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The ‘Recusancy Revolt’ of 1603 Revisited, Popular Politics, and Civic Catholicism in Early Modern Ireland

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Abstract

This article contributes to a body of work exploring the possibilities of a popular politics in Ireland before the rising of 1641. It does so by revisiting the ‘recusancy revolt’ of 1603 in which, in the interregnum created by Elizabeth I’s death, churches and civic space in towns in the south and west of Ireland were reoccupied for Catholic worship. Reading for meaning in the shaping and timing of the crowd rituals at the heart of the protest, the article argues that Old English elites and people physically acted out the recovery of these spaces for the public performance of a civic Catholicism, in which corporate worship was integral both to the maintenance of the civic order and to the defence of ancient liberties and freedoms against the encroachments of an anglicizing and Protestant regime. Analysing the dynamics of these confessional protests, the article assesses the potential for an active citizenry represented by popular political mobilization in 1603 and contrasts this with later popular mobilization in the 1641 rising. It explores the paradox at the heart of a protest in which it was believed that the restoration of *public* Catholic worship could co-exist with continuing civic loyalty to an English and Protestant monarchy.

I

In 1603, on the death of Elizabeth I, cities and towns in the south and west of Ireland experienced a wave of popular movements to reclaim public space for Catholic worship. Cathedrals and churches were reoccupied and reconsecrated; Protestant ministers were evicted and Protestant bibles and prayer books attacked; and public processions of the sacrament and crucifix through urban streets reclaimed civic space for the performance of a civic Catholicism. In 1983, Anthony Sheehan published an important article on

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the 1603 'recusancy revolt' (a term he appears to have coined).¹ As Sheehan noted, there had been remarkably little work on 1603 since Bagwell's narrative treatment in his 1909 history of *Ireland under the Stuarts*.² There has been little published work since Sheehan's article. By far the best recent analysis remains unpublished.³

Summarizing earlier work, Sheehan had argued that, when considered at all, the revolt had been 'written off as...a religious fling, an outburst of mass hysteria with no past and no future'.⁴ Acknowledging that religion had a role to play, Sheehan nevertheless dealt crisply with what happened in the churches in 1603. Instead, he sought to argue that political causes were at least as important as religion in explaining the revolt. Noting that the consequences of harvest failure, currency debasement and war, with its disruption to important trading patterns with Spain, had created poverty and economic discontent, Sheehan stressed the important part played by the political threat to the towns, centres of privilege and strongholds of the Old English, descendants of Ireland's Anglo-Norman conquerors. Suspicious of their loyalties and increasingly concerned about the valuable economic and political privileges their charters had given them, English administrators at Dublin and in the new provincial presidencies had begun to challenge their charters and encroach on their rights. Growing government interference meant that 'the entire constitutional position of the towns was at stake', Sheehan argued. The revolt was therefore, 'a virtual declaration of...[the towns'] independency of the provincial government'.⁵

Outside periods of intense political agitation, records for the study of early modern popular politics are often patchy and always problematic, a problem compounded for early modern Ireland by the underdevelopment of contemporary state record-keeping institutions and by the near-total destruction in 1922 of the National Record Office. By comparison with later periods, until recently there has been relatively little work on early modern Irish crowds before 1641 and even less on crowds in what might be called 'the politics of subsistence'.⁶ But the 'recusancy revolt' of 1603 produced a depth of documentation that makes it possible to recover the politics of protest in that moment.⁷

¹ Anthony J. Sheehan, 'The recusancy revolt: a re-interpretation', *Archivum Hibernicum*, 38 (1983), pp. 3–13.

² Richard Bagwell, *Ireland under the Stuarts and during the Interregnum* (3 vols., London, 1909–16), I, pp. 1–13.

³ Stephen Carroll, 'Government policy, strategies of negotiation and the politics of protest in early seventeenth century Ireland' (Ph.D. thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 2013), ch. 1.

⁴ Sheehan, 'Recusancy revolt', p. 12; idem, 'Irish towns in a period of change 1558–1625', in Ciaran Brady and Raymond Gillespie, eds., *Natives and newcomers: the making of Irish colonial society, 1534–1641* (Dublin, 1986), pp. 93–119.

⁵ Sheehan, 'Recusancy revolt', p. 3.

⁶ But for the later period, see now Timothy D. Watt, *Popular protest and policing in Ascendancy Ireland, 1691–1761* (Woodbridge, 2018); James Kelly, *Food rioting in Ireland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: the 'moral economy' of the Irish crowd* (Dublin, 2017); and essays in Peter Jupp and Eoin Magennis, eds., *Crowds in Ireland, c. 1720–1920* (Basingstoke, 2000).

⁷ Official papers at The National Archives (TNA), *Calendar of State Papers Ireland (CSPI), 1603–1606*, mainly SP 63/215, can be supplemented by the detailed record kept by the lord deputy's

There remains, of course, a bias in the surviving historical record – familiarly, with a Protestant, anglicizing authority producing much of the archive, but less obviously also with the towns’ rulers speaking for those they ruled over and seeking subsequently to gloss, and to gloss over, the internal divisions behind a more radical edge to events in the larger urban centres in 1603. The evidence therefore remains partial in both senses of the word, reflecting both the incompleteness of the surviving record and the truth of the observation that authority is invariably the first historian of protest. As ever, popular political beliefs were verbalized only indirectly in the recorded words of those unfortunate to be arrested and examined. Few of these survive for 1603, and the surprisingly lenient treatment of the rebellious towns immediately after the revolt meant that there were probably fewer to survive. But as a counterbalance, there are also eyewitness accounts for Cork and Waterford, the two most important centres of the revolt.⁸

This article returns to the ‘recusancy revolt’ to recover the popular role in the events of 1603. It seeks to contribute to an emerging body of work that has begun to explore the possibilities of a popular politics before the rising of 1641.⁹ Paying attention to what actually happened in the revolt, I argue that

secretary, Fynes Moryson (printed in *An itinerary written by Fynes Moryson Gent...containing his ten yeeres trauell through the twelue dominions of Germany, Bohmerland, Sweitzerland, Netherland, Denmarke, Poland, Italy, Turkey, France, England, Scotland, and Ireland...* (1617), pp. 279–95) and the Carew and Boyle papers: *The Lismore papers (Second Series) viz. selections from the private and public (or state) correspondence of Sir Richard Boyle, First and ‘Great’ Earl of Cork*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (5 vols., [London], 1887–8) (hereafter *Lismore papers*); J. S. Brewer and William Bullen, eds., *Calendar of the Carew manuscripts preserved in the Archiepiscopal library at Lambeth* (6 vols., London, 1867–73) (hereafter *Cal. Carew MSS*), V (1603–23). There remain lacunae in the sources. Of these, the absence of urban records is the largest loss; of the towns involved, only Waterford has a surviving corporation book covering the period: Niall J. Byrne, ed., *The great parchment book of Waterford: Liber antiquissimus civitatis Waterfordiae* (Dublin, 2007).

⁸ James White, vicar apostolic of Waterford and Lismore, a leading participant in events at Waterford, wrote an account for the pope: White, *The Irish Catholics after the death of Queen Elizabeth [1604]* (republished in P. M. Egan, *The guide and directory of the county and city of Waterford* (Kilkenny, 1895), pp. 116–42). William Farmer, a Protestant surgeon, was a witness to events at Cork in 1603: C. Litton Falkiner, ‘William Farmer’s chronicles of Ireland, parts I & II’, *English Historical Review*, 22 (1907), pp. 104–29, 527–52. Little is known of either man. Farmer was associated with the circle of Sir Arthur Chichester, later lord deputy: ‘Farmer’s chronicles’, p. 104. There is some confusion about White’s affiliation, described as a Jesuit with black gown and cornered cap in Moryson’s *Itinerary*, p. 293. Aine Henry, ‘A database of Catholic priests reported to be in south-eastern Ireland, 1557–1650’, *Archivium Hibernicum*, 68 (2015), p. 131, lists two Whites, one as Dr, a Jesuit, and the other James White as a Dominican, identifying the latter as the vicar apostolic: Thomas F. Flynn (*The Irish Dominicans 1536–1641* (Dublin, 1993), p. 104) mentions White, but does not identify him as a Dominican.

⁹ Clodagh Tait, ‘Disorder and commotion: urban riots and popular protest in Ireland, 1570–1640’, in Maura Cronin and William Sheehan, eds., *Riotous assemblies: rebels, riots and revolts in Ireland* (Cork, 2011), pp. 22–49; Clodagh Tait, ‘Riots, rescues and “grene bowes”: Catholics and protest in Ireland, 1570–1640’, in Robert Armstrong and Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, eds., *Insular Christianity: alternative models of the church in Britain and Ireland, c. 1570–c. 1700* (Manchester, 2013), pp. 67–87; David Edwards, Pádraig Lenihan, and Clodagh Tait, eds., *Age of atrocity: violence and political conflict in early modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2007); Carroll, ‘Politics of protest in early seventeenth century Ireland’; David Edwards, ‘Out of the blue? Provincial unrest in Ireland before 1641’, and John Walter,

the protests in 1603 should be seen as an expression of a corporate, civic Catholicism and caution against making too rigorous a division between politics and religion in the causes of the 'recusancy revolt'. Reading for meaning in the shaping and timing of the crowd rituals at the heart of the protest, the article explores how the politics of religion in 1603 promoted a popular political mobilization that both anticipated, but also sharply differed from, the better-documented politics of the 1641 rising.

II

Elizabeth I died on 24 March 1603. The news of her death and of James VI and I's succession to the English throne was proclaimed in Dublin on 5 April. Officially, news began to reach the Munster and Leinster towns a little under a week later on 11 April.¹⁰ But proclamation locally of the new king, as was customary and now commanded, did not occur immediately. Instead, it became a point of conflict between the government and some of the towns. Its implementation was resisted by town rulers, notably in Waterford and Cork, who had written to each other – 'in neighbourly and brotherly love' – to establish the truth of news of the succession and what they were each proposing to do about proclaiming it.¹¹ Both had prevaricated.¹²

At Waterford, where news of Elizabeth's death had seen the citizens already begin to take over the churches, the mayor had told the provincial commissioners for Munster that he must take advice from his brethren in the corporation. On meeting, they had advised postponing any action until the town had received an official order directly from the lord deputy to proclaim James.¹³ A subsequent attempt to proclaim the new king, at the market cross opposite the guildhall,¹⁴ had raised a 'tumult'. When Sir Nicholas Walsh, chief justice in the Court of Common Pleas and the city's former recorder, had tried with others to proclaim James at the High Cross, in the euphemistic words of the mayor they had had 'some impediment given them'.¹⁵ As Sir Nicholas himself complained, he had been pulled down from the Cross and physically manhandled, his opponents 'in most violent manner...drawing me to & fro', while attempts were made to snatch the proclamation from his hand. The violence had transgressed social

'Performative violence and the politics of violence in the 1641 depositions', both in Micheál Ó Siochru and Jane Ohlmeyer, eds., *Ireland, 1641: contexts and reactions* (Manchester, 2013), pp. 95–114, 134–52. For more general discussions of the possibilities of a popular politics, see Eamon Darcy, 'Political participation in early Stuart Ireland', *Journal of British Studies*, 56 (2017), pp. 773–96; Brendan Kane, 'Popular politics and the legitimacy of power', in Eve Campbell, Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, and Audrey Horning, eds., *Becoming and belonging in Ireland AD c. 1200–1600: essays in identity and cultural practice* (Cork, 2018), pp. 328–43.

¹⁰ *Lismore papers*, I, pp. 43–4; *Cal. Carew MSS*, V, pp. 7–8, 10.

¹¹ *CSPI, 1603–1606*, pp. 15–16.

¹² Waterford read the proclamation on 13 April (White, *Irish Catholics*, p. 120), Cork on the 16th (*Cal. Carew MSS*, V, p. 9; Moryson, *Itinerary*, p. 285).

¹³ TNA, SP 63/215/31.

¹⁴ Niall J. Byrne, 'Jacobean Waterford: religion and politics 1603–25' (Ph.D. thesis, Cork, 2002), p. 16.

¹⁵ TNA, SP 63/215/31, 40.ii, 48.

as well as bodily boundaries. Walsh subsequently complained of his attackers, 'facing & outfacing me & using hard spe[e]ches toward me & my companie'.¹⁶

Sir Nicholas identified his attackers only as commoners, but memories of the event were still strong when the establishment of the Confederacy in the 1640s allowed the printing of a manuscript from the early 1620s that recalled events at Waterford in 1603. The author, Patrick Comerford, later bishop of Waterford and Lismore, remembered the attack as the work of 'yong men's zeale'.¹⁷ In another, contemporaneous report, the young men were said to have used 'rash speches' during the tussle over the attempt to proclaim James, one reportedly crying out, 'We will not have a Scott to be our King'.¹⁸ The episode hints at a more fundamental opposition at a popular level to proclaiming James king. It voiced a sentiment also to surface in examinations of participants after the end of the movement.

At Cork, after a stormy meeting between members of the corporation, the commissioners, and Richard Boyle, clerk to the council for Munster and later first earl of Cork, the corporation had insisted on holding a meeting of the whole membership. This larger gathering was summoned to the tholsel (town hall) by the beating of drums and given an armed guard. Made publicly to wait at the City's High Cross and then further fobbed off when they came to the Council House, the commissioners later learned that a decision had been taken to postpone publishing the proclamation until a date that allowed it to be done with full solemnity, or so the town claimed.¹⁹ The delay in delivering a reply, and the fact that the commissioners had found the Council House 'so full as way was forced for them', suggests that many more of the town participated in the meeting and that many opposed proclaiming James. At the initial meeting with the commissioners, the recorder William Meade, whose hostility to the commissioners saw him rebuked for speaking in 'a ruff[fe]aniely sorte', had warned that 'there weare many that would be ready to break forth'. Significantly, when the commissioners suggested they might themselves proclaim the succession, they were reminded by the recorder that their power had ceased with the queen's death.²⁰ The interregnum this created was to be important in explaining events in 1603.

If proclaiming James produced recorded trouble only in Waterford and Cork, the recovery of cathedrals and churches and the public profession therein and on urban streets of Catholic worship took place much more widely in the new political space created by this interregnum.²¹ It was to be the leitmotif of the

¹⁶ *Cal. Carew MSS*, V, p. 10; TNA, SP 63/215/31.

¹⁷ Marsh Library, Dublin, W C5533D: R.F.P.C. [Patrick Comerford], *The Inquisition of a sermon preached in the cathedral church of the city of Waterford in February 1617 etc by Robert Daborne...* (Waterford, 1644), pp. 18–19, 27–8. I am very grateful to the library's Keeper, Dr Jason McElligott, for making it possible for me to check my notes from this volume. On Comerford, see Michael Golden, *The life and times of Patrick Comerford O.S.A. (1586–1652). Counter-reformation bishop of Waterford and Lismore* (Waterford, n.d.).

¹⁸ TNA, SP 63/215/48.

¹⁹ TNA, SP 63/215/62.

²⁰ *Lismore papers*, I, pp. 43–9.

²¹ *Calendar of State Papers Venetian*, X: 1603–1607, p. 42.

'recusancy revolt'. Thus, in the last week of April, the lord deputy, Lord Mountjoy, informed Robert Cecil that 'all the townes or as I hear most off [sic] them in Munster, and Kilkennye and Wexford in Lemster, have with som Insolence, sett upp the publiqe exercyse of the mass'.²²

In Cork, this had begun on Sunday, 10 April,²³ when the cathedral had been taken over and reformation begun on its interior. The Protestant William Farmer, an eyewitness to events there, recorded that the Ten Commandments and other scriptural sentences had been erased, the bibles and prayer books torn and burned, the cathedral new washed, and images repainted.²⁴ It had then been announced that there would be a 'solemn procession' through the city and mass would be sung openly in all the churches. When representatives of the provincial government had tried to persuade the mayor to intervene to prevent this, he had agreed, on oath they claimed, that he would not attend. But he said that he had also told them that he loved the mass as well as any of the town and that since 'all the Towne were resolved to have the masses publiquelie sett up...he was not able to restrayne them from that which they loved better than their lives'.²⁵

The next day what a report described as, but did not identify, the sublegate of the pope processed around the town with wax lights and the cross carried before him, accompanied by other priests, a large crowd (the report said 3,000 at least) and the mayor. They then proceeded to sanctify the cathedral, placing a guard of 200 at the doors before entering and celebrating mass. On this and the next day, burials of a townsman and priest were held with 'all papistical Ceremonies', with the mayor 'goeing with greate pompe...the Kings' sword and the badges of Office carried before him'.²⁶

Thereafter, there were further public processions, reclaiming the urban streets for the public profession of the Catholic faith. During these processions, the sacrament was reportedly carried through the streets 'with great pomp and incredible joy of the whole town'. When this had happened at Cork, a later report described one man looking up to heaven and with outstretched arms praying that the city never want the power 'to preserve so happy, holy, and divine a custom', an act for which he was later summoned by the lord deputy.²⁷

At Waterford, the Jesuit and vicar apostolic of Waterford and Lismore, Dr James White, reported that the citizens had come in a body to his house and demanded that by enacting 'the solemn rites of the Catholic Church' he restore their hereditary rights to the city's churches, illegally held by 'atheistical' (Protestant) ministers. On the evening of 11 April, White took the lead in taking 'peaceful possession' of St Patrick's church, purifying it 'by public and solemn rite' and celebrating mass there the next day. After the service, 'the

²² TNA, SP 63/215/38.

²³ Boyle's account is a little confused. He gives the date as 10 April, which was a Sunday, but then refers to the next day as a Saturday: *Lismore papers*, I, pp. 55–6.

²⁴ Litton Falkiner, 'Farmer's chronicles', p. 530.

²⁵ *Lismore papers*, I, pp. 55–6.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 55–7; Moryson, *Itinerary*, p. 287.

²⁷ *Chapters towards a history of Ireland in the reign of Elizabeth. Being a portion of the history of Catholic Ireland by Dom Philip O'Sullivan Bear*, ed. Matthew J. Byrne (Dublin, 1903), p. 179.

poor people, hungering and thirsting after justice', insisted that he purify Holy Trinity, the cathedral church. White then performed a 'rite of lustration', in the presence among others of Sir Nicholas Walsh, the man who was to have trouble proclaiming the king. Here too recovery of the cathedral, and the discovery that its reformed interior had been kept 'not like a church, but like a pigstye, a receptacle of filth and impurities', necessitated thorough cleansing and the restoration of altars in all the side chapels.²⁸

White's account suggests that possession was peaceful. But other accounts suggest that possession and purification were not without violence. The keys to the cathedral were forcibly seized from the sexton, and Farmer recorded that a Captain Nicholas Strange had surprised the cathedral church. Entering the vestry and the house of the chancellor, Strange had removed Protestant bibles, prayer books and other books, tearing and burning them at the cross in the churchyard.²⁹

Summoned by bells on 12 April, the corporation, with men and women of the 'respectable families' and the whole population of the city, had processed to the cathedral to hear a sermon from White, high mass sung, and to witness 'many other acts of religion calculated to excite the people to piety and penance'. After dinner, the king was proclaimed at the market place with bonfires and the distribution of money and drink, and the prisons were thrown open. The mayor, magistrates, and the whole body of the citizenry then returned to the cathedral for a further service, ending with the Loretto litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary.³⁰ Around the same time, citizens broke open the doors of a priory that had been converted to a hospital in the 1540s and restored it to use as a friary.³¹ Renovation of the city's churches was said to have gone on until the first week of May.³²

Similar happenings took place in a number of towns. A letter from London to Rome reported that at Limerick and Drogheda, as well as at Cork, the Protestant ministers had been expelled, public processions held, and the mass and altars reinstated in the churches.³³ At Limerick, the neighbouring gentleman, the devout Sir John Bourke (later executed for his faith in 1607), appears to have played a leading role in repossessing the old Dominican church of St Saviour, a role for which he was subsequently committed to Dublin Castle.³⁴ There were almost certainly more episodes than those for which we now have evidence. Dr White reported in what he said was an incomplete

²⁸ White, *Irish Catholics*, pp. 119–20; [Comerford], *Inquisition of a sermon*, pp. 18–19.

²⁹ Litton Falkiner, 'Farmer's chronicles', p. 530; TNA, SP 63/215/48.

³⁰ White, *Irish Catholics*, pp. 116, 119–20.

³¹ As Clodagh Tait notes, there were well-founded suspicions that the hospital's benefactions had already provided a front for Catholic devotional activity: Tait, *Death, burial and commemoration in Ireland, 1555–1650* (Basingstoke, 2002), pp. 143–4.

³² TNA, SP 63/215/31; Moryson, *Itinerary*, p. 285; White, *Irish Catholics*, p. 135.

³³ J. Hagan, ed., 'Miscellanea Vaticano-Hibernica, 1420–1631', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 4 (1915), p. 232. See also J. Hagan, 'Some papers relating to the Nine Years War', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 2 (1913), pp. 316–17.

³⁴ Flynn, *Irish Dominicans*, pp. 132–3; Anthony M. McCormack, 'Burke (Bourke), John', *Dictionary of Irish biography*.

list that either he or his fellow priests had hallowed cathedrals and churches at Carrick-on-Suir, Cashel, Clonmel, Cloyne, St Dominick's monastery, diocese of Ossory,³⁵ Dunkit, Fethard, Kilkenny, Limerick, Ross, Thomastown, and Wexford.³⁶

At Wexford, the sovereign, the chief officer of the town, admitted that the magistrates and commons accompanied by a priest had taken possession of St Mary's and St Patrick's, the latter then in a ruined state, and that mass was now said there. But he denied the bishop's allegation that they had been accompanied by armed men or that 'any opprobrious words' had been used towards the bishop.³⁷ At Kilkenny, friars assisted by some 'disorderly people' were said to have dispossessed the Protestant ministers, taken possession of the churches, and publicly celebrated mass there.³⁸ It had been White, coming from Waterford, who had hallowed their church, while a Dominican friar, Edmund Barrie, had forcibly entered Blackfriars abbey, then used as the sessions house, torn out the court's furnishings, set a guard over it, and claimed it in the name of his fellow friars. Redecorating its interior and restoring images, they had made it a site for processions in which the corporation took part.³⁹ This was probably the monastery on which the Dominican Simon of the Holy Spirit O'Hallaghan claimed to have spent 300 pounds of silver in repairing.⁴⁰

Events at Kilkenny must have seemed a rerun of the events that had greeted the accession of Mary I when priests and people had taken over the cathedral and churches, and, the Protestant bishop William Bale complained, had 'mustered fourth in general procession most gorgeously/all the towne over with Sancta Maria ora pro nobis' and 'brought fourth their coopes/candelstickes/holy waterstocke/crosses and sensers'.⁴¹ Clearly, as had happened in England at the restoration of Catholicism under Mary I, urban communities in 1603 were restoring images, and perhaps vestments and sacred utensils, that had been hidden away from Protestant iconoclasts. According to William Farmer, there was a general 'bringing fourth [of] old rotten stockes and stones of images'.⁴²

III

While the timing of the interregnum following Elizabeth's death determined the initial phase of the revolt, it was the significance of its alignment with a

³⁵ Flynn identifies this as Kilkenny: *Irish Dominicans*, p. 130.

³⁶ White, *Irish Catholics*, pp. 120–1; Moryson, *Itinerary*, pp. 286–9, 295; Litton Falkiner, 'Farmer's chronicles', pp. 530–1.

³⁷ TNA, SP 63/215/40.iii.

³⁸ TNA, SP 63/215/38.

³⁹ TNA, SP 63/215/48 and 70; Moryson, *Itinerary*, p. 285; Flynn, *Irish Dominicans*, p. 128.

⁴⁰ O'Hallaghan also claimed that this had led to his being summoned before Mountjoy and, somewhat implausibly, that he had answered the summons so well that the monastery had been allowed to remain: Flynn, *Irish Dominicans*, pp. 131–2.

⁴¹ John Bale, *The vocacyon of Johan Bale*, ed. Peter Hapé and John N. King (Binghampton, NY, 1990), pp. 57–9, 62.

⁴² Litton Falkiner, 'Farmer's chronicles', p. 530; Margaret Aston, *Broken idols of the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 219–57.

symbolically charged period in the church's liturgical calendar that gave heightened meaning to subsequent events. At Waterford and elsewhere where he was called to hallow the churches, White records the emotional impact these repossessionings created, noting amidst the floods of tears the 'inexpressible joy of the people', a description echoed in Jesuit letters.⁴³ Doubtless, these descriptions owe something to the intended audience for his narrative. But they point to something significant in the timing of the events of 1603.

It is important to note, as has either not previously been done or, if done, not discussed, that the recovery of the churches occurred at one of the most important Christian festivals. They began in Passion Week and continued into Easter. The cleansing and purification of churches, deformed by Protestant church fittings and defiled by Protestant worship, began, as at Cork, on 10 April, Passion Sunday. It was on Palm Sunday (17 April) that the community at Cork received the sacrament and entered into an association to spend their lives and estates in defence of their Catholic faith.⁴⁴ As the Jesuits reported, deciding to begin this in Holy Week 'nothing the Church commanded was to be done [in it] was omitted'. Over a period of five days, masses, processions, and sermons were 'nearly daily events'. Catholic congregations publicly celebrated 'the offices of Tenebrae, Sepulchre, the Mandate and the Passion and everything else'.

The performative drama these rituals entailed doubtless heightened the emotional force of their actions for the participating protesters.⁴⁵ William Farmer watched the Good Friday procession at Cork. Beginning in the cathedral, the priest and friars, accompanied by the mayor and aldermen and 'the best of the citizens', processed through the streets from town gate to town gate with some forty penitents, bare-footed young men, whipping themselves and responding to the chief priest's recital with cries of 'Misere Mei'.⁴⁶

At a symbolically important time in the liturgical year, recovery of the churches allowed Catholics collectively to meet the canonical requirement to take Easter mass with its focus on the central question of personal reformation and collective salvation. As White ventriloquized petitioners seeking the hallowing of the city's churches at Waterford saying, they wished to 'profess the faith of God and our forefathers and discharge the other duties of piety and charity, whereby we may now at length move the mercy of God in our behalf, for long has his hand been heavy upon us'.⁴⁷ White's account for the pope goes on to stress the spiritual fruits this brought in a moral reformation of lapsed Catholics and the renewal of religious fervour. The Jesuit letter reporting events in Limerick, Cork, and Drogheda records, without specifying the city, that in two of the churches eighty masses were held in a single day,

⁴³ White, *Irish Catholics*, pp. 121, 119; Vera Moynes, ed., *Irish Jesuit annual letters*, I: 1604–1615 (Dublin, 2019), p. 29.

⁴⁴ *Lismore papers*, I, p. 57.

⁴⁵ Moynes, ed., *Irish Jesuit annual letters*, p. 29.

⁴⁶ Litton Falkiner, 'Farmer's chronicles', pp. 530–1.

⁴⁷ White, *Irish Catholics*, p. 119.

while the two Jesuits active in the Waterford area, Fathers Leinach and Mulronee, could later claim that they heard so many confessions, ‘they could hardly breath’.⁴⁸ These reports should perhaps be read with a degree of caution, given the context in which the clergy active in Ireland were seeking to stress the strength of Catholic devotion in the country as part of their campaign to secure resources and personnel from the Catholic hierarchy. But they point to the emotional charge and pull of the timing of a protest taking place in Holy Week. As the Jesuits reported, this ‘caused great devotion in a people who had never seen such things before, and they ceaselessly thanked God for such a great favour’.⁴⁹

IV

A shared justification for their actions offered both licence and legitimation for the reintroduction of public Catholic worship and helped to co-ordinate the cities’ and towns’ actions. Popular beliefs about the nature of the interregnum between the death of one monarch and their successor, artificially prolonged as here by the refusal immediately to proclaim James, offered them licence for their actions. Popular beliefs about James’s own faith and religious practice could be taken to afford them legitimation.

A popular belief in the interregnum as a liminal period in which there was temporarily no law in force was a characteristic of early modern political culture. In England, the death of Elizabeth saw individuals in alehouses and crowds protesting popular grievances claim that the laws and the authority of those whose office was to enforce them died with the monarch. In Scotland too, similar beliefs lay behind the outbreak on Elizabeth’s death of cross-border raiding between Scots and English in what came to be called a ‘busy week’.⁵⁰ A belief in the interregnum was clearly also held in Ireland, or at least among the Old English. Thus it was reported of Waterford that ‘they formally defended their proceedings’ by claiming that ‘they had only taken the benefit of the time, by the death of the Queene to use the liberty of their consciences’.⁵¹ Similarly, at Kilkenny it was said that ‘after the death of the Queene they thought it not against the law, to professes their religion publickly till the Kings coronation’.⁵² (Opting for coronation, not proclamation, to confirm the succession was a popular preference to be found elsewhere among plebeian constitutionalists eager to extend the period of freedom an interregnum was believed to permit.) As Mountjoy wrote to Robert Cecil on

⁴⁸ Hagan, ed., ‘Miscellanea Vaticano-Hibernica’, p. 232; Fergus Michael O’Donoghue, ‘The Jesuit mission in Ireland 1598–1651’ (Ph.D. thesis, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, 1981), p. 39. For suspicions about the part played by the fathers in Waterford and the surrounding area, see Moryson, *Itinerary*, pp. 293–4.

⁴⁹ Moynes, ed., *Irish Jesuit annual letters*, pp. 29–30.

⁵⁰ John Walter, ‘“Law-mindedness”: crowds, courts and popular knowledge of the law in early modern England’, in Michael Lobban, Joanne Begiato, and Adrian Green, eds., *Law, lawyers and litigants in early modern England: essays in memory of Christopher W. Brooks* (Cambridge, 2019), pp. 175–6.

⁵¹ TNA, SP 63/215/53.

⁵² TNA, SP 63/215/53.

19 April, 'they would fayne excuse or mitigate...there attempt with a purpose only to declare there Religion to his Ma^{ty} and the world in that tyme between two raignes, wherin they suppose it lawfull or lesse dangerous'.⁵³ But of course it was precisely the liminality this created that worried governments.

Accordingly, more worrying still in 1603 was the associated belief that in the interregnum the authority of all those whose office it was to enforce the law also died with the monarch.⁵⁴ When denying their request to be allowed to proclaim James king, the recorder at Cork had reminded the Munster commissioners that 'he knew all the former Commissioners and power ceased [and] was extinct by her Majesty's death'.⁵⁵ Acknowledging themselves that the queen's death 'had given end to all Aucthoritie for the governement of this province', the commissioners wrote anxiously to have their offices renewed, 'that we may not contynewe here inferior to the Maior of Corcke as he now vaunteth we are'.⁵⁶ Mountjoy later wrote to the mayor, 'it may be you have rashly and unadvisedly done this, upon some opinion of the ceasing of authority in the publike gouernement, upon the death of our late Souereign'. Interestingly, even Mountjoy reluctantly acknowledged that if so this was 'somewhat more excusable'.⁵⁷

If belief in the interregnum created the space within which the citizens could act, it was a belief about James's religion and religious policies that lay at the heart of the actions taken. In the 'restorationist mood' that greeted the succession in Ireland,⁵⁸ the belief, widely held, that James, son of the martyred Mary Queen of Scots, was himself a Catholic or would offer liberty of conscience to his Catholic subjects was taken to offer legitimation for the collective and public profession of their faith. According to Patrick Comerford, the citizens at Waterford, 'had intelligence from good Authors of great expectation, and likelihood, that if King *James* would succeed, he would permit Irishmen a free exercise of the Catholique religion'. This was the more so since he was 'sonne to a Catholicke and holy Mother' and, as they were told, had promised in secret intelligence with the pope and kings of France and Spain that if he became king 'he would allow Catholicks the publicke exercise of their Religion'.⁵⁹ The mayor of Waterford reported that the people flocked daily to the churches, 'giving out that they are in good hope the kings Ma^{tie} will be pleased to let them have the libertie of their Conscience'. The citizens believed that 'the King wo[u]ld be pleased to give good allowance to their doings', an opinion also reported from Kilkenny.⁶⁰ At Wexford, the sovereign reported

⁵³ TNA, SP 63/215/33.

⁵⁴ TNA, SP 63/215/31, 67.

⁵⁵ *Lismore papers*, I, pp. 48–9.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁵⁷ Moryson, *Itinerary*, p. 288.

⁵⁸ Brian MacCuarta, *Catholic revival in the north of Ireland, 1603–41* (Dublin, 2007), p. 168.

⁵⁹ [Comerford], *Inquisition of a sermon*, p. 29. For some discussion of the manoeuvring to secure support for James's succession in Ireland, see David Edwards, 'Securing the Jacobean succession: the secret career of James Fullerton of Trinity College, Dublin', in Séan Duffy, ed., *The world of the galloglass: kings, warlords and warriors in Ireland and Scotland* (Dublin, 2007), pp. 188–219.

⁶⁰ TNA, SP 63/215/40.ii, 48, 53.

that the people going to mass think it 'wilbe graciously accepted of his most Roiall Ma^{tie}, who 'by comon iudgement of all men here, fewe excepted, is thought to be Catholique'.⁶¹ At Cork too, Boyle reported those involved in restoring the mass and images, saying 'they did not know but that the King was of their religion'.⁶² Given James's hostility to the conflict of political loyalties that obedience to the pope entailed, such beliefs were to be proved wrong. But reports of James's practice towards Catholics in Scotland, and in England his wooing of Catholics with apparent promises of religious toleration in seeking support for his claim to the succession, help to explain the strength of the ideas that circulated in Ireland in 1603.⁶³ Even Mountjoy, while complaining about the towns' 'insolent' proceedings in the public profession of Catholic worship, felt the need initially to write to establish the king's pleasure in how to deal with them.⁶⁴

V

When the lord deputy progressed through the region with an army, variously numbered at 2,000 to 5,000 strong, most towns quickly conformed, submitting by early May at least and with Cashel the last to be visited by Mountjoy on May 20. Mountjoy demanded the return of the churches to Protestant worship and at each town exacted an oath of allegiance to the crown with a denial of dependency on the pope.⁶⁵ But Waterford and Cork (initially) resisted. Reflecting their political identity as quasi-city republics and standing on their charters, they attempted to raise demands for toleration, liberty of conscience, civic control of the forts ('pestilent impediment to our corporation', as Cork complained),⁶⁶ and the retention of ruined churches for public worship, and to negotiate the terms of Mountjoy's entry or – briefly – to offer armed resistance.⁶⁷

At Waterford, there were political disagreements about whether and how to admit Mountjoy. The gates had been shut on news of his arrival and the citizens had begun to arm themselves. On the arrival of the lord deputy on Low Sunday, 1 May, there was a procession in which the sacrament, accompanied by 'an immense throng', was carried through the streets and market place. Returned to the cathedral, it was placed on the high altar, at which 'there was a general cry from the people' protesting 'that they were resolved to live and die in the faith of the holy Eucharist'. White then took an oath of

⁶¹ TNA, SP 63/215/40.iii.

⁶² *Cal. Carew MSS*, V, p. 9.

⁶³ See Richard A. McCabe, 'Panegyric and its discontents: the first Stuart succession', in Paulina Kewes and Andrew McCrae, eds., *Stuart succession literature: moments and transformations* (Oxford, 2019), pp. 32–4; Dorothy Boyd Rash, 'The religious toleration of James I', *History Today*, 29 (1979), pp. 109–10; Michael Questier, 'The politics of religious conformity and the accession of James I', *Historical Research*, 71 (1998), pp. 14–30; Ken Fincham and Peter Lake, 'The ecclesiastical policy of King James I', *Journal of British Studies*, 24 (1985), pp. 169–207.

⁶⁴ TNA, SP 63/215/33.

⁶⁵ Moryson, *Itinerary*, pp. 293, 295; TNA, SP 63/215/53.

⁶⁶ TNA, SP 63/215/62.

⁶⁷ Moryson, *Itinerary*, p. 287; TNA, SP 63/215/48, 58; White, *Irish Catholics*, p. 130.

all the magistrates and adult males, married *and* unmarried, that they were resolved to live and die as Catholics and 'that they should be true to the Pope and maineteine the Romish Religion with their goods and their lives'. This took place before the high altar in the cathedral and during the celebration of the mass, and it was confirmed by the oath-takers kissing the crucifix that White presented to each of them.⁶⁸

According to Farmer, Waterford 'grew into a great mutinie among themselves' with some wanting to open the gates and others threatening to kill any who attempted it. But in the end, the gates were opened and Mountjoy was met by the mayor and corporation who, in accordance with the customary urban ritual symbolizing the acknowledgement of royal lordship (and here the restoration of political order), surrendered the royal sword and town keys. In response, the lord deputy, in a familiar exercise of royal justice and mercy, pardoned those the town had handed over as the principal actors (including John Fagan who had originally been selected for execution by martial law) – 'upon their humble submission upon theyr knees, confessing their faultes, and craving pardon'.⁶⁹

At Cork too there was also a dispute over whether to allow Lord Mountjoy to enter the city, but resistance was even stronger here.⁷⁰ Troops were raised,⁷¹ government officials imprisoned, royal fortifications seized and razed, and royal supplies and munitions appropriated and briefly deployed in cannon fire against Mountjoy's forces and the Bishop's Palace.⁷² The recorder, Thomas Meade, whom we have already seen resisting the attempts of the Munster commissioners to proclaim the king, was at the heart of this opposition, leading the crowds in the recovery of the churches and the demolition and seizure of royal fortifications, and angrily arresting royal officials and supporters of Mountjoy.⁷³ According to a subsequent deposition, the mayor, Thomas Sarsfield, had assembled the citizens before they went on to demolish the fort and had told them 'that before 40 hours had passed, all *Ireland* would be in arms against the King, & that the crown of *England* should never more recover *Ireland*'.⁷⁴ Both mayor and recorder were said to have been present when a friar preached a sermon, 'that the Kings Majesty was noe perfect King till the Pope confirmed him' and 'that he could not be a lawful King, who was not placed by the Pope, and sworne to maintaine the Roman Religion'.⁷⁵ An oath, similar to that at Waterford, was also taken during

⁶⁸ White, *Irish Catholics*, p. 123; TNA, SP 63/215/48.

⁶⁹ Litton Falkiner, 'Farmer's chronicles', p. 532. It is not clear if these included the two or three reported to have been placed in prison to await a charge of treasonable words: TNA, SP 63/215/53.

⁷⁰ Charles Smith, *The antient and present state of the county and city of Cork, in four books...* (2 vols., Dublin, 1750), II, p. 99n.

⁷¹ *Lismore papers*, I, pp. 65–6.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 59–73; TNA, SP 63/215/48, 55, 56, 63; Litton Falkiner, 'Farmer chronicles', p. 531; *Cal. Carew MSS*, V, pp. 7–9.

⁷³ *Lismore papers*, I, p. 44; TNA, SP 63/215/63, 81; Smith, *Antient and present state of Cork*, II, p. 99n; Moryson, *Itinerary*, pp. 285, 287, 291.

⁷⁴ Smith, *Antient and present state of Cork*, II, pp. 95–6n.

⁷⁵ *Lismore papers*, I, p. 61; TNA, SP 63/215/48; Moryson, *Itinerary*, p. 291.

mass at Cork on Palm Sunday. Those swearing it were said to have vowed to maintain their religion with their lives and to bury themselves within the city's walls if not.⁷⁶

The revolt lasted little more than a month. The short-lived nature of the revolt owed much to the overwhelming military strength that the lord deputy could deploy, to his firm refusal to accede to the towns' requests to be allowed church worship or to take over responsibility for the forts that they had briefly put under siege, and perhaps also to his repeated conciliatory statement he would 'take no great knowledge of that is past'.⁷⁷ Despite the high language initially used to describe the events by Mountjoy – in his early correspondence with the government he had called it the most dangerous conspiracy that was ever begun in Ireland – the 'recusancy revolt' was, as Sheehan noted (although not entirely accurately) 'suppressed bloodlessly'.⁷⁸

Several things, however, point perhaps to continuing low-level opposition. The impossibility of finding a jury within Munster willing to convict Cork's recorder, Thomas Meade eventually led to his retrial in Dublin.⁷⁹ In June, White could still publicly celebrate Corpus Christi at Kilkenny, and into July there was a complaint that the town continued openly to maintain a friar, identified as the leading Dominican, Simon of the Holy Spirit O'Hallaghan.⁸⁰ Despite a promise to remove all the images from the church, there had been further adornings, and the refusal of Kilkenny's sovereign, Sir Walter Archer, to obey an order to restore Blackfriars to secular use led to his imprisonment and finally flight to the continent.⁸¹ In the face of overwhelming military strength, low-level opposition might also have deployed the 'weapons of the weak'.⁸² When, for example, Mountjoy was finally let into Cork, he was presented with a 'dumb show' of a guard of ploughs lining either side of the main street. This was intended to be read, as it was by Protestant commentators, as a silent testimony to the impoverishing consequences of the state's oppressive policies.⁸³

Despite reports of similar happenings within the Pale, with masses reportedly being said openly in some remoter rural parish churches and the takeover of churches in Drogheda and Naas,⁸⁴ the 'recusancy revolt' gathered little open support beyond the towns of the south and west, and even here there are some

⁷⁶ TNA, SP 63/215/55; *Lismore papers*, I, pp. 56–7; Moryson, *Itinerary*, p. 287.

⁷⁷ CSPI, 1603–1606, p. 20.

⁷⁸ TNA, SP63/215/49; Sheehan, 'Recusancy revolt', p. 3. At least three of those involved at Cork were apparently hanged under martial law: *Cal. Carew MSS*, V, pp. 11–12.

⁷⁹ Litton Falkiner, 'Farmer's chronicles', pp. 531, 534–5; Jon G. Crawford, *A Star Chamber court in Ireland: the court of Castle Chamber, 1571–1641* (Dublin, 2005), pp. 286–7.

⁸⁰ White, *Irish Catholics*, p. 134; Flynn, *Irish Dominicans*, p. 129.

⁸¹ TNA, SP 63/215/66, 81; W. G. Neely, *Kilkenny: an urban history, 1391–1843* (Belfast, 1989), p. 47; Flynn, *Irish Dominicans*, p. 129.

⁸² For 'weapons of the weak', see James C. Scott, *Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of peasant resistance* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1985).

⁸³ *Cal. Carew MSS*, V, p. 11.

⁸⁴ MacCuarta, *Catholic revival*, p. 168; TNA, SP 63/215/28; Bagwell, *Ireland under the Stuarts*, I, p. 6.

notable absences.⁸⁵ The decision to take an oath in defence of Catholicism, adopted across a number of towns and cities, was intended to have been the basis of broader co-operation (and as such, so the Jesuits reported, had also secured the subscription of some of the nobility and gentry).⁸⁶ Clearly, there had been communication within the region between the towns' rulers, with Waterford and Cork playing a leading role in seeking support to lift their sieges. But this was not be another revolt of the Comuneros.⁸⁷

VI

Despite the short-lived nature of the movement, its fracturing of the political order does throw up valuable evidence of the political culture of the Old English towns and of the new possibilities for popular political mobilization. Enjoying a privileged position within early modern Ireland and, with the autonomy their charters granted them, accustomed to think of themselves as city republics (and sometimes to act as though they really were), the Old English towns had developed a distinctive urban political culture. Governed by urban patriciates, customals, constitutions, guilds, elections, oaths, and the political vocabulary of commonwealth nevertheless offered a more participatory model of civic politics. If not yet the politics of a public sphere, politics in Irish towns was necessarily public.

Unsurprisingly, Protestant officials attributed leadership to priests and friars whom they accused of preaching seditious doctrine and of leading popular violence.⁸⁸ At Cork, when there was a panic about a surprise attack, it was the priests reportedly calling on the people to 'Arme, Arme' and who accompanied groups intent on disarming the English.⁸⁹ At Waterford, where 'the common party' were reported to be ready to be ruled and directed by him, White clearly played a leading role (as well as in other towns as vicar apostolic), and he was sent by the town to represent it in negotiations with the lord deputy. While reports have him preaching to the corporation and apparently promoting and playing a leading part in popular resistance, he represents himself in his own subsequent account of events as being against tumult and disorder, claiming to have strictly prohibited violence against

⁸⁵ Neither Dublin nor Galway joined, for some explanation of which see Colm Lennon, *The lords of Dublin in the age of Reformation* (Dublin, 1989), p. 172; Moryson, *Itinerary*, p. 286. The absence of Kinsale is perhaps to be explained by the town's recent and bloody experience of fighting in the 1601 siege, after which its charter and insignia were for a while in the hands of the Munster presidency: CSPI, 1601-1603, p. 377. For some discussion of the absence of protest among the Old English Pale community, see Ruth A. Canning, *The Old English in early modern Ireland: the Palesmen and the Nine Years War, 1594-1603* (Woodbridge, 2019), pp. 193-200.

⁸⁶ Moryson, *Itinerary*, pp. 291, 293-4; CSPI, 1603-1606, pp. 15-16, 36, 48; *Lismore papers*, I, p. 61; Moynes, ed., *Irish Jesuit annual letters*, p. 30.

⁸⁷ On the role of the towns, see Stephen Haliczzer, *The Comuneros of Castile: the forging of a revolution, 1475-1521* (Madison, WI, 1981).

⁸⁸ For examples, see TNA, SP 63/215/53, 70, 81; *Lismore papers*, I, p. 72; Smith, *Antient and present state of Cork*, II, p. 94n.

⁸⁹ Moryson, *Itinerary*, p. 289; *Lismore papers*, I, pp. 60-1, 63, 72.

those who professed a different faith. Farmer, however, reports White in the turmoil on Mountjoy's arrival as having 'ranne into the thronge of the people with a crucifix in his hand crieieng out and sayeing, this is the God that you must fight for', a statement at some variance with White's report to the pope that he had cautioned against 'tumult and Disorder'.⁹⁰ Given the focus of the 'revolt', priests and friars necessarily played a prominent part in the restoration of the churches and in drawing up and administering oaths to defend the faith.

Control of cathedral and parish church in 1603 allowed sermons which, as at Waterford, accompanied the taking of oaths. White's example suggests how sermons might politicize the people. He was said to have preached a sermon at St Patrick's in which he told his listeners that 'now Jesabel was dead' 'every man might freely enjoy the fruits of his own reward' free from the 'rapine of the soldiers'. If true, White was repeating a dangerous identification, common throughout Catholic Europe, of Elizabeth I with a woman, the epitome of wickedness, who was known for having promoted false religion and trampled over the rights of the people.⁹¹ At Cork, the sermon preached by a friar in the presence of the corporation raised questions about the nature of true kingship.

The town hall and public assembly, as well as churches and congregations, were at the centre of the popular political mobilization in 1603. At Cork, when the citizens were called to the tholsel by the beating of drums to discuss whether to proclaim James, the Munster commissioners, as we have seen, had found it 'so full' as a way had to be forced for them.⁹² Civic space and the authority invested in it had also been used to try to mobilize popular support. At Cork, at the strategic setting of the market cross, the site of state and civic declarations and of opposition to proclaiming James king, three men (whom Farmer named as George and Andrew Lukas and John Fagan, identified elsewhere as the principal speaker)⁹³ 'with loud voices cried to the people, that they should fight and venter [venture] theyr lives for the king of Spayne, who was their Catholick King, and that they should not suffer any Scottish man to raigne over them'. At Waterford, a copy of the city's resolutions sent to the lord deputy was publicly affixed to the church doors, an important site within early modern urban communicative practices and one apparently made use of in other towns.⁹⁴ Among the questions to be asked of the Waterford men examined after their submission was whether anything published in writing was set on church doors at Clonmel and elsewhere 'to seduce the people'.⁹⁵

Popular participation was also at the core of the swearing of oaths that defined the movement in many of the towns and cities. Administered within the sacred space of the church and accompanied as at Waterford by a sermon,

⁹⁰ Litton Falkiner, 'Farmer's chronicles', p. 531; White, *Irish Catholics*, pp. 119–20.

⁹¹ Cal. Carew MSS, V, p. 10; Richard Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana, or, the history of Ireland, from the conquest thereof by the English, to the present time...* (1689–90), p. 5.

⁹² *Lismore papers*, I, p. 46.

⁹³ Litton Falkiner, 'Farmer's chronicles', p. 532.

⁹⁴ White, *Irish Catholics*, p. 120. A copy of this document appears not to have survived.

⁹⁵ Moryson, *Itinerary*, p. 293.

this served to educate those sworn in the politics of the revolt. As the evidence at Waterford suggests, swearing the town might also accord a political status and agency to those whose dependence would normally have excluded them from formal political participation. According to White, when in compliance with 'his exhortation' the town came to take the oath to live and die as Catholic, it was not just married male heads who took the oath, but 'all who had come to men's estate'. This was to lower the age of political adulthood. Inviting young unmarried males to participate in their own right in the collective act of oath-taking was to enlist the support and harness the energies of an age group which in early modern culture served, in Natalie Zemon Davis's telling phrase, as 'the uproarious voice of the community's conscience'.⁹⁶ It was precisely this group who had been to the fore in opposing James's proclamation and in seeking to mobilize support to resist Mountjoy. Tellingly, Patrick Comerford in his pamphlet about events at Waterford thought 'those yong mens zeale might abide a better, and more upright interpretation'.⁹⁷

More interestingly still, at Waterford the women and boys were also said to have earnestly begged to be allowed to take the oath. White claimed that he was obliged to refuse them 'so great was the multitude of grown men who pressed forward to take it'.⁹⁸ But if granted, this would have been an even more radical extension to membership of the political community (and perhaps not one that the city's rulers and male household heads were likely to have welcomed). It points, however, to the politicization inherent in the experience of collective oath-taking in 1603, one that was later to be fully realized when more widely adopted in Ireland in 1641 (and in the Scottish and English revolutions of the 1640s).⁹⁹

In the emotionally charged atmosphere that accompanied the recovery of the churches and the restoration of the public celebration of the mass, politics inevitably spilled over into the street and market. That this was a popular movement runs through White's account of events, in which he presents himself as being pressed by the people to recover the churches under threat of being reported to the pope if he did not. If the urban elites joined in the celebration of the public restoration of Catholicism, the evidence leaves it unclear whether, as White's account suggests, the initial occupation of the churches had been the work of clergy and people. Even with the density of material for 1603, much of the everyday nature of the protest remains closed to us. But placing faith at the core of protests that took place at a high point in the Catholic church's liturgical calendar ensured that there was a depth to

⁹⁶ N. Z. Davis, 'The reasons of misrule: youth groups and charivaris in sixteenth-century France', *Past & Present*, 50 (1971), pp. 41–75.

⁹⁷ [Comerford], *Inquisition of a sermon*, p. 27.

⁹⁸ White, *Irish Catholics*, p. 123.

⁹⁹ John Morrill, 'An Irish Protestation? Oaths and the Confederation of Kilkenny', in Michael J. Braddick and Phil Withington, eds., *Popular culture and political agency in early modern England and Ireland: essays in honour of John Walter* (Woodbridge, 2017), pp. 243–6; Laura Stewart, *Rethinking the Scottish revolution: covenanted Scotland, 1637–53* (Oxford, 2016); John Walter, *Covenanting citizens: the Protestation oath and popular political culture in the English revolution* (Oxford, 2017).

political mobilization in 1603 in cities and towns whose political structures and culture already provided greater opportunities for popular political participation.

VII

After the event, the towns' rulers were as ready as other elites in early modern Europe in episodes of rebellion to blame 'the insolent fury of the comminality', claiming they 'could not rule the multitude' and attributing to 'the heady violence of the com[m]on people' the violent recovery of the churches.¹⁰⁰ Although it probably had the support of only a minority, there is evidence of a more radical politics at the level of both dissident members of the urban elites and people in the politics of 1603.

Examinations taken after the city's submission at Cork reveal the underlying political dissidence that motivated some of those who opposed Mountjoy's forces. Edward Roche, brother to the popular priest Dominic Roche, had said that 'the City would fight against the King himself if he came to look for it' and that the kings of France and Spain would assist them, 'if he did not give their church free liberty'.¹⁰¹ Thomas Fagan, 'a faxious and busyie fellowe' to his opponents, who had played an active role in the restoration of Catholic worship and a leading part in the military resistance to Mountjoy's forces, was recorded as saying that, 'For his part, no King should rule him, but such as would give him liberty of conscience.'¹⁰² Owen Mac-Redmond, a schoolmaster, said that if James did not turn Catholic then he predicted all Ireland would revolt. He launched a sustained attack on James's kingship. Styling him 'the poorest Prince in Europe', he compared him unfavourably with several of the Scottish nobles who were wealthier than him and with the president of Munster who 'kept a better table than he'. Interestingly (and accurately), he also reported that 'About 7 or 8 years before there was no other mockery in all the stage plays, but the King of Scots.' 'No English man would abide the government of a Scot', he claimed.¹⁰³ Since James had little but former church and abbey lands on which to live, Mac-Redmond observed, the city had good reason not to obey him.

Mountjoy had reported that some 'are so bold as to speake of the title of the Infanta'. Mac-Redmond was one of those, and others agreed. The 'Cross master' (crucifer), most likely Thomas Fagan again, was also charged with maintaining

¹⁰⁰ TNA, SP 23/215/53; *Lismore papers*, I, p. 69.

¹⁰¹ Smith, *Antient and present state of Cork*, II, pp. 95–6n. Dominick Roche's standing amongst the townsmen at Cork was such that an earlier attempt to take him into custody had created uproar: *CSPI, March–October 1600*, p. 135.

¹⁰² *Lismore papers*, I, p. 72; TNA, SP 63/215/63; Smith, *Antient and present state of Cork*, II, pp. 95–6n. It is not known whether Thomas Fagan was related to the John Fagan who had played a leading role at Waterford.

¹⁰³ For discussion of anti-Scottishness in the 1590s on the London stage, see James Shapiro, 'The Scots tragedy and the politics of popular drama', *English Literary Review*, 23 (1993), pp. 428–49, and https://lostplays.folger.edu/Anti-Scots_Play. I am grateful to Tim Wales and Naomi McAreavey for references and for discussing this with me.

the right of the Infanta to the English crown.¹⁰⁴ We need to exercise caution here since reading off popular attitudes from cases of sedition is extremely problematic. The attitudes recorded were most probably those of a minority. But the evidence suggests that there was a more radical edge to opposition at a popular level. Certainly, all of this stood at some variance with the cities' self-fashioning as loyal subjects of the English crown.

There was also a familiar rhetoric of violence – as reported by its recipients.¹⁰⁵ It was said that some at Waterford did 'openly say, that they repented they had not taken the heads of S^r Nicholas Walsh and S^r Richard Ayleward' when they attempted to proclaim the king.¹⁰⁶ At Cork, the citizens, expecting an attack and armed and awake through the night, were reported to have set a guard at the door of the English and to have threatened a massacre.¹⁰⁷ The bishop of Cork alleged that one of the guards, in a scuffle with one of his men, had wished the bishop there and had threatened his death.¹⁰⁸

There were also angry words. It is clear that familiar social antagonisms toward New English upstarts lurked beneath the surface in 1603. Those subsequently tried at Cork were found to have called the commissioners and royal officials 'traytors, destroyers of the city and commonwealth, base-born fellows, beggarly companions, yeomans' sons etc.'¹⁰⁹ In the aftermath of the revolt, several officials testified to their fear that, labelled traitors, they would be subjected to popular violence.¹¹⁰ At Cork, the English were said to have been 'offer[ed] hourlie matter of quarrell'.¹¹¹ Thomas Fagan was reported to have 'never suffered an *Englishman* or Protestant to pass him by unabused'. Carrying a cross in procession through the streets of Cork, he was said to have 'had the impudence to revile Sir *Gerald Herbert*, because he would not put off his hat, & do reverence to the cross'. Violence did not follow this exchange. Nevertheless, for Herbert, this disregard for the (social) deference required under the early modern gestural code doubtless served as an uncomfortable reminder that it was Catholics who now controlled public space.¹¹²

A more alarming episode was said to have taken place at Cashel. There, at the command of the priest, a Protestant goldsmith had been tied to a tree, surrounded with 'heretical books', some of which were set fire to, and threatened with burning and other torment if he would not convert. Following criticism of his treatment by a townsman, he had been released, but only after some six hours. According to a report by two Jesuit priests, fearing to be 'scorched' he had made himself a Catholic, but his books and house had been burned

¹⁰⁴ TNA, SP 63/215/40; *Cal. Carew MSS*, V, p. 12.

¹⁰⁵ *Lismore papers*, I, p. 57.

¹⁰⁶ TNA, SP 63/215/48.

¹⁰⁷ *Lismore papers*, I, p. 63.

¹⁰⁸ Moryson, *Itinerary*, p. 291.

¹⁰⁹ Smith, *Antient and present state of Cork*, II, p. 96n.

¹¹⁰ *Lismore papers*, I, pp. 69–71.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹¹² Smith, *Antient and present state of Cork*, II, p. 94n. On 'hat honour', see John Walter, 'Gesturing at authority: deciphering the gestural code of early modern England', in Michael J. Braddick, ed., *The politics of gesture: historical perspectives, Past & Present*, Supplement, 4 (2009), pp. 119–21.

so that, the Jesuits reported approvingly, even a heretic's house should not remain in the city.¹¹³

But besides the death of two soldiers and a Protestant minister in the brief exchange of fire at Cork,¹¹⁴ and despite the evidence of a rhetoric of violence and of the plundering of English property,¹¹⁵ it is the absence of violence against Protestants that is striking in 1603. The Cashel episode was apparently exceptional, even if it serves as a disturbing reminder of the fear that some Protestants must have felt as Catholics took control of public space. Neither the living – nor, thinking of 1641, the dead and buried – were subject to violence. At Waterford, there were burials of Catholics, attended by the corporation with the full rituals of the Catholic church, but no exhumation of Protestant corpses, and this despite the fact that, as the Jesuits had argued, the churches had to be reconsecrated since 'they were polluted...because heretics had used them or had been buried in them'.¹¹⁶

There was certainly violence against the material objects of Protestant worship, but not against Protestants. William Farmer was allowed to be an eyewitness throughout the events in Cork, but records no threat to himself. At a distance, the Jesuits in London reported that Protestant ministers had been 'hunted away' at the takeover of the churches.¹¹⁷ But it is evident that they had been allowed, as at Waterford, to attend and witness Catholic services.¹¹⁸ And at Drogheda it was actually the lord primate, James Ussher, who – cap in hand – had petitioned the corporation to release the man who had been arrested there for saying he hoped soon to have mass said in the town's church.¹¹⁹ Nonetheless, it is interesting that in Waterford White reports that at the collapse of the protest 'some Catholics' closed and locked the church doors, returning the keys to him and he in turn to the city's magistrates, 'lest there might be a tumult amongst the people and spilling of blood'.¹²⁰

If blaming 'the many-headed monster' was a frequent early modern strategy to avoid the reprisals that opposition to the state always threatened, these shards of evidence suggest then that there was a more oppositional edge to the protests in 1603. At Waterford, and (especially) at Cork, resistance, though brief, reflected internal political divisions. While those willing to admit Mountjoy at Cork were called the 'better effected',¹²¹ opposition was voiced by some, sometimes key, members of the town's ruling groups about whose loyalties, as at Cork,¹²² the administration had well-founded anxieties.

¹¹³ Moryson, *Itinerary*, 295; Bagwell, *Ireland under the Stuarts*, I, pp. 6–7.

¹¹⁴ *Lismore papers*, I, p. 60.

¹¹⁵ Moryson, *Itinerary*, p. 295; Smith, *Antient and present state of Cork*, II, p. 98n.

¹¹⁶ Moynes, *Irish Jesuit annual letters*, p. 29.

¹¹⁷ Bagwell, *Ireland under the Stuarts*, I, p. 7.

¹¹⁸ *Lismore papers*, I, p. 57; White, *Irish Catholics*, p. 19.

¹¹⁹ TNA, SP 63/215/28.

¹²⁰ White, *Irish Catholics*, p. 130.

¹²¹ *Lismore papers*, I, p. 72.

¹²² In 1600, if the date is correct, the examination before the Ecclesiastical High Commission of a group of Cork's citizens (including William Meade's brother John, a man included in a group Bishop Lyon identified as 'evil-minded men to the state') worried away about conflicting loyalties to pope

Resistance was fed by popular support that existed beyond the ruling circle and which could perhaps be more openly radical in its opposition to the Dublin administration's policies of anglicization and Protestantization. Public protests at both Waterford and Cork by those outside the urban patriciate echoed calls there and elsewhere to reject James as king and to support a Spanish succession.¹²³ At Cork, leadership to the resistance to Mountjoy was provided by two men with experience of service in the Catholic League in France's wars of religion,¹²⁴ while the evidence from the episode at Cashel and from White's own text suggest that some of those involved in 1603, especially the religious orders, were willing to import the terminology of continental confessional conflicts, talking of Protestantism in the language of heresy and heretics that was to sponsor much of the violence in the 1641 rising.¹²⁵ As with the radicalizing dynamic experienced in other early modern European rebellions, events in 1603 hint at the radical potential inherent in a divided elite and confessional mobilization.

VIII

Despite evidence of some resistance and the circulation of more radical political positions, the surprisingly peaceful resolution of the 'recusancy revolt', coming as it did shortly after the savagery of the Nine Years War, points to a fundamental paradox in the political culture of the Old English towns (and it is perhaps a testimony ultimately to the ability of most of the urban elites to control and fashion public protests to avoid the charge of treason).¹²⁶ What is striking in the actions and answers of the town's Old English rulers, both during and after the revolt, was their insistence on their loyalty to the crown as foundational to their political identity.

It had been a common refrain in their correspondence with the state before 1603. Even writing after the town's resistance, against what he refuted as false reports, Cork's mayor could still feel able to remind Robert Cecil that the city had 'ever stood without any stain of disloyalty from the Crown of England' since the Conquest. Cork's rulers believed they could assure Mountjoy, in rebutting his reference to 'certain insolencies', that they could not 'call to mind' anything that might have offended the state and could speak to him of the city's 'public prayers...[giving] publike testimony of their faithful hearts to the Kings Royal Maiesty'.¹²⁷ Informing Mountjoy that 'the people' think that their restoring of the ruinous St Patrick's (neither meddling with tithes nor

and monarch: Anthony J. Sheehan, 'Attitudes to religious and temporal authority in Cork in 1600: a document from Laudian MS 612', *Analecta Hibernica*, 31 (1984), pp. 61–8, at p. 64. For Sir George Carew's earlier suspicions about the loyalty of members of the corporations in Munster, see *Cal. Carew MSS*, III, pp. 492–3.

¹²³ In a clash with the Protestant minister at Navan in the Pale, friars were also said to have contemptuously referred to James as king of Scotland and a heretic and to have wished him and all who had authority under him dead: Bagwell, *Ireland under the Stuarts*, I, p. 6.

¹²⁴ *Lismore papers*, I, p. 63; Smith, *Antient and present state of Cork*, II, p. 94n.

¹²⁵ White, *Irish Catholics*, pp. 119, 120.

¹²⁶ Litton Falkiner, 'Farmer's chronicles', p. 534.

¹²⁷ Moryson, *Itinerary*, p. 290; TNA, SP 63/215/67.

other livings) ‘wilbe gratusly accepted of his most Roiall Ma^{tie} [and] noway hurtfull to his H[ig]h[nes]s or to the State’, Wexford’s sovereign assured Mountjoy of the town’s ‘most firm obedience and loyalty’.¹²⁸ Similarly, in his answer to the lord deputy, Waterford’s mayor could declare that he believed the recovery of the churches,

no breach of his Ma^{ts} Lawes nor ane disturbance of his quiet or peace; considering that the Citizens of this cittie have allwaies Lived in quiet, perfect and due subjection under the Crown of England, without spott, as well in the time of the olde Catholique Religion as at other times, when they were restrained of the liberty of their Consciences, which now also they do and will always continue.

Thus, Waterford’s mayor could even end his report with the claim that ‘This place is in good peace and tranquillity’.¹²⁹ These replies were neither simply duplicitous nor self-deceiving. They point to a political identity grounded in centuries of allegiance to the English crown which was deeply inscribed in Old English urban political culture.

A belief that it was possible both to publicly practise their faith and to proclaim their loyalty to the English crown ran through the ‘revolt’. As White was reported to have said, the towns had resolved to ‘ioyn their loyalty and Religion together’; their ‘constant theme was to retain the old faith of their fathers to God, and sincere unalterable allegiance to their natural sovereign his Majesty King James’.¹³⁰ Sent to negotiate with Mountjoy and pressed on whether it was lawful for subjects to take arms against their prince, White described himself as ‘a Christian, a firm Catholic, and certain and most loyal subject of His Majesty’.¹³¹ According to his own account, he repeatedly stated that ‘so far from the Catholic religion impairing to the least degree their loyalty to the prince; on the contrary, that loyalty would every day be becoming more & more firm and affectionate’. He returned later the same day to acknowledge to Mountjoy that it was not lawful for subjects to bear arms against their prince for religion or any other cause. On entering the city, Mountjoy was presented with declarations professing their loyalty to the king, one drawn up in the name of all the citizens and signed by the leading men of the city and another signed by the priests. The latter declared that ‘as by the law of nature, of nations, and of God, subjects are bound to obey their lawful princes and lords, we hereby declare, and let all whom it concerns know, that his

¹²⁸ TNA, SP 63/215/40.iii.

¹²⁹ TNA, SP 63/215/40.ii.

¹³⁰ TNA, SP 63/215/48; White, *Irish Catholics*, p. 121. See also Hagan, ed., ‘Miscellanea Vaticano-Hibernica’, p. 232. For Irish Jesuits’ stress on their loyalty to the crown, see Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, ‘The Jesuits and issues of political and ecclesiastical authority in Ireland, 1620–1648’, *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 103 (Winter 2014/15), p. 417.

¹³¹ TNA, SP 63/215/48; White, *Irish Catholics*, pp. 123–30. Alan Ford discusses this exchange in “‘Firm Catholics” or “Loyal Subjects”?: Religious and political allegiance in early seventeenth-century Ireland’, in D. George Boyce, Robert Eccleshall, and Vincent Geoghegan, eds., *Political discourse in seventeenth and eighteenth century Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2001), pp. 1–2.

Majesty King James being our natural and lawful king, we shall obey him and give him all the service due to a king by his subjects' (but adding in a clause that would not have pleased James, 'in all things not conflicting with, or impairing the honour, obedience, reverence and service due to the majesty of God').¹³² Tellingly, White's original oath which had required those swearing it only 'that they should be true to the Pope and maineteine the Romish Religion with their goods and their lives' had been subsequently altered to 'to be true to God and the King, and to maintaine the Catholique Religion'.¹³³ If the 'recusancy revolt' was a revolt, then at least for its leadership among the town's rulers it was a *loyalist* revolt.

IX

The Old English towns had not responded to the earl of Tyrone's appeal for their support in the Nine Years War, but they still experienced its consequences in increased financial burdens, growing political and military interference, and heightened government suspicions of their loyalties. The 'recusancy revolt', as Sheehan argued, was therefore more than simply a demand for the restoration of Catholic worship. But what needs stressing is the closeness of the inter-relationship between religion and politics in the events of 1603. As Stephen Carroll shrewdly suggests of events at Cork, 'In taking the munition storehouse or in reconsecrating churches, the citizens essentially promoted the same cause, that of civic liberty.'¹³⁴ Strikingly, while the towns' rulers sought to blame the people for the violence, all were willing to acknowledge their support for, and participation in, the restoration of the public profession of the Catholic religion, accompanied as it was with all the pomp and insignia of civic authority. What was noticeable in all this was the emphasis on the *public* profession of the communities' Catholic faith. Indeed, Dr White was said to have banned the private celebration of mass after the recovery of the churches.¹³⁵

Despite the chorus of Protestant protests about the open practice of Catholicism in the larger urban centres,¹³⁶ *de facto* toleration under Elizabeth had meant that Catholic worship in a private or domestic setting had been largely winked at. But in 1603, there was a very public restoration of Catholicism, employing both the rituals of the Catholic church and civic ceremonial. This was signalled by and celebrated with the lustration of churches and public processions that restored civic space as sacralized (Catholic) space

¹³² TNA, 63/215/48, 53; White, *Irish Catholics*, p. 131. For a concise discussion of the problems posed in trying to reconcile religious faith and political allegiance, see Aidan Clarke and R. Dudley Edwards, 'Pacification, planation and the Catholic question, 1603–23', in T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin and F. J. Byrne, eds., *A new history of Ireland: early modern Ireland, 1534–1691* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 189–91.

¹³³ White, *Irish Catholics*, p. 123; TNA, SP 63/215/48.

¹³⁴ Carroll, 'Politics of protest in early seventeenth century Ireland', p. 18.

¹³⁵ TNA, SP 63/215/48.

¹³⁶ See, for example, CSPI 1574–1585, p. 229; 1588–1592, p. 341; 1596–1597, pp. 13–14, 18, 19; *March – October 1600*, pp. 424–5, 498; 1600–1601, p. 122; 1601–1603, pp. 185, 377.

and reinvested the spaces of the city (and its churches) with the popular meanings and memory of a Catholic civic culture.¹³⁷ These were shaped by and in turn gave expression to an urban corporate Catholicism in which the town's 'best citizens'¹³⁸ and the commons, under the conjoined leadership of Catholic priesthood and corporation, marching (and sitting in church) according to rank, enacted both the sacramental community and the local social and political order, something of importance to all early modern towns but something increasingly denied Irish cities and towns under a Protestant and anglicizing regime.¹³⁹ Carrying the sacrament and cross through the streets, accompanied by the town's rulers and civic insignia, and demanding gestural acknowledgment by forcing men to reverence it,¹⁴⁰ these processions publicly performed a corporate Catholicism.¹⁴¹ They physically acted out the recovery of public space for a civic Catholicism in which collective worship of the true religion was integral to the maintenance of both civic order and to the defence of ancient liberties and freedoms.¹⁴²

Sheehan's conclusion to his analysis of 1603 was that 'the townsfolk of Munster acted in a foolish and short-sighted manner, but they did so in a fashion consistent with the way they had acted in the past, clinging to their old liberties as if nothing had changed'.¹⁴³ They perhaps deserve a better obituary. Like many of the better-studied rebellions in sixteenth-century England, the revolt of the towns was an attempt at petition by protest (continued thereafter in the delegations the towns sent to London). As in the English rebellions, 1603 too had its war parties, but within the dominant culture of loyalty and obedience, urban patriciates sought to negotiate with, not to overthrow, royal authority.¹⁴⁴

Loyalty and liberty were intended to go hand in hand. But the legacy of 1603 was to be very different. It increased the distrust already felt by the English administration about the possibilities of citizens being both 'firm Catholics' and loyal subjects, Mountjoy himself reportedly 'stilling that sedition which

¹³⁷ On this, see Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The sacred and the body social in sixteenth-century Lyon', *Past & Present*, 90 (1981), pp. 40–70; Alexandra Walsham, *The reformation of the landscape: religion, identity, and memory in early modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 153–232.

¹³⁸ Litton Falkiner, 'Farmer's chronicles', p. 530.

¹³⁹ Robert Darnton, 'A bourgeois puts his world in order: the city as a text', in his *The Great Cat massacre and other episodes in French cultural history* (New York, NY, 1984), pp. 107–44.

¹⁴⁰ *Cal. Carew MSS*, V, p. 9.

¹⁴¹ On the development of a corporate Catholicism, see Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*; idem, 'Civic privilege and state power in Dublin 1543–1613', *Rostrum: A Journal of Education and the Arts* (1987), pp. 107–13; idem, 'Fraternity and community in early modern Dublin', in Robert Armstrong and Tadhg Ó'hAnnracháin, eds., *Community in early modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2006), p. 178.

¹⁴² On the concept of 'civic Catholicism', see D. Alan Orr, 'Civic Catholicism, military humanism and the decline of justice', in Thomas Lodge's *The wounds of ciuill war (1594)*, *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 83 (2020), pp. 33–60 and the further references therein at p. 35.

¹⁴³ Sheehan, 'Recusancy revolt', p. 12.

¹⁴⁴ There is now an extensive literature on these rebellions, but Mervyn James, *English politics and the concept of honour*, *Past & Present*, Supplement, 3 (1978), reprinted in his *Society, politics and culture: studies in early modern England* (Cambridge 1986), esp. pp. 32–43, remains an insightful analysis of the politics of dissidence in sixteenth-century England.

they call their conscience'.¹⁴⁵ Moryson's (re)phrasing of Mountjoy's forceful response to Waterford's attempts to use their charter to refuse him entry that 'he would cut King *Johns* Charter in pieces with King *James* his sword' might be taken to foreshadow an acceleration in the state's attack on civic independence.¹⁴⁶ Significantly, 1603 is remembered in Waterford's remaining municipal record for the imposition of a garrison of 900 in response to the priests hallowing the cathedral and saying mass there.¹⁴⁷ After 1603, towns and cities were to find their civic independence 'bridled' (a favourite term among those writing in the aftermath of 1603)¹⁴⁸ by military garrisons, their *cursum honorum* badly disrupted by the Dublin administration's self-defeating pursuit of conformity through enforcing the oath of supremacy on Catholic officeholders, and compromised by the questioning and confiscation of their charters whose generously drawn privileges and 'liberties' had increasingly angered New English administrators.¹⁴⁹

Despite the pledge circulated in the oath that takers would defend the Catholic faith with their lives,¹⁵⁰ 1603 was not a war of religion. By contrast with 1641, it did not involve sectarian violence, nor the purging of Protestants. With the exception of Cork where Jesuit reports talked wildly of many deaths on both sides,¹⁵¹ the limited resistance elsewhere suggests that the towns' rulers, when not divided, were in 1603 still able to command the (public) obedience of the people and to hold in check the corrosive force of conscience in confessional politics let loose in the 1641 rising. The solidarities of a corporate Catholicism could both structure the protests and, ultimately, contain more radical reactions to the pressures of the Nine Years War and the anglicizing project. Popular politics in 1603 was then intended to take the form of a sponsored political agency. But 1603 did reflect the growing centrality of (a post-Tridentine) Catholic faith to the confessional construction of an urban corporate order for the defence of whose liberties it increasingly stood and for the possibilities this offered of new forms of active citizenship, for an oath-led and confessional popular political mobilization across declining

¹⁴⁵ TNA, SP 63/215/53.

¹⁴⁶ Moryson, *Itinerary*, p. 293. Another, less colourful, account has him citing King James's patent, not sword: TNA, SP 63/215/53.

¹⁴⁷ Byrne, ed., *Great parchment book*, p. 210.

¹⁴⁸ TNA, SP 63/215/56, 58.

¹⁴⁹ For these subsequent developments, see Crawford, *Star Chamber court*, pp. 46, 50–1, 69–70, 132, 142, 163, 301–2, 306–7, 314, 323, 328–9, 487–9, 522–3, 525–31, 533, 536–8, 539–40, 543; Julian C. Walton, *The royal charters of Waterford* (Waterford, 1992), pp. 47, 49; idem, 'Church, crown and corporation in Waterford 1520–1620', in William Nolan and Thomas Power, eds., *Waterford history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1992), pp. 177–98; [Comerford], *Inquisition of a sermon*, p. 21; Eamonn McEneaney, ed., *A history of Waterford and its mayors from the twelfth century to the twentieth century* (Waterford, 1995); Liam Urwin, 'Politics, religion and economy: Cork in the seventeenth century', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, 85 (1980–81), pp. 7–25; Lennon, *Lords of Dublin*, pp. 51–2, 58, 167, 192, 206–8. On the regime's hostility to civic charters, see John Collins, 'Politics, religion and identity in Irish port towns, 1625–42' (M.Phil. thesis, Cambridge, 2008).

¹⁵⁰ Moynes, *Irish Jesuit annual letters*, p. 30.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

ethnic differences that might undercut traditional loyalties and ultimately sponsor more radical programmes, possibilities that were to be realized in 1641.

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