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[195]. P. Harris, Fratres sobrii estote, p.42.

[196]. ibid.

[197]. P. Harris, The Excommunication, pp 102-5; in Drogheda, some time before 1623, a friar was conducting the funeral where the corpse was clothed in the Franciscan habit; the parish priest tore off the habit, and proceeded with the funeral himself, because burial was to take place in the parish church, Wadding papers, pp 38, 637-41; on contemporary funerals, see C. Tait, Death, Burial and Commemoration in Ireland, 1550-1650 (Basingstoke, 2002), chapter 3.

present in varying degrees across the church province, but were found in concentrated form in Drogheda, and exploded there in the early 1620s. Friction existed between diocesan clergy and religious, and between older established orders and the newer arrivals. The stresses arising from expansion were compounded by atavistic animosities between some Old English clerics, and Franciscans at home in the Gaelic Irish world; in addition, resentments derived from differing stances in the Nine Years War were still fresh in the 1620s and later.

Parish life was characterised by the widespread survival of traditionalist clergy, and the emergence of the mass-house as the place of worship. The layer of continentally-trained diocesan clergy was spreading, especially in Meath diocese, and in south Louth, though these were closely associated with their patrons among the elite. Religious orders flourished especially in the towns, making north Leinster one of the areas in the kingdom most densely worked by tridentine clergy. The establishment of religious life for women (as in the Poor Clare convents) emphasised the stability which catholicism enjoyed in the 1630s. The re-emergence of the older orders raised issues which had been latent in the catholic community across Ireland since the dissolution of the monasteries. The dispute in Meath diocese between Bishop Dease and the Cistercians highlighted these questions. These included tensions with diocesan authorities over pastoral provision in impropriate parishes, and with the Anglo-Irish elite regarding the ownership of properties formerly belonging to the orders. The Cistercians were few in number, and their impact on the population was correspondingly slight. By contrast, the Franciscans were the most numerous order. Maintaining the growing number of Franciscans, in particular, was an especial burden on the catholic laity in these decades.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ASPECTS OF LAY PIETY, 1603-41

The limited progress of tridentine catholicism across the northern church province in the early seventeenth century has been a leitmotiv in this study. Its diffusion was linked to the distribution of continentally-trained clergy. Apart from some Franciscans and prelates in Ulster, these were largely concentrated in the Anglo-Irish areas. Even within those areas, their impact was greatest among the landed and mercantile elite, with whom these clerics, diocesan and religious, had strong family ties. An examination of some aspects of lay piety across the north confirms this picture of a two-tiered catholic culture. The most receptive milieu for the reformed catholicism of continental provenance was the Anglo-Irish elite. This tridentine layer existed somewhat uneasily alongside the enduring, popular and traditionalist religious culture of the majority, which embraced a spectrum of beliefs and practices ranging from the orthodox to the superstitious. In this chapter, aspects of lay piety in the north during the early seventeenth century will be explored. One major distinction is between the forms of piety available to the social elite, and the popular catholicism which was interwoven with beliefs and practices, some of which were not of christian provenance. One way in which the new-style catholicism was mediated was through English recusant priests - their influence, however, was limited largely to some few upper-class households. Thus the English dimension was one strand within elite catholicism. Further, pilgrimages to Rome and Loreto were normally the preserve of the rich among the laity. Reading played a part in devotional life at this social level, and contributed to conversions to catholicism. The close association of the propertied classes with the religious orders was reflected in requests for burial in convents, and bequests to religious houses. Popular piety was expressed in ascetical practices, including fasting, and

undergoing the pilgrimage to St Patrick's Purgatory, at Lough Derg, which was experiencing revival from about 1620. The desecration of relics, and protestant acquisition of some convent premises, gave rise to anxieties within the catholic community, often associated with burial. There was a lively cult of local saints, focused on relics and holy wells. However, with the possible exception of Meath diocese, it would appear that by 1641, tridentine reformers had made little impact on popular religiosity across the north.

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There was an English recusant dimension to catholicism at the upper social level. From the 1590s, priests were sheltering in Drogheda from the rigours of anti-recusant measures in England.[1] Englishwomen who married into the Irish peerage chose chaplains from among recusant clergy of their native land. Mabel Fitzgerald, Countess of Kildare (d.1610), employed a series of English priests as her chaplain in her residence, Maynooth castle. Their influence was not limited to one household, for chaplains moved among the homes of the extended family.[2] Some individual lay people exercised a profound spiritual influence on their contemporaries. The profession of faith of Christopher Nugent (d.1602), Baron Delvin, impressed the earl of Essex.[3] Conversations with the baron contributed to the conversion to catholicism of his neighbour, Henry Piers (1568-1623), son of an English military captain settled in the former abbey of Tristernagh, County Westmeath.[4] Exposure

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[1]. Will of John Boyar, 22 Apr 1604, copy, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, sub anno 1604.

[2]. In 1554, Mabel Browne, daughter of Sir Anthony Browne, and sister of Anthony 1st Viscount Montagu, married Gerald Fitzgerald, 11th Earl of Kildare, in London, G.E.C., Complete Peerage, sub Kildare; her chaplains were John Boyar (will of John Boyar), and in 1605, after Boyar's death, Francis Barnaby, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.345; on English priests among nobility and gentry in County Kilkenny, see B. Mac Cuarta (ed.), 'Old English catholicism in Chester documents, 1609-19', Archiv. Hib., 57, pp 5-6; similarly, Christopher Plunket, 8th Baron Dunsany (d.1603) married Mary (or Maud) Babington (d.1609), of Derbyshire, while his heir Patrick (b.1588), 9th lord, married Jane Heneage, of Lincolnshire, Lodge, Peerage, vi, pp 206-10; the womens' religion is not known.

[3]. Edifying example of Baron Delvin's profession of faith, and its influence on the earl of Essex, Capt Hugh Mostin to L. Mansoni, papal nuncio, [1600], Archiv. Hib., 24, p.82; G.E.C., Complete Peerage, sub Delvin.

[4]. William Piers (d.1603), acquired Tristernagh in 1562, D.N.B.; Henry Piers, funeral certificate, W. Fitzgerald, Some funeral entries of Ireland [from BL Add Ms 4820] (n.p., 1909), p.114; on the Westmeath background of the Piers family, see E. Hickey, 'Some notes on Kilbixy, Tristernagh, and Templecross, and the family of Piers', Riocht na Midhe, 7 no 4, pp 52-76; Henry Piers wrote of Delvin, 'a lord baron of great honour and complete virtue who for zeal in religion, learning in divinity, philosphy, music, and other sciences, true valor, civil conversation, plain dealing, hospitality, and constancy towards his friends, was a pattern for all noble minds to imitate, and as his life was [exemplarily] good, so was his death an edification to all such good Christians as have had notice of the manner thereof', 'A discourse of Henry Piers his travels written by himself', (1605), Bodleian, Oxford, Ms Rawl. D 83, p.26

to the variety of protestant opinion in England, and to English recusancy, while visiting his brother-in-law's family, furthered his progress towards Rome. Mary Piers married Thomas Jans (or Jens), whose family were part of a recusant network spanning England and Ireland.[5] Arising from this connection, Piers made contact with the household of the Dublin alderman, James Jens.[6] As a result of their encouragement, Piers travelled to Rome, leaving Dublin in June 1595. This he did in opposition to his parents, his wife Jane, and his wife's family, for her father was Thomas Jones, state archbishop of Dublin, and lord chancellor of Ireland.[7] While in Rome, through the good offices of an English priest, Piers stayed at the Jesuit-run English College, and imbibed the spirituality on offer there.[8] On his return to his estate in County Westmeath, Piers remained a catholic, though the eight children were raised 'in the fear of God' with their grandfather, the archbishop of Dublin.[9] Two sons, Henry and Thomas, were catholics, and Thomas became a friar.[10] The fact that Henry Piers and Baron Delvin were neighbours and staunch catholics made north-west Westmeath a place of special protection for catholic priests during the coercion of the early 1610s.[11]

Conversions to catholicism were not uncommon among British settlers and soldiers; Archbishop Jones could refer to the conversion of his son-in-law as being 'after the manner of this country'.[12] Laity among the colonists were often agents of religious change. In County Tyrone, Bartholomew Owen, an army officer, eagerly read catholic literature, 'certain popish books', and in turn wished his neighbour Sir Toby Caulfield to read this material too. Owens' spiritual guide was doubtless one Hixsie, an English recusant priest,

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[5]. H. Piers, 'A discourse of Henry Piers his travels written by himself', pp 2-4.

[6]. Alderman James Jens (or Jans) (d.1610) was receiving Jesuits and seminary priests in his Dublin home; in 1599, the conversion of Sir Charles Blunt to catholicism took place there, HMC Salisbury, ix, pp 375-6; profile, C. Lennon, The lords of Dublin in the age of reformation (Dublin, 1989), p.258.

[7]. Archbishop Jones to Salisbury, 24 Feb 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.425; H. Ware, 'Memoirs of the family of Sir Henry Piers of Tristernagh', NLI Ms 2563.

[8]. The priest was Richard Haddocke DD; Piers describes a spiritual exercise, 'A discourse of Henry Piers', pp 1, 102.

[9]. Archbishop Jones to Salisbury, 24 Feb 1607, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1606-8, p.425.

[10]. H. Ware, 'Memoirs of the family of Sir Henry Piers'; Thomas Pies OFM, ordained priest, Malines, 1639, Jennings (ed.), 'Irish names in the Malines ordination registers', I.E.R., 5th series, 76, pp 399-408.

[11]. 'The names of sundrie priests and friars within some dioceses, and counties of Ireland', 1613, TCD Ms 567, ff 32r-35v.

[12]. Archbishop Jones to Salisbury, 24 Feb 1607.

who was visiting mid-Ulster at the time.[13] Similar zeal was shown by Scottish catholics on the Hamilton lands at Strabane, County Tyrone, who were keen proselytizers among their countrymen settled there.[14]

Conversions to catholicism among the elite were much prized by the tridentine clergy, including those who were ministering in north Leinster. At this social level, reading played a part in some conversions. There were several instances where a matron of the Pale converted, after holding discussions with Jesuits about various passages in the bible; one woman engaged in a controversy, by letter, with the father, on objections which she raised from scripture.[15] Reading a work of apologetics helped confirm Sir John Draycott, of Meath, in the catholic faith; Draycott had been recently converted by the Capuchin, Barnaby Barnwall.[16]

Travel gave some few men of the Anglo-Irish upper classes personal experience of tridentine catholicism on the continent. This exposure took several forms. As noted in chapter six, many youths from this background attended school abroad, often in Jesuit establishments; it may be presumed that a proportion of these returned to Ireland. This shared continental experience facilitated a broadly common religious sensibility between gentry and merchants, and the returning clergy. Continental influence doubtless contributed to the growth of a more exigent catholicism in this milieu. For a much smaller number, pilgrimage abroad represented further experience of continental catholicism. The house of the Blessed Virgin at Loreto, near Ancona, was a place of devotion popular in the early seventeenth century. As mentioned above, Henry Piers traveled to Rome, and visited Loreto on his return journey. The northern earls visited the shrine on their way to Rome in 1608.[17] Government disapproval of travel to Rome suggests that, at the upper levels of Old English society, individuals were in fact journeying there. In summer 1623, Christopher Nugent, son and heir of the earl of Westmeath, received licence to travel for two years on the continent, taking two servants, 'with a promise not to go to Rome'.[18]

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[13]. Sir Toby Caulfield's account, 25 Jan 1606, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, pp 409-10; Owen's pension as lieutenant, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1603-6, p.427.

[14]. On the catholicism of the Hamiltons of Strabane, see chapter four.

[15]. Jesuit annual letter 1619, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.161,

[16]. The text was Zacharias Bouver, Orthodoxa Consultatio de ratione verae fidei agnoscendae (Cologne, 1626), noted in [Nicholas Archbold], 'The evangelicall fruict of the seraphicall Franciscan Order', BL Harl Ms 3888, fol.9v; on fol.155r, Bouver's work is given as Demonstrationes fidei catholicae contra atheistas (Cologne, 1626).

[17]. An early-seventeenth century Irish view of the cult and miracles associated with Loreto is given in T. O Cianain, The Flight of the Earls [1608], ed. P. Walsh (Dublin, 1916), pp 110-61.

[18]. Pass for Lord Delvin, 15 July 1623, Nugent papers, Anal. Hib., 20, p.140.

Nobles, in common with many others, undertook pilgrimages in the hope of receiving a specific favour. In this regard, and in other areas, Jesuit influence on the nobility was epitomized in the case of Richard Nugent, 1st Earl of Westmeath (1583-1642).[19] In response to worsening eyesight, in spring 1635, Westmeath undertook a pilgrimage to Loreto and Rome, hoping to be cured, 'by the intercession of our lady of Loreta'. The earl expressed his desires in terms of the 'indifference' recommended in the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola, 'the which [being restored to full health] if it might be to the honour and glory of God I shall most humbly crave, if not I have rather to be as I am, then to be restored unto me former health having been so great [a sinner]'.[20] Similarly, the journey to Italy of Matthew Plunkett (d.1629), Baron Louth, in 1625, was a pilgrimage to Rome, and probably also to Loreto; he had also visited Spain.[21] A barren marriage led Randal MacDonnell, first Earl of Antrim, to undertake a pilgrimage to St Bridget's well, in County Roscommon. In thanksgiving for an heir, he built a shrine there in 1625.[22]

Spiritual provision for those who had died played a prominent role in lay devotion. Legacies to religious houses, and to individual priests, associated with masses for the dead, were expressions of piety, arising from the catholic notion of freeing souls from purgatory. This practice was widespread among the elite. By this means, the nobility were munificent benefactors of the friars, reflecting the warm bonds linking noble families and convents in their localities. Indeed it was probable that many men from such families received their

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[19]. The influence of the Jesuits on Westmeath was noted by contemporaries: the earl 'is the minion of the Jesuits and priests', Lord Deputy Falkland to Secretary Conway, 31 Mar 1624, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.475, and G. Panzani, papal agent in London, to cardinal Barberini, 9 Mar 1635, BAV, Barberini Ms 8633, fols 216-24; he had a son named Ignatius (after Ignatius Loyola, Jesuit founder), and in his will (2 Oct 1640), he left an annuity of £10 to his cousin, Nicholas Nugent SJ, will of Richard Nugent, 1st Earl of Westmeath, Anal. Hib., 20, p.144; Jane Nugent (nee Plunkett), Dowager Countess of Westmeath (d.post Jan 1643), left £100 to the Jesuits, will of Thomas Dease, bishop of Meath, 23 June 1648, Anal. Hib., 20, p.146; G.E.C., Complete Peerage, sub Westmeath.

[20]. Letters of G. Panzani, favouring Westmeath's journey to Italy, 9 Mar 1635, BAV, Barberini Lat. Ms 8633 (Anal. Hib., 16, p.16), 15/25 Feb 1635, fol. 171, 9 Mar 1635, ibid., fols 216-24; P. Harris, Exile exiled (n.p., 1635), p.36; quotes, Westmeath to Thomas Wentworth, 12 Apr 1635, Sheffield City Libraries, WWM, Str P 15/14; on 'indifference' in Ignatian (or Jesuit) spirituality, see 'First Principle and Foundation', L. Puhl (ed.), The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius (Chicago, 1951), p.12; licence to travel for one year, with six servants, and £60, 17 Feb 1635, Cal.S.P.Dom, 1634-5, p.514; Westmeath left London in the last week of Feb 1635, and returned there some days before 18 May 1635, Westmeath to Wentworth, 20 Feb, 18 May 1635, Sheffield City Libraries, WWM, Str P 14/342, 15/78; at the time of his death in 1642, the earl was blind, Lodge, Peerage, i, p.241.

[21]. Will of Matthew Plunkett, 5th Baron Louth, 11 Dec 1625, Lodge, Peerage of Ireland, vi, p.168; he visited Italy in 1625, T. Strange OFM to L. Wadding, 4 Aug 1629, Wadding papers, p.304.

[22]. G. Hill, The MacDonnells of Antrim (Belfast, 1873), p.224.

early schooling with the friars. Thus the Maguires, barons of Enniskillen, had close ties with the Franciscan convent of Lisgoole. Lordly devotion to the friars, and reliance on them for masses for the dead, was particularly evident in the will of Conor Lord Maguire, written shortly before his execution in London, in February 1645. He left £20 to the Lisgoole convent, and £10 each to the convents of Armagh, Cavan, and Monaghan, for masses for his soul; further, he desired all his friends 'to have many masses and prayers said for my soul'. Lord Maguire was heavily in debt, and he was anxious that the legacies to the Franciscans be paid speedily.[23] Given the religious coercion in the first two decades of the seventeenth century, wills of that time were of necessity more oblique. Thus in 1610, Mary Nugent (nee FitzGerald) (1556-1610), Dowager Baroness Delvin, left £15 'for pious uses', and £30 'for godly uses', 'as she will declare in a letter to her son the lord of Delvin'.[24] Masses for the dead were doubtless intended, in part, by these provisions.

It is probable that recusant peers and gentry were using some of their revenues from livings of the state church to support catholic clergy, and this may have been channelled in legacies to religious orders, and diocesan priests. From the 1620s, testamentary provisions, in this regard, were more explicit. Thus in his will of 1625, Matthew Plunkett, Baron Louth, left £100 to the Franciscans of Drogheda, to be divided between themselves, and the convents at Armagh, Dublin, and London, 'to pray for his soul'.[25] Lord Louth's particularly large legacy to the friars may have been possible because of the exceptional scale of his profits from impropriate livings of the state church in his area. In the early 1630s his heir was drawing over £440 p.a. net from this source.[26]

Similar processes, though involving smaller sums, may be discerned among the gentry. Reflecting the vacuum in provision for the dead caused by the demise of the religious houses, in 1615, an Irishman in County Londonderry gave a cow to Abbot Gillecome M'Teig (perhaps of the former Cistercian house of Macosquin), for saying

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[23]. Extract of will of Connor Lord Maguire, in M. Archdall, Monasticon Hibernicum, ed. P. Moran (Dublin, 1876), ii, p.167; 'Connor Lord Maguire', New DNB.

[24]. [Nugent papers], Anal. Hib., 20, p.137; G.E.C., Complete Peerage, sub Delvin.

[25]. Lodge, Peerage of Ireland, vi, p.168.

[26]. The core of this staunchly recusant family's church interests was a cluster of six livings in mid- and south Louth which they retained through the 1620s and 1630s; in addition, by 1634 they had acquired a further four livings. In 1634, the then baron owned eleven livings, with a total value of £468 p.a.; clergy salaries for seven livings amounted to a total of £21.10s annually. The church buildings showed no sign of investment, being ruined or in poor repair, Armagh diocese, 1622, TCD Ms 550, pp 42-7; Armagh diocese, 1634, TCD Ms 1067, pp 16-9; list of patrons, Armagh diocese, 1634, TCD Ms 1040, ff 2-5; the peer's exceptional profits from impropriations were reflected in his examination before the 1622 commissioners, 13 May, 20 May 1622, commission journal of Sir Nathaniel Rich, 1622, NLI Ms 8014 (iii).

sixteen masses in the donor's house.[27] Testators wanted to ensure that as many priests as possible were saying mass for their soul; to this end they distribtued legacies among several categories of clergy. Thus in 1618, Matthew Archbold, of County Westmeath, left £4 to Mr Coyle, £2 to the priests who were prisoners in Dublin castle, and £5 to the friars at Multyfarnham.[28] This concern lay behind the legacies to clergy in one County Monaghan will of 1622; the testator left 20s to his 'ghostly father and parish priest', 20s to the friars in Monaghan, and 'to every parish priest within the diocese of Clogher one shilling per priest'. In this instance, the individual had perjured himself to facilitate the state bishop's interests in the lands of the coarbship of Clones; the confessor (who, as customary, witnessed the will, and may indeed have drawn it up) may have encouraged the deeply troubled testator to seek remembrance at masses and prayers by legacies to a wide range of clergy.[29] In the more tolerant climate of the mid-1620s, legacies to religious houses and priests were more explicit than earlier in the century: in 1626, James Nugent of Clonlost, County Westmeath, left bequests to the recently returned Dominicans of Mullingar, to the Franciscans at Multyfarnham, and to various priests (presumably secular clergy).[30] In this regard, there was a particular devotion to the friars, and testators left monies to the revived convents of Franciscans and Dominicans alike. Dying in the habit of the mendicants, and burial in a Franciscan convent, were further marks of devotion to the friars at various social levels.[31]

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[27]. Examination of Knogher M'Gilapatrick O'Mullan, c.60 years old, before Sir Thomas Phillips, 10 May 1615, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, pp 54-5.

[28]. NAI, RC 5/11, pp 66-71; similarly, will of Edmond Malone, of Balinahowne, County Westmeath, 1638: 'I bestow and bequeath as legacy upon my soul £10 st viz 20s to Dr Terence Coghlan, 20s to the parish priest Cahir Coghlan, 20s to my nephew Laghlen Bryne, -- to Rory O Mullin, 10s to William McGerrald, 10s to Laghlen O Rigney, 10s to William O Sheill, 10s to Wm Cary, £3 st to Franciscan friars of Athlone, and 30s to -- of Mullingar', NAI RC 5/6, pp 236-40; Thomas Mageoghegan (probably from Westmeath) left 20s to his parish priest, Owen Mageoghegan (perhaps a relative), and legacies to the Franciscans of Athlone and the Dominicans of Mullingar, n.d., RC 5/12, pp 215-7; Christopher Jones, of the Athlone merchant family, left £10 the Franciscans of Athlone, 20s to the Athlone parish priest, 20s to Fr Anthony Geoghegan, and 10s to bishop of Elphin (unclear whether RC or Church of Ireland), temp. Chas I, RC 5/12, pp 355-60; Henry FitzGerrald, Ballentogher, County Westmeath, left 5s each to Fr Andrew Dalton, Fr Nicholas Uffy, and Fr John O Canyne, together with 10s each to Fr James Mortagh, and the convents of Longford, Athlone, Mullingar and Multyfarnham, 30 Dec 1636, RC 5/12, pp 317-9.

[29]. Will of Cahill Duffe O Connally of Mathicarny, County Monaghan, 12 Mar 1622, Essex Record Office, D/DL/E91; on the evolution of the coarbship of Clones, see chapter two.

[30]. Will dated 24 Oct 1626, Nugent papers, Anal. Hib., p.140.

[31]. On dying, and burial, in early seventeenth century Ireland, see C. Tait, Death, Burial and Commemoration in Ireland, 1550-1650 (Basingstoke, 2002), pp 30-84; requests for burial in the Franciscan convent, Multyfarnham: will of Piers Nugent, Drogheda alderman, 1608, Anal. Hib., 20, p.135, will of Gerald Fay, Dirranegarragh, County Westmeath, 21 Mar 1612, NAI, RC 5/11, pp 307-12; Maurice FitzGerrald, Newcastle, County Longford, request for burial in Franciscan

Diocesan clergy, too, were entrusted with legacies to provide masses for the deceased. In 1635, Thomas Nugent left £40, 'to be laid out for the use of my soul according as Thomas Deys [bishop of Meath] will dispose of it'.[32] The large number of religious houses in Drogheda by 1641 (see chapter seven) suggests that the merchants there were leaving legacies for masses.[33] A further form of piety involved giving money to the poor at the time of the funeral - presumably to encourage their prayers for the deceased.[34]

Other forms of spiritual provision for the dead also reflected the elite's adherence to the old religion. A series of wayside crosses, in stone, were erected from c.1575 - c.1607, mostly in County Meath. The patrons of these memorials were drawn from the leading families of the area. Requests for prayers for the donors were part of their design. At a time of intense religious pressure, this public profession of commitment to traditional piety pointed to a deepening allegiance to catholicism by these families.[35] Reflective of the stability of catholicism by the 1630s, men and women with means wished to be associated with the mass, and to ask for prayers for their souls, through the gift of a chalice made in a precious metal, engraved with the name of the donor. Early in the seventeenth century, chalices and patens were often of cheap and fragile materials. It was a concern of catholic reformers to improve the quality of liturgical vessels.[36] In addition to several made under clerical patronage, lay men and women in the northern ecclesiastical province were commissioning chalices from the mid-1610s.[37] Thus in 1619, Mary O'Donnell, sister of

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convent, Athlone, will 30 Mar 1635, RC 5/12, pp 207-12; request for burial in Franciscan convent, Cavan, will of Philip McPhilip O'Reyly, Dromlomane, County Cavan, 15 May 1638, RC 5/25, p.276.

[32]. Will of Thomas Nugent, Dunferth, County Kildare, proved 22 Nov 1635, Anal. Hib., 20, p.141.

[33]. In his will of Dec 1634, Thomas St Lawrence left '£20 for my soul to the fathers and the poor', T. Patterson, 'The St Lawrence family of Drogheda and Cruisetown - Abstracts of wills and documents, 1623-55', Louth Arch.Soc.Jn., 10 no 4, pp 346-9.

[34]. Nicholas Dalton, Milltown, County Westmeath, left £3.2.6 to designated local poor people, 1 Dec 1631, NAI, RC 5/12, pp 114-7; Gerrott Tyrell, Castlelost, County Westmeath, left £8 to be distributed to the poor, 5 Apr 1637, RC 5/12, pp 275-80; Rowland Savage, Ballygallgatt, County Down, left £20 for the poor, 9 Aug 1638, RC 5/27, pp 177; Randall MacDonnell, 1st Earl of Antrim, left £600 'to be distributed amongst the children and the poor at the time of my death', will, 1630, RC 5/24, p.67.

[35]. H. King, 'Late medieval crosses in County Meath, c.1470-1635', in R.I.A.Proc., 84 C (1984), pp 79-115.

[36]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections, p.123; 'relatio status', Kilmore 1629, Archiv. Hib., 5, pp 80-2; ibid., Down and Connor 1639, Archiv. Hib., 5, p.106.

[37]. Chalice, from 1616, inscribed 'Oliver Plunket'; perhaps the individual from Clonbrony, County Meath, who belonged to a junior branch of Baron Dunsany's family, J.Buckley, Some Irish Altar Plate (Dublin, 1943), p.39, Lodge, Peerage, vi, p.200; Ellis Ferrall had one made in 1634, Buckley, Some Irish Altar Plate, p.61; chalice in memory of Stephen Cooke, his wife Elizabeth,

Red Hugh O'Donnell, gave a chalice in memory of her husband, Tadhg O'Rourke, to the revived convent of Creevelea, County Leitirm, traditionally patronised by the O'Rourke lords.[38]

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Lough Derg, the medieval pilgrimage centre in south Donegal, had a special place in the devotional life of early seventeenth century Ireland. Religious persecution associated with war and its aftermath rendered St Patrick's Purgatory inaccessible for many years, and the pilgrimage was almost extinct.[39] By the early 1620s, however, a revival was underway, and Lough Derg was re-established as one of the major pilgrimage venues in Ireland. In 1625, Thomas Fleming, catholic archbishop of Dublin, noted that crowds from all over Ireland were once again making the pilgrimage, summer and winter; numbers were so large that many were unable to land on the island. On 5 June 1632, about 470 pilgrims were on the island.[40] Lough Derg had widespread appeal, for the pilgrims included men and women, young and old, rich and poor.[41] In response to this upsurge in popular interest, by about 1630, the catholic primate, together with the substitute of the Clogher vicar-apostolic, asked the Franciscans to care for the growing number of pilgrims; the Augustinians, traditionally in charge of Lough Derg, were virtually defunct in Ireland.[42] The recent surge in numbers was reflected in the development of rudimentary buildings. People came from all over the kingdom: on the island there were places for receiving pilgrims from each of the four provinces. Simple Irish thatched huts or cottages had been

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and daughter Maria, in 1635, ibid., p.66; and George Russell and his wife, Maria Taafe, of Rathmolin [Rathmullan, Downpatrick, County Down], in 1641, ibid., p.85; in County Louth, down to the early twentieth century, many more chalices had survived, some of which probably pre-dated 1641, Louth Arch. Soc. Jn., 9, p.170.

[38]. P. Walsh, 'O'Donnell's daughter Mary', I.E.R. 19 (1922), pp 656-8; similarly, in 1633 Mary Maguire, wife of Brian Oge O'Rourke, gave a chalice to the friars of Donegal, J. Buckley, Some Irish Altar Plate (Dublin, 1943), p.58; P. O Gallchobhair, 'A missing Maguire chalice' [1633], Clogher Record, 1 no 3, preliminary page.

[39]. Hugh O'Reilly, archbishop of Armagh, and Thomas M'Kearnan, substitute to vicar apostolic of Clogher, to the cardinal protector, 11 Mar 1631, Wadding papers, p.485.

[40]. Sir William Stuart to lords justice, 8 June 1632, in H. Jones, Saint Patrick's Purgatory (London, 1647), p.127.

[41]. T. Fleming, archbishop of Dublin, to internuncio, 20 Aug 1625, in P. Moran, Catholic archbishops of Dublin (Dublin, 1864), pp 309-10; it was alleged that 1500 people at one time were performing the devotions at Lough Derg, account of Lough Derg in T. Messingham, Florilegium Insulae Sanctorum (Paris, 1624), p.97.

[42]. H. O'Reilly and T. M'Kearnan to cardinal protector, 11 Mar 1631, Wadding papers, pp 485-6; H. Jones, Saint Patrick's Purgatory, p.2.

recently erected, and there the pilgrims slept, on hay or straw, 'without caddow, pillow, or pallet, tumbling themselves in their mantles, or wrapping their heads in their breeches, or trowses [trousers]'. A house was built for the hearing of confessions.[43] As part of the anti-catholic campaign of the lords justice, in 1632 James Spottiswood, state bishop of Clogher, arranged for the destruction of the church and underground chambers or caves on the island.[44]

Asceticism characterised the Lough Derg devotions.[45] The pilgrimage lasted nine days, which the pilgrim spent walking barefoot, generally on sharp rocks and stones. There was one meal a day, consisting of oatmeal, or bread, and water. Set prayers were said, while making seven circuits of the church, both inside, and outside; the pilgrim kissed the church door, and stone cross, and then proceeded to similar exercises around the penitential beds, named after the saints - Bridget, Colmcille, Katherine, Patrick, Yavock, Molissny [Maol Iosa], and Blenyn or Brendan.[46] Having refreshed themselves at the water's edge, the pilgrims returned to the church, and recited the prayer of Our Lady's psalter. These exercises were performed morning, noon, and evening. The pilgrimage included making an offering on the church altar, which benefitted convents and seminaries in Ireland and abroad. On the evening of the eight day, they confessed to one of the priests.

A quasi-baptismal ritual ensued on the ninth, and final, day. Modelled on a burial - 'the show of some funeral pomp' - the procession of nine pilgrims walked behind the banner of the cross towards the caves, one for men, and one for women. A spirit of reconciliation characterised the pilgrims, 'groaning and sighing, desiring forgiveness, and forgiving all that have offended them'.[47] They spent a full 24 hours sequestered in the cave, in silence, with no food, sitting in a crouched position; through a crevice, one of the priests offered words of comfort. The following day, the priest in charge escorted the pilgrims to the water's edge; there, in a clear echo of the baptismal liturgy, they 'duck themselves over head in that water', and proceeded to the church.[48]

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[43]. Jones, Saint Patrick's Purgatory, p.9; quote, p.13.

[44]. Jones, Saint Patrick's Purgatory, pp 127-32.

[45]. The following account of the practices is based on Jones, Saint Patrick's Purgatory, pp 11-14.

[46]. Jones, ibid., p.7.

[47]. Jones, ibid., p.13.

[48]. Quote, Jones, ibid., p.14; 'deducuntur ad marginem stagni, ibique se nudos immergunt acquis lacustribus' [they are led to the edge of the waters, and there they immerse themselves naked in the waters of the lake], T. Messingham, Florilegium, p.96.

The high standing of St Patrick's Purgatory was indicated by the lack of enthusiasm for its destruction. In autumn 1632, no workmen from the locality could be found, at any price, for the task. This distaste was shared by local officials, for the sheriff of Donegal absented himself from the proceedings, and the sheriff of Fermanagh appeared with merely one man-servant; the demolition was left to James Spottiswood, bishop of Clogher, who arrived with about twenty men, suitably equipped and armed.[49] Thereafter the pilgrimage was prohibited, but in the late 1630s Queen Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I, was lobbying for official toleration of the pilgrimage.[50]

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Religion at the popular level embraced a wide range of beliefs and practices, ranging from those of broadly christian provenance, to elements which catholic reformers struggled to eradicate.[51] On the ignorance of the rural population in matters of faith, tridentine clerics and protestant settlers in early seventeenth century Ireland were in agreement.[52] Fasting played a central role in devotional life at all social levels. Barnaby Rich, who was in Ulster in the 1580s, noted that the Irish kern or soldiers fasted three days a week, on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, and in addition on the vigils of feasts and saints' days; he alleged that more fast days were observed in Ireland than elsewhere.[53] The devout nobleman, Richard Nugent, first Earl of Westmeath, believed in the merit accruing from fasting.[54]

The cult of saints loomed large in early modern catholicism: Patrick, Bridget and Colmcille were revered as patrons of Ireland; this was especially true in Ulster, where Colmcille was widely credited with continuing to perform many strange miracles.[55] For contemporaries, the protection of the saints was alive and close at hand.[56] Particular devotion was attached to individual relics. The midlands, and, to a lesser extent, Ulster,

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[49]. Bishop Spottiswood to James Ussher, archbishop of Armagh, 31 Oct 1632, Jones, ibid., p.132.

[50]. George Conn, papal envoy in London, to Cardinal Barberini, 7 May, 21 May 1638, Anal. Hib., 16, p.25.

[51]. On popular religion in early modern Ireland, see R. Gillespie, Devoted people: belief and religion in early modern Ireland (Manchester, 1997).

[52]. Bentivoglio, Brussels internuncio, 'Catholic Ireland in 1613', Archiv. Hib., 3, p.300; Irish as idolatrous, B. Rich, A new description of Ireland (London, 1610), pp 11, 27.

[53]. Rich, A new description of Ireland, pp 10-11.

[54]. Westmeath to T. Wentworth, 12 Apr 1635, Sheffield City Libraries, WWM Str P 15/14.

[55]. Rich, A new description of Ireland, p.49.

[56]. On the cult of the saints in early modern Ireland, see R. Gillespie, Devoted People, pp 68-73.

were exceptionally rich in relics.[57] In Armagh, the book of Armagh was honoured for its links with Patrick; known as 'Canoin Patraic', it was in the custody of the hereditary 'Maor na canoine' [steward of the canon], hence the family name McMoyer, in Fews barony.[58] Similarly the bell of St Patrick, with its shrine, was in the care of the herenach O'Mulholland family, living near Stewartstown, County Tyrone.[59] The cult of St Colmcille was strong across Ulster. Several relics associated with him were kept in the custody of families in Donegal.[60] The book of Colmcille, with binding of silver and gems, was kept in Durmhaigh Mac Eochagain's country.[61] Some other saints enjoyed regional popularity: St Damhnait was honoured throughout Oriel, specifically Counties Louth and Monaghan.[62] The cult of most saints, however, was purely local. The patron day was celebrated at the church or well associated with the saint, and often a fair took place on that day. Even in the wake of widespread destruction in war, after 1603 many relics of saints survived. The shrine of St Richard of Dundalk may have survived into the seventeenth century.[63] In Dundalk, Richard was revered as a saint of equal standing with Patrick and Colmcille.[64] Particular favours were associated with individual saints. Thus, Donncha was the patron of fishermen in Clogherhead, County Louth. 'Not one man of them was ever drowned, and many other strangers were drowned there before them'; it was further alleged that the weather was always fine on his feastday, held in harvest time.[65]

Even in Ulster, many relics of saints survived into the 1630s, and probably down to 1641. In Kilbroney, County Down, St Bronagh was venerated, 'at whose statue God has

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[57]. See map, H. Crawford, 'A descriptive list of Irish shrines and reliquaries', R.S.A.I. Jn., 53, pp 74-93, 151-76 (here, p.75)

[58]. E. Gwynn, introduction, Book of Armagh: The Patrician documents (Dublin, 1937), p.I; J. Gwynn (ed.), Liber Ardmachanus (Dublin and London, 1913), pp cv-cx; it was in the custody of the family until it was pledged for £5 in 1680.

[59]. W. Reeves, 'On the bell of St Patrick', R.I.A. Trans., 27, pp 1-30 (here, pp 18-19, 25).

[60]. The Cathach or psalter of Columcille was in the custody of the McRorty family, of Ballymagroarty, Tirhugh barony, W. Reeves (ed.), Adamnan, Life of St Columbe (Edinburgh, 1874), pp lix-lx; P. O Gallachair, 'Coarbs and erenaghs of County Donegal', Donegal Annual, 4 no 3, pp 272-81.

[61]. M. O'Clery, The Martyrology of Donegal [1630], eds J. Todd and W. Reeves (Dublin, 1864), p.xl.

[62]. Devotion to St Dympna [Damhnait] in County Louth in sixteenth century, M. Hanmer, Chronicle of Ireland [1571], in Ancient Irish Histories (Dublin, 1809), ii, p.143.

[63]. Unruly soldiers wrecked the monument 'not long ago', J. Ussher to William Camden, 30 Oct 1606, J. Ussher, The whole works of ... James Ussher, C. Elrington and J. Todd eds (Dublin, 1847-64), xv, p.18.

[64]. O'Clery, Martyrology, p. xliii.

[65]. O'Clery, Martyrology, pp xlv-xlvi.

performed many miracles in our day'. Maginnis patronage may have helped the survival of the shrine.[66] In Monaghan, St Damhnait's staff, kept in the church of Tydavnet, was the focus of the saint's cult; down to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the relic was used to detect perjury; a fair was held there on 13 June, her feastday.[67] In Tyrone, the bell and staff of Caoide were preserved, and there was a church in his name in Domhnach-Caoide.[68] In Donegal, the shrine of St Mura's bell was kept in Fahan.[69] The relic known as Bachall Mhuire [Mary's staff] was renowned in Ulster, and only O'Neill was allowed to swear by it; this may have been the wooden image, noted by Nicholas Bernard as 'Mac Kill Murragh', which caused elation in the Irish camp at the siege of Drogheda in 1641-2.[70]

Strong cults survived in the south midlands, and Meath. The shrine of St Ciaran, of Modreny, was included in a list of pilgrimage sites granted a papal indulgence some time after 1605. The patronage of the Nugents, barons Delvin, probably accounted for the inclusion of the shrine of St Fechin, of Fore, County Westmeath, in the same list.[71] The popularity of Fore as a religious venue was attested by the fact that in April 1624, a large crowd under the leadership of several catholic prelates gathered there.[72] Various relics were associated with specific situations. Loman's bachall (or staff) and chain were preserved at Portloman, County Westmeath - the chain was in demand by expectant mothers praying for a safe delivery.[73] Some relics were used for oaths. The bachall of Maoltuile was kept in the parish church of Cill-Maoltuile, in Desert-Midhe, in Meath diocese. The relic was attributed with miraculous powers against those who swore falsely on it.[74] In O'Mulloy's country (Fearcal barony, King's County), Colman Ealo was the local

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[66]. Quote, W. Reeves (ed.), 'Irish itinerary of Father Edmund MacCana [OFM]', [1644], U.J.A., 2 (1854), pp 44-59 (here, p.48); the church of St Broviana of Leggan was one of three churches in Dromore diocese for which Catherine Maginnis, Countess of Tyrone, requested a privileged altar, 14 Oct 1608, ASV, Secretaria Brevium, Altaria perpetua, vol 14 (1608), fols 296-9.

[67]. B. O'Daly, 'St Damhnat', Louth Arch.Soc. Jn., 11, pp 237-51.

[68]. O'Clery, Martyrology, p.373.

[69]. The shrine was in Fahan down to 1846, when it was sold; the bell itself may well have been in the area in the early seventeenth century, H. Swan, 'Historical associations of Fahan', Donegal Annual, 5, p.145.

[70]. Rich, A new description, p.49; R. Gillespsie, 'Destabilising Ulster, 1641-2', in B. Mac Cuarta (ed.), Ulster 1641: Aspects of the Rising (Belfast, 1993), p.116.

[71]. Brief, Paul V [1605-21], undated, Archiv. Hib., 3, pp 261-4; St Feichin of Fore, O'Clery, Martyrology, p.417.

[72]. Lord Deputy Falkland to Secretary Conway, 19 Apr 1624, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.482.

[73]. O'Clery, Martyrology, pp xli-xlii.

[74]. O'Clery, Martyrology, p.445; as noted above, in County Monaghan, St Damhnait's bachall had a similar function.

patron, and his staff was still preserved.[75] There may have been a revival of some old cults, as long-lost relics were rediscovered in the early seventeenth century. Thus in Meath, Peter Mac Eochagain discovered the brass bachall of Aodh mac Bric, inlaid with silver, and Mac Eochagain presumably held custody of this relic. The tub of Berchain had been recently found in the Ui Berchain territory of King's County; the wood was solid enough to hold water.[76]

People believed strongly in the power of the saints, and in the access to that power which relics provided. Relics were regularly carried about the countryside, not only within the locality where the saint was patron, but sometimes beyond. These tours were to facilitate those unable to travel in person to the shrine, perhaps because of sickness or age, as was the case with similar tours organised by the Cistercians and Franciscans; access to the relic entailed a small fee. Catholic reformers dismissed this practice as a money-making venture by those in charge of relics, who were generally laymen. Another practice, emphatically condemned as superstitious by tridentine reformers, was for lay people to dip the sacred object in a container of water, while performing exorcism by saying some small prayers; this water was then used to sprinkle people and cattle.[77] Prophecies were attributed to some saints: according to the prophecy of Berchan, the pope was to release Ireland from foreign bondage;[78] at the feast of All Saints, 1606, Lough Erne in Fermanagh dried up, and it was believed that a prophecy of Columbanus foretold the drying of the sea.[79] New cults were emerging. In Raphoe in 1640, angelic voices, singing enchantedly, were heard for fifteen days at the grave of a Cistercian, James Colanus; this phenomenon, and other wonders attributed to Colanus, attracted both catholics and protestants.[80]

Some wooden statues of the Virgin were the focus of widespread cults: before its destruction in 1611, the image housed in a small chapel near Coleraine, adorned with marks of devotion and thanks from those allegedly cured there, attracted pilgrims from a wide area, including the Pale towns.[81] From the time of Henry VIII, down to its destruction

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[75]. O'Clery, Martyrology, p.xliv.

[76]. O'Clery, Martyrology, p.xli.

[77]. The bachall of Lomman was in the possession of Walter MacEdward, in Portloman, County Westmeath, O'Clery, Martyrology, p.435; the bachall of Aodh mac Bric was owned by Peter MacEochagain, ibid., p.xli; as noted above, in Ulster, relics associated with Patrick and Colmcille were in the hereditary custody of various families; 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections on Irish church history, pp 130-1.

[78]. O'Clergy, Martyrology, p.xxxiii.

[79]. Letter of David Roche, 1608, from Rome, I.E.R., 10 (1873), pp 454-5.

[80]. Acta, Propaganda Fide, 2 Apr 1640, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.111.

[81]. [C. Hollywood SJ] to Richard Conway, 4 Nov 1611, I.E.R., 10, pp 290-7; on the destruction

by Sir Charles Coote in 1642, the statue known as Our Lady of Trim was kept 'with great veneration' in a private house in the town.[82] In the 1630s, the Marian statue in the possession of the Poor Clares in their convent outside Athlone was renowned.[83] A belief in miraculous powers was associated with some shrines. This was the case with the images of the Blessed Virgin, near Coleraine, and in the Dundalk area, in the early 1600s; a secular priest in Dundalk testified to 'marvelous and real cures, which I have seen'. The Dundalk statue was a recent phenomenon, showing that new cults could emerge, reflecting new situations; the cult and its attendant miracles were linked, in the eyes of this priest, with the intensification of religious persecution in the post-1603 period, and interpreted as a sign of divine disapproval of the new religion.[84]

Church authorities were promoting certain pilgrimage sites after the hiatus posed by the recent war. This aim was expressed in the papal approbation granted to pilgrimage places across Ireland, some time after 1605, presumably at the behest of the local ecclesiastical custodians. Benefits included a plenary indulgence, on confession of sins and receiving holy communion, on different feasts at the various sites: in the northern province, at the chapel of St Fechin, in Fore, County Westmeath, on Corpus Christi, the Annunciation, and the patron's day; and at the metropolitan church in Armagh, on the feast of St Patrick.[85] Requests for papal favours were doubtless supported by the nobility who were patrons of the church in those localities.[86] Thus the baron of Delvin probably supported the request for the site at Fore, and Hugh O'Neill, for that at Armagh; in all likelihood, these papal grants were made with the blessing of the primate, Archbishop Peter Lombard, and formed part of his reform agenda for the Irish church. Papal approbation reflected local ecclesiastical promotion of these forms of popular piety, which may have been undergoing a revival after the disruption of war. By emphasising the reception of the sacraments, these grants may also have been inspired by a desire to face

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of this statue, see chapter one.

[82]. J. Gilbert (ed.), A contemporary history of affairs in Ireland 1641-1652 (Dublin, 1879), i, p.32.

[83]. H. Concannon, Irish nuns in penal days (London, 1931), p.36.

[84]. Fr Henry Mellan, Dundalk, Jan 1608, W.M'D., 'Irish ecclesiastical colleges since the reformation', I.E.R., 10, p.181.

[85]. Brief, Paul V, undated, Archiv. Hib., 3, pp 261-4.

[86]. Papal grants of privileged altars to a series of churches, from Dundalk to O'Cahan's country [County Londonderry], were made at the behest of the earl of Tyrone, and Catherine Magennis, his wife, within months of their arrival in Rome in 1608, ASV, Secretaria Brevium, Altaria perpetua, vol 14 (1608), ff 39, 296-9.

the challenge posed to religious orthodoxy and ecclesiastical authority by the popular gatherings at holy wells and trees.

Popular piety embraced both christian and pagan elements. The landscape was dotted with holy wells or springs, many of which were associated with the cult of local saints. Holy wells were flourishing centres of popular devotion and carousing.[87] Thus in MacCoghlan's country (Garrycastle barony, King's County), was St Manchain's well; as was customary at such places, devotion took the form of the station, or 'turas', involving a number of set exercises to be performed there on the saint's day.[88] Belief in the favours granted through the saints' intercession, arising from devotion at the wells, was widespread. In Meath, it was reported that an English protestant prayed at St Helen's well; after washing his hand in the water, it was healed, and he became a catholic.[89] Catholic reformers were prepared to countenance these devotions, allowing that they gave benefit by the natural healing power of the waters, and by the intercession of the saints. However, practices at the many sacred wells popular in the early seventeenth century contained pagan elements, which tridentine ecclesiastics were keen to purge; the sacred trees which also attracted crowds in this period were more clearly pagan, without a christian context.[90]

This was also the case with the 'coarse images', or sheela-na-gigs, which catholic pastors were enjoined to collect from their parishes, and store away.[91] To guard themselves and their cattle from the ravages of evil spirits, people were drawn to seek spells, charms and incantations from hags and witches. Both men and women, described as witches and users of incantations, were engaged in these exorcisms.[92] Thus the blessed water and set prayers which the church offered in these situations were but one among a range of remedies which people sought.[93] The practice of placing curses on people and cattle was

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[87]. The many holy wells listed in various counties in subsequent centuries were doubtless thriving in the early seventeenth century; for named wells as centres of popular merriment, see J. Deane (ed.), 'Extracts [re County Louth] from Isaac Butler's journal' [1744], Louth Arch.Soc.Jn., 5, pp 93-108; C. O Danachair, 'The holy wells of Dublin', Repertorium Novum, 2, pp 68-87, 233-5.

[88]. O'Clery, Martyrology, p.xlv.

[89]. Jesuit annual letter 1619, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.159.

[90]. 1614 Drogheda synod, Renehan, Collections on Irish church history, pp 130-1.

[91]. 1631 Tuam synod, Renehan, Collections on Irish church history, p.492; given the broadly common Gaelic culture of Ulster and Connacht in the early modern period, it is probable that these images featured also in the north; on their survival in the seventeenth century, see P. Corish, The Catholic Community in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (Dublin, 1981), pp 37, 65, 69.

[92]. Decrees of Tuam synod, 1632, in P. Moran, Memoirs of Most Rev Oliver Plunkett (Dublin, 1861), p.389.

[93]. Stories about the legendary sanctity of a Donegal friar who died in 1549, illustrating his opposition to these spells, reflected practices current at the time of writing in 1618, Jennings (ed.),

common; part of the ministry of tridentine missioners such as the Capuchins was to liberate those in thrall to these spells.[94] Apart from the Franciscans, culturally at home in the Gaelic world, the reforming impact of the tridentine clergy on the religion of the populace was restricted, given their small number, not to mention their geographical and social concentration among the Anglo-Irish elite.[95] Even among the numerous Franciscans, only a proportion of those actually ministering in Ulster and isolated areas of north Leinster had a continental training; in 1618, about 30% of friars in Ireland were preachers.[96] In Meath, because of the catechising efforts of the many tridentine clergy, popular piety was moving towards the tridentine norm, in that people were going more frequently to the sacraments, and catholic religious knowledge was increasing among them.[97] Thus, with the possible exception of Meath, the influence on popular beliefs and practices of missioners of all orders, and the small but growing numbers of tridentine diocesan clergy, was limited. By 1641, the world of popular religion over most of the northern province was little touched by tridentine reform.

Attitudes to protestantism reveal another aspect of popular belief. Arising from the preaching of the friars, in some areas lay people had a sense of the incompatibility of the two denominations, and this understanding was spreading. Thus in County Londonderry, in May 1615, Art M'Tomlen O'Mullan accused the churchwarden Brian McShane O'Mullan of not fulfilling his duties as warden, in part by maintaining a priest to say masses in his house.[98] By drawing on the theme in counter-reformation polemic whereby Luther was viewed as the son of Lucifer, popular preaching in Irish reinforced animosity against the representatives of the new church order, by linking them with the devil.[99]

'Brussels Ms 3947', pp 41-7; Rich, A New Description of Ireland, pp 41-2.

[94]. Letters and relation of Francis [Nugent] OFMCap, acta, Propaganda Fide, 15 Mar 1632, Archiv. Hib., 22, p.62.

[95]. For examples from the corpus of Franciscan devotional poetry in Irish at this time, see C. Mhag Craith (ed.), Dan na mBrathar Mionur (2 vols, Dublin, 1967-80); links between tridentine clergy and the Anglo-Irish gentry and nobility are explored in chapter six.

[96]. In 1618, merely 35 of the 120 Franciscans in Ireland were preachers, B. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.18.

[97]. This was the opinion of the Jesuits in 1617, and they cited the testimony of Christopher Cusack, rector of the Irish college, Douai, a visitor to his native county of Meath, Jesuit annual letter 1617, IJA, MacErlean Transcripts, translations, p.80.

[98]. Examination of Knogher M'Gilpatrick O'Mullan, c.60 years old, before Sir Thomas Phillips, 10 May 1615, Cal.S.P.Ire., 1615-25, p.54; the context of this encounter is given in R. Gillespie, Conspiracy: Ulster plots and plotters in 1615 (Belfast, 1987).

[99]. This theme featured in a work designed for the use of pastors in Ireland, namely, Aodh Mac Aingil, Scathan Shacramuinte na hAithridhe (Louvain, 1618); for a discussion of the relevant section, see M. O Riordan, 'The native Ulster mentalite as revealed in Gaelic sources 1600-50', in

Antipathy to protestantism was also revealed in responses to the destruction and secularisation of church premises and relics, which represented a traumatic break for the people of the locality. Towards the end of the Nine Years War, Edward Baron Cromwell destroyed Down cathedral, together with the relics of Patrick, Bridget and Colmcille kept there. Into the 1640s, old people reckoned the passing of the years by reference to this cataclysmic event.[100] Former convents, which had come into protestant hands, were viewed as polluted, and thus not suitable as a place of burial. Thus in 1618, indicative of catholic insecurity in that decade of anti-recusant pressure, Nicholas Archbold, of Westmeath, requested burial with the Franciscans in Multyfarnham, 'if it be not polluted or the Franciscan friars from hence banished'.[101] However, in rural areas especially, burials continued to take place in the former convents. In the case of the Franciscan convent of Creevelea, County Leitrim, the new owner was assuming part of the role exercised by the friars. Walter Harrison, a settler of military background, had part of the church roof, which had been destroyed by fire, covered by thatch. This was to facilitate the tradition of burial within the premises, for which the newcomer, following the Franciscan custom, was accepting money.[102]

A corpus of psychic experiences, and cautionary tales, emerged, centred on those, especially protestants, who had acquired former religious properties. The Franciscan historian, Donatus Mooney, resident in Drogheda in the mid-1610s, related the stories associated with the former Franciscan convent in the town. The tenor of these, as recounted by Mooney, was to show that 'unjust profanations of our [Franciscan] places are not permitted by God with impunity'.[103] However he is at pains to stress that these accounts were widespread within the community, reflecting catholic (and not merely Franciscan) unease and resentment at the profanation of once sacred sites. One focus of popular anxiety was the destruction of convent buildings. Mooney drew on the reminisences of contemporaries, such as the diocesan priest Balthasar Delahoyd (born

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B. Mac Cuarta (ed.), Ulster 1641, p.85, and M. Mac Craith, 'The Gaelic reaction to the Reformation', in S. Ellis and S. Barber (eds), Conquest and Union: Fashioning a British State, 1484-1725 (London and New York, 1995), pp 139-61.

[100]. W. Reeves (ed.), 'Itinerary of Fr Edmund MacCana' [1644], U.J.A., 2, p.51.

[101]. Will of Nicholas Archbold, 22 July 1618, NAI, RC5/11, pp 66-71; on protestant ownership of convents viewed as profanation of traditional burial grounds, see B. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.17.

[102]. B. Jennings (ed), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.21; the Harrisons were becoming conversant with the religious culture of the area, for they sent a son to be fostered with a local Irish family, B. Mac Cuarta, 'The Plantation of Leitrim, 1620-41', Ir.Hist.St., 127, p.317.

[103]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.32.

c.1564), and an unnamed merchant.[104] One owner wanted to knock down the bell tower, and sell the marble for profit. Overnight, the workers engaged on this task were all terrified, and refused to continue; 'nothing would move them to violate anything belonging to St Francis'.[105] In the mid-1610s, a subsequent owner, Moses Hill, attempted to demolish the tower. This was similarly thwarted by the reluctance of the workers, for the memory of the previous attempt was still fresh; further, in this instance a stone fell from the top of the tower, as the men were gathered underneath, without, it was believed, any human agency.

Burial in or near a convent was greatly desired, even after the premises had been vacated by the religious.[106] Hence it was not surprising that abnormal phenomena associated with the cemetery of the Drogheda convent were reported. The burial ground had been turned into a kitchen garden by the protestant occupier, and vegetables in the shape of a hand emerged; eventually no one would buy these; it was held that 'by this prodigy, the sacriligious profanation of the sacred place was being reproved and condemned by God'.[107]

It was further believed that ill-fortune and fearsome apparitions dogged the occupiers of the former convent. Some had tried to run a business there, in what seemed an ideal commercial location. Many occupants, however, were reduced to poverty, and terrified by abnormal sights and sounds: unusual singing, and being beaten, whipped and cudgeled by men in the Franciscan habit. One after the other, the traders vacated the premises. Their otherwise inexplicable failure was viewed as divine retribution for desecrating the convent by trade.[108]

In 1611, a series of abnormal occurrences, widely reported, testified to local disquiet at the sale of the convent to the northern provost-marshal, Sir Moses Hill, 'a most evil heretic persecutor of catholics'.[109] For a month before the sale, crying and wailing were heard nightly in the premises. Hill made the place his dwelling. After some time, however, his

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[104]. On Delahoyd's subsequent row with the Franciscans in Drogheda, see chapter seven.

[105]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.29.

[106]. C. Tait, Death, Burial and Commemoration in Ireland, 1550-1650 (Basingstoke, 2002),pp 77-8; see locations of burial requested, wills, especially 1620s and 1630s, NAI RC/5, passim.

[107]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.30.

[108]. In the early 1640s, a Franciscan noted a similar process in the friars' convent at Carrickfergus, County Antrim. A citizen used the convent ruins to build a house; 'under the just judgment of God he was deprived by the governor of the town of both house and other premises ... Of the sacrilegious act and of the merited punishment which was inflicted by heaven, I have met many eyewitnesses', W. Reeves (ed.), 'Itinerary of Fr Edmund MacCana' [1644], U.J.A., 2, p.59.

[109]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.28.

wife declared publicly that she would never live there anymore, for she had experienced dreadful nocturnal visions. In autumn 1615 she was struck with paralysis, and attributed her affliction to 'divine virtue', interpreted locally as divine displeasure at Hill's ownership of the convent.[110]

These stories reflected the trauma occasioned by the break in the local religious landscape which the reformation entailed. They pointed to unease within the catholic community at the secularisation of once holy sites, an unease present even many decades after the expulsion of the friars. Popular anxiety was compounded if the premises were in protestant hands, for, in the view of some, the burial ground once patronised by local families was thereby desecrated.

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In this chapter, we have attempted to sketch some features of the piety of catholic laypeople in the north in the early seventeenth century. As was the case across the kingdom, for people of all classes, the year was punctuated by feasts and fasts. Commentators noted the Irish predilection for regular fasting. Patronal feastdays, whether of the founders of the various religious orders, or of local saints, were marked with special celebration, which, in the case of the mendicants, included meals for large numbers of people. In all cases, these events were associated with merry-making and carousing, which catholic reformers struggled to curtail. In the north, the revival of Lough Derg from the early 1620s placed it among the leading pilgrimages in Ireland, attracting people from a broad social and geographical spectrum. In placing the Franciscans in charge of the devotions, the church authorities sought to ensure the orthodoxy of the pilgrimage; the focus was on personal conversion, and reconciliation. Its popularity reflected the same desire for healing which found expression in the crowds seeking pardons and indulgences up and down the country.

One influence on the piety of the Anglo-Irish elite was the ministry of the English recusant priests who sought refuge in Ireland from the 1590s. They represented one source for the reforming of catholicism in the early seventeenth century. It appears that their influence was limited largely to the noble households in which they were chaplains. The personal testimony and witness of individual laypeople played a role in conversions to catholicism at this social level. Pilgrimage to Rome and Loreto, while limited to a few, even among the elite, contributed to the diffusion of continental forms of piety. Devotion to the friars and their founders, especially the Franciscans, was expressed in gifts, and

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[110]. Jennings (ed.), 'Brussels Ms 3947', p.32.

legacies for masses. The wealth and devotion of the Anglo-Irish elite fuelled the extraordinary expansion of religious orders in Drogheda and the Pale. In wills of nobility and gentry, provision for masses, to be said especially by communities of religious, reflected widespread concern to provide spiritually for the dead. Other expressions of elite piety associated with care for the dead included gifts of chalices for use at mass, and the erection of wayside stone crosses, which were a feature of the Anglo-Irish areas, particularly Meath, in this period.

Religion at the popular level embraced both christian and pagan elements. The work of missioners of various orders, the preaching of bishops and other continentally-trained prelates, and the slow diffusion of tridentine clergy, most notably in the parishes of Meath diocese, would suggest that a better understanding of the faith was emerging in some areas. Meath diocese probably had one of the largest concentrations of tridentine clergy in the kingdom by the 1630s. However, the influence of tridentine clergy tended to be greatest among the social elite, and was concentrated geographically in the Anglo-Irish areas. Antipathy to protestantism was part of popular catholicism, doubtless reflecting the impact of preaching over several generations. Trauma at the transfer of religious houses to protestant ownership featured in the case of the Franciscan convent at Drogheda, and perhaps elsewhere. The cult of local saints and their relics was widespread throughout the church province. Tenuous references to these cults, and beliefs and practices associated with cures and spells, point to the sturdy endurance of a whole corpus of popular religion which remained resolutely impervious to the reforming zeal of tridentine clergy.

CONCLUSION

The evolution of catholicism in the northern ecclesiastical province in early seventeenth-century Ireland has been the subject of this study. A major trend was the change among parish clergy, in many areas, from token conformity to a clearly Roman confessional identity. At the beginning of the century, the nominal adherence of parish clergy to the state church was widespread, in line with the spread of central government control outwards from the Pale, extending to Ulster and the midlands in the wake of peace in 1603. Developments within catholicism help to explain the emergence, by the 1620s, of a more exclusively catholic religious identity. The gradual and uneven diffusion of tridentine clergy across the north was underway by about 1610. These clerics contributed greatly to the withering of the nativist conformity characteristic of the parish clergy in the early years of the century.

In tracing the emergence of tridentine clergy, the contrast between Ulster and north Leinster must be noted. Differences in catholicism between both areas arose from their contrasting Gaelic and Anglo-Irish cultural and social forms. Traditional differences were accentuated by the fact that the Anglo-Irish remained loyal during the northern revolt of the 1590s. These considerations contributed to the divisions within northern catholicism which characterised the early seventeenth century. The study underlines the slow pace of religious change. The persistence of traditionalist parochial clergy has been detected across the north, but especially in Ulster. Only from the beginning of the 1610s were clergy who had studied on the continent appearing in any numbers in the Anglo-Irish areas. Newer-style clergy were fewer in Ulster; there, down to 1641, these comprised merely a small number of the higher clergy. The continentally trained among the growing numbers of Franciscans represented the most significant cadre of tridentine clergy in Ulster, though these were a minority even among the friars, at least into the 1620s, and probably later. However, despite their paucity, such clergy were crucial in the survival of catholicism in Ulster. The group of diocesan vicars appointed by Rothe in the early 1610s, assisted by the friars, ensured the loyalty of priests and people to Rome. This was a minimalist achievement; tridentine reform had little impact on the lower clergy in Ulster, where clerical concubinage persisted into the

1630s; down to 1641, diocesan ordinaries were struggling to impose the newer, more demanding standards on a clerical body which had lacked the normal structures of ecclesiastical discipline since the end of the sixteenth century. In contrast, by the 1630s Meath was among the Irish dioceses in which tridentine catholicism was most fully realised. These divergences between the catholicism of Ulster and of the Anglo-Irish areas contributed to the tensions which erupted in the Confederation of Kilkenny in the 1640s.[1]

The varied distribution of newer-style clergy across the north points to the differing pace of religious change; in this, developments in catholicism mirror the differential spread of the reformation to the localities. The impact of religious coercion, and the emergence of a new layer of tridentine clergy within the clerical body, differed across the region. A mosaic pattern best describes this process. In this, the aristocracy and gentry played a crucial role in protecting the old faith in their localities, and in promoting tridentine catholicism through patronage of clergy who had studied on the continent. Strong and active landlords were able to protect their tenants from the impositions arising from the crown's coercive religious policy, implemented especially rigorously in the 1610s. Further, by their protection and patronage of continentally trained clergy, landowners (together with the merchants of the towns) were key agents of religious change within the catholic community. It was, in part, from the continental orientation of these families from the 1590s, through schooling, trade and military service, that a new cadre of clergy was emerging in north Leinster from about 1610; these were the clerics who were returning from studies abroad to minister in the region; kinship networks among the landed elite provided the pastoral context for their apostolate. While such priests were to be found among the secular clergy, especially in the Anglo-Irish heartlands of Counties Meath and Louth, men of this background comprised the bulk of the Jesuits and Capuchins, and some were also to be found among the Franciscans, who were similarly active in their home areas.

In the evolution of catholicism in Ulster, another influence was that of Scottish settlers, and in particular the Hamilton family, earls of Abercorn, based in Strabane barony, County Tyrone, and Sir Randall MacDonnell, first earl of Antrim. Particularly in Strabane, a colony

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[1] . Political tensions within the catholic community in the 1640s are explored in M. O Siochru, Confederate Ireland: A Constitutional and Political Analysis (Dublin, 1999); the religious dimension is treated in T. O hAnnrachain, Catholic Reformation in Ireland: The Mission of Rinuccini, 1645-1649.

of émigré Scots catholics was emerging by the 1620s, under Hamilton leadership. In this milieu, tridentine clergy were especially welcomed. The Scottish catholics included several dynamic and influential individuals who had fled their homeland because of anti-catholic pressures there. Their religious zeal was such that they were active prosletysers among their fellow-Scots. As a result, together with the Londoners' indulgence of catholicism, in the 1630s the Derry diocese was the envy of catholic ecclesiastics elsewhere in Ulster. Earlier, from the 1590s, recusants were finding refuge in Ireland (including north Leinster) from the pressures of anti-catholic coercion in England. Priests among them were serving as chaplains in aristocratic households, primarily in families where the lady of the house was English. Thus Scottish, and to a lesser extent, English, settlers played a small but significant role in fostering a revived catholicism in their localities. Women of the Anglo-Irish elite were especial patrons of the new-style clergy; in addition, some were joining convents on the continent; it was a sign of the normalization of catholic life by the late 1630s that two convents for women had been established in the region.

Religious coercion was part of the backdrop of catholicism in this period. However, in practice, it was concentrated in limited periods, in particular during the years 1605-7 in the Pale, and in the 1610s throughout the region. Study of the implementation of this coercion, however, highlights the limits of centralised policy. At times of rigid enforcement, many priests were imprisoned, and in the 1610s especially many laypeople were severely dealt with in the collection of the recusancy fine. A more constant burden was the fact that in most localities people laboured under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the state church. Nevertheless, the edicts of central government depended for their execution on the acquiescence of local notables. The power of local magnates and notables could in practice mitigate, and sometimes vitiate entirely, the decrees of central government against catholicism. Depending on local arrangements, anti-catholic measures could vary in rigour. Protestant landlords – such as the Londoners in Londonderry, and the Bagnalls in south Down – could be just as keen to ignore these measures as catholic notables were. In east Ulster, the exceptional level of destruction before 1603, the predominance of British settlers thereafter, and the consequent absence of tridentine clergy, contributed to the persistence of forms of confessional ambiguity among catholics into the 1630s; this ambiguity had largely disappeared elsewhere by then. Coercion abjectly failed to break the Roman church's infrastructure in the localities, neither did it draw laity to the state church in any sustained manner. Indeed, the solidarity it engendered, under the leadership of the clergy newly returned from the continent, served to foster the growing catholic identity. Anti-recusant

coercion, coupled with the vigorous enforcement of ecclesiastical exactions by the established church, caused widespread resentment against the state church within Irish society. These trends reinforced antipathy against protestantism, a stance which was probably already widespread by 1603, for it was being diffused by Franciscan preaching since the late sixteenth century. In 1615, Irish anger at clerical greed erupted in violence against state church personnel in mid-Ulster. Similarly, in 1641-2, native resentment at state church impositions over the previous decades contributed to the targeting of state clergy, and the desecration of churches, which characterised Irish attacks on the British in Ulster.[2]

The patronage of the Anglo-Irish elite, together with the influence of returned tridentine clergy, and the easing of coercion against priests, accounted for the flowering of religious orders in north Leinster in the 1620s and 1630s. In Ulster, too, the Franciscans were growing in number in these decades. Growth in clergy numbers gave rise to an increasing burden of maintenance on the laity; tensions within the catholic community ensued. In north Leinster, especially, disputes arose between the orders, and between bishops and religious, arising from the medieval legacies of the respective orders. Tensions also existed between the traditionalism of the lower clergy, and the more exigent outlook of the higher clergy. This led to conflict, especially in Ulster, between the diocesan ordinaries, and some among the lower clergy, who included large numbers of recalcitrant vagabond clerics, a disruptive influence, for they were unamenable to episcopal control. By 1641, with the exception of Meath diocese, and south County Louth, parochial clergy were still largely traditionalist. The persistence of popular forms of piety, such as pilgrimages, and devotion to relics, underlined the local and conservative nature of catholicism. While the efforts of tridentine clergy ensured the survival of the Roman church, their influence on popular religion across the province of Armagh was limited; their greatest impact was on the elites of the Anglo-Irish areas .[3]

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[2] . N. Canny, Making Ireland British 1580-1650 (Oxford, 2001), pp 469-491 ('The Rising in Ulster in 1641').

[3] . For a more positive assessment of the impact of tridentine catholicism in Ireland as a whole by 1641, see T. O hAnnrachain, Catholic Reformation in Ireland: The mission of Rinuccini 1645-1649 (Oxford, 2002), pp 39-81 ('Development and reform in the Irish Church, 1618-1645').

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