Perspectives on James II and the Emergence of Jacobitism in Ireland

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Part I: Introduction

On March 12, 1689, James II, the deposed Stuart monarch, came to Ireland with the intention of raising a sizeable army among the large Catholic populace and pressing his claims to the throne. Months later, he set sail for France and never returned. To be sure, James had been defeated at the Battle of the Boyne by William's army; however his force remained largely intact and indeed continued to fight for another year without him. James had lost his nerve and fled, as he had done before in 1688, during the Glorious Revolution.

The speed with which James fled across Ireland has become legendary in the folk tradition. One popular story relates how James, after reaching Dublin, declared to the Lady Tyrconnel, "your countrymen, madam, can run well." She was quick to reply, "Not quite so well as your majesty, for I see you have won the race."[1] James had abandoned a capable Irish army for the safety of France. Yet nearly a year later, as that same Irish Catholic army stood ready for battle, unaware that the impending clash would effectively end their war with William, they demonstrated both loyalty and reverence for the Stuart line. This paper is an examination of why Irish Catholics continued to devote themselves to a king who appeared to have abandoned them.

The inspiration for this study of Irish views of James II grew unexpectedly out of a class I took on eighteenth and nineteenth-century Irish poetry while abroad in Ireland. The class involved an interdisciplinary analysis of Irish poetry during the period of the

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[1] J. G. Simms, *Jacobite Ireland* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 153. Hereafter cited as Simms.

Protestant ascendancy with a particular focus on the decline and transformation of the Irish bardic tradition. It related the plight of the eighteenth- century Irish poets, many of whom had witnessed the tumultuous events of the Glorious Revolution in England and the subsequent Williamite wars. These Gaelic writers, who once occupied a highly regarded position in Irish society, suffered greatly during the crises of the seventeenth century and especially due to the extensive dispossession of the Catholic landed class who supported and patronized their livelihood for centuries. Their poetry expressed a highly emotive and personal account of contemporary political events and was captivating from both a literary and historical viewpoint.

The most surprising theme in these poems was their persistent faith in the Stuart dynasty despite its political and military ineptitude. For example, an eighteenth-century poem entitled "Mo Ghile Mear" (The Lively Lad, i.e., Bonnie Prince Charlie), imagined the victorious return of James's grandson and the violent expulsion of English Protestants from Irish soil. Yet, while the poets of the late eighteenth century continued to endorse the claims of James III and Charles Edward Stuart, the successors in the Stuart line, they seemed to harbor particularly hostile feelings towards James II, who by the late eighteenth century had become "'Seamus An Chacha' (James the Shite) who, with his one English shoe and one Irish shoe, had lost Ireland."[2] This relationship between the Irish Catholics and James II, which was suggested by Dr. J. S. McGee, eventually became the basis for this undergraduate thesis.

Since James II was not depicted in a positive light by the eighteenth-century Irish poets, it seemed logical to expect even more rancorous descriptions in the years after

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[2] Eamonn O' Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite Cause, 1685-1766* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001) 83. Hereafter cited as O' Ciardha.

1690, following his flight from the Boyne. Indeed, in 1691, Irish Catholics suffered a devastating defeat at the Battle of Aughrim, where two-thirds of the Irish aristocracy was wiped out. If Irish anger towards the deposed monarch was ever at its height, one would assume it would have been then. Upon closer study, however, the contrary proved to be the case. In fact, Catholic opinion of James II in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century was mostly positive. Furthermore, references to James II in other documentary sources, such as correspondence, sermons, narratives, and political treatises, expressed both loyalty and reverence for the Stuart king. It appeared that Irish Catholic opinion during the early eighteenth century was very different than that of the late eighteenth century poets. This paper is therefore concerned with how Irish Catholics viewed James II after his defeat, and more particularly, why they persisted in professing loyalty to a monarch who abandoned them.

It is not difficult to understand why James's accession in 1685, was received with praise by the general Catholic populace in Ireland. In the two critical matters of land and religion, the new king represented the prospect of desirable change. Catholics were no longer forced to perform their religious practices in secret, and the landed class now had a king whom they believed was sympathetic to their cause. These hopes were particularly raised by the birth of a male heir to James's wife Mary of Modena on June 30, 1688. Irish supporters of James II thought they could be certain that a Catholic succession was ensured, a certainty that of course evaporated in the wake of the Revolution of 1688 that began in November and the Williamite Wars that followed. How did Irish Catholics understand and explain their allegiance to the English throne? Furthermore, why did Jacobites remain undyingly loyal to James II even after his craven flight from the Boyne?

To answer these questions, evidence has been drawn from the writings of Irish Catholic and Protestant Jacobites, including correspondence, personal accounts, pamphlets, and sermons. The very political narrative accounts of "A Light to the Blind" and the Charles O' Kelly's "Destruction of Cyprus," have been analyzed for their views towards James II. Charles O' Kelly narrative is of particular interest as he was a commander in the Williamite Wars and thus expressed the perspective an Irish Catholic who witnessed the tragic loss at the Battle of Aughrim and continued to demonstrate loyalty to James II. The writings of two clergy members of the Church of Ireland as well as a Catholic bishop shed light on the religious experience of both Catholics and Protestants and even, in the case of Charles Leslie, a Protestant Jacobite. Moreover, the literary tradition of poetry and folk songs that were integral to Irish culture but that have been largely neglected until recently have been examined. Poetry and folk songs can be an invaluable source because they contain important indicators of popular sentiment. They also reveal very personal accounts of contemporary events that express an emotive and intimate sense of the period. One intention of this paper is that an analysis of this oft ignored body of texts, when understood within the context of more traditional sources, will further illuminate the Irish experience during a pivotal stage of their history.

Though James fled the Boyne, Irish Catholics remained surprisingly loyal. To understand this fervent allegiance to the deposed Stuart line it is important understand three critical factors. First, as has already been stated, James, as a Catholic king, represented prospects for change in the two important areas of land and religion. Though Catholics were eventually defeated at the Battle of Aughrim, they did not consider their

defeat to be absolute. The fact that Louis XIV continued to support James II led many to believe that he would once again try to recapture the throne. James's restoration was favorable to the French king who was currently involved in a continental war with the Augsburg Alliance and William, the new king of England, was an important part of this alliance. If James reclaimed the throne, William's power would be undermined and Louis would have the support of the restored Stuart monarchy. Thus, the international conflict fueled Irish expectation and Irish Catholics continued to suppose that James II would attempt to reclaim his crown. Indeed, this belief was not entirely unfounded as James and his successors continued to press their rights to the monarchy, well in the eighteenth century.

Secondly, a religious sense of divine determination ensured that many Irish Catholics expected a Stuart restoration because they believed it was the will of God. While they debated whether James's loss at the Boyne was a result of God's testing of their devotion or his punishment for their waywardness, the Irish believed that every political event was a result of the Lord's divine will. Though uncertain of when, they did not doubt that God ultimately favored a Catholic predominance.

Finally, a firm devotion to the concept of succession by hereditary right caused many Catholics, and even certain Protestants, to question the legitimacy of William's reign. James II was the rightful heir by lineage, and to alter the succession was to undermine the divinely appointed order of heritable monarchy. Furthermore, if a king could be chosen and deposed by the whimsy of parliament, how could any leader truly operate? To Jacobites, James was the rightful successor whether they liked him or not, and to declare a new king while he remained alive had frightening implications.

Irish Poetry

The topic of Irish Jacobitism, and particularly its poetry has been well discussed in the works of Eamonn O' Ciardha, Nicholas Canny, and Brendan O' Buachalla. As a historical source, poetry can be quite problematic due its abstract form and the subjective nature of its interpretation. However, Eamonn O' Ciardha argues that,

> historians should not dismiss the repetitive rhetoric of the poem, song and sermon without attempting to integrate such material into the context of Irish, British and European politics . . . The very fact that such Jacobite or anti-Jacobite rhetoric continually resounded from the pulpit, press or pew, or was fixedly rooted in the repertoire of the poet, is indicative of its popularity among audiences. It is also a further demonstration of the survival of the Stuart king as . . . Messiah in Irish political life for the first part of the eighteenth century.[3]

The fact that certain themes in Irish poetry also appear in other contemporary documents, such as political treatises and narratives, supports the view that they were widespread among contemporaries. That Daibhi O' Bruadair, Diarmit McArthy, and Eoghan O' Rathille were all writing about similar Jacobite ideas displays the extent to which Jacobite rhetoric and ideology was pervasive in Irish society.

Nicholas Canny's article about why Gaelic poetry should be analyzed as a historical source notes

> the measured statements that are such a striking feature of the Old English political treatises composed in the English language occasionally make their appearance in this Gaelic literature, but what makes the Gaelic writings particularly valuable as a historical source is that they provide information on a much wider spectrum of Irish Catholic opinion than do the English language texts, and again, unlike the English language texts, the Gaelic compositions were produced consistently over the entire period

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[3] O' Ciardha, 49.

> in question.[4]

Although English would have been the predominant language among the landed classes, Gaelic was spoken by the vast majority of lower class Irish Catholics. While the extent to which the poetry spread throughout Ireland is highly debatable, one can be sure that at a local level, the poets were very influential. Their poetry would have been put to music in pubs and circulated within local communities. As Brendan O' Buachalla remarks,

> Irish political poetry for most of the eighteenth century is essentially Jacobite poetry. Its underlying values, its rhetoric, its ideology can be readily identified as Jacobite; the main poets of the period can be classified as Jacobite poets, that is poets who championed the cause of James II (in Latin Jacobus, hence Jacobite) and his descendants.[5]

While the writings as they stand alone, may be hard to interpret, their consistency with other Jacobite sources, and in the context of the rhetoric of the period, can certainly be useful. Not only do the poets provide highly personal accounts of the period, they also set the contemporary events of the seventeenth century into the context of a very old Irish tradition and thus, to a certain extent, express a perception firmly rooted in Irish cultural understanding. Furthermore, as Nicholas Canny astutely points out, they remain a valuable source of political insight for a faction that did not write extensively in the English language.

The principle poets of the seventeenth century were undoubtedly Eogan O' Raithille and Dabhi O' Bruadair. These poets, more than any others, have left a significant amount of poetry that has been preserved and even widely translated into

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[4] Nicholas Canny, "The Formation of the Irish Mind: Religion, Politics, and Gaelic Irish Literature 1580-1750," *Past and Present*, 92 (1982): 95. Hereafter cited as Canny.
[5] Brendan O' Buachalla, "Irish Jacobite Poetry," *Irish Review*, 7 (1992): 42. Hereafter cited as O' Buachalla.

English. Of their personal lives, not entirely too much is known. O' Bruadair, the older of the two, had witnessed Cromwell's invasion of Ireland as well as the accession of a Catholic king and his subsequent flight.[6] James's loss at the Boyne was the last in a long line of disappointments for O' Bruadair and his poetry certainly expressed a bitter tone. In his later years, he was contemptuous of the decline of the Irish poetic tradition and the state of Irish Catholics. O' Raithille witnessed the Williamite years in his younger years, but experienced the oppressive conditions of the eighteenth century. Like O' Bruadair he despised Protestant predominance and bemoaned the fate of his country. Incredibly, despite their despair, both poets remained faithful to the Stuart kings.

Part II: Context

Ireland in the Seventeenth Century

The deepest divisions that pervaded Ireland in the 1680s were exacerbated by the crises of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These tensions, which revolved primarily around the two crucial areas of land and religion, did much to shape Catholic Irish allegiance to James II.[7] To understand the political and social climate of the 1680s, it is essential to at least have a cursory understanding of the political events in Irelandwhich preceded James's accession. Up until the sixteenth century, the province of Ulster had remained a problem spot for the English monarchy; however, over the course of the sixteenth century, the Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland effectively established English control of the region. In 1607, the O'Neills, the O'Donnells, "and more than

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[6] See Padraig Riggs, *Daibhi O Bruadair and his Historical Context* (London: Irish Texts Society, 2001), hereafter cited as Riggs, for a look at what little biographical information there is on the poet.

[7] Simms, 1

ninety of the leading men of Ulster," took ship and sailed for the continent.[8] The "flight of the earls," left the native Gaelic aristocracy in Ulster leaderless, "and the government jubilant. There was no longer any need for action or conciliation in Ulster."[9] In the years that followed, the native Irish were segregated to certain areas and much of their land was given to Scottish and English settlers. The resulting network of Protestant communities that developed created antagonism over land and religion between the predominantly Catholic Irish and the "new English" who settled their lands. These tensions eventually resulted in the Irish Rebellion of 1641 and the Confederation of Kilkenny.

In 1649, Oliver Cromwell, in response to this rebellion, led an invasion of Ireland backed by Parliament. The invasion was relatively quick and effective and lasted less than a year. While there has been much debate over Cromwell's behavior in Ireland and the extent to which he did or did not massacre civilians, a topic that continues to be very controversial in Ireland this day, what is important for the purposes of this paper is how Ireland was dealt with after the conclusion of Cromwell's conquest.[10] In 1652, an Act for the Settlement of Land in Ireland was passed by the Rump Parliament in London. This was the first of many laws aimed at Catholic landowners in Ireland who initially lost lands according to their level of involvement in the Irish Rebellion of 1641 and the later struggle with Cromwell. After subsequent statutes were passed, Catholic landowners were eventually forbidden to hold lands east of the Shannon River, a river which split the western Irish province of Connacht from the rest of Ireland. Those who voluntarily surrendered their lands were supposed to receive an equal amount of land in Connacht.

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[8] Aiden Clarke, "The Colonisation of Ulster and the Rebellion of 1641," in *The Course of Irish History*, ed. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin 152-164, (Cork: Mercier Press, 2000), 153. Hereafter cited as Clarke.

[9] Ibid., 152.

[10] Riggs, 3.

Legislatively, this moved all Catholic landowners into the western Irish province of Connacht and enabled the English to pay off their soldiers with the vast amount of Irish land that had been confiscated. A further effect was the solidification of a Protestant landowning majority in what had traditionally been a Catholic stronghold.

Indeed, the dispossession of Catholic landowners during the 1650s profoundly altered the makeup of Ireland. Irish Catholics went from owning nearly sixty percent of Ireland in 1641 to about twenty percent which was concentrated almost entirely in Connacht.[11] As Padraig Riggs has astutely pointed out, this effectively created a large population of Catholic Irish who were now landless and bitter towards the new Protestants who now inhabited their ancestral lands.[12] These dispossessed Catholics praised the accession of James II who they believed, as a Catholic king, would undo the injustices of Cromwell's Protestant regime. Furthermore, they flocked to join James's army when he returned in 1690. Thus, while the events of the seventeenth century drastically altered the ownership of Catholic land in Ireland, it also created a vast group of dispossessed Catholics who for the most part remained west of the Shannon and bitterly hoped for an opportunity to regain their lands.

While the dispossession of Catholic landowners certainly impacted the Irish aristocracy, Padraig Riggs has pointed out that "those who did not own land in Ireland before 1652, the vast majority of the population, were not materially affected by the [change in land ownership]."[13] Most Protestant landlords kept the Irish tenants who better knew the land. In the area of religion however, the mass Irish Catholic populous suffered significantly. Catholics were barred from holding any public offices. As J. G.

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[11] Clarke, 164.
[12] Riggs, 23.
[13] Ibid., 11.

Simms writes, "The Catholic church was ruthlessly suppressed, its buildings destroyed, its friars 'knocked on the head', its priests transported to Barbadoes."[14] Catholic schoolmasters and bishops were ordered to leave Ireland on pain of death, and the Mass as well as other Catholic rituals had to be conducted in secret. While conditions improved slightly after the restoration of Charles II, Cromwell's land settlements remained largely intact and religious oppression of Catholics continued at the hands of Protestants who feared that any strengthening of Catholicism in Ireland would end in their own dispossession

By the time of James's accession in 1685, tensions between Catholics and Protestants over land and religion continued to pervade Irish Catholic sentiment. The dispossession of ancestral lands was fresh in the mind of Catholic landowners and the oppressive measures put in place against practicing Catholics had taken its toll for over thirty years. James II and VII was both a Catholic and an English king of Gaelic descent. Because of his paternal great-grandmother, Mary Queen of Scots, James had Gaelic blood, a fact that many Irish Jacobites liked to play up. Irish Catholics believed that because of this Gaelic ancestry and his religious disposition, he would be very sympathetic to the Irish Catholics' cause. Dispossessed Irish Catholic landowners who remained west of the Shannon looked to James for the restoration of their former lands. Irish Catholics looked to James to usher in a new era of Irish Catholicism. Most Irish Catholics remained bitter towards their Protestant neighbors and especially the Cromwellian settlers who now possessed Irish ancestral lands. These tensions played an integral role in shaping Irish political attitudes and sentiment during the reign of James II and VII.

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[14] Simms, 2

Social Makeup of Ireland in the Seventeenth Century

Ireland in the seventeenth century consisted of three groups of people. These were the Old Irish, the Old English, and the New English. In a report to Rome in 1648, a papal envoy wrote:

> The Catholics of Ireland have from time immemorial been divided into two adverse factions. One under the name of the old Irish, although dispersed over the four provinces of the Kingdom, are yet more numerous in that of Ulster...The other faction may be called the old English, a race introduced into Ireland at the time of Henry II . . . and so called to distinguish them from the new English who came over with the Protestant heresy.[15]

This distinction was also by used by Daibhi O' Brudair, the writer of "A Light to the Blind," Diarmid McCarthy and many other contemporaries. The social group termed the Old Irish consisted of the Gaels: the Irish who had inhabited Ireland since antiquity and any groups who had assimilated into Irish culture before the Norman invasion of Ireland such as Norse-Gaels. With few exceptions, they were Catholic. The Old English were the descendants of Englishmen who arrived during and after the Norman invasion of Ireland in 1169 and before the Tudor Conquest of Ireland in the sixteenth century. This group was also predominantly Catholic. The New English consisted of English settlers who came after the Tudor Conquest of the sixteenth century and who tended to be Protestant. While these three groups remained culturally distinct, the events of the mid-seventeenth century caused an even wider religious divide.

Because the Old English had settled in Ireland since the twelfth century, they had

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[15] Nicholas Plunket, *Derry and the Boyne,* ed. Brendan Clifford (Belfast: Belfast Historical & Educational Society, 1990), 17. Hereafter cited as Plunket.

largely assimilated into Irish culture. While aware of their ancestral distinction, the Old English by the seventeenth century were very similar to the Old Irish. The broad religious persecution and dispossession of Old Irish Catholic and Old English Catholic landowners even further unified the two social groups. In the narrative of the Williamite Wars, the writer of *A Light to the Blind,* stated that their religion and interests brought them together.

> . . . And as to the more ancient Irish noblemen and gentlemen, since they have been for several generations linked in blood to the Old English in Ireland, and are of the same religion, which obliges her professors to fidelity upon pain of damnation, these persons have the same firmness of loyalty and the same interest.[16]

In the eyes of a contemporary Irish Catholic, the two groups were more or less intertwined by late seventeenth century. Though considerable strife between the two factions had caused considerable division during the Irish Rebellion of 1641, the Old Irish and Old English seemed to be politically unified under the flag of Irish Jacobitism after James's accession because their goals were relatively similar. They both favored James's reign and sought the renewal of their lands. In fact, J.G. Simms has noted that those Old English Catholics who were successful in regaining their lands back often sided with the dispossessed Old Irish Catholics who shared their religion.[17]

From this point onward, any reference made to Old English will refer to the English in Ireland from the time of the Norman Invasion and any reference made to the New English will refer to the English in Ireland from the time of the Tudor Conquest. Unless otherwise specified, the term Catholic Irish or Irish Catholics will be used to refer both the Old Irish and Old English social groups. Additionally, the terms Protestant Irish

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[16] Plunket, 78
[17] Simms, 30

and Irish Protestants will be used to refer to the New English, though it must be clarified that their did exist people living in Ireland during the seventeenth century outside of these distinctions, such as a small minority of Protestant Jacobites.

Part III: The Impact of James's Accession on Irish Political Thought.

James's Accession and Catholic Freedom

On the 6th of February 1685, James II ascended the British throne after the death of his brother; an event greeted with open praise among Irish Catholics who believed that he would restore their rights and end an oppressive Protestant regime. As a Catholic King with Gaelic ancestry, James represented the prospect of welcome changes for Irish Catholics who had suffered under oppressive religious laws and who had witnessed the dispossession of a majority of Irish Catholic ancestral lands. During his reign, the tensions that surrounded land and religion in Ireland, caused first by the Tudor incursions and more recently and extensively by Cromwell's came to the surface and Irish Catholic expectation began to build dramatically.

As has been stated earlier, Irish Catholics were harshly treated in the years following Cromwell's conquest and those practicing the Catholic religion, especially priests and schoolmasters, suffered greatly. The Archbishop John Brenan who was the bishop of Cashel, the seat of Catholic authority in Ireland during the seventeenth century, and his reports to Rome paint a rather stark picture of the period preceding James's accession. His letters to the Internuncio of Papal Affairs offer an interesting first hand

account of the widespread suffering of Catholic clergy at the hands of Irish Protestants. .

In a letter dated September 12, 1680 Brenan wrote,

> It is no wonder you receive few letters from me, considering the malignity of the times, and especially as my friends, who expedited or received my correspondence, were compromised . . . nevertheless I have endeavored to send letters by the long sea route, though I had no other news to communicate that we were living in patience, hoping in the mercy of God that in good time He would console our innocence and give light to our adversaries to show their error in persecuting us.[18]

This letter expressed the difficulties that Brenan faced as a practicing Catholic archbishop living in Ireland during the 1680s. Not only was communication difficult, but it had to be smuggled in and out of the country. Those who aided the archbishop in his communication were "compromised." The letter continued to discuss the alarming lack of Irish clergymen in Ireland and the various ways in which Catholics had to practice in secret. In a letter dated April 14' 1684 he stated, "the demon has not ceased to inspire with his malignity those who persecuted us, and that as yet the times are far from tranquil.[19] It is significant that less than a year before James's accession, Brenan was writing about persecution of Catholics. Though James II's brother, Charles II, was not particularly hostile towards Catholics, conditions in Ireland remained rather harsh for right up until 1685.

The stark contrast between Brenan's letters before James's accession and after, express the extent to which Irish Catholic hopes were raised by James's ascent. In a letter dated June 6' 1685, Brennan declared that

> God, who has chastised us for our sins, seems now to be disposed to show us mercy, considering the sacred and innocent blood that has been shed, and grants us a calm season with a good prospect of things favorable to our holy religion,

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[18] John Brenan, *A Bishop of the Penal Times Being Letters and Reports of John Brenan,* ed. P. Canon Power (Dublin and Cork: Cork University Press, 1932), 70

[19] Ibid., 77

> and comfort to the afflicted by [the accession of] a new King's to the throne -- to whom may God grant, many and happy years.[20]

Just a few months later, in November, an ever happier Brenan joyfully wrote that

> this long tempest of persecution has at length come to an end, and the Divine Mercy has been pleased to comfort the faithful in these parts by the coming to the royal throne of our most pious King James who publicly professes the Catholic and Apostolic faith, and in an exemplary manner exercises the Christian virtues."

By November, less than a year after James's accession Brenan declared that the persecution had finally come to an end. Within a year, James was being extolled for establishing toleration of Catholic worship. As Brenan expressed, Irish Catholics believed that James brought with his accession "a season with a good prospect of things favorable to our holy religion." For Irish Catholics, James represented a new era of Catholic freedom from persecution.

Equally expressive during the years of James's reign were the Irish poets who wrote prolifically to praise their new Catholic king. Their poetry is useful, not only as a descriptive example of Irish sentiment, but also because it expressed a perspective on James II within the context of the Irish poetic tradition and thus according to traditional Irish notions of kingship. Poets such as Daibhi O' Bruadair and his contemporaries were quick to proclaim a new triumphal era for Irish Catholics. The "Triumph of James II" is O' Bruadair's twenty-eight stanza poem that celebrates James's military accomplishments and portrays him as a protector of the Catholic faith. In the poem, O' Bruadair describes James II as

> A noble and steadfast prince, warlike, illustrious,
> Pious, triumphant and brave to death,
> The Creator hath granted us after His wrath
> As a Shield of defence to this coast of ours;

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[20] Ibid., 80

…And a prop of the right-roaded faith is he.[21]

Here, the right-roaded faith is of course the Catholic religion. What is most important to note in this passage is the strong sense of change that it expressed. According to O' Bruadair, God granted James to the Irish people as their defender "after His wrath." The idea that James's reign came after a period of God's wrath is important because it illustrates the extent to which O' Bruadair believed James's reign would bring Ireland out of the harsh period before it. To O' Bruadair, the decades preceding James's reign were harsh for Catholics because they had evoked God's wrath. O' Bruadair associated James, as a Catholic, as a sign of God's mercy and representative of a new period of good fortune for Irish Catholics.

Also important to O' Bruadair were James's leadership skills. The poem continued to highlight the victories of James's military career and stated that Ireland was fortunate to have such an able commander defending her shores. James had been a brilliant navy commander in his younger days and O' Bruadair emphasized this throughout his poem.

> Hardships vexatious and menacing dangers
> He, venturesome, met with in many roads,
> While guarding the fame and the charter of England's men
> Facing the fight on the roaring waves.[22]

As MacErlean, the editor of the volume points out, this fight on the roaring waves is a reference to James's victory over the Dutch fleet under Odpam and VanTromp off Lowestoft. For O' Bruadair, James was a king who had showed

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[21] David O' Bruadair, *The poems of David O Bruadair*, ed. Rev. John C. MacErlean (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Kent, & Co., 1917), 3:81. Hereafter cited as O' Bruadair, *Poems Of.*

[22] O' Bruadair, *Poems Of,* 81.

tremendous valor and leadership in battle and he took great pride in the military prowess of his new king.

This Irish expectation is further present in the writings of O' Bruadair's contemporary, Diarmid McCarthy. His poem, "A Hundred Thanks to God," illustrated a similar sense of change by juxtaposing James's historic act of attending mass to the persecution that the Irish endured before his accession for the same action. He writes:

> A hundred thanks to God after each fearful storm
> And each persecution that menaced us heretofore.
> James, the illustrious sovereign, is hearing Mass
> In Whitehall, surrounded by priests as a bodyguard.[23]

On February 12, 1685, King James in London, openly attended Mass for the first time as the monarch of England, signaling a new era of Catholic freedom. While the poem certainly praised James's devotion to Catholicism, it particularly highlighted Irish deliverance from religious persecution. Like O' Bruadair, McCarthy emphasized the end of Irish oppression and celebrated what he believed was a new period of Catholic freedom under the auspices of a Catholic monarch.

Catholic Predominance

Even beyond religious freedom, both McCarthy and O' Bruadair gloried in the prospect of Irish predominance over their former persecutors. In "A Hundred Thanks to God," McCarthy wrote,

> Behold the Gaedhil in arms, every one of them;
> They have powder and guns, hold the cities and fortresses;
> The Presbyterians, lo, have been overthrown;
> And the Fanatics have left an infernal smell after them.

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[23] Ibid., 95.

> …'You Popish rogue,' they won't dare to say to us;
> But 'Cromwellian dog' is the watchword we have to them…[24]

By 1685, James had begun to appoint Catholics as officers in his army and to exempt them from the Oath of Supremacy.[25] The Oath of Supremacy was considered heretical by Catholics because it forced them to acknowledge that the king rather than the pope was the head of the church. This was the tool that had long been used to deny positions in the army or elsewhere in the government to Catholics. In 1686, James appointed Richard Talbot, an Irish soldier and landowner, the earl of Tyrconnel and his lord deputy of Ireland. Tyrconnel quickly stepped up efforts to Catholicize the army. The policy of placing military power back into the hands of Catholic Irish, which went forward in both Ireland and England under James, further represented to McCarthy and O' Bruadair a dramatic shift from Protestant to Catholic preeminence. To McCarthy, this meant that the Protestants had finally "been overthrown." McCarthy's reference to insults in the passage particularly expressed the extent to which he reveled in the fact that the tables had been turned. No more would he and his co-religionists find themselves insulted as "Popish rogues" and would instead enjoy addressing the "Presbyterians" and "Fanatics" as "Cromwellian dogs." Like McCarthy, O' Bruadair described James II as

> The first king of England who gave rank and dignity,
> Death-dealing weapons and uniforms
> To Irishmen after the risks they encountered --
> Conduct that freed them from Tyranny.[26]

O' Bruadair not only emphasized the fact that James had reformed the military along Catholic lines, but also that he brought Irish Catholics out of a period of Protestant discrimination and oppression. Through the Catholicization of the military, James

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[24] Ibid., 97.
[25] Simms, 20.
[26] O' Bruadair, *Poems Of,* 87.

accomplished the empowerment of Irish Catholics against their Protestant neighbors.

Furthermore, many Catholics maintained the belief that James would one day overturn the Cromwellian land settlements, a sentiment echoed in the narrative of "A Light to the Blind" and other writings.[27] In fact, the first action Irish Catholics demanded of James II when he landed in Ireland was the eradication of the confiscation that had occurred under Cromwell.[28] According to the writer of "A Light to the Blind," the Irish aristocratic class remained convinced throughout James's entire reign, that as a Catholic King with Gaelic ancestry, he would restore their lands.

The poets expressed a similar expectation. As a poet, O' Bruadair counted himself a part of the Irish aristocratic class, which most Irish poets had done since the Middle Ages and many of his contemporaries, such as Egan O' Raithille, continued to do well into the eighteenth century.[29] Michael Hartnett stated that his two main patrons in County Limerick were the Norman-Irish families, the Fitzgeralds of Springfield and the Burkes of Cahirmoyle.[30] Much of Dabhi's poetry focused on the dispossession of these aristocratic classes, and expressed hope that James would eventually reinstate the great Irish families to their former positions of power and wealth.[31] In the "Triumph of James II" he wrote,

> By the mighty king's pains which produced these first gracious deeds
> I guess there is something additional

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[27] Plunket, 75.
[28] Plunket, 88.
[29] O' Ciardha, 42. This idea of belonging to an aristocratic class is expressed particularly in the poetry of Eogan O' Raithille. See "Valentine Brown" and "The Time He Moved beside Tonn Toime" in Aodhgan, O' Raithaille, *O Rathaille,* ed. Michael Hartnett (Loughcrew: The Gallery Press, 1999) 71, 74. Hereafter cited as O' Raithille.
[30] Daibhi O' Bruadair, *Selected Poems of David O Bruadair,* ed. Michael Hartnett (Dublin: Gallery Press, 1985), 10. Hereafter cited as O' Bruadair, *Selected Poems.*
[31] See in particular "Triumph of the Taidgh" which tragically predicts the victory of the great Irish families during the Boyne in O' Bruadair, *Poems Of,* 127.

> Already prepared for the youths of this country,
> Stored up in the hand of their guiding lord;
> Consider the generous deeds of the dragon.[32]

While O' Bruadair expressed gratitude for the favor James II had already showed to the Catholic Irish, he also maintained hope that James would move beyond the Catholicization of the army and religious reform. He further described James II as "the dispenser who hath changed our despondent hopes."[33] Considering the poet's aristocratic background, one could logically assume that O' Bruadair's description of James as "dispenser" in addition to his belief that James would continue to uphold Catholic interests in Ireland, were indicators of the poet's expectation of land restoration.

McCarthy expressed similar hopes.

> Fodla's sod ne'er shall belong to the Fanatics;
> . . . How quickly the Song of God's graces have rained on us
> In the time of King James, brightest star in the firmament
> Tadgh, who last year being whacked by a Fanatic,
> Is flaying and rending this year his posterior.[34]

McCarthy proudly declared that "Fodla's sod," a name for Ireland, would never belong to the "Fanatics," a disparaging Irish term for Protestants. The term Tadgh is also a common name for Catholic Irish. Here, McCarthy's strong statement, that Ireland's land would never belong to Protestants, is linked to the "time of King James." Like O' Bruadair, McCarthy believed that James II would one day reinstate Irish lands.

During the reign of King James II, McCarthy and O' Bruadair both believed that he was very concerned with protecting and furthering Irish interests. While James was lauded for his military conquests and religious beliefs, as O' Bruadair and McCarthy

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[32] Ibid., 87.
[33] Ibid., 89
[34] Ibid., 99

expressed in their poetry, he was most important to the Catholic Irish as a symbol of change. Their poetry not only illustrated Irish opinion towards James II but elucidated Irish Catholic expectation. In the eyes of Irish Catholics, James had already caused a great deal of positive change. Under his regime, Irish Catholics experienced a broad measure of religious freedom that did not exist in decades prior. The Catholicization of the army put military power back in the hands of Catholics. Many Catholics, such as O' Bruadair and McCarthy even believed that James would one day overturn Cromwell's land settlements and reinstate Irish Catholics to their ancestral lands.

Part IV: The Boyne and After

By September of the year 1688, it became evident that James's son-in-law, the Dutch Prince William of Orange, intended to invade England.[35] William's fleet landed in England on November15 at the Bay of Torbay on the Devon coast, where the Dutch prince began making preparations for war with James. The "invasion," however, was relatively short lived, as James lost his nerve and by December had fled to England. With James gone and the throne open, William moved quickly to consolidate his authority in London and press his wife's claim to the crown.

According to J. G. Simms, "the overthrow of James created much confusion in Ireland . . . Protestant sympathy for the revolution was evident, and an immediate

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[35] W. A. Speck, "James II and VII (1633–1701)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, October 2009, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14593 (accessed February 12, 2010).

Williamite attack was expected."[36] Tensions between Catholics and Protestants flared, and many groups formed "armed associations" in anticipation of conflict.[37] Moreover, there was general uncertainty as to whether or not the Richard Tabot, Earl of Tyrconnel and James's Lord Deputy of Ireland, would come to terms with William.[38] As Simms notes, Protestants in Dublin expected that James was ready to hand Ireland over to William "and the Catholic population apparently formed the same opinion; according to the French ambassador, they threatened to burn him in his house if he tried to make peace with William."[39] It is not entirely obvious what Tyrconnel's true aims were at the beginning of James's exile. Whether his initial communication with William was a ruse intended to buy more time or a genuine desire to come to terms may never be known. Nevertheless, by January, it was clear that the Lord Deputy, who was in communication with James II's court in St. Germain, intended to fight in order to maintain James's regime in Ireland.

Pressed by both Louis IX and Tyrconnel, who continued to assure the king that there were a great number of loyal subjects who were willing to fight for his cause, James made preparations to return to Ireland. James and Louis believed that Ireland's large Catholic population, as well as the smaller size of the island in comparison to England, would produce to an easy victory and a more manageable and defensible territory. Once they controlled the island, Ireland would serve as an excellent invasion point for England, where it was hoped that the disaffected Scots, who endured persecution as a Protestant minority group during Charles II's reign, would join in James's war to regain the throne.

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[36] Simms, 48.
[37] Simms, *50.*
[38] Ibid., *50.*
[39] Ibid., 51.

On March 12, 1689, James landed in Ireland at the port town of Kinsale. The former king immediately made his way to Dublin, where he convened an Irish Parliament in order to consolidate Catholic support in Ireland. While James's initial desire was to avoid completely alienating Protestant interest, he was confronted with Irish Catholics who demanded a reversal of the Cromwellian Land Settlement Acts that had dispossessed so much of the Irish Catholic land-owning class. Though James knew a decision to reverse the Land Settlement Acts would damage his credibility in England, he had little choice but to yield to the Irish Catholic aristocracy whom he absolutely needed if he was going to gain control of Ireland.[40] James's decision to repeal those laws and his intention to wage war against a Protestant usurper elevated him yet again, to the status of the warrior king who actively fought for Irish interest. The Catholic landownders had believed that James had at long last fulfilled their expectations. Not only had he ended religious persecution during his reign, but he had now finally returned Irish estates to their rightful Catholic owners. Preparing to fight William, James now embodied the image of the mythic Irish hero who fought to free Ireland that had been projected by many Catholic Irish poets during his reign. Irish Catholics appeared in droves to join James's army.

As it was generally expected that William would try to retake Ireland, James rushed to assert control over the entire island. Gaining complete authority, however, proved more difficult than he had expected. In many towns in the north, Protestants barricaded themselves in, and in the cases of Derry and Enniskillen, managed to hold out until the initial contingent of William's forces landed in northern Ireland in late July

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[40] Ibid., 74.

1690. William himself arrived in mid-June with more troops and marched towards Dublin to face James. On July 1, James and William led their armies into battle about forty miles north of Dublin and the Boyne River. After several hours of heavy fighting, James was decisively defeated. According to the writer "A Light to the Blind," "the heat of [the] action lasted not above an hour . . . The loss on either side was not considerable as to the numbers of men, though the king, by that little contention, lost the province of Leinster and part of Munster."[41] During the battle, James had once again lost his nerve and ordered a premature retreat. Though James's army remained intact, he shocked everyone by continuing his own personal retreat past Dublin and sailing for France on July 4 after leaving orders for Tyrconnel to command the army and continue the struggle against William. The Lord Deputy succeeded for an entire year until his forces were soundly defeated at the Battle of Aughrim in July 1691 and he eventually surrendered at Limmerick in October.

The surrender was a catastrophe for Irish Catholics, particularly the landed class, whose hopes and expectations had been fulfilled by James's return and the reversal of the Cromwellian land settlement His flight after the Battle ofthe Boyne and the defeat of the Irish Catholic army at Aughrim certainly left Catholics devastated. The Protestants regained all the land they had briefly lost, and the penal laws prohibiting Catholic worship was re-enacted. There is no doubt that the Irish Catholics were deeply disappointed. Nevertheless, their expectations for and loyalty towards the Stuart king continued despite his crushing military failure.

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[41] Plunket, 127.

James II had fled the Boyne and Ireland prematurely, leaving his loyal Catholic subjects to fight for a king who had left them to their own fate. Though the Irish Catholic army continued to receive support from the French, one might expect their attitude towards James would be highly critical. Indeed, some of the Catholic comments about James II that have been recorded were quite scathing. For example, William's quick victory at the Boyne allegedly led one of his generals to say "change but kings with us and we will fight you over again."[42] Another popular tale maintained that when James reached Dublin, he declared to Lady Tyrconnel that "your countrymen, madam, can run well." She was quick to reply, "Not quite so well as your majesty, for I see you have won the race."[43] At least by the late eighteenth century, James had become "'Seamus an chaca' (James the shite), who, with his one English shoe and one Irish shoe, had lost Ireland."[44]

Yet, despite the folk tradition that emerged later, the contemporary sources portray a different Catholic attitude towards James II. In fact, most of the documentary evidence suggests that Irish Catholics remained surprisingly loyal towards the deposed king. Even after their final defeat at Aughirm, Irish Catholics continued to look towards James as their rightful sovereign. A majority of the soldiers directly involved in the Williamite Wars fled to France, where they continued serve at James's court at St. Germain and to fight in Louis's armies.[45] According to Padraig O Ciardha, they helped inflict "humiliating defeats on William, in particular at the battle of Landen where he lost

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[42] Simms, 153.
[43] Ibid., 153.
[44] O' Ciardha, 83.
[45] For a more detailed look at Irish Catholics abroad see L. Cullen, "The Irish Diaspora of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries." In *Europeans on the Move*, ed. N. Canny, 113-159 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994)

12,000 men, eighty cannon and multiple standards."[46] Many Irish Catholics who remained in Ireland continued to be active for the Jacobite cause throughout the 1690s and into the early decades of the seventeenth century.[47] Though disappointed at the outcome of the Williamite Wars, Irish Catholics maintained their belief in James II and his heirs.

Explaining Irish Loyalty to James II

There are two primary explanations for this continued loyalty to James II regardless of his craven flight. First, Jacobite loyalists did not consider the Battle of the Boyne to be irreversible defeat. Rather, they understood their loss in context of the greater international conflict that was raging between Louis XIV and the League of Augsburg, which consisted of his English, Dutch, and Hapsburg opponents. For Louis, Ireland was useful mainly as a base for an invasion of England. While Irish Catholics may not have fully understood the French king's intentions behind his involvement in Ireland, they did know that they were a part of this wider struggle. Until James's death in 1701, they maintained the belief that he would return again with French support and reclaim the crown. Because Irish Catholics maintained a strong hope and even expectation that James would return, he still embodied the possibility that Catholic land and religion would be restored. The Boyne may have been a decisive defeat in a greater war, but according to Catholics, the war was far from over.

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[46] O' Ciardha, 87.

[47] Eamonn O Ciardha's study has made an excellent case disproving the traditional notion that Irish Catholic activity in the wake of the Williamite Wars was very limited.

Second, a religious sense of divine determination and traditional notions of Irish kingship and fidelity ensured that many Irish Catholics, and even some Protestants, such as by Charles Leslie and Edward Wettenhall, remained loyal to whom they perceived to be the rightful claimant to the English throne. As Brendan O' Buachalla astutely observes,

> when James II returned to France in the aftermath of his humiliating retreat from the Boyne in 1690, he sailed not into oblivion but into a well-defined niche in traditional Irish ideology -- the rightful King who was banished from his kingdom, but who was destined to return and reclaim his patrimony.[48]

For Catholics, James II was ordained by God to rule England. Many blamed his loss at the Boyne on bad advice, an Irish disunity, or betrayal, and some even respectfully suggested that James II could have made a mistake or two. Nevertheless they continued to believe that he would return and take back his rightful throne. It is obvious that by the seventeenth century, the extent to which the Irish Catholics had romanticized James II, particularly through poetry and doggerel verse—by emphasizing his Gaelic ancestry and comparing him to mythical heroes and historical kings—had become ingrained in the minds of the early eighteenth-century Irish. Though this image may have faded during the eighteenth century, it did not disappear but applied to James's successors: his son James III and later Bonnie Prince Charles. Many of these Catholic sources expressed a sense of divine religious destiny inherent in the Jacobite cause because of the truth of the Catholic faith and the falsity of the Protestant heresy. There also existed a small group of Irish Protestants who maintained that it was their Christian duty to support the rightful succession of James II, even if they disagreed with his religious beliefs. For this group, the monarch's religion was obviously not a factor. Clearly, aside from religious division,

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[48] O' Buachalla 42.

there was legitimate dispute in Ireland as to whether or not James II had been rightly deposed by William III and Mary II. Indeed, many Protestants in England defended the legitimacy of William and Mary's regime based not on their Protestantism but on James's effort to present young Prince James as his son when the lad had allegedly been sired by someone other than the king. Those who accepted this line of argument contended that Mary, James's elder daughter, was the rightful heir to the throne and not her half-brother James III. Both sides, in other words, sought to claim divine sanction for their positions in the Revolution of 1688-89 and to assert that their opponents were attempting to place a usurper on the throne instead of the true heir.

The International Context

One might assume that if there had been any Irish Catholic anger directed towards James II for his flight from Ireland, it would have been at its height just after the Boyne, when the Irish Catholic army continued to fight against William's forces despite the absence of the king for whom they were fighting. While James II resided safely in France in a palace that Louis XIV provided in for him, a hungry Irish Catholic army continued the struggle. On July 12 1691, almost a year after James's loss at the Boyne, Catholic Irish troops faced William's forces in what became the most crushing defeat for Irish Catholics during the Williamite Wars. Before the battle, the French commander Monsieur St. Ruth made a speech to the Irish Catholic Army.

> It is now therefore, if ever, that you must endeavour to recover your lost Honour, Priviledges, and Fore-Fathers Estates: You are not Mercenary Soldiers, you do not fight for your Pay; but for your Lives, your Wives, your Children, your Liberties, your Countrey, your Estates, and to restore

> the most Pious of Kings to his Throne; but above all for the propagation of the Holy Faith, and the Subversion of Herese . . And you may be assured, that King James will Love and Reward you, Louis the Great will protect you, all good Catholicks will Applaud you . . ..[49]

This manuscript was found among the papers of Monsieur St. Ruth's dead secretary after the battle was printed in Dublin in 1691. The fact that a French commander was able to address an army of Irish Catholic soldiers and make explicit references to the restoration of James II after his flight from the Boyne shows that he believed that Irish Catholic soldiers remained loyal to James II. Though James II had fled Ireland, his name could still be invoked without stirring ire among Irish Catholic soldiers. According to St. Ruth, not only did they fight for the restoration of their "Pious King," but they would be rewarded upon his arrival. He further declared that Irish Catholics were fighting for the reclamation of their lost estates. In 1691, Irish Catholics were still battling for James II's return to his throne because it would bring in its wake, the re-establishment of Catholicism and the reclamation of their lands.

Also interesting to note in this speech, is the fact that a French commander while speaking to Irish Catholic troops and assured them that they would be protected by Louis the Great. In the speech, St. Ruth tells the Irish soldiers that their battle played a larger role in international politics and that their success depended on aid from the French king. Edward Wettenhall, a bishop in the Church of Ireland, preached a number of sermons in which he rebuked Irish Jacobite Protestants for supporting the restoration of a king who sought help from France. In one sermon he argued that any English king who recquired the assistance of Louis XIV would be forever in his debt. "Oh, then we shall have K.

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[49] Monsieur St. Ruth, *Monsieur St. Ruth's speech to the Irish Army, on the 11th of July, 1691. Being the day before the battel at Aghrint, as it was found among the papers of his secretary, who was killed in the battel,* Dublin: 1691, in *Early English Books Online* http://eebo.chadwyck.com. (Accessed February 10, 2010.

James again: What? Are they sure of that? Do they know of any instance of the French King's conquering a Kingdom to give it away?"[50] Wettenhall went on to argue that such a king would be merely a puppet king with no real power, and even worse subject to Louis's growing empire.[51] Like the Catholics, the Irish Protestant were keenly aware of the international context, and in 1691 they continued to fear a possible invasion by James II. In the complex and dangerous political atmosphere of the late seventeenth century, both sides had reason to expect another invasion and either feared it or hoped for it depending on their respective positions. The writer of the narrative, *A Light to the Blind,* expressed a similar understanding of the international context. "To make these noble flames of the Catolicks take a higher pitch, they are told that the king will come amongst them in person; that France will send arms, will send money, will send experienced officers and trained soldiers to their assistance."[52] The writer understood that Irish expectation depended, to a certain extent, on French aid.

The Divine Providence of the Jacobite Cause

The international nature of the conflict between France and the Augsburg alliance and Louis's interest in England ensured that Irish Catholic hopes for a Stuart restoration endured well into the eighteenth century. However, beyond this expectation, was an even more deeply ingrained sense of divine providence and religious determination. While the bitter outcome of the war in 1691 left practicing Catholics in a disadvantageous position,

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[50] Edward Wettenhall, *A Letter to a Friend*, (London: printed for T. Parkhurst at the Bible and Three Crowns, 1691) in Early English Books Online. www.eebo.com (Accessed February 10, 2010), 1

[51] Ibid., 2

[52] Plunket, 83.

they firmly believed, like their Protestants neighbors, that the political events of the 1690s, no matter how inauspicious, were ultimately directed by the hand of God. Regardless of the war's outcome, Catholics remained assured that God favored the success of their religion. Additionally, this belief among Catholics and Protestants, led to an overriding sense of confidence in both communities that, though at odds, mirrored one another. Nicholas Canny's article, "The Formation of the Irish Mind, Religion Politics and Gaelic Literatures," is particularly helpful in understanding how this religious model operated. He writes:

> The fact that, to some degree, the two communities functioned within the same intellectual paradigm also explains the general absence of surprise on the part of the Protestant settlers when the Irish [Catholic] rebels claimed that the opportunity for revolt had been provided them by God. Rather, the Protestants conceded this point but interpreted this instance of divine intervention to mean that their own faith in Providence was being put to the test. So also as the rebellion proceeded and the atrocities mounted, Irish Protestants became increasingly confident that the "vengeance of God" would beset the rebels. The repeated outcome of rebellions in seventeenth-century Ireland thus satisfied the Protestants that their confidence had been well placed, and confirmed them in their belief that it was they, and not the Catholic Irish, who were the chosen people of God.[53]

Whether favorable or unfavorable, Protestants believed that their current political position was a result of God's will. Similarly, Catholics did not regard their adverse situation in the years preceding 1685 as a sign that God had forsaken them, but rather that their devotion to Catholicism was being tested or, as O' Bruadair expressed that they were being punished for their lack faith.

After James's flight, Irish Catholics were certainly disappointed, but many simply reverted back to the prevailing attitude of pre-1685. Any defeats, including James's loss at the Boyne, were explained as trials intended to embolden Catholic devotion to God.

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[53] Canny, 114.

Furthermore, their faith in the eventual predominance of Catholicism which, for many was intertwined with the Stuart cause did not waver. One Jacobite pamphleteer likened the current plight of Irish Catholics to that of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness.[54] He further argued that James still had many loyal subjects in his kingdom and that if the Stuart king returned; God would restore him to his rightful throne.[55] He explained:

> For even they who would oppose him, and confront force to force, if once he [James] should attempt to Land in an hostile manner, would not so much as hurt the hair on his head, nor touch the outside of his garment. . . things altogether as unlikely (as what is here imagined) have come to pass and been brought about, when they have been transacted all along exactly in the way and method of God.[56]

For the writer of this pamphlet, James could not be harmed if he returned to England because his restoration was ordained by God. Though Ireland, like the Israelites, was in a period of "wandering and wilderness," the writer urged Catholics to look forward to the fulfillment of God's will.

This expectation is further illustrated in the narrative work "A Light to the Blind." There are many instances, for example, in the narrative in which the author imparted advice to a "future" king of Ireland and England and suggested that such a king, "in after times, when by providence a restoration is made, may, if he pleases, reap a substantial benefit out of the remembrance of this behavior of his Irish subjects, and their Catholick fathers."[57] Implicit in such suggestions was the belief that a restoration would eventually happen. For the writer of "A

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[54] Richard Stafford, A *Supplement and Addition unto a Printed Paper, Bearing Date July 25. 1692. And thus Superscribed, To our Sovereign Lord, King James the II. Rightful King of Great Brittain, and Ireland, whosesoever He now Inhabits in the Parts beyond the Seas.* (London: 1692), 1.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid, 2-3.

[57] Plunket, 84.

Light to the Blind" and many of his contemporaries, it was not a question of if, but rather of when. Despite their situation, Irish Jacobites expected a Catholic restoration to occur because they believed it was part of God's will.

Succession by Hereditary Right

There is a third, distinct factor that shaped Jacobite loyalty to the Stuart line, which is embodied particularly well in the writings of Jacobite Protestants during the 1690s. While a desire for advantage and a belief in divine authority inspired Catholic fidelity to James II, there was also a critical matter of succession that was important to both Catholics and Protestants. Howard Nenner has judiciously argued that "in the constitutional climate of 1685 a crown by right of descent was to be regarded as superior to all others."[58] The practice of hereditary succession was desirable because it ensured a certain and stable transition between monarchs. As Nenner explains, "It was comforting to believe that God had instituted monarchy among his people for their good order and had prescribed heredity as the way to avoid conflict in the succession of their kings."[59] Furthermore, it became a way in which the kingdom could ascertain God's choice for the throne. To tamper with the rightful line of succession was to undermine the order and stability of the kingdom as well as God's chosen successor. Thus, to Jacobite supporters, especially Protestants who did not have a great deal to gain from the reign of a Catholic king, James's restoration were a matter of upholding the principle of rightful hereditary succession.

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[58] Howard Nenner, *The Right to be King: The Succession to the Crown of England 1603-1714* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995) 148.
[59] Ibid, 28.

When James was deposed in 1688, William justified his claim to the throne by declaring that he had "such a right, as all the world knows, to the succession to the crown."[60] When parliament members attempted to validate the revolution against James II, they did so under the pretense that James's heir was illegitimate and that the rightful claimant by hereditary succession was therefore his daughter, William's wife Mary. This accusation was based on widespread rumors that James's "alleged" son had been swapped at birth due to the king and queen's inability to provide a healthy male heir.[61] Thus, the rhetoric of both William and parliament in 1688 attempted to legitimize William and Mary's accession by establishing their hereditary right and discrediting James's heir. Jacobites on the other hand argued that the birth was genuine and that the revolution was an illegal and immoral act that disrupted the succession. They further debated that even if Mary was next in line for the crown, parliament had no right to declare a new king while James II was still alive and still the monarch of England.

The writings of Charles Leslie, an outspoken Protestant opponent of Roman Catholicism but an ardent Jacobite supporter, reflect the nature of this debate over succession in Ireland. Leslie was a nonjuring clergy member of the Church of Ireland but wrote extensively condemning the revolution of 1689 and advocating the restoration of James II. According to the *Oxford History of National Biography*, "During the 1690s Leslie served as a primary conduit of information between the nonjuring community in England and the Stuart court, making several trips to St. Germain."[62] In 1695, he wrote

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[60] Ibid, 153.

[61] Edward Gregg, "James Francis Edward (1688–1766)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2007, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14594 (accessed March 8, 2010).

[62] Ibid.

a lengthy political treatise entitled *An Answer to a Book Entitled, The State of Protestants in Ireland Under the Late King James's Government.* This work was a rebuttal to a treatise written a few years prior that defended James's deposition and criticized his government. Leslie's arguments in *An Answer*, typified Jacobite criticism of the revolution. He claimed, "it is decreed and established as the true Christian doctrine in these words; infidelity or difference in religion doth not make void the magistrates just and legal authority, nor fee the people from their obedience to him."[63] Leslie argued that regardless of James's religion, parliament did not have a right to disrupt the lawful succession. Leslie accused the parliament of seeking to become popes and subjecting the king to their authority. He further contended that such an act would lead to the disruption of order. If a prince was justified in looking into another prince's kingdom and stealing his throne if he believed it to be mismanaged, what should stop a landowner from looking into his neighbor's affairs and taking his wife, his land, and his children if he saw fit to do so? For Charles Leslie, those who had deposed James II had violated the sacred concept of accession by descent and thus subjected the monarchy to the absurd authority of parliament's whimsy. To him, this had dangerous implications.

The Gaelic poets also bemoaned the effects of the damaged lineage. As Brendan O' Buachalla astutely notes,

> . . .underlying the theory of Divine Right and underpinning all Jacobite rhetoric was the social theory of Order -- a divinely ordained patriarchal hierarchal order that had been sinfully ruptured in 1688. It followed that only the return of the rightful King could restore that order again. An anonymous English Jacobite put it simply and succinctly: 'From a which it

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[63] Leslie Charles, *An Answer to a Book Intituled, The State of the Protestants in Ireland Under the Late King James's Government; In which, Their Carraige towards him is Justified, and the Absolute Necessity of their endeavoring to be Free's from his Government and of submitting to their present Majesties, is Demonstrated* (London, 1692) in *Early English Books Online* http://eebo.com (Accessed February 10, 2010) 16.

> is plain our people can never enjoy lasting peace or happiness till they settle the succession again in the right line and recall us the immediate lawful heir'; and those sentiments were re-echoed -- albeit in more elegant form -- by Dry den and Pope in England, Iain Lorn MacDhomhnaill in Scotland and by O Rathaille and his colleagues in Ireland.[64]

In Gaelic poetry, the disrupted order caused by James's deposition and the subsequent Protestant predominance in Ireland was expressed through hyperbolic images of nature being turned on its head .In one such poem, O' Rathaille lamented that even "the deer has lost the noble shape with which she was endowed / since the foreign raven nested safe within Ross Wood's bounds; fish avoid the sun lit streams where gentle currents / sound," and "all milk is refused to the calves by the cows / since Sir Val usurped the rights to kind MacCarthy's ground."[65] The two references to "foreign ravens" in Ross Woods and "Sir Val" were allusions to an unjust Protestant presence in Ireland. Sir Val was a reference to Valentine Brown, the local Protestant landowner who had replaced the Catholic McArthy family. The image of foreign ravens invading Ross Woods represented the presence of new Protestant landowners, such as the Browns, and emboldened O' Rathille's theme of the unnatural disruption of life in Ireland. This theme was further expressed in the depiction of calves being refused milk and fish avoiding streams.

For the writer of "A Light to the Blind," loyalty to the rightful succession was equally important. In his explanation of why the Irish fought to reinstate James II, he declared that, "the Catholicks of Ireland do undertake a war for the reinthroning of their banished king. Why should they do this? . . . Catholick religion obliges us to duty towards our lawful sovereign, though he had often injured us, and though he were of a

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[64] O' Buachalla, *Selected Poems,* 48.
[65] O' Raithille, 71.

contrary belief."[66] The writer's complaint of injuries referred James's failure to overturn the Land Settlement Acts upon his accession or during his reign. Despite their being treated unfairly, however, he emphasized that Irish Catholics rushed to the Stuart cause, because it was their duty to their rightful sovereign. Moreover, he further declared that this duty was in spite of the fact that the Pope did not advocate James's reign. According to the writer of "A Light to the Blind," duty to the rightful sovereign was so important that it endured even without Papal recognition.

While most Irish Catholics remained loyal to James II, they still had to contend with his miserable failure at the Boyne. Both the poets and the writers of "A Light to the Blind" and *The Destruction of Cyprus* went to great lengths to avoid accusing James directly. For the writer of "A Light to the Blind" James's loss was a result of terrible advice and he emphasized the Englishness of such advisors. To the author, the English were a disloyal race by nature and had proven time and again to be undependable, juxtaposed of course to the Irish who had demonstrated undying fidelity. The document also contains many references to treachery, though the writer never explicitly reveals the guilty parties.[67] These types of accusations are mirrored in Charles O' Kelly's *The Destruction of Cyprus.* For O' Kelly, the primary antagonist of the Williamite Wars in Ireland was the Lord Deputy Tyrconnell, who Kelly was convinced advised James II to lose Ireland in hopes of maintaining goodwill with his English subjects. While Tyrconnel's motivations are never explicitly stated, Kelly assured his readers that James did not flee from the Boyne out of cowardice, but rather bad advice from Tyrconnel as

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[66] Plunket, 82.
[67] Plunket, 91.

well as his English advisers.[68]

The disappointment caused by James's loss at the Boyne, is also expressed in the poetry of the 1690s, particularly O' Bruadair's poetry, which laments the sorry state of Irish Catholics. Yet, while O' Bruadair's poetry indeed painted a negative picture of the decade, he nevertheless continued to profess undying loyalty to James II. For the poets, it was not James who was at fault, but rather the Irish Catholics who were unable to unite. As the product of an ostensibly aristocratic class, O' Bruadair's poetry reflected the voice of a poet who firmly believed that it was his duty to remain loyal to the deposed Stuart king. In fact, O' Bruadair insisted that it was his own foolish and cowardly countrymen who not only caused the debacle at the Boyne but were also responsible for Catholic Ireland's current state. One of his best-known poems, entitled 'An Longbhriseadh' ("The Shipwreck")[69], blatantly condemned his kinsmen for Ireland's seventeenth-century crises. The poem painted a positive view of James II and suggested that he was deeply concerned with Ireland's fate and had actively fought for Irish interests.

> The king, though ill-equipped, having little stock
> and though his supporters were not much better off,
> in his deep fidelity to the men of this land
> he sensed their distress far off in distant France."[70]

Like many other Catholics of his time, O' Bruadair believed that James, who had Gaelic ancestry, was actively interested in championing the rights of the Irish people.

Nevertheless, what is most fascinating about this poem, composed sometime after the Boyne in1691, is that O' Bruadair did not skip over James's humiliating defeat. In fact, rather than blame the defeat at the Boyne on the king, O' Bruadair placed the

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[68] Charles O' Kelly, *The Destruction of Cyprus,* ed. John Cornelius O' Callaghan (Dublin, Irish Archeological Society, 1850), 16.
[69] O' Bruadair, *Selected Poems,* 11.
[70] O' Bruadair, *Selected Poems,* 38.

responsibility on his Irish countrymen whom he described as an "erring herd who turned a deaf ear to the advice they received when freedom was near."[71] O' Bruadair writes,

> When army-less the English king fled from the field,
> from the rage of retainers poor in loyalty,
> the wall that held back horror in a hell
> was ruptured by the surge of a violent swell.
> Through the universe moved the angels from the depths
> urging proud men to avoid what was good for them.[72]

Through the imagery of demons and hell, O' Bruadair suggested that his countrymen who were already "poor in loyalty" were urged to "avoid what was good for them."

It is important to note that O' Bruadair specifically pointed to troops who were already disloyal and unable hold out against their baser instincts in order to act in their own interest. O' Bruadair's disgust with his own country often appeared in his poetry elsewhere, and he was quick to condemn the Irish for their lack of unity.

> No cause for wonder how the newcomers get on
> -- they're careful in their councils, their friendships last long-
> most unlike the woman's tribe to which I belong --
> one pull of a hair and their closeness comes undone.[73]

However, this contempt moved beyond disloyalty. Later O' Bruadair remarked of the Irish that "they lie down in the house of a hostile host and can't tell the cure of the wound from its source."[74] In his view, not only were the Irish incapable of uniting, they failed to see or even understand the importance of the source of their salvation: James II. This notion that the common Irish were incapable of returning Ireland to its rightful ruler due

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[71] Ibid., 35.
[72] Ibid., 38.
[73] Ibid., 35.
[74] Ibid., 36.

to their own incapability is evidence of O' Bruadair's aristocratic training and the remnants of a medieval Irish poetic tradition that could no longer sustain itself. As a poet in his old age, he had witnessed both Cromwell's invasion, the War of the Two Kings, and the decline of the traditional Irish poetic tradition. James defeat was yet another disappointment. This may account for the extremely bitter and defeatist tone O' Bruadair expressed while many of the other contemporary sources continued to expect James's second return.

Criticism of Irish Catholics also became popular in the Irish "Aisling," or roughly translated, vision poetry tradition. In this genre, Ireland was often personified as a beautiful young woman, typically with green eyes. The writer portrayed himself as a character in the poem who possessed an omnipresent point of view, either able to visit any part of Ireland in the blink of an eye or see the whole island at once. This character interacted with Ireland's personified form and expressed his ideas about the general state of Ireland. Some poets such as O' Bruadair employed this literary device to chastise Ireland. In his poem entitled "A wound has poured me," O' Bruadair described Ireland in rather denigrating terms.

> She's forsaken her race, her fierce raider-children
> ...She promised her blossoms, her kiss, her dependence
> to a Gaelic king and to all his descendants
> to that whoring female no change was ugly:
> not her fate as bed mate to all new snugglers..."[75]

In this passage, Ireland is personified as a woman who has not only "forsaken her race" but has also become a whoring female to countless "bed-mates" after promising herself to a "Gaelic king." The Gaelic king mentioned in this poem is a reference to James II. It is significant that O' Bruadair condemned Ireland for forsaking her race after promising

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[75] O' Bruadair, *Selected Poems*, 30

herself to a James II. Once again, O' Bruadair blamed the Catholic Irish for what he perceived as their cowardice at the Boyne River. He criticized the wavering loyalty of the Irish Catholics, whom he personified in the figure of a whore who slept around and welcomed change.

Criticism of Irish Catholics after James's defeat was not isolated to O' Bruadair's poetry. Egan O' Raithille, a contemporary of O' Bruadair and a poet from Kerry in the south of Ireland, also used "aisling poetry" to criticize Irish Catholics.[76] In his poem "Silver of Silver," O' Raithille described a meeting between himself and an elusive woman with "green-tinged eyes." In the poem, the woman tells the poet that she is lonely because she waits for "him," another allusion to James II, to return and claim his birthright. The woman then quite suddenly darts away, and the poet chases her into a house filled with "mocking goblins" and other foreboding characters. Eventually he finds her in bed with an English churl.

> The sorrow, the pang, the tragic loss, the grief!
> The bright, beloved one, tender, warm-lipped and sweet,
> Held by a balding, jaundiced lecher and his black team;
> There's no relief for her until the lion's come over the sea[77]

Like O' Bruadair, O' Raithille expressed Irish betrayal through the sexual deviance of Ireland's personified form. In the poem, Ireland is portrayed as elusive and unfaithful. She runs away from the poet and is shamed when he finds her in bed with a very unflattering English lover. While less overtly critical, O' Raithille still pointed his finger at the Irish. Unlike O'Bruadair, however, he was less impressed with James II, who was depicted in the poem as a prince who abandons Ireland. Nevertheless, as the last line

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[76] O' Raithille, 11
[77] O' Raithille, 18.

demonstrates, O' Raithille, like O' Bruadair, continued to look towards the Stuart line for Ireland's salvation.

Conclusion

After James's accession, Irish Catholics experienced a welcome reversal of a long period of Protestant predominance. They gloried in the prospects that James's reign presented. For the Irish Catholic landed class, James's reign elicited the hope that their family estates would be returned. For Catholics in general, James's accession brought restoration of Roman Catholicism and freedom from Protestant oppression. Their long journey, as Israelites wandering in the wilderness, was finally over. A Catholic king was on the throne for the first time since 1533, and it seemed to mean that they had at last regained God's favor. When James was deposed by William late in 1688, there was a period of uncertainty. Irish Catholics did not know whether or not James's Lord Deputy, the earl of Tyrconnel, would try to make peace with William, and they vigorously expressed their displeasure with such a notion. When James returned, they were ready to fight for both his cause and his crown.

Despite James's behavior at the Boyne in 1690, Irish Catholics continued to remain loyal until his death in 1701. The first reason for this continued loyalty was undoubtedly the fact that Irish Catholics did not believed the Williamite wars were over. Jacobites understood that as long as Louis XIV supported the Stuarts and was interested in Ireland in order to keep William occupied, they had reason to hope and even expect the return of their king. Furthermore, a belief in divine providence ensured that Catholics did

not despair or turn their anger towards their monarch, but merely thought that his absence was temporary. Eventually, God would restore a Catholic king to the throne, but only He knew when that would happen. For the poets, such as O Bruadair, the Irish were being punished for their lack of faith and their lack of respect for Irish traditions. Finally, despite James's abandonment of Ireland, he was, according to Catholics, the rightful successor to the throne. Whether he was a strong king or a weak king, he was God's choice to be the king of England, Scotland and Ireland. Thus, even certain Irish Protestants, such as Leslie Charles who disliked James's religious leanings, professed their loyalty to the Jacobite cause. It did not matter what happened at the battle of the Boyne; to Irish Jacobites, James was the rightful king. Consequently, as the sources indicate, many tried as hard as they could to avoid directly blaming him. Either he was manipulated by bad advice or betrayed by treacherous subjects, but as Colonel O' Kelly emphatically stated, he did not run from the Boyne because of cowardice.

Thus, due to the nature of the international war that was raging between Louis XIV and the Augsburg Alliance and the importance of Ireland in that conflict, a religious sense of divine destiny, and a staunch loyalty to the rightful succession of the Stuart kings, most Irish Catholics and even some Irish Protestants remained loyal to the James II and his heirs well into the eighteenth century.

Epilogue

Though Irish Jacobites continued to wait for a Stuart restoration, their hopes were never fulfilled. During the subsequent period and the Protestant ascendancy, Catholics

suffered from discrimination in economic matters, and were again forced to practice their religion in secret. Many emigrated from Ireland to fight in the armies of Spain and France. Upon James's death, their hopes did not diminish, but rather transferred to his son, James III and then later to Bonnie Prince Charlie. Catholic expectation continued to grow well into the late eighteenth century, despite a later folk tradition that denounced James II.

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