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Sylvester O'Halloran's *General History* (1778): Irish Historiography  
and the Late Eighteenth-Century British Empire.

One Volume

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Director of Centre for Irish Studies: Dr. Louis de Paor.

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## Abstract

This study views Sylvester O'Halloran's *A general history of Ireland* (1778) within the context of an innovative attempt to initiate Irish Catholic participation in the British Empire by engaging London, the administrative capital of the empire, directly in Catholic relief politics. The political context which informed O'Halloran's approach was the consolidation and reorganisation of the British Empire in the post-1763 period, and the threat to imperial security presented by the advancing war in the American colonies.

The argument has three principal strands. The London publication of *A general history of Ireland* indicated that this work was directed at an audience outside of Ireland as well as within Ireland. The analysis of the subscription-list confirmed that that audience consisted of members of Britain's political élite and successful émigré Irishmen in the service of European Catholic powers. The analysis of the narrative of *A general history of Ireland*, when compared with its principal sources, Keating's seventeenth-century *Foras feasa ar Éirinn* and the twelfth-century *Lebor gabála Éirenn*, shows that O'Halloran altered his source materials to construct an historical picture of a Milesian maritime empire.

O'Halloran's argument for Catholic inclusion in the British Empire was twofold. He altered his source material to suggest an ancient parity with the contemporary British Empire to demonstrate an Irish historical fittingness for an imperial role, while his subscription-list confirmed a current aptitude. This argument was directed at, and partly endorsed by, another section of the subscription-list, London's political élite.

O'Halloran's *A general history of Ireland* was the first attempt by an Irish antiquarian to address the Catholic relief debate to an audience outside of Ireland, marking its publication as the most politically potent work by an Irish Catholic antiquary in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

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## Notes on Nomenclature and Abbreviations

Spellings and typography in the quotations throughout this work correspond to the originals, unless otherwise stated.

AH	Anthologia Hibernica
DIB	Dictionary of Irish Biography (Online 2010)
LM	List of Members, Royal Irish Academy.
MDMPS	Memoirs of the Dublin Medico-Philosophical Society
MBCA	Minute book of the Dublin Society's Committee of Antiquarians
NLI	National Library of Ireland
NLS	National Library of Scotland
Oxford DNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Online 2004-2011)
PRONI	Public Records Office of Northern Ireland
RIA	Royal Irish Academy
TRIA	Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Thesis Introduction and Critical Argument

This study views Sylvester O'Halloran's (1728-1807) *A general history of Ireland* (1778) within the context of an innovative attempt to initiate Irish Catholic participation in the late-eighteenth-century British Empire by engaging London, the administrative capital of the empire, directly in Catholic relief politics.<sup>1</sup> This approach marked a significant turning-point in how Ireland's Catholic intellectual élite agitated for Catholic relief, not being directly addressed to London until the 1790s (O'Flaherty, 1985:26-27). The central focus of O'Halloran's argument, as will be demonstrated, was to establish an historic and current suitability of Ireland for a British imperial role, and in the process to activate a positive discursive shift in Irish national stereotyping. The political context of O'Halloran's intervention was the consolidation and reorganisation of the British Empire after the conclusion of the Seven Years War in 1763. The impetus which informed this approach was the threat to British imperial security posed by the advancing war in the American colonies. British imperial need to supplement the armed forces of the Crown provided the opportunity to agitate for repeal of penal restrictions on Irish Catholics in the British imperial interest.<sup>2</sup>

Rather than focus on a multiplicity of individuals, texts or time periods, this study places the historiography of the antiquary and Irish language scholar Sylvester O'Halloran at the centre of research. Hitherto, O'Halloran has not enjoyed this central focus in antiquarian studies, but has existed as an adjunct to a more central theme in current historiography. In fact, interest in Sylvester O'Halloran came initially from the medical profession, and present-day research is still based on a seminal article by fellow surgeon Sir William Wilde in 1848. This article took the form of a tribute to O'Halloran's medical achievements which filled two-thirds of

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<sup>1</sup>Hereafter *A general history of Ireland* is referred to as: *General History*.

<sup>2</sup>I am aware that the use of the term 'British Empire' can be problematic because of the various debates surrounding the term in current historiography. However, this thesis does not engage with those areas. Within the context of this study British Empire, or post-1763 British Empire, unless otherwise stated, refers to British possessions after the Seven Years War (1763) which includes her colonies in North America, settlements and trading posts in the West Indies and India, her possessions in Florida, Canada and the province of Bengal in India and Ireland amongst others.

the content. The remainder was given over to a short description of O'Halloran's antiquarian publications, and although informative, did not attempt an analysis of that body of work. There was a revival of interest in O'Halloran from the 1960s. This interest was once again primarily medical, but not exclusively so. John B. Lyons, of the Royal College of Surgeons, Dublin published a series of useful articles on O'Halloran, which added significantly to prior information on O'Halloran's background and achievements (1963b; 1963c; 1989; 1995:40-54; 1991).<sup>3</sup> Lyons (1961; 1963a), furthermore, published a collection of the known public and private correspondence of O'Halloran. Notwithstanding that this present study has added substantially to that collection, this is still a small body of work in comparison to the published correspondence of Charles O'Connor of Belanagare (1710-1791).<sup>4</sup> A full and detailed analysis of O'Halloran's correspondence as a body of work has yet to be undertaken. However, Clare O'Halloran (1989:78-81) has evaluated a small portion of this correspondence in the context of the Gaelic response to the publications of James Macpherson (1736-1796).<sup>5</sup>

To date, no in-depth textual analysis of the *General History* has been undertaken, nor does it appear as a central theme in any current work. References to the *General History* appear in the work of various scholars, but these references usually serve to underpin a broader theme which these works peruse, rather than as a significant entity unto itself. Within this context, for instance, O'Halloran (2004:53) refers to the opening page of the *General History* as evidence of the influence of Charles Vallancey's orientalism on O'Halloran's antiquarian writings.<sup>6</sup> Colin Kidd (1999:161-162) refers to O'Halloran's deployment of a Milesian civilisation in defence of Irish civility. Patrick Delury (2000:27) cites a paragraph from the 'Dedication' section to the *General History* to comment on the manner in which O'Halloran used a "powerful patriotic rhetoric merged with a "love of truth" to underpin the authority of his narrative.

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<sup>3</sup>For further biographical articles on O'Halloran, see: Hayes (1936-9); Herbert (1944-6); Hannon (1987a; 1987b; 1988; 1996). For additional correspondence outside of J. B. Lyons's published collection above, see: Lyons, C. E. (2007; 2009; 2010).

<sup>4</sup>A transcript of this additional correspondence is provided in Appendix A.

<sup>5</sup>This issue is discussed in Chapter 2.

<sup>6</sup>Charles Vallancey (1721-1812) was of French Huguenot stock, a surveyor, cartographer, antiquarian and orientalist. Sylvester O'Halloran's relationship with Vallancey is discussed in Chapter 2.

This study does not expressly engage with the issues outlined above, nor does this research view the text of the *General History* in isolation from either its publication-site or its readership. The *General History* is viewed as a composite work that operates over three levels: publication-site, subscription-list and textual narrative – where the significance of its publication-site and the complexity of its readership complement and explain the narrative and the political message it embodied. By its readership I mean, in particular, the subscribers listed in the subscription-list to this work. Therefore, a consideration of O'Halloran's publication strategies and his intended audience, done from the perspective of book-history, to show the novelty and innovativeness of this work, is an integral part of the following discussion.

Moreover, although the *General History* is the focal point of the study, this research does not view this work in isolation, or apart from the O'Halloran corpus in general. Reference to O'Halloran's published works, either with regard to publication-site, subscription-list or narrative, forms the basis for much of the comparative discussion offered throughout the following chapters. In the short space of eight years O'Halloran published two minor works: *Insula sacra: or, the general utilities arising from some permanent foundation, for the preservation of our antient annals demonstrated, and the means pointed out* (1770),<sup>7</sup> and *Ierne defended: or, a candid refutation of such passages in the Rev. Dr. Leland's, and the Rev. Dr. Whittaker's works, as seem to affect the authenticity and validity of antient Irish history. In a letter to the Antiquarian Society* (1774).<sup>8</sup> His two major works were: *An introduction to the study of the history and antiquities of Ireland* (1772) and his *General History* (1778).<sup>9</sup> These works form the basis of the O'Halloran corpus.

Critically, this study views this body of work in the nature of a progression, and argues that, although the genesis of O'Halloran's historical narrative, and by extension his political ideology, can be ascertained in his early antiquarian publications, it emerges in a fully developed form and acquired focus only in the *General History*. In this period Britain's need to supplement its armed forces during

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<sup>7</sup>Hereafter *Insula sacra*.

<sup>8</sup>Hereafter *Ierne defended*.

<sup>9</sup>*An introduction to the study of the history and antiquities of Ireland* is hereafter referred to as the *Introduction* unless clarity requires that the full title be given.



the Anglo-American crisis coalesced with a Catholic desire for repeal of penal restrictions, and gave form and focus to his narrative. This convergence resulted in a work that is the most strategically pragmatic and politically potent work from a Catholic antiquarian in the eighteenth century. For this reason, O'Halloran's *General History* has been selected as the focal point of this study.

## 1.2. Mid-Eighteenth-Century Irish Historiography

The early years of the eighteenth century witnessed the consolidation of Protestant dominance in church and state in Ireland: subsequently, a series of penal laws were enacted which restricted the social, political and religious life of Irish Catholics. In the first half of the eighteenth century, Catholic hope was focused overseas on the return of the exiled Stuart King and the restoration of lands. Sylvester O'Halloran's historiography is situated in the second half of the eighteenth century, when, after the defeat of the Jacobite forces at Culloden in 1746, Ireland's Catholic élite turned its attention to seeking an accommodation with the Protestant state.

History was the source of a set of arguments used in the Catholic relief debate. This led to a major revival in Catholic antiquarian writing at this period, focusing on the issue of Catholic relief. One of the main debates was the extent to which Catholics were excluded from full participation in the political nation. Aside from history, other methods were also employed to further Catholic relief. In 1756 the Catholic Association (later, the Catholic Committee) was founded. The founding members of the Catholic association were the Dublin physician John Curry, the gentleman-farmer Charles O'Connor of Belanagare, Co. Roscommon, and Thomas 'Bullocks' Wyse of Waterford.<sup>10</sup> Although the Association was marked by ineffectiveness and internal division, it provided a forum and initiated the politicisation of the Catholic relief issue. The association sponsored petitions and Catholic loyalty addresses, and raised money to sponsor agents to represent the

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<sup>10</sup>Charles O'Connor and John Curry (d. 1780) were long-time friends and correspondents. There are various useful works on O'Connor. For his correspondence, with Curry, see: Ward and Ward (1980). For a fuller discussion on O'Connor as antiquarian and scholar, see: Ó Catháin (1989:136-163). For attempts to provide a mutually agreeable history by Edmund Burke, Curry, and O'Connor see: Love (1962a: 419-43; 1962b: 1-25). Thomas 'Bullocks' Wyse (1701-1770) owned a large estate in Waterford and was involved in trade and mining. His nickname came from the use of bullocks, rather than horses, to draw the plough, as a protest against the penal laws, which allowed a Protestant to buy any horse from a Catholic for a sum of £5 only. For a fuller account of the Wyse family of Waterford, see: Ryan (2004:108-111).

Catholic case in Dublin and London. Pamphleteering and propaganda was another method employed to advance a more favourable view of the Catholic Irish (Bartlett, 1992:50-65).

Antiquarian writing during this period was guided by the belief that, as the misgovernment of Irish Catholics was based on the misrepresentation of crucial events in Irish history, only an unbiased account could hope to alter and bring about a change in Protestant opinion (Love, 1962c). In the eighteenth century the alleged Catholic atrocities during the 1641 Irish rebellion were the favourite topics of discourse employed, both in print and from the pulpit, as a reminder of Irish barbarity, and the necessity for Catholic exclusion to ensure the security of the Protestant state. The first book published in English and aimed at a Protestant audience as part of the campaign for Catholic relief was Dr. John Curry's *A brief account from the most authentic Protestant writers of the causes, motives, and mischiefs, of the Irish rebellion, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of October 1641* (1747), in which Curry took up the task of articulating the Catholic perspective on the 1641 Rebellion (Gibney, 2009).<sup>11</sup> Charles O'Connor, by contrast, focused on the early period of Irish history. In defence of an early literate and civilised Irish society he published in 1753, *Dissertations on the antient history of Ireland*, and in 1766 he published a modified edition of this work, entitled *A dissertation on the first migrations, and final settlements of the Scots in North-Britain*. Catholic opinion, as it was expressed in print, was being shaped by Charles O'Connor and Dr. John Curry at this period.

There was unwillingness on the part of Irish Catholic writers to engage in the Catholic relief debate. One reason for this was that the accommodation policy adopted by Ireland's Catholic élite did not necessarily reflect the sentiments of Ireland's Catholic élite in general (Bartlett, 1992:52). Another reason was that Jacobitism, which focused on the return of the Stuart king and restoration of forfeited property, persisted well into the second half of the eighteenth century (Ó Ciardha, 2001). Cadoc Leighton (1994:11) viewed limited participation in the Catholic relief debate as indicative of a "relative contentment" of Catholics, arguing that, if

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<sup>11</sup>For Curry, see: (Gibney, 2009). For an interesting insight into Irish historiography and the relationship between Edmund Burke, O'Connor and Curry see: Love (1962c:180-198). For use of the 1641 rebellion in Irish Protestant celebrations, see: Barnard (1991:889-920).

conditions were seriously oppressive, more Catholics would have been willing to commit to the debate. Ian McBride's (2009:194-245) recent survey of eighteenth-century Ireland includes an insightful and comprehensive review of the cause and effects of penal legislation, and challenges this simplistic interpretation of Catholic acquiescence during this period. Notwithstanding that O'Connor and Curry were prolific writers under their own name, or that of a Protestant persona, this limited participation restricted the diversity of opinion that otherwise appeared in print and shaped the debate.<sup>12</sup>

### 1.3. Current Historiography

In the last number of decades there has been a revival of interest in Irish antiquarian writing, and this area is now recognised as a valuable source for tracing the interaction of Ireland's ethnically- and religiously-divided cultures in penal times. One of the ways in which these two cultures both intersected and collided was in the production of a mutually agreeable version of Irish history. Much of the modern historiography that has focused on eighteenth-century antiquarian writing has been occupied with trying to explain the relative failure to initiate an historical dialogue across these two divided cultures. The burgeoning of this historiography can be traced to its beginnings in a series of articles by the American historian Walter Love in the 1960s. Love sketched the failed attempts of Charles O'Connor and Edmund Burke (1729-1797) to encourage Protestant writers to produce a philosophical or impartial history of Ireland that would be agreeable to both liberal Catholics and Protestants (Love, 1962b; 1962c).<sup>13</sup> Ned Lebow (1973) employed a broader perspective, and traced the development of the British model of Irish history in writers from the twelfth century to the eighteenth century, and focused on the manner in which this model, despite ethnic, religious and cultural affinities between Britain and Ireland, had been constructed to denigrate the Irish and portray British rule as benign and beneficial.

Joep Leerssen (1986a), in the first major work on the formation of Irish identity, *Mere Irish and Fíor-Ghael*, focused on what was common to both cultures.

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<sup>12</sup>Leighton (1994) presents a useful overview of the pamphleteering campaign of O'Connor and Curry.

<sup>13</sup>Edmund Burke was an author and British politician. He was Irish-born and had a sympathetic understanding of the plight of Irish Catholics. Although Burke was a Protestant, his mother was a Catholic. For Burke's relationship with Ireland, see: O'Brien (1992).

Employing a much broader field, Leerssen's work charted the slowly emerging development of a national ideal in Irish and English literature on Ireland from the twelfth to the end of the eighteenth century. One of the interesting insights which emerged from this complex study was an understanding of the manner in which the Anglo-Irish were finally to resolve their identity dilemma of being neither English in Britain nor Irish in Ireland, by the adoption of a hybrid identity, historically located in a Gaelic past, while retaining English-orientated values in culture and politics.

Jacqueline Hill (1988) focused on the differences between the two traditions. Hill provided a comprehensive and informative outline of the various writers and models of Ireland's history that found expression in the eighteenth century. She suggested that the development of a mutually agreeable model of Irish history was inhibited by the fact that interpretations of the past remained more contentious in Ireland than in England or Scotland because of the weakness of the Protestant establishment in Ireland.

The historiography of this period has been further enriched by the addition of a European context. Leighton (1994) argued that similarities can be found between the *ancien régime* society of pre-revolutionary France and Ireland's Protestant society, whose dominance was vindicated by narratives of conquest. Sean Connolly's *Divided kingdom* (2008), which is a complex political narrative charting the interactions, sometimes volatile and sometimes peaceful, between Ireland's ethnically- and religiously-divided societies, would support Leighton's *ancien régime* thesis. Kidd (1994) viewed Scottish, English and Irish antiquarian thought from a European and Enlightenment perspective, and the most recent work on this period, McBride's *Eighteenth century Ireland* (2009:21), uses European history "as both a series of contexts and as a framework for comparison" to provide a more nuanced understanding of ascendancy Ireland.

The first monograph on antiquarian debate in the second half of the eighteenth century is Clare O'Halloran's *Golden ages and barbarous nations* (2004). This study is further enhanced by placing Irish antiquarianism in a European comparative context. O'Halloran investigates the influence of key European cultural trends, such as primitivism and Orientalism, on Irish antiquarian reconstructions of the past. She

further examines the manner in which contemporary politics, in particular the Catholic Question, shaped articulations of the past in Catholic and Protestant antiquarian writing. She (2004:186) further argues for the historical usefulness of antiquarian texts, not only in their political context but also in understanding the growth of an Anglo-Irish literary tradition and in shaping the “cultural dimensions of Irish nationalisms” into the twentieth century. Although O’Halloran would not agree with the *ancien régime* school of thought, what is common in the more recent historiography is the introduction of a European perspective.

#### 1.4. The British Empire and the Catholic Question

The Catholic Question shaped articulations of the past in antiquarian debate. However, the reason for the emergence of the Catholic Question in the 1760s, and its persistence thereafter, has been the subject of renewed interest in the last thirty years. The earlier work of the historian Maureen Wall in the 1950s and 1960s laid the foundation for much of the research into this area that has subsequently appeared.<sup>14</sup> Thomas Bartlett’s *The fall and rise of the Irish nation* (1992) is the standard work at present in this area. Various suggestions have been made as to why the Catholic Question should have arisen at this particular time. Three events happened during this period that helped to quieten Protestant fear of Jacobitism in Ireland. Firstly, the defeat of the Jacobite forces at Culloden in 1746 eased Protestant anxieties. Secondly, the peaceable behaviour of Irish Catholics during the rising in Scotland made Irish Protestants feel that Jacobite support in Ireland was no longer considerable. Thirdly, the refusal of the Pope to recognise the Stuart king, Charles III, in 1766, after the death of the Old Pretender, James III, eased fears surrounding the security of the Protestant Hanoverian succession (Bartlett, 1992:45-65). Other scholars point to an enlightenment ethos of toleration, and “the recognition, in some quarters at least, that the penal code had failed utterly to convert or to reduce Catholics to due obedience” (Kelly, 1988a:41). The suggestion has also been made that a desire to bring Catholic wealth into the Irish economy was another factor in facilitating the emergence of the Catholic Question into the public arena (Wall, 1958).

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<sup>14</sup>The original works of Wall on this issue are scattered in various academic journals, however, Gerard O’Brien (1989b) has published a collection of these articles, which has made the work of this scholar more readily available.

One of the aspects of the Catholic Question that has been emphasised in the recent historiography on this issue, and which is relevant to this study, is the imperial context. Robert Burns (1963) first highlighted the influence of the Anglo-American crisis on the enactment of the 1778 Catholic Relief Act, as British ministers, alarmed by the Franco-American Treaty (1778), and the extension of hostilities to Europe, hoped to meet the challenge by recruiting in Scotland and Ireland. Robert Kent Donovan (1985) also emphasized the military origins of the Irish Catholic Relief Act, and further clarified its origins as part of a wartime strategy by the British ministry to supplement the army during the American war. Bartlett (2010) links the emergence of the Catholic Question in the 1760s to the consolidation of the British Empire in the post-1763 period. Moreover, he suggests that the reason for both its emergence and its persistence thereafter “is to be found in the expansion of empire”, and, in particular, “to the scale and extent of warfare from the 1760s onwards” (Bartlett, 2010:169). Therefore, issues of British imperial policy dictated the Catholic Question in the second half of the eighteenth century.

At the conclusion of the Seven Years War, in 1763, Britain’s territory increased fivefold. Amongst other territorial gains, Britain successfully took Florida from the Spanish and Canada from the French. She also gained her first major possession on the Indian continent, with the acquisition of the lucrative province of Bengal. In order to cope with the administrative difficulties that came with vast territorial gains and the religious and ethnic diversity of the newly-extended empire, Britain began the process of imposing tighter imperial rule and asserting parliamentary control over her dominions (Colley, 2009:103-105). The most contentious of these measures was the Stamp Act of 1765, which claimed the right to levy colonial taxes. The American colonies rejected the right of the British Parliament in this regard, and war between Britain and her American colonies followed (Marshall, 1998b:11-14). The effects of British imperial control were also felt in Ireland, and significant changes in the administration of the Irish Parliament were introduced to ensure tighter control by London. The management of the Irish Parliament through a series of undertakers, who had deputised for the British-appointed Lords Lieutenant in their lengthy absences, had proved unsatisfactory and was abandoned. In the future, the Lords Lieutenant would permanently reside in Ireland, and, with the support of a chief

secretary and a ‘castle party’, would support the interests of the King in the Irish Parliament (Bartlett, 2010:172-174). This new system indicated a significant shift in power. O’Halloran’s *General History*, it will be argued here, was addressed to this new imperial context and the shift in power it had occasioned.

What directly links the foregoing review of current historiography to the present study is that, in many instances, the novelty of O’Halloran’s contribution had already been registered in that historiography. Leerssen (1986a:415-6) identified O’Halloran as a harbinger of a younger generation of antiquarians, who argued from an Irish rather than a Gaelic or Catholic perspective. Delury (2000:28n.76) disagreed slightly with Leerssen on this point and suggested that O’Halloran was “better understood as establishing a new Catholic perspective in the English language”. Nonetheless, the point of confluence is that Delury also associated O’Halloran’s antiquarian works with a changing perspective. For Clare O’Halloran (2004:4,110-111), O’Halloran’s writings were reminiscent of the less discreet publications of the younger Charles O’Conor. Leighton (1994) also identified O’Halloran as introducing a changed perspective into Catholic relief politics. In contrast to O’Conor and Curry, who declared an acceptance of a Protestant nation governed in the Protestant interest, O’Halloran argued that the Irish, Catholic and Protestant, were “one people” (Leighton, 1994:111). This study would concur that O’Halloran introduced a new perspective into the Catholic relief debate, but will argue that the significance and extent of O’Halloran’s innovative contribution, not only to the Catholic relief issue, but to the debate on Irish affairs in general, has not been recognised in current historiography.

### **1.5. Thesis Format**

The following discussion is divided into five chapters. This study will argue that Sylvester O’Halloran’s distinctive contribution to Catholic relief politics was his conceptualisation of the Catholic relief issue from a British imperial, rather than an insular perspective. Therefore, the aim of Chapter 2 is to identify the various life experiences that shaped Sylvester O’Halloran’s intellectual and political formation, and, subsequently informed his innovative perspective on the Catholic relief issue in his historical writings. This investigation takes the form of a biographical approach. Secondly, this chapter positions O’Halloran and his publications as an active force

within the eighteenth-century antiquarian world of this period. To demonstrate the distinctiveness of O'Halloran's approach, comparisons with Charles O'Connor will be offered at relevant points throughout this chapter, and these form much of the basis for comparative discussion here.

The critical discussion of this dissertation is presented in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, where O'Halloran's *General History* is viewed in the nature of a three-pronged strategic approach to Catholic relief politics, focusing on the publication process, the subscription-list and the narrative of the *General History*. Chapter 3 focuses on the exceptionality and the significance of a London publication for a work on Irish affairs, and provides a full and detailed account of the publication process and the difficulties of the British book market for an Irish-based author in pursuit of a London publication.

The London publication of the *General History* indicated that this work was principally directed at an audience outside of Ireland, and was the first attempt by an Irish antiquary to address the Catholic relief issue to such a readership. Chapter 4, therefore, using a prosopographical approach, focuses on audience, and presents the first in-depth analysis of the subscription-list to O'Halloran's *General History*. Three significant groups are identified: Irish émigrés in Europe; Britain's political élite; and the Irish élite, both Protestant and Catholic. The central purpose of this analysis is to discover the historical and political significance of the subscription-list's composition within the context of Catholic relief politics and issues of British imperial security, in particular, troop deficiency, during the Anglo-American war.

Chapter 5 focuses on the narrative of the *General History*. This chapter analyses the manner in which O'Halloran reconstructed the narrative of early Irish origin in contemporary and imperial terms, relative to Britain's imperial state, to demonstrate an Irish historical aptitude for an imperial role. The significant changes O'Halloran made to the traditional narrative are demonstrated by comparing his narrative with its antecedents in this tradition; Keating's seventeenth-century *Foras feasa ar Éirinn* and the twelfth-century monastic compilation *Lebor gabála Éirenn*. When these three elements - the publication-site, the composition of the subscription-list, and the imperial context of the *General History* are drawn together, a clear picture of



O'Halloran's three-tiered strategic approach to Catholic relief politics at this opportune political juncture emerges.

Having presented the evidence for the central argument here in the forgoing chapters, the aim of Chapter 6 is to investigate the reception of the *General History*, and assess what effect this work may have had on the debates at this time. There are two areas available for investigation here. One source is the reviews that O'Halloran's *General History* generated in the London-based review periodicals. The second is the strong newspaper response this work received in Ireland. An investigation of these two sources reveals the fundamental differences which underpinned the Catholic relief debate in Ireland and Britain, and further contextualises the significance of the London publication of the *General History*.

This thesis offers a new dimension to the study of antiquarian writing, in that it views O'Halloran's *General History* as a composite work. This interdisciplinary approach, which facilitates the examination of the wider context and implications of the publication-site and composition of the subscription-list, in addition to the narrative, provides for a critical re-evaluation of the political context of this work. The influence of the newly-extended Britain Empire in shaping Irish antiquarian writing has not been previously investigated in this manner. This thesis bridges that lacuna in current historiography, and makes an original contribution to previous critical scholarship in this area, by demonstrating how O'Halloran's *General History*, including its publication-site, subscription-list, and narrative, was a work shaped and informed to appeal to the British imperial context.

## 2. Sylvester O'Halloran (1728-1807): Antiquary and Irish Language Scholar

### 2.1. Introduction

In the 1760s, when Sylvester O'Halloran, a continental-trained medical surgeon from Co. Limerick, entered the arena of antiquarian debate, Catholic opinion, as it was expressed in print, was being shaped by Charles O'Connor and Dr. John Curry. O'Halloran introduced a new voice into Catholic relief politics. This voice was more assertive and showed less concern for the sensitivities of his Irish Protestant audience than the discreet and "pleasing rather than a vigorous" style which characterised O'Connor's approach (Wyse, 1829:41). O'Halloran would gradually become one of the foremost antiquarians of the Gaelic tradition writing for an English-speaking audience in the latter half of the eighteenth century. His contribution to antiquarian studies was recognised by Ireland's antiquarian élite in 1786, when he was elected member of the Royal Irish Academy, which had been formed the previous year (*LM* 1785-1819). Membership of the Academy conferred considerable social status. The exclusivity of Academy membership in 1786 is highlighted in Wilson's *Almanac* (91-92). Aside from the patron, but including the honorary members, of which there were twelve, O'Halloran was a member of a select club of one-hundred persons.<sup>1</sup>

This study will argue that Sylvester O'Halloran's distinctive contribution to Catholic relief politics was his conceptualisation of the Catholic relief issue from a British imperial, rather than an insular perspective. This approach marked a significant turning-point in how Ireland's intellectual élite agitated for Catholic relief, and sharply differentiated his approach from that of his contemporaries. Therefore, a central focus of this chapter is to identify the various life experiences that shaped Sylvester O'Halloran's intellectual and political formation, and, subsequently, informed his innovative perspective on the Catholic relief issue in his historical writings.

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<sup>1</sup>In 1788, O'Halloran donated "an ancient Brass sword and celt" to the Royal Irish Academy, which still resides there (Wilde, 1861:474).

Various biographical articles have been written on Sylvester O'Halloran. The most significant of these have come from the medical profession, in particular the articles by Sir William Wilde and J. B. Lyons, of the Royal College of Surgeons, Dublin, as outlined in the Introduction to this study. These articles portray O'Halloran as a successful medical professional, who established a flourishing medical practice in his hometown of Limerick in the latter half of the eighteenth century. His innovatory contribution to medical science, as portrayed by Wilde and Lyons, identify O'Halloran as an original thinker, an individual of superior intellectual capacity, who towered over most of his eighteenth-century contemporaries in the field of medical science. In 1780, and again in 1784, he was honoured by the Royal College of Surgeons, Dublin (Wilde, 1848:231). O'Halloran is, furthermore, credited with laying the foundation for the present-day Royal Irish College of Surgeons.<sup>2</sup>

Although these articles refer to O'Halloran's antiquarian works, no attempt is made there to analyse the significance of this material in a political context, or to investigate how O'Halloran's experiences as a medical author and medical professional influenced his antiquarian writings. A major difficulty with O'Halloran-studies at present is that two leading aspects of O'Halloran's life, his medical profession and his antiquarian activities, have been treated, in the main, as separate entities. Antiquarian writing was the political medium of the disenfranchised Catholic for those, like O'Halloran, who had the financial security and leisure-time to pursue it. However, the greater portion of his time and commitment was invested in the medical world. The world of the medical profession inculcated a diversity of social contacts and associative life with élite Protestant society in Ireland and Britain that would not have been otherwise available to a Catholic like O'Halloran (Barnard, 2010b:185). Moreover, O'Halloran's experience as an established medical author in Britain and Ireland possibly aided his rather rapid rise in antiquarian circles in Ireland. Therefore, an understanding of the significance of the medical sphere in shaping O'Halloran's antiquarian writings is a vital component in understanding his

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<sup>2</sup>O'Halloran is credited as a founder on the College website: <http://www.rcsi.ie>. The value of the honorary membership received by O'Halloran is equated by Lyons with a modern-day fellowship. See: Lyons (1963c:283).

innovative approach to Catholic relief politics.

The separation of O'Halloran as antiquarian and medical professional is particularly apparent in works of an antiquarian interest, and references to O'Halloran the medical professional appear in a rather meaningless 'frozen' form. Clare O'Halloran (2004:4,38-39,107) introduces him as "a surgeon in Limerick", "a medical doctor and surgeon in Limerick", or as an "eye-surgeon who had received his training in London and Paris". Delury (2000:26) describes O'Halloran as a "Catholic physician". Kidd (1999:160) introduces O'Halloran as a "surgeon with ophthalmic interest". This study adopts a different approach, and would argue that O'Halloran-studies, in general, are better served by an integrative approach, and this is the approach adopted here.

One difficulty with O'Halloran-studies is the lack of private papers, and only a small body of public and private correspondence, notwithstanding the additional correspondence which has come to light during this research. This circumstance makes the reconstruction of a comprehensive biographical profile difficult. To help bridge this lacuna, the following discussion uses O'Halloran's publication-history, his role as a subscriber, and the subscription-lists of relevant works as a compensatory measure, to present a more informed biographical profile.

This chapter is divided into three main areas of discussion. Firstly, this chapter investigates the various life experiences that informed O'Halloran's intellectual and political development. There are three areas pertinent to this investigation. A formative influence on the young O'Halloran was the religiously-divided nature of eighteenth-century Irish society. This section presents a review of eighteenth-century Irish society, and discusses how the constraints of penal restrictions influenced O'Halloran's social and political development, and how he himself viewed these restrictions. A second formative influence on the young O'Halloran that must be taken into consideration is the pervasiveness of Jacobite ideology in his youth; in particular, the influence of the Jacobite ideology of O'Halloran's tutor and uncle, Seán Clárach Mac Domhnaill (1691-1754) (Ó Ciardha, 2001:143,161-163). Thirdly, O'Halloran's educational experiences are viewed as a significant formative

influence. The second major area of focus in this chapter is O'Halloran's medical career. This section provides an insight into how the young ambitious surgeon quickly became an established medical figure and author in medical circles in Britain and Ireland, and the associative life that he enjoyed. Lastly, this chapter discusses O'Halloran's antiquarian publications, which are contextualised chronologically within his rise in Irish antiquarian circles. To demonstrate the distinctiveness of O'Halloran's approach, comparisons with the antiquarian writings of Charles O'Connor, who employed a similar timeframe to O'Halloran, are offered at relevant points throughout this chapter, and these form much of the basis for comparative discussion here. Moreover, the aim of this review of O'Halloran's early antiquarian writings is to provide a background to the comprehensive analysis of the *General History*, which will be presented in the following chapters.

Although it would, perhaps, be impossible to identify one particular influence as being stronger than others in shaping O'Halloran's approach to Catholic relief politics, this chapter will present the argument that O'Halloran's perspective on the Catholic relief issue is primarily, but not exclusively, an outgrowth of the international world of the medical profession he inhabited. Moreover, it will be suggested that his conceptualisation of the Catholic relief issue from a British imperial perspective can be shown to be a natural progression of the various strategies he employed in the medical sphere, to cope with what he perceived as the insularity of the Irish medical world.

## 2.2. Formative Influences

One of the formative influences on Sylvester O'Halloran's intellectual and social development was the religiously-divided nature of the society he inhabited. A series of penal laws were passed by the Irish Protestant Parliament to copper-fasten the Protestant ascendant position established by the victory of the Williamite troops at Limerick in 1691.<sup>3</sup> The defeat of the Irish forces at Limerick was the final stroke in the conquest of Ireland, and completed a process which had been ongoing for the previous two centuries. The Stuart king, James II, had previously fled to the safety of

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<sup>3</sup>There are various sources which provide useful background information to this period see: Connolly (1992, 2000, 2008); McBride, (2009).

the court of the French king Louis XIV after his defeat at the Battle of the Boyne (1690). The Irish army followed James to France, and continued to support the Jacobite cause in the Catholic armies of France and Spain. Subsequently, a Protestant state was inaugurated, within which all functions of church and state became the preserve of the Protestant ruling-class. Despite its paucity of numbers, the established state church was of the Anglican denomination of Protestantism (Johnston-Liik, 2006:7). This meant that Quakers and Presbyterians were also affected by penal restrictions, albeit to a lesser degree. For instance, although Presbyterians were excluded from municipal corporations, they retained the county franchise, and also had the right to sit in parliament (Johnston-Liik, 2006:12-13).

Land was the key to social, economic and political power, and the gradual erosion of Catholic power can best be evaluated by a review of the reduction of land in Catholic ownership during the upheavals of the seventeenth century. In 1641 nearly 60% of land was still in Catholic ownership. By 1688 this figure was reduced to 22%, and by 1703 the figure had fallen to 14%. The penal laws would lead to further reductions in Catholic landholding, primarily through the effect of the gavelling clause in the 1703 'An Act to prevent the further growth of Popery' which legislated that, on the death of a Catholic landowner, his estate would be divided amongst his heirs. The intent was to encourage estate fragmentation and reduce Catholic power in land-holding. Primogeniture was the custom in England, as elsewhere in Europe (Beckett, 1989:58-61).

There were various reasons for the actions of the Irish Protestant Parliament at this juncture, and a review of these reasons provides an insight into Protestant mentality at this period, and its attitude to the general Catholic population, of which O'Halloran was a member. The Protestant Irish felt that the terms granted to Catholics under the *Treaty of Limerick* in 1691 (Simms, 1965) were too generous, and did not go far enough to secure the Protestant position in Ireland. Moreover, there was the perception that the share of the Williamite confiscation of lands was less than what had been expected. The Williamite confiscation added only about 8% to the total land acreage that had previously been confiscated (Johnston-Liik, 2006:5). Irish Protestants feared that, given the opportunity, Irish Catholics would

regroup and present a threat once more to the Protestant dynasty, and, of course, to their own interests, which were intimately connected to it. Therefore, the central focus of the penal laws was to ensure that the Catholic gentry would never rise again to a position of power or influence, by effectively excluding them from all areas of civil, military and political power, and restricting Catholic-owned land. The gavel clause was effective in reducing Catholic land-holding. However, there were also notable exceptions. Karen Harvey (1998:43-80) provides an account of the manner in which the Catholic gentry family of Bellew, significant land-owners in Connaught, successfully circumvented the gavel clause and retained their lands. Catholics who were excluded from land-purchase frequently moved successfully into trade (Wall, 1958; Cullen, 1986).

In the first half of the eighteenth century, in particular, the fear of a return of the Jacobite army to overthrow the Protestant Hanoverian dynasty and reinstate a Stuart king haunted the psyche of the Protestant community in Ireland. This resulted in a siege mentality within the community, “fostered by events in the preceding century, particularly the rebellion of 1641, and the occupation of Ireland from 1689 to 1690 by the forces of James II” (Eccleshall, 1993:37). The continued Catholic loyalty to the House of Stuart, and its favourable attitude towards England’s arch-enemy France, made any protestations of loyalty to a Protestant sovereign suspect at this period. Therefore, as Wall (O’Brien, ed. 1989b:14) commented, Irish Catholics were viewed as “a danger to the State and must be kept in subjection by severe penal laws”.

Many Protestants also had an almost pathological distrust of Catholicism, and feared the politico-religious basis of its tenets. The reason for this was that Catholicism prioritised spiritual loyalty to the pope over temporal loyalty to a monarch. Conversely, a Protestant monarch, being also head of the Church, demanded temporal and spiritual loyalty from his subjects. Consequently, Catholics were perceived, by virtue of their religious tenets, as being disloyal to the monarchy. This, as Andrew Sneddon (2004:38) observed, was an inherent constituent of Protestant culture in Ireland: “to view the country’s Catholics as a potential security threat, because of their temporal and spiritual allegiance to the pope, the arch-enemy of all Protestant countries.”

Eighteenth-century Irish society was also divided on cultural and ideological grounds. The language of Ireland's Protestant élite was English. They supported the British monarchy. Politically and culturally their attention was focused on Trinity College, the Dublin Parliament, and on the London administration. Irish was the daily language of the Catholic majority, but many were also proficient in English. Politically, their loyalty was to the Royal House of Stuart, in the first half of the eighteenth century, in particular. They directed their attention not towards Dublin or London, but to France and the court of the exiled Stuart king at St. Germain. Their hopes of restoration and a reversal of fortune lay with Ireland's Catholic community overseas "(with its colleges, its army, its wealthy diaspora)" (Whelan, 1996:3). James C. Beckett described the ethos of eighteenth-century Irish society, and the enduring lines of division that existed, as follows:

Though the Williamite wars had left the Protestants supreme, and had brought in a long period of peace, there was no real conciliation. Neither side could forget how much had been lost and won. The victors were ever on their guard; the vanquished kept alive their resentment; and the line of division was hardly less sharply marked in peace that it had been in war.

(Beckett, 1976:45)

In brief, eighteenth-century Irish society was one in which penal restrictions were imposed on three quarters of the population in order to protect the ascendant position of a minority élite. This élite feared the loss of lands by military invasion and/or by claims made against land titles, many of which were held under the suspect legality of the Act of Settlement.<sup>4</sup> The main issue was the struggle for land and the civil, economic, and political power it conferred, and "Religion had been [simply] the badge of difference" (Beckett, 1976:45). Catholic sympathiser Edmund Burke (Janes, ed. 2002:280-281) in 1792 expressed his view of the penal laws as acts born out of a "hatred and scorn towards a conquered people, whom the victors delighted to

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<sup>4</sup>The Act of Settlement (1652) passed in the period of Cromwell's reign and the interregnum, was, after the Restoration, declared illegal, as it had not received royal sanction. A new Act of Settlement was passed in 1662, which ordered that Cromwellian land-holders give up a portion of their lands to compensate the 'innocent' Catholic and Old English. This proved unworkable, so a further act was passed: The Act of Explanation, in 1665, whereby Cromwellian land-holders were to give up one-third of their land in compensation. See: Philips and Jeffreys (1666).



trample upon”, and, moreover, Burke held that the penal laws were enacted not “in the spirit of a contest between two religious factions, but between two adverse nations”.<sup>5</sup>

A review of the impact of penal legislation on the general Catholic population is outside the parameters of this thesis. What is important, in the present context, is to suggest the possible manner in which penal restrictions influenced the political development of Sylvester O'Halloran, and, subsequently, influenced his approach to the Catholic relief issue. For instance, according to Delury (2000:26-27) O'Halloran was “too young to see the worst of the penal laws, the horror of which paradoxically justified the moderate, apologetic approach of Curry and O'Connor”. There are some difficulties with this statement. Although there was some amelioration in the inter-denominational conflict from the 1760s onwards, there was no actual repeal of penal legislation until Gardiner's Catholic Relief Act was passed in 1778. A small measure of relief (referred to as the Bog Act) was passed in 1771, whereby Catholics were allowed to take leases of 61 years on reclaimed bog at a distance of at least one mile from a town.<sup>6</sup>

Reference to amelioration then refers to an attitudinal change, which was generated by a perceived lessening within the Irish Protestant community of the papist threat. The decrease in Protestant anxiety was initially due to the failure of Prince Charles Edward's campaign in Scotland in 1745, and the defeat of the Jacobite forces at Culloden in 1746. Moreover, the failure of Pope Clement XIII, on the death of the Stuart king, James III, in 1766, to recognise his son's hereditary dynastic claim, indicated a withdrawal of papal support for the Stuart dynasty. These events freed the Irish Catholic, to pledge loyalty to the Hanoverian succession by the Oath of Allegiance introduced in 1774 (Bartlett, 1993b:66-67). However, there was no material gain for Catholics taking this Oath at that time, and between 1774 and 1778, but prior to Gardiner's Catholic Relief Act, only 1,500 Catholics had taken the Oath (Morley, 2002:132).

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<sup>5</sup>For an account of Burke and his relationship with Ireland, see: O'Brien (1992).

<sup>6</sup>Irish Statutes 11 & 12 Geo. 3 c. 21. See: *Irish Statutes Book*.

In fact, two acts passed in 1776 would question the reliability of the amelioration theory. In 1776, an Act of Parliament (15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> Geo III c.21) was passed, entitling a justice of the peace and all sheriffs, chief magistrates of towns and cities corporate within their jurisdiction, to enter at any time, day or night, the house of a Catholic who was suspected of possessing unlawful arms. If arms were not found there, the Catholic was required to take an oath confirming that no arms existed. However, if this oath was refused, or the search had been hindered in any way, a penalty was imposed. The punishment was “fine and imprisonment, *or such corporeal punishments of pillory whipping, as the Court shall in their discretion think proper*” (Parnell, 1808:89). Secondly, and in the same year, although Catholics had been excluded *de facto* from sitting in parliament since 15 October 1692, by submission to the English Act of 3<sup>rd</sup> William and Mary, they were not excluded *de jure* until the Third of Geo III c.32 in 1776 (Parnell, 1808:91). If anything, these two acts sought to copper-fasten restrictions on Catholics, and they certainly call into question the supposed spirit of amelioration in this period.

There were no penal restrictions *per se* on Catholics entering the medical profession. However, there was a religious bar against Catholics at Trinity College, Dublin. Therefore, the medical profession was open to those Catholics who could afford an overseas medical training. On this basis, it could be argued that O'Halloran's career as a medical surgeon, a profession which was relatively removed from penal restrictions, cushioned O'Halloran from the full force of the penal laws. The reality of the situation was, however, that, although he was one of the great medical minds of the eighteenth century, O'Halloran, as a Catholic, was excluded from army medical positions and the offices of state physician or surgeon. He was also barred from medical professorships at Trinity College and the School of Physic, and denied the rank of Fellow in the College of Physics (Lecky, 1892,3:26). Moreover, O'Halloran's Catholicism excluded him from any position of political or civil authority. In any other society, a leading medical professional like O'Halloran would certainly have occupied a position of civic importance. Consequently, it would be difficult to discount the impact of penal legislation on O'Halloran's intellectual and political formation.

To gauge O'Halloran's experience of penal restrictions, using his profession as the sole yardstick, is to fail to understand the broad effect of penal legislation on the Catholic experience generally. This is valid, whether one argues that penal legislation was less oppressive because of the discontinuous nature of its imposition, or that it affected one segment of the population more than another, or to suggest that penal legislation was less harsh than the statutes might imply, because Catholics achieved a measure of success, despite this legislation (Wall, 1958; Cullen, 1986, 1990).

In fact, O'Halloran's family typified those hardest hit by penal legislation. For instance, O'Halloran, as a farmer's son, would have appreciated, on a personal level, the restrictions under the 1703 Act which restricted Catholic land-leases to a 31-year period, and the prohibitive payment of two-thirds of the yearly profit to the landlord. Moreover, as one of three sons, he would certainly have understood the devastation to the social fabric of Catholic family life by the pernicious law which prioritised the Protestant heir; that is, were a son to convert to Protestantism, or the breaking-up of the estate in consequence of the law of gavelkind.

O'Halloran's eldest brother, Joseph Ignatius (1720-1800), was a Jesuit priest. and had drawn the attention of the law on two separate occasions in 1765, and again in 1771, for proselytising. Kevin Hannan (1989:22), citing from an unpublished manuscript of Fr. Francis Finnegan, described the occasion:

Some two years after his arrival in Cork, on the 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1765, a bill of indictment was found by the Grand Jury against 'Joseph O'Halloran, Popish priest and Jesuit, who was the person who had the daring insolence, together with the titular Bishop, publicly in a popish chapel near Shandon Church to set at defiance the laws of the Realm, by reflecting on and attempting to overthrow the fundamentals of the established church and in contempt of the indulgence given to papists by our mild and generous government. [...]. Seven years later, on the 18<sup>th</sup> February, 1771 Father O'Halloran was reported as engaging in a similar dialogue.

(Fr. Finnegan, Hannan, ed. 1989:22)

O'Halloran also had an understanding, at a personal level, of the prohibitions imposed on Catholic tradesmen by the Protestant dominated trade guilds. His other brother, George, was a silversmith in Limerick city. Catholics were admitted to trade guilds only as quarter-brothers, and on the payment of a fee known as 'quarterage' every quarter day. There was no legal basis for this fine, and Catholics objected strongly to paying quarterage (Wall, 1952:91-114). In response to Catholic objections, the guilds attempted to have a law passed by the Irish Parliament confirming their legal rights. The Catholic Committee organised resistance, and raised money to prevent the passage of these bills. In the context of such an attempt, in the early months of 1766, O'Halloran (1766) wrote to Charles O'Connor, and availed of a somewhat unguarded language to express his outrage at the injustices imposed on Catholic tradesmen. He implored O'Connor to use his influence with his "friends", which can be taken to mean the Catholic Committee, to oppose the progress of the bill, which would have given legal sanction to the exorbitant fines imposed on the "mercantile part of our brethren":

Let Protestants Writers blush when they rail against the Cruelty of Foreign Inquisitions. The unprecedented, the unjustifiable oppressions they have laid on us and the new ones daily inventing to the very Extinction of Industry, of wealth, and of Manufactories amongst us, will be their endless reproach!

(O'Halloran, 1766)

This open expression of ire is absent from O'Halloran's public statements, where he adopted a non-partisan approach, and relied on the tools of rhetoric, hints and allusions, where meaning is frequently implied rather than made explicit. The tone of the above is both angry and condemnatory and indicates acceleration, rather than the converse, at this period in Protestant attitudes towards the mercantile Catholic sector, at least.

The entrenched prejudiced attitude of at least some members of Ireland's Protestant community is further confirmed when O'Halloran himself became the object and the victim of Protestant anxiety. In March 1778, France signed the Franco-American Treaty. This occurrence increased the possibility of a French

invasion of Ireland, and Protestant anxiety intensified. Two letters were sent to the Lord Chief Secretary Heron, accusing O'Halloran of being a 'French spy' and recommending his immediate detention (Anon, 1778a & Anon, 1778b). The ease with which these accusations could be made, and the belief legitimised in law, that, whenever Britain was engaged in war, Catholics were automatically held to be in correspondence with the enemy, brings into focus the largely ignored psychological impact of penal legislation on the Catholic experience (Cullen, 1986:23-36).

The psychological aspect of the penal laws, first highlighted by Wall (O'Brien, ed.1989b:9), received further attention in the more recent work of Ó Ciardha. Ó Ciardha (2001:28) takes the view that the existence of a body of penal laws, immaterial of whether these laws have a history of strict or continuous enforcement, had a negative psychological effect. Harvey (1998:15) takes a more moderate position in this regard, stating that life for the Catholic gentry Bellew family was one of "accommodation and frustration", rather than oppression. For O'Halloran, the penal laws had an effect not simply on the Catholic élite, but on the Catholic population generally. O'Halloran (1778a,2:168-169) contended that the penal laws "with wonderful impartiality and perspicuity materially affected every order of men", "perverting the bonds of society whereby the kingdom degenerated", so that it "swarmed with perjurers, blood-hounds, and discovers":

Thus a profound and undisturbed peace of eighty-six years, has proved, to a large majority of the natives of this kingdom, a period of most unheard-of afflictions; *and laws operating against industry, arts, and sciences, have had the utmost success.* The poor of Ireland, one of the most lovely and fruitful islands in the world, are, *at this day*, the most wretched and oppressed set of mortals the sun ever shined on'. (O'Halloran, 1778a,2:171)

Whether this wretched state can be attributed directly to a consequence of penal legislation, or more accurately to the common material lot of the lower classes in eighteenth-century society, is open to discussion. However, it is O'Halloran's position that there was a causal relationship.

In fact, one of the most irritating aspects of penal restrictions for the Catholic élite was not that restrictions had been imposed in the first place, but rather that the nature of the imposition negated certain pre-existing economic and social norms of eighteenth-century society. Consequently, Ireland's Catholic élite were divested of privileges which their birth and status would otherwise have conferred. Conversely, even the lowest Protestant was elevated beyond what would have been considered his natural station. O'Halloran (1778a,2:168) expressed his grievance at this 'unnatural' order of things. In a long tirade against penal restrictions, he peevishly complained that a Catholic gentleman was even forbidden "to wear that common mark of gentility, a sword". This comment indicates O'Halloran's aristocratic view of society, and an effect of penal legislation on the Catholic élite that is routinely overlooked. Thomas Wyse described the trials of the eighteenth-century Irish Catholic gentleman in this regard as follows:

A Roman Catholic peer or gentleman of fortune [...] found himself encircled by a fictitious aristocracy, without any of those real ingredients of distinction which takes away some portion of pain from such superiorities. It was the base, and the violent, and the malignant, who represented it; [...] the shaft of scorn from the lowest hand was levelled at him [...] its honours were not of its own creation: it was a favourite and suddenly elevated cast, [...].

(Wyse, 1829:51)

Although not a landowner, and penal restrictions on land-purchase closed that particular avenue of advancement, O'Halloran proudly displayed that other requisite of gentility – lineage – for public recognition in his *General History*. O'Halloran (1778a,2:389) claimed descent, on the paternal side, from the ancient sept of Clann Feargal to Heremon son of Milesius. Ethnically, this lineage positioned O'Halloran as a descendant of one of the most ancient Milesian families, who, according to the twelfth-century compilation *Lebor gabála Éirenn* tradition, possessed immemorial right of possession to Ireland. Another demonstration of genteel status, the family crest, was displayed on the inside cover of O'Halloran's (1755/6) unpublished manuscript, *A new philosophical and medical treatise on the air*. In the contemporary eighteenth-century Irish context, this public display of status on

O'Halloran's part was both a social and a political statement.

Further research will, no doubt, add immeasurably to our understanding of the psychological and material impact of penal legislation on the Catholic experience. However, what is clear is that O'Halloran's personal and public life were affected by penal restrictions in a demonstratable manner, and certainly influenced his political and intellectual development.

A second influence on O'Halloran's political development was Jacobitism. Jacobitism was the active and vibrant political ideology of Catholic Ireland in the first half of the eighteenth century, in particular. Jacobite ideology focused on the fortunes of the Stuart king and the Irish military community overseas, with the possible hope of return and reversal of fortune. Sentiments such as these permeated the political consciousness of the Catholic majority (Ó Ciardha, 2001).<sup>7</sup> In light of O'Halloran's tutelage by, and his kinship with, the Jacobite poet, Seán Clárach Mac Domhnaill, the influence of Jacobite ideology on his intellectual and political development has to be considered. Munster, O'Halloran's home province, was the Jacobite heartland. Mac Domhnaill, founder of the poetry school at Coshma, was one of the foremost promulgators of Jacobite ideology, and an active recruiter for the Jacobite cause in Ireland (Ó hÉalaí, 1975:94). O'Halloran makes two pertinent comments about Mac Domhnaill in his antiquarian writing:

Mr. Mac Donnell, a man of great erudition, and a profound Irish antiquarian and poet, whose death I sensibly feel, and from whom, when a boy, I learned the rudiments of our language [. . .]. This learned and worthy man died in the year 1751, near Charleville; and I have never since been able to find how his papers were disposed of, though I am told he left them to me.

(O'Halloran, 1772a:162)

The above comment makes clear O'Halloran's admiration for Mac Domhnaill as an Irish scholar and poet. The fact that a poet of the stature of Mac Domhnaill should leave O'Halloran his private papers indicates that the admiration was returned in

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<sup>7</sup>For a broad-based view of Jacobitism, see: Lenman and Gibson (1990).

some measure. The exact nature of Mac Domhnaill's position within the O'Halloran's family, aside from a kinship, is unclear. It seems possible that Mac Domhnaill may have been employed by O'Halloran's parents in the capacity of a home tutor, to teach not only Sylvester but also his brothers, Irish language and history. Under the penal laws, Catholic schools were forbidden, as was the teaching by a Catholic in a public or private capacity. However, these laws were largely ignored, and tutors were frequently employed by the Catholic gentry for their young offspring (Harvey, 1998:92-109). In the absence of another likely candidate, Mac Domhnaill's tutelage would explain O'Halloran's early ability to read and decipher Irish manuscripts. Wilde (1848:247) commented that, during the period of his medical training in Paris, in 1748/9, O'Halloran copied Gaelic manuscripts in the Irish college in Paris. Therefore, in light of the tutor/student and uncle/nephew relationship that existed between O'Halloran and Mac Domhnaill, it would have been difficult for O'Halloran not have imbibed some measure of Jacobite ideology from Mac Domhnaill.

The years of the War of the Austrian Succession, 1740-1748, were vibrant years for Jacobitism in Ireland. The opportunity presented by this war, which saw Prussia and France in conflict with Britain and the Dutch Republic, revived the importance of Jacobitism in European political circles at this period, and proposed invasions of Britain and Ireland were planned. This period of opportunity injected a sense of heightened expectation into Irish Jacobitism, which is confirmed in the poetry of Mac Domhnaill, amongst others (O'Ciardha, 2001:270-278). The young O'Halloran was possibly carried on this rising tide. O'Halloran was in England in 1745, on his way to the continent to begin his medical training, when the forces of Charles Stuart were assembling in the north of Scotland. It is reported that O'Halloran, then 16 or 17 years of age, had entertained the notion of answering the rallying-call to join the Jacobite forces (Wilde, 1848:248). This story would confirm that O'Halloran held Jacobite sympathies, in his youth at least. Then again, there is no evidence to prove this point, one way or the other, as it is based on hearsay. However, the source is Wilde (1848:248) himself, who stated that he heard it from one of O'Halloran's "oldest living acquaintances". What this story does suggest, however, is that, in the



public mind, O'Halloran was connected with Jacobitism, or at least in the oral tradition that survived, or perhaps developed, after his death.

However, if, as Brendan Ó Buachalla (1992:43) states, Jacobitism was predicated on the notion of “return, renewal, and restoration”, on a series of events to be activated by the reinstatement of the Stuart dynasty, then O'Halloran was not a Jacobite, whatever his earlier tendencies may have been. In his first major publication, the *Introduction to the Study of the history and Antiquities of Ireland* (1772a), O'Halloran (1772a:378) publicly detached himself from all Jacobite sentiments, and declared against the Royal House of Stuart. There is no evidence to suggest that his private opinion regarding the restoration of a Stuart dynasty, and, by extension, his Jacobite loyalty, was different to that expressed publicly in this regard at this date. However, what O'Halloran did most probably imbibe from this period of his life was an admiration for military life, and, by extension, an understanding and appreciation of the political ramifications of changing alignments of power in Europe. The potential of the Irish overseas community to return, and to bring about a reversal of fortunes in Ireland, was at the heart of Jacobite ideology. The eulogising of Ireland's military valour abroad, which is ever-present in O'Halloran's work, is reflective of a similar obsession within Jacobite ideology.

A third influence on O'Halloran's intellectual and political development was his educational experiences. Aside from O'Halloran's tutelage by Mac Domhnaill, he was further educated at the fee-paying school of the Protestant minister, Robert Cashin, in Limerick city. This experience provided the young O'Halloran with an early introduction to, and familiarity with, Protestantism and Limerick Protestant society (Lyons, 1963b:219). Cashin's relationship with O'Halloran was a supportive one, as Cashin appears as a subscriber to O'Halloran's *Introduction* (1772a) and his earlier *A complete treatise on gangrene and sphacelus, with a new method of amputation* (1765a).<sup>8</sup> Moreover, a perusal of the clerical subscribers to O'Halloran's *Introduction* confirms the easy relationship and support that O'Halloran had from both sides of the sectarian divide. Of the 23 clergymen listed in O'Halloran's

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<sup>8</sup>Hereafter, *A complete treatise on gangrene and sphacelus*.

*Introduction*, 12 (or 52%) of the total clerical figure were Protestant Ministers (Leslie, n. d.)

Another formative influence on O'Halloran's development was the nature of his medical training, which, as a Catholic, necessitated travel. For those Catholic families who could afford the expense, it was customary to send their children abroad for further education, in particular to France, though this was illegal. In defiance of penal legislation, at 16 years of age O'Halloran left Ireland to begin his medical training at London, Paris and Leiden (Lyons, 1963b:219-221). O'Halloran's eldest brother, Joseph Ignatius, was also educated in France. In 1745, he entered on a theological course at the Grand College at Poitiers, and was subsequently ordained a priest of the Jesuit order in 1748/9. He held the Chair of Philosophy at Bordeaux until 1757. Certainly, the presence of his brother Joseph would have eased O'Halloran's integration into the Irish/French émigré community. The education of, not one, but two, sons abroad fixes O'Halloran's family in the "modestly comfortable to very comfortable" social category (Cullen, 1990:77).

In many respects, this overseas training, conducted by many Catholics out of necessity, functioned in a similar manner to the 'Grand Tour' undertaken by the élite of Irish Protestant society, which provided for an interaction with different languages, cultures and political outlooks, and generally enlarged horizons. For the Irish Catholic, this experience presented the opportunity to experience life at liberty from penal restrictions. It also provided O'Halloran with the opportunity to interact with Ireland's overseas military, medical, and intellectual diaspora, acquainting him with not only the wider world but also, perhaps, with a cosmopolitan view of Ireland, from the distance of the émigré perspective. A perusal of subscription-lists in O'Halloran's books confirms that he made enduring contacts during this period, which he may have renewed and maintained on return visits. On their return to Ireland, successful continental-trained Irish doctors like O'Halloran, Barnard (2010b:194) has commented, "added to the complexity and vigour of eighteenth-century Ireland".

### 2.3. Medical Career and Social Environment

In 1749 O'Halloran returned to Limerick from his medical training on the continent, via London, with a completed thesis on ophthalmology in hand that would lay the foundation for a successful medical career. The adoption by O'Halloran of the French manner of dress after his return is often referred to, and ascribed to French influence during his period of continental studies: "The tall thin doctor in his quaint French dress, with his gold-headed cane, beautiful Parisian wig and cocked hat" as Wilde (1848:244) put it. But what did this attire signify in the home and Irish context?

Firstly, in the public mind and among the aristocracy in Ireland and Britain, an appreciation of French culture was expressed in a preference for French dress, coiffure, culinary taste and, of course, wine. For some members of the British aristocracy, "France was something of a cultural beacon" (Conway, 2001:885). This demonstration of an appreciation of French culture was considered as an indication of "refinement and culture" (Kennedy, 1999:18). By mid-century, and dependent on financial status, this expression of an appreciation for French culture had spread to the Irish provinces.

Secondly, French dress implied a proficiency in the French language, and conversing and corresponding in French was an extension of the "cachet of refinement", noted in particular by Marie Kennedy (1999:13) amongst the highest echelons of Irish society in the Carton and Castletown social circle.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, by the eighteenth century, French had replaced Latin as the language of the scholarly and intellectual community (Kennedy, 1995:4). Evidence for Irish appreciation of French culture on this deeper and more intellectual level is confirmed by "the substantial quantities of French books in private libraries and the vigour of the trade in such books" (Kennedy, 1995:4; 1999:13,18). More appropriately contextualized then within its historical and social milieu, O'Halloran's manner of dress can be viewed as a visual social, and even political, statement. It was, in a manner of

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<sup>9</sup>Carton House, Co. Kildare was the home of the Dukes of Leinster. The first Duke, James Fitzgerald (1722-1773), was an active politician and landowner, as was the second Duke, William Robert Fitzgerald (1749-1804). Castletown House was the home of Thomas Conolly (1738-1803), MP, and also considered the richest man in Ireland. See: *Oxford DNB*.

speaking, a marketing persona, which functioned to identify O'Halloran with a particular social and intellectual community, the political mobility of which was not, paradoxically, available to him in Ireland.

Be that as it may, shortly after his return from the continent, and based on his publication history and presentation of papers, O'Halloran clearly intended to reach the highest echelons of his profession, or at least as high as an Irish Catholic could progress. To achieve this end O'Halloran focused his energies not just on Ireland, but also on the wider British publication market. For instance, on the advice of Dr. Richard Mead of London,<sup>10</sup> O'Halloran immediately set about establishing his credentials in the medical world by publishing his thesis in 1750, under the title *A new treatise on the glaucoma, or cataract*. In the preface to his *A critical analysis of the new operation for a cataract* (1755), O'Halloran (1755:2) makes reference to a paper he read before the Royal Society in London in the winter of 1752. In this preface, (1755:3) he makes further reference to a number of papers he had sent to, or perhaps read himself, before the Royal Society between 1752 and 1755 that had been well received there. O'Halloran's (1755:3) approach to the Royal Society, he mentions, had been with the encouragement of "a couple of learned Friends". One of these friends may have been Dr. Mead, who was a council member of the Royal Society.

O'Halloran was equally attentive to make his name known in Irish medical circles. On 5 May 1757, Dr. Nathaniel Barry<sup>11</sup> a guest speaker at a meeting of the *Medico-Philosophical Society* in Dublin read part of a paper by O'Halloran on the same subject of the cataract for the benefit of the society members (MDMPS:92).<sup>12</sup> It is not surprising that O'Halloran would involve himself with this society as it chimed with his own outward looking attitude to medical affairs. Barnard (2010b:189)

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<sup>10</sup>Richard Mead (1673-1754) was a physician and a member of the Royal Society, London. He was a well-known patron, and subscribed to numerous books and art projects. See: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>11</sup>Nathaniel Barry (1724-1785) was the son of Sir Edward Barry, President of the Royal Irish College of Surgeons. He was appointed in 1749 as King's Professor of Surgery and Midwifery at Trinity College, Dublin. See: Brockliss (2010:90,97).

<sup>12</sup>Edward Barry, Charles Smyth and John Rutty were active members of the Medico-Philosophical Society (1756-1784). See: Repository of the Medico-Philosophical Society. For the Physico-Historical Society, see: Magennis (2002:199-217).

describes the attitude of this society as “the first specifically medical group in Ireland which involved itself consciously in the wider world”, and for which documentation is available. On 8 June 1762, O'Halloran (1762a) sent a further letter, which contained an article on the subject of the foetus, to Mr. Cleghorn, the society secretary. This article was also sent by O'Halloran (1762b) to the *Dublin Magazine*, and was published in the August edition that year.

O'Halloran was also establishing his credentials as a successful medical author, and his works were being reviewed in the British periodical review literature. In 1762, *A new method of amputation successfully performed in the hospital of Limerick, by Mr. O'Halloran of that city, surgeon and man-midwife*, appeared in both the *Scots Magazine* and the *London Magazine or, Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer* for April 1762.<sup>13</sup> These comments were later amplified into the larger tract, previously mentioned, and published in 1765 in Limerick and London under the full title, *A complete treatise on gangrene and sphacelus, with a new method of amputation*. The London edition of this work was favourably reviewed by the two most prestigious British periodicals of the period (Donoghue, 1996:29-32). The first review appeared in the *Monthly Review* for April 1766. The second appeared in the *Critical Review, or Annals of Literature*, in October 1766.<sup>14</sup> Aside from publications, O'Halloran also quickly established a successful and comfortable medical practice in his hometown of Limerick (Lyons, 1963b:226-229).<sup>15</sup> These forgoing activities confirm that O'Halloran was an ambitious young medical professional, anxious to establish himself as a public medical figure in Britain and Ireland.

This is further confirmed by a review of his history as a subscriber at this stage. Early in his career, O'Halloran established himself as a patron of the arts, and the lists of subscribers to his early books reflect both his professional interest and a desire to advance by vicarious association with more established members of the medical profession through subscription.<sup>16</sup> In 1751 he himself is listed as a subscriber to Rev. Richard Barton's *Lectures in natural philosophy*. Very little is known about

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<sup>13</sup>Hereafter *London Magazine*.

<sup>14</sup>Hereafter *Critical Review*.

<sup>15</sup>Ferrar (1769:38) records O'Halloran as residing at Change Lane, Limerick, moving later to Merchant's Quay, as recorded by Lucas (1788, 2:174).

<sup>16</sup>A full list of the works O'Halloran subscribed to is provided in Appendix B.

Barton, except that he was curate at Lurgan from 1742 until his death in 1751.<sup>17</sup> O'Halloran's subscription here is reflective of his own interest in natural philosophy. He had for some time been working on a philosophical work of his own, *A new philosophical and medical treatise on the air*. This work was completed in 1755/6, but was never published.

In 1757, O'Halloran subscribed to John Rutty's *An essay towards a natural, experimental and medicinal history of the mineral waters of Ireland*. John Rutty, a Quaker, was one of the founding members of the Medico-Philosophical Society. Rutty shared a mutual interest with O'Halloran in mineral compounds in water, and although no letters survive to confirm a correspondence, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that correspondence did occur (O'Halloran, 1755:33; Rutty, 1757:78).<sup>18</sup> Of the 384 subscribers to this work, 49 are listed as MDs and 11 as surgeons, one of whom is Sylvester O'Halloran. Association via subscription with more established medical figures such as Rutty or Edward Barry, President of the Irish College of Surgeons, who is listed here, was part and parcel of the networking circle for the young and ambitious.<sup>19</sup> It can be assumed that subscribers frequently expected the subscription favour to be returned. For instance, Rutty subscribed to Richard Barton's *Lectures on philosophy* in 1751, and Barton in turn subscribed to Rutty's *Essay* in 1757. Rutty's name appears on the subscription-list to O'Halloran's *A complete treatise on gangrene and sphacelus* (1765), and it can be assumed that Barton's name would also have appeared there, had he still been alive. O'Halloran did not confine his subscription support to medical works. He also subscribed to Robert's *Juvenile on various subjects* (1763) and to Ferrar's *A history of the city of Limerick* (1767).

A confluence of interest in improvement of healthcare for the sick provided opportunities for a Catholic medical professional like O'Halloran to interact with

<sup>17</sup>Richard Barton (1722-1751). His father Rev. John Barton was Dean of Armagh and Vice Provost of Trinity College (Praeger, 1949).

<sup>18</sup>John Rutty (1698-1755) was born in Wiltshire, England. He received his medical degree from Leiden in 1723. He came to Dublin in 1724, and remained there until his death in 1775. See: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>19</sup>Barry was physician-general to the forces in Ireland and professor of physic at Trinity College, Dublin. Barry was also MP for Charleville, Co. Cork, 1744-1760. He was created a baronet in 1775. O'Halloran dedicated his *A critical analysis of the cataract* (1755) to Edward Barry. See: *Oxford DNB*.

other public-minded individuals. Medical professionals were in frequent contact with the board of governors of the various hospitals with whom they were associated. These public-spirited individuals were usually members of Ireland's Protestant élite and generally occupied positions of power and influence. O'Halloran's medical profession facilitated contacts with Ireland's and Britain's professional and intellectual élite, an opportunity that would not have been as readily available to Catholics from other professions (Barnard, 2010b:185). This contact generally occurred within the hospital environment, where medical and non-medical personal interacted, either on the board of governors or via the various charities established to maintain hospitals.

An account of O'Halloran's involvement with the foundation of the Limerick hospital provides a concrete example of the manner in which a Catholic medical professional like O'Halloran had access to the social habitat of the Protestant élite and politically influential. In 1759, O'Halloran established a small voluntary hospital for the sick in Limerick city, which laid the foundations for the later County of Limerick Hospital. Wilde commented on O'Halloran's participation within the new institution as follows:

We have been curious enough to look into some of the earliest books connected with this institution, preserved with wonderful care and accuracy, and find the name, as given under the accompanying engraving, signed to almost every meeting of the Committee; O'Halloran himself being generally in the chair, or taking a very active part in the business of the meeting, as betrayed in several instances by his handwriting.<sup>20</sup> (Wilde, 1848:244)<sup>21</sup>

O'Halloran also enjoyed a period as a governor on the board of governors of the Limerick County Hospital, from 24 June 1768 to 24 June 1769, with a payment of £3.8.3 listed against his name (Ferrar, 1769:35). A comparison between the names of the list of governors and governess of the Limerick hospital, as listed by Ferrar in

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<sup>20</sup>Wilde's 1848 article contains a signed image of O'Halloran, which was taken from an engraving given to the author by O'Halloran's grandson, Captain Henry D. O'Halloran. This is the 'handwriting' example Wilde refers to in the above extract. See: Wilde (1848:223 fn.a).

<sup>21</sup>For Ferrar's account of the foundation of the Limerick hospital, see: Ferrar (1767:100-101).

1768/9 (1769:34-6), with the subscription-lists of O'Halloran's published works, confirms that contacts made through his involvement in the Limerick hospital provided many subscribers for his publications. For instance, O'Halloran's subscription-list for his 1765 *A complete treatise on gangrene and sphacelus* contains the names of 17 members of the board of Limerick County Hospital, or 32% of a total of 54 members. Seven years later, 11 of these names reappear on the subscription-list of O'Halloran's *Introduction*, with an additional four names, which in total equals 28% of a total of 54 members. The subscription-list to O'Halloran's *General History* (1778) contains the names of 13 members of the board of the Limerick County Hospital, or 24% of the total board members. Many of those mentioned are present or future members of the Irish Parliament; for instance, Edmund Sexton Pery<sup>22</sup> and Sir Henry Hartstonge, both of whom were consistent O'Halloran supporters.<sup>23</sup>

O'Halloran's involvement with the Limerick hospital also facilitated contacts with like-minded individuals from overseas, and increased the diversity of his social habitat. For instance, one of these individuals was William Chapple of Exeter, who was involved with the building of the Exeter and Devon Hospital.<sup>24</sup> Chapple is listed as a subscriber to O'Halloran's *Introduction* in 1772, and in turn O'Halloran is listed to Chapple's *A review of part of Risdon's Survey of Devon* (1785), which indicates, if not a friendship, at least a supportive work-relationship. Another of O'Halloran's medical circle, William Bromfield, was one of the founders of the Locke Hospital in London. Bromfield was a surgeon at St. George's Hospital, London, and was appointed surgeon to George III in 1761, after his marriage to the Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg. Bromfield is mentioned in O'Halloran's correspondence.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, O'Halloran's medical profession facilitated his entrance into the world of the political influential Protestant élite in Ireland and Britain.

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<sup>22</sup>Edmund Sexton Pery (1719-1806) was speaker of the Irish House of Commons, 1771-1785. He was MP for O'Halloran's home town of Limerick from 1761-1785. He was raised to the peerage in 1785, as Viscount Pery of Newtown Pery (Johnston-Liik, 2002,6:55-59).

<sup>23</sup>Hartstonge (1725-1797) was married to Sexton Pery's sister. He was MP for Co. Limerick 1776-83; 1783 -90, and like his brother-in-law was a member of the liberal party in the Irish Parliament (Johnston-Liik, 2002,4:376-7).

<sup>24</sup>For William Chapple (1718-1781), see: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>25</sup>Bromfield (1712-1792) was appointed surgeon to Prince Frederick in 1745, and to the queen's household in 1769, see: *Oxford DNB*.



The foundation of hospitals was usually associated with the establishment of a charity to provide capital for the enterprise. This type of charity involvement increased “the occasions when medical men joined in the civic and associational life focussed on neighbourhood, parish vestries [...] and voluntary groups like the [...] Dublin Society and Physico-Historical Society” (Barnard, 2010b:185). For instance, in 1773, in response to a request by the ladies of Limerick for a Lying-in Hospital, a Charitable Literary Society was formed to collect funds for the enterprise (Lyons, 1963b:230). O'Halloran, as a medical professional, who was to give his services *gratis* to the proposed hospital, was again involved in the process, and, it can be assumed, in the charitable attempts and associational life to raise funds. Therefore, O'Halloran enjoyed a varied social life directly related to his medical profession. This type of socialising and interaction with the Protestant élite of Irish and British society would not have been as readily available to Catholics from other professions.

There were certainly setbacks to O'Halloran's rise to prominence as surgeon and medical author. The first came from the Irish College of Surgeons, and provides the first instance of O'Halloran turning outwards towards Britain for approbation as a compensatory measure, to combat what he perceived as the insularity and narrow-mindedness of the home environment. This can be seen in the manner in which O'Halloran dealt with the less than positive reaction from the Irish medical world to two of his publications. The first work referred to is O'Halloran's *A treatise on the glaucoma or cataract* published, as mentioned, in 1750.

In 1749, returning from Paris via London, the young and newly qualified surgeon O'Halloran presented his new thesis on the cataract to Dr. Richard Mead, who recommended its publication. O'Halloran described the encounter in the ‘Dedication’ section of that work as follows:<sup>26</sup>

I had the Honour of laying it before You, soon after my quitting *Paris*, tho' then almost in it's Infancy – - - You, Sir, were pleased to think the Attempt

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<sup>26</sup>The ‘Dedication’ section of this work is not paginated. For reference purposes I number the pages of this section 1-10.

laudable, and the Performance not unworthy publick [*sic*] Notice.

(O'Halloran, 1750:5)

Sometime in 1749 or 1750, and perhaps on the advice of Dr. Mead, O'Halloran placed his completed thesis before Dr. Barry, President of the Irish College of Physicians, in an attempt to gain the approbation of this body for his work before publication. This approbation was not forthcoming. In the 'Dedication' to this work, O'Halloran is implicitly critical of what he perceives as the reprehensible behaviour of this body and expresses his opinion in a contrast drawn with the reactions of the London College of Surgeons in the person of Dr. Mead, as outlined above. O'Halloran described the response of the Irish body of surgeons to his work as follows:

But tho' it [his thesis] remained there [Irish College of Surgeons] for above a week, and that there had been a full Assembly of that learned Body, in the *Interim*, before whom I proposed to demonstrate the Facts herein contained; yet I found they had *neither Time, nor Curiosity*, to see those Things; and they declined approving it, because looking over the Authors here quoted, would take up too much Time.

(O'Halloran, 1750:7-8)

This setback from the leading body of Irish surgeons could have had a serious and retarding impact on the young O'Halloran's medical aspirations, and in some ways this public denunciation seems foolhardy. However, the manner in which O'Halloran navigated through this opposition was to turn outwards towards Britain, and enlist the support of one of the many contacts he had made during the period of his medical training. Shrugging off the attempted rejection of his work by the Irish College of Surgeons then, O'Halloran dedicated his work to Dr. Mead, whom he described as "the head of his Profession, and the *Hippocrates* of the present Age". For protection against "the Snarlings of invidious *Criticks*" (and it can be assumed the Irish body of surgeons is here included), O'Halloran elicits the "protection" of Dr. Mead as "a sufficient Guard" from all opposition (O'Halloran, 1750:5-6,10).

The publication of his *A complete treatise on gangrene and sphacelus*

(1765) provides another example of how O'Halloran dealt with the poor reception of his work in Ireland.<sup>27</sup> This work was dedicated to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Hertford, and was written with the military needs of the newly-extended British Empire in mind. In 1765, the British Empire was still in the process of consolidating those territories awarded at the conclusion of the Seven Years War in 1763, and the health of the soldier was paramount in any military endeavour. In the 'Dedication', O'Halloran (1765a:ii) reminded the Earl of Hertford, to whom the work was dedicated, of the interest of "our present gracious Sovereign [...] in the state of his military Hospitals, during the last great war". Moreover, he (1765a:iii,v) reminded Hertford that the subject of his work, "mortification", was the complaint "by the nature of their service, the military are most exposed to" and argued for "its general use in the military hospitals of this kingdom".

However, this work was not well received in Ireland. In January 1772 and July 1778, O'Halloran (1772c & 1778c) published two letters in *The Public Register, or, Freeman's Journal*, expressing his disappointment at the Irish reception of a work that O'Halloran felt would have earned him a national reward in any other country in Europe.<sup>28</sup> In an attempt to influence the Irish medical profession by exposing what he felt was their biased attitude, O'Halloran held up for contrast the reluctant Irish response with the positive reception this work received in England, as he had done previously with his earlier work on the cataract. In his address to the "very respectable Body of [Irish] Surgeons", O'Halloran (1772c) was implicitly critical of their behaviour in a contrast drawn with the actions of his friend William Bromfield, surgeon at St. George's Hospital, London:

He [Bromfield] condescended to adopt a mode of practice, the invention of a person greatly his inferior in every point of chirurgical merit, merely because he was satisfied of the justness and utility of it; and by so doing has greatly

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<sup>27</sup>Though the surgical application of this work, which O'Halloran held in such high esteem, is little regarded today, nevertheless this work retains a profile. This profile is due to the small appendix, *The Proposals for the Advancement of Surgery in Ireland*, which is found at the conclusion of the work, and from which, it is generally agreed, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland evolved. See: (Wilde, 1848:228); (Lyons, 1989:71).

<sup>28</sup>*The Public Register, or, Freeman's Journal*, hereafter *Freeman's Journal*.

raised its reputation and consequence. I am persuaded, Gentlemen, [...] you would readily adopt any practice that tended to public utility, *even though a native of the kingdom was the author of it.* (O'Halloran, 1778c)

To add further weight to his argument, O'Halloran listed the influential medical backing his new method of amputation had in Britain. He assured his readers that this new method had the full backing of the influential and royal confidant, Robert Adair, and had been successfully performed by surgeons in both St. George's and St Thomas's Hospital in London.<sup>29</sup> In particular, O'Halloran (1777c) mentioned Mr. Else of St. Thomas's Hospital and Member of the Paris Academy.<sup>30</sup> O'Halloran was well known at these London hospitals, particular St. George's Hospital, and frequently received invitations to attend, or to observe at operations, when in London (Wilde, 1848:240). In light of the military dynamic of England's colonial expansionist policy, it is not surprising that the military utility of O'Halloran's method, which boasted a quicker recovery time than other methods then available, would appeal and find support with the English establishment. O'Halloran, then, enjoyed a supportive medical habitat in England.

What is significant about the two examples given here is that, in both instances, O'Halloran viewed, and used, Britain as the liberating framework within which to deal with what he perceived as an Irish insularity and parochialism. This is not surprising, as the review of O'Halloran earlier papers and publications has demonstrated that, from the beginning of his career, he was interested in cultivating the British medical sphere. O'Halloran's response to Irish insularity was to turn outwards towards Britain as the site of both power and opportunity. This study will shortly argue that O'Halloran was the first Irish antiquarian to address the Catholic relief issue to an audience outside of Ireland. The foregoing examples indicate that O'Halloran's strategy in this regard, and his identification of London as the site of power, was a natural outgrowth of the strategies he used in his medical works to cope

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<sup>29</sup>Robert Adair was an Irish-born medical professional who made his career in Britain. He was appointed Chief Surgeon to the Hospitals and Inspector-General of the Regimental Infirmaries in March 1756. He was both surgeon and personal friend of King George III, and friend to the King's brothers. See: Malloch (1937).

<sup>30</sup>For Thomas Else (St. Thomas's 1768-1780), see: Lawrence (1996:88,198,296).

with Irish disinterest. These two examples confirm the significance of the medical sphere in shaping O'Halloran's antiquarian politics.

In brief, Sylvester O'Halloran was a successful medical professional and author. His medical profession gave him access to levels of Protestant élite society, and a social circle in Britain and Ireland that might otherwise not have been available to him. His medical works were better received in Britain than in Ireland, where he seems to have been more favoured and enjoyed a supportive medical habitat.

#### 2.4. O'Halloran's Rise in Antiquarian Circles and Publications, 1763-1778

The purpose of this section is to position O'Halloran as an active figure in the antiquarian world of eighteenth-century Ireland, by charting his rapid rise in antiquarian circles, and referencing his publications chronologically within this discussion. This section does not present an analysis of these works. The intent is to highlight the distinctive elements of O'Halloran's writings that differentiate his approach from that of Charles O'Connor, and to provide a background to the comprehensive analysis of the *General History*, which will be presented in the following chapters.

In 1763, and with a profile as a successful surgeon and medical author, O'Halloran entered the arena of antiquarian debate with a strongly worded letter directed against the publications of the Scottish schoolteacher, poet and historian, James Macpherson. Although a newcomer to antiquarian debate, O'Halloran (1763b) was the first Irish antiquarian to denounce Macpherson's publications in a letter to the *Dublin Magazine*, published in January 1763, entitled *The poems of Ossine, the son of Fionne Mac Comhal, re-claimed. By a Milesian*. (21-23). In August the same year, O'Halloran (1763c) sent a further letter on this topic, *A letter to Mr. Macpherson, occasioned by his dissertation on the poems of Temora. By a Milesian* which was also published in the *Dublin Magazine* (457-460).<sup>31</sup> The circumstance which gave rise to these letters was the publication by Macpherson in the 1760s of a

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<sup>31</sup>In O'Halloran's (1765b) letter to O'Connor 19 February 1765, O'Halloran mentioned a third letter sent to Wilson's *Dublin Magazine* the previous year, 1764. O'Halloran may indeed have sent a third letter but this third letter, if sent, was not published in Wilson's *Dublin Magazine*. In his *Introduction* (1772a:312) O'Halloran corrected this error, and referred to only two letters sent by him to the *Dublin Magazine*.

variety of poetic works that he claimed were the genuine works of the Scottish poet Ossian, composed in the third century before Christ. Moreover, he argued that the Ossianic tradition was of Scottish origin, and that Scotland, not Ireland, was the motherland of the Gael. It was self-evident to the Irish native antiquarian that these poems were, in fact, based on Gaelic traditional tales from the *Fiannaíocht* and *Rúraíocht* cycles. The controversy that arose regarding the authenticity of these poems became known as the Ossianic controversy.<sup>32</sup>

What is most striking here is that the first Irish challenge to Macpherson came from a newcomer rather than from more established quarters, such as Charles O'Connor. O'Halloran (1765b) regarded these poems as less of a fraud than others did, and felt that they confirmed "the taste, Erudition & sentiments of our Great Ancestors". O'Connor did not agree, and despite a lengthy correspondence with O'Connor, in February and March 1765, O'Halloran (1765e) gave way, but only reluctantly, and accepted O'Connor's view that the poems were indeed fabrications. As the historian Clare O'Halloran has commented, this early disagreement between O'Halloran and O'Connor on issues regarding the Ossian poems revealed a fundamental difference in these two scholars' approaches to Irish history:

O'Connor presented the history of early Ireland as the struggle to achieve a constitutional monarchy, [...]. [O'Halloran's] interest was in the military and heroic rather than the constitutional, and it is in this context that his desire to refute Macpherson's presentation without destroying the credibility of the poems themselves can be understood. (O'Halloran, 1989:80)

However, aside from whether one scholar had a penchant for the political and the other for the military, the common ground here is the issue of origins, which was central not only to the claims of both these scholars but also to assertions of Gaelic antiquity generally. O'Halloran's contribution to the debate did not go unnoticed. In 1763, George Roberts of Limerick, in *Juvenile poems on various subjects*, dedicated a poem to O'Halloran with this inscription:

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<sup>32</sup>For the works of Macpherson, see: bibliography. For further elaborations on this topic, see: Thompson (1952); Snyder (1965); Ó Catháin (1993); Mac Craith (1996); Gaskill (1991); O'Halloran (2004).

Inscribed to Mr. O'HALLORAN, of *Limerick, Surgeon*, whose steady zeal and unwearied Application in asserting, from undeniable Proofs, in the Case of *Ossine* against Mc. Pherson, the Honour &c. of his Country deserves the highest Applause. (Roberts, 1763:158-163)<sup>33</sup>

No further explicit comment appeared from O'Halloran on an antiquarian issue until 1770, and the publication of his first antiquarian work, *Insula sacra*. However, during this period he did make one comment in the preface to his treatise on amputation that indicated that the issue occupied his thoughts. In the midst of what is a scientific discussion on the advantages of his new method of amputation, O'Halloran interjected to point out:

In the most early periods of our history, it appears, that the health of the subject, was a particular object of attention in the state; and were no other monuments of our antiquity left, yet would this alone, in every civilised nation, secure us the character of a polished people.

(O'Halloran, 1765a:xii)

Behind the scenes O'Halloran had begun to forge contacts in the antiquarian world. He initiated a correspondence with Charles O'Connor in February 1765 on the subject of the Ossian poems, as mentioned. The same year, the subscriptions list to his *A complete treatise on gangrene and sphacelus* contained the names of both Charles O'Connor and his long-time associate and fellow antiquarian Dr. John Curry. O'Halloran was not acquainted with Curry at this point, and actually it was O'Halloran (1765b) himself who inserted both Curry's and O'Connor's names into his subscription-list with a promise of forwarding copies of the work to both. O'Halloran's purpose was twofold. Firstly, he wished to publicly associate himself, via his subscription-list, with two of the most prominent figures in Irish Catholic antiquarian circles at this time, and enhance his own position through association. Secondly, he wanted Curry to write a review of his work on amputation. The review was not forthcoming, however, and O'Halloran (1766) commented in a later letter to

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<sup>33</sup>Sylvester O'Halloran and his wife are listed as subscribers to this work. See: Roberts (1963:14).

O'Connor in February 1766, "Thou' Dr. Curry was not kind enough to give me his decisions on my work, I shall soon see this job undertaken by a pen less reserved".

Surviving correspondence confirms that in the interim O'Halloran had started on his first major antiquarian work, *An Introduction to the Study of the History and Antiquities of Ireland*, and was in consultation with O'Connor on that subject. When O'Halloran began his research for this project, it is not possible to say.

Correspondence extant between O'Connor and O'Halloran, relating to the *Introduction*, only covers a period from January 1769 to March 1769, which is almost three years before the publication date of the *Introduction* (Ward and Ward, eds. 1980, 2:254-257, 261-263).

It appears O'Halloran was somewhat impatient, however, and wanted an early platform to air his views. In 1770 he published *Insula sacra*. This is a small work of 35 pages octavo, and printed by T. Welsh of Irish-town, Limerick. The first five pages are written in the form of an address to the *Dublin Society*, to whom the work is dedicated.<sup>34</sup> The *Dublin Society* was founded in 1731, received its royal charter in 1750, and was the main agent for economic development in Ireland. *Insula sacra* is generally seen as an attempt by O'Halloran to engage the interests of the *Dublin Society* in the preservation of the Irish annals (as the title indicated), and to that end he provided four specific guidelines in the address section of this work. Aside from this address, *Insula sacra* is more accurately contextualised as an extract from his *Introduction*, which, although ready for publication, had been delayed at the press (1770:i).<sup>35</sup> Confirming this point, *Insula sacra* is the only work not included by O'Halloran in the 1803 publication of his entire corpus entitled *An introduction to and an history of Ireland*. From a marketing viewpoint, *Insula sacra* was a form of advance publicity, an attempt by O'Halloran to draw attention to, and gauge the possible reception, of the prestigious *Dublin Society* to his forthcoming major antiquarian work, the *Introduction*. In fact, it is not an improbable conjecture that

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<sup>34</sup>Livesey (2004:615-640) discusses the importance of the *Dublin Society* as an instrument of governance for over two centuries in finding a role for Ireland in the late eighteenth-century British Empire. For the *Dublin Society* also see: Clarke (1951:334-344).

<sup>35</sup>The subject matter of *Insula sacra* is found dispersed throughout Chapter V and VI in Part II of the *Introduction*, pp. 159-178. Frequently the exact lines are reproduced, for instance, p. 74 amongst other examples.



*Insula sacra* was also used by O'Halloran to collect further subscribers for his *Introduction*, as this work is prefaced by full subscription details that would usually appear on a *Proposals* document.<sup>36</sup>

O'Halloran's historiographical approach was different to that of his fellow antiquarian, Charles O'Connor. *Insula Sacra* provides two examples of that difference at this early stage in O'Halloran's antiquarian writings. Firstly, as Clare O'Halloran observed, O'Halloran had a tendency "for making direct links between the past and the contemporary political situation of the native population".<sup>37</sup> These 'digressions' as O'Halloran himself termed them, reflect the eighteenth-century political context of his writings. They contain the O'Halloran ideology, or, in other words, his view as to how Ireland should be ruled, where parallels are drawn, either by allusion, or made explicit between the past, in the form of Milesian rule in Ireland, and the present situation under the Irish Protestant régime. One example from *Insula sacra* will suffice to demonstrate this point. Within the context of the arrival of the Milesians in Ireland O'Halloran commented:

Thus it is demonstrable that our ancestors came to Ireland, a great, a pious and warlike race; [...]. With them they brought these arts and sciences, for which they were so celebrated in Egypt and Greece; and if we critically examine the antient Irish legislation, we shall find it the work of a wise and most learned people, and its great durability proves it. To hope by severe & penal laws, to make mankind better and juster [*sic*], the History of all times denies; but to form a constitution which

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<sup>36</sup>The issuing of a *Proposals* document prior to printing a work was part of the subscription method of publication. The main function of a *Proposals* document was to attract subscribers. This subject is discussed in full in Chapter 3. The following details appeared with *Insula Sacra*: "Ready for the Press, And to be printed by Subscription, An Introduction to the Study of the History and Antiquities of Ireland, by Mr. O'Halloran. Price to Subscribers, Six English Shillings, of which a Crown to be paid on Subscribing, the remainder on delivery of the Work in neat half Binding, to which the names of the Subscribers are to be prefixed. Subscriptions will be taken in by Messrs. Faulkner, Wilson and Hoey, Jun. in Dublin, and the Printer hereof, and Mrs. Long in Limerick." (1770:2).

<sup>37</sup>The historian Clare O'Halloran would suggest that O'Connor was similarly indiscreet in his earlier work and provides one example. See: *Oxford DNB*.

people with all their aggregates of virtues & vices, were equally interested to preserve - - - and whilst it was so formed as to make a smaller State respectable, yet equally capable to render a more extensive one great and powerful, seemed to be reserved for the Ἰερον Γ'ενοϋ or, ancient Irish.

(O'Halloran, 1770:16-7)

The point O'Halloran is making here is that the durability of Milesian government in Ireland was attributable to its policy of inclusion rather than exclusion. In the contemporary context this can be read as that the Milesian policy of inclusion, rather than exclusion (penal laws), made Ireland (a small state) respectable, and a similar policy could also make "a more extensive one" (Britain, and by extension, its empire) great and powerful. Therefore, O'Halloran views the effect of Catholic exclusion from a British imperial as well as an insular perspective, and he argues that Catholic inclusion would be beneficial to Ireland and Britain. The fact that O'Halloran has chosen to include this statement in his first public address to the *Dublin Society* increases its significance as a pivotal aspect of his Catholic relief politics. This argument for inclusion is central to O'Halloran's *General History*, and is discussed in full over the following chapters. What is important to note here is that the genesis of this argument, albeit in an underdeveloped state, is present in his first antiquarian publication, and differentiated his approach to that of O'Connor.

Secondly, the geographical focus of their historical interest was different. *Insula sacra* focuses on the early origin of the Gael in the Mediterranean area. O'Halloran's concern was in demonstrating that these early migrators had culturally influenced the development of Greece and Egypt, by comparing the fragmented histories of the Mediterranean with traditional native sources (1770:10-17). Conversely, O'Connor (1766:22) discounted this early period as "a Fable of the Bards, to render the Original of our Monarchs more august and sacred". This area of interest is further developed and expanded on by O'Halloran (1778a,1:40.183) in the *General History*. In the *General History* O'Halloran links the migrations of the Gael in the Mediterranean with two ancient empires of that region, Phoenicia and Carthage. This linkage provides the underpinnings for his assertion of a Milesian Empire, rather than a Milesian kingdom, in Ireland, and will be discussed in full shortly. O'Halloran's *Insula Sacra* thesis, however, met with no response from the antiquarian

community at his stage. Much later Thomas Campbell (1789:13-15), in the context of a critique of O'Halloran's *Introduction*, dismissed the theory out of hand.<sup>38</sup>

Before turning to O'Halloran's first major publication, the *Introduction*, a review of the subscription-list of that work, in a comparison with the subscription-list of the earlier *A complete treatise on gangrene and sphacelus* (1765a), can provide some insight into the progress of O'Halloran's networking within the Irish antiquarian scene at this early stage. It can be estimated that he became acquainted with Major Charles Vallancey some time between the period 1765 and 1771, as Vallancey's name does not appear on the subscription-list to the aforementioned 1765 work, but he is listed as subscriber to the *Introduction* in 1772.<sup>39</sup> Although it could be argued that the medical rather than historical nature of this work may be the reason for the non-appearance of Vallancey's name in the subscription-list, this is not necessarily the case. Of the 206 subscriber names that appear in this 1765 work, only 32 have clear connections with the medical world, being identified as surgeon, M.D., apothecary or druggist, with the substantial remainder drawn from the upper echelons of Irish society.

Vallancey was a member of the *Dublin Society*, and his interest in Irish antiquity paved the way for the Catholic antiquarian to enter the previously Protestant-dominated Dublin antiquarian circle. Vallancey was, therefore, an important contact for O'Halloran. In fact, correspondence between Vallancey (1771) and O'Conor (1771) confirms that O'Halloran had established a good relationship with Vallancey some time prior to 1771. Vallancey's (1771) letter to O'Conor mentions that O'Halloran had visited him in Dublin, presumably to collect from Vallancey the amended drawing of St. Cormac's Chapel for his soon-to-be published *Introduction*.

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<sup>38</sup>Rev. Thomas Campbell (1733-1795) was a church of Ireland clergyman and traveller born in Co. Tyrone. Campbell's most significant work is his diary account of visits to England between 1775 and 1792. His 1775 account is the most complete and provides insights into the days he spent in the company of Dr. Johnson and Joshua Reynolds. The 1775 account was published by Clifford (1947). See: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>39</sup>Charles Vallancey arrived in Ireland around 1750 as a military engineer stationed at Cork. He moved to Dublin in 1761, where he became a member of the Dublin Society in 1763. In 1772 he founded the Select Committee (1772-1774) to investigate the antiquities of Ireland. He was also involved with the later Antiquarian Society (1779-1783), and a founding member of the Royal Irish Academy in 1785 (O'Reilly, 2006:125-217).

O'Halloran had also asked him to forward his criticism on Macpherson to O'Connor. In turn O'Halloran (1772b) offered to share his collection of manuscripts with Vallancey. These actions indicate a cordial relationship had been established.

In the interim, O'Halloran had also made the acquaintance of another figure that was to become prominent in antiquarian circles, historian and Protestant clergyman the Rev. Thomas Leland.<sup>40</sup> Leland is not listed as a subscriber to the 1765 work, but is listed as a subscriber to the 1772 *Introduction*, which would date their acquaintance to sometime prior to 1771. At this initial stage the relationship is certainly friendly, as, in the body of this work, O'Halloran (1772a:304) referred to him as "the great antiquarian Leland". It seems, then, that, less than two years after his first minor antiquarian publication, O'Halloran had successfully penetrated the Irish Protestant antiquarian circle, and his name is publicly associated, via his subscription-list, with two of the most significant figures in that area, Vallancey and Leland.

O'Halloran's first major antiquarian publication, entitled the *Introduction to the study of the history and antiquities of Ireland*, was published by subscription in Dublin by Ewing in 1772.<sup>41</sup> This was a substantial work in single volume quarto consisting of 420 pages, covering a period from the earliest times up to the end of the seventeenth century. However, due to the multiplicity of topics introduced therein by O'Halloran, the *Introduction* reads like a work that has been hurriedly researched, where the aim was to cover as many topics as possible within the inadequate and confined space of one volume. For instance, Part I covers diverse subjects, ranging from the hypothesis that Ireland was the metropolitan seat of druidism and the birthplace of chivalry, to an account of the Mediterranean origin of the Gael and Irish architecture. Part II deals with the domestic situation, and details the Milesian

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<sup>40</sup>Leland (1722-1785) was born in Dublin and educated at Trinity College. In 1766 he purchased a Gaelic manuscript, the annals of Lough Key, which he gave to the library at Trinity College. As college librarian he had invited Charles O'Connor to study there (Love, 1962b:6). Whether Leland extended the same privilege to O'Halloran is not known. A comment by O'Connor in a letter to O'Halloran in 1769, while O'Connor was in Dublin "we are each occasionally employed in the same library" may indicate the affirmative (Ward and Ward, 1980,1:255).

<sup>41</sup>This work was later reprinted in London the same year. The Dublin and London editions are identical regarding content and the main body of the work. However, there are some differences; the most significant regards the reduction of the number of illustrations to six in the London edition from the original eight in the Dublin edition.

legislature, commerce and navy. In addition, section two recounted the arrival of Christianity and the populace and mineral wealth of Ireland. While Part III moved into more contemporary and controversial issues, and commented on all the revolutions in Ireland up to 1691, in one way or other, in strong and forthright language.

The *Introduction* can be used to point to two further areas that differentiate O'Halloran's historiographical approach from that of Charles O'Connor. Firstly, what is remarkable about the *Introduction* on initial reading is the assertive, even challenging, tone of its narrative. O'Connor's style was more discreet, pleasing rather than vigorous, and very aware of the 'sensitivities' of his Protestant audience (O'Halloran, 2004:37). O'Halloran, in contrast, used a forthright language to rail against the manner of the English conquest of Ireland. For instance, he accused the English of "making Ireland a slaughter-house for near 500 years," or again that England "gave murder, robbery, and theft the sanction of the law in Ireland" (O'Halloran, 1772a:204-205; 282). More graphically he described the cruelty of English soldiery during the Rebellion of 1641:

So cruel were these men in the trade of murder, that when sometimes reprehended for their infernal sporting with the miseries of dying infants they used gravely to answer; *That nits would be lice.* (O'Halloran, 1772a:294)

Remarks such as these are frequently couched in patriotic language, to make them more acceptable, and usually contain a qualifying statement, to further cloak the attack. However, even in this regard O'Halloran was ungenerous. Of English cruelties in the reign of Charles the first, he commented:

Charity obliges me to hope that the unexampled blood reprisals of their enemies proceeded not from any cruelty peculiar to the English nation, but from the vindictive spirit of a few. (O'Halloran, 1772a:294)

O'Halloran, therefore, introduced a new and more forthright voice into Irish Catholic antiquarian writing than had hitherto existed, and differentiated his style and

approach from that of Charles O'Connor. Secondly, O'Halloran introduced an imperial resonance into his narrative that is not present in Conor's writings (1753, 1766, 1775), or in the earlier tradition, as represented by *Lebor gabála Éirenn*, or in Keating's *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*. O'Halloran (1772a:147) began this process here by arguing for equivalence between the term 'ard ri' and the term 'emperor'. Following from this assertion he introduced an imperial nuanced language into his narrative. This can be confirmed, rather crudely perhaps, by noting the numerical frequency of precise terms relating to empire, and within an Irish context, that appear in the text. The three terms used here are 'emperor', 'empire' 'imperial'. I count four references to the term 'emperor', seven uses of the term 'imperial', and four occurrences of the term 'empire' in the *Introduction*. However, due to the multiplicity of topics, and the unstructured and unfocussed style of the narrative, this resonance could easily pass unnoticed. The idea of a Milesian Empire, rather than a Milesian kingdom, is a totally new concept introduced by O'Halloran into his *General History*, and sharply distinguishes his work from his contemporaries, or its antecedents in this tradition. This study will argue that the reason O'Halloran argued for a Milesian Empire, rather than a Milesian kingdom, was because he wanted to establish an ancient parity with Britain which was now an imperial power. What is significant here is that the genesis of this idea, albeit in an underdeveloped state, is present in the earlier *Introduction*, and is a distinctive element, which differentiates his approach to that of Charles O'Connor.

The *Introduction* met with varying responses. Regarding its reception within domestic antiquarian circles, O'Connor (1771) commented to Vallancey on 29 of November 1771, "I agree with you that some of his [O'Halloran's] arguments [were] shrewd and sensible" but O'Connor added, "I think you will agree with me, that he has left the main point just as he found it [...] destitute of the proper proofs; I mean the early use of letters in Ireland". O'Connor (1771) seems to have been more impressed by the presentation of the work rather than its content. He commented to John Curry a few days earlier that "This work is magnificently printed; when you see it, you will find that were he [O'Halloran] to defend a bad cause, he would be no formidable adversary" (Ward and Ward, 1980, 1:291). The *Introduction* was indeed magnificently printed and expensive to produce, as it contained eight illustrations.

Outside of Ireland the *Introduction* caught the eye of the Rev. John Whitaker (1735-1818) who commented in his *The history of Manchester* (1773,1:308) that “though it is animated with an uncommon spirit of patriotism, and has actually vindicated Ireland from many gross and established mis-presentations, [it] is not written in a strain of cool and judicious argumentation”.<sup>42</sup> O'Halloran's *Introduction* also caught the eye of the noted British historian David Hume (1711-1776), and caused him to make a correction, albeit a trivial one, in later editions of his *History of England*. O'Halloran (1772a:277-278) pointed out that Hume had incorrectly named O'Rourke's wife, the alleged catalyst in the Norman invasion of Ireland, “Omach” instead of “Dearbhorguil”. Hume subsequently renamed the heroine “Dovergilda” (Fieser, 2003:375,377n.4).

Reviews of the *Introduction* appeared in the *Critical Review* and the *Monthly Review, or Literary Journal*, in 1773 and a brief mention of the work appeared in the *London Magazine* in the same year.<sup>43</sup> The *Critical Review* (1773:198), confining itself to the early residence of the Gael in the Mediterranean, pronounced a rather sharp criticism of the work, accusing O'Halloran of “an undue partiality” and an “attempt to mislead the public judgment”, which, in the reviewer's opinion, should be considered “as a criminal imposture” by resurrecting the “absurd tales respecting the Irish antiquities”, which all previous “rational investigation” had proved false. The *Monthly Review*, on the other hand, provided a more comprehensive review, and although dismissing the “old Milesian and other fables” out of hand, seemed to concur with the general spirit of the work:

In fine, we would wish that every thing were exploded, or abolished, which tends to keep alive any invidious national distinction between Scotland and Ireland, - or, indeed, England: with which we think them, for political, and just reasons, entitled to perfect EQUALITY. (*Monthly Review*, 1773:201)

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<sup>42</sup>This work was published originally in 1771, and republished with some changes in 1773. O'Halloran refers to the 1773, edition as he mentions Whitaker's comments on his *Introduction*, which was not published until 1772.

<sup>43</sup>*Monthly Review, or Literary Journal*, hereafter *Monthly Review*.

O'Halloran's next publication arose out of a controversy regarding the publication of the Rev. Thomas Leland's *The history of Ireland from the invasion of Henry II* (1773), and produced a response from O'Halloran that was both public and vitriolic in the form of a pamphlet entitled, *Ierne defended: or, a candid refutation of such passages in the Rev. Dr. Leland's, and the Rev. Dr. Whitaker's works, as seem to affect the authenticity and validity of antient Irish history* (1774a).<sup>44</sup> However, Leland, secretary of the Antiquarian Society, rather than Whitaker, was the main focus of O'Halloran's *Ierne defended*, where his refutation encompassed two thirds of the content there.

It was expected that Leland would supply Ireland with a philosophical and impartial history of this island, as Hume had done for England. Catholic sympathiser and MP for Bristol, Edmund Burke, and also Charles O'Connor, had both encouraged and supplied Leland with materials to this end (Love, 1962b:1-25). O'Halloran certainly expected Leland to produce a work favourable to the Irish situation. In his *Introduction* he (1772a:319) listed Leland among the great refuters of Ireland's enemies, and included him in a list with "a Lind, a Stanihurst, [...] or an Ussher, a Ward, a Routh, or a Wadding". He (1772a:304) further referred to him as the "great antiquarian Leland" who had said of Boethius's *Scotorum Historia* "that its falsehoods [regarding Irish history were] so many, and so glaring, as scarcely to be enumerated". In fact, in his *Introduction*, O'Halloran advertised Leland's soon-to-be-published *The history of Ireland*, and, moreover, recommended it to his readers in the context of a fuller discussion on the Norman invasion:

The dignity and honour of this *Imperial Kingdom*, [Ireland] as well as of the present race of Irish, require a fuller and clearer investigation on this matter; and what shall be found defective in me, on this head, I trust the candour and learning of so able an advocate as Dr. Leland, will more than sufficiently supply.

(O'Halloran, 1772a:233)

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<sup>44</sup>In response to Leland's history, John Curry (1773) also published a pamphlet, which focused on refuting Leland's account of the 1641 Irish rebellion. For an account of Curry's refutation see: Gibney (2009).



However, Leland's impartiality had succumbed to the promise of clerical advancement, and his history pleased neither one side nor the other. Leland angered Catholics by his misrepresentation of events. His party history did not go far enough to satisfy the Protestant bigot, and his friends, who had expected a philosophical history, were disappointed (Love, 1962b:15, 23, 22). This left O'Halloran in rather an embarrassing position, having previously promoted this work in his *Introduction*. A central objective of *Ierne defended*, then, was an attempt by O'Halloran to dissociate himself from Leland's *The history of Ireland*. O'Halloran had not only publicly supported Leland in his *Introduction*, but had advertised and recommended his soon-to-be published history. A second consideration for O'Halloran was to publicly highlight the manner in which Leland had plagiarised his thoughts, without crediting him in the published work. Leland and O'Halloran had discussed the events surrounding the Norman invasion, and must have been in sympathy for O'Halloran to have recommended Leland's work, on that issue, in particular, to his readers. On publication, however, it seems that, although Leland had availed of O'Halloran's insights, he presented them as his own without acknowledgement (1774a:20).

O'Halloran's rebuttal of Leland's *The history of Ireland* focused only on the 'Preliminary' to Leland's work, and, in particular, the following passage which appeared there:

Depressed for many ages, and reduced to a mortifying state of inferiority, stung with reproaches and the contempt, and sometimes with the injurious slander of their neighbours, they [the Irish] passionately recurred to their monuments of ancient glory, and spoke of the noble actions of their ancestors in the glowing style of indignation. (Leland, 1773:vi)

O'Halloran's refutation was predicated, primarily but not exclusively, on a valorisation of Irish military achievements. O'Halloran's inclusion of military exploits as a theme in his refutation, here and elsewhere, sharply distinguishes his approach from that of Charles O'Connor. O'Connor focused on the political sophistication of early Irish government, and deliberately excluded references to military exploits, as he felt it reinforced the stereotyped barbaric image of the Irish

(O'Halloran, 2004:24-25,110-111). Rejecting Leland's opinion as to the alleged mortifying state of Irish inferiority, O'Halloran (1774a:6) countered with "If the English Princes did not love them, they *most certainly respected and feared them*". He (1774a:7-10) then proceeded to give an exhaustive list, outlining the military power and might of Irish resistance, from the reign of Elizabeth to the present day. O'Halloran (1774a:8) described Owen Roe O'Neal, in the reign of Charles the First, as a figure "courted by Cromwell, envied by Ormond, and dreaded by every enemy to his country". He was equally attentive in the modern period, and drew on many of the most iconic Irish émigré military figures serving in the Catholic armies of Europe to defend against Leland's insult of Irish inferiority:

General Wall Ambassador from the court of Spain to that of Great Britain, [...]. Count O'Mahony the Spanish minister at the court of Vienna; the young Count Taaffe Ambassador extraordinary from the imperial court; Count Lacy, another; general O'Reilly governor of Madrid; and the late Lord Tyrawly, an O'Hara, died commander in chief of the British forces! All these are no doubt, strong proofs, how much the Irish were — *reproached and contemned [sic]* by their neighbours! (O'Halloran, 1774a:10)

This type of military exhibitionism would have been anathema to O'Connor. The reason for this lies in O'Connor's assertions of Catholic loyalty, which were central to his case for Catholic relief, and which would have been undermined by an emphasis on Ireland's military nation serving in the armies of the traditional enemies of Britain. O'Halloran had no such reservations, and, unlike O'Connor, did not associate military exploits with barbarism. The eulogising of Irish military exploits in an historic and current context is a central theme in O'Halloran's *General History*, and a central component of his argument for Irish Catholic inclusion in the British Empire.

O'Halloran was becoming a public figure of controversy, and *Ierne defended* was the first of O'Halloran's publications to provoke a newspaper response. In this case it consisted of three letters in total, where O'Halloran and Leland were positioned along distinct but opposing party lines. A letter from a correspondent who signed

himself 'A School-boy' initiated the controversy accusing O'Halloran of writing that:

Prolix letter [*Ierne defended*] because Mr. Leland did not even mention your name in his works, and Mr. Whitaker has with some contempt; this is what you call *amor patria*; but it is evident that it is self-love that has engaged you in the publication of that letter. By endeavouring to make those gentlemen answer you, you thought to acquire some credit; but they despise such futile historians. (A School-boy, 1774a:1)

O'Halloran identified 'A School-boy' as the Rev. Thomas Leland, and he replied with a forthright and lengthy rebuttal published on the front page of the *Freeman's Journal*, 4 June 1774. O'Halloran (1774b) accused Leland of being "shamefully ignorant and unjustifiably prejudiced" in matters of Irish history, and in response to the accusation that he himself was *non compos mentis*, he tartly replied that "you have been already fairly acquitted of any tendency to it, *from the thickness of the partition*". The assumption by O'Halloran that Leland was the author of this letter prompted a further letter from 'A School-boy' (1774b:2), who now identified himself as a fellow Limerick-man, an intimate acquaintance of O'Halloran, a Milesian and of the Limerick Diocesan School. In this later letter 'A School-boy' continued his verbal tirade against O'Halloran, and further accused him of a "malicious and envious heart", and branded him "a visionary and romantick [*sic*] writer", whose work "hurt rather than serve[d] Irish history", and whose writings would be condemned to oblivion:

You say you have attacked Hume, Voltaire, & c. I am certain you had assurance enough to do so: is it not obvious in what contempt they hold you, when they would not answer you. Their works will be read, when yours will be buried in oblivion. (A School-boy, 1774b:2)

As to the actual identity of 'A School-boy', Ferrar's (1769:14) *Limerick Directory* records Rev. Ephraim Monsell as master of the Diocesan School, Back Lane, Limerick, while Lucas (1788,2:70) records a Rev. William Jones as master of a

similar school in Mungret Street. Either way, the attack on O'Halloran, as a past pupil of the Diocesan School, was very personal. He did not reply to the second letter from 'A School-boy'. Whether O'Halloran had deliberately mistaken the identity of 'A School-boy' to be that of Leland, and availed of the public platform this letter provided to mount a further assault on Leland's *The history of Ireland*, and to further promote his own *Ierne defended*, is open to conjecture.

Conversely, O'Halloran's refutation of Leland prompted a supportive response from the Gaelic community. Gaelic poet and Clare schoolteacher Tomás Ó Míocháin composed a laudatory tribute to O'Halloran entitled *Do dhochtúir Fíorealadhanda ua hAlludhráin* (Ó Muirthe, 1986).<sup>45</sup> This poem, in its bombastic style, is highly reminiscent of the old bardic school of praise-poetry, and harkens back to a time when poets, and by extension, their poetry, were valuable components of Irish society (Bergin, 1970). This poem is the only evidence extant which provides some insight into how O'Halloran's antiquarian writings were viewed by the Gaelic community, of which Ó Míocháin was an important member.

Ó Míocháin was founder of the Ennis poetry school, and his poetic circle included poets of the stature of Seán de hÓra, Seán Lloyd, and Séamas Mac Consaidín (Williams and Ní Mhuiríosa, 1979:261-2; Ó Muirthe, 1986:87). In contrast, then, to the opinion expressed in the newspaper response, Ó Míocháin judged *Ierne defended* as the sweetest composition ever composed in Ireland (*An Éirinn Airt níor bhfeas dúinn binn dréachtach*) which silenced the base cleric (*do thacht ar ndaoirchléirigh*). For Ó Míocháin, O'Halloran was the scion/hero "Gas" who had destroyed with his pen (*do sgrios le peann*) Leland's history, which is portrayed as the unwelcome weed (*fiaighle nuadh*) that has intruded into Irish history. It is impossible to gauge what type of circulation this tribute might have enjoyed, but it probably did not extend beyond the Irish-speaking community, and would not have had the high-profile impact of the newspaper response. In keeping with the bardic style upon which the poem is based, this tribute may have been read aloud in O'Halloran's presence, and a copy of the work presented. This poem confirms that O'Halloran's writings, or at least *Ierne defended*, was being read by the

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<sup>45</sup> The English translation of various lines presented here are the translation of this author.

Gaelic community, and found approval amongst its ranks.

*Ierne defended* can be used as a barometer to chart O'Halloran's increasing influence within the antiquarian world. His *Introduction* attracted the attention of John Whitaker and David Hume, which, at the very least, confirmed that his work was being read by the antiquarian world outside of Ireland, regardless of the opinion they may have held of that work. Secondly, O'Halloran was becoming a public figure, albeit one of controversy, as indicated by the newspaper response to *Ierne defended*, and also one associated with a particular party and historiographical bias. O'Halloran was also becoming an accepted member within the Protestant-dominated antiquarian world. The Select Committee, a sub-committee of the *Dublin Society*, was formed in 1772, spearheaded by Charles Vallancey.<sup>46</sup> The Committee remained active for only two years. The aim of this committee was to recover, interpret and promote Irish antiquities. Both Charles O'Connor and the Archbishop of Dublin, John Carpenter, were members. The first reference to O'Halloran in the *Minute- book of the Dublin Society's Committee of Antiquarians* appears on 12 February 1774, which indicates that O'Halloran was not invited in the early stages of the Committee to become a member. Unfortunately there is no mention of who nominated him. He attended meetings on 19, 20 and 24 February the same year. His name is not listed, either in the list of subscribers or in the list of members, at the back of the minute-book. The Committee appears to have lost its initial vigour towards the end of 1774, and Charles O'Connor, S. J. (1949:333) commented that "By the autumn of 1774 the affairs of the Select Committee had reached a sorry pass."

Perhaps O'Halloran's standing in the antiquarian world can be further gauged from the fact that he was included on the itinerary of the Protestant clergyman and antiquarian the Rev. Thomas Campbell during his research for his *A philosophical survey of the south of Ireland* (1777). Campbell (1777:223) visited O'Halloran at Limerick, and referred to the "polite and hospitable reception" he received from "this learned gentleman", who also made his library available to him. What is significant here is that, only four years after his first major antiquarian publication, O'Halloran had become well-placed and accepted within the Irish Protestant antiquarian world.

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<sup>46</sup>For the Select Committee, see: O'Connor (1949:325-337).

O'Halloran was not averse to airing his disagreements on antiquarian issues publicly, as his refutation of Leland's *The history of Ireland* confirmed. O'Halloran's staunch defence of the traditionalist view of Irish history was not directly solely at Protestant clergymen, but included the inner sanctum of Gaelic antiquarianism, in the person of Charles O'Connor. In a letter from O'Halloran (1774c) to O'Connor in April 1774, there are some signs of disruption in what appeared to have been a friendly and scholarly relationship. As a gesture of reconciliation, perhaps, in this letter O'Halloran offered to subscribe to O'Connor's forthcoming *The ogygia vindicated*, a suggestion that was obviously refused, as O'Halloran's name did not appear on the published subscription-list in 1775. A later letter, in 1776, indicates that matters had deteriorated between the two scholars (O'Halloran, 1776b). The central issue of disagreement was focused on the reliability of the early genealogical records, as referred to previously here, with O'Halloran arguing for an earlier reliability. With the publication of O'Halloran's *General History*, in 1778, the disagreement between O'Halloran and O'Connor became public knowledge. O'Halloran (1778a,1:123) accused O'Connor of betraying the Gaelic historiographical tradition, of choosing "rather to accuse their authors of imposition and ignorance, than himself of wilful error". Neither O'Connor's name nor that of the Rev. Leland, who had also felt the sting of O'Halloran's pen, appear as subscribers in the subscription-list to O'Halloran's *General History*.

A review of O'Halloran's antiquarian publications reveals a period of intense activity between 1770 and 1778. The absence of medical publications during this time confirms that O'Halloran devoted this period, in particular, to his antiquarian studies. That O'Halloran considered this body of work as definitive is suggested, firstly, by the fact that he did not publish a major antiquarian work after his *General History* in 1778.<sup>47</sup> Secondly, his decision to republish this particular body of work 23 years later, in 1803, under the title *An introduction to and an history of Ireland*, despite an altered political landscape, confirms that this body of work remained representative of his thoughts on the subject. Linked thematically, all the works

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<sup>47</sup>O'Halloran published only two minor articles of an antiquarian nature after the *General History*: 'A Rosg-Catha, or Martial Ode, sung at the battle of Cnucha by Fergus, Son of Finn, and addressed to Goll, the Son of Morna' (*TRIA*, 1788,2:7-17) and 'Of the Ancient Arms of Ireland' (*AH*, 1793b:172-177).

pursue the origin and history of the Milesian race in a manner that reflected a contemporary political need to reconstitute and restate Ireland's past.

O'Halloran's last major antiquarian work, the *General History*, was published in London in June 1778. O'Halloran was the only Irish antiquary of this period to have penned a general history of Ireland. O'Connor did not attempt a general history, and he did not see his *Dissertations* in that light (1766:206). The Abbé Mac Geoghegan's *Histoire de l'Irlande ancienne et moderne* (1758-63) was published in Paris, and written from a continental and émigré perspective, rather than the perspective of a home-based author. O'Halloran's *General History* is a two-volume chronologically ordered narrative of the history of Ireland from the earliest period to the twelfth century. There is only one illustration, and that is the coat of arms of the dedicatee, 'Murough O'Bryen', (1726-1808) 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Inchiquin, Irish soldier, peer and politician, and also includes the family motto "*Lamh Laidre o'n Vachdar*" (1778a,1:iii).<sup>48</sup>

O'Halloran adopted a similar timeframe in his history to that of Keating's *Foras feasa*, and divided his material accordingly between a pre-Christian era, in volume one, followed by the Christian period, in volume two. Volume one recounts the history of the Gael, from their early origin in the Mediterranean area, and concludes with the reign of Daithí, in the latter part of the fourth century BC. Volume two introduces the Christian period, and continues the narrative down to the coming of the Normans in the twelfth century. The *General History* details the origin and descent of the Milesian race, including, as per the traditional narrative, an account of the pre-Milesian tribes, from the eponymous ancestor, Phaenius, to Rory O'Connor, last high-king of Ireland, in the twelfth century. O'Halloran's approach to early Irish history took the form of a comparative analysis, where evidence from classical and other foreign sources, supported by a rather suspect etymology, was used to validate the Irish historical record. Written from the perspective of eighteenth-century historiographical thought, it rejected the orthodox Christian views of history and biblical overtones that permeated earlier works. O'Halloran (1776a) wrote within the

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<sup>48</sup>This is the family motto of the O'Brien, frequently spelt *lámh láidir in uachtar* meaning the strong are uppermost.

prevailing understanding of history as a source of instruction, and from the perspective of philosophical enquiry. Although O'Halloran confined his history to an uncontroversial past, woven into this seemingly benign timeframe was a potent political subtext - tirelessly sustained throughout the narrative - that was both contemporary in form and direction.

The basic elements of O'Halloran's political ideology can be discerned in his earlier works, as demonstrated here. However, this study will argue that his ideology only came to maturity in the *General History*, when Britain's need to supplement its armed forces during the Anglo-American crisis coalesced with a Catholic desire for repeal of penal restriction, and gave focus and direction to O'Halloran's argument. O'Halloran's response to this opportunity, in the form of his *General History*, was pragmatic, even opportunistic. His approach was guided by a clear perception that the best chance for Catholic relief, at this political juncture, and in the context of an insecure fragmenting British Empire, lay not with a truculent Irish Parliament, but with a British ministry, which was desperately short of manpower and anxious to pursue the war in America.

For the purpose of the following analysis, the *General History* is viewed as a composite work, which operates over three levels: publication-site, subscription-list and narrative. The argument that will be presented in the following chapters has three principal strands. Firstly, the London publication of the *General History* was an innovative attempt to initiate Irish Catholic participation in the newly-expanded British Empire, by engaging London directly in Catholic relief politics. Secondly and thirdly, O'Halloran's argument for Irish Catholic participation in the British Empire was twofold; an historical aptitude for empire is demonstrated in the text, while a current aptitude is revealed by the subscription-list.

## 2.5. Conclusions

This chapter has presented a review of the significant formative influences that shaped the intellectual and political life of Sylvester O'Halloran, in order to shed some light on the innovative approach he adopted in his historical writings, and, by



extension, to Catholic relief politics. It would, perhaps be impossible to identify one particular influence over that of another, and state that this experience above all others shaped O'Halloran's approach to Catholic relief politics. It was, ultimately, a variety of factors. However, this study would identify his medical profession as the most significant formative influence, which facilitated the inculcation of an international perspective on life generally, but especially in relation to Irish affairs.

What has clearly emerged is that O'Halloran's entry onto the antiquarian scene introduced a new voice into Catholic relief politics. After the publication of his first antiquarian work, *Insula sacra*, O'Halloran quickly became an established and controversial figure in Irish antiquarian circles. He introduced a new and assertive voice into Catholic antiquarian debate. This voice was less concerned with soothing Irish Protestant anxieties than previously, and suggests that O'Halloran did not view Catholic relief solely in an insular or Irish Protestant context. The publication strategies he employed to counter Irish medical resistance to his early medical works confirmed that O'Halloran would not be confined by Irish insularity. Like his fellow antiquarians, O'Halloran mobilised the Gaelic tradition in his defence of Irish of civility. However, the geographical focus of his writings, his emphasis on martial valour, and his tendency to view Irish affairs within the broader parameters of British imperial discourse, confirmed that O'Halloran viewed Irish affairs somewhat differently than his contemporaries prior to the publication of his *General History* in 1778.

### 3. A London Publication: O'Halloran's *General History* 1778

#### 3.1. Introduction

The first distinctive feature of O'Halloran's *General History* is its publication-site: London. As Richard Sher (2006:500-501fn.90) points out, the more usual practice for the Irish-based author was a Dublin publication, to be then followed by a later London reprint. The reason for this was that, although displaying an affinity with European intellectual thought works, such as the *General History*, that were political in direction but narrow in focus, and dealt with an ancient Irish historical and pseudo-historical past, had little appeal to a London book market or the wider imperial area it serviced. In light of the commercial resistance in London to publishing works on Irish affairs, a central concern of this chapter is to investigate why O'Halloran pursued a London publication for this work, in particular.

To date, Toby Barnard is the only historian who has expressly commented on the London publication of O'Halloran's *General History*. Barnard (2010a:9) is of the opinion that O'Halloran published this work in London because he was unable to find the necessary 200 subscribers to raise the publication capital by way of subscriptions in Ireland. The analysis of the subscription-list to the *General History* presented in Chapter 4 will demonstrate that Irish subscribers alone, in fact, totalled 247. Therefore, the suggestion that the London publication of this work was made necessary due to a financial disinterest in Ireland is untenable.

This chapter will make the argument that the London publication of the *General History* was an attempt by O'Halloran to access a British imperial audience for this particular work, and address the Catholic relief issue to an audience outside of Ireland. The evidence for this argument is divided into four main areas of discussion in this chapter. Firstly, this chapter focuses on the distinctiveness of the publication-site of the *General History*, by comparing its publication-site with other works within the O'Halloran corpus. Furthermore, it will demonstrate that, in a comparison with publication-sites of comparable works from a similar timeframe, the London publication of the *General History* is an exceptional feature of this work. This

section also refers to the text of the *General History* to provide corroborating evidence to confirm that O'Halloran intended this work for an audience outside of Ireland, as well as a domestic readership. Lastly this section presents the political juncture which created an opportunity for Irish Catholic relief and informed the London publication of the *General History*.

Secondly, this chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of all aspects of the publication process of the *General History*, from the time of its conception by the author in 1774 to its publication date in June 1778. A review of the difficulties O'Halloran faced in overcoming the commercial resistance that works on Irish affairs encountered in the disinterested British book market can confirm the importance to O'Halloran of the London publication of this work. The most significant of these difficulties was the publication process itself. Unable to locate a suitable publisher, possibly due to commercial disinterest, O'Halloran used the 'self-publication by subscription' method to publish his *General History*. In brief, this means that O'Halloran oversaw the publication process himself. This method was labour-intensive and time-consuming, and for an Irish-based author the difficulties were considerable. This project also entailed a degree of financial risk, as the author had to provide the initial capital to fund the publication process, and further verifies O'Halloran's commitment to the London publication of this work. There are also two *Proposals* documents, dated 1776 and 1777, extant for the *General History*, which provide useful information as to how this work was presented to its potential readership, including the price, a physical description of the finished work, and, in the later 1777 *Proposals* document, the names of the British and Irish booksellers who would carry it. Copies of these two documents, including a full analysis of their contents, are presented here

Thirdly, this chapter looks at how the *General History* was presented to the public. This area focuses on the promotion of the work, the role of the bookseller in launching a book onto the public market, and the important role they played in securing reviews in the various review periodical literature. A review of the advertising campaign which preceded the publication of this work in London, in contrast to the later and more low-key advertisements in the Irish newspapers, will bear out that London, rather than Ireland, was the target market for this work. This

section also looks at the importance of author identity, and finishes by suggesting that despite the commercial resistance of the British book-market, the *General History* made a small profit for its author. There was only one edition of the *General History*. This chapter concludes by suggesting that the reason the *General History* did not undergo a Dublin reprint, as the author intended, can, perhaps, be attributed to the London publisher, John Murray.

### 3.2. A London Publication

In 1772 O'Halloran published his first major antiquarian work, *An introduction to the study of the history and antiquities of Ireland*, and, if a later comment on his antiquarian ambitions can be taken as more than just a rhetorical flourish, O'Halloran (1778a:xxxix) intended that, with the *Introduction*, his "historical researches should end". Two years later, however, he published the pamphlet *Ierne defended* (1774a), which was written in the form of an address to the members of the Dublin-based Antiquarian Society (Love, 1962a). In the closing pages of this pamphlet O'Halloran made the first public declaration of his intent to write a general history of Ireland. He presented himself to the Antiquarian Society as a suitable candidate: "Secure in a fair and unblemished character, and in an extensive and successful practice in my profession." He assured the Society that his motives were "*Public Spirit and the love of my Country*". Citing his *Introduction* as reference for his unaided effort to "attempt a revival of our Antient History", and with the "outlines of a general History" in hand, he made "a public tender" of his service (O'Halloran, 1774a:34-5).

This was the first public announcement that O'Halloran intended to write a history of Ireland. Official approval from this Anglo-Irish Protestant society would have imbued O'Halloran's intended *General History*, whether intended for a British or Irish market, with a very marketable air of impartiality, and increase its sale potential. O'Halloran's approach to the Antiquarian Society is, then, best viewed within a common strategy employed by all authors, to publicly advertise an intended publication and generate interest in a forthcoming work. However, O'Halloran failed to engage the interest of the Society. How serious O'Halloran's intent was in seeking the approbation of this society is questionable, as he presented his 'offer' in a work

that was a forthright criticism of a recent publication by the society's secretary, Rev. Thomas Leland's *The history of Ireland* (1773).

O'Halloran's first contact with the London market, in pursuit of a London publication for the *General History*, was by way of correspondence with the London bookseller, John Murray, on 8 December 1775 (Murray, 1776a).<sup>1</sup> Murray had been the agent for the London reprint of O'Halloran's *Introduction*, and four letters from Murray to the Dublin publisher Thomas Ewing survive.<sup>2</sup> Ewing, whose premises were located at Capel Street, Dublin, was a long-term friend of Murray, and frequently co-operated in joint-publication enterprises.<sup>3</sup> This was the London connection availed of by Ewing to arrange for the London reprint of O'Halloran's *Introduction* (Pollard, 2000:188). In fact, a letter from Murray to Ewing confirms that Ewing had enthusiastically promoted O'Halloran's *Introduction* to Murray as something of a 'bestseller':

O'Halloran I have advertised for the 21<sup>st</sup> being the Meeting of Parliament, and you may depend upon my zeal to promote the Sale which if it answers your Expectation will prove a Happiness to me. (Murray, 1773a)

There are five letters in total in the John Murray archives relating to the publication of O'Halloran's *General History*.<sup>4</sup> These letters cover a period from February 1776 to November 1777. Four of these letters are to O'Halloran, and the fifth is to the Dublin-based publisher, Mr. James Hoey.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, O'Halloran's letters to Murray have not survived. However, these response letters from Murray are a valuable resource in reconstructing aspects of the publication history of O'Halloran's *General History*, and are availed of throughout the following

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<sup>1</sup>In eighteenth-century usage a 'bookseller' meant both a publisher and a retailer of books and publishing rights (Clapp, 1931:204n.1).

<sup>2</sup>These letters cover a period from June 1772 to June 1773. There are two further letters in the Murray Archives from Murray to Edinburgh bookseller Mr. Balfour which contain a mention of O'Halloran's *Introduction*. Extracts from these letters reproduced here are by courtesy of the John Murray Archives, NLS.

<sup>3</sup>This Ewing/Murray connection had also facilitated the earlier London reprint of John Curry and Charles O'Connor's *Observations on the Popery Laws* in 1771.

<sup>4</sup>I would like to thank Dr. Toby Barnard for drawing my attention to the existence of the Murray to O'Halloran letters in the NLS.

<sup>5</sup>James Hoey II, Catholic bookseller and printer, Skinner Row, 1757-1764:19 Parliament Street, Dublin 1764-1782. See: Pollard (2000:293). Hoey was a printer for the Catholic Committee. See: Edwards (1943:29).

discussion. Barnard (2010a) also refers to the Murray to O'Halloran letters as evidence to demonstrate the commercial resistance that publishing Irish histories encountered in the British book market. This point is discussed in the following section. What is significant about these letters in the present context is that they confirm O'Halloran's early resolve to pursue a London publication for the *General History* and confirm that this decision had concretised by December 1775 when he penned his first letter to John Murray (1776a).

Further evidence of O'Halloran's decision to pursue a London publication, and his intent to access an audience outside of Ireland for this work is confirmed in a later letter to Henry Jerome de Salis (1709-1794). In 1776, O'Halloran (1776a) employed the Limerick printer John Ferrar of Limerick to print a proposal for printing by subscription document for the *General History*.<sup>6</sup> The primary function of a proposals document was to announce an intended publication and generate financial support, in the form of subscription to publish the work. In February 1777, O'Halloran enclosed this document in a letter to the Rev. Jerome de Salis, who was rector at St. Antholins, London. This letter (O'Halloran, 1777b) indicates that there was a warm social relationship between O'Halloran and de Salis, which had probably developed during de Salis's time as a vicar at Fedamore, Co. Limerick from 1760 until 1774.<sup>7</sup> In this letter, O'Halloran informed de Salis of the intended London publication of his forthcoming work, "I have some thought of publishing this work in London". O'Halloran presented his proposed *General History* to de Salis as a work of international significance, and made clear his intent to engage an international audience:

The History of Ireland should by no means be Considered, as a Mere Local History; but as a Work, that will tend highly to Illustrate the History and Antiquities of Neighboring [*sic*] Nations, particularly the Britains and Gauls.

(O'Halloran, 1777b)

O'Halloran intended his *General History* for an audience outside of Ireland, and a first-edition London publication added prestige to a work, and attracted a more

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<sup>6</sup>For an account of John Ferrar, see: Moore (2009).

<sup>7</sup>For de Salis, see: Lyons (2007).

wealthy clientele as “in Dublin – as elsewhere – the wealthy customer usually preferred the London edition to any other” (Pollard, 1989:116). London was the world centre in the publication of English-language material. London was also the commercial capital of empire, the home of the parliament and the court, and the arena in which all important matters of state took place. As Linda Colley (2009:64) observes, “All of these lures ensured that there was a huge annual influx of county squires and noblemen into the city”. However, there were also commercial considerations. London prestige came at a price, with production and advertising costs in London substantially higher, in comparison to the rates charged by the Dublin trade (Sher, 2006:461-3). Another factor was the Copyright Act of 1709 (8 Anne c.19), which gave O'Halloran the opportunity to establish his legal entitlement to the work, an option not available in Ireland, as the Act did not extend to Ireland.

O'Halloran's particular choice of title for this work, *A general history of Ireland* would suggest that he was attempting to draw on the popularity and eminence of another work as part of a promotional strategy for his own *General History*. The only other history of Ireland published in the eighteenth century from a Catholic Irish antiquarian who used this precise term was Dermot O'Connor. O'Connor published an English translation of Keating's *Foras feasa ar Éirinn* in London and Dublin in 1723.<sup>8</sup> Keating's work had circulated in manuscript form since its composition in about 1643, and the sought-after status of this work, and the desire of subscribers to be associated with its publication, can perhaps be gauged from the fact that it supported independent subscription-lists, first for the London and then for the Dublin edition, both published in the same year. The publication in Dublin of another *Proposals* document in August 1777 for the *General History*, directed towards the Irish market, would suggest that O'Halloran (1777a) intended to emulate O'Connor in the provision of separate London and Dublin editions.<sup>9</sup> Like O'Connor, O'Halloran also dedicated his *General History* to the Earl of Inchiquin. It seems a likely marketing strategy that O'Halloran should attempt to link both works, in light of the demand and popularity of the earlier production.

<sup>8</sup>John Huddleston Wynne (1742-1788) published in London *A general history of Ireland. From the earliest accounts to the present time* in two volumes (1772). Wynne had worked for the *British Magazine* with Smollett and Goldsmith. He was a prolific writer, and removed from consideration here, being neither native Irish nor Catholic. See: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>9</sup>This document was printed by James Williams, bookseller from 1764-1780 at 21, Skinner Road, Dublin. Book, Paper and Parchment Warehouse. See: Pollard (2000:619).

The London publication of O'Halloran's *General History* is one of the defining features which sets this particular work apart from other publications within the O'Halloran corpus, and sharply delineates it from other published works of a similar genre and from a comparable timeframe. The innovativeness of O'Halloran's publication strategy can be demonstrated via a location list of works identifying the site of first publication. The following list (Table 3.1) provides the site of first publication for nine of O'Halloran's works. This list covers a time-span of 53 years of O'Halloran's publication history, from his earliest publication in 1750 to his final publication in 1803.

**Table 3.1: Site of First Publication: O'Halloran**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Location</b>
1750	O'Halloran, S.	<i>A new treatise on the glaucoma or cataract.</i>	<b>Dublin</b>
1755	O'Halloran, S.	<i>A critical analysis of the new operation for a cataract</i>	<b>Dublin</b>
1765	O'Halloran, S.	<i>A complete treatise on gangrene and sphacelus; with a new method of amputation</i>	<b>Limerick</b>
1770	O'Halloran, S.	<i>Insula sacra.</i>	<b>Limerick</b>
1772	O'Halloran, S.	<i>An introduction to the study of the history and antiquities of Ireland.</i>	<b>Dublin</b>
1774	O'Halloran, S.	<i>Ierne defended.</i>	<b>Dublin</b>
1778	O'Halloran, S.	<i>A general history of Ireland.</i>	<b>London</b>
1793	O'Halloran, S.	<i>A new treatise on the different disorders arising from external injuries of the head.</i>	<b>Dublin</b>
1803	O'Halloran, S.	<i>An introduction to and an history of Ireland.</i>	<b>Dublin</b>

The above table confirms that, in this period, the *General History* was the only O'Halloran work that received a first edition London publication. In other respects, O'Halloran's publication history followed the usual pattern for the Irish-based



author. Although two of his works included in this table, the *Introduction* and *A complete treatise on gangrene*, underwent a London reprint, they were first published in Dublin. Therefore, the following list, which identifies the *General History* as the only O'Halloran work to receive a London publication, confirms the exceptionality of the publication-site.

The second list here below gives the site of first publication for a selection of works from a similar genre and a comparable timeframe to that of O'Halloran's *General History*. The only filter I have applied to the compilation of the following list is the exclusion of English/Irish authors not based in Ireland in this period. The purpose of this comparison is to highlight the exceptionality of the London publication of the *General History*, when compared with the publication-sites of similar works.

**Table 3.2: Site of First Publication: Comparable Works**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Location</b>
1771	Curry, J. And O'Connor, C.	<i>Observations on the Popery Laws</i>	<b>Dublin</b>
1772	Vallancey, C.	<i>Essay on the antiquity of the Irish language</i>	<b>Dublin</b>
1773	Vallancey, C.	<i>A grammar of the Ibero-Celtic, or Irish language</i>	<b>Dublin</b>
1773	Leland, T.	<i>The history of Ireland from the Invasion of Henry II</i>	<b>Dublin</b>
1775	O'Connor, C.	<i>The Ogygia vindicated</i>	<b>Dublin</b>
1775	Curry, J.	<i>An historical and critical review of the civil wars in Ireland.</i>	<b>Dublin</b>
1783	Crawford, W.	<i>A history of Ireland</i>	<b>Strabane</b>
1786	Walker, J. C.	<i>Historical memoirs of the Irish bards</i>	<b>Dublin</b>
1789	Brooke, C.	<i>Reliques of Irish poetry</i>	<b>Dublin</b>
1793	Hely, J.	<i>Ogygia or, a chronological account of Irish events.</i>	<b>Dublin</b>

The above table confirms that the usual publication-site for works on Irish affairs was Ireland.<sup>10</sup> Works were frequently published in Dublin and London the same year, and this was the case with Leland's three-volume *The history of Ireland*. The copyright for Leland's work was bought by the Dublin publisher Moncrieffe (Sher, 2006:500fn.90; Pollard, 2000:413). Pamphlets, in contrast, could be published with relative ease in London, especially if the author footed the cost. This was with case with the London publication of Curry's reply to Leland's *The history of Ireland* (1773). The pamphlet *Remarks on certain passages in Dr. Leland's history of Ireland* was published in London at the author's own expense of £7.10s. (Love, 1962b:22).

In sum, the London publication of O'Halloran's *General History* stands unique within the O'Halloran corpus. Additionally, in a comparison with the publication-site of comparable works from a similar timeframe, the London publication of the *General History* is exceptional enough to merit the centrality it occupies in the argument presented here: that the London publication of the *General History* was an attempt by O'Halloran to access an British imperial audience for that particular work.

This argument can be further supported by reference to the narrative of the *General History*. O'Halloran's historical timeframe was from the earliest period to the twelfth century. However, as mentioned, O'Halloran frequently diverted from this timeframe and inserted digressions at various periods throughout his narrative. These digressions linked a past and present situation and formed the political subtext which operated throughout his writings. Two of these digressions focused on penal restrictions on Irish Catholics and the *General History* is the only work in the O'Halloran (1778a, 1:97-99; 2:65-171) corpus that contains a significant discussion, ten pages in total, on penal legislation.

In his discussions on the effects of penal legislation, O'Halloran addressed his concerns within a dialogue of maternal benefice, directed, not towards the insular

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<sup>10</sup>Thomas Campbell's *A philosophical survey of the south of Ireland* (1777) was, in essence, a travelogue, and is, therefore, excluded from the list, although published in London.

and self-motivated Irish Protestant Parliament, but towards the British Parliament. O'Halloran argued that, after the *Treaty of Limerick*, when the “bold and restless spirits” had departed, there existed an opportunity for tranquillity and prosperity to be restored to “*the peaceable sons of Ireland*”. The Irish Parliament, however, instead of “conciliatory acts”, or “labouring to make the horrors of war be forgot”, acting out of a “zeal for religion”, concentrated its energies to “convert and reform their new subjects, by penal laws”, and “make wilful obstinate recusants feel the utmost force of them!” (O'Halloran, 1778a:2,167-168). O'Halloran described the Irish Protestant Parliament that had enacted penal legislation as the “pretended Irish friends” and the “most determined enemies to Britain”, whose legislation endangered national security by swelling the armies of France, thereby strengthening the arm of Britain's arch enemy:

The most determined enemies to Britain could not more effectually serve France, than her pretended Irish friends did by these proceedings [penal laws]. The nobility, the gentry, and the commonality of Ireland now crowded by thousands to France; and it appears by researches and calculations made at the War-office THERE, that from the year 1691 to 1745 inclusive, 450,000 Irish died in her service! (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:98-9)

O'Halloran's discourse above is clearly not directed towards the Irish Protestant Parliament. In fact, in his argumentation he has reversed the polarity of the prevailing line of reasoning used to justify penal legislation on Irish Catholics, by directing attention away from the Irish as instigators of dissension and towards the Protestant Parliament, on which he lays sole blame for constituting the threat to the national security of both Ireland and Britain.

The *General History* also contained another feature that was unique to this work. Volume one of this work contained a *To the Reader* section, and as the Dublin-published *Introduction* did not contain this consideration, its inclusion here further suggests that the *General History* was intended for a readership outside of Ireland, as well as a domestic market (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:lv-lvi). This section provided the reader unfamiliar with Gaelic history with short explanatory notes of various terms in use in the text. For instance: “Milesians, the name by which the ancient Irish are

generally distinguished from those of later periods”; “The Heberians, the descendents of Heber, eldest son to Milesius”, or “Clann-Baoisgne, the knights of Leinster, so called from this Baoisgne, ancestor to the famous general Fion-Mac-Cumal” (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:1vi,lv,liv). A further aid to the reader unfamiliar with the Gaelic language (and that was not provided in the *Introduction*) is a user-friendly pronunciation-guide for the Irish terms in the work, so that the “mere English reader” could read and pronounce these words with ease (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:1-li). Therefore, reference to the text, and the inclusion of reading-aids, would seem to further suggest that the *General History* was directed towards a non-traditional audience.

The reason O'Halloran wanted to address the Catholic relief issue to a British rather than an Irish audience was because he viewed the newly-extended British Empire as a framework of diversity within which Catholic relief could be gained. The post-1763 British Empire was an empire of ethnic, religious and legal diversity. Territorial acquisitions in the Seven Years War, which concluded in 1763 with the Peace of Paris, altered the Protestant and white base of the British Empire. The acceptance of diversity and an ethos of religious toleration was necessary to consolidate and ensure the security of vast territorial gains, which now included Florida, Canada, and Britain's first major possession on the Indian continent, the lucrative province of Bengal (Marshall, 1998b:8; Colley, 2009: 102-103). The British Empire now included Hindus, Muslims, and a large Catholic population in Canada. The actions of the Lord North Ministry in 1774, by granting toleration to the Quebec Catholics, had plainly shown that accommodation would be sought wherever it was needed to preserve the empire, even to the extent of seeking accommodation with Popery (Hill, 1989:103). This was a radical step for a nation whose central identity was not only Protestantism, but Protestant opposition to Popery (Colley, 2009:18-20,54). However, it was a necessary one. Britain was seriously challenged, in terms of her limited population-reserves, and, by extension, her armed forces (Colley, 2004:4-9). Therefore, a policy of pragmatism in areas of religious toleration was adopted by the newly-extended British Empire to preserve and secure territorial gains in the interest of imperial security, and created opportunities for Catholic relief.

The political context which motivated the London publication of the *General History* was the outbreak of war between Britain and her American colonies in 1775. The American war increased concerns about British imperial security, and the idea of recruiting Irish Catholic regiments, a point that had been tentatively raised during the Seven Years War, was raised again with more vigour (Bartlett, 1992:82-83). The possibility of France entering the war had been raised by Lord Sandwich as early as 1775 (*Oxford DNB*). This possibility was confirmed in March 1778, when France signed the Franco-American Treaty, and officially entered the war on the side of the American colonists. Issues of British imperial security were now focussed nearer home, as the loyalty of Irish Catholics became an imperial concern. The British Empire's western flank, Ireland, now lay vulnerable to the disaffection of the Irish Catholic. Britain simply did not have the manpower to deal with a war on two fronts. Concessions would have to be made to Irish Catholics to secure their disaffection in the event of a possible invasion of Ireland by France. This was the political juncture which actuated the London publication of the *General History*.

The innovativeness of O'Halloran's strategy to engage Britain directly in Irish Catholic relief politics by a London publication of this work can be further contextualised by the fact that a similar strategy was not employed by the Catholic Committee until 1792, when a new mood of militancy permeated Catholic agitation for relief, under the leadership of John Keogh (O'Flaherty, 1985). This was also, significantly perhaps, the first occasion that O'Halloran's name appeared publicly linked to an organised movement for Catholic relief (Woods, 2003:65-66).

### **3.3. The Complexities of the Publication Process**

The political and intellectual environment which shaped the writing of Irish histories is well serviced by a wide historiography (Leerssen 1986a; O'Halloran, 2004; Cunningham, 2000). However, the practicality of bringing these histories into the public domain, and the commercial resistance that these attempts encountered, is, however, a neglected area. It was, as Barnard (2010a:95-112) commented with regard to Irish publications, and in particular publishing histories at this period, that they were "easier to compose than to publish". This section focuses in particular on the manner in which O'Halloran dealt with the 'commercial resistance' he

encountered and the methods he employed to circumvent these problems, in relation to the publication of his *General History*. An understanding of the obstacles O'Halloran had to overcome to ensure a successful London publication for the *General History* can confirm the importance to him of the London publication of this work. Moreover, the insights gained provide a useful context within which eighteenth-century book publishing in general, and in particular, the obstacles to publishing works on Irish affairs at this time, can be viewed.

There were various publication methods open to the eighteenth-century author. O'Halloran chose the 'self-publication by subscription' method. At this stage in his publication career, O'Halloran was an experienced author, having published no fewer than seven works: four of a medical and three of an antiquarian nature.<sup>11</sup> All of these books were published initially in Ireland. However, O'Halloran's *A complete treatise on gangrene and sphacelus* (1765a) and his *Introduction* (1772a) were also reprinted in London; the former by Vaillant and the latter by John Murray, as mentioned.<sup>12</sup> All of which serves to indicate that O'Halloran had some prior experience, if only at a distance, of dealing with London book-publishers, and on which he could now draw to make an informed decision regarding the *General History*.

O'Halloran was also experienced in the field of subscription-publication at this time. This point I return to shortly. In brief, subscription provided the finance to publish a work which the booksellers considered had limited market appeal, or for which the author was insufficiently wealthy to underwrite the publication himself. All of O'Halloran major works, between medical and antiquarian, up to this point, had been published by this method. His first major work, *A treatise on the glaucoma, or cataract* (1750) was published by subscription, according to Pollard (2000:121), who comments that the bookseller, Joseph Cotter of Skinner Row, Dublin, records that, on the 14 October 1750, he, with others, collected subscriptions for

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<sup>11</sup>His antiquarian publications were: *Insula sacra* (1770); *Ierne defended* (1774a); *Introduction* (1772a). His medical publications were: *A critical analysis of the new operation for a cataract* (1755); *A concise and impartial account of the advantages arising to the public from the general use of a new method of amputation* (1763); *A new treatise on the glaucoma or, cataract* (1750); *A complete treatise on gangrene and sphacelus; with a new method of amputation* (1765a).

<sup>12</sup>Paul Vaillant, publisher in the Strand, London.

O'Halloran's work.<sup>13</sup> However, I have been unable to locate a copy of this work with a subscription-list included. His 1765 *A complete treatise on gangrene and sphacelus* was also published via the subscription method, as was his first major antiquarian work, the *Introduction* (1772a). However, the *General History* was the first work that he published using a combination of subscription and self-publication.

Self-publication was indicated by the phrase 'Printed for the Author' appearing on the title-page of the work. There was a degree of stigma attached to self-publication, which could be avoided by the author opting for the profit-sharing method, or selling the copyright (Sher, 2006:235-236).<sup>14</sup> O'Halloran did not opt for either of these methods. This suggests that the sale potential of the *General History* was unattractive to London booksellers, and neither option was actually open to O'Halloran, because of a lack of interest in the work. The market for works on Irish affairs was limited in London. John Curry's failed attempt to publish his *An historical and critical review of the civil wars in Ireland* in London three years earlier is a case in point (Love, 1962b:19-20). The publisher John Murray's letters to O'Halloran confirm that O'Halloran had attempted to engage the interest of at least one London bookseller in the publication of the *General History*. He may also have attempted to engage the interest of other booksellers. O'Halloran's letter (1777b) to De Salis in London, in 1777, requesting him to set him up with "an eminent bookseller", one year after his initial contact with Murray, would confirm this point.

Be that as it may, Murray's reply to O'Halloran's correspondence confirms a commercial resistance to publishing Irish histories in Britain. Notwithstanding that the tone of Murray's (1776a) initial reply to O'Halloran's enquiries about a London publication is congenial, and indicates a willingness to give advice, he also candidly informs O'Halloran that, in his opinion, his upcoming work has little commercial potential in Britain. The reasons he gives are that O'Halloran's earlier *Introduction*, which had been committed to him, did very poorly and despite the fact, as he pointed

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<sup>13</sup>The 'others' mentioned by Cotter above can perhaps be identified by an advertisement for O'Halloran's work which appeared in the *Munster Journal* 2 October 1749. The additional booksellers were John Ferrar, bookseller, Limerick; Rev. J. P. Droz, Dame Street; Mr. Faulkner, Essex Street and lastly Mr. Powell, Crane Lane, Limerick, whose name appears on the title-page of the published work.

<sup>14</sup>In the case of Charles O'Connor's *Dissertations on the ancient history of Ireland* (1753) the phrase is "For the editor, Mr. Mich Reilly".

out, that he had spent £9 on advertisements, he sold no more than 50 or 60 books. He also informed O'Halloran that his style, although abounding with the "amor Patrice" was "too little under the restraint of Judgement", to appeal, and therefore he could expect little support from the British subscription market. Murray was less than supportive of O'Halloran's London publication, and two other letters from Murray (1776b & 1776c) to O'Halloran the same year confirm Murray's disinterest in the work, despite O'Halloran's attempts to further engage him. Another consideration that may have influenced O'Halloran's decision to opt for the self-publication method, aside from the disinterest of British booksellers, was the higher costs of a London publication. He may have hoped that, by overseeing the publication himself, he would have better control of the financial outlay necessary. The publication methods chosen by O'Halloran, and the substantial difficulties for an Irish-based author in overseeing a London-based publication, confirm his dedication and determination to pursue a London publication for this work in particular.

Keith Maslen (1972) has charted the popularity of the self-publication method from the Bowyer Ledgers for the interval between 1700 and 1770. Maslen (1972:304) noted that this method enjoyed a period of rapid rise that reached a peak in the 1730s and then went into a slow decline.<sup>15</sup> Work performed for booksellers during this period still constituted the major and weightier portion of the business. Work performed for the author was usually smaller, and generally consisted of *Proposals* documents, which numbered one to eight pages. The self-publication method had the obvious attraction of cutting out the bookseller, or middleman, and providing the author with direct access to the market. However, by 1778 the self-publication method was in fast decline because of the complexity of the publication process.

A description of this method, and O'Halloran's participation therein, can provide a better understanding of the financial and leisure-time commitment that O'Halloran would have had to devote to the London publication of his *General History*.

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<sup>15</sup>The Bowyer Ledgers are the detailed accounts of the publishing house of William Bowyer and Son for the period 1710-1777. The ledgers provide invaluable information on the journey of a text through the printing house, including such details as types, format, and print-run. The Bowyer Ledgers are one of the few surviving ledgers of the London book-trade for this early period, and also provide information concerning authorship, book-production and book-distribution in eighteenth-century London. They have been edited by Maslen and Lancaster (1991).



Publishing a book was a three-part process, involving capital, production and distribution. O'Halloran seems to have been heavily committed in all three areas, although the overall venture was shared with the booksellers.

Notwithstanding the fact that subscriptions would alleviate the final financial commitment, in the initial stages O'Halloran would have personally financed the venture. The preliminary financial outlay would have included the printing of the first *Proposals* document by John Ferrar in Limerick, in 1776, and the later document by Williams in 1777. There were also travel expenses, which would have involved serious financial outlay for the Irish-based author. A London-based publication would have necessitated frequent travel, not only in connection with the publication process but also with the business of collecting British subscribers, of which there are a total of 44 on the subscription-list to this work. How often O'Halloran undertook this journey, or the expense involved, cannot at this distance be calculated. It seems probable that there were many such visits. A letter from Murray (1777b) to O'Halloran confirms one such visit by O'Halloran to London on publication business some time in 1777. A second comment in correspondence (Anon, 1778b) sent to the Lord Mayors of Cork and Limerick in July 1778, confirms O'Halloran's presence in London in June or July of 1778. As the *General History* was published in London in June, it can be assumed that this was the reason for O'Halloran's presence on that occasion.

Collecting subscribers was an integral part of raising capital for a publication venture and, as will be demonstrated shortly here, O'Halloran was actively involved in the subscription collection process for his *General History*. O'Halloran was also heavily committed in the production stage of the publication process. Murray's (1777b) letter to O'Halloran in November confirms that O'Halloran had personally employed a printer, Archibald Hamilton, purchased his own paper, and employed a designer.<sup>16</sup> These actions confirm O'Halloran's full participation in the production area of his *General History*.

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<sup>16</sup>Archibald Hamilton (1719-1793) was a co-founder, with Tobias Smollett (1721-1771), of the *Critical Review*. See: *Oxford DNB*.

As to the final stage of distribution, in addition to the booksellers, O'Halloran most probably arranged for the distribution of the work to his Irish subscribers. This is suggested by an advertisement that appeared in the *Freeman's Journal*, 4 July 1778, announcing the publication of the *General History*, and directing subscribers to send for their books to Messrs. Bonfield and Co., New-Row, Dublin. "Mich. Bonfield, merchant Dublin" is listed as a subscriber to O'Halloran's *General History*. Bonfield was also a member of the Catholic Committee, and he is first mentioned in the minute-book of this committee in September 1773 (Edwards, 1942:9). Thomas Bonfield, also a merchant, and most likely of the same firm, is listed as a subscriber to O'Halloran's earlier *Introduction*. It seems likely, therefore, that, as O'Halloran appears to have been acquainted with the Bonfield family, he made arrangements for collection of his *General History* from their warehouse in Dublin.

Although new to the self-publication method, O'Halloran was experienced in publishing works by subscription, and perhaps his confidence in his area facilitated his decision to undertake this more complex and time-consuming publication method. Subscription-publication was an evolved form of the earlier Renaissance-style patronage, which adopted a more democratic form in the eighteenth century, whereby a number of patrons replaced the wealthy individual (Korshin, 1974:464).<sup>17</sup> Although subscription-publication was a communal enterprise, patronage in the form of fiscal support was not always equal. That is to say that, although a minimum deposit was fixed by the author, in this case, half a guinea, a patron could, if so inclined, and in reflection of the earlier patronage system, make a larger donation.<sup>18</sup> This was indicated by placing opposite the subscriber's name the number of copies that this larger deposit would warrant. For instance, a major contributor to O'Halloran's *General History* was Sir Robert Tilson Deane, who ordered twenty copies of O'Halloran's work.<sup>19</sup> This was the highest number of

<sup>17</sup>This communal sharing in enterprise gave rise to the first example of a subscription-publication: Minshew, John (1617) *Ductor in linguas*. See: Clapp (1931:205).

<sup>18</sup>By a Royal proclamation in 1717 the value of a guinea was set at 21 shillings. See: Mouré, (2002:18). The value was the same in Ireland.

<sup>19</sup>Robert Tilson Deane (1745-1818), later Lord Muskerry (1781), was MP for Carysfort 1771-6, and MP for Cork County 1776-81. The ancestral home of the Deane family was Springfield Castle, Co. Limerick (Johnston-Liik, 2002, 4:39-41).

copies ordered by any one individual. More usually, subscribers ordered one to three copies.

Aside from subscription, finance could also be raised via a dedication to a personage. A dedication to a wealthy personage was an integral part of subscription-publication, and in earlier times the dedicatee would have responded with a substantial contribution. However, by the 1730s, as Paul Korshin (1974:467) points out, “gifts from dedicatees to authors were seldom larger than £20 or £30, and more usually in the region of £10”. Even though the monetary reward from a dedication was small, the custom persisted as a marketing lure to attract potential buyers. O'Halloran (1778a:iii-viii) dedicated his *General History* to the ancient Gaelic and Milesian lords of Munster, in the person of “Morrough O'Bryen, Earl and Baron of Inchiquin, Baron of Burren, and Lord Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of the County of Clare”.<sup>20</sup> If the dedicatee in this instance had made a special gift of patronage to O'Halloran, one might expect to see this reflected in additional books ordered and noted in the subscription-list, but this is not the case here.

By the eighteenth century, publication of books by the subscription method was commonplace, and the popularity of the subscription phenomenon gave rise to a particular vocabulary, which in time was shared by all realms of subscription enterprises, including book-publication (Clapp, 1931:203-4). For instance, the term ‘subscription’, when referring to book-publication, implied an agreement or contract between the author or printer/bookseller, on the one hand, and a number of subscribers, who could also be termed ‘benefactors’, on the other, who provided the venture capital. ‘Proposals’ is another word in the subscription vocabulary, and is a statement of the terms of contract between the subscribers and the author/bookseller.

There are two *Proposals* extant, relating to the publication conditions of O'Halloran's *General History*, referred to earlier. These documents provide valuable information as to how the *General History* was presented to the reading public. In brief, the *Proposals* was a multifunctional document. The primary function was a call for investment in the form of subscription. The amount of information given on

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<sup>20</sup>The ‘Keeper of the Rolls’, or of the English county records, was the highest civil officer in the county.

a *Proposals* document varied. Usually, the *Proposals* document provided subscribers with a physical description of the proposed work in its publication form. This description included paper quality, printing, binding, and sometimes also the number of pages. The price and conditions of sale were laid out, and frequently an overview of the general content and direction of the intended work was given. The number of pages could vary, but the average size of the *Proposals* document was between one to four pages. Brooke's *Proposals* document was two pages in length (Brooke, 1788). The earliest *Proposals* document for O'Halloran's *General History* was printed by John Ferrar in Limerick, in 1776, and was eight pages in total. However, this document, as it has come down to us, is incomplete, indicated by the unfinished line at the end of page eight. The second *Proposals* document was printed by the Dublin printer, James Williams of Skinner Row, Dublin on the 1 August 1777.

A comparison with the earlier document confirms that this document too, as it has come down to us, is incomplete, consisting only of four pages in total. The missing pages are from the *Introduction* section, which consists of only two pages, in comparison to six pages in the 1776 document. These two documents are almost identical. However, there are two significant changes. In the 1777 document the number of subscribers required to send the work to press in the *Conditions* has increased from 200 to 300 (Figure 3.2). Although the deposit of one half guinea remained the same, the total price in the 1777 document had increased to one guinea and a half, from the original one guinea price, with the 'half' written in by hand (Figure 3.2). However, this price was later returned to the original price of one guinea as the advertisements (O'Halloran, 1777c) for the *General History*, which appeared in the *Freeman's Journal* on 22 and 26 November 1777 and 2 December 1777, confirm. The principal difference between these two documents is the increase in subscribers to bring the work to press.

This alteration was most likely made to compensate for the higher London printing costs. At the time of printing of the earlier document O'Halloran was only at the enquiry stage of a London publication. He had not secured a London printer, and may have underestimated the additional cost of a London publication. The later *Proposal* document, in 1777, would seem then to reflect the conditions of the final contract document offered to subscribers. Although a copy of the *Proposals*

document held at the various booksellers in London has not survived, William's document could be taken to be representative, as it is unlikely that the Dublin subscriber would be expected to pay more for the completed work than his London-based contemporary. Copies of the *Conditions* from each of these documents are presented overleaf. Aside from this, these two documents are basically the same and it can be assumed that the missing pages from the 'Introduction' section of the 1777 document, if they had survived, would have been the same as that of the 1776 document. This assumption is based on the fact that the two pages which have survived correspond exactly with the earlier 1776 'Introduction' section. As the 1776 document is the more complete of the two, and allowing for the fiscal changes in the 1777 document, I view these two documents as one composite document, and discuss it accordingly, prioritising the wording of the later document in the *Conditions* extract given below.

The content of the *Proposals* document falls into three sections. The first part is entitled *Proposals for printing by Subscription, A General History of Ireland*. This part states the author's intent to publish and informs the public that the method of publication is by subscription. This section can also be interpreted as a call for investors. The second section is headed 'Conditions', and forms the contract between author and subscriber. Here O'Halloran outlines in detail what exactly the subscriber can expect for his pecuniary support, and consists of four precise articles. In return for an investment of one guinea, half to be paid in hand and the remainder on delivery, O'Halloran promised:

I. That the Work, which will be comprised in two large Volumes in Quarto,<sup>21</sup> shall be printed with a new<sup>22</sup> Type, and on fine<sup>23</sup> Paper.

II. The Price to Subscribers will be one Guinea and a half;<sup>24</sup> half a Guinea [to] be paid on subscribing, and the Remainder on Delivery of the Work in handsome half Binding.

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<sup>21</sup>The earlier document included the words here, 'of about 500 Pages each.

<sup>22</sup>'beautiful' in the 1776 document.

<sup>23</sup>'excellent' in the 1776 document.

<sup>24</sup>'One Guinea' in the 1776 document, the 'and a half' is written in by hand in the 1777 document.

Figure 3.1: O'Halloran's *General History* 1778: *Conditions*. Printer: J. Ferrar Limerick

1776

## Conditions.

- I. That the Work which will be comprized in two large Volumes in Quarto, of about 500 Pages each, shall be Printed with a beautiful Type, and on an excellent Paper.
- II. The Price to Subscribers is one Guinea, half to be paid in Hand, and the Remainder on Delivery of the Work, in handsome half Binding.
- III. That as soon as 200 have subscribed, and even sooner the Work shall be committed to the Press, and worked off with all possible Diligence.
- IV. The Names of the Subscribers will be prefixed to the Work; and, as the Author could have no Inducement whatever to engage in so arduous and laborious an Undertaking, but the Honor of his Country, he flatters himself, that he becomes intitled to the Support and Protection of every Lover of Ireland.

N. B. A few Copies will be Printed on Royal Paper, and elegantly bound.

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RECEIVED from  
*Half a Guinea, being the first Subscription  
for a General History of IRELAND, in two  
Quarto Volumes.*

Reproduced by courtesy of Essex Record Office.

III. That as soon as 300<sup>25</sup> have subscribed,<sup>26</sup> the Work shall be put to Press, and finished<sup>27</sup> with all possible Diligence.

IV. The Names of the Subscribers will be prefixed to the Work; and as the Author could have *no Inducement whatever*<sup>28</sup> to engage in so arduous and laborious an Undertaking, but the Honor of his Country, he flatters himself, that he becomes entitled to the Support and Protection of every Lover of IRELAND.<sup>29</sup>

N. B. A few Copies will be Printed on Royal Paper, and elegantly bound.

(O'Halloran, 1777a)

At the end of the 'Conditions' there is a receipt section, which the subscriber would sign and keep as proof of his deposit paid. Subscriptions were to be taken by 'Messieurs Williams, Faulkner,<sup>30</sup> Wilson,<sup>31</sup> and Hoey, Booksellers, Dublin. No booksellers are mentioned in the earlier 1776 document.

The third section here is entitled 'Introduction', and contains a short overview of the initial chapters of the printed work. A comparison with the published work shows this to be a 'new' composition, rather than an extract from the original manuscript. This section served as a specimen of the literary capabilities of the author, and also assured the subscriber that his initial investment of one half guinea was in competent hands. It also provided the prospective subscriber with an insight into the content and direction of the proposed work. O'Halloran stated the intention of his work in both documents as follows:

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<sup>25</sup>200 subscribers in the 1776 document.

<sup>26</sup>'and even sooner' in the 1776 document.

<sup>27</sup>'worked off with' in the 1776 document.

<sup>28</sup>No italicisation in the 1776 document.

<sup>29</sup>Lower case except for initial letter in the 1776 document.

<sup>30</sup>Thomas Todd Faulkner, Parliament Street 1779-1780; 15 Parliament Street 1792-3. George Faulkner printed the following works: O'Connor, C. (1775) *O'Flaherty Roderic. The Ogygia Vindicated: Against the Objections of Sir George Mackenzie*; Vallancey, C. (1773) *A Grammar of the Ibero-Celtic or Irish Language*. See: Pollard (1989:196-202).

<sup>31</sup>William Wilson, Dame Street 1772; No. 6 Dame Street 1773-1786; At Homer's Head, No. 6 Dame-street 1777; No 6. Dame Street 1781; No. 1 Exchange-Court 1798. See: Pollard (1989:625-626).

To banish for ever, from the Eyes of Europe, such illiberal and ill-founded Prejudices: to establish the History and Antiquities of Ireland, on the most solid Basis, in opposition to domestic as well as foreign Scepticism; and to demonstrate how interesting the Subject is, to Letters in general, are the avowed intention of this Publication. (O'Halloran, 1776a, & 1777a)

In the content specimen offered for subscriber perusal, O'Halloran focused on the early origin of the Gael in the Mediterranean, and introduced his 'new' method of chronology, which he argued lent validity to the account. One could assume that the material or argument offered there was shaped to appeal to a particular target audience. The subscribers to O'Halloran's history were thus informed of the shape and intended form of his history, or at least that part of it which the author chose to reveal, and if the *Proposals* document did not satisfy the curiosity, O'Halloran's first major work, the *Introduction* (1772a), which disseminated a broadly similar message, was in the public domain. Having paid his deposit and received a copy of the *Proposals*, the first part of the subscription contract was completed.

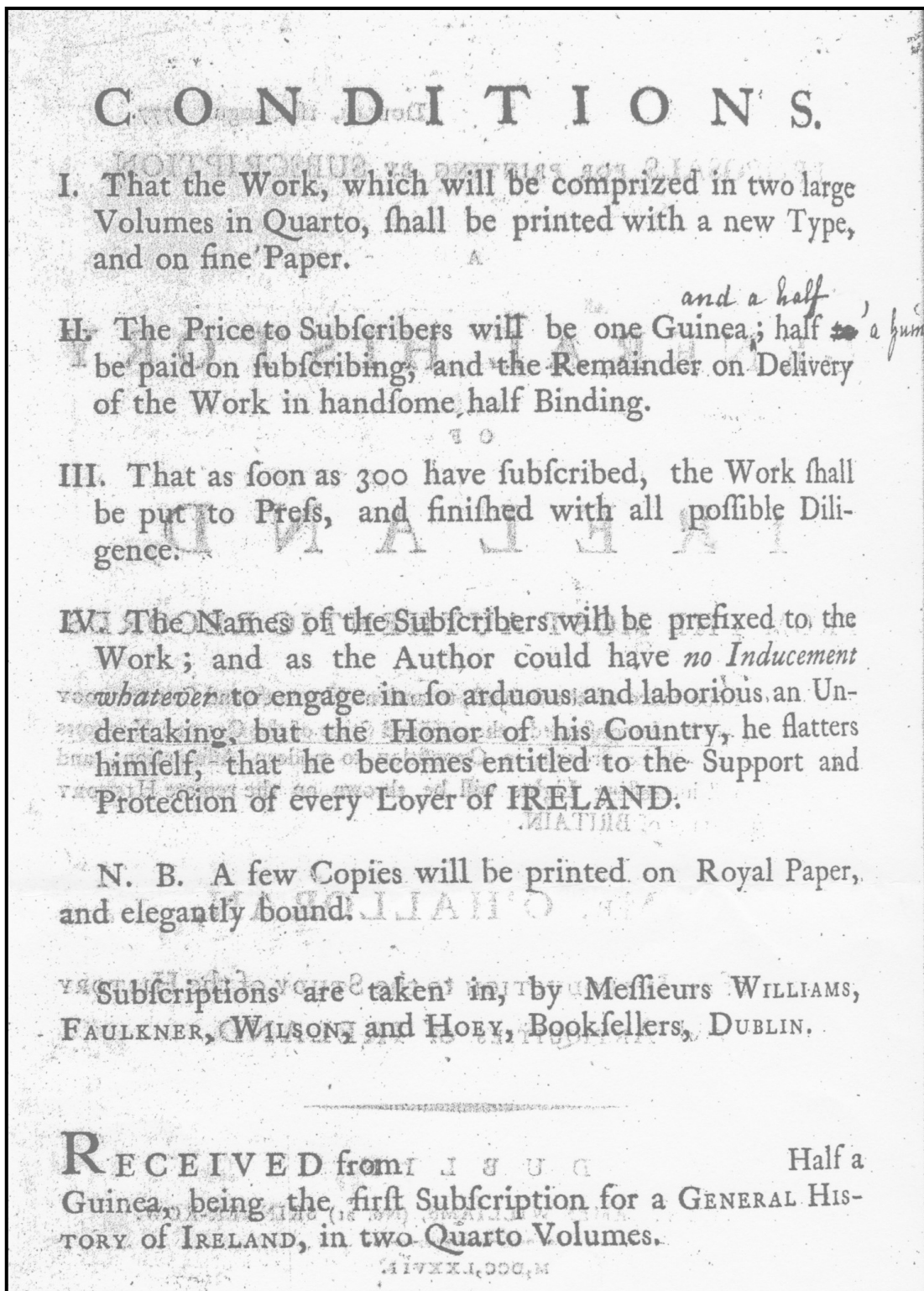
The *Proposals*, when extant, as it is here, opens a broad window onto subscription-publication, and, in this instance, provides detailed insights into the manner in which O'Halloran presented his proposed *General History* to the public in the initial stages of publication. The conditions also indicate O'Halloran's target audience. O'Halloran was clearly targeting the upper strata of society; the price at one guinea would have put his history out of reach of a popular market. The subscription price was a special rate reserved for subscribers. Non-subscribers would pay a higher rate.<sup>32</sup> The 'N. B.' note in the 'Conditions' section above in Figure 3.2: "A few Copies will be Printed on Royal Paper, and elegantly bound", would suggest that O'Halloran was also targeting the connoisseur book collector. Whether O'Halloran had actually received requests from particular wealthy clients to produce special-edition copies of the *General History* is impossible to say, but that is certainly the implication. Alternatively, the 'N. B.' may have been deliberately

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<sup>32</sup>Price increase for non-subscribers is particularly referred to in Adams (1794:1) *Proposals for printing by subscription*.



Figure 3.2: O'Halloran's *General History* 1778: *Conditions*. Printer: J. Williams, Dublin, 1777



Reproduced by courtesy of Essex Record Office.

inserted to imply that the *General History* was a sought-after work by the élite of society as a means of attracting further subscribers; patronage was, after all, the lifeblood of the subscription method.

### 3.3.1. The Economy of Authorship

The collection of impressive subscribers was part of the economy of authorship and the publication of a *Proposals* document was the public announcement by the author of an intended publication, and formed an important part of the advertising campaign. There were various reasons that attracted subscribers to a work aside from a topic-related interest. Subscribers were frequently attracted by the increase in social standing their vicarious association with titled members of the nobility might confer. And with this attraction in mind, the *Proposals* document frequently contained the names of high-ranking subscribers already secured to encourage further subscription (Robinson and Wallis, 1975:iv). For instance, *The Proposals for printing by Subscription [...] the Description of Leicestershire* (1777) by William Burton contained the names of 144 subscribers, including influential figures from the titled gentry and clergy class. This was not a feature of either of the two proposal documents extant for O'Halloran's *General History*, and had O'Halloran a similar list at this stage he would have presented it. By late 1777 he appears to have been in a somewhat better position, and his advertisement for his *General History* in the *Freeman's Journal* on 22 and 26 of November and 2 December 1777 proclaimed that "this Work [...] has already being honoured with the Names of some of the most illustrious and respectable Characters in Britain, France and Spain" (O'Halloran, 1777c). However, no actual names are listed.

Another method employed by authors to attract subscribers was to encourage an already published and well-known author to write a supporting blurb on their behalf to be included with the *Proposals*. Dr. Samuel Johnson, obliged the author James Bennet for his proposed work entitled *Roger Ascham's Works* in this way. Further advertising mileage was gained by this author by publishing Johnson's blurb

in the *European Magazine* and referring to Johnson's recommendation of the work in his *Proposals* (July, 1789:4).<sup>33</sup>

The methods used by authors to reach a potential public were, therefore, varied. *Proposals* were frequently included with published works by the same or another author in an attempt to draw on the repeat-subscriber market or attract new subscribers. For example, John Brown's *A compendious view of natural and revealed religion* (1782) contained at the back of this book the *Proposals* for another similarly-inclined author, *Three and fifty two letters by the eminently pious Mr. Samuel Rutherford*. Thomas O'Brien McMahon placed his *Proposals* for the proposed publication of his *Eusebius* on page nine of his *The candor and good-nature of Englishmen exemplified, in their deliberate, cautious, and charitable way of characterizing the customs, manners, constitution, and religion of neighbouring nations* (1777). Magazines were also used to advertise forthcoming works. The *Dublin Magazine* for July 1764 (441) published a small advertisement, reminding its readers that a *Proposals* document for O'Halloran's *A treatise on the different disorders that require amputation; in which will be described a new method of performing this operation*, had been issued. Although this advertisement is not the *Proposals* document *per se*, it does contain the necessary information, if a subscriber wished to subscribe. For instance, the potential subscriber is advised that the price is "6 British Shilling", and that subscriptions will be taken by the editor of the *Dublin Magazine*.

*Proposals* were seldom advertised in newspapers. A search of the Burney eighteenth-century digital collection reveals only three 'Proposals for Printing by Subscription' in 1776, and seven such advertisements in 1777. There is no reference to O'Halloran's *Proposals* in the English newspapers. The Irish-based *Freeman's Journal*, however, carried advertisements on 22 and 26 November and 2 December 1777, as mentioned (O'Halloran, 1777c). *Proposals* could also be left at any public venue where an interested public might gather, or a chance passer-by might subscribe. In O'Halloran's case, and based on the newspaper advertisements for his *General History*, it can be assumed that subscription receipts for Dublin subscribers

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<sup>33</sup>I have not located the actual *Proposals* document for this work, nor a copy of this work by James Bennet. It may be that the work was never published.

Another method, and one employed by O'Halloran, was simply to write to potential subscribers asking for support. In this regard, O'Halloran's (1777b) letter to the Rev. de Salis in 1777 provides a context in which to understand the methods used by the eighteenth-century author to reach out to potential subscribers (Lyons, 2007). O'Halloran included with his letter to de Salis the *Proposals* document for his *General History*. There are eight pages in the *Proposals*, and when this letter, which was two pages in length, is included, this resulted in a considerable 'package'.

In this letter O'Halloran (1777b) denies that his primary intent in contacting de Salis was to solicit subscription: "I would not wish, to have it supposed, that it is, by way of Soliciting your Interest, in the Subscription way – by no means." However, the fact that O'Halloran had not been in contact with de Salis for six years, as this letter attests, added to the fact that O'Halloran had included a rather bulky *Proposals* document with his letter, would seem to negate the veracity of his assertion here. His denial, therefore, can be attributed simply to decorum (O'Halloran, 1777b). O'Halloran's letter to de Salis was most likely but one example of numerous such packages sent to potential subscribers as part of O'Halloran's overall publicity campaign to promote his new history. It is impossible to gauge how many such 'packages' he may have sent. However, considering the limited means of communicating in the eighteenth century, the fact that the *General History* subscription-list contains 121 overseas subscribers, aside from the 358 Irish subscribers, the number of these 'packages' sent may have been considerable. The financial and time resources need to conduct a subscription campaign in this manner confirms O'Halloran's dedication to this project.

Sir James Caldwell was the recipient of another O'Halloran package. This assumption is based on the content of a letter from O'Halloran (1777d) to Caldwell written on the 13 December 1777.<sup>34</sup> This letter is informative on many levels. Firstly,

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<sup>34</sup>A full transcript of this letter is provided in Appendix A, letter 5. James Caldwell (1720-1784) was a descendant of the Caldwell family that came to Ireland from Ayrshire at the time of the Plantation of Ulster. The Caldwell estates were situated in Fermanagh and Cavan, and the fourth Baronet, mentioned above, was noted for being an 'improving' landlord. In politics he was loyal to the Crown, a supporter of the Irish Parliament, and vigorously upheld the penal law system. However, he also defended the rights of Catholics to practise their religion. See: Busteed (2001:317-329).

it provides supporting evidence for the conjecture, suggested by the de Salis letter, that O'Halloran sent out numerous packages to potential subscribers as part of his subscription campaign. Secondly, it confirms an Anglo-Irish interest in O'Halloran's proposed history, and a desire to participate in a shared Irish past. Thirdly, it suggests that O'Halloran may have been selective in informing his subscribers, or some of them at least, as to the overt political thrust of his work.

On the basis of O'Halloran's response, it can be understood that Caldwell, in his letter of 13 December 1777, had asked O'Halloran to delay the publication of the *General History* until the following May as he, Caldwell, was in the process of collecting subscriptions by way of alleviating the financial burden of publication. O'Halloran's reply to Caldwell's request for a delay in publication confirms this interpretation:

You have recommended to me, to postpone the publication of my History to May next, & your reasons are just, & friendly. I have certainly gone to great expence [*sic*], as well in the procuring [of] Materials for this Work, as in the manner of printing it in a Country like Ireland where Science has few patrons or Protectors, a Man is justified in labouring, at least to be no loser, by his Works. I shall therefore delay the publication till the latter end of April or beginning of May, & shall be obliged to you & your friends, for their countenance & support on this Occasion. (O'Halloran, 1777d)

O'Halloran's reply to Caldwell suggests that the London publication had drawn heavily on his financial resources, and also, perhaps, that subscribers were not as forthcoming as he had hoped. However, it is unlikely that O'Halloran would have agreed to delay the publication of the *General History*, if Caldwell had not assured him of substantial support in some way, and that all he required was some time to collect subscriptions. O'Halloran may also have thought it worth his time to invest in cultivating what could be a lucrative subscription-source for future publications.

Aside from subscription business, Caldwell had another reason for writing to

O'Halloran. Caldwell had included in his letter an account of the exploits of his own ancestors, with a request, or at least the suggestion, that these anecdotes be included in O'Halloran's *General History*.<sup>35</sup> In this regard, O'Halloran arranged to meet Caldwell in Dublin in February 1778, and indicated, that, if possible, he would comply with Caldwell's request. The desire of the Anglo-Irish to be included in a charted Irish past at this period is accepted (Leerssen, 1986a; O'Halloran, 2004). This letter provides a concrete example of the manner in which this desire found expression. It also suggests that O'Halloran's proposed *General History* had aroused interest in Anglo-Irish circles, and was considered to be an important and high-profile work, as indicated by Caldwell's desire to be associated with it.

However, Caldwell was also cautious and asked O'Halloran for some indication as to the content and direction of the *General History*. O'Halloran's reply is truthful, on one level, but also false by omission. He (1777d) informed Caldwell that his history was "Chiefly confined to the antient state of Ireland; & it's history & Chronology, are put on the most solid basis". He stated that the purpose of his history was to emphasis the international importance of Irish history as a source of information on the early history of Britain and Europe, equal to, if not superior to, that of the Roman accounts of the period. He also added that, "if we have not clearly understood, the nature & spirit of the present constitution or Extent of Poyning's Law of Parliament, it is from a shameful neglect of the history of our Ancestors!". The purpose of Poyning's Law (1495) had been to place the English Parliament in authority over the Irish Parliament. The subordination of the Irish Parliament to the English Parliament was reaffirmed in the Declaratory Act of 1720 (Bartlett, 1992:34-35). The notion, therefore, that the restrictions Poyning's Law imposed on the Irish Parliament could be challenged on historical grounds would have appealed to Caldwell as an influential landowner and Irish MP.

The manner in which O'Halloran's account of his history to Caldwell was confined to a safe and uncontroversial past is significant, as it may represent the

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<sup>35</sup>I take it that, as O'Halloran refers to a Colonel Caldwell in this letter, it is an account of the exploits of Colonel Hume Caldwell, who served in the Austrian service, that Sir James wants included in the *General History*. See: *Oxford DNB*.

'stock response' employed by O'Halloran to attract subscribers who would not have countenanced support on more contentious issues. This position raises the question as to how many of O'Halloran's subscribers were fully cognisant of the direction of the *General History* before publication. A comment by a correspondent to the *Hibernian Journal: or, Chronicle of Liberty* on 26 October 1778, who used the pseudonym 'Crito', would suggest that O'Halloran had been guilty of dubious tactics in attracting subscribers to his work.<sup>36</sup>

I imagine the greatest Offence to many, is seeing their Names in the List of Subscribers, of which I know several who are heartily ashamed, now they see to what a Work that they were drawn in to subscribe. (Crito, 1778b:1)

O'Halloran's reply to Caldwell's query regarding the content of the *General History* would seem to underscore the above comment. Then again, O'Halloran's (1772a:291-5) *Introduction* was in the public domain since 1772, and though O'Halloran's polemic there was cloaked in patriotic language, to make it more acceptable, the *Introduction* may have gained O'Halloran something of a reputation as an outspoken critic. This most probably occasioned the query from Caldwell as to the nature of O'Halloran's present work. O'Halloran may also have been aware that his outspoken comments would hinder subscription collecting. The addendum to the advertisement for the *General History*, which it is assumed is the composition of the author, appeared in the *Freeman's Journal* of 22 and 26 November and 2 December 1777, announcing the proposed publication of the *General History*, would seem to bear this out:

N.B. as the Author has no other Inducement to this great and arduous Undertaking, but the Desire of drawing forth the History and Antiquities of his Country from that Neglect and Oblivion to which they have been but too long consigned, and *throwing them into full Day*; and to prove that the spirit of the present Constitution can only be clearly understood by recurring to the past, - he flatters himself that he is entitled to the support of every Lover of

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<sup>36</sup>*Hibernian Journal: or, Chronicle of Liberty*, hereafter *Hibernian Journal*.

his Country; and that this Work, which has already been honoured with the Names of some of the most illustrious and respectful Characters in Britain, France and Spain, will not be less so at home. (O'Halloran, 1777c)

It is impossible to say whether O'Halloran and Caldwell actually met in Dublin in February 1778. If they did meet, it appears that neither party profited by the encounter. Caldwell is not listed as a subscriber to O'Halloran's *General History*, nor does any reference to his ancestors or relatives appear in the text of the *General History*. These two letters are representative of numerous packages O'Halloran may have sent to potential subscribers, in Ireland and overseas, and provides an insight into eighteenth-century book-marketing, and confirms O'Halloran's personal involvement and commitment to provide a successful London publication for his *General History*.

O'Halloran also had the advantage of being an experienced author, who had previously employed the subscription method of publication, and had available to him a potential pool of repeat custom. A comparison of the names in the subscription-lists to his various works confirms that many of O'Halloran's subscribers were indeed repeat customers. For instance, a comparison of the three subscription-lists from O'Halloran's works in 1765, 1772 and 1778, confirms that twenty subscribers in total appear in all three lists, which, considering the time period involved, is impressive. A total of 54 subscribers, seven from the 1765 subscription-list and 47 from the 1772 subscription-list, also appear in the subscription-list of the *General History*. This number of 54 represents 11.3% of the total number of 479 subscribers for the *General History*. This figure is a conservative estimate, and does not include the area of general family support, which is notable here, and indicated by the recurrence of the same family surnames. For example, Crofton Vandeleur Esq. appears in O'Halloran's subscription-list of 1765 and 1778, but his name is absent from the 1772 subscription-list. However, the Vandeleur family continued to be represented there by another family member, Ormsby Vandeleur. In this manner, repeat support for O'Halloran's works appears in the Munster families of Hen/Henn, Widenham, Deane, Lysaght, O'Grady and the Dublin merchant family of Bonfield.



The *General History* was printed and available to the British public in June 1778. Based on O'Halloran's reply to Sir James Caldwell (O'Halloran, 1777d), previously mentioned, a broad idea of the printing timeframe for O'Halloran's *General History* can be gauged. However, the information given by O'Halloran to Caldwell may not be totally accurate. Caldwell, as mentioned, had asked O'Halloran to delay the publication of his work for two reasons. Firstly, Caldwell wanted O'Halloran to include a mention of his own ancestors in the *General History*. Secondly, Caldwell gave the impression that he was in the process of collecting subscribers for the work. In light of this, O'Halloran may have misled Caldwell as to the advanced printing stage of his work in order to put some pressure on Caldwell to produce subscriber names.

With these considerations in mind, and based on O'Halloran's reply to Caldwell, the first volume of O'Halloran's *General History* was printed by 13 December 1777, and the second volume, as O'Halloran comments in his reply to Sir James Caldwell, was at this time "about three Weeks in the press." The preliminary discourses and the subscription-list were still with the author at this period, which - as the discourses would preface the first volume - indicates the fragmented and piecemeal nature of the printing. Publication was planned for late March or early April. However, O'Halloran (1777d) agreed to delay the publication at the request of Sir James Caldwell "till the latter end of April, or beginning of May". The *General History* was published and available to the English public on 1 June 1778.

In sum, the forgoing discussion has revealed that the self-publication by subscription method chosen by O'Halloran for his *General History* was labour-intensive and time-consuming, and was probably one of necessity, rather than a favoured choice, due to a disinterested commercial market. The project entailed a degree of fiscal risk, which others in a less secure financial position might not have been at liberty to take. The survival of two proposal documents for the *General History* has facilitated useful insights into how O'Halloran marketed this work. His letters to de Salis and Caldwell provide an insight into some of the methods O'Halloran employed to provide capital for the publication process, and confirm his personal involvement and his commitment to ensuring a London publication for the *General History*.

### 3.4. Booksellers and Marketing Strategies

O'Halloran engaged the services of three booksellers to distribute and sell his *General History* in Britain: G. Robinson,<sup>37</sup> J. Robson<sup>38</sup> and J. Murray. As mentioned, O'Halloran had requested the Rev. de Salis to set up a contact with 'an eminent bookseller' in London on his behalf. Whether de Salis made enquires on O'Halloran's behalf to possible London booksellers, or whether any suggestions he may have made influenced O'Halloran's final decision, it is not possible to say. However, if de Salis had suggested the Scot dissenter George Robinson it was a popular choice. Robinson was known as the "the king of booksellers" and was renowned for his generosity and hospitality to his authors (Sher, 2006:388-9). He had many friends in the printing and publishing business in Ireland and must have known of O'Halloran's work and reputation. The book-trade was a close-knit community and its members co-published works of mutual interest to share the economic risk.

For an Irish-based author like O'Halloran, the service of a reliable and influential bookseller, who would promote the work in the form of advertising, and arrange favourable reviews, was vitally important. The motivation for the bookseller to ensure a successful book launch was financial. The bookseller received 25% commission of the published price on books sold (Maslen, 1972:305). The following discussion outlines, firstly, the advertising and promotional work that accompanied the publication of the *General History*. An example of the advertising that appeared in the British newspapers for the *General History* is presented overleaf (Figure 3.3). Secondly, this section discusses how O'Halloran protected his medical author image in his antiquarian publications, and investigates whether this work made a profit or loss. Lastly, this section suggests a possible reason why there was only one edition of the *General History*, despite the author's intent to provide a Dublin edition for this work also.

Newspaper advertising was a key component in book sales, and advertising was

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<sup>37</sup>George Robinson, 25, Adison's Head, Pater Noster Row, 1764-1833. See: Curwen (1874:69); *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>38</sup>James Robson, 27, The Fethers, New Bond Street, trading as J. Robson and Co. from 1777. See: *Oxford DNB*.

Figure 3.3: O'Halloran's *General History* 1778: Advertisements in British Newspapers

<p><i>Speedily will be published,</i> Handsomely printed in Two Volumes in Quarto, <b>A GENERAL HISTORY OF IRELAND,</b> from the earliest Records; in which the importance of the Subject, to ancient History and Chronology in general, is demonstrated; the civilized State of the Celtic Nations of Europe is proved; and new and interesting lights are thrown on the remote History and Antiquities of Britain. By Mr. O'HALLORAN. London: Printed for the Author; and sold by J. Murray, No. 32, Fleet-street. Where may be had, by the same Author, An Introduction to the Study of the History and Antiquities of Ireland, illustrated with plates, in one vol. 4to. price 12s. in boards. <i>The General Advertiser and Morning Intelligencer: 23 May 1778</i></p>	<p><i>Saturday next will be published,</i> In Two Volumes, Quarto, <b>A GENERAL HISTORY OF IRELAND,</b> from the earliest Periods and most authentic Records to the Decline of the Twelfth Century; in which the Importance of the Subject to History and Chronology in general, is demonstrated; the civilized State of the Celtic Nations of Europe proved; and new and interesting Lights thrown on the remote Histories of both Britains. By Mr. O'HALLORAN, Author of an Introduction to the History and Antiquities of Ireland. London: Printed for the Author, by A. Hamilton; and sold by J. Robson, New Bond-Street; G. Robinson, Paternoster-Row; and by Messrs. Faulkener, Hoey, and Wilson, in Dublin. <i>St. James's Chronicle or, The British Evening Post: 26 May 1778</i></p>
<p><i>Saturday next will be published,</i> In Two Volumes, Quarto, <b>A GENERAL HISTORY OF IRELAND,</b> from the earliest Periods, and most authentic Records, to the Decline of the Twelfth Century; in which the Importance of the Subject to History and Chronology in general, is demonstrated; the civilized State of the Celtic Nations of Europe proved; and new and interesting Lights thrown on the remote Histories of both Britains. By Mr. O'HALLORAN, Author of an Introduction to the History and Antiquities of Ireland. London, printed for the Author, by A. Hamilton; and sold by J. Robson, New Bond street; G. Robinson, Paternoster-Row; and by Messrs. Faulkener, Hoey, and Wilson, in Dublin. <i>The Public Advertiser: 26 May 1778</i></p>	<p><i>This day was published,</i> Handsomely printed in two volumes in quarto, price 1l. 11s. 6d. in boards, <b>A GENERAL HISTORY OF IRELAND,</b> from the earliest accounts to the close of the Twelfth Century, collected from the most authentic Records; in which new and interesting lights are thrown on the remote histories of other nations, as well as of both Britains. By Mr. O'HALLORAN, London: Printed for the author; and sold G. Robinson, Paternoster-row; J. Murray, No. 32, Fleet-street; J. Robson, New Bond-street; and the booksellers in Dublin; Where may be had, written by the same author, An Introduction to the Study of the History and Antiquities of Ireland: In which the assertions of Mr. Hume, and other writers, are occasionally considered. Illustrated with copper plates. 4 o. price 12s. in boards. <i>London Packet or, New Lloyds Evening Post: 1 June 1778</i></p>
<p><i>This Day was published,</i> Handsomely printed in Two Volumes in Quarto, Price 1l. 11s. 6d. in Boards. <b>A GENERAL HISTORY OF IRELAND,</b> from the earliest accounts to the close of the twelfth century, collected from the most authentic records; in which new and interesting lights are thrown on the remote histories of other nations, as well as of both Britains. By Mr. O'HALLORAN. Printed for the Author, and sold by G. Robinson, Paternoster-row; J. Murray, Fleet-street; J. Robson, New Bond-street; and the Bookellers in Dublin. Where may be had, written by the same Author, An Introduction to the Study of the History and Antiquities of Ireland; in which the assertions of Mr. Hume, and other Writers, are occasionally considered, illustrated with copper-plates, 4to, price 12s. in boards. <i>The London Chronicle: 13 June 1778</i></p>	<p><i>This Day were published,</i> Handsomely printed in Two Volumes in Quarto, Price 1l. 11s. 6d. in Boards, <b>A GENERAL HISTORY OF IRELAND,</b> from the earliest Accounts, to the Close of the Twelfth Century, collected from the most Authentic Records; in which new and interesting lights are thrown on the remote Histories of other Nations, as well as of both Britains. By Mr. O'HALLORAN. Printed for the Author and sold by G. Robinson, Paternoster-row; J. Murray, No. 32, Fleet-street; J. Robson, New Bond street; and the Bookellers in Dublin. Where may be had, written by the same Author, An Introduction to the Study of the History and Antiquities of Ireland; in which the assertions of Mr. Hume, and other Writers, are occasionally considered. Illustrated with Copper-plates, 4to. price 12s. in boards. <i>The General Evening Post: 23 June 1778</i></p>

17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> Burney Collection Newspapers. [Online] <http://find.galegroup.com>

generous but not overly so. The advertising sequence was, in the usual manner, employed by publishers, and a 'Speedily will be Published' notice appeared in the classified section of the *General Advertiser and Morning Intelligencer* on the 23 May 1778. Three days later a 'Saturday next will be published' advertisement was posted in the *St. James's Chronicle or The British Evening Post*, *The Public Advertiser* and the *General Advertiser and Morning Intelligencer*, building up to the eventual 'This Day is Published' notice.

The earliest 'This Day is Published' advertisement appeared on Monday, 1 June 1778, in the *London Packet or New Lloyds Evening Post*. Similar advertisements appeared on 4, 6, 9, 10, 13, 16, and 23 June in the following London papers: *London Packet or New -Lloyds Evening Post*; *General Evening Post*; *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*; *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*; *London Chronicle*; and the respectively. Mention of O'Halloran's book also appeared in *The London Magazine*; or, *Gentlemen's Monthly Intelligencer* for June 1778 (280) in *A List of new publications for June 1778 besides those reviewed*. The advertised price was £1.11.6s. in boards.

Another insight into the advertising strategy employed by booksellers is the opportunistic re-advertisement of a previous work by the same author. The aim of the bookseller was to re-establish the author's profile in the public mind in order to encourage further subscription and increase sales of the soon-to-be-published work. For instance, the advertisements for the London reprint of the *Introduction* appeared in various English papers from 16 January to 11 May 1773, at which time they ceased. However, four years later, in December 1777, a series of advertisements appeared where the *Introduction* was again brought to the attention of the public and was advertised as one of other books printed by John Murray. John Murray had printed the *Introduction*, and Murray was one of the booksellers for the soon-to-be-published *General History* as mentioned. This timely reappearance of O'Halloran's name in the English papers has to be considered part of the overall advertising strategy for the publication of the *General History*, and would confirm the bookseller's interest, or at least that of Murray, in the advertising campaign. Mention of O'Halloran's *Introduction* appeared on December 1777 in the *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*. Further advertisements followed on the 25, 26, 27 December

1777 in the *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* and on the 26, 27 and 29 December 1777 in the *Daily Advertiser*. The *Introduction* was further advertised, at a price of 12s in boards, in tandem with the *General History* as Figure 3.3 shows. Although the Dublin booksellers, Messrs. Faulkener, Hoey and Wilson, are listed in the English paper advertisements, the first 'This Day is published' advertisement did not appear in the Irish papers until one month later, in the *Freeman's Journal* for 4 July 1778. Irish subscribers were directed to send to Messrs. Bonfield and Co., New Row, Dublin, to collect their book. The delay may have been due to shipping-time between England and Ireland, but still, a month appears a considerable time-lapse.

The advertised price at £1.11.6s was the same as that advertised in the previously mentioned English papers. Following on from the initial 'This Day is published' advertisement, subsequent advertisements appeared in the *Freeman's Journal*, 7, 11 and 30 July; 13 and 20 August; 3 and 24 September; 15, 22 and 29 October; 26 November; 3 and 24 December 1778 and again on 7 January 1779. The advertisements in the Irish papers mention two additional booksellers: Mr. Flinn, Cork, and Mrs Halland, Limerick. The appearance of two Munster booksellers is not surprising as the analysis of the subscription-list of this work will shortly demonstrate, O'Halloran drew much of his support from his home province of Munster.

The organisation of suitable book-reviews was an important part of the bookseller's advertising strategy, and an integral aspect of the publication process. This service an author would expect from a competent bookseller. For an Irish-based author like O'Halloran, obtaining reviews in prestigious review periodicals was important. The relationships between review periodicals and authors were not always convivial, and varied according to whether the review given was a negative or a positive one (Donoghue, 1996:49-55). The review periodicals were acquainted with O'Halloran's medical works. In April 1762 favourable reviews of O'Halloran's *An Account of the success of a new method of amputation, performed in the hospital of Limerick* appeared both in the *London Magazine* and the *Scots Magazine*, as mentioned. A similar favourable review of the larger work, *A complete treatise on gangrene and sphacelus; with a new method of amputation* appeared in the *Monthly*

*Review* in 1766 (April:273-277) and also in the *Critical Review* the same year (October:273-276). There is no evidence to suggest what sort of relationship O'Halloran had with the reviewers of his antiquarian works. However, in relation to his medical publications the relationship was an uneasy one, despite what, on the whole, were favourable reviews. In this regard O'Halloran commented to O'Conor in 1766:

Messieurs the Review writers, if my accounts from London are right as I cannot doubt, are preparing an high Coloured Critick on it<sup>39</sup> – with regard to the stile, [*sic*] that they have taken for granted on sight unseen to be execrable etc. [...] these Gents and I have been alas I cannot say, very good – Acquaintances – for, some years agoe [*sic*] they gave an Account of my Treaties [*sic*] on the Cataract, from a New Edition by Vaillant, which, they were far from being sparing in their Censures on the whole, without once mentioning the purport of the work. (O'Halloran, 1766)

However, reviews were important to authors, as can be taken from the above, where O'Halloran expresses a degree of anxiety as to how his work would be reviewed, and obviously a positive review would encourage sales volume. Booksellers were intimately linked with the review journals of the period, as an extended interest of their trade in books, and frequently used their influence to further the sale of particular books (Sher, 2006:366-367). This is a consideration which an analysis of book-reviews must bear in mind. O'Halloran's choice of George Robinson as one of his booksellers was a good decision in this regard because Robinson was editor of the *Critical Review* at this period, and had been since 1774. The *Monthly Review* and the *Critical Review* were the most popular journals by mid-century, and it was commonplace for both authors and readers to consult review periodicals (Donoghue, 1996:16). Robinson was further involved with the *Ladies Magazine* from 1771 and the *New Annual Register* from 1781 onwards. Archibald Hamilton who printed

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<sup>39</sup>The work referred to is; *A complete treatise on gangrene and sphacelus, with a new method of amputation* published by A. Welsh, Limerick in 1765 and reprinted the same year by Vaillant in London.

O'Halloran's *General History*, was, with Tobias Smollett, founder of the *Critical Review*.<sup>40</sup>

Seven reviews of O'Halloran's *General History* appeared in the review periodicals of the period. This is a considerable increase on the three reviews that appeared for his first major publication, the *Introduction*. This increase in reviews is probably due to the extra attention the *General History* attracted because of its London publication. The *Introduction* reviews, however, did appear in the most popular review journals of the time: the *Critical Review* and the *Monthly Review* (March 1773, 35:198-202; Sept. 1773:193-202). A brief mention of this work also appeared in the *London Magazine, or, Gentleman's monthly intelligencer* (42, 1773:38).

Five of the reviews for the *General History* appeared in London-based periodicals. The first review appeared in the *Critical Review* for July 1778 (33-37). Considering the association of Robinson as mentioned with the *Critical Review* the appearance of a review there is not surprising. In August 1778 printer and bookseller Thomas Wright published a short mention in the *Westminster Magazine; or, The Pantheon of Taste* (434). A more substantial piece appeared the same month in the *London Review of English and Foreign Literature*, which had been founded by the English novelist, playwright and satirist, William S. Kendrick, in 1775 (96-98).<sup>41</sup> Early in 1779 the *Monthly Review* (3-8; 95-106) published a very comprehensive review in its January and February edition. The *Monthly Review* is counted as two reviews because the time-span of the review drew public attention not once but twice to the work in two separate editions. The very successful Edinburgh-based *Weekly Magazine, or, Edinburgh amusement*, published its review in September 1778 (281-282).<sup>42</sup> Only one Irish periodical published a review of O'Halloran's *General History*, and this review appeared in September 1778 in Exshaw's *Gentleman's and*

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<sup>40</sup>*Oxford DNB* previously cited.

<sup>41</sup>Hereafter *London Review*. William S. Kendrick's (1725-1799) *The London Review of English and Foreign Literature* ran from 1775 to 1780. This was a monthly review of 80 pages which attacked most of the contemporary writers and their works, and gave habitual bad reviews to Covent Garden and Drury Lane theatres. The magazine was continued for a year after his death by his son William Shakespeare Kenrick. See: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>42</sup>*The Weekly Magazine* was owned by the Scottish printer and newspaper proprietor, Walter Ruddiman (1719-1781). See: *Oxford DNB*.

*London Magazine* (482-483). Exshaw is listed by Sher (2006:389) amongst Robinson's Dublin associates. Exshaw is not listed as one of the Dublin book-agents for O'Halloran's history and, therefore, would have had little interest in its promotion. The existence of this review is probably a reflection of Robinson's influence, and his professional and private friendship with Exshaw, or indeed that of John Murray, who also had connections with Exshaw and the Dublin book-trade.<sup>43</sup>

Another technique used by review periodicals in consideration of the frequent two-fold interest of the owner/editor, who was also a bookseller, (Robinson and Murray have been mentioned earlier in this context), was to stimulate interest by playing one author off against the other in their reviews. The opportunity to exploit this type of strategy certainly existed in Ireland. Authors from the Anglo-Irish tradition and those from the native Irish tradition regularly published books with competing claims to cultural authority. On a public level the work of Leland and O'Halloran were frequently juxtaposed. Murray had thought to use this oppositional stance as an advertising strategy to promote O'Halloran's *Introduction*, and he commented to Thomas Ewing in that regard:

Thinking to do something for you with O Halloran I advertised it strongly in the St. James Chronicle in opposition to Leland's History, upon the Publication of the latter. But the Success was not answerable to my Zeal.  
(Murray, 1773d)

This trend of comparison followed O'Halloran's work into the world of publication and production. The review periodicals supported the established tradition, whether in historiographical trends or in politics, consequently Leland's view of Irish history, was viewed with cultural authority, while O'Halloran work, in this case his *General History*, was relegated to the realm of the "fabulous":

Mr. O'Halloran's narrative, however, may be regarded as a connected detail

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<sup>43</sup>The content and direction of these reviews are critically discussed in Chapter 6, where they form part of the investigation surrounding the public reception of the *General History*.



of the fabulous times in Ireland, preceding the dawn of its authentic annals  
in Dr. Leland's History. (*Critical Review*, 1778:37)

As Leland faded from the Irish antiquarian scene, the Rev. Edward Ledwich (1738-1823) rose to prominence and replaced Leland as the significant author against whom O'Halloran was juxtaposed in the British periodical review literature:

The colonization of the country in early ages, is naturally the first topic which fall [*sic*] under Mr. Ledwich's view. What will our old friend Mr. O'Halloran say to the utter and contemptuous rejection, not only of the tale of Noah's granddaughter and Partholanus, but also of the Milesian colony, on which that gentleman descants with so much enthusiasm and confidence, and, as it must be allowed, with considerable ingenuity? – To a mind, zealous like his for the glory of his country, and enamoured with its ancient honours, how ungrateful must be these humiliating accounts!

(*Monthly Review*, 1793:30)

The review periodical literature used the pre-existing divide in Irish society to stimulate interest and controversy. It is unlikely that it was the intent of the periodical literature to increase already existent tensions. The juxtaposition of O'Halloran against Leland and, subsequently, Ledwich, confirms his position as a leading defender of the Gaelic tradition in British-based periodical review literature.

However, this negative portrayal of O'Halloran as a somewhat fanciful author by the review periodical literature could have serious repercussions on his medical career, which was his main source of income. Authors, like publishers, were branded, in that they were associated in the public mind with particular works and viewpoints. How the author presented himself on the title-page, therefore, was an important part of author-public image. O'Halloran needed to separate his medical author-image from his antiquarian image. One reason for this was that, in the eighteenth century, medical science was still in its infancy. The M.D. ranked higher than a surgeon. Until 1745 in England surgeons and barbers were incorporated into the same guild. The separation of surgeon and barber did not occur in Ireland until 1780 (Wilde, 1848:436). Medical works dealt with the serious issue of life and death.

Authors of medical works needed to convince their readers that they wrote with authority, and that that authority was acknowledged in the wider medical world. Medical works, therefore, needed to display the credentials of the author, and, reflecting this need Sher (2006:160), observed that “the fullest embellishment of authors’ identities often occurred in medical books”.

From this perspective, O'Halloran's desire to create an alternative author self-image for his antiquarian publications is understandable. For instance, the reviews of O'Halloran's *Introduction*, previously mentioned, where he is judged to be somewhat of a fanciful and imaginative antiquarian, would certainly not complement the more serious and authoritative image his medical works portrayed. O'Halloran recognised that he needed to separate his authoritative medical author-image from that of his antiquarian author-image. This desire to disassociate the medical author from the possibly pejorative affect of his antiquarian image is confirmed by the manner he represented himself on the title-page of his works

On the title-page of his first publication in 1750, *A new treatise on the cataract*, O'Halloran represents himself as, “Sivlester [*sic*] O'Halloran, Surgeon.” On the title-page of *A critical analysis of the new operation for a cataract* (1755), O'Halloran has added further credentials; “Mr. O'Halloran, of Limerick, Surgeon and Man-Midwife. Author of a new treatise on the cataract”. On the title-page of O'Halloran's 1765 work, *A complete treatise on gangrene and sphacelus*, the author is presented as “Mr. O'Halloran, Surgeon”. The title-page of his last major medical publication, in 1795, *A new treatise on the different disorders arising from external injuries of the head*, contains the full embellishment of all his credentials at that time: “Mr. O'Halloran, M.R.I.A. Honorary Member of the Royal College of Surgeons, in Ireland; and of the Physico Chirurgical Society, and Surgeon to the County of Limerick Hospital.”

In contrast, the title-pages of his antiquarian works; *Insula sacra*, (1770), *Ierne defended* (1774a) and the *General History* (1778a) presents the author simply as “Mr. O'Halloran”, or, in the case of the *Introduction* (1772a), as “Sylvester O'Halloran”. For those who knew O'Halloran personally, this stratagem would not work, but in the wider world of publishing it was an effective strategy to disassociate

his medical author-image from his antiquarian author-image. This was a serious consideration for O'Halloran, who was not of independent means, as his income came from his profession.

Did the *General History* make a profit or loss for O'Halloran? There are no record-ledgers extant that would allow an accurate calculation of the production-costs of O'Halloran's *General History* to be ascertained. Drawing on the work of Richard Sher (2006, 462-3), however, an approximate cost can be gauged from a comparison with a three-volume set of Adam Ferguson's *Progress and termination of the Roman republic*, printed in 1783 by Strahan, whose ledgers detailing the transaction are extant. Ferguson's work was an expensive quarto edition, as was O'Halloran's. In addition, O'Halloran (1776a, 1777a) intended to supply some particular editions suited to the library collector and connoisseur to be "Printed on Royal Paper, and elegantly bound".

The total cost of printing for a three-volume set with a print-run of 1,500 copies was £272.14s. The initial print-run for O'Halloran's history was 750 copies, which is exactly half that of Ferguson's run. The paper requirement for O'Halloran's *General History*, consisting of 831 pages, at four pages to a sheet, would have been slightly less than 208, in comparison to the 202 sheets that Ferguson's required, and O'Halloran's two-volume set was one less than Ferguson's.<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, there was the cost of advertising. A two-inch advertisement cost three shillings, and all of O'Halloran's advertisements I have noted were at least four inches in length, and longer in some instances. I count twelve advertisements in the English papers for O'Halloran's *General History* from 23 May 1778 up to and including 23 June, which amounts to 36s. There were eleven advertisements in the Irish papers from 7 July to 26 November 1778, in addition to the three advertisements which appeared in the *Freeman's Journal* between 22 November and 2 December 1777 (O'Halloran 1777c). By this reckoning, in the region of £7.16.0 was spent on newspaper advertising, based on a calculation of 26 four-inch advertisements at six shillings per advertisement. Comparing this figure to the £9

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<sup>44</sup>For a comparison of production costs see: (Pollard, 1989:110-135).

figure for advertising spent by Murray (1776a) on O'Halloran's *Introduction* this seems a reasonable amount. In a letter to James Hoey, Murray (1776d) expressed it as his opinion, in the context of the sales of Curry's "Civil Wars" in London, that advertising to the sum of eight guineas was needed to promote sales of any work.<sup>45</sup>

However, even allowing for sundries, including the cost of the Greek font which O'Halloran's work necessitated, with subscribers contributing 565 guineas, O'Halloran not only covered his production and advertising costs, he made a profit. Point two in O'Halloran's *Proposals* would seem to confirm my estimation here. In that document O'Halloran (1777a) assures his subscribers that "as soon as 300 have subscribed, the Work shall be committed to the Press", which can be interpreted as implying that production-costs at that stage would be adequately covered in order to commit the work to print. Korshin (1974:466), in his article on eighteenth-century literary patronage, further confirms this point, commenting that "sometimes as few as 150-200 subscribers were sufficient to ensure publication". However, it must be added that O'Halloran was not trying to make a living from his writings. He had a successful medical practice in Limerick, and could have, if necessary, subsidised the publication to some extent, and he was not as dependent on profits as other authors may have been.

### 3.5. One Edition of the *General History*?

There was only one edition of the *General History*, although, as indicated previously, O'Halloran had contemplated a Dublin edition also. A comment in the *Hibernian Journal* (Crito, 1778a) in October 1778, to the effect that O'Halloran "was now treating with the Dublin Booksellers for an Octavo Edition of his History", further confirms O'Halloran's intent to produce a Dublin edition of this work. However, the octavo edition did not materialise. The fact that O'Halloran's *General History* did not enjoy a Dublin reprint may be attributable to the publisher John Murray. Based on the content of a letter from Murray (1777a) to the Dublin printer James Hoey, it appears O'Halloran had approached Hoey on this matter in September 1777. Hoey sought Murray's advice in this regard, but Murray replied negatively:

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<sup>45</sup>I am assuming this comment refers to Curry's publication of his *An Historical and Critical Review of the Civil Wars in Ireland* in 1775.

Mr. O'Halloran prints an edition of 750 Copies of his History, in London; and I am candidly of opinion that there will not be purchases enough in the 3 Kingdoms to consume it. He is egregiously wrong therefore to think of an octavo edition. (Murray, 1777a)

Murray's (1777b) last letter to O'Halloran in November 1777 indicates that serious discord had arisen and suggests that personal rancour, as well as commercial advice may have actuated Murray's strong negative response to Hoey on the issue of a second edition of the *General History*. The reason for this conjecture is that notwithstanding that Murray's replies to O'Halloran persistently displayed a commercial disinterest in his work, this last letter shows an unexpected degree of antagonism. Lack of correspondence between August 1776 and this later letter in November 1777 means that there is no way of knowing definitively what gave rise to the discord. Murray may simply have become tired of O'Halloran's persistence and viewed O'Halloran the author as a non-profitable enterprise and was disinclined to spend time on a project that would not return a profit. This view agrees, in broad substance with that proposed by Barnard (2010a:95-112), regarding the Murray to O'Halloran letters. For Murray, although he considered O'Halloran as "a worthy and an honest man", he viewed the author O'Halloran in common fault with all authors who zealously overestimated the market appeal of their work, leaving the bookseller in the unpleasant position of having to restrain their exuberance with cautious restraint.

However, the tone of Murray's caustic comments to O'Halloran regarding a frontispiece for his *General History* in this last letter seems to indicate something more personal may have affronted Murray than the usual vicissitudes of the author-bookseller relationship:

With regard to the design for a frontispiece I return the one you send me, for it is a very bad one, if your faith had been as a grain of sand to have consulted me, I would have made a point to have got a decent and proper one, but I will not be concerned in repairing a wounded cause. The Gent<sup>m</sup>.

who recommended you to Mr. Wale<sup>46</sup> is the proper person to apply in this business, it would be awkward for me at my advanced period of life to become a mere servant. (Murray, 1777b)<sup>47</sup>

The central area of concern appears to be that Murray feels that O'Halloran has misused him, in fact, treated him like "a mere servant". What may have happened here is that, from the outset O'Halloran had realised that if he wanted a London publication for the *General History*, he would have to oversee the London publication himself. However, self-publication was a complex process, and the difficulties involved increased for an Irish-based author contemplating a London publication. O'Halloran needed advice from an expert like Murray to guide him through the process, and his initial contact with Murray can be seen in that light. However, at the same time, it appears that O'Halloran was not inclined to involve him in any commercial opportunities that might arise.

Murray was, after all, a business-man, "imbued with a commercial spirit" (Zachs, 1998:43) and the ultimate touchstone for Murray was "sales" (Barnard, 2010a:19). The self-publication method would not have been popular with publishers. Publishing was a business enterprise, and profit was made not only through sales but also in striking a bargain with businesses that were pivotal to the publication enterprise. The ability to make these bargains enhanced the reputation and standing of the publisher, who could, by his favour, send business and profit in his favoured direction. The author - in this case O'Halloran - who opted for the self-publication method retained control of the enterprise, and in the manner of a subcontractor, struck his own bargains with the relevant businesses, thereby replacing the publisher and depriving him of possible profit. Murray's pejorative

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<sup>46</sup>Mr Wale is difficult to indentify. Murray may be referring to Mr. Wale, assistant to John Gwynn, designer of the Magdalen Bridge built between 1772 and 1790, close relative to Samuel Wale, London, and collaborator with Gwynn in publishing artistic projects. See: Jaine (1971:63).

<sup>47</sup>With regard to the frontispiece mentioned by Murray, O'Halloran's intent had been to provide a frontispiece (a decorative illustration placed opposite the title-page of a work) for his *General History*. According to O'Halloran (1793b:173), the reason for its non-appearance was that his research on the arms of Meath was not completed in time for publication. O'Halloran's intended frontispiece was to depict a female representing Hibernia holding a shield emblazoned with the arms of the four provinces and Meath. Although O'Halloran's *General History* does not contain a frontispiece, his later *An introduction to and an history of Ireland*, published in 1803, contains a frontispiece that conforms to this description.

comment to O'Halloran regarding the employment of a printer and designer and purchasing his own paper provides evidence for this interpretation:

Were I disposed I could be severe upon you here. For Notwithstanding my attention to you before your visit to London, my disinterested counsels upon your arrival, and my persevering continuance to put you right in all matters regarding your book; - Notwithstanding this you employed a printer & designer, and purchased your paper without the formality of evening [*sic*] consulting me in the way of Complement. (Murray, 1777b)

Murray's annoyance with O'Halloran may have arisen from a number of small irritants, rather than one single event. O'Halloran's appeal to Murray to sort out the frontispiece may have been the last straw in what Murray must have considered an unprofitable and troublesome relationship, and gave rise to the caustic comments in this final letter to O'Halloran. Considering Murray's letter to Hoey, rejecting the idea of a second edition for the *General History*, was written only three weeks previously, it is very probably that Murray's annoyance with O'Halloran may well have influenced his vehement rejection of the work to Hoey. Therefore, the fact that the *General History* enjoyed only one edition is attributable, in part at least, to the British publisher John Murray.

It is impossible to know whether or not Hoey repeated Murray's comments to O'Halloran. However, it is significant that O'Halloran did not engage with Murray on publication matters after this point. O'Halloran placed the London reprint of his next major work, *A new treatise on the different disorders arising from External Injuries of the Head*, in the hands of George Robinson, notwithstanding the fact that Murray, who had become a major publisher of medical works from the 1770s, was also a possible publisher (Zachs, 1998:88-89). This change in booksellers would suggest that the disagreement between Murray and O'Halloran may have been mutual.

### 3.6. Conclusions

The London publication of O'Halloran's *General History* is the defining feature of this work, and marks it as exceptional, not only when compared with similar works

from within the O'Halloran corpus, but also when compared with works from a similar genre and a comparable timeframe. The difficulties of a London publication for an Irish-based author were considerable. There was strong commercial resistance from the British book market to publishing works on Irish affairs because of the poor sales return. To overcome this difficulty, O'Halloran personally managed and financed by subscription, the publication of the *General History*. The conditions of printing and the purchase price confirm that the *General History* was aimed at the élite market. The London publication of the *General History* succeeded because of O'Halloran's personal commitment to the project and his ability to access a numerically strong subscriber network to finance the publication. The London publication-site, further supported by textual evidence from the *General History* confirms that O'Halloran was directing his argument for Irish Catholic relief to the British Parliament in London, rather than the Irish Parliament in Dublin. The political context which informed his decision was the opportunity for Irish Catholic relief during the period of the Anglo-American crisis. Therefore, the London publication of the *General History* is exceptional enough on all accounts to merit the centrality it occupies in the argument presented here: that the London publication of the *General History* was an attempt by O'Halloran to access an imperial audience for this particular work and represents the first attempt by an Irish antiquarian to address the Catholic relief debate to an audience outside of Ireland.



## 4. Subscription-list Analysis: O'Halloran's *General History* 1778

### 4.1. Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 2, the first distinctive feature of the *General History* is its publication-site. The second distinctive feature of O'Halloran's *General History* is the location and profile of its subscribers. To demonstrate this point, this chapter presents an analysis of the subscription-list, using a prosopographical approach (Verboven et al, 2007). There are two elements to this approach. Firstly, the subscription-list is viewed as a basic database from which certain criteria, supplemented when necessary by further research, are extracted and represented in the form of tables and charts. Secondly, this data is then combined, interpreted and synthesised within the wider historical context. The central query of this analysis is to discover the historical and political significance of the composition of the subscription-list to the *General History*, within the context of Catholic relief politics and issues of British imperial security, in particular troop deficiency, during the Anglo-American war.

Antiquarian writing was the political-medium of the disenfranchised Catholic in the eighteenth century. Subscription-publication was the means by which many of these works were published and entered into the public domain. Therefore, the analysis of the subscription-list can provide valuable information in discerning the various elements of society, which supported these works. However, the significance of the subscription-list in antiquarian writings has received little more than passing reference in current academic scholarship. Making the comment that mid-eighteenth-century antiquarian writers, Protestant and Catholic, were among the "leading political figures, military officers, and clergymen of their day", Delury (2000:10) adds in passing, that the "subscription-lists of their works [Protestant and Catholic antiquarians] regularly included the most powerful persons in Ireland". However, Delury makes no attempt to expand on what possible significance, social, political or, otherwise, the appearance of these "powerful persons" might imply. Barnard (2010a:95-112) examines the commercial resistance to publishing works on Irish history in the eighteenth century, and in this context, he looks more closely at O'Halloran's subscription-lists, and identifies some of the "powerful persons"

referred to by Delury. However, Bernard's concern is with how Irish authors countered commercial resistance, by mobilising their social circle to finance publication, rather than with the significance of the subscription-list in a political context.

This study argues that subscription-lists demand a more intensive scholarly reading, and should be viewed as complimentary to the narrative in polemical works such as the *General History*, in particular. The reason subscription-list analysis is especially important in politically informed works, is because it can be understood that a subscriber, who demonstrates financial support by subscription to ensure the publication of a work, also supports the political message that has informed that work. The political focus of Catholic antiquarian writing at this period was to agitation for repeal of penal restrictions on Irish Catholics. Therefore, subscriber support in this list, suggests support for removal of penal restrictions on Irish Catholics, at this particular juncture at least, and points to the significance of subscription-lists analysis, as a means to extend and compliment the interpretation of the textual narrative.

The analysis of the *General History* subscription-list reveals three major groupings in the list: a British political élite, Irish émigrés in the service of European Catholic powers, and an Irish subscriber group. The presence of an Irish subscriber group in a work on Irish affairs is not surprising, as a work of this nature would naturally find support in its home market. However, what is remarkable, is the appearance of unprecedented support from a British political élite in the polemical work of an Irish Catholic author, and poses the question as to what significance can be attached to this event? The political and temporal significance of this event further increases when, as the following analysis will demonstrate, it was a 'one time only' event, as a search of other lists from a similar genre and timeframe, fails to locate a similar occurrence. As the publication of the *General History* coincided with the first significant repeal of penal restrictions on Irish Catholics, it is highly significant that, this list contains unparalleled support from a British political élite who, as it will shown, was instrumental in pushing the Irish Catholic Relief Act (1778) through a reluctant Irish Parliament. The political context of this intervention

was the war in the American colonies, and the need to supplement the British war machine with Catholic recruitment from Ireland. In addition, the signing of the Franco-American Treaty in March 1778, made it expedient to grant some measure of Catholic relief to prevent the disaffection of the Irish Catholic, in the event of a possible French invasion of Ireland. This chapter will argue that the appearance of a powerful British political coterie in O'Halloran's subscription-list is so unprecedented in the history of Irish antiquarian publications, that the most likely explanation lies in the immediate political arena, and the desire of the British administration to ensure passage of a Catholic relief measure in Ireland, in order to recruit Irish Catholic soldiers for the American war.

The following analysis views the composition of the subscription-list as a deliberate orchestration of the author, and as an extension of the political message which informed his narrative. This position does not suggest that the author handpicked each individual subscriber, what it does argue, however, is that the overall composition of the subscription-list, is the deliberate creation of the author. The appearance of a substantial representation from Irish émigrés is, like the appearance of the British political élite in this list, unprecedented in the history of Irish antiquarian publications at this period, and is similarly distinctive as being a 'one time only' occurrence. Because the Irish émigré group contains many of the most iconic figures in Irish military history serving in the Catholic armies of Europe, a linkage is suggested between their appearance here and Britain's depleted manpower resources at this juncture. This chapter will argue that O'Halloran's inclusion of successful Irish émigrés in his list was to demonstrate Ireland's current fittingness for an imperial role, and underpins his argument for repeal of penal restrictions on Irish Catholics, to facilitate Irish Catholic participation in the British Empire. Moreover, as will be demonstrated in the following chapter, this argument complements the textual narrative, which is directed towards demonstrating an historical suitability for an imperial role.

The appearance of substantial Irish support for a work on Irish history is not unusual. However, what is significant is the considerable and unparalleled Irish political élite support for this work. The following analysis focuses primarily, but not

exclusively, on the significance of Irish political élite support for the *General History*, and makes the argument that pressure from the British administration and a possible French invasion of Ireland, increased awareness among the Irish political élite, that their exclusionary policies needed to be pragmatically modified, to placate the Irish Catholic in the interest of both Irish and imperial security, at this juncture. The following discussion centres on the political significance of these three groups in the *General History* subscription-list.

This chapter is divided into five main areas of discussion. The first area introduces the main characteristics of a subscription-list, and reviews the limitations the format of the list imposes on subscriber identification. The second area is directed towards highlighting those elements of the *General History* subscription-list which differentiate it, not only from other lists within the O'Halloran corpus, but also from other lists of a similar genre, and a comparable timeframe. Consequently, this area focuses on the impressive support for this work as determined by the numerical superiority of subscribers and projected sales volume, the distinctive aristocratic element, and the unparalleled geographical distribution of subscribers. Comparisons with other works are offered throughout this section, to highlight the uniqueness of the *General History* subscription-list.

The remainder of this chapter treats in turn the three major subscriber groupings that have been identified in the subscription-list of the *General History*: a British political élite; Irish émigrés in Europe and an Irish political élite. Each of these three sections is divided into two parts, and reflects the two-tier prosopographical approach that is being used here. The purpose of part one is to identify the social and political profile of the group and its subscribers. Building on this information, part two discusses the possible significance of each group's appearance in O'Halloran's subscription-list, within the political context of the opportunity presented for Catholic relief during the period of the Anglo-American crisis.

#### **4.2. Features of a Subscription-list**

A subscription-list is a list of the names of those persons, termed subscribers, or patrons, who demonstrated support for a particular work, and, by extension, the

ideology it contained, by placing a deposit with a bookseller, in order to provide the initial capital to ensure printing and publication as outlined in Chapter 2. On publication, the subscription-list became an integral part of the overall text, and formed a public declaration of support for the author and his work. However, errors in the compilation of material did occur at the printing house, and research has shown that although a work may have been published by the subscription method, this did not guarantee that a list of subscribers was present in every copy of the same edition. For instance, the Dublin edition of O'Halloran's *Introduction*, held at the National Library of Ireland, does not contain a list of subscribers, but the London reprint edition of this work, held there, has a full list of subscribers. Conversely, the London reprint of O'Halloran's *Introduction* held at the NUI Galway library, does not contain a list of subscribers.

The importance of the subscription-list is demonstrated by the high-profile position it occupied within the book, usually placed after the title-page. However, the position of the subscription-list within a work could vary. The subscription-list to the second edition of Rev. Alban Butler's *The lives of the fathers, martyrs, and other principal saints* (1779), is placed after the title-page. In the 1775 edition of the Rev. Leland's *The history of Ireland from the invasion of Henry II*, the subscription-list appears at the end of the third and final volume. In O'Halloran's works, the subscription-list unfailingly appears after the title-page and dedication preliminaries of the first volume.

Subscribers' names were usually presented in alphabetical order. However, the alphabetical system was not the only method used. Subscriber names could also be presented in geographical order (Taylor and Skinner, 1778:1-15). Some lists, rather than follow a strict alphabetical order, grouped certain trades and professions together (Robinson and Wallis, 1975:vi-vii). However, the subscription-list to all of O'Halloran's works published by the subscription method is presented in alphabetical order. A sample-page from the subscription-list of O'Halloran's *General History* is presented as a visual aid to highlight the hierarchical ordering of this list.

The sample-page overleaf shows that, although subscriber names follow alphabetical order, in that surnames are clustered in alphabetical groupings, within these groupings, names are ordered hierarchically, according to social position, but again, this is not strictly adhered to in all cases. The centrality of noble patronage is clear in the prominent position accorded to them in the listings. This pre-eminence is clear in the manner in which peerage titles, for example, “Marquis” and “Viscount” head the alphabetical R and S categories overleaf. Titled members of the peerage in the order: Duke, Marquis, Earl, Count, Viscount, and Baron usually take precedence within each alphabetical grouping. In the absence of a peerage title to head a section, an individual of the next highest social order is listed. For instance, in the sample-page overleaf “John Tunnadine LL.D.” leads the T category in the absence of a peerage title. The title ‘Honourable’ takes precedence over the title ‘Sir’, and in O'Halloran's list, those subscribers with an appended quality of ‘esquire’ or military title generally, but not always, take precedence over minor clergy, as the sample-page illustrates. The ‘Mr’ grouping, which also contains the merchant class, appears last in each alphabetical grouping. Therefore, O'Halloran's list was arranged to emphasise the aristocratic element of its subscribers.

Omission of subscriber names was common in subscription-publication. In order to minimise this occurrence, the subscription-list was generally printed and bound last, and was usually unpaginated, to facilitate later insertion of the list into the main body of the work (Robinson and Wallis, 1975:iv,v). Despite this precaution, some works did go to press with an incomplete list of subscribers. The subscription-list to Brooke's *Reliques* is prefaced by an apology and an explanation by the author, as to why her particular list was incomplete:

The Publication of this Work has been delayed some Time, for the purpose of being enabled to give the following List complete; — still there are several Subscribers whose Names are not yet come to hand, and the List Is therefore necessarily, though reluctantly, printed without them.

(Brooke, 1789:xi)



Subscriber names that arrived at the printer in time to be included in the subscription-list, but too late to be included in their proper regular order, were printed in a separate section, at the end of the subscription-list. The subscription-list to Crawford's *A history of Ireland* (1783:xxx), and the Rev. James Hely's translation of Roderic O'Flaherty's *Ogygia* (1793:Lxxxxii), contain an example of the manner in which late subscribers were accommodated.

It is seldom possible to identity or even to classify every subscriber in a subscription-list. This is due to the lack of supplementary information recorded for each individual subscriber. Whether this was due to the publisher, or to a subscriber not providing full details when the initial deposit was placed, is impossible to say. These details, however, if recorded, were not always published, which adds to the many difficulties in identifying subscribers in a listing. Therefore, familiarity with significant figures of the era, in which the list was compiled, is an important prerequisite for subscription-list analysis.

In the case of members of the nobility, high-profile MPs, professional or military figures, the absence of these details is of lesser consequence, as many will have made their mark in public life, and consequently, merited note in common biographical databases. Trade directories are another useful source of information used in subscriber identification. Some subscribers may have had importance at a local rather than a national or international level, and in these cases, local histories can be an invaluable source of information. Moreover, the manner in which these high-profile subscribers socially interacted, can shed light on, and aid in the identification of lesser-known or less accomplished members of this grouping.

Sometimes the work itself can be a useful source of information to aid identification of a subscriber, or at least provide some useful insight into the author's relationship with a particular subscriber. The last two chapters in volume two of O'Halloran's *General History* (1778a,2:385-416) entitled "Containing an alphabetical list of ancient Irish territories, and by what Milesian families possessed, both before and after the invasion of Henry II", and "Objections to the authenticity of Milesian pedigrees answered", are useful in this context. Some of the names



mentioned in these two chapters also appear in the subscription-list to this work. In some instances O'Halloran added a personal note to these accounts. For instance, of Standish O'Grady of Capper-cullen, Limerick, he commented that, "a more respectable character cannot any where be found" (O'Halloran, 1778a,2:387).

The extent of supplementary information given in the *General History* list regarding subscribers varies. In the case of influential subscribers from the nobility class usually only a title is given, for instance: "Earl Carrick", "Duke of Devonshire" or, "Duke de Fitz-James". Frequently, Christian names and a quality is supplied, whereby the subscriber's profession or trade is indicated. For instance, the following names appear on the subscription-list sample-page: "Lieut. John O'Shee", "Lieut. Patrick Sarsfield", "Rev. Charles Coote", or, "Edward Smyth M.D.". This information facilitates classification of subscribers in categories, such as: military, medical, or, clerical. Less frequently, indication of residence is also provided, for example: "Mr. Mathew Talbot, merchant, Dublin", "Mr. William Terry, merchant Malaga". Other examples are: "Mr. Clarke, London", "Lancelot Browne, esq. Hampton Court", or, "Sir James Barry, in the service of Spain." This type of detail facilitates a geographical classification of subscribers.

However, one of the difficulties of subscription-list analysis is, that while details such as those given above were supplied in some cases, they were omitted in others. The omission of forenames, occupation, address or even title was also common. For instance, the *General History* subscription-list contains a "Mr. Clark", a "James Reilly", a "James Swift" without any additional information given, which makes it impossible geographically, or occupationally, to categorise these subscribers. Another difficulty is that inconsistencies in spelling were common in subscription-lists. The reason for these inconsistencies is because standardised spelling of either personal or place names, had not been introduced in the eighteenth century (Johnston-Liik, 2002,3:18). For example, the surname 'Chapple' is spelt "Chappel" and the 'Marquis Monsieur d'Eguilly' is presented as "M. le Marquis d'Eguile" in O'Halloran's *Introduction* (1772a) list. Another impediment to individual subscriber identification is the frequency of the same surname. For example, there are four subscribers with the surname 'O'Ferral' in O'Halloran's 1778 subscription-list. One

of these O'Farrells is identified as, "M. D. College of Physicians, Dublin", which is more than adequate information to trace this individual, but what of the other three O'Ferrall subscribers? Are they brothers, sons, father, or are they in fact in any way related? It is impossible to know or even visit all possible archival sources. However, lack of supplementary information is not a significant factor in the following analysis, as there are only six subscribers in the *General History* list that cannot in some way be classified, either by nobility, geographical location, profession or trade.

Before turning to the particulars of O'Halloran's subscription-list, and based on the subscription method of publication as described earlier, an understanding of the type of relationship that existed between author and subscriber is important within the context of the later analysis presented here. The subscriber or patron of a work, was part of the social or extended social circle of the author. The subscriber was aware, to some degree at least, of the proposed content and directions of the work he subscribed to. The subscriber was sufficiently interested in ensuring the publication of this work, and by extension the ideology it contained, that he contributed towards its publication-cost. As to whether the subscriber actually read the book he purchased, Cole (1974a:243) offers the opinion that, although not all books bought were actually read, works of discursive prose, like history, were amongst those favoured by eighteenth-century library owners. Paul Korshin (1974:459) supports this opinion commenting that as, "bibliophily and bibliomania" had not become popular in the eighteenth century:

Book collecting among the wealthy usually resulted from a genuine literary or antiquarian interest rather than from a desire to engage in an ostentatious pastime. (Korshin, 1974:460)

Subscribers subscribed to a work for various reasons. Patronage was expected from the wealthy, and considered part of their social responsibilities. Some subscribers contributed to the publication of a work out of a topic-related interest, while other subscribers were frequently attracted by the increase in social standing their vicarious association with titled members of the nobility might confer. For others, it was an opportunity to advertise. A subscription-list was a perfect form of

advertisement for members of the book-trade, and a subscription-list usually contained the name of a member of the book-trade in some form. For instance, “Mr. Flin, bookseller” is listed in the *General History* list (1778a,1:xi) “Mr. Long, bookseller” is listed in his 1765 list.<sup>1</sup> “Mr. Patrick Byrne, bookseller” is listed in the subscription-list to Brooke’s *Reliques* (1789:xiii). “Mr. Peter Hoey, printer” is listed in O’Conor’s *The ogygia vindicated* (1776) and “Mr. John, Hillary, bookseller” is listed in Butler’s *The lives of the fathers, martyrs, and other principal saints* (1779).<sup>2</sup>

In sum, a subscription-list contained the names of a list of patrons who financially supported the publication of a book. On publication, the list became an integral part of the overall work, and acted as a public declaration of support. The relationship between subscriber and the author/work were viewed in this context. An influential list of subscribers added to the prestige and sales potential of a work, and with this in mind, influential subscribers were given priority position in a list. Subscriber identification can be problematic, particularly in the case of low-profile subscribers, who have not merited a mention in available sources. This study views the architecture of the subscription-list to the *General History*, as a composition of the author, and as an aid to complement the narrative interpretation, presented in the following chapter.

### 4.3. *General History*: Subscription-list Analysis

The purpose of the following analysis is to identify the distinctive features of the *General History* subscription-list which differentiate it from other lists of a comparable genre and timeframe. Therefore, this analysis focuses on the impressive support for this work as determined by the numerical superiority of subscribers and projected sales volume, the distinctive aristocratic element and the unparalleled geographical distribution of subscribers. Numerically, the subscription-list to the *General History*, standing at 479 subscribers, is superior to any previous O’Halloran

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<sup>1</sup>The subscription-list is unpaginated in this work. The subscription-list is placed after the dedication section.

<sup>2</sup>*The ogygia vindicated* subscription-list is unpaginated as is the subscription-list to Butler’s work. The subscription-list in the former, is placed after the Table of Contents, and in the latter, the list is placed after the title-page.

work published by this method.<sup>3</sup> O'Halloran's *Introduction* (1772a) contained only 213 subscribers, and his earlier *A complete treatise on gangrene and sphacelus* (1765a), contained only 206 names. These figures indicate a 3.4% increase in subscribers from 1765 to 1772, while the *General History*, standing at 479 names, indicates an impressive 225% increase in subscribers from the publication of the *Introduction* in 1772. In contrast, a comparable work from a similar historiographical tradition, O'Connor's *The ogygia vindicated* contained only 254 subscriber names. Brooke's *Reliques* attracted a slightly larger number with 288 subscribers listed. The third edition of the Rev. Thomas Leland's *The history of Ireland* (1775) representing an Anglo-Irish perspective, lists a total of 385 subscribers.

This substantial increase in subscriber numbers for the *General History* can be attributed to a variety of factors. A London publication attracted a wider clientele, and O'Halloran clearly conducted a more determined subscription campaign to ensure the publication of this work. Another consideration here is that, as O'Halloran's status and reputation as an author had concretised, he had managed to retain previous subscribers and attract new customers. This is evident by the material increase in subscriber numbers, and by the incidence of repeat subscribers. For instance, and aside from general family support, 54 subscribers, or 11.3% of the total figure of 479 subscribers, are common to all three O'Halloran subscription-lists mentioned here: 1765, 1772 and 1778.

However, the material fact of the publication of a book implies, only that an author has carried through his plan of presenting his thoughts and ideas, on whatever subject he may have selected, to its logical conclusion, of seeing that work presented in printed form. It does not of itself indicate in any way a sales volume figure, without which it is meaningless to speak of, or suggest possible influence, if that work in its printed state, never entered the public market to any significant extent. According to a comment by the publisher John Murray in a letter to the Dublin printer James Hoey, O'Halloran had initially considered a print-run of 1000 copies

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<sup>3</sup>There are a total of 480 names listed. Confusion has arisen between Marshal Fitzjames and the Duke de Fitzjames which are in fact only one person, the Duke de Fitzjames was Marshal of France and the printer here, Archibald Hamilton, for whatever reason, misunderstood the title and created two subscribers out of one. Therefore, the correct total of subscribers is 479.

for *the General History*. Murray (1777a) claimed that he convinced O'Halloran to reduce this number to 750 copies, as Murray was of the opinion that there was not "purchases enough in the 3 Kingdoms to consume it". The initial sales volume of this print-run of 750 copies can be gauged from the subscription-list, by totalling the number of copies ordered by subscribers. If more than one copy was ordered, the number of copies was placed after the subscriber's name.

There are in total 479 subscribers listed, which would indicate an initial sales volume of 479 two volume sets, if each subscriber ordered one set apiece. However, some subscribers ordered more than one copy. When extra copies ordered are taken into account, the total number of expected sales, at this stage, indicated by the subscription-list, is 565 sets. In contrast to this figure, *The ogygia vindicated* projected sales volume, as indicated by the number of copies ordered, was 286, and by the same criteria, Brooke's *Reliques* totalled 349 copies ordered. However, the initial sales volume of O'Halloran's *General History* at 565 sets, fades numerically in comparison with the subscription-list of a later historical work, *A history of Ireland from the earliest period to the present time*, published in Strabane in 1783 by William Crawford.<sup>4</sup> There were 1,387 subscribers to this work, with an additional 76 extra copies ordered, which brings the initial sale figure to 1,463 copies, which is almost three times the sales volume of O'Halloran's *General History*. Be that as it may, Crawford's position was exceptional. Usually the collection of patronage depended on the personal and extended social contacts of the author and the skill of a bookseller. Crawford, however, was chaplain to the 1<sup>st</sup> Tyrone regiment of Volunteers (Vance, 2001), and had access to an already existent and organised network of patrons, which facilitated subscriber collection far outside his personal capability. Crawford's listings reflect the prevalence of Volunteer support (1783:xi-xxx).<sup>5</sup>

Aside from the initial sales volume as indicated by the subscription-list, the overall sales volume of the *General History* can be tentatively estimated. A count of the books remaining in the warehouse of John Murray, in 1793, lists 94 copies of

<sup>4</sup>William Crawford (1739/40-1800) was a minister of the Presbyterian General Synod of Ulster. He was ordained minister for Strabane, Co. Tyrone in 1766. See: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>5</sup>For formation on Volunteer companies and their significance at this period, see: Connolly (2008:404-408: 411-415).

O'Halloran's *General History* there (Zachs, 1998:282). This means that, in addition to the 565 copies purchased, according to the subscription-list, a further 91 copies of the *General History*, were sold. This would give a total sales volume of 656 sets of the *General History*. However, a comment by O'Halloran in 1803, challenges this estimate. In the 'Advertisement' section of his *An introduction to and an history of Ireland* (1803), O'Halloran (1803:iv) commented that after the initial publication of the *General History*, "a further three hundred copies were immediately after shipped off for Spain, besides a quantity for India". These figures simply do not add up, unless O'Halloran's print-run was 1,000 rather than 750 copies. This is unlikely to be the case, as Murray's ledgers also confirm a print-run of 750 for the *General History* (Zachs, 1998:282).

It is very probable that O'Halloran may indeed have shipped copies of his work to Spain and India. As will be demonstrated shortly, there was a substantial demand for O'Halloran's *General History* in Spain, and O'Halloran's son, Captain Joseph O'Halloran, was stationed with the British army in India. Joseph O'Halloran is not listed as a subscriber to the *General History*, but he is listed in the subscription-list of the later 1803 work, and ordered ten sets. It seems likely then, and allowing for the 94 copies remaining in Murray's warehouse in 1793, that O'Halloran's shipment to India and Spain, was in the region of 91 copies, probably less. There are three reasons for taking this position. Firstly, a print-run of 750 copies for the *General History* is confirmed in reliable sources. Secondly, there was only one edition of the *General History*, therefore, O'Halloran cannot be referring to a later reprint of this work. Thirdly, as his comment that he shipped 300 copies to Spain and India appeared in the 'Advertisement' section of this later work, it seems likely, that this remark was an exaggeration, a rhetorical flourish, to stimulate a sales demand for the 1803 work. The sales volume of the *General History* rests then at a tentative 656 copies. However, this figure assumes that all subscribers fulfilled the initial contract, and that no further unsold copies remained with other booksellers.

Another distinctive feature of this list is the aristocratic profile of its subscribers. Subscribers in a subscription-list are generally drawn from the upper echelons of society, and a wealthy commercial class. Notwithstanding this, one of the most

striking features on initial perusal of the subscription-list to O'Halloran's *General History*, is the superior aristocratic profile of this list. The aristocracy were a predominantly landed social élite. Although there were varying degrees of wealth and social status within this class, they were all "bound together by the knowledge of their common role as the governing class" (Beckett, 1989:22). In earlier centuries this class had been categorised as 'nobility'. In the eighteenth century, the term 'aristocracy' came into general usage. The earlier division of this nobility class into peerage and titled gentry, or, *nobilitas major* and untitled gentry, or, *nobilitas minor*, is more useful here on occasions, in highlighting the finer points of the aristocratic element in O'Halloran's list (Beckett, 1989:18). Where this distinction is not important, I use the term 'nobility', when categorising subscribers, to signify the ruling class in the following tables. Otherwise, the more usual eighteenth-century term 'aristocracy', is used to signify the ruling class.

The increased aristocratic element of the *General History* subscription-list can be confirmed by a comparison with the earlier *Introduction* (1772a) list. The *Introduction* contained only 21 members of the *nobilitas major*. Various peerage titles were represented. There was one Marquis, five Earls, two peerage Lords, one Spiritual Lord, and one Baroness, or 9.9% of the overall total of 213 subscribers to this work. In comparison, the list to the *General History* contained 79 members of the *nobilitas major*, and again, various peerage titles were represented. There were five Dukes, one Marquis, eleven Earls, seven Counts, four Viscounts, two Barons, one Dowager Countess, two Countesses, three peerage Lords, and two Spiritual Lords, or 16.5% of the overall total figure of 479 subscribers. The peerage element in the *General History* list is made up of an eclectic mix of continental and British/Irish peerage titles, with the weightier portion at 23 peerage titles drawn from the British/Irish peerage.<sup>6</sup> There are six British peerage titles listed. The significance of this figure increases when placed within the context of the total membership of the British peerage, which prior to 1780, only consisted of 190 members (Beckett, 1989:30). The remaining 17 titles are creations in the peerage of Ireland. There are nine continental peerage titles. With the exception of the Duc de Fitzjames, the

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<sup>6</sup>After the Act of Union between England and Scotland in 1707, English and Scottish peerage titles were replaced by one peerage of Great Britain.

remaining peerage titles are titles of ennoblement, whereby Irish émigrés were rewarded for military/civil service.

In comparison, O'Connor's *The ogygia vindicated* contained 8 members of the *nobilitas major*, and two Spiritual Lords, which represent 3.9% of the total figure of 254 subscribers. Notwithstanding the numerical superiority of Crawford's list, as mentioned at 1,387 subscribers, there are 56 members of the *nobilitas major* and one Spiritual Lord, or 4.1% of the overall total subscriber figure. Brooke's list on the other hand, contained a respectable 30 members of the *nobilitas major*, and one Spiritual Lord, which represents 10.8 % of the total subscriber figure to the *Reliques of Irish poetry*.

The number of subscribers from within the *nobilitas major* poses a query as to whether O'Halloran himself was socialising within these aristocratic circles? Or is this impressive aristocratic element rather a reflection of the extended influence of his networking circle in this period? Certainly, the author's ability to access a wealthy subscriber clientele was an invaluable aid in subscription-publication. Some indication of when, and at what level of social influence O'Halloran conducted his subscriber campaign for his 1778 publication, can be gleaned from his correspondence. A letter from O'Halloran (1791) to the neo-classical painter James Barry in 1791, which has recently come to light, offers further insights into O'Halloran's social circle.

The content of this letter suggests that O'Halloran was socialising at the highest and royal levels of British élite society.<sup>7</sup> In the context of Barry's painting *Venus rising from the Sea* (1772), O'Halloran commented that, "when presented at Gloucester House, I was shown one [painting] purchased at a high expense at Rome, but by no means equal to yours." Gloucester House, London, was the residence of Prince William Henry, Duke of Gloucester and Edinburgh (1743-1805), younger brother of George III, fourth in line of succession at birth. O'Halloran further commented to Barry, "After I left London I heard with great pleasure that you were appointed to paint the rise and progress of the arts", which points to O'Halloran's

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<sup>7</sup>A copy of this letter is presented in Appendix A, letter 15.



presence in London and his presentation at Gloucester House in 1777, as that was the year that Barry's proposal to paint the Great Room of the Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, was accepted (Gibbons, 1991:113). A letter from Murray (1777b) to O'Halloran confirms that O'Halloran was indeed in London in 1777, on publication business. O'Halloran's acceptance socially by a presentation at Gloucester House would have greatly enhanced his personal reputation.

It is not possible to say how O'Halloran's presentation at Gloucester House was organised, but there are various possible scenarios. O'Halloran may have gained entrance into the Royal circle by way of his friendship with Edmund Burke.<sup>8</sup> However, it seems more likely, in light of O'Halloran's Catholicism, that O'Halloran's introduction was conducted via a non-political route, through his friendship, perhaps, with fellow Irishman and surgeon Robert Adair, previously mentioned. O'Halloran refers in warm terms to Adair as, "my esteemed friend Mr. Adair" (Wilde, 1848:240). Adair was a personal friend of George III and also of his brother William Henry, whose life he saved on two separate occasions (Malloch, 1937:590). Therefore, Adair was certainly in a favourable position to introduce O'Halloran at Gloucester House, and considering Adair's friendship with O'Halloran was such that he was prepared to use his own not inconsiderable political contacts at a later date, to support O'Halloran's campaign to secure a civil list pension (Lyons, 2009:33-43), it seems plausible that he may have acted for him in this manner also.

There is also the possibility that O'Halloran's entrance into the élite of London society was facilitated by way of his acquaintance with the Catholic lawyer Dan MacNamara. MacNamara, as mentioned, was the London agent for the Irish Catholic Committee (Edwards, 1942:32,50).<sup>9</sup> MacNamara kept abreast of current affairs and the élite of London society, including the Prince of Wales, enjoyed hospitality at his estate in Surrey. O'Halloran's acquaintance with MacNamara was such that a

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<sup>8</sup>There are two letters from O'Halloran (1778b & 1783) to Burke extant. For a useful biography on Burke and his relationship with Ireland, see: O'Brien (1992).

<sup>9</sup>MacNamara (1720-1800) came to Ireland in 1768 when Dr. John Curry paid him 25 guineas for his services, and it was decided to retain him at that time. He remained in the employ of the Catholic Committee as London agent until replaced by Richard Burke, son of Edmund Burke in 1791 (McGeehin, 1952:7, 104, 110). See: *Oxford DNB*.

“parcel” of the *Proposals* for the *General History* was sent by John Murray (1777b) to MacNamara. MacNamara is also listed as a subscriber to the *General History*, and ordered six copies of the work. O'Halloran's presentation at Gloucester House could have been organised by any of these suggested routes.

Be that as it may, O'Halloran's letter to Barry confirms that O'Halloran had access to the highest echelons of British society. This contact provided him with an opportunity to collect an impressive subscriber list. It would be impossible to say whether O'Halloran was on personal terms with all of his aristocratic subscribers. More probably, he was well acquainted with some members, who subsequently acted on his behalf. The interesting linkage of subscribers in his list can best demonstrate how this system could operate, with out the necessity of knowing the original contact.

Two examples will suffice to illustrate this point. George Spencer, fourth Duke of Marlborough<sup>10</sup> forms a nexus for two apparently unconnected listings, Jacob Bryant<sup>11</sup> and Lancelot Brown.<sup>12</sup> Antiquarian and classical scholar Jacob Bryant was employed as secretary to Marlborough's father. After the death of the third Duke, Bryant was given a 'patronage job' in the Office of Ordnance to the value of £1,000 per annum by the Marlborough family (Korshin, 1974:458). Marlborough employed the services of the landscape artist Lancelot Brown, otherwise known as Capability Brown, to remodel the grounds at Blenheim. Brown was appointed master gardener at Hampton Court in 1764. His work at Blenheim was in conjunction with this position. A fourth subscriber that may be included in this Marlborough nexus is

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<sup>10</sup>In 1762 George Spencer (1739-1817) was sworn a member of the Privy Council of Britain. Under the Grenville administration he held the office of Lord Privy Seal from April 1763 to July 1765. Spencer had electoral importance in the boroughs of Woodstock, Oxford, and Heytesbury and in the county of Oxfordshire. See: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>11</sup>O'Halloran (1776a & 1777a) refers to Jacob Bryant in his *Proposals* as a “learned Author” and cites Bryant's *A New System, or An Analysis of Ancient Mythology* published in 1774-6. For a full account of Bryant's connections with the Spencer family, see: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>12</sup>Lancelot Brown (1716-1783) lived at Wilderness House, Hampton Court from 1764. Brown was a master landscape designer and artist of the eighteenth century whose work is said to have epitomised that age. His friends included the British Prime Ministers: William Pitt, Lord Bute, George Grenville and Lord North. It is also said that he ‘had the ear’ of George III. See: *Oxford DNB*.

Spencer's brother and MP Lord Robert Spencer.<sup>13</sup> All four persons subscribed to O'Halloran's *General History*.

Another revealing example of the interlinkage within the listings is Henry Thomas Fox-Strangways, Earl of Ilchester.<sup>14</sup> Fox-Strangways married Mary Theresa, daughter of Standish O'Grady of Capper-cullen, Co. Limerick, in 1772. The O'Grady family were consistent supporters of O'Halloran's works, and Standish O'Grady appears in all four of O'Halloran's subscription-lists from 1765 until 1803. His daughter, Mary Theresa, appears here as Countess Ilchester. Fox-Strangways represented Midhurst with his cousin, the Hon. Charles James Fox, from 1768-1774.<sup>15</sup> Charles Fox was also a cousin of political reformer, William Fitzgerald, Duke of Leinster.<sup>16</sup> All of the above are O'Halloran subscribers. What these examples demonstrate is that O'Halloran's acquaintance with even one member of these groupings, could significantly extend his subscription network, if properly utilised, and explain the peerage element in this list.

A social profile of O'Halloran's list can be represented effectively visually via a socio-economic breakdown of subscribers, where *nobilitas major* and *minor* are viewed as occupation. In this representation, my analysis is guided by the material representation of the subscription-list. By that I mean that, I adhere closely to those occupations specified within the list, notwithstanding that further investigation of individual subscribers, may alter this perspective. For instance, from a political perspective, the subscriber Barry Yelverton has clear importance as a member of the

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<sup>13</sup>In 1770 Robert Spencer (1747-1831) was appointed a Lord of Trade. He was a supporter of the North administration until 1781 when he suddenly joined the opposition. He subsequently appears in all lists as a supporter of the Fox-Portland party (Namier and Brooke, 1985,3:460-461).

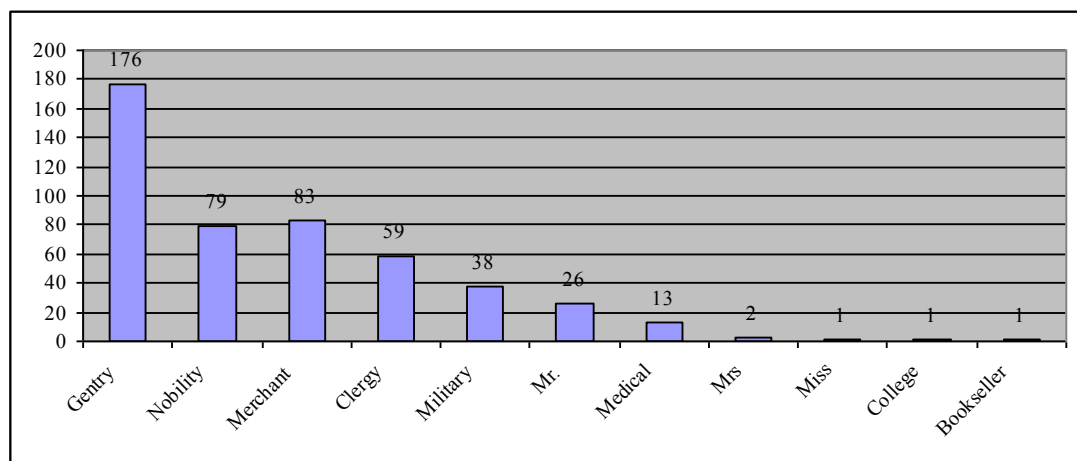
<sup>14</sup>Fox-Strangways (1747-1802) was MP for Midhurst 1768-1774. He was captain of the 24 Ft. and sold out in 1775 when his regiment was ordered to America (Namier and Brooke, 1985,2:467).

<sup>15</sup>Charles James Fox (1748-1806) is listed as Hon. Charles Fox in O'Halloran's list, whether by printing error or otherwise, the 'James' has been omitted. Initially a supporter of the Grafton and North administration, Fox later became a Whig convert. After 1774 Edmund Burke sought him out and he considered Burke as his mentor. Fox did not hold any deep personal religious views and held to a tenet of religious toleration for Dissenters and Roman Catholics. Fox was a Francophile and out of agreement with Burke on the matter of the French Revolution. Fox favoured the French manner of dress as did Sylvester O'Halloran. See: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>16</sup>William Fitzgerald became Ireland's premier peer in 1773 when he assumed the Dukedom after his father's death. His political outlook was Whig. He was appointed commander in chief of the Volunteers in 1779 to be later replaced by Lord Charlemont. His brother Lord Edward Fitzgerald was a leading member of the United Irishmen. The Duke was also suspected of rebel sympathies. See: *Oxford DNB*.

Irish Parliament.<sup>17</sup> However, this quality, which could be denoted by the addition of MP after his name, an occurrence which is reasonably common in both the Crawford and Brooke lists, has been omitted. Therefore, my evaluation of the list at this point is guided by prioritising occupation according to author's intent. For example, I place Sir James Aylmer in the 'nobility' category as denoted by his title, although he is also a colonel in the regiment of Ultonia. Some separation is necessary between the minor gentry and that of the peerage and titled-gentry subscribers, to present an accurate representation of the aristocratic level of O'Halloran's list. Therefore, peerage and titled-gentry subscribers, or the *nobilitas major*, are grouped as 'nobility', while 'gent' and 'esquire', the *nobilitas minor*, together form a general 'gentry' category.

**Figure 4.2: Subscribers to O'Halloran's *General History*: by occupation specified**



The numerical breakdown of this chart reads: Gentry - 176; Nobility - 79; Merchant - 83; Clergy - 59; Military - 38; Mr. - 26; Medical - 13; Mrs. - 2; the Miss, College and Bookseller category are represented by one subscriber each. If the filter placed on military subscribers by prioritising their 'titled-gentry status' was removed, the number in the military category increases from a figure of 38 to 47 military subscribers. This increase is insignificant within the overall total of 479 subscribers. The weightier portion of O'Halloran's list is drawn from the upper

<sup>17</sup>Barry Yelverton (1736-1805) politician and judge, was one of the foremost liberal patriots of his time. He strongly supported both the 1778 and the 1782 Catholic relief bills. He was MP for Carrickfergus 1776-1783; Attorney-General for Ireland 1782-3; Baron of the Exchequer in 1783 and was raised to the peerage in 1800 as Viscount Avonmore. See: *Oxford DNB*.

echelons of society and a wealthy commercial class. The manner in which O'Halloran has presented this list confirms that his interest was in emphasising the aristocratic profile of his subscribers.

Another distinctive feature of this list is the geographical profile of its subscribers. In the subscription-list to the *General History* location is specified for only 215 subscribers, or 44.9% of the total subscriber total. Based on this preliminary reading, 70 subscribers are located outside of Ireland, primarily in Britain, or on the continent, while the remaining 145 subscribers are given various locations within Ireland. However, these figures can be improved upon, utilising the various sources available for subscriber identification, mentioned previously. The geographical location of subscribers is, therefore, underpinned by an element of inferred location. By inferred location I mean that, although location is not specified in the list for example, Sir George Savile (1726-1784) or Lieutenant General Ricardo Wall (1694-1778), because of the high-profile nature of these subscribers, their location can be inferred as Britain and Spain respectively. In this manner, location can be identified for 368 or 76.8% of the total number of subscribers listed in O'Halloran's list. These figures can be further broken down. Of the total figure of 368, 247 or 67% of subscribers are located in Ireland, while the remaining 121 or 32.8% of subscribers, are located primarily in Britain, or on the continent, which confirms the general location distribution indicated by the preliminary reading.

There are 111 remaining subscribers for whom location cannot be identified. The probability is that location for the remaining 111 subscribers is Ireland. There are two reasons for this conjecture. Firstly, an analysis of subscriber surnames indicate an Irish location, however, this is not conclusive. Secondly, as a subscription-list with a strong international element would add prestige to a work, and increase its sales potential, an author would doubtlessly pay particular attention to this element in the composition of his list, particularly with respect to low-profile subscribers, as indeed O'Halloran has here. For instance, the subscriber "Mr. Clarke" had little to offer in the way of status or occupation, and in the hierarchical ordering of the list he is positioned last in that particular alphabetically grouping. However, his location, 'London', is important in highlighting the overseas element of support for the work,

and is particularly noted there. Therefore, the conjecture that the location of the remaining 111 subscribers, which go to make up the total of 479 subscribers, is Ireland, aside from surname analysis, is based on the probability that, were it otherwise, it would have been noted in the list. However, to maintain accuracy, discussion here is confined to those 368 subscribers, for whom location can be identified.

Chapter 2 argued that the London publication of the *General History* was an attempt by O'Halloran to address the Catholic relief issue to an audience outside of Ireland. In this context, therefore, these 121 overseas subscribers are particularly significant. This overseas subscriber support is unprecedented, not only within the O'Halloran corpus, but within the history of antiquarian publication in the post-1763 period, and clearly distinguishes this work from other works of a similar genre and within a comparable timeframe. The distinctiveness of the *General History* list in this regard can be demonstrated. The aim of Table 4.1 below is to demonstrate that the overseas subscriber total in the *General History* at 121 subscribers is superior to other O'Halloran works and, consequently, marks the *General History* as exceptional in this regard.

**Table 4.1: Numerical Comparison of Overseas Subscribers to O'Halloran's Works**

Year	Title	Subscriber Total	Overseas Subscribers
1765	<i>A complete treatise on gangrene and sphacelus</i>	206	6 (2.9%)
1772	<i>An introduction to the study of the history and antiquities of Ireland</i>	213	11 (5.2%)
1778	<i>A general history of Ireland.</i>	479	121 (25.3%)
1803	<i>Introduction to and an history of Ireland</i>	396	5 (1.3%)

Table 4.1 demonstrates that, in a comparison with other O'Halloran works, that have been published by the subscription method, a distinctive feature of the *General History* list is the significant overseas subscriber element present. The following table gives the overseas subscriber element in works of a similar genre and timeframe. The selection of works in Table 4.2 below was determined by the

availability of comparable subscription-lists.<sup>18</sup> However, I have tried to maintain continuity through the chapters, and the works in Table 4.2 have been referenced previously with regard to publication-site in Table 3.2, Chapter 3. The purpose of this contrast is to highlight the numerical superiority of the overseas subscriber element in the *General History*, and the uniqueness of its occurrence. The *General History* list is included below to aid the comparison.

**Table 4.2: Numerical Comparison of Overseas Subscribers in Works of a Similar Genre and Comparable Timeframe**

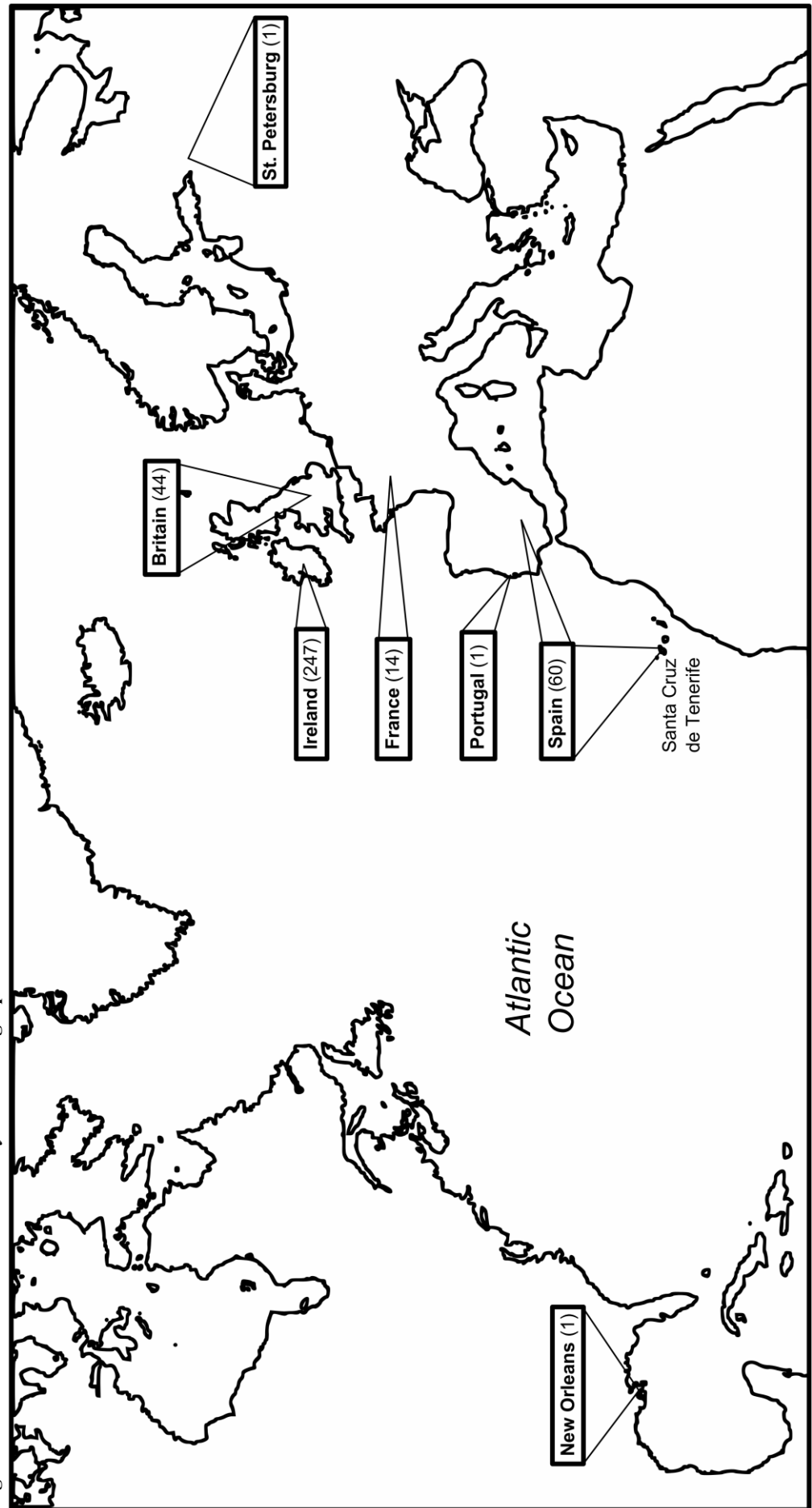
Author	Year	Title	Subscriber Total	Overseas Subscribers
O'Connor	1775	<i>The ogygia vindicated</i>	254	3 (1.2%)
Crawford	1782	<i>History of Ireland</i>	1,387	33 (2.4%)
Brooke	1789	<i>Reliques of Irish poetry</i>	288	29 (10%)
Hely	1793	<i>Ogygia</i>	405	3 (0.7%)
O'Halloran	1778	<i>A general history of Ireland.</i>	479	121 (25.3%)

O'Connor's *The ogygia vindicated* contains the smallest overseas subscriber element. It can be noted that despite Crawford's impressive total of 1,387 subscribers, the overseas subscriber element is small, at 2.4% of the total figure. Brook's list contains a significant overseas element at 10% of the total subscriber figure there. This comparison confirms the numerical superiority of O'Halloran's overseas subscribers in comparison to other similar works, and sharply differentiates O'Halloran's work, from that of his contemporaries, in this regard.

The geographical distribution of O'Halloran's subscription-list, including the number of subscribers from each country, is presented visually overleaf (Figure 4.3). The largest numerical representation is Ireland with 247 subscribers, which is not

<sup>18</sup>The first edition of Leland's *The history of Ireland* does not contain a subscription-list. However, the 1775 edition of this work contains a subscription-list with a total of 389 subscribers. Of this number there were two overseas subscribers: one from Minorca and one from France. However, I have not included this work in the list above as a comparison between a first edition subscription-list and a later edition would not be an accurate comparison.

Figure 4.3: O'Halloran's *General History* 1778: Geographical Distribution of Subscribers





unexpected, as a work on Irish affairs would find a more natural and receptive market within the home environment. Munster accounts for 124 or 51% of subscribers, 95 subscribers or 38 % are located in Leinster, 22 or 9% are in Connaught and 2% or 6 subscribers are in Ulster. These results are not unexpected, and given the personal dynamic of subscription-collection, O'Halloran's largest support is from his home province of Munster. The high results for Leinster are also predictable. Dublin was the cultural, social and political capital of Ireland and was a central meeting point for all provinces. O'Halloran, as a successful medical practitioner and author, had access to Dublin's cultural and political élite. It is difficult to explain the poor showing in Ulster. However, the fact that Ulster is the point furthest from the author's home support base seems a likely explanation.

In addition to the numerical superiority of the overseas subscriber element in the *General History* list, a second distinctive feature of this group is its geographical distribution. In descending order, O'Halloran's overseas support is concentrated in Spain with 60 (66)<sup>19</sup> subscribers, or 49.6% of the total overseas subscriber group. There are 44 or 36.4% subscribers from Britain; 14 or 11.6% of subscribers are located in France, and one subscriber each from Portugal, Russia and New Orleans, individually representing 0.8% of the total overseas figure. This geographical distribution clearly imbues the subscription-list of the *General History* with a strong international element and an imperial resonance, located in the British, Spanish and French subscribers. The greater demand for O'Halloran's *General History* in Spain, rather than France, is noted and poses a question, which I address in the following section.

The distinctiveness of the geographical distribution of the overseas subscribers to the *General History* can be demonstrated by comparison with the O'Halloran corpus, and subsequently, by contrast with comparable works from a similar genre and timeframe. In Table 4.1, the total figure for O'Halloran's overseas subscribers, taking all of O'Halloran's works, (apart from the *General History*) into account, is 22 subscribers. There are in total 16 subscribers from Britain, three subscribers from France, one subscriber from Maine, one subscriber from Jamaica, and one subscriber

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<sup>19</sup>Parenthesis denotes the number of copies ordered.

from Bengal, India.<sup>20</sup> The significant increase in British, French and Spanish support for the *General History* is a distinctive feature of this list.

In the second Table 4.2, with respect to O'Connor's *The ogygia vindicated*, there is one subscriber from England and two subscribers listed from France. Of the 33 overseas subscribers in Crawford's list, the geographical location for five subscribers is America with the remainder from Britain. Brooke's *Reliques* had a more international flavour, with one subscriber from Spain, four from Prague, seven subscribers from Italy, and seventeen subscribers from Britain. Hely's *Ogygia* contained one subscriber each from Britain, France and Bengal. This comparison further highlights the distinctiveness of the numerical superiority and geographical distribution of the overseas element in the *General History* list.

In conclusion, the subscription-list to O'Halloran's *General History*, when compared with lists from a similar genre and a comparable timeframe, is remarkable. Comparatively speaking, O'Halloran's *General History*, based on subscriber numbers and projected sales volume, the distinctive aristocratic element and the unparalleled geographical distribution of subscribers, confirms an international distribution and audience unsurpassed by any other similar work from this period. The significant point to be noted, with regard to the overseas subscriber element, is that neither before nor after this period, does a similar event occur, and points to the temporal significance of this occurrence, which will be discussed shortly here.

#### 4.4. Overseas Subscribers: Introduction

The geographical distribution of overseas subscribers confirms the international dynamic of the subscription-list to O'Halloran's *General History*. For ease of discussion these 121 overseas subscribers can be broken down into two main groups, notwithstanding the initial but deceptive multi-ethnic appearance of this group. The 44 British subscribers make up the first group in the overseas composition of O'Halloran's list. The second group is composed of successful émigré Irishmen in the service of European Catholic powers, and an equally successful Irish émigré commercial group, consisting of 77 subscribers in total. It would be idle to separate

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<sup>20</sup>The subscriber from Bengal is O'Halloran's son, Captain Joseph O'Halloran, mentioned previously.

this group into its smaller constituent parts, as its geographical distribution is not reflective of a group allegiance to one location over that of other, but rather reflects the push and pull of European military conflict in the dispersion of the Irish military émigré group, and sites of commercial opportunity for the merchant class. The following discussion focuses on the British subscriber group.

#### **4.5. The British Subscriber: Analysis**

There is a twofold aim to the analysis presented here. Firstly, the aim is to provide an identity profile of the British subscriber focusing, primarily, but not exclusively on the political element of this group. Secondly, the aim is to show by comparison with other subscription-lists, the uniqueness of this strong British political element in the subscription-list of a work on Irish affairs. This analysis is followed by a discussion on the significance of this group in the subscription-list at this political juncture.

Within the British subscriber group, there is a small but significant Anglo-Irish political element, which raised an initial difficulty in categorising the Anglo-Irish MP who sat, or who had the entitlement to sit, in both the Irish and British House of Commons, as belonging properly in a British or Irish category. In the following categorisation of these MPs as primarily British or Irish, I follow the guidelines as laid out by Namier and Brooke (1985, 1:163), who in this regard commented: “A man with a seat in both Parliaments could be but a nominal member of one of them, and in almost all cases he chose to concentrate on the British House of Commons”.<sup>21</sup>

There are three subscribers in O'Halloran's list that fall into this category: John Fitzpatrick (1745-1818) Earl of Ossory, William Ponsonby (1741-1793), Earl Bessborough and lastly Earl Robert Nugent (1720-1788). Fitzpatrick devoted his political life to the British House of Commons, where as Lord Gowran he was MP for Bedfordshire between the years 1767 -1794, and Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire during the period 1771-1818 (Namier and Brooke, 1985,2:431-33). After his father's death in 1758, William Ponsonby succeeded to his title as Baron

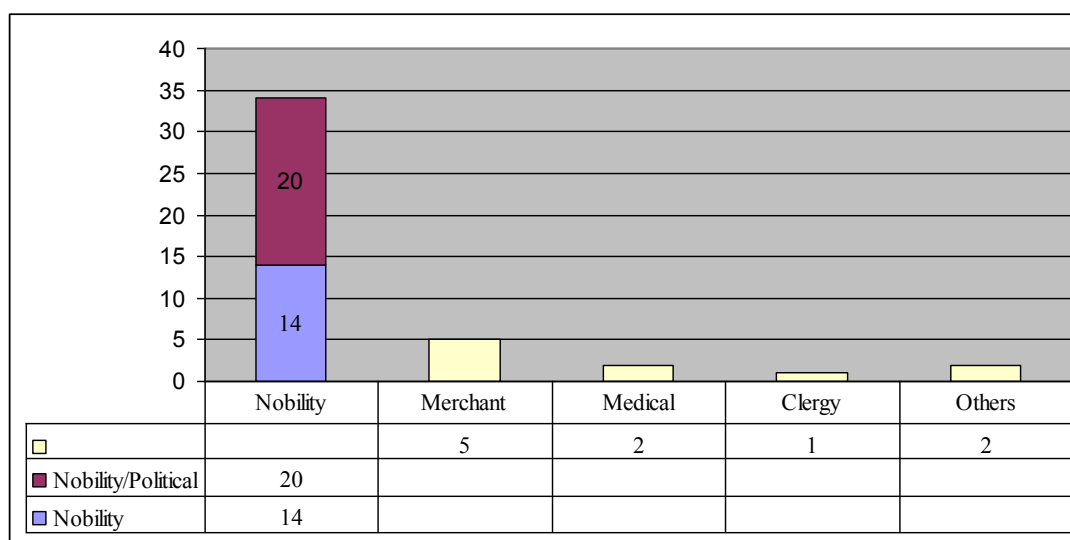
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<sup>21</sup>Honourable Thomas Conolly (1738-1803) was an exception to this rule. Connolly was MP for Malmesbury, between the years 1759-1768 and MP for Chichester during the period 1768-1780 but focused on the Irish House of Commons where he was of particular note (Namier and Brooke, 1985, 1:163).

Ponsonby of Sysonby, a creation in the Peerage of Great Britain, which entitled him to a seat in the British House of Commons. In addition to holding a seat for Kilkenny 1727–58, he sat in the Westminster Parliament for Derby 1742–54, Saltash 1754–6 and Harwich 1756–8. He married Lady Constance Cavendish, and thereafter, his life and political ties were with England (Namier and Brooke, 1985,3:306-307). Robert Nugent was an MP in the British House of Commons for St. Mawes 1741-51, Bristol 1754-1774, and was returned again for St. Mawes in 1774, and held his seat there until 1784. These subscribers devoted their political life to the British Parliament. Therefore, for the purpose of this analysis, they are categorised as ‘British’ in all following discussions here, in line with Namier and Brooke guidelines.

Politics was not an occupation in the eighteenth century. Those involved in state service were drawn from the nobility, whose source of income was their estates, and neither peers nor MPs were paid for their services. Political service in this manner was considered part of the ‘duty’ of the ruling class. The occupational breakdown of subscribers, which has been useful up to this point as a form of categorisation, requires some modification to highlight the political element in the British subscriber group. Therefore, a subset within the nobility category has been created, which includes the *nobilitas major* and *nobilitas minor*, and colour coded to denote those subscribers with political influence.

**Figure 4.4: British subscribers to O'Halloran's *General History*: by occupation specified with a political subset**



The British subscriber group contains 34 members of the nobility which is 77.2% of the total figure of 44 British subscribers. Twenty members of this group of 34 have significant political influence, either in the British House of Commons or House of Lords. This figure of 20 represents 45.5% of the total British subscriber figure. There are five merchants representing 11.4% of the overall total. Representatives from the medical profession total 2 or 4.5%. There is one clerical subscriber at 2.3 % of the total figure. The remaining groups consist of one 'Mr.', and one college subscriber, 'Eton College', indicated under the category title 'Others' above.

Many of these 44 British subscribers can be accounted for in the usual way within the general parameters of subscription-collection, as the 'personal affair' or extended social circle of the author. The appearance of the subscriber "James M<sup>c</sup>Mahon, apothecary Russel Street, Covent Garden", or, "Richard William Stack, M.D. London", is not surprising, considering O'Halloran's medical profession. Other British subscribers cannot be identified because of insufficient information given in the listing, but similar and clearly 'Irish' surnames in the instance of "Mr. George Dwyer, merchant, London", when compared with "Mr Anthony O'Dwyer, merchant, Cádiz", would suggest a connection with the Irish *émigré* merchant class, which has a numerically strong representation in this subscription-list, as mentioned.

However, the numerically strong representation from the British political élite in the list is striking. For the politically-informed reader, the appearance of this powerful and influential coterie of British politicians in O'Halloran's subscription-list functioned as a significant political marker, and imbued the work with considerable gravitas. Amongst those mentioned here, and heading this list, is the leader of the Whig party, the Marquis of Rockingham, Charles Watson Wentworth.<sup>22</sup> Rockingham was Prime Minister twice, in 1765-6 and again in 1782. Sir George Savile, although officially an independent, had Whig sympathies. Savile is particularly important within the Irish context as on 14 May 1778 he introduced the English Catholic Bill, 'for relieving his majesty's Roman Catholic subjects', in the

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<sup>22</sup>Rockingham (1730-1782) blamed Lord North for the war in the American colonies and condemned the Boston Tea Party. On May 11 1779, he spoke in Parliament in favour of the liberalisation of Irish trade. See: *Oxford DNB*.

English House.<sup>23</sup> A further subscriber listed here is Rockingham's right-hand man and later Prime Minister, the Duke of Portland, William Cavendish-Bentinck.<sup>24</sup> At the return to power of Rockingham in 1782, Portland was made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland during the period of negotiation for legislative independence. He was also head of the Whig party from 1784 to 1790.

A further Whig magnate in this coterie is the Duke of Devonshire, William Cavendish. Devonshire was Lord Treasurer of Ireland and governor of Cork from 1766 to 1793.<sup>25</sup> Included in this group is the Hon. Charles Fox, previously mentioned, who held the post of foreign secretary in the Rockingham's Administration in 1782, later to form a coalition with Lord North in 1783.<sup>26</sup> Another Whig magnate here is the Right Honourable Richard Rigby who spent over 43 years in the British House of Commons.<sup>27</sup> In 1757 he came to Ireland as secretary to John Russell, 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Bedford and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. The Duke of Marlborough, who retired from political office in 1766 but remained an influential figure in electoral terms due to his influence in the boroughs of Woodstock, Oxford and Heytesbury and in the county of Oxford, as mentioned. His brother Sir Robert Spencer, also mentioned, was an MP in the British House of Commons for a total of forty years.

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<sup>23</sup>Savile (1726-1784) was elected for Yorkshire in 1759 and held his seat in four consecutive elections. Savile was a moderate politician and followed Rockingham's political line. Rockingham in turn referred to Savile 'as my mentor'. By 1782 his relationship with Rockingham was strained and he did not favour the Fox-North alliance (Namier and Brooke, 1985,3:405-9). See also: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>24</sup>In 1765, Portland (1738-1809) was appointed to the office of Lord Chamberlain in the Rockingham administration. He was home Secretary in Pitt's ministry from 1794-1801. He is accused of betraying his friend Viceroy Fitzwilliam and changing his mind on Catholic emancipation although apparently he never had expressed himself publicly in favour of it. See: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>25</sup>Cavendish (1748-1811) did not have major political ambitions and refused cabinet office three times, even during the Regency crisis in 1788-9 when Charles Fox had told him any post he wanted was his. See: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>26</sup>Frederick North, second Earl of Guildford (1732-1792). Lord North was a member of the Tory party. He was British Minister from 1770 to 1782. The Quebec Act 1774, which granted religious toleration to the Quebec Catholics, was passed during his ministry, as was the 1778 Irish Catholic Relief Act. In 1780, he enacted legislation that allowed Ireland to export woollen goods and to trade freely both ways with British colonies. He was in favour of the union of Britain and Ireland, and during the debates on Pitt's Irish trade proposals, spoke in favour of union. See: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>27</sup>Richard Rigby (1722-1788) represented Castle Rising from 1745 to 1747, Sudbury 1747 to 1754 and Tavistock 1754 to 1788. Rigby was listed by the parliamentary managers as Opposition, but Namier and Brooke report that he was not very 'active' on their side. Rigby sat in the Irish House as an MP for Old Leighlin, was made a member of the Privy Council in 1760, and returned to Britain with Bedford, in 1761 (Namier and Brooke, 1985,3:354-360).

The only expressly militarily connected politician listed, is Vice-Admiral Hugh Pigot, MP for Bridgenorth between 1778 and 1784. In 1775, Pigot was promoted to rear-admiral, followed by a further promotion in 1776, to vice-admiral.<sup>28</sup> In March 1782, under the Rockingham Administration, he was made a Lord of the Admiralty. John St. John, MP for Eye during the period 1775-1784, is also listed. St. John was a relative of Lord North, and was a constant supporter of the North Administration. St. John was also a member of Charles Fox's social set.<sup>29</sup> Edmund Burke MP for Bristol, Catholic sympathiser and O'Halloran (1778b, 1783) correspondent is also a subscriber here.<sup>30</sup>

Another Whig political figure present here is Earl Fitzwilliam, maternal nephew of the Marquis of Rockingham.<sup>31</sup> William Gerard Hamilton served two Whig administrations, that of the Duke of Devonshire (1756-7) and the Duke of Newcastle (1757-62) (Johnston-Liik, 2002, 4:354-5).<sup>32</sup> There are in addition the three 'Anglo-Irish' politicians, mentioned previously, William Ponsonby, John Fitzpatrick and Robert Nugent. Robert Nugent was an enduring supporter of Lord North, as were two further British politicians listed here: Charles Mellish was MP for Pontefract in 1774 and Aldborough in 1780,<sup>33</sup> and George Clive, MP for Bishops Castle during the years 1763-1779.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>28</sup>Hugh Pigot (1722-1792), previously a supporter of North's administration, from 1778 was in regular opposition (Namier and Brooke, 1985, 3:281). For Pigot's military campaigns see: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>29</sup>St. John also represented Newport between the years 1780-1784. (Namier and Brooke, 1985, 3:400-401). St John did not stand for election after 1784 and was more interested in the theatre than in politics. See: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>30</sup>Burke represented Wendover (1765-1774), Bristol (1774-1780) and Malton (1780-1794). He was private secretary to William Gerard Hamilton, and when Hamilton was appointed Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1761, Burke came with him to Dublin. After a bitter break with Hamilton, Burke became private secretary to the Marquis of Rockingham in 1765. Burke was against the American war, and a firm supporter of the British Empire, which he envisaged as an "aggregate of many states under one common head" (Namier and Brooke, 1985, 2:145-153). See also: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>31</sup>William Wentworth Fitzwilliam (1748-1833) was 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Fitzwilliam in the Peerage of Great Britain, and 4<sup>th</sup> Earl Fitzwilliam in the Peerage of Ireland. He entered the British House of Lords in 1769. On his uncle's death, he inherited, not only his vast estates in Yorkshire, Northamptonshire and Wicklow, but also his political mantle. In 1795, he was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. See: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>32</sup>William Gerard Hamilton (1729-1796) was chief secretary to Lords Halifax and Northumberland in the early 1760s. He had a long political career from 1755 to 1796. See: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>33</sup>Mellish (1736-1796) was a constant and firm supporter of the North administration (Namier and Brooke, 1985, 3:129).

<sup>34</sup>Clive (d. 1779) went to India in 1757 with the family of Robert Clive, where he acted as an agent for the army. In 1763, he was elected for Bishops Castle until his death in 1779. In 1772, Clive returned to supporting the government party, and continued to do so until 1779 (Namier and Brooke, 1985, 2:223-224).

The political influence of this cluster of British MPs in the subscription-list to the *General History* is unquestionable. Their appearance in the subscription-list of a work on Irish affairs by a Catholic author, is also unexpected. The publisher John Murray (1776a), had candidly advised O'Halloran that subscription potential for this work in Britain was very low. Confirming this point, Murray (1777b) further commented in a later letter to O'Halloran, confirming his earlier assessment, "For my own part I have not Received a single subscription to your history". Therefore, in light of Murray's comments and reservations regarding the receptiveness of the British market to O'Halloran's proposed work, the appearance in the *General History* subscription-list of a total of 44 British subscribers, 20 of whom are influential British MPs, is remarkable.

A key point in the argument which will follow here will link the appearance of Britain's political élite in the *General History* subscription-list, with British imperial concern to pass a Catholic Relief Act in Ireland in 1778. Therefore, a central point in the construction of this argument is to emphasise both the timing and uniqueness of the event. The timing and distinctiveness of this occurrence can be demonstrated by comparison with other lists. Firstly, a comparison with the list from O'Halloran's *Introduction* (1772a), and his later *An introduction to and an history of Ireland* (1803), will confirm the numerical exceptionality of the British political élite in the *General History* subscription-list. Secondly, this comparison is then extended to include lists from a similar genre and timeframe, to further confirm the distinctiveness of this occurrence.

As shown in Table 4.1, O'Halloran's *Introduction* contained 11 overseas subscribers. Of this number, nine subscribers were from Britain, and can be categorised as follows: two peerage members, one titled-gentry subscriber, three clerical subscribers, one apothecary and two gentry subscribers. Of the nine British subscribers, only three in this list can be categorised as indicating a degree of British political influence. They are John Montagu (1718-1792) Earl of Sandwich, who was a British statesman with a seat in the British House of Lords. He held various government posts throughout his career, and was three times Lord of the Admiralty,



the last occasion during the North Administration of 1771-1783 (*Oxford DNB*). His son, Lord Hinchinbroke, also named John Montagu (1744-1814), was an active MP of the British House of Commons for 27 years, where he represented Brackley 1765-1768 and Huntingdonshire 1768-1792 (Namier and Brooke, 1985,3:155-157). Lord Courtenay (1744-1788), later Viscount Courtenay, was the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl de jure of Devon and had a seat in the British House of Lords.<sup>35</sup> Only one of these subscribers, Lord Courtenay, appears in the list of the *General History*. Therefore, the British political élite element in the *General History* is far superior at 20 subscribers, than the *Introduction*, which contained only three subscribers in this category. Although the *Introduction* underwent a London reprint, it was initially published in Dublin, which indicates O'Halloran was not particularly seeking a British or overseas readership for this work.

A further comparison to highlight the exceptionality of the British political élite in the *General History* list can be made by referring to the subscription-list of O'Halloran's *An introduction to and an history of Ireland*, published in Dublin in 1803. The subscription-list to the 1803 work was substantial, with 396 subscribers and 766 three-volume copies ordered. However, there are only five overseas subscribers listed. Of this total figure of five, four subscribers were from Britain and one subscriber from Bengal. The Bengal subscriber can be identified as O'Halloran's son, Captain O'Halloran. Of these four British subscribers, which consist of two 'esquires' and one subscriber without any quality appended, there is only one subscriber that can be said to belong to the British imperial and political dynamic of the *General History*, the Marquis of Hertford, Francis Seymour-Ingram. As Viscount Beauchamp, Seymour-Ingram was politically active from 1766, when he represented Lostwithiel, and later Oxford, in the British House of Commons. He was also Lord of the Treasury in the Lord North Administration from 1774-1780. The low overseas subscriber element in this work could be for a number of reasons. Like the *Introduction*, this work was published in Dublin, which indicates that O'Halloran

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<sup>35</sup>There is a letter from Edmund Burke to Courtenay, 24 July 1780 which indicates a friendly acquaintance. See: Williams and Bourke, (1844,2:363). The Devon Estate in Newcastle West, Limerick was granted to Sir William Courtenay, Knight of Powderham in Devonshire, on 23 September 1591. The family held the title Earls of Devon, and the land in Limerick eventually comprised 85,000 acres. It was held by the Courtenay family until the sale of the estate in 1908, under the 1903 Land Act, when practically all the lands of the Devon Estate were sold. The Courtenay estate was Powderham Castle in the county of Devon. See: *Connaught and Munster Landed Estates*.

had no specific interest in engaging an audience outside of Ireland for this work. Another reason may be that as this work is a republication of O'Halloran's antiquarian corpus, rather than a first edition, those individuals overseas who might otherwise have expressed an interest, were already in possession of first-edition copies of the works.

Moving outside the O'Halloran corpus, the exceptionality of the *General History* list in relation to the political profile of its British subscribers, can be demonstrated by comparison with the list of O'Connor's *The ogygia vindicated*. An initial perusal of this list reveals the poverty of either English or even Irish nobility patronage. There are only two peerage members and two Spiritual Lords: the Earl of Moira, John Rawdon (1720-1793), the Earl of Hillsborough, Wills Hill (1718-1793), the Lord Archbishop of Antrim and Primate of all Ireland and Bishop of Down. This is surprising, perhaps, given that O'Connor was of the minor-landed gentry. The coterie of Whig politicians representing the British imperial element in O'Halloran's list, is absent. The only overseas subscriber here is Wills Hill. Hill was secretary of State for the American Colonies from 1768-1772, and again in 1779 until 1782.<sup>36</sup>

A perusal of other subscription-lists mentioned here, such as the subscription-list to Brooke's *Reliques* (1789), or Crawford's *A history of Ireland* (1783), or Hely's *Ogygia* (1793), verifys that this cluster of British MPs is confined to the *General History* subscription-list, and confirms both the timing and distinctiveness of the British political élite in the *General History* list. What makes it even more remarkable is that their names should appear here in a work that, from a British imperial perspective, is really trivial and unimportant, unless the British Empire had something to gain by demonstrating support for Irish Catholics at this juncture via O'Halloran's subscription-list. What significance can be attached to this event?

#### 4.5.1. British Intervention: Catholic Relief in Ireland 1778

In August 1778, Gardiner's Relief Act, the first substantial repeal of penal restrictions on Irish Catholics was enacted.<sup>37</sup> This Act abolished the gavelling clause

<sup>36</sup>There were two British secretaries of state until 1782. Their responsibilities were divided geographically. Hill was responsible for southern England, Wales, Ireland and the American colonies (until 1768). See: *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>37</sup>The Irish Catholic Relief of 1778 is generally referred to as Gardiner's Relief Act, from Luke Gardiner MP for Dublin, who introduced the Heads of the Bill into the Irish House in May 1778.

of the 1703 Act, which legislated for the compulsory division of an estate on the death of a Catholic land-owner. The maximum period of Catholic land-leases was extended from 31 years to 999 years and the automatic right of an eldest son, on converting to Protestantism, to his father's estate was rescinded. The reason for the passing of this Catholic Relief Act at this particular time has been the subject of much scholarly research. One of the aspects of the Catholic question in Ireland and elsewhere that has been emphasized in the recent historiography on this issue, is the imperial context.

Jacqueline Hill has argued that the impetus for the Quebec Act, which granted religious toleration to the Catholics of Quebec, was essentially a pragmatic one, arising from issues of military and imperial security (1989). With regard to Gardiner's Relief Act, Burns (1963), Donovan (1985), and Bartlett (2010) have all emphasized the military origins of the act, and further clarified its origins as part of a wartime strategy by the British ministry to supplement the army during the American war with Irish Catholic recruitment, as previously outlined in the Introduction to this dissertation. The Irish Catholic Relief Act was initially part of a wider campaign to pass a measure of Catholic relief in England, Scotland and Ireland through a potentially reluctant British Parliament and an even more reluctant Irish Parliament. Catholic Relief Acts were passed in England and Ireland but the Scottish measure failed due mainly to violent opposition in Scotland (Donovan, 1987). The Irish Catholic Relief Act was considered by the British Government to be more urgent (Donovan, 1985:95-99). The reason that the British Prime Minister, Lord North was in favour of an Irish Catholic Relief Act, was because the British army urgently needed soldiers for the war in America, and Ireland, where three quarters of the population were Catholics, was an untapped recruiting resource. Gardiner's Relief Act did not specifically mention Catholic recruitment, but it was hoped that the Catholic gentry, who were the only ones who profited from the property relief measures of the Catholic Relief Act, would show gratitude, by encouraging Catholics to enlist in the British army (Bartlett, 1993b:70-71).

Penal legislation was the bulwark of the Irish Protestant ascendancy position, and various measures were employed by the British Government to counter the

expected opposition to the passing of a Catholic Relief Act in Ireland. This study will make the argument that one of those measures, hitherto undetected, was the orchestrated appearance of an unprecedented powerful British political coterie in O'Halloran's subscription-list, to demonstrate British Government support for Irish Catholics at this juncture. The following discussion will argue that these subscribers cannot be viewed within the normal parameters of subscriber support, and therefore, that the more likely reason for their appearance can be found in the political arena. In this analysis I confine the investigation to those MPs in the *General History* list that were politically active at this period. For instance, although listed as a subscriber in the subscription-list to O'Halloran's *General History*, I omit Thomas Stapleton, whose political career as an MP for Oxfordshire ended in 1768, and the Earl of Ilchester, Henry Fox-Strangways, who did not sit in the British House after 1774. Therefore, this discussion is confined to those other 18 British MPs who were active at this period.

The appearance of a subscriber in the subscription-list of any work creates particular associations in the public sphere between that subscriber and the author of the work. Within the 'personal affair' dimension of subscription-collection it is implied that the subscriber was a member of the close personal, social or extended social circle of the author. Moreover, the subscriber, by providing financial backing in the form of a deposit, confirmed his support for, and his desire to bring the work he had subscribed to, into the public domain. Furthermore, the subscriber's support for the work and, by extension, its ideology entered into the public domain once the work was published, assuming the subscription-list was published as part of the overall work, which was generally, but not always the case. Therefore, within the normal parameters of subscription-collection, the inference is that O'Halloran had access to, or acquaintance with, many of the leading political figures in the British Parliament, and that they in turn supported both the author and his work by sponsoring its publication into the public domain. The significance of these figures is that they are members of the British governing élite, whether in power or in opposition, and are the official public representatives of British imperial power. The appearance of even one of these names would significantly increase the gravitas of any work. There are two possible scenarios that could explain the unprecedented

appearance of 18 such political representatives in the list of a Catholic author supporting a history of Ireland.

One possible explanation for their appearance here is that there had arisen a sudden and unexpected interest in Irish antiquarianism in British Government circles. This is unlikely for many reasons. O'Halloran's assertions of an ancient Milesian civilisation in Ireland which is a central theme of his work, was in direct opposition to current historiographical trends as outlined by the major British historians David Hume (1711-1776) and Dr. William Robertson (1721-1793) who favoured the model of a progressive development of society.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, and more significantly perhaps, the acceptance within British Government circles of the civilised ethos of early Irish society would have undermined the legitimacy of the English conquest of Ireland, which was based on the alleged cultural inferiority of the Gael (Canny, 1973). In addition, O'Halloran's *General History* was not only a political subversive restatement of Ireland's past, but also contained a forthright condemnation of British rule in Ireland, within the fine distinction that O'Halloran directed his ire towards the Irish, rather than the British Parliament.

Some of these British political élite subscribers had connections with Ireland, and, by extension, it could be argued that, they had an interest in Irish affairs and therefore might sponsor a history of Ireland. Savile and Rockingham were both owners of Irish estates. Savile also had close familial ties to Ireland, his mother Mary, was daughter of John Pratt (c.1670-1740), who had held the position of Deputy Vice-treasurer of Ireland. Further direct or indirect connections with Ireland can be identified within this coterie of British parliamentary figures. For instance, Charles James Fox was cousin to the Duke of Leinster. Earl Fitzwilliam, another Irish estate holder, was the maternal nephew of the Marquis of Rockingham. However, if a motivational factor for the appearance of these British political subscribers was a sudden interest in Irish antiquarianism, then their names would appear in similar works, and, as demonstrated, this is simply not the case. Therefore, none of the reasons that normally drive subscribers appear valid here, and further

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<sup>38</sup>Colin Kidd discusses the effect of the new method of social analysis proposed and supported by Hume and Robertson on Gaelic antiquity, and on issues of national identity in Ireland and Scotland. This type of social analysis came to be known as 'stadialism', and argued that society developed in three or four stages from an original state of barbarity to civilisation. See: Kidd (1994:1197-1214).

highlights the uniqueness of the appearance of this numerically strong display of British political power in a work that must, in the ordinary course of British imperial events, appear relatively unimportant – unless the British Empire could see some material gain in its promotion.

The high-profile political stature of these subscribers suggests that an explanation may be more readily found within the imperial and political arenas. A striking consideration, in this regard, is the appearance of Sir George Savile in the subscription-list of O'Halloran's *General History*. Savile was the independent Member of Parliament, who on 14 May 1778, introduced the English Catholic Relief Bill 'for relieving his majesty's Roman Catholic subjects', in the English House of Commons. The appearance of Savile's name fronting the work of an Irish Catholic author published in June 1778, with the English Catholic Relief Act passed into law, and a similar Irish bill under acrimonious discussion in the Irish House of Commons, would invite not only a consideration of a linkage between the two acts, but would also strongly suggest that, that linkage had been formed within the imperial corridors of power.

Despite the fact that Sir George Savile was not the prime instigator of Catholic relief, and Donovan (1985:87) would suggest that Savile was chosen to present the English Catholic Relief Bill, "because he was 'sound' on the supposed dangers of Roman Catholicism", Savile's name became so linked in the public mind, as Luke Gardiner's would later, with the Irish Catholic Relief Act (1778), that the name and the act became synonymous. So much so that Savile, amongst others, became the target of an attack by the Protestant Association during the Gordon Riots, when his house was attacked, and his coach overturned (Rudé, 1956:101). He was no less infamous in Ireland. According to a correspondent who signed himself 'Caractacus', Sir George Savile and others, had imposed on the people in order to ensure passage of this bill in England:

The gentlemen who spoke in favour of the Popish act, [in the British House of Commons] did not, in my opinion, seem perfectly well acquainted with the genius of the Roman Catholic Religion. Sir George Savile, and many other

able and disinterested men, seemed to consider as much altered, or rather absolutely reformed, that what it formerly had been. They pretended to insinuate, that the darkness of ignorant superstition, and the madness of bigotry, had yielded to the irradiations of science and philosophy; that the pretensions of the church of Rome to power over the consciences of men, had partly been given up, and partly been rendered feeble and inefficacious through length of time and disuse – ALL THIS I DENY.

(Caractacus, 1778:4)

Therefore, the appearance of Savile's name in the subscription-list of a work by an Irish Catholic author, at this particular juncture, would suggest a connection with Catholic relief politics.

Another reason that points to the political significance of these subscribers is that, of all 18 subscribers only one, Edmund Burke, had a personal commitment to Ireland (Donovan, 1985:87). Although the Marquis of Rockingham had spoken in favour of the English Catholic Relief Bill in the House of Lords (Cobbett, 1814,19:1144), and held to a general philosophy of toleration, he had no previous history of agitation for relief of Irish Catholics. Sir George Savile, who introduced the English Catholic Relief Bill had on 18 May 1775, and again on the 14 April 1778, moved for repeal of the Quebec Act, which had granted toleration to the Quebec Catholics, as an act "odious and inimical to the Americans" (Namier and Brooke, 1985,3:408). These actions point to Savile's complex stance on issues relating to Catholic relief.

Certainly for O'Halloran, the collection of such a singular group was something of an accomplishment, however, can this feat be attributed solely to O'Halloran's networking skills? Or was he knowingly, or unknowingly, a willing tool in Lord North's overall strategy to ensure passage of a bill for Catholic relief in Ireland? Or in other words, did the British Prime Minister, Lord North, co-opt O'Halloran's *General History*, in the form of the subscription-list, to send a message of British Government support for Irish Catholics to the Irish Protestant Parliament, as part of his overall tactics to ensure passage of relief for Irish Catholics? There are two

reasons that Lord North wanted to ensure passage of Catholic relief in Ireland. Firstly, he wanted to encourage Catholic recruitment into the British army, as troops were needed for the American war. Secondly, he needed to prevent the disaffection of the Irish Catholic, as the signing of the Franco-American Treaty in March 1778 made the British Empire's western flank, Ireland, vulnerable to a French invasion.

If indeed O'Halloran's subscription-list is an orchestrated piece of pro-relief propaganda, and aside from the other British parliamentary figures listed there, the appearance of Sir George Savile is striking, and has to be more than coincidence. I would sense Lord North's hand in the strategy, rather than that of Edmund Burke. It is not impossible that Burke was acquiescent in this manoeuvre, but on the whole, as a known Catholic sympathiser (O'Brien, 1992:49), Burke adopted a more covert strategy, avoiding the foreground arena in this debate, and instead remained "unobtrusive", and "openly championed Scottish and English Roman Catholics only in 1779" (Donovan, 1985:87-8).

The absence of Lord North's name from O'Halloran's subscription-list does not preclude his orchestration of the list. Catholic relief was an initiative that involved the government right to the top, and since senior members of the government/political élites were sponsoring the *General History*, it is unlikely that North was unaware of it, and it is more than possible that he approved of it. The reason Lord North should have considered such a stratagem necessary lies in the expected opposition to the passage of a Catholic relief measure in Ireland, along similar lines to that which had been passed in England. The English Catholic Relief Act was simply the first step in orchestrating a similar act in Ireland, and was confirmed by Lord Beauchamp's outspoken remark during the debates on the bill in the English House, "this bill [English Catholic Relief Act] he hoped would, when passed, be an example to the Irish Parliament, in whose power it was to give that relief to their brethren" (Cobbett, 1814,19:1142). Although the British Parliament had the power to pass relief bills for Scotland and England, the passing of a similar relief bill for Ireland, was outside their jurisdiction. However, before a Catholic Relief Act could be passed in Ireland, the British Parliament had first to repeal the anti-Catholic land laws enacted in the reign of Queen Anne (1702-14), and secondly,



pass an act for Catholic relief in England, as the Irish Parliament refused to act, unless Britain also passed a similar measure for Catholic relief (Donovan, 1985:84).

The possibility that Lord North would orchestrate this appearance of an unprecedented powerful British political coterie in O'Halloran's subscription-list to demonstrate British Government support for Irish Catholics, at this juncture, would be consistent with his approach to similar difficult situations in the recent past. North was a tactician and in 'tricky political' situations when the British Parliament needed to maintain distance, Bartlett (1992:85-86) suggests that North regularly employed the use of a go-between. For instance, in the preparations for the bill to secure English Catholic relief, Sir John Dalrymple acted as North's man in discussions between Scottish and English Catholic leaders. Bartlett (1992:85) further suggests that Luke Gardiner was North's man in Dublin during the period of Gardiner's Relief Act. Moreover, North was behind Sir George Macartney's covert mission to Ireland in 1779-1780, to "sound out" the possibilities of a union between Britain and Ireland (Bartlett, 1992:85). Donovan has pointed out that North had a "shrewd awareness" of the usefulness of Catholics, and was quite willing to deal with the Catholic problem, when the security of the British Empire demanded it. Defending the passage of the Quebec Act (1774), and his ministry's part in it, North, in May 1775, "coolly indicated that arming the *Quebecois* for service against New Englanders and Southerners did not perturb him" (Donovan 1985:90). Therefore, North's use of a go-between, or agent, is well attested in dealing with 'tricky' situations, where overt interference could be counterproductive.

The British Government had been quite clear in making its wishes known to the Irish Parliament regarding the passage of Irish Catholic relief, and the following extracts from Lord Cavendish's parliamentary diary (1778) of the proceedings, gives some idea of the pressure applied, and the reaction to it by members of the Irish House of Commons. The following comments all occurred on 4 August 1778, and at that period in the debate, when the proposed Catholic Relief Bill had been returned

from England with the Dissenter clause removed.<sup>39</sup> Many members felt resentment at British Government interference in the Irish House, as John Fitzgibbon's comments below indicate:

Mr. Fitzgibbon MP Dublin University: It seemed to me to be announced to the Nation when this [Catholic Relief Bill] was first introduced, they did not wish that the subject of it should be freely discussed by Parliament. Government had good wishes for the bill, the good wishes of Government they communicated to the Members of this House, this was publicly announced to the Commons as if the business of Parliament in any case much less upon a matter of mere internal regulation was only to fulfil the good wishes of Government. (In Cavendish: 4 August 1778:248-9)

Others such as John Ponsonby, whose name appears on O'Halloran's subscription-list<sup>40</sup> or Col. Jeffereyes, who was not an O'Halloran subscriber, were at pains to point out that their vote was not influenced by the dictates of Government.<sup>41</sup>

Mr. John Ponsonby, MP Kilkenny: I am not induced to give my vote for it, because Administration have hinted it is their wish. (In Cavendish: 4 August 1778:329)

Col. Jeffereyes MP Randalston: I shall give my vote in the way we are told Government wish, but it can't be supposed Government has any influence upon me. (In Cavendish: 4 August 1778:320)

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<sup>39</sup>Dissenters were Christians who separated from the Church of England in the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Test Act of 1673 ruled that holders of all civil, military and positions of trust under the Crown had to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and receive the Anglican sacrament. This law was strictly enforced against Catholics. However, an annual Indemnity Act was passed to allow Dissenters to hold positions under the Crown. The Dissenter clause referred to above was tacked on to the Catholic Relief Act, as an attempt to sabotage Catholic relief at this period. See: Bartlett (1992:88).

<sup>40</sup>John Ponsonby (1713-1787) was MP for Newtownards, 1739-1760, 1761-71, and also for Co. Kilkenny, 1761-1768, 1768-1776, 1776-1787. Ponsonby was Speaker of the Irish House of Commons from 1756 to 1772. (Johnston-Liik, 2002,4:89-96).

<sup>41</sup>Col. Jeffereyes (1734-1780) was MP for Randalstown, Co. Antrim, from 1776 to 1780.

The following comment by Mr. Connelly confirms that government wishes had also extended to threats, and the withdrawal of privilege under Government, for those who objected to the measure:

Mr. Connelly MP Londonderry: I will venture to say that many people will lose Commissions under Government for the objections to this bill.

(In Cavendish: 4 August 1778:266)<sup>42</sup>

Therefore, the British Government had made it quite clear to the Irish House that it wanted a Catholic Relief Act passed, and it was not above applying a degree of pressure, to ensure its wishes were carried out. The suggestion, then, that O'Halloran's subscription-list was orchestrated in a manner to convey the wishes of the British Government, is quite consistent with the overall tactics employed by the British Government, in its approach to the passage of Catholic relief in Ireland. British Government's 'partiality' for Irish Catholics, at this juncture, was noted by Henry Grattan, who commented: "it is not a bill [Catholic Relief Bill] of toleration it is a bill of partiality" (In Cavendish 4 August 1778:324).<sup>43</sup>

Another dimension of these political subscribers that leads to the conjecture of a Lord North involvement, rather than single party support, is the political allegiance of the 18 politicians listed here. Donovan reminds us that it is erroneous to attribute the success of the passing of the English Catholic Relief Act solely to the Rockingham Whigs, and while accepting that their role was not "negligible", Donovan (1985:85) further adds that, "they did not take on this political assignment alone or even principally", it was a measure introduced and pursued by the Lord North Ministry. In the consensual politics of the 1770s, support was required in the passing of any measure from as many sections in parliament as possible. It is useful, then, to note, the party affiliations of the British political subscribers that appear in O'Halloran's subscription-list, and further observe that they reflect, not only the 'consensual' nature of party politics, but also the consensual passing of the English Catholic Relief Act in the British House of Commons (Donovan, 1985:85).

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<sup>42</sup>Thomas Connolly was MP Londonderry 1761-1800 (Johnston-Liik, 2002,3:467-474).

<sup>43</sup>Henry Grattan (1746-1820) was MP Charlemont (Armagh): 1775-1790; MP Dublin City: 1790-1800 (Johnston-Liik, 2002,4:,302-310).

A total of twelve British political subscribers in the *General History* subscription-list come from the Whig party, or have strong Whig sympathies: the Marquis of Rockingham (Charles Watson Wentworth), Edmund Burke, the Duke of Portland (William Cavendish-Bentinck), the Duke of Devonshire (William Cavendish), Hon. Charles James Fox and Vice Admiral Hugh Pigot. Earl Rockingham's maternal nephew Earl Fitzwilliam is also present here, as is the Earl of Bessborough, William Ponsonby. Earl Ossory, John Fitzpatrick, the Right Honourable Richard Rigby and the independent Sir George Savile are included in this group. The Rt. Hon William Gerard Hamilton was constant in his opposition to government policy during the period of the American crisis, although at other times, Hamilton adopted an inconsistent voting pattern (Namier and Brooke, 1985, 2:572-4). The remaining six politicians can be classed as government supporters. They are: John St. John, who was also a relative of North, Lord Marlborough (George Spencer), his brother Sir Robert Spencer who would later join the opposition, George Clive, Charles Mellish and Earl Nugent. Earl Nugent was an enduring supporter of Lord North, and is quoted as saying that he, "would abide by North in adversity, [...] as he had supported him when in power" (Namier and Brooke, 1985, 3:221).

The consensual nature of the passing of the English Catholic Relief Act is further confirmed by Edmund Burke, in a letter to Edmund Sexton-Pery, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons in July 1778, regarding the progress of Gardiner's Relief Act in the English House, and the controversial Dissenter clause. Burke confided to Pery that he, "reminded him [Sir Grey Cooper] of the understood compact between parties upon which the whole scheme of the toleration originating in the English bill was formed" (Janes, 2002:140).<sup>44</sup> Subsequently, the *Annual Register* for 1778 (191) recorded that the English Catholic Relief Act was a "motion received with universal approbation", and "passed without a single negative" in the British House of Commons. During the British Government debates on the English Catholic Relief Bill, Lord Beauchamp too commented that, there was not "one dissentient voice" (Cobbett, 1814,19:1141). Certainly, the 'universal assent' to this bill was the result of a finely-tuned strategic manoeuvre beforehand. The British

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<sup>44</sup>Grey Cooper was appointed secretary to the Treasury in 1765, and remained joint secretary to the Treasury for sixteen years under successive governments, until the downfall of the North Administration in 1782. See: *Oxford DNB*.

political subscribers in O'Halloran's list are representative, not only of this strategy in microcosm, but of Lord North's considered approach to ensuring the passage of the English, and later Irish Catholic Relief Acts.

As to the reason why O'Halloran's *General History* was chosen to deliver this display of British Government support was probably a matter of convenience, a timely confluence of events, rather than preference. The news of his forthcoming publication was certainly no secret. His *Proposals* had been printed and was one assumes in circulation since 1776. The news of its upcoming publication would certainly have reached North's ears, considering their mutual social circle, and, if not, it would have taken very little trouble on North's part to find out. O'Halloran's political stance was also well-known, and if not, his *Introduction* (1772a) was available for perusal, wherein - as the publisher John Murray (1776a) commented, O'Halloran's "amor Patrice [...] flashed like lightning". Moreover, there existed a cordial relationship between O'Halloran (1781b & 1782a) and Sir George Macartney, whose services had previously been availed of by Lord North, as mentioned above. Based on existing correspondence between O'Halloran and Macartney, the relationship was such that Macartney was prepared to "stand for" O'Halloran with the London booksellers, which would indicate, if not an intimate relationship, at the least a familiar and trusting one (Lyons, 2009). Therefore, there were many opportunities for Lord North to be aware of O'Halloran's soon-to-be-published work.

O'Halloran certainly would have had an appetite for intrigue, and his letter (1778b) to Burke dated 1 August 1778, also raises the question as to whether O'Halloran was acting on Burke's behalf in Ireland in the lead up to Gardiner's Relief Act. This letter points to O'Halloran's covert political activities as a liaison between Burke and interested Catholic parties in Ireland during this period. The tone and general tenor of O'Halloran's letter to Burke, is in the form of a report. O'Halloran here confirmed to Burke that he had passed on his sentiments as requested to those leaders of the Catholic faction in Dublin, Limerick and Cork. He further reported on their reaction to Burke's advice, which appears to have been that, should the present Catholic Relief Bill be rejected by the Irish Parliament, a petition

should be immediately drawn up in response. O'Halloran's first meeting was in Dublin with, amongst others, Dr. Curry, a leading member of the Catholic Committee. It also appears clear that O'Halloran's role as liaison with Burke was acknowledged, and accepted by the Catholic Committee in Dublin and Limerick, as on both occasions, it is accepted that O'Halloran would convey gratitude and thanks to Burke on their behalf. The conjecture that O'Halloran acted for Burke in a similar manner on other occasions is probable, especially in light of O'Halloran's closing comments to Burke:

Whatever advice or Opinion you will please to give me on these Matters, I shall Exactly and faithfully Communicate as you direct and *no more*; Rely upon it, that they will be paid the Utmost [*sic*] attention to.

(O'Halloran, 1778b)

Whether O'Halloran was the prime mover and instigator of Catholic agitation for repeal in the south, would be difficult to prove, but almost certainly, he was a significant figure and, as mentioned, the Catholic gentry were at the forefront of the agitation for Catholic repeal at this period (Harvey, 1998:147-152). It appears probable, therefore, that although Burke would not have overtly suggested the orchestration of O'Halloran's subscription-list, he would have supported the measure – as indeed he did. Like the other parliamentary subscribers in this British group, Burke's name appears only once in O'Halloran subscription-lists, and that is in the subscription-list to the *General History* in 1778.

However, even if this conjecture regarding North's orchestration of O'Halloran's subscription-list was to prove untenable, and attributable only to a 'happy coincidence', the message it sent out to Irish Protestants with the arrival of the *General History* in Ireland in July 1778, set against the backdrop of heated discussions on the issue of Catholic relief, was a realistic reflection of the British Government's stance in relation to the passing of Gardiner's Catholic Relief Act. This public declaration of British Government support for O'Halloran's *General History*, would have had a significant, and effective impact, in certain Protestant quarters in Ireland.

In fact, there was a section of the Irish Protestant community that perceived O'Halloran to be a "rebel" in the service of France. In July 1778, two letters were sent to the Lord Mayors of Cork and Limerick, expressing the concern of "several respectable protestants" (Anon, 1778a & 1778b). These letters accuse O'Halloran, a Catholic priest Thomas O'Brien McMahon, the publisher of a "treasonable book" and the Clare-born French-based antiquarian Chevalier O'Gorman, in a French conspiracy (Morley, 2002:112-113).<sup>45</sup> Neither O'Brien nor O'Gorman is listed as a subscriber in any of O'Halloran's works. However, O'Halloran does refer to his friendship with O'Gorman in his *General History*, "My esteemed friend the Chevalier O'Gorman, chief of this ancient house" (Tullichrien, Co. Clare) (O'Halloran, 1778a, 2:402). The "treasonable book" referred to has the rather sardonic title: *The candor and good-nature of Englishmen exemplified, in their deliberate, cautious, and charitable way of characterizing the customs, manners, constitution, and religion of neighbouring nations*. This book, published in London in 1777, was a virulent anti-British production. The main focus of the work was an attack on the irreligion of the English, but it also castigated the British exploitative and repressive régime in Ireland, revealing an outlook that Morley (2002:113) comments, pervaded "the vernacular literature of the period but which seldom found its way either into print or the English language".

Moreover, these two letters, which are almost duplicates of each other, accused this trio of seditious activities as far back as 1761, and the rise of the Whiteboys.<sup>46</sup> The following extract, although unflattering to O'Halloran, gives a flavour of these letters:

The Priests of Limerick and a vain prattling Surgeon of the same place, lately have under the pretence of publishing a book, whose name I do not recollect, are said to be deeply concerned in the Irish part of M<sup>c</sup>Mahon's schemes. They also affirm that he has many relations in Clare, Limerick and other parts of Munster, whom, even such of them as are pretended Protestants, he employs

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<sup>45</sup>O'Gorman (1725-1809) served as a soldier in the Irish Brigade in France. He later became involved in genealogical research and the wine trade. See: (Hayes, 1941:587-596). Morley (2002:112-113fn.57), refers to an undated letter in the Heron papers outlining a similar scenario. They may be the same. Transcribed copies of these letters are provided in Appendix A: letters 6 and 7.

<sup>46</sup>For agrarian problems and the Whiteboys, see: Donnelly (1983).

to further his destructive designs. It is thought by some who have been in his company that the Surgeon, being a loquacious, timid, insignificant creature, would, upon the first menace of commitment confess all he knows.

Having thus, Sir, communicated the result of several respectable Irish Protestants information relative to their hellish machinations, I leave it to your discretions and that of the worthy Corporation, to watch over, and, when more shall be discovered, proceed against the offenders there, in the manner you shall judge most conducive to the preservation of your own and friends lives. Wherefore, begging you will kindly excuse the trust our Zeal or Religion and love for our native Country urged us to give you, [...].

(Anon, 1778a )

The above extract is interesting on many levels. It emphasises the heightened sense of Protestant anxiety at a possible French invasion of Ireland. It also confirms the suspicious mindset, which some Protestants held with regard to their Catholic neighbours, and their own sense of insecurity in Ireland. This extract also helps to contextualise the impact that the appearance of British political support for Irish Catholics, at this juncture, via O'Halloran's subscription-list, would have had on some Irish Protestants at least. Considering the Irish Protestant community depended on the British Government for its security, and the maintenance of its ascendant position in Ireland, the possible significance of British Government support for Irish Catholics, had to be alarming.

Whether there is any sound evidence for the accusations made against O'Halloran in these letters, is impossible to say. However, O'Halloran was not one who kept his political opinions to himself. For instance, during the period prior to the Act of Union (1801), he publicly and loudly it seems, campaigned against the union of Ireland and Britain in Limerick city, so much so that, his name was raised in the Irish House of Commons by Henry Grady.<sup>47</sup> Grady's comments were reported in the *Freeman's Journal*:

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<sup>47</sup>Henry Grady (1765-1847) was MP for Limerick City 1797-1800: UK Parliament 1801-1802. He was pro-Union, and after the Union the voters of Limerick arranged a deputation to express their 'disapprobation' of his conduct (Johnston-Liik, 2002, 4:299-301).



the city [Limerick] waited in silence the passing of that measure [Act of Union], until every seducing insidious art had been resorted to, by a few disaffected persons, to inflame and intoxicate the populace, in order to procure some idle, wild expression, against it. Thus in the moment of popular intoxication, a Republican Clergyman put a string of resolutions into the hands of a mad Doctor, who read them aloud in the public streets. The populace re-echoed after the said Republican Clergyman and mad Doctor, after this *par nobile fratrum*! “No Union! No Union” (Grady, 1799:1)

It would be difficult to identify the “mad Doctor” as Sylvester O'Halloran, if not for a comment in the London *Observer* shortly after, dated 4 March 1799, which referred to the very same meeting, and identified the names of the participants (London *Observer*, 10 March 1799:2).

O'Halloran was certainly aware of the significance of this coterie of British political support in his subscription-list, and in some ways, their appearance here could be said to have been self-serving. Whether he had obliged the British Government, in this regard, would be more difficult to prove. However, it is suggestive that, the following year O'Halloran was in a position of favour in British Government circles, where his attempts to obtain a civil list pension found support among significant political figures, as this following extract from O'Halloran's letter (1779) to an unknown correspondent confirms:

Convinced of its [*A Complete Treatise on Gangrene and Sphacelus, with a New Method of Amputation*, 1765] great Utility, M<sup>r</sup>. Adair, when I was last in London, Recommended me to Memorial Lord North, Claiming a Public Reward for so Useful a discovery. Which was delivered by Col. St. John. Lord North, wrote to M<sup>r</sup>. Adair, to know if I was Intitled [*sic*], to such Reward; and he gave it, as his opinion, and quoted Authorities for that opinion that I was. Lord Beauchamp wrote me word, that his opinion was, that the Application should be made thro' Parliament; and I was yesterday Honored with a letter from Sir Grey Cooper, pointing out, that to Apply properly and to Succeed, some friend should Apply to the Chancellor of the

Exchequer for his Majesty's permission, to move the House on that head,  
which must be done, by a petition referred to that House.

(O'Halloran, 1779)

Although O'Halloran's attempt to obtain a civil list pension would fail, this degree of support for a politically marginalised Irishman, is remarkable, and suggests that O'Halloran was in favour in British Government circles at this period.<sup>48</sup>

To summarise: what I have tried to demonstrate here is that this sudden appearance, and one-time occurrence in O'Halloran's subscription-list of a powerful British political coterie, is so unprecedented in the history of Irish antiquarian publications, that the most likely explanation lies in the immediate political arena, and the desire of Lord North to ensure passage of an Irish Catholic Relief Act. O'Halloran's participation in this manoeuvre, was doubtlessly, part and parcel of the overall Catholic gentry's agitation in pursuit of Catholic repeal, at this juncture. In light of the letter from O'Halloran to Burke, it is very probable that those in the inner sanctum of Catholic agitation were apprised of the content of the subscription-list before publication. I would further suggest that this sudden and unexpected display of British Government support in the *General History* subscription-list, is reflective of a confluence of aims at a particular political juncture, rather than a broad-base support for relief of Irish Catholics in general, or a particular interest in the history of Ireland, from a Catholic and traditional stance. As Namier and Brooke (1985, 1:164) comment the: "usual attitude of the English Members towards the Irish was of contempt for the Catholics and fear of the Protestants; there was little feeling of community between the two peoples, and concessions to Ireland by the British Parliament were never made willingly".

#### 4.6. Irish Émigré Subscribers: Analysis

There are 77 Irish émigré subscribers in the subscription-list of O'Halloran *General History*. This degree of support from the Irish émigré community is unprecedented in the history of antiquarian writing at this period. What is further striking is that, like the appearance of a substantial British political élite in the subscription-list of an

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<sup>48</sup>O'Halloran conducted an eleven-year campaign to obtain a civil list pension which ultimately failed. See: Lyons (2009).

Irish antiquarian writer, this degree of support from the Irish émigré community is also a 'one-time' only event, as will be shortly demonstrated. This confluence invites a linkage between both occurrences, and raises the question as to what possible significance can be attached to this event?

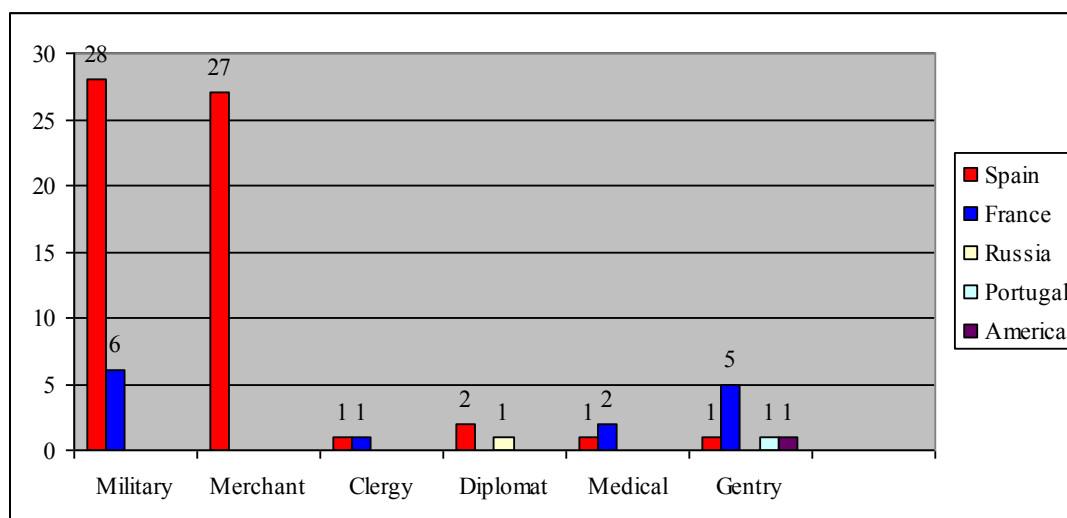
Unlike the British political élite, the motivation for the Irish émigré community to subscribe to a history of Ireland appears rather straightforward. The Irish émigré group, regardless of the geographical location of its constituent parts, was a cohesive unit based on familial ties and solidarity, consequently imbuing this group with a power and significance larger, than that what its numerical size, might indicate. This was also a group that maintained close ties with Ireland (Recio Morales, 2010; Villar García, 2006; Harvey, 1998). And although only a small percentage of individual émigré subscribers appear in O'Halloran's subscription-list, they can be seen as interconnecting links within the greater diaspora community overall. Therefore, in light of the close ties between Ireland and the Irish émigré community, the question is not why this group should appear in the subscription-list to a work on the history of Ireland, but rather, why have they not appeared in substantial numbers previous to this date? And secondly, what is the significance of their appearance at this particular juncture?

The following discussion will make the argument that O'Halloran's inclusion of successful Irish émigrés in his subscription-list was to demonstrate Irish current suitability for a British imperial role, and was in sympathy with Britain's imperial need to access Irish soldiery at this juncture, as discussed in the previous section. It will be further argued that, the inclusion by O'Halloran in his subscription-list of iconic Irish military figures serving in the Catholics armies of Europe, confirms the British imperial, rather than the Irish insular direction of his discourse.

The following analysis will provide an identity profile of this group, focusing primarily, but not exclusively, on the military, political and commercial background of the Irish émigré. The purpose of this profile is to identify what particular significance these subscribers constitute in the subscription-list of the *General*

*History.* This section will also focus on identifying the circumstance around which the Irish émigré constructed their political identities in their adopted countries, and offer a suggestion as to why, as has been noted previously, that there are significantly more Spanish than French subscribers in O'Halloran's subscription-list, despite his greater association with France. The information provided by this analysis will then be used to investigate the political significance of these subscribers at this political juncture, in the discussion which follows this analysis.

There are two distinct major sub-groups within the Irish émigré grouping: military subscribers total 34 or 44.2% of the total figure, with subscribers from the commercial émigré class totalling 27 or 35.1% of the total figure. This result is not surprising, as Irish emigration to the continent in pursuit of military careers, particularly in the Catholic armies of France and Spain, or seeking sites of commercial opportunity, has a long history (Bartlett and Jeffery 1997). There were various social, economic and religious factors that influenced Irish emigration. A detailed review of the nature and cause of these migrations is outside the scope of this research. This area has been covered by other scholars and is drawn on freely throughout this thesis (O'Ciosáin, 2001; Villar García, 2006). The primary motivational factor for the particular émigré group in O'Halloran's subscription-list, was the defeat of the Irish forces at Limerick (1691). This defeat resulted in a mass exodus of over 25,000 Irish soldiers to the continent, in support of the exiled Stuart king James II. The subsequent imposition of penal restrictions on the resident Catholic population resulted in further military and commercial emigration to the continent, resulting in what Kevin Whelan (1996:3) has termed an "Irish Catholic nation-in-waiting overseas (with its colleges, its army, its wealthy diaspora)". An occupational representation including the geographical distribution of this group can be presented visually.

**Figure 4.5: Irish émigré subscribers to O'Halloran's *General History*: by occupation specified**

This chart reveals the strong military element in the composition of O'Halloran's Irish émigré group, with 28 subscribers from Spain and 6 from France. Spanish merchant support is also strong in the *General History* list, totalling 27 subscribers. There are no French merchant subscribers listed. Three subscribers are placed in the 'diplomat' category. These are "Lewis O'Brien, Vice-Consul Ferrol"; "His Excellency Count Lacy, ambassador to Russia" and "Sir James Barry in the service of Spain". This last subscriber caused some categorisation difficulties initially, because of the lack of information in the list. However, as he is of the titled-gentry class, it is assumed his 'service' to Spain, was at a diplomatic level. There are three medical subscribers. Dr. Tim O'Scanlan was chief physician to the Spanish navy (White, 2008). Dr. John MacMahon was professor at the *école militaire* at Paris (MacMahon, 1989). However, I have been unable to locate any further information about the second French medical subscriber, Dr. Fitzgibbon of Bordeaux.

Both clergymen listed are high-ranking church officials. The French subscriber is Arthur Richard Dillon, Archbishop of Narbonne, and son of Arthur Dillon "who in 1690 led Dillon's regiment to France from Ireland" (Hayes, 1949:63-4). Louis Cullen, in his work on the Irish diaspora in the age of Choiseul, comments that by mid-century Arthur Richard had become the acknowledged leader and protector of

the Irish community.<sup>49</sup> The second clerical subscriber is family chaplain to the king of Spain, or as the list reads “Rev. Dr. O’Connelly family chaplain to his catholic majesty”. There are eight subscribers in the ‘gentry’ group: 5 subscribers from France, and 1 subscriber each from Spain, Portugal and America. However, aside from location the list provides no further information about these subscribers.

However, the apparent lack of political influential figures in the Irish émigré group as represented in the graph, is slightly misleading. The militarisation of administration during the Bourbon reign, and in particular after the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-14), meant that military and civil administration duties were not totally separate areas. This resulted in exceptional Irish soldiers being promoted to civil administration positions (Recio Morales, 2010:182). Many Irish, and some of these O’Halloran subscribers, occupied these dual positions.

The foremost of these in the Spanish imperial sense, has to be the Nantes-born Lieutenant-General Ricardo Wall (1694-1778). Incidentally, Wall was deceased by the time O’Halloran’s *General History* was published. Wall’s father, Mathew Wall, was one of many Jacobite soldiers who went to France after the Jacobite defeat at Limerick, in 1691. He served in the regiment of Fitz-James. Ricardo Wall was born in Nantes, and would become one of the most powerful men in Spain. He became Spanish Secretary of State in 1754, in addition he also held the post of Secretary for the Indies. Moreover, during the period of illness of Ferdinand VI, Wall also took on the position of Secretary of War in 1759. After the death of Ferdinand, Wall continued as Secretary of War under the new king of Spain, Charles III, making Wall virtually a ‘Spanish prime minister’. In 1763, he was replaced by Grimaldi and Esquilache, as Secretary of State and Secretary of War respectively. Wall, however, continued to enjoy royal patronage. He was a Councillor of State until 1772, and visited the Spanish King annually until 1775, at the king’s request. Wall was in a unique position of privilege and his compatriots were the beneficiaries (Recio Morales, 2010: 238-239; Téllez Alarcia, 2008:137-148).

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<sup>49</sup>When, under the auspices of the *Select Committee*, the Chevalier O’Gorman applied to colleges in France for copies of Irish manuscripts the response from the College of Lombards was prompt, and a meeting, to which all Irish gentlemen living in Paris were invited, was conducted under the chairmanship of the Archbishop of Narbonne, Arthur Richard Dillon (1721-1806). See: Nevin, (1993:24).

One of the many Irishmen that Wall helped elevate to power, was O'Halloran subscriber Count Alexander O'Reilly (1723-1794). O'Reilly was born in Ballytrasna, Co. Meath. His grandfather, John O'Reilly, had been a colonel in the army of James II. O'Reilly was famous as a military strategist. He revitalised the Spanish colony of Cuba, and subsequently, was promoted to Inspector of the Spanish Infantry. In 1769, he performed a similar function at Louisiana; returning to Spain in 1770, and was rewarded by the king, with the title of Count. He was subsequently appointed military governor of Madrid, with responsibility for all civil and criminal administration. From 1780 to 1786, O'Reilly was governor of Cádiz, the most cosmopolitan city in Europe at the time (Fannin, 2001:26-30).

There are four more O'Halloran subscribers who occupied influential positions in a similar manner to that of O'Reilly, where military and civil responsibilities were fused. Major-General Don Felix O'Neill, Commander-General of Galicia, has been mentioned previously: another is Brigadier-General Vincent Kindellan, governor of Zamora; Count O'Falia was Captain-General of the coast of Granada, and Lieutenant-General Sir John Sherlock was governor of St. Lucas. There were other Irish, not of the military persuasion, who occupied influential administrative positions in Spain. O'Halloran's subscription-list contains one example: Lewis O'Brien who was Vice- Consul of Ferrol.

There were five Irish regiments formed in Spain during the early period of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-14), in response to a chronic shortage of soldiers in the Spanish army. Periodically, during the seventeenth century, there were Irish regiments fighting in Spain, but it was only in the eighteenth century, when the Irish regiments were taken onto the muster rolls of Philip V of Spain, that they received official recognition. These regiments were made up of disbanded troops from Louis XIV's army. They were named Hibernia, Ultonia, Limerick, Waterford and Irlanda (Murtagh, 1996:296). Of these, the most significant representation in O'Halloran's subscription-list, is a group of twenty-two subscribers representing the Irish regiments of Ultonia and Hibernia. Although the Irlanda regiment is not specifically mentioned in the subscription-list, Brigadier-General Vincent Kindellan,

previously mentioned, was a member of Irlanda.<sup>50</sup> All of these subscribers were high-ranking military officers.

The military grouping also contains a strong Jacobite element, located in the French military subscribers, and centring on the figures of James II and his son Charles Edward. The Duc de Fitz-James (Charles de Fitzjames, 1712-1787), was a grandson of the Stuart King, James II, by his illegitimate son James Fitz-James, (1670-1734). James Fitz-James fought at his father's side at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, later sharing his exile in France, and becoming a naturalised French citizen in 1703.<sup>51</sup>

Another O'Halloran subscriber with a strong Jacobite background, is the Comte de Serrant, Francois-Jacques Walsh de Serrant (1704-1782). The Comte de Serrant was grandson of Philip Walsh of Ballynacooly, County Kilkenny, who transported James II from Kinsale to France in 1690. His brother, Anthony Walsh, a rich merchant and shipbuilder of Nantes, transported Charles Edward Stuart to Scotland in 1745 in his boat the *Du Teillay*, and was rewarded with the title of 'Lord Walsh de Serrant'. Francois-Jacques was created Comte de Serrant by Louis XV in 1754/5, received a commission in the regiment of Clare in 1760, and in 1784, was made Maréchal de Camp (Hayden, 1934:103-4). Don Felix O'Neil is another subscriber with strong Jacobite links. O'Neill joined the Irish Brigade in 1744, and was sent to Scotland in 1746. He fought at Culloden and remained with Charles Edward after the defeat (Hayden, 1934:100-101). In 1778, O'Neill, as recorded in O'Halloran's list, held the position of Major-General and Commandant-General of Galicia, and Inspector-General of the Spanish infantry.

Another subscriber here whose name evokes a Jacobite resonance, is Count Arthur Dillon (1750-1794). The Dillon regiment was formed in 1688 by Theobald Dillon (7<sup>th</sup> Viscount Dillon, d.1691), to fight on the side of James II in the Williamite wars in Ireland. Dillon became colonel of the family's proprietary regiment on the death of his uncle. The Dillon regiment demanded, and obtained, the privilege of

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<sup>50</sup>During the American War of Independence, the Hibernia regiment to the tune of 580 officers and men, were engaged in the capture of Pensacola from the British in 1781. See: Murphy (1960:219).

<sup>51</sup>For the Fitz-James social circle in Paris, and other family information, see: Adam and Adam (1890).



being the first to cross the Atlantic and fight the English in the American war of Independence, and engaged the enemy at Savannah in 1779.<sup>52</sup> On the prestige of the Dillon family, Cullen (2006:28) comments that, “with command of a regiment and a politically influential archbishop, they had an unprecedented Irish presence at court”.

A faint trace of the Jacobite connection is retained in the presence of another subscriber, Count Francis de Lacy (1725-1801), who at this juncture was ambassador to Russia. Lacy was son of Limerick-born, Count Peter Lacy, a Russian field marshal, who had followed the fortunes of the exiled James (Ferrar, 1787:346-348). Two further subscribers here are Baron Patrick D’Arcy (d.1799), and Count John James O’Kelly. D’Arcy was son of John D’Arcy from Co. Galway. He entered French service and was ennobled by Prince Charles Edward in 1747, and received letters of naturalization and ‘ancient nobility’ from Louis XV, in 1757. D’Arcy was aide-de-camp to Marshal Saxe at Fontenoy (1745). During the Seven Years’ War (1756-1763), he was a captain in Fitz-James Irish Horse regiment (Hayes, 1949a:52-53). D’Arcy was captured by the English in 1746, as he attempted to make his way from Ostend to Scotland, to join the Pretender (Walsh, 1978:104). Baron D’Arcy was more usually referred to as, Count D’Arcy, but Walsh (1978:105) observes that, D’Arcy either signed his name, or was designated only as, *le Chevalier d’Arcy*. Count John James O’Kelly, French diplomat, was son of Denis O’Kelly of Roscommon who had served in the Spanish army. In 1777, Louis XVI appointed John James O’Kelly Minister-Plenipotentiary of France to the court of the Elector of Mayence. He was recognised as Comte O’Kelly by Louis XIV in 1776 (Hayes, 1949a:236-7).

In sum, O’Halloran’s *General History* is fronted by an impressive array of many of the most prestigious aristocratic military figures of Europe from the Irish émigré community, many of whom were actively engaged in armies opposed to Britain at this period. The significance of this group in an Irish Protestant and British imperial context, is discussed shortly.

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<sup>52</sup>Dillon was second-in-command at the capture of the English island of Grenada in the West Indies, which was the first great French victory over the English, in 1779. He also participated in the capture of the island of Saint Eustache from England, and in 1782, the island of Saint Christopher, and was subsequently appointed governor of Saint Christopher. In appreciation of his services, the French Government appointed Dillon governor of Tobago. See: Hayes (1934:115-6).

There is also a substantial representation from Ireland's *émigré* merchant class in the *General History* subscription-list. There are 20(21) merchants from Cádiz, 6(10) from Málaga and 1 merchant from Ferrol. There are no merchants listed from France in the subscription-list here, although there are five subscribers listed from Bordeaux, where Irish merchants were involved in the wine trade (Harvey, 1998:123-5). The works of Maria Begoña Villar García on Irish migration and exiles in Spain, and Samuel Fannin on the Irish community in eighteenth-century Cádiz, facilitate identification of many of the Spanish merchants listed in O'Halloran's subscription-list, as amongst the wealthiest of Irish merchants (Villar García, 2006; Fannin, 2003).<sup>53</sup>

Cádiz's importance as a trading port increased in 1717, when the monopoly of trade with the colonies was transferred from Seville to Cádiz. In the eighteenth century, the Irish were the dominant group among the British population of Cádiz, and amongst the wealthiest were the Cádiz Irish merchants, who were slightly more affluent than their counterparts at Málaga (Villar García, 2006:196). The Murphy family of Cádiz, who operated twenty trading vessels, conducting trade between Spain, the rest of Europe and the Indies, owned more ships than any other Irish merchant (Fannin, 2003:147). Edward and Barnard Murphy are O'Halloran subscribers. The Cádiz trading house of Carew, Langton and Power was amongst the wealthiest in Cádiz. Carew is not listed as a subscriber to O'Halloran's *General History*, but the remainder of this triad, Power and Langton, are subscribers. John Galway, another O'Halloran subscriber, owned substantial property in Cádiz and in the surrounding countryside (Fannin, 2003:140).

Málaga was a port of call for European-African and Atlantic traffic. Both William Terry of Málaga, and Dominic Terry of Cádiz, are O'Halloran subscribers. The Terry family of Cádiz, supporters of James II, originated in Limerick. The Málaga branch of the Terry family was from Cork. William Terry of Cádiz inherited the titles of Marqués and Caballero de Santiago. He was heavily involved in the public affairs of Cádiz, as royal representative in council affairs (Fannin, 2003:143;

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<sup>53</sup>For information regarding the Bellew merchant enterprise in Spain, see: Harvey (1998:125-130).

Terry, 2010). Another O'Halloran subscriber involved in public office was, Thomas Quilty of Málaga, who was an alderman (Fannin, 2003:141).

Many of the Irish became rich in Spain, but both Fannin and Villar García point out that, the Irish also contributed to, and were an active force, in their communities; "The benefits of their activities affected their adopted cities, economically, of course, but also intellectually as their taste for economic, technical and administrative reform indicates" (Villar García, 2006:199). The Irish merchant community in Spain, including the 27 O'Halloran subscribers mentioned here, were active and influential forces in imperial trade because of their wealth and position. O'Halloran's *General History* has drawn strong support from Ireland's military and commercial émigré community. These subscribers are significant military, political and commercial figures in their respective 'adopted' countries.

The forgoing analysis has demonstrated that many of the Irish émigrés, and particularly those listed here, enjoyed military and commercial success in their adopted countries. The reason for this success, at least in part, was because of the special privileges the Irish émigrés enjoyed from the host nation. The success of the émigré group, particularly in Spain, was intimately connected to their Irish origin, and was in part based on the special privileges granted to this group by the host nation. Recio Morales has demonstrated that the Milesian myth, which explained the Spanish origins of the Irish race, was an integral and enduring component around which the Irish émigré constructed their application for special privileges as 'Old Spaniards' from the Spanish Crown, from the sixteenth until the eighteenth century (Recio Morales, 2006:243-244; Fannin, 2003:137). During the Habsburg reign, the Irish were granted equal access with native Spaniards to public and military positions in Spain, and in Spanish dominions. This privilege was confirmed by the Bourbon king Philip V (Recio Morales, 2010:181-2). These special privileges formed the basis of the political identity of the Irish émigré in Spain. The central elements of this identity were, Milesian origin, military service and Catholicism.<sup>54</sup> In this regard, the Milesian origins of both Count Alexander O'Reilly and Count O'Falia, are recounted by O'Halloran (1778a, 2:386,396) in his account of Milesian families.

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<sup>54</sup>For a complete discussion on this issue, see: Recio Morales (2006:240-266).

Special Irish rights and privileges also facilitated the Irish émigré group's entrance into, at least the lower echelons of Spanish nobility, membership of which was essential for advancement in both the military and administration sectors (Fannin, 2003:141). Irish merchants in Spain also had special privileges as 'old Spaniards'. According to a royal decree in 1759, any Irish who had lived in Spain for more than ten years, or who had married a Spaniard, had the same rights as native Spanish to trade and to property ownership (Fannin, 2003:137).

The Irish émigré group in France also had special privileges. The special status of the Irish émigré in France was based primarily on military service to the crown. After the capitulation of Limerick in 1691, those soldiers who emigrated to France, were granted the same rights as French subjects, and although this situation provoked discord among some property owners, the Irish were confirmed in this right by royal decree in 1741 (Hayes, 1934:293). Harvey provides an example of preferential treatment enjoyed by the Irish in France in 1756, when war with England resulted in the expulsion of British merchants from Nantes. However, the Irish were not included in this measure as they, "successfully petitioned the crown to remain, pointing out their long and varied services to France" (Harvey, 1998:123).

The special privileges from the host nations enjoyed by the Irish émigré commercial network placed them in a unique position to hinder British trade whenever possible. For instance, in times of conflict between the host nation and Britain, British merchants were expelled. The Irish, however, were allowed to remain (Villar García, 2006:180), to expand and solidify their commercial position, thus diverting money away from British coffers and, by extension, depleting the war treasury. It also appears that the Irish were not above misappropriating funds to thwart British commercial activity. Harvey (1998:128) comments on a report by a British consul, which accused the Irish in Cádiz of diverting funds collected for distressed British subjects, to outfit a privateer in 1726 to prey on English shipping, and maintain "Irish officers in the Spanish service". The consul Colebrook also accused the Irish of not charging their countrymen port duty on ships entering the harbour, and of charging double the rate to British ships. The significance of the Irish

émigré commercial group in this regard, is often side-lined by the more high-profile activity of the Irish émigré soldiers. In brief, special privileges were enjoyed by the Irish émigré communities in France and Spain that facilitated the upward mobility of this group, and increased the opportunities for advancement and wealth.

The circumstances around which each group constructed their political identity, as outlined above, suggests a possible reason as to why the demand for O'Halloran's *General History* was greater in Spain, rather than in France, despite O'Halloran's greater contact with France. The political identity of the Irish/French émigré subscriber was based primarily on military service to the crown. In this regard the Abbé MacGeoghegan's three volume *Histoire de L'Irlande ancienne et moderne* (1758-1763), which was dedicated to and eulogised the military exploits of the Irish Brigade, verified the special privileges bestowed on the Irish/French émigré by the host nation, and, consequently, may have lessened the demand for O'Halloran's work in France.

On the other hand, the Irish/Spanish émigrés had different needs. Their claim was not based primarily on military service but on the alleged Spanish origin of the Gaelic race. O'Halloran's *General History*, with its assertions of the Spanish origin of the Gael from Heremon and Heber, sons of *Míl Espáine*, provided contemporary textual validation to support the Irish/Spanish émigrés' claim to special privileges in Spain as 'ancient Spaniards'. White's (2008) research into the works of Dr. Tim O'Scanlan, chief physician to the Spanish navy and O'Halloran subscriber, confirms the centrality of the Milesian origin legend for the Irish/Spanish émigré group. White, furthermore, emphasises its contemporary importance as a "currency-value in the cultural and social psychology" of the Irish/Spanish émigré (White, 2008:161). O'Halloran's *General History* attracted strong Irish/Spanish émigré support because it filled a gap in the Irish/Spanish émigré market that Mac Geoghegan's earlier work had not fully satisfied. O'Halloran's reconstruction of the Milesian myth, and his eulogy of Irish martial valour, around which the Irish émigrés constructed their overseas political identity, and formed the basis for their demands of special privileges from the host nation, chimed with the attitudes of the émigré group.

As a point of interest, a perusal of the subscription-lists to the O'Halloran corpus, medical and antiquarian, apart from the *General History*, reveals no previous Spanish or Irish/Spanish émigré support for any of O'Halloran's works. In addition, moving outside the O'Halloran corpus, I can find no evidence of Irish/Spanish émigré support in any comparable subscription-list of this period. In addition to those lists already mentioned here, I have extended the search to include the subscription-list to Ferrar's *An history of the city of Limerick* (1767), and the later more substantial work *The history of Limerick* published in 1787. Alban Butler's *The lives of the fathers, martyrs, and other principal saints* (1779) contains five subscribers from Portugal, but there are no subscribers from Spain, and similarly Archdall's *Monasticon Hibernicum* (1786) list, contains no Spanish subscribers. The absence of Spanish support, whether Irish/Spanish émigré or otherwise, in contemporary works, makes its appearance here remarkable.

However, it could also be argued that, if the Spanish origin of the Gael was the principal reason for the appearance of Irish/Spanish émigré support in O'Halloran's *General History*, why did the work of Charles O'Connor, who also supported the Spanish origin of the Gael, not receive similar support? The reason for this lies in O'Connor's assertions of Catholic loyalty, which were central to his case for Catholic relief, and which would have been undermined by an emphasis on Ireland's military nation serving in the armies of the traditional enemies of Britain. Moreover, he likely would have viewed such an association as counter-productive, and more likely to inflame, rather than soothe, Protestant fears surrounding the Catholic issue in general. This was also the general attitude of the Catholic Committee of which O'Connor was a founder and leading member. The position of the Catholic Committee, which reflects the O'Connor stance on this issue, is made clear in their address to Frederick Earl of Carlisle, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1780:

To repeat to your excellency at the instant of your auspicious arrival in this kingdom our utter abhorrence of the insidious conduct of France and Spain and the unnatural and ungrateful hostility of Holland, originating from designs to tarnish the lustre of his majesty's crown and destroy the tranquillity of the happiest government upon earth. (Edwards, ed. 1942:55)

Therefore, O'Connor would have viewed the inclusion of Irish émigré military subscribers in his subscriptions lists as counterproductive to the political agenda which motivated his work, which focused on bringing Irish Protestants and Catholics into closer agreement with each other. Aside from O'Halloran, there were only two other Irish antiquarians writing at this period that would have attracted Irish émigré subscriber support, Charles O'Connor and John Curry. John Curry did not publish his works by the subscription method of publication, although there is evidence to suggest that Charles O'Connor did collect subscribers for the publication of his 1775 *An historical and critical review of the civil wars in Ireland* (Love, 1962b:25). However, a list of subscribers was not published with the work. This leaves the subscription-lists of Charles O'Connor as the only other avenue that was available to the Irish émigré community, to demonstrate their support by subscription. Therefore, the most likely answer to the question posed at the beginning of this discussion as to why there had been no Irish émigré subscriber support in the subscription-lists of other antiquarians at this period, is because Charles O'Connor would have viewed their inclusion as counter-productive

Before moving on to discuss the significance of the Irish émigré subscriber, it is important at this stage to emphasise the uniqueness of this substantial appearance from Irish émigrés in the work of an Irish antiquarian at this period. This can be demonstrated by referring firstly, to the presence of Irish émigré subscribers within the O'Halloran corpus, and, then, by extending this comparison to include subscriptions list from a similar genre and comparable timeframe. In the subscription-list to O'Halloran's 1765 *A complete treatise on gangrene and sphacelus* there is only one subscriber from France, Rev William O'Halloran, canon of St. Austeri in Perigord. I have been unable to locate any further information on this subscriber. In the subscription to O'Halloran's *Introduction* (1772a), there are two subscribers from the Irish émigré group: Sir Maurice MacMahon and the Marquis Monsieur d'Eguilly.<sup>55</sup> The Marquis d'Eguilly was John Baptist MacMahon born at Limerick, in 1715, to Patrick MacMahon and Margaret Sullivan of Bantry, of the O'Sullivan Beare line.<sup>56</sup> Because of their Catholicism and loyalty to the Stuart cause, the family were dispossessed of their lands and emigrated from Ireland to France, after the

<sup>55</sup>Spelt 'Marquis d'Eguile' in O'Halloran's subscription-list.

<sup>56</sup>John Baptist MacMahon married the heiress to the estates of the Marquis D'Eguilly. When the Marquis died, MacMahon and his wife inherited the estates at Burgundy. In 1763, MacMahon was ennobled by Louis XV and granted the title of Marquis D'Eguilly. See: Hayes (1949a:186).

Jacobite defeat of 1691. John Baptist was founder of the French MacMahon family (MacMahon, 1989:105-6). The point of contact and mutual interest between MacMahon and O'Halloran, apart from their Limerick backgrounds, was primarily medical, as John Baptist was also a physician educated at the University of Rheims (Hayes, 1949a:185-6).

Sir Maurice MacMahon could be either the brother or second son of John Baptist, as both carry the same first name. John Baptist's brother, Maurice, joined the regiment of Fitz-James, and family history states that he aided Charles Edward in the 1745 period (MacMahon, 1989:105). Maurice MacMahon, son of John Baptist, and later Count de Charney, was a professional soldier in the army of France (Hayes, 1949a:186-7). O'Halloran records MacMahon as a 'Knight of Malta'. This quality is not mentioned with regard to either the son or brother in any source I have located. There are no subscribers from the Irish émigré group in the subscription-list of O'Halloran's *An introduction to and an history of Ireland* (1803).

The list to O'Connor's *The ogygia vindicated* contains two subscribers from France: one a merchant from Bordeaux can be considered a member of Ireland's émigré commercial community; the other is listed as "O'Reilly Member of the Paris Committee". His name and location would indicate that O'Reilly is part of the Irish émigré group, but I have no information regarding the committee mentioned here. The subscription-list to Hely's *Ogygia* (1793) contains one Irish émigré subscriber that has been mentioned here previously in the context of O'Halloran's *Introduction*, the Marquis D'Eguilly. Other lists that have been mentioned here from writers of the Anglo-Irish tradition contain no Irish émigré subscribers. Therefore, the absence of significant Irish émigré support within the O'Halloran corpus, and moreover, in comparable subscriptions lists of this period, confirms the exceptionality of the *General History* list in this regard.

#### **4.6.1. Irish Émigré: Irish Suitability for an Imperial Role**

The forgoing analysis of O'Halloran's subscription-list confirmed an unprecedented representation from Ireland's militarily and commercially successful émigrés. The analysis furthermore demonstrated that neither before nor after this particular appearance in O'Halloran's list in 1778, did a similar representation appear in any comparable antiquarian subscription-lists. Moreover, a comment in the *Hibernian*



*Journal* (Crito, 1778a), confirms that their appearance here is not by chance, but at the invitation of the author, who wrote to Ireland's French and Spanish military diaspora soliciting their support in the form of subscription for his *General History*. The following discussion centres on the varying reactions that the presence of this group in the *General History* subscription-list would have had on Irish Catholics, Irish Protestants and Britain's imperial and political élite. The aim is to demonstrate that, the inclusion by O'Halloran of Irish military émigrés confirms that the *General History* was not directed towards an Irish Protestant audience, as this reminder of an alternative militarily successful Irish aristocracy would have been anathema to many in the Irish Protestant community. Therefore, this display of Irish military and commercial power was directed primarily towards a British readership. The purpose of their inclusion in the list was to demonstrate Irish current suitability for an imperial role, and was in sympathy with Britain's imperial need to access Irish soldiery at this juncture.

From the Irish perspective, two views of Ireland's overseas émigrés existed. For the Catholic community, whether their aim was rapprochement with the British and Dublin administration (Morley, 2002:66-68), or a Jacobite restoration (O'Ciardha, 2001), the existence of Ireland's overseas émigrés added a continental dimension to a conflict that otherwise, would have been confined to the island of Ireland. It was also confirmation for those at home that they were neither alone nor isolated in their struggle. Moreover, for those who still maintained the hopes of a Jacobite restoration, the War of the two Kings had not ended with defeat at Limerick in 1691. The site of conflict was simply removed to the continent, and the struggle continued via the Irish military fighting in the Catholic armies of France and Spain.

The Protestant ascendancy class in Ireland viewed this overseas Irish community with suspicion and anxiety. From early in the eighteenth century, the Irish regiments serving in France and Spain, were imbued with an aura of invincible bravery, and viewed as dangerous instruments of war, in the hands of an untrustworthy France. In 1728, Charles Forman published a pamphlet entitled *A letter to the right honourable Sir Robert Sutton, for disbanding the Irish regiments in the service of France and*

*Spain*, and, although Forman eulogised the bravery of the Irish regiments, he called for their immediate disbandment. Forman argued that:

while the Irish regiments are suffer'd to continue in the Service of France and Spain, they will always furnish those Nations with Instruments to carry on their Designs against us, and to prove a Nursery of inveterate Enemies to Britain as long as she continues under the Government of the August House of Hanover. (Forman, 1728:21)

The Irish Brigade by its continued existence acted on an already insecure Protestant élite, and increased their sense of anxiety. The two letters received by the Lord Mayors of Cork and Limerick, referred to here previously, provide some idea of the shape that Protestant anxiety could take at this period. How real that particular threat was at any given time, is immaterial. The eyes of Dublin were focussed on Irish troop movements on the continent, Irish coasts were monitored, and at times of crisis or threatened invasion, for instance in 1715, and again in 1745/6, internal suppression increased. Numerous invasion plans were hatched both in France (Murtagh, 1996:307-8) and in Spain (Recio Morales, 2010:173-176), by Irish military figures, but ultimately these were doomed to failure by forces outside the control of the Irish Brigade, and, “due to the sheer volatility of international politics” (Recio Morales, 2010:175).

Another issue of concern for the Protestant ascendancy class in Ireland, and heightened by the existence of the Irish émigré community, was the ever present sense of insecurity and instability which characterised this class. This sense of insecurity centred on two issues primarily: land title and status. Niall Ó Ciosáin (1997:171-184) has elaborated on these issues and the manner in which they affected the status of the Anglo-Irish in Ireland. Political power was connected to land-ownership, and land-ownership was a long-established confirmation of nobility. However, in Ireland much of the land in Protestant ownership was held either by confiscation, or held under the Act of Settlement (1652), and frequently lacked legal title support documentation. Security of Protestant land-ownership was in many instances dependent on the continuance of Protestant dominance in church and state.

The sense of insecurity felt by the Protestant landowner was further compounded by many of the dispossessed owners continuing to reside in the locality, as either tenants or small land-owners. This point, regarding the insecurity of Irish Protestant land tenure, is made by the anti-repeal MP John Fitzgibbon, in the Irish House of Commons, during the parliamentary debates surrounding Gardiner's Catholic Relief Act.<sup>57</sup>

Every man who is acquainted with the History of Ireland must know, that three fourths of the Landed Estates in Ireland are held under the Act of Settlement, & Explanation, and the Act of resumption. Every title depends upon the stability of the present Government. I say every man who has an Estate derived under those Acts, the very being of his Estate depends upon his defending the Established Government.

(In Cavendish: 16 June 1778:303-4)

Insecurity of status was another problematic issue for the Protestant community in Ireland. The dispossessed Gaelic landowners had frequently been of nobler birth than the adventurer or the Cromwellian soldier, that had replaced them. Gaelic aristocracy, like its European counterpart, was based on status. In Ireland, however, hierarchy and status were dependent on religion. Therefore, the continued existence of an alternative Catholic aristocratic class, holders of a more legitimate land title claim than the present occupiers (and of which O'Halloran's subscription-list is a potent reminder), would not be welcomed by some sections of the Protestant community in Ireland.<sup>58</sup> Clearly then, O'Halloran's list was not shaped to appeal to an Irish Protestant audience. It was directed towards an audience outside of Ireland, as the London publication-site confirmed. In fact, O'Halloran's inclusion here of a militarily strong émigré group, which would be unsettling to say the least for an Irish Protestant readership, further confirms this point.

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<sup>57</sup>John Fitzgibbon (1749-1802), was MP Dublin University 1778-1782. Fitzgibbon was raised to the peerage in 1789 as Baron Fitzgibbon, later Earl of Clare in 1795. He occupied many influential posts. He was Sheriff of co. Limerick 1872; Attorney General, 1783, and Lord Chancellor from 20 June 1789 to 1802 (Johnston-Liik, 2002,4:165-170).

<sup>58</sup>These two issues relating to land title and status are discussed in full in Chapter 5.

However, although Ireland's overseas émigré community might be viewed as seditious from an Irish Protestant insular perspective; this view point did not necessarily coalesce with the current British imperial assessment of the situation. This was a crucial period for the British Empire. War with her American colonies in 1775 not only raised issues of imperial security but also threatened the very fabric of the Empire. Burgoyne's defeat at Saratoga in October 1777 brought an opportunistic France into the fray in March 1778, an event which had been forecast by the First Lord of the Admiralty, John Montague as early as 1775 (*Oxford DNB*). Consequently, Britain's western flank, Ireland, lay vulnerable to the disaffection of the Irish Catholic in the event of a French invasion. Britain simply did not have the military resources to defend the Empire on two fronts. Britain needed to supplement her armed forces. The discussion on a possible imperial intervention in Irish Catholic relief politics in the previous section here confirmed Britain's determination and desire to access Irish soldiery in the face of Irish Protestant opposition.

Therefore, this opportune and unprecedented appearance of substantial representation from Ireland's émigré community, at the same as the British Empire was in crisis is not coincidence, and invites a linkage between both events. This is further borne out by the fact that O'Halloran deliberately orchestrated this émigré representation in his subscription-list as mentioned. For O'Halloran, the wealth and political potential of the Irish émigré acted as an effective and contemporary confirmation of the Irish ability to prosper and contribute militarily, administratively and commercially as an active force within empire, when freed from penal restrictions. Irish Catholics, as Nicholas Canny (1994:315-316) points out, who depended on British imperial trade for their own prosperity, had no wish to destroy the British State. They simply wanted to remove the restrictions that prevented them from full participation in its prosperity. When viewed from this perspective, the inclusion by O'Halloran of a proven military resource and a successful commercial sector in his subscription-list is not seditious; it is rather a timely reminder of a resource that could perhaps be utilised in exchange for a small measure of Catholic relief.

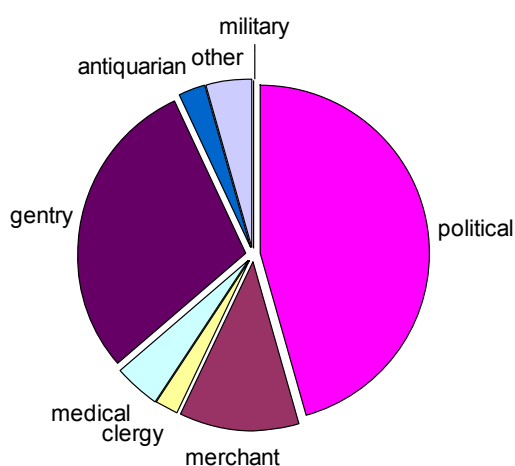
This reading is consistent with O'Halloran's critique on penal legislation within the text of the *General History*. There O'Halloran (1778a,1:98) addressed his concerns within a discourse of concern for the British Empire, creating an ideology within which the Irish Protestant ruling class were contextualized as the, "most determined enemies" of Britain, whose penal legislation against Irish Catholics endangered national security by swelling the armies of France, thereby strengthening the arm of Britain's arch enemy. O'Halloran (1778a,1:97-9) further argued that had the "cruel hand of oppression" (penal laws) not reduced Irish soldiery to despair, they would not have enlisted in the armies of France and Spain, and would not have fled "to seek protection in foreign climates, and fight the battles of the enemies of their country". The implied conclusion being, of course, that they would now be fighting in the ranks of the British imperial army, for "their country" (Britain) if penal restrictions were removed.

Whether these Irish émigré would have agreed with O'Halloran's identification of Britain as their "country", and France and Spain as their enemies at this point, is a little startling. Dillon's regiment, after all, as mentioned, had demanded the privilege to be the first regiment sent to America to fight the British. However, O'Halloran's argument is that, if penal restrictions on Irish Catholics were removed they would enlist in the British army. The opportunity to serve in the British army would have been welcomed by many Irish career soldiers in pursuit of advancement and promotion (Cullen, 1990:75). Although barred officially from serving in the British armed forces until 1793, in the 1780's, the British army received applications from Irish Catholic officers serving in continental armies, seeking to transfer to the British army (Bartlett, 1993b:71). O'Halloran's argument is contemporary and potent. After all, the British Empire's constant need for soldiers had led to a remarkable *volte face* in respect of Scotland and her once Jacobite Highlands, who had progressed from being viewed as an expensive nuisance, to a valuable commodity as "the arsenal of the empire" (Colley, 2009:132). Issues of imperial security now provided a similar importunity for Ireland to replace, or at least, compliment Scotland, in this regard and, thereby gain access to other imperial benefits.

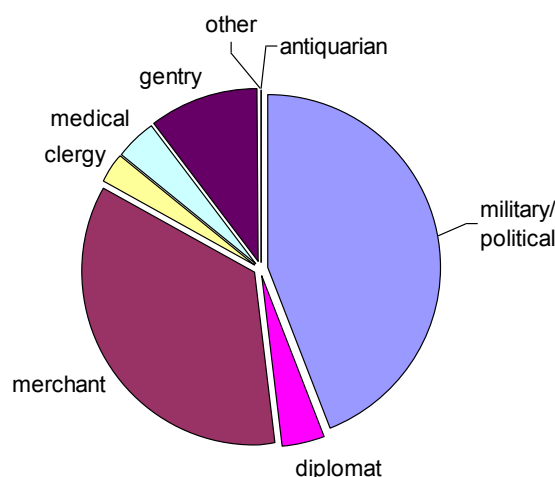
To summarise: The unprecedented appearance of a nexus of Britain's political élite, and an equally powerful military/political/commercial representation from Ireland's overseas émigrés, marks the subscription-list of O'Halloran *General History* truly remarkable in this period. When the components of these two groups are placed side by side, as they are in Figure 4.6 below, the degree of British/French/Spanish imperial power they represent, in the context of the overarching political crisis at this period, is striking.

**Figure 4.6: British and Irish Émigré subscribers to O'Halloran's *General History*: by occupation specified with political subset**

British Subscriber



Irish Émigré Subscriber



As before, these charts prioritise the political element of its aristocratic subscribers, and it is interesting to note that the power balance between the British political élite, and the Irish émigré military/political group, is even at 45%. However, this may have occurred more by a 'happy coincidence' rather than by design. The unparalleled appearance of these two groups supporting a history of Ireland by a Catholic author at this particular juncture, has formed the basis for the core argument represented here. The success of the Irish émigré group, and the reason that O'Halloran orchestrated their appearance in his subscription-list, was to demonstrate a current fittingness for Irish participation in the British Empire, and informed his strategic approach to Catholic relief at his juncture. Moreover, and by extension, the success

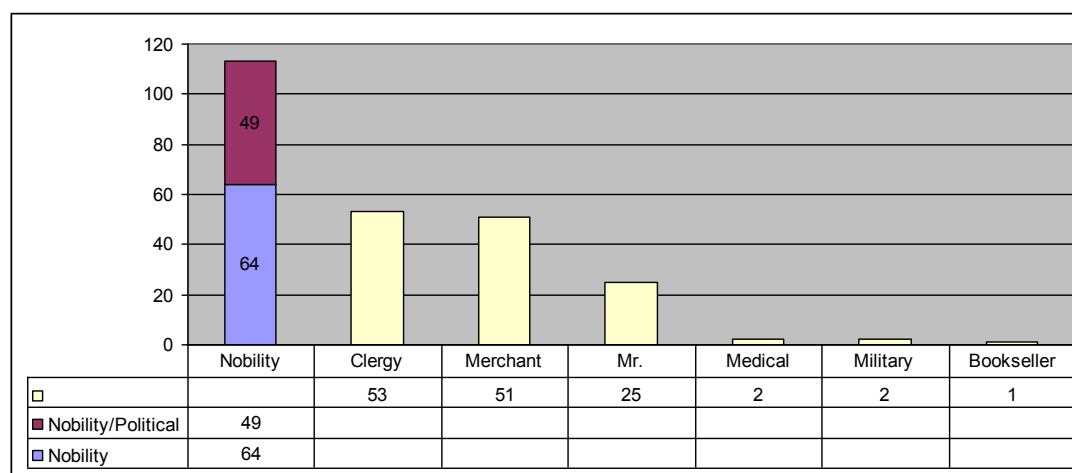
of the Irish émigré group represented in microcosm the potential military and commercial dynamic of the oppressed Irish nation itself, if Catholic rights were restored. This argument O'Halloran directed at the political élite in London. The substantial representation from this group in the *General History* subscription-list confirms that, not only had he had accessed his target audience, but that they even partly endorsed it.

#### **4.7. Irish subscriber: Analysis**

The third group in O'Halloran's subscription-list is the Irish subscriber group. The appearance of strong support for a work on Irish affairs from the home market is neither unusual, nor exceptional. My aim, however, as before is to focus primarily, but not exclusively, on the political influence that this group represents. The following discussion is divided into two main areas. Firstly, the intent is to provide an identity profile of the Irish subscriber group. Secondly, the aim is to contextualise the strong political support that this analysis reveals in the context of Irish Catholic relief at this period.

The central focus of the following occupational breakdown of the Irish group is to reveal not only the various sections of the community from which O'Halloran drew support, but more importantly, to identify the Irish Protestant political support in the work of a Catholic antiquarian at this period. In order to identify the political complexion of this group, a sub section within the 'nobility' group is created as previously outlined, with regard to the British subscriber group. The political subset within the 'nobility' category is coloured coded for emphasis and clarity. The guidelines used here to identify subscribers as politically active, are the second parliament and third parliament in the reign of George III, 1768-1776, and 1776-1783. This may initially appear rather a broad time-span for a work published in 1778. However, this time-span is determined by the dismissal of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, which occurred midway through O'Halloran's four-year subscription campaign, based on the assumption that he initiated his campaign in 1774, at the same time that he publically announced his intention to write his *General History* (O'Halloran, 1774a:34-5).

**Figure 4.7: Irish subscribers to O'Halloran's *General History*: by occupation specified with a political subset**



There are 113 subscribers, or 45.7% of the total figure in the 'nobility' category. Within this group 49 members or 19.8% are political influential. In descending order clerical subscribers at 53 represent 21.5% of the total; merchants are the next highest group at 51 or 20.6% of the total; at a figure of 25 the Mr. category accounts for 10.1%. There are 2 medical and 2 military subscribers who individually represent 2.8% of the total; the smallest category is bookseller at 1 or 0.4% of the total subscriber figure.

O'Halloran's subscription-list contains 37 members, or 12.3% of the total membership of the Irish House of Commons. The significance of this number must increase, in consideration of the political power and influence of these subscribers, as the legal and opinion makers of their day. A comparison with the subscription-lists of O'Halloran's other works can help to contextualise this figure. The subscription-list to O'Halloran's *A compleat treatise on gangrene and sphacelus* (1765a), contained five representatives of the Irish House of Commons, or 2.3% of the total membership of the House. The *Introduction* (1772a) contained 4 representatives, or, 1.3% of the total membership. However, a further eight names listed in the *Introduction* list are future members of the third parliament in the reign of George III, 1776-1783. For instance, Alexander English and Barry Yelverton, although listed in the *Introduction* list, do not enter the Irish House of Commons until 1776, these subscribers are, therefore, considered politically inactive at this period. It is somewhat easier to identity the MPs in the subscription-list to O'Halloran's *An*



*introduction to and an history of Ireland* (1803), as this quality is recorded for the first time in O'Halloran's subscription-lists. There are five active members of the Irish House of Commons listed in O'Halloran's 1803 subscription-list. Therefore, these figures confirm that political support in the *General History*, in a comparison with other lists in the O'Halloran corpus, is remarkable. The only other list available for comparison, at this particular period in the work of a Catholic antiquarian, is O'Connor's *The ogygia vindicated*. I count four MPs in O'Connor's subscription-list to *The ogygia vindicated*, one of whom is Luke Gardiner, the Dublin MP who introduced the Catholic Relief Bill into the Irish House of Commons in May 1778.

Although political activity was confined primarily to the House of Commons, members of the House of Lords were not necessarily merely bystanders, and I have included this element in the above graph. O'Halloran's subscription-list contains twelve peerage members, three of whom were politically active within the above-specified time period. For example, Murrough O'Brien, Earl of Inchiquin was MP for Clare 1756-1760, Harristown 1761-1768, and member of the Privy Council of Ireland from 1780 (Johnston-Liik, 2002,5:375-7). Thomas Dawson, Lord Dartry was MP for Monaghan 1749-1760 and 1761-8, and was created Baron Darty in 1770 (Johnston-Liik, 2002,4:30-1). Henry Thomas Butler, Earl Carrick was MP for Killeagh 1768-1774, and appointed to the Privy Council of Ireland in 1777 (Johnston-Liik, 2002,3:342-3). As members of the Irish House of Lords and substantial landowners, peerage members could control the election of particular candidates within their locality. For instance, the Duke of Leinster, William Fitzgerald, also an O'Halloran subscriber, controlled about six members of the Irish House of Commons. Another O'Halloran subscriber, Lord Charlemont, brought Henry Grattan into the Irish Commons, as MP for Charlemont in 1775.<sup>59</sup> In comparison, *The ogygia vindicated* list contains three members of the Irish House of Lords. Therefore, the political support for the *General History* at this particular period, in comparison with previous lists mentioned here, is remarkable, and raises the question as to what significance can be attached to this event? This issue will be critically discussed shortly.

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<sup>59</sup>James Caulfeild (1728-1799) was founder member and president of the Royal Irish Academy in 1785. He supported parliamentary reform in 1783-4. He believed in religious toleration for Catholics, but believed admission to the constitution should be reserved for Protestants. See: *Oxford DNB*.

The occupational breakdown of the Irish subscriber group also revealed a substantial clerical representation in the subscription-list. In total there are 53 subscriptions from clergymen. I have been unable to identify the religious affiliation of six of these subscribers.<sup>60</sup> Of the remaining 47 clerical subscribers, 28 or 59.6% are Catholic, and there are 19 representatives from the Church of Ireland, which is 40.4% of the total figure. Amongst those listed are: the Archbishop of Dublin, John Carpenter, who was also a member of the Dublin Society's Select Committee with O'Connor and O'Halloran. The Catholic Bishop of Cork, John Butler, and numerous priests from the diocese of Cloyne in particular, are listed. In the *General History* O'Halloran (1778a:xliv) conveys his thanks to the Rev. Doctor Mac Kenna, titular bishop of Cloyne, who provided him with a copy of the *Leabhar Leacan*. Representatives from the Church of Ireland include the Lord Bishop of Limerick, Rev. Archdeacon Leslie, Rev. Archdeacon John Wardlow and the Rev William Cecil Pery, Dean of Killaloe, later Bishop of Limerick from 1784-94. Cecil Pery was the brother of Edmund Sexton Pery, speaker of the Irish House of Commons. These figures would indicate, or at least give the appearance of, a broad multi-denominational appeal for O'Halloran's *General History*. Clerical representation in the subscription-list to O'Halloran's *Introduction* would confirm this impression where 50% of clerical subscribers can be identified as Church of Ireland (Leslie, n. d.).<sup>61</sup>

The merchants were a potent force in Irish society, and represent only one element of the larger international commercial network of the Irish merchant class, as demonstrated previously here with regard to Spain. A feature of Gardiner's Catholic Relief Act, with its property concessions, was an attempt to release Catholic money into the economy. In fact, Barry Yelverton in his pro-relief speech on 22

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<sup>60</sup>I record my thanks here to Fr. Hugh Fenning for his assistance in identifying many of the Catholic clergymen in O'Halloran's 1778 subscription-list. My thanks are due also to Dr. Raymond Refausse and Mary Furlong, of The Representative Church Body Library, Braemor Road, for aiding me in identifying many of the Anglican clergymen in the 1778 list.

<sup>61</sup>A tentative number for Catholic subscribers in the *General History* subscription-list can be calculated. The 77 Irish émigrés are presumably Catholic. Catholic clerical subscribers account for a further 28 subscribers. There are 27 Catholic merchants listed. Catholic Committee members number 6. In total then, a conservative estimate of Catholic support for the *General History*, is 138 subscribers, or 28.8% of the 479 subscribers present. The number of Catholic subscribers may be much higher, but the prosopographical research needed in that regard, is outside the parameters of this study.

May, had argued that if the Irish House did not pass a measure of Catholic relief commensurate with the Catholic relief passed in England, the Irish Catholic would take their money to England or America, where more favourable conditions prevailed for investment (Burns, 1963:190). The merchant class are represented by 51 subscribers. The largest contingent are from Dublin, and of the thirty merchants listed with a Dublin address, 27 can be identified as Catholic (Wall, 1960:298-323).

All subscribers with a connection to the medical trade, including apothecary or druggist, are included in the 'medical' category. O'Halloran appears to have had little interest in collecting subscribers from his own medical profession for this work. Aside from overseas medical subscribers, which are eight in total, there are six other medical subscribers in O'Halloran's list. However, I can identify Ireland as location for only two of this number, but even if location for the remaining four could be identified as Ireland, the total number of subscribers from O'Halloran's own profession of medicine, would be small, 2.9% of the total figure of 479 subscribers. The subscription-list of the landowner and antiquarian Charles O'Connor, *The ogygia vindicated* (1775), contained 14 medical subscribers, or 5.5% of a total of 254 subscribers. O'Halloran's earlier *Introduction* (1772a) contained 11 medical subscribers, or 5.2% of a total of 213 subscribers. Although both Ferrar's (1769) and Lucas's (1788) Limerick directories list numerous medical persons in Limerick, none of these names appear in O'Halloran's subscription-list in 1778. However, two Limerick M. D.s: Cornelius Kelly and Thomas O'Brien are listed as subscribers to the earlier *Introduction*. The subscription-list to O'Halloran's medical work *A complete treatise on gangrene* (1765a) fared a little better. There are 24 medical subscribers or 11.7% of the total of 206 subscribers. I have been unable to locate a copy of the subscription-list to O'Halloran's *A new treatise on the glaucoma or cataract* (1750) for comparison.

There are three possible explanations for the dearth of medical subscribers here. One explanation may be that the medical profession were not major collectors of libraries, which Cole (1974b:234) confirms by ranking them only 6<sup>th</sup> in his list of private libraries in eighteenth-century Ireland. A second source of reference for the poor showing of Limerick medical men in subscription-lists is Ferrar's, *The History*

of *Limerick* (1787). Ferrar's list contains only 7 medical subscribers, or 1.6% of a total number of 436 subscribers.

Secondly, the small numbers of subscribers from the medical profession could be a reflection of O'Halloran's sometimes uneasy relationship with that group in Ireland. Elsewhere, this author has detailed O'Halloran's frustration at the Irish body of surgeons for refusing to endorse his new method of amputation published in 1765 (Lyons, 2009). In addition, a letter from O'Halloran (1786) to Sir Vere Hunt, indicates that O'Halloran was not always on good terms with his fellow Limerick surgeons.<sup>62</sup>

Another consideration that must be taken into account, considering the carefully crafted nature of this list, is that O'Halloran was simply not interested in collecting medical subscribers, unless they were socially complementary and added prestige to the work. In that regard, Sir Nathaniel Barry, mentioned previously, certainly fits that profile, and is listed as a subscriber. Barry was professor of surgery and midwifery in 1749, joint Physician-General to the Army (Ireland) 1749-50, and in 1782 was appointed Honorary Fellow to the Royal College of Physicians in Ireland. Another medical professional of sufficient standing who appears as a subscriber here was John O'Ferral, who was affiliated to the College of Physicians in Dublin.

In sum, O'Halloran's Irish subscribers are drawn from the upper echelons of Irish society, and contain many of the most influential opinion makers and political figures of his day. The Irish subscriber group contains substantial multi-denominational support for the *General History*, and strong representation from the merchant sector, primarily Catholic. Conversely, support from O'Halloran's medical profession is insignificant. The forgoing analysis also revealed an unprecedented political support in the subscription-list of the *General History* at this period. This occurrence would invite a linkage with the also unprecedented British political support for this work, previously mentioned.

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<sup>62</sup>The estate of Sir Vere Hunt (1761-1818) was at Curragh Chase, Adair, Co. Limerick. He was a governor of the Limerick County Infirmary and was appointed a high sheriff of Limerick in 1784 Ferrar (1787:212,465). A transcript of this letter is provided in Appendix A, letter 12.

#### 4.7.1. Ireland's Political Élite: Catholic Relief in Ireland 1778

The following discussion focuses on the significance of Irish political support in the work of an Irish Catholic antiquary at this period, and will make the argument that the political context which motivated the appearance of a British political élite in the *General History* list, also actuated this unparalleled Irish political support. The most useful source available to identify Protestant political concerns at this juncture surrounding the passage of Irish Catholic relief is *Sir Henry Cavendish's Parliamentary Diary, 1776-83*, which contains a record of the parliamentary debates on Gardiner's Catholic Relief Act. The following investigation will focus primarily on the speeches of O'Halloran's subscribers recorded in this work, to discern if his arguments for Catholic relief, predicated on the military career of Irish émigrés, or the utility of Irish Catholics as British imperial agents, found resonance in the debates on Catholic relief in the Irish House of Commons at this period.

Within the context of the Parliament of 1776-1783 and Gardiner's Relief Act of 1778, O'Halloran's list contains the names of 29 members of the Irish House of Commons, who would have been present, or had the right by election to be present, for the debate on the Catholic Relief Bill. However, what the individual contribution of each of these members was, is impossible to say. Based on Lord Cavendish's diary account of the debates, not all of these members actually voiced an opinion, or at least one that was recorded by Cavendish. However, what can be said is that the majority of subscribers in the *General History* list, but not all, voted in favour of Gardiner's Relief Act. Those who voiced the most strident opposition to the bill, for instance, George Ogle<sup>63</sup>, or Sir Edward Newenham, are not listed as subscribers to O'Halloran's *General History*.<sup>64</sup>

Many of the most vocal supporters of Gardiner's Relief Act during the period of the debates on this issue in the Irish House, are listed as subscribers, which points to a 'liberal' element among O'Halloran's political subscribers. Luke Gardiner who

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<sup>63</sup>George Ogle (1742-1814) was MP for Wexford County 1769-1797 (Johnston-Liik, 2002, 5:390-394).

<sup>64</sup>Edward Newenham (1730-1814) was MP for Wexford 1769-1776; Dublin County 1776-1797 (Johnston-Liik, 2002, 5:352-355).

presented the bill is not a subscriber.<sup>65</sup> However, Barry Yelverton,<sup>66</sup> who delivered, what Robert Burns (1963:189-190) has called the “most powerful speech in favour of immediate relief for the Catholics” in response to the objections of Hercules Rowley and George Ogle to the introduction of the Catholic Relief Bill, is a subscriber.<sup>67</sup> Yelverton's pro-relief position is not surprising. He had been retained by the Catholic Committee as early as 1773 to be “the non-freemen's council before the house of commons” (Edwards, 1942:15). Another subscriber is Limerick man, and Speaker of the Irish House, Edmund Sexton Pery.<sup>68</sup> Pery was a consistent supporter of Catholic relief and corresponded with Edmund Burke during the course of the debate in the Irish House on Gardiner's Relief Act (Williams and Bourke, 1844:223-4). Pery was also a strong O'Halloran supporter. His name appears in all three of O'Halloran's subscription-lists mentioned here: 1765, 1772 and 1778.

The Honourable John Ponsonby<sup>69</sup> who declared himself “a friend to the heads of the bill” as did Sir Lucius O'Brien were also O'Halloran subscribers.<sup>70</sup> This was something of a turn around for Ponsonby, who had voted against the 1774 Catholic Relief Act, which allowed Catholics demonstrate their loyalty to the Crown by taking an oath acknowledging the Hanoverian succession (Johnston-Liik, 2002,6:89-97). Another important figure listed is the Attorney-General of Ireland, John Scott. Scott spoke passionately in favour of repealing the gavelling clause. He also spoke against George Ogle's motion to remove the fee simple clause from the proposed act, and replace it with a 999 year lease (Burns, 1963:195).<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Luke Gardiner (1745-1798) was MP for Dublin County 1773 -1783; 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Mountjoy 1789; Viscount Mountjoy 1795 ((Johnston-Liik, 2002,4:260-2).

<sup>66</sup> MP for Carrigfergus for the period 1774-1783 (Johnston-Liik, 2002,6:570-2).

<sup>67</sup> Rt. Hon. Hercules Langford Rowley (1707-1794) was MP for Co. Londonderry 1743-1760;Co. Meath 1761-1794.

<sup>68</sup>Sexton Pery was MP for Limerick City 1761-1785; member of the Privy Council of Ireland 1771; raised to the peerage in 1785 as Viscount Pery of Newtown Pery. Pery is considered one of the leading politicians of eighteenth-century Ireland (Johnston-Liik, 2002,6:55-59).

<sup>69</sup>Ponsonby was replaced by Sexton Pery as Speaker of the House in 1771 (Johnston-Liik, 2002,6:89-97).

<sup>70</sup>O'Brien (1731-1795) was created third baronet on the death of his father in 1765. He was a member of the younger branch of the O'Briens, Earls of Thomond and of Inchiquin. He was MP for Clare 1761- 1776; Ennis 1776-1778; Clare 1778-1783, and member of the Privy Council of Ireland 1786 (Johnston-Liik, 2002,5:372-375).

<sup>71</sup>Scott (1739-1798) was appointed Attorney-General in 1777. He sat in the Irish House of Commons for Mullingar from 1760 to 1783. He was a firm supporter of the North Administration, and after the fall of Lord North in 1782, Scott was dismissed by the new Rockingham Administration. He was created Baron Earlsfort in 1784, Viscount Clonmel in 1789 and Earl of Clonmel in 1793. He voted in favour of the 1778 Catholic Relief Act (Johnston-Liik, 2002, 6:251-253).

One of the most outspoken pro-relief MPs was O'Halloran subscriber William Alexander English.<sup>72</sup> On 25 May, in support of the motion introduced by Luke Gardiner for Catholic relief, English (Cavendish:25 May 1778:28-29) exclaimed "For God's sake let them [Catholics] go to Heaven their way. [...] Will Commemoration and Transubstantiation never have an end. Moreover, on 18 June, when English rose to declare in favour of the revised relief bill, he criticised the sectarian attitude of the House, commenting that:

Since the first introduction of the subject, he had heard the pompous sound of Protestantism echo thro' the house, as if every thing noble, & great was confined to its professors. (English In Cavendish: 18 June 1778:50)

English was one of a group of MPs that revolved around Sir Robert Tilson Deane.<sup>73</sup> Others in this group were Charles Francis Sheridan, who was MP Belturbet, Co. Cavan, Jocelyn Deane, MP for Baltimore, and Cornelius O'Keefe, MP for Fore. Deane had purchased a seat in parliament for both English and Sheridan (Johnston-Liik, 2002, 4:39-41). Deane had also financially supported the publication of the *General History* to the sum of 20 guineas, which was the cost of the 20 copies he ordered. All of the above MPs are listed as subscribers to the *General History*.

However, being an O'Halloran subscriber did not necessarily equate with unequivocal support for Gardiner's Relief Bill. For instance, O'Halloran subscriber, Richard Longfield, presented a petition from Cork city to the Irish House of Commons on 15 June against Gardiner's Relief Bill and, in particular, against the repeal of the gavelling clause.<sup>74</sup> The Provost of Trinity College, John Hely Hutchinson, another O'Halloran subscriber, seconded the motion that the petition be received.<sup>75</sup> However, Hely Hutchinson strongly denied that his actions indicated that

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<sup>72</sup>William Alexander English (c.1724-1794) was MP for Wexford 1776-1790.

<sup>73</sup>Sir Robert Tilson Deane was MP Carysfort, 1771-1776; Co. Cork 1776-1781 (Johnston-Liik, 2002, 4:39-41).

<sup>74</sup>In an unsigned and undated letter to Sir Richard Heron, Richard Longfield, and his brother Robert Longfield, are listed as members "that are quite independent of L<sup>d</sup> Sh.<sup>n</sup> [Lord Shannon]" See: Anon, n. d.). Shannon was strongly opposed to the Catholic Relief Act (Burns, 1959:686).

<sup>75</sup>Hely-Hutchinson (1723-1794) was MP for Cork City 1760-1790. He was appointed to the Privy Council in 1765, and in 1774 was appointed Provost of Trinity College, Dublin. He spoke fervently in favour of the Catholic Relief Act in 1778 during the debate on the issue in the Irish House of Commons (Johnston-Liik, 2002, 4:394-403).

he was against the proposed bill in any way. Longfield was not the only O'Halloran subscriber who voted against the Catholic relief bill. Of the total figure of 27 O'Halloran subscribers, who were also members of the Irish House of Commons, and whose votes have been recorded, five members voted against the Act.<sup>76</sup> These actions confirmed the view of Edmund Sexton Pery expressed in a letter to William Knox, and cited by Burns (1963:190) that, although resistance to any relaxation of the penal laws was expected, the repeal of the gavelling clause would incite particular opposition, as this clause was considered "even by moderate men, as the Palladium of Ireland".

The imperial importance of securing the loyalty of Irish Catholics in the context of Britain's war in America, and a possible French invasion of Ireland, is a point raised by many of O'Halloran's subscribers during the course of the Catholic relief debate. The emphasis on the imperial significance of Irish Catholics, and their possible contribution to the security of the British Empire, underscores O'Halloran's later argument within the text of the *General History* - that Catholic relief was in the best interest of the empire.

Yelverton, in rather a long-winded speech, and in the context of a possible invasion of Ireland by France, made the imperial argument that securing Catholic loyalty would release the forces of the country, including the militia and regular forces to oppose a common enemy:

The British Empire is now pitted against France, is the strength of the British Empire equal to the numbers of Inhabitants it can bring into action against the Common Enemy? I say it is not. It is equal only to that excess of strength which the governing Inhabitants have over the governed. For if the State be obliged to employ a part to keep the governed in awe then the strength is only equal to that number that can be employed against the Common Enemy. [...] but if we are to govern a part of the inhabitants of this Country with a rod of iron, if we are to keep them in such a State as to doubt their fidelity we must

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<sup>76</sup>Hon Edmund Butler, MP Kilkenny 1776-9; Richard Longfield, MP Cork 1776-1783; James Uniack, MP Youghal 1776-1797; Richard Townsend, MP Co. Cork 1759-1783; Henry Prittie, MP Gowran 1769-1776 and Co. Tipperary 1776-1783.



employ that Militia to act against them to keep them in awe, and employ nothing against Invaders but the Regular forces.

(Yelverton In Cavendish: 4 August 1778:215-6)

Yelverton's argument is simple and pragmatic. If some measure of Catholic relief is not granted to ensure Catholic loyalty, he points out that there are insufficient troops to defend the country, in the event of a French invasion of Ireland.

Another O'Halloran subscriber, the Attorney General John Scott (In Cavendish:16 June 1778:216), argued on the basis that unless toleration was granted to secure the loyalty and interest of the Irish Catholic, they would, like the "revolted Americans", the "favourite Children" of the British Empire, form an alliance with France, and threaten the security of Ireland and the British Empire. John Ponsonby also contextualised the necessity for Catholic Relief within the overall dynamic of imperial politics, and the Anglo-American crisis. Ponsonby (In Cavendish:20 June 1778:312) referred to the Catholic Relief Act as, the "wise intention" of the British ministry in response to the loss of a "great part of the Empire, to coalesce, and bring together the remaining part of the Empire". William English argued that acceptance of religious diversity was needed to strengthen the British Empire and to repel the "natural enemy [France]":

Our hierarchy counted no fewer than twenty religions, or different religious sects with the Empire, now if each of these was to have different Civil rights, & privileges, where were we to look for that unanimity, which alone could give strength, & efficacy to the community, and enable us to retrieve the loss of our Revolted Colonies, or repel the natural Enemy that may be said to be now thundering at our Gates?

(English In Cavendish: 18 June 1778:50)

While all of the above extracts echo the belief that Catholic relief is in the best interest of Ireland and the British Empire, the impetus propelling the debate is not religious toleration. It is the pragmatic realisation that exclusionary policies have to be modified for the security of Ireland, and, by extension, the British Empire. Central

to this argument, is the awareness that there are insufficient troops available to defend the country, in the event of Catholic disaffection. John Scott's argument is similarly activated by thoughts of war and security. However, what is interesting about his argument, is that like O'Halloran, Scott argues for repeal on the basis that penal restrictions have strengthened the armies of Britain's enemies. Scott makes a further argument that Irish Catholics would make good soldiers and imperialists as demonstrated by the current military careers of the Irish émigrés. Scott presented his argument for repeal, by drawing attention to iconic figures in Irish military service abroad, a similar strategy as employed by O'Halloran here in his subscription-list:

Look a little into the History of Europe, & see if my observation is justified. who are the names that have figur'd? they are Exiles of Ireland and are extoll'd as Heroes in every Country. Bring back those persons that have made other Countries great, & mark this Era as an enlightened Era. Bring, Sir, from Spain a man honoured by all the people of that Country, & almost idolized, that distinguishes himself as the first character in Europe, an Exile from this Country – Wall. Another man of that name high in reputation has mark'd his name for genius, & talents in France. You are distress'd in the East Indies, who does it? A man of your own Country General Lally. You are injured by an Army on the Continent, that Army commanded by the Marshal Biron. Look thr' every Country in Europe, & see if the people you have banished have not been the Coriolani of those Countries. They have got honour, & immortality in every Country but their own. Are those a system of laws then you are to continue, and to keep alive by the recollection of the Flames.

(Scott In Cavendish: 18 June 1778:206)

One figure mentioned here by Scott, Lieutenant-General Ricardo Wall, is listed in the *General History* subscription-list. Therefore, O'Halloran's argument for Catholic relief, and, by extension, Catholic inclusion in the British Empire, found resonance in the debates in the Irish House of Commons, and confirms the political potency of his argument.

Despite the fact, however, that many arguments are made about the harshness of the penal code, and various references are made to the 'state of slavery' in which the Irish Catholic exists, the Catholic relief debate is driven primarily by a political confluence of events and pressure from the British ministry (Bartlett, 1992:86-94). There is no indication at any point, notwithstanding the impassioned pleas of John Scott or John Hely-Hutchinson, that the overall consensus of the Irish House of Commons, is other than to grant the minimum required to secure Catholic loyalty, at this particular time. Pro-relief speaker Barry Yelverton comments in this regard:

the Papists are not ambitious of honours, or Offices of trust, & profit. if they were, I should be as unwilling to indulge that ambition as any man in the House. At the same time I wish them a participation of our property. [...] I am glad this bill provides against their having the remotest influence upon our National Councils. (Yelverton In Cavendish: 18 June: 132)

Col. Brown, although a supporter of the Catholic relief bill, expressed his belief that he did not think "men of any religion, except the Established religion, are fit to have places, & employments under the Crown" (In Cavendish:18 June 1778:51). The conservative, and perhaps reluctant approach, of the Irish Parliament to the Catholic relief issue, is confirmed by their unwillingness to pass a relief bill similar to that passed in England, which allowed Catholics the right to purchase land.

It would be impossible to prove that the sole motivation for the increased number of politically-influential subscribers present in the subscription-list of O'Halloran's *General History*, was the overarching political crisis facing Britain and Ireland. However, it is a strong possibility. As O'Halloran's letter to Caldwell confirmed, O'Halloran was still collecting subscribers in late 1777, and had suggested a meeting with Caldwell in February 1778. The possibility of a French invasion of Ireland had concretised by March, with the signing of the Franco-American Treaty. The English Catholic Relief Act had been passed in the British House in May 1778. There was close interaction between MPs of both the British and Irish Houses, and the wishes of the British Ministry, in regard to Catholic relief for Ireland, had been made clear to the Irish House, as the comments expressed by

members during the period of the debates confirmed. O'Halloran's *General History* was not published until June of that year, and, as mentioned previously, the subscription-list was the last item to be printed, in order to facilitate full inclusion of subscriber names. It is plausible to suggest, therefore, that the increased number of Irish political subscribers in the subscription-list, reflected a heightened awareness of the importance of Catholic support, and this recognition manifested by way of subscription to O'Halloran's *General History*.

There are other factors which must be taken into account with regard to the Irish situation. The refusal of Rome in 1766, after the death of James III, to recognise a Stuart heir to the British throne, encouraged a feeling of security among the Irish Protestant class. Another motivational factor was the awaking Protestant interest in a shared Irish past. However, Clare O'Halloran (1989:83) has observed that this interest in Gaelic literature and history was an established response of a "colonial élite, once secure in its position, taking an interest in the receding indigenous culture". In other ways this awakened interest was part of an identity quest by the Anglo-Irish, who inhabited the paradoxical position of not being considered English in Britain, or Irish in Ireland. This is confirmed by the desire of Sir James Caldwell, as mentioned in Chapter 3, for an account of the exploits of his own ancestors, who came to Ulster in the reign of James I, to be included in O'Halloran's *General History*. Certainly, O'Halloran's *General History*, with a timeframe that excluded the later volatile period of the Irish/English conflict, subsequent forfeitures and the infamous Act of Settlement, would have appeared as an attractive opportunity for those who wished to share in a charted Irish past (Leerssen, 1986a:385-444). However, of all the motivational factors mentioned here, the overarching political crisis is the only factor, with a significant degree of urgency, that can account for the unprecedented political support for O'Halloran's *General History*, at this juncture, as opposed to other books. The political debates surrounding the Catholic Relief Act confirm that, it was the threat of war rather than toleration, that provided the impetus for the Catholic Relief Act.

#### **4.8. Conclusions**

The forgoing analysis has confirmed that a second distinctive feature of the *General*

*History* is the location and profile of its overseas subscribers. Two influential groups were identified: a British political élite and an Irish émigré military and commercial group. When the unprecedented appearance of these two groups, in the work of an Irish Catholic antiquarian, were contextualised against the background of the Anglo-American crisis, and the opportunity for Irish Catholic relief that was presented, the following conclusions were drawn. O'Halloran's inclusion of successful Irish émigrés in his subscription-list was an attempt to demonstrate Irish current suitability for an imperial role, and was in sympathy with Britain's imperial need to access Irish soldiery at this juncture. Moreover, and, by extension, the success of the Irish émigré group, represented in microcosm the potential military and commercial dynamic of the oppressed Irish nation itself, if Catholic rights were restored. This message was received by Britain's political élite, who partly endorsed it by supporting the *General History* by subscription. It was further argued that this appearance of an unprecedented British political coterie in O'Halloran's subscription-list, was a stratagem, possibly orchestrated by the British Prime Minister Lord North, to demonstrate British Government support for Irish Catholics, and encourage passage of the Irish Catholic Relief Act through a truculent Irish Parliament at this juncture.

With regard to the Irish subscriber group, the unprecedented political support at this period from the Irish 'liberal' Protestant party, would suggest that the overarching political crisis that stimulated the unprecedented appearance of the Irish émigré, and British political group, also increased awareness among the Irish Protestant class, that exclusionary policies needed to be pragmatically modified in the interests of imperial security, and a possible French invasion of Ireland. O'Halloran's argument that Irish Catholics would make good soldiers and imperialists, as demonstrated by the current military careers of Irish émigrés, was clearly stated by one member of the Irish House during the course of the debates on the Catholic Relief Bill.

## 5. Textual Analysis: O'Halloran's *General History* 1778

### 5.1. Introduction

Chapter 3 concluded that the London publication of the *General History* indicated that this work was directed at an audience outside of Ireland, as well as within Ireland. Chapter 4 identified two distinctive elements of that audience as consisting of a British political élite, and Irish émigrés in the service of Catholic European powers. Chapter 4 made the argument that the inclusion of Irish émigrés in the subscription-list of this work was an attempt by O'Halloran to demonstrate a current suitability of the Irish for a British imperial role. Moreover, it was suggested that this message was not only received by a British political élite, but was also partially endorsed by it, by financially supporting the publication of the *General History* through subscription. The third distinctive feature of the *General History* is the manner in which O'Halloran modified his source materials to construct an historical picture of an ancient Milesian Empire. The idea of a Milesian Empire, rather than a Milesian kingdom, is a totally new concept introduced by O'Halloran, and sharply distinguishes his work from his contemporaries, and the *General History* from its antecedents in this tradition. The reason O'Halloran argued for a Milesian Empire, rather than a Milesian kingdom, was because he wanted to establish an ancient parity with Britain, which was now an imperial power. Consequently, Britain's imperial status influenced the shape of his narrative, and reflects the eighteenth-century political context of his writings.

This chapter will make the argument that the reason O'Halloran modified his materials in this manner was because he wanted to engage British imperial interest in securing Irish Catholic relief, by showing how the Irish were historically suitable for an imperial role, thereby initiating Irish Catholic participation in the British Empire. O'Halloran's argument for Irish Catholic inclusion in the British Empire had two strands. He wanted to show that Ireland had both a current and an historic aptitude as imperial agents. A current aptitude for empire is established in the subscription-list, while an historical aptitude is demonstrated in the text. Both of these two strands compliment and reinforce the central argument for Irish inclusion in the British Empire. O'Halloran's means of communication and language use in the text

identifies his intended audience as the British Empire. This confirms the significance of the London publication of this work, and moreover, the recognition by O'Halloran of London, as the metropolitan capital of the British Empire, as the site of power to bring about Irish Catholic relief, if issues of imperial security necessitated this action. The political context which shaped his narrative was the opportunity for Irish Catholic relief created by the Anglo-American crisis.

Viewing the *General History* as a composite work, which includes the significance of its publication-site and audience, placed within the appropriate political context, provides a framework which complements the textual reading of its narrative. In the absence of this framework, the narrative of the *General History* could be viewed as a rather fanciful interpretation of Irish history, and the political context and direction of its narrative would be missed. The textual analysis of the *General History* following is guided not only by the political context, but also by the significance of its publication-site and audience.

The central focus of this chapter is to analyse the content of the *General History*, and in a comparison with its aforementioned antecedents, identify the eighteenth-century political context and imperial direction of the discourse. To date, no in-depth textual analysis of the *General History* has been undertaken, nor does it appear as a central theme in any current work. As mentioned, reference to the *General History* appears in the work of various scholars. Clare O'Halloran (2004:53) refers to the opening page of the *General History* as evidence of the influence of Charles Vallancey's orientalism on O'Halloran's antiquarian writings. Kidd (1999:161-2) refers to O'Halloran's deployment of a Milesian civilisation in defence of Irish civility, and sees this work as underpinning the writings of Charles O'Connor. Delury (2000:27) also compares the work of O'Connor and O'Halloran, and cites a paragraph from the 'Dedication' section to the *General History*, to comment on the manner in which O'Halloran uses a "powerful patriotic rhetoric merged with a "love of truth", to underpin the authority of his narrative.

This chapter is divided into six main areas of discussion. Firstly, this chapter briefly discusses the political use of Irish historiography in O'Halloran's two main traditional sources, *Lebor gabála Éirenn* and *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, and explains how

O'Halloran's use of classical sources and his new system of chronology, influenced the modifications in his narrative. Section two, three and four of his chapter focuses on identifying the influence of imperial Britain on reconstructions of the Irish past in a comparison with the traditional narrative.<sup>1</sup> Section five discusses the *General History* as a military manifesto for Irish participation in the British Empire, and, sixthly, this chapter concludes by highlighting the distinctiveness of O'Halloran's approach to the Irish historiographical tradition, in a comparison with the approach adopted by Charles O'Connor.

## 5.2. The Sources

The two main Gaelic sources for O'Halloran's *General History* are *Lebor gabála Éirenn* and *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, and these sources provide the framework for his narrative. Both of these works were composed at critical periods in Irish history, and both works appropriated the Milesian past as a political statement, or restatement of Ireland's past, at crucial periods as the contemporary situation demanded. The twelfth century produced the monastic compilation, the *Lebor gabála Éirenn*, or, 'the Book of the taking of Ireland', which was primarily a defence of immemorial rights of possession at the time of the Norman invasion of Ireland. This work contained the chronicles of early Irish historiography and narrated the five invasions of Ireland in pre-Christian times, including a list of the kings of Ireland in pre-Christian and Christian times, until the arrival of the Normans in the twelfth century.<sup>2</sup> Although the Milesian invasion from Spain was the last invasion of Ireland, the *Lebor gabála* prioritised this invasion over the others, by placing it first in its accounts. Milesian and pre-Milesian invaders were formed into one poly-ethnic group, and immemorial rights of possession by the Gael to Ireland, were based on historical antiquity and priority of settlement (Kidd, 1999:152-153).

In the seventeenth century, Keating's *Foras feasa ar Éirinn* brought the lore of the *Lebor gabála* to a new audience, adding to and weaving new material from

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<sup>1</sup>By 'traditional narrative' is meant Keating's *Foras feasa ar Éirinn* and *Lebor gabála Éirenn*. These works are abbreviated in the following discussion as: Keating and LG.

<sup>2</sup>The *Lebor gabála* in its extant form is a compilation of two independent texts from the eighth century. Reflecting the age in which they lived, a primary concern of the compilers of the *Lebor gabála* was to assimilate Gaelic history with the universal biblical history and clear parallels can be drawn between the history of the Gael in the *Lebor gabála* and the history of the children of Israel as found in the Old Testament (LG, 1938 pt.1:ix-xxix).



disparate sources into the first narrative history of Ireland (Cunningham, 2000). *Foras feasa* was primarily a defence of the Stuart dynasty and Catholicism, and was designed to deal with contemporary issues of the early modern period. In particular, *Foras feasa* dealt with “those issues and preoccupations by which Keating himself was peculiarly exercised as a Counter-Reformation cleric and patriot” (Bradshaw, 1993:167). Keating retrospectively shaped his sources to show continuity between the early Christian church and the Catholicism of the Counter-Reformation, and to provide historical validation and legitimacy for the Stuart dynasty (Ó Buachalla, 2006:17).<sup>3</sup> What was important for Keating, reflecting the political climate of his time, was to establish a parity of Ireland's kings with their British and Saxon counterparts (Cunningham, 2000:141-142).

The political climate in which O'Halloran wrote was different again. The early years of the eighteenth century witnessed not only the consolidation of Protestant dominance in church and state in Ireland, but also, in the post-1763 period, the consolidation of the newly-extended British Empire. Britain, which was now an imperial power, influenced the shape of O'Halloran's narrative. Therefore, O'Halloran's argument for parity was based on the existence of an ancient Milesian 'Empire' in Ireland, and is reflective of the eighteenth-century political context of his writings.

Although *Lebor gabála* and *Foras feasa* were the main Gaelic sources used by O'Halloran, they were not the only ones. He (1778a,1:lvii) claimed also to have a copy of the *Leabhar Lecan*, “faithfully transcribed from the original in the Irish College at Paris”, given to him by Dr. Mac Kenna, titular Bishop of Cloyne. The *Leabhar Lecan*, or Book of Lecan, is a manuscript from the end of the fourteenth century and contains a wide variety of Irish source material including two versions of *Lebor gabála Éirenn*.<sup>4</sup> O'Halloran also stated that he had in his possession a copy of the *Réim ríoghraidhe* of Giolla Caomháin, and of its continuation by Giolla Moduda, which was given to him by Dr. O'Cullinan of Mallow. The *Réim ríoghraidhe* or the 'Succession of the kings' provides an account of the kings of

<sup>3</sup>The most comprehensive work to date on Geoffrey Keating and his writings is Bernadette Cunningham's *The world of Geoffrey Keating* (2000). For other works on Keating see: Bradshaw (1993:160-190); Ó Buachalla (2006:13-18).

<sup>4</sup>For the historiography of the Book of Lecan, see: MacSwiney (1928/9:31-35).

Ireland, the length of their reign and the manner of their death, including some sparse genealogical information (Walsh, 1941). O'Halloran (1778a,1:xlii) further claimed to have in his possession all the manuscripts he referred to in his writings. However, claims of this nature by a writer to be in possession of original sources gave authority to his work, but as no evidence has come to light, as yet, of the contents of O'Halloran's library, it is impossible to verify this position. The central focus of this discussion is to analyse how O'Halloran modified his traditional materials, rather than ascertain whether he was in fact in possession of original manuscript sources.

The most significant changes O'Halloran made to his source material concerns the early origin of the Gael in the Mediterranean. He used three forms of evidence to support these changes here, and elsewhere throughout his narrative. This evidence consisted of: comparative analysis, his new system of chronology and linguistic evidence. O'Halloran's approach to early Irish history took the form of a comparative analysis with classical and other foreign sources as a validating measure of the Irish historical record. This approach was influenced by the prevailing historiographical trend, which prioritised classical sources, and also necessitated a correlating chronological system. O'Halloran's thesis rested on the premise that the echoes of the migrations of the early ancestors of the Gael had been retained in the histories of the countries they passed through on their journey to Ireland, and that a comparison of these sources would lend further validity to the traditional accounts, as recorded in the native Irish historical record. Coincidentally, O'Halloran found recorded in the fragmented histories of the Mediterranean, the memory of a once-great maritime people which, he argued, paralleled the early history of the Gael. These people were the improvers and colonizers of Africa and Greece. Their exploits provided Homer with source material for his *Odyssey*, and were a model for Orpheus and the Argonauts. Ultimately, this race settled in the Hyperborean Island, according to the Greeks, and in the Atlantic Isle, according to the Egyptians. O'Halloran submitted that a comparison of these fragmented histories, with those of the native historical records of Ireland, would confirm that this race of people were the Gael, and Ireland their final destination. Conversely, Charles O'Connor's interest in this period was confined to establishing an early literacy through Phoenician contact. A contrast between the different political agendas of these two scholars, which

influenced their interpretation of the Gaelic historiographical tradition, is presented at the end of this chapter.

O'Halloran supported his comparative analysis by introducing a 'new system' of chronology. Chronology and genealogy underpin and provide structure for O'Halloran's narrative (Figure 5.1), and indeed, the *sine qua non* of his argumentation was the establishment of a stable time line and a precise genealogical paradigm for the pseudo-historical period. His system was computation-based. O'Halloran (1778a,1:iv) selected the date of the reign of Laogaire in 428 AD and one "accepted by all parties to be the commencement of historical time", as the starting date. Working backwards, O'Halloran (1778a,1:v,iv,5) then allocated 14 years to a reign, and 35 years to a generation, further guided by what he called "sound criticism and plain sense", he arrived at a system that allowed him to pinpoint significant event dates with which to anchor his history.<sup>5</sup> O'Halloran then used this system of chronology as a correlating timeline to date events recorded in the fragmented histories of the Mediterranean. For example, O'Halloran (1778a,1:vii) stated that letters were introduced into Egypt by Niul in AM 1941 (Figure 5.1 Niul:1941), or that the inhabitants of Crete received the Phoenician alphabet from Cadmus, son of Sru in, AM 2046 (Figure 5.1 Sru:2046).

It is most probable that O'Halloran's sole purpose in introducing his 'new' system of chronology in the *General History* was to confer a further degree of certainty on the early migrations, and to confirm interactions and linkages between the early Irish and other countries in the Mediterranean area. Thus established, this timeline is used to underpin retained contact with the Mediterranean area at a later date in the text. In altering the computations in the reigns of kings to suit his own particular objective, O'Halloran was following a well established tradition. Keating (1:83-87) had also altered the various computations in the reign of kings to suit his own objective.

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<sup>5</sup>Two dominant dates existed for the creation of the world. These dates were based on the Septuagint, or the Greek version of the Old Testament, and the Hebrew Masoretic text. The Septuagint, postulated a date of 5500 BC, the Hebrew date was 4,000 BC. O'Halloran (1778a,1:41) uses the Hebrew date.

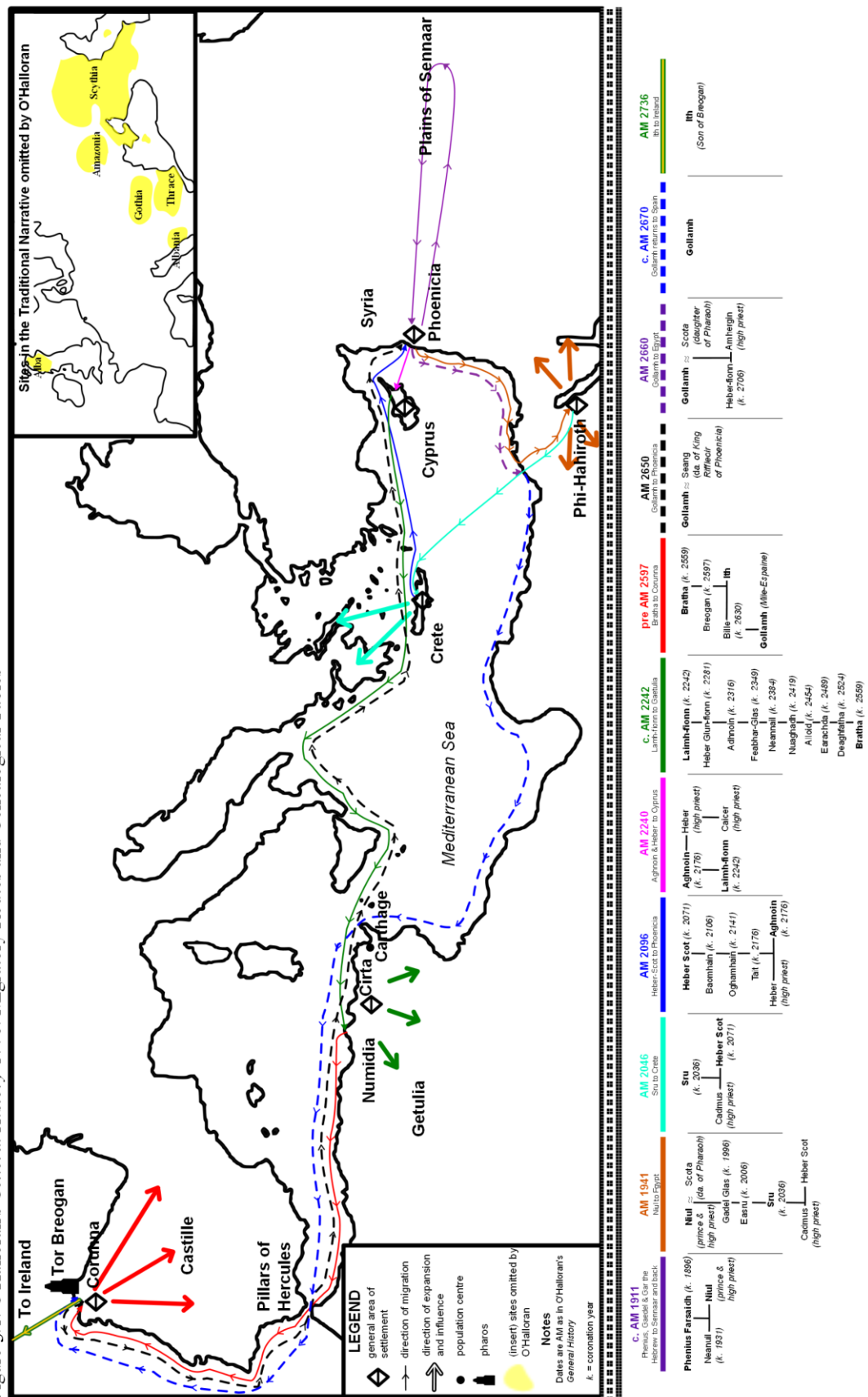
O'Halloran's alterations to the migratory routes of the early Irish ancestors in the Mediterranean are shown in Figure 5.1 overleaf. This map is an attempt to simplify the large amount of complex data, which underpins O'Halloran's account of the early migrations of the Gael in the Mediterranean, into a readily accessible medium. There are three important elements presented: the inset in the upper right-hand corner highlights geographical locations which have been omitted by O'Halloran, but were present in the traditional narrative migratory routes; the main map shows the migratory routes taken according to O'Halloran's account; the genealogical tables, based on O'Halloran's narrative at the bottom of the map, are in groups, headed by the name of the leader and the destination of a migration. The genealogical tables are dated and colour-coded to correspond to the migratory routes. O'Halloran's form of spelling is used in the listing and throughout the discussion here. The larger arrows indicate dispersal and influence. This map is accessed during the course of the following discussion via date and name headings from the genealogical tables, for example Niul:1941. The information in this table reads that Niul, high-priest and prince, was the leader of the expedition to Egypt in the year AM 1941. He married Scota, daughter of the Egyptian Pharaoh. They had a son Gaedel Glas, who became king in AM 1996. Easru, son of Gaedel Glas, was king in AM 2006, followed by Sru in AM 2036. Sru had two sons; Heber Scot and Cadmus.

O'Halloran also used a Phoenician model of linguistics to support his narrative changes. The linguistic theories of Samuel Bochart (1599-1667), who postulated a Phoenician origin for most European languages, was influential amongst Irish traditional scholars because his theories provided linguistic evidence to support the Gaelic myths of early origin in the Mediterranean (Leerssen, 1986a:334).<sup>6</sup> In the latter half of the eighteenth century, O'Halloran correspondent and subscriber Charles Vallancey was the strongest proponent of the Phoenician model, and his work is referenced by O'Halloran (1778a:37,48) on two occasions. The use of etymologies is a common feature in O'Halloran's writings. In the *General History*,

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<sup>6</sup>For an account of linguistic developments that were significant to the Irish language see: Leerssen (1986a:333-339).

Figure 5.1: O'Halloran's *General History* 1778: Migratory Routes and Genealogical Tables



however, he defended his usage by arguing that etymologies were useful only to provide corroborating support for events already substantiated by historical evidence:

And here let me once for all remark, that etymologies in general should be very cautiously admitted, as in themselves of no great force in forming inductions from ancient history; nor should I produce them so often on this and former occasions, but that I am first warranted by the evidence of history.

(O'Halloran, 1778a, 1:85-86)

### **5.3. Influence of Imperial Britain on Reconstructions of the Irish Past**

The aim of this section is to demonstrate the influence of imperial Britain on O'Halloran's narrative reconstruction of the Irish past, in a comparison drawn with the traditional narrative. The reason O'Halloran introduced various innovations into his narrative, it will be argued, was to demonstrate an Irish historic suitability as imperial agents and was complimentary to his argument for a current suitability, as demonstrated by the subscription list analysis in the previous chapter. O'Halloran's innovations were both structural and terminological. The aim of these innovations was to support his assertion of the existence of an ancient Milesian Empire in Ireland, which had once wielded the sceptre of an extended empire, embracing Britain and part of Gaul in the pre-Roman and Roman period. This section presents the argument that the contemporary direction of O'Halloran's discourse, and the reason for his alterations to the traditional narrative, was to demonstrate that, as descendants of an ancient Milesian Empire, the Irish were eminently suited for participation in the contemporary British Empire. The introduction into the traditional narrative of the concept of a Milesian Empire is a totally new innovation by O'Halloran. What significance can be attached to this innovation in the contemporary sense? And how would O'Halloran's audience have understood this concept?

The direction of O'Halloran's argument had a contemporary resonance. There was, after all, a demand for literature on empire in Britain, and the first volume of Edwards Gibbons *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* published in 1776 only

two years prior to O'Halloran's *General History*, was considered a best seller (Sher, 2006:159). The reason for this interest was that territorial gains and expansion as a result of the Seven Years War altered Britain's popular conception of her empire. In the pre-war period Britain viewed her empire as an empire based on trade and commerce, a "peaceful enterprise". It was, therefore, considered 'secure', because unlike earlier territorial empires such as the Roman, Britain's empire was built on trade not conquest. However, territorial expansion as a result of victory in the Seven Years War challenged this popular conception of Britain's empire as a peaceful enterprise based on trade. Britain's empire was now an empire of conquest and dominion, sustained by force of arms, like earlier empires, and there was no guarantee that the British Empire would not decline and decay like earlier empires of conquest. (Colley, 2009:103, Marshal, 1998b:5-7). Therefore, there was a current market interest in the reasons for the decay of empires and a clear connotation and association, for the well-read eighteenth-century reader, between the ancient Roman and contemporary British Empires. However, the difficulty for O'Halloran was that the concept of a Milesian Empire would have meant very little to his eighteenth-century readership.

The following discussion, which is divided into three main areas, examines how O'Halloran presented his argument for an Irish historic imperial aptitude. The first area of discussion focuses on the novel alterations O'Halloran made to the traditional narrative concerning the early migrations of the Gael in the Mediterranean area and demonstrates how these innovations were directed towards both constructing an imperial past for the early ancestors, and laying the basis for his later assertion of an ancient Milesian Empire in Ireland. Moreover, this section shows how O'Halloran tailored his narrative to suit the sensitivities of the Protestant bible-reading audience towards whom this work was directed, by removing the Catholic overlay and other biblical connections, which had permeated Keating's narrative.

After the successful conquest of Ireland by the Milesian expedition, O'Halloran's alterations to the narrative are both terminological and structural. O'Halloran housed his narrative of Milesian rule in Ireland in an imperial nuanced language and argued for the existence of an ancient Mileisan Empire in Ireland. This second area of discussion focuses firstly, on the manner in which O'Halloran both

introduced and justified his use of an imperial nuanced language and how this usage has impacted on his narrative. Secondly, this area investigates the possible significance of this usage in the contemporary eighteenth-century context and examines what his eighteenth-century audience might have understood by this usage.

The third area of discussion focuses on the structural changes O'Halloran made to his narrative in his account of Milesian rule in Ireland. In particular, this section is concerned with investigating the manner in which O'Halloran employed and expanded creatively on Irish encounters with the Roman Empire in the traditional narrative as a counterpoint, to demonstrate the power and influence of his alleged Milesian Empire. O'Halloran's positioning of the Roman Empire, a concept which was as familiar to his audience as the British Empire, as the Other against whom the excellence of his Milesian Empire was given authority, was a rhetorical strategy to link the familiar concept of the Roman Empire with the unfamiliar concept of a Milesian Empire, and form a bridge of understanding for his eighteenth-century audience. Additionally, this section examines the political significance of O'Halloran's innovative assertion of Irish aid to the Carthaginians during the Punic Wars in the context of the central focus of O'Halloran's narrative, which was to demonstrate Irish suitability as imperial agents.

The first part of this discussion focus on the O'Halloran's alterations to the traditional narrative of the account of the origin of the Gael in the Mediterranean. Within Gaelic historiography the origin of the Gael in Scythia, and subsequent migrations prior to arriving in Ireland, has always formed an integral part of the narrative of origin, from its first textual manifestation in *Lebor gabála Éirenn*. This tradition was replicated over time by subsequent Gaelic antiquarians. In the process, certain core elements of the tradition became conventionalized, and carried a special significance in defining the dominant meaning of the traditional narrative. A comparison of O'Halloran's narrative with his main sources can identify where his account deviates from the traditional narrative, and identify the eighteenth-century political context of his narrative.<sup>7</sup> This is the approach adopted here.

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<sup>7</sup>There are three redactions and a verse account of most every event in the *Lebor gabála*. The approach adopted here is to use the version that provides the fullest account of the events.



O'Halloran made three significant alterations to the migratory routes of the early ancestors in the Mediterranean as found in the traditional narrative. His reason for making these changes was to provide an imperial past for Ireland's Milesian Empire, by linking the Milesian ancestors with both the Phoenician and Carthaginian Empires of the Mediterranean area. The first alteration O'Halloran makes is directed towards creating a link between Ireland's Milesian Empire and the ancient Phoenicia Empire. According to the traditional narrative, the territory of Scythia and the birthplace of Phaenius, King of Scythia, and from whom the Gael claim descent, was located in the interior of Asia, with access to the Mediterranean via a Scythian river called the Tanais (Keating, 2:31). However, O'Halloran argued that historians had erred in locating the Scythian settlement so far inland at this early period. O'Halloran located Scythia, not in the interior of Asia, but on the Syrian coast and claimed that:

Every circumstance and every fact that can be collected, unite in fixing it [Scythia] on the Syrian coast bordering the Mediterranean, and to be the ancient Phoenicia, so renowned in history. (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:40)

The reason O'Halloran rejected the location of Scythia in the interior of Asia, as per the traditional narrative, was because his preoccupation was with providing an imperial identity for the early ancestors. The compilers of the *Lebor gabála* and Keating had no such concerns, as the political context which motivated their writings was different. By moving the location of Scythia to the Syrian coast, and identifying it as the site of ancient Phoenicia, and Phaenius, the eponymous ancestor of the Gael, as the King of Phoenicia, O'Halloran (1778a,1:41) linked the narrative of early beginnings with an historically significant and ancient empire. The claim of the Phoenicians to supremacy in navigation, commerce, arts and the sciences before other nations was well documented (Bryant, 1767; Goguet, 1761; Blennerhassett, 1751; Du Pin, 1709). Phoenicia was not only a geographical location but a highly emotive and succinct political concept. Therefore, this concept postulated here by O'Halloran, with all its ramifications, was one that was readily understood by a reasonably well-read eighteenth-century audience. To strengthen his argument O'Halloran (1778a:44-7) compared the customs, mode of worship and language of the Phoenicians and the Gael, and concluded that the Gael were the ancient

Phoenicians. They were called Phenians from Phaenius; “*Feni o fhenius adbearta, brigh gan dochta*” (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:43).<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, according to O'Halloran's (1778a:49) narrative, the Milesians who invaded Ireland in the year AM 2736, were direct descendants of the ancient Phoenician Empire. This is the first link in the chain which will provide the early ancestors of the Gael with an imperial past. This is the direction of O'Halloran's alteration in the original migratory route and is confirmed in the text;

After such proofs and such illustrations of times so extremely remote, will any candid man of letters deny the truth of our early records? Will he any longer refuse us the use of letters, when it appears to demonstration, that the very father of letters, of arts and of sciences was our great ancestor? Will he deny us the use of ships, when it becomes evident, that the first inventors of ships, and of navigation, were our *great ancestors*?”

(O'Halloran, 1778a,1:52-3)

The second alteration O'Halloran made to the traditional narrative provided a link between the Gael and the Carthaginian Empire. O'Halloran (1778a,1:183) submitted that *Gaothluigh Mheadhonacha*, which previous Gaelic antiquarians had taken to mean Gothland/Gothia (Keating,2:35), referred in fact to Getulia on the North African coast bordering on Carthage. O'Halloran (1778a,1:83-84) claimed that both Carthage and Numidia were very early inhabited by Phoenician colonies, and identified this early Carthaginian colony as the Gael under the leadership of Laimh-fionn in AM 2279 (Figure 5.1). The Laimh-fionn colony remained in this area for approximately 280 years and as they were a “commercial” and “a warlike people”, O'Halloran (1778a,1:85) argued that they would have “planted colonies”, and formed regular settlements there. He further argued that the place names surrounding Carthage corresponding “exactly to the ancient Irish language”, strengthened his hypotheses. He provided the following examples: “the plain surrounding Carthage was called Magaria; and *mugh* is Irish for a plain”; the harbour of Carthage was called Cohon, and “*cuan* is Irish for an harbour”; Cirta he derived from the Irish for

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<sup>8</sup>Also in Keating (2:20).

city which is *cathair*, and Carthage, he derived from *cathair* and *oghe*, a maiden city (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:85).

The Carthaginian Empire did not rise to prominence until some time after this period, approximately AM 3350. However, based on O'Halloran's (1778a,1:85-6) assertion of a Phoenician colony under Laimh-fionn in the area around Carthage, it would seem to follow that at least a portion of the Carthaginian Empire, which came to prominence about AM 3350, were direct descendents of this earlier Laimh-fionn colony. Therefore, not only were the Gael a branch of the ancient Phoenician Empire, they were also the progenitors of the great Carthaginian Empire. Considering the fact that O'Halloran seeded the area around Carthage with Gaelic place names, this appears to have been his assertion also. Phoenicia and Carthage provide major anchor points in O'Halloran's narrative of origins, and forge a direct link between the Irish ancestors and two major ancient maritime trading empires of the Mediterranean.<sup>9</sup>

Lastly, an attempt to clearly delineate the exclusively maritime nature of the journeys of the early ancestors influenced O'Halloran's third alteration. According to the traditional narrative, although there are some variations as to specifics, the migratory route of the Gael included a trip to the land of the Amazons on the Caspian Sea, a journey north to the Rhippean mountains, a trip to Britain and back, a visit to the island of Gothland and the land of the Goths, in addition to a short sojourn on the island of Sicily (LG, pt.2:69,71; Keating, 2,32-37; Figure 5.1). All of this O'Halloran omitted and prioritised the maritime nature of their expansion, thereby avoiding all tiresome explanations of circuitous routes and river-hopping as in Keating. From their departure point at Phoenicia, as they worked their way through the Mediterranean, sailing past the Pillars of Hercules to Corona, from where they eventually sail to Ireland, their expansion route was by sea. The reason O'Halloran confined the travels of the early ancestors to sea journeys was because he wanted to emphasise the maritime nature of their expeditions, a concept which was easily translated into eighteenth-century terms by a British Empire who viewed itself

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<sup>9</sup>Throughout his *General History* O'Halloran argues for a close affinity between Ireland and Carthage to explain the advanced state of Irish commerce and Irish participation in the Punic wars against the Romans. These references are interspersed through his narrative. See: O'Halloran (1778a,1:136,138-9,143-4,168).

primarily as a maritime trading nation. Pride in naval power and maritime prowess was a significant element in Britain's sense of identity (Armitage, 2000:100-124; Marshall, 1998b:5; 1998b, 5-7; Baugh, 1994:186).

Although there was a significant military element to the British Empire in the post- Seven Years War period, the popular conception of the British Empire was as "a trading empire", "the beneficent creation of a liberty-loving and commercial people" (Colley, 2009:103). O'Halloran's recreation of the benign influence of the early ancestors in the Mediterranean, is suggestive of this ideal. In the course of their travels throughout the Mediterranean, O'Halloran informs us, through migration, conquest and commerce, the Gael exercised the earliest known civilizing influences, diffusing a religion in the form of their druidical tenets, letters in the form of the Phoenician alphabet and a sophisticated system of government and polite society to the more barbarous areas, thus bringing a unity of culture and learning to the Mediterranean area prior to the great civilizations of Greece and Rome (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:54-72). Thus placed, these early migrants are cast by O'Halloran as the major hub in a network of commercial trade routes in the Mediterranean.

The greater antiquity of the Scythians in education and learning, compared to the Egyptians or Greeks, is stated in Keating (2:13; 1:229), as is the notion that "institutes and laws and ordinances" originated in Scythia. However, the idea of a significant diffusion of culture, as postulated by O'Halloran, is absent. This is another example of O'Halloran structuring his narrative in the eighteenth-century context, and suggestive of a modern parallel in the trading enterprises of the British Empire (Marshall, 1996:185-223). The validity of O'Halloran's reconstruction, or whether it would stand up to modern scrutiny, is irrelevant. What is important is that within the British imperial mindset and for O'Halloran's contemporaries, this concept is readily perceived as pertaining to power and empire. What was important for O'Halloran here in the early migrations, was to reconstruct an ancient Milesian imperial past, in an embryonic or potential state at least, to underpin his assertion of a Milesian Empire in Ireland, at a later date. O'Halloran does not refer to the early migrants as constituting an empire at any stage.

Aside from changes in migratory routes, O'Halloran made other significant changes to the traditional narrative to suit the eighteenth-century context and the religious sensitivities of the non-traditional audience towards whom this work was directed. His narrative deviated from the traditional narrative in four main areas. Firstly, there is the absence of a Catholic perspective or ethos which is so pervasive in Keating. Secondly, O'Halloran rejected out of hand the linkage of native and biblical genealogies fundamental to the traditional narrative. Following from this he also rejected the assertions of early contact between the Gael and Israelites. Lastly, and more revealing, perhaps, of the altered eighteenth-century perspective on religious matters and Ireland's relationship to Rome, was O'Halloran's forthright condemnation of the twelfth-century Bull of Pope Adrian, which was in contrast to the position adopted by Keating.

O'Halloran removed the heavy overlay of Catholicism which had permeated Keating's *Foras feasa* and refashioned Ireland's narrative of origin as a secular myth, actuated only by a spirit of toleration, thus subverting the controversial Catholic element of the earlier work. One of the significant differences between Keating and O'Halloran centred on the right of the Papacy to assign sovereignty, and focused on the twelfth century Bull of Pope Adrian IV, *Laudabiliter* granted in 1155 (Norgate, 1893:18-52). O'Halloran's history and the traditional narrative sharply diverge on this matter and emphasise the altered political climate under which both these authors, O'Halloran and Keating, worked. According to Keating (3:7), the sovereignty of Ireland had been given to the Pope by Donnchadh Mac Brian Bhoraimhe when on a pilgrimage to Rome, "about seventy-seven years before the Normans came to Ireland". Donnchadh and the "nobles of Ireland consented to the Bishop of Rome having authority over them, because they were wont to contend with one another for the mastery of Ireland" (Keating, 3:7). The purpose of this account in Keating was to place the sovereignty of Ireland in papal hands to legitimise the subsequent papal transfer of the sovereignty of Ireland to Henry II of England. This, as Bernadette Cunningham (2001:17) has suggested, was a "deliberate fabrication" on Keating's part, but a fabrication that was "crucial to his argument concerning the legitimacy of the Norman invasion". Keating (3:351) goes further and explains that the reason the twelfth-century Diarmaid Mac Murchadha king of Leinster, went to the king of England for help, "rather than any other king"

was because, “it was the King of England who had authority over Ireland from the Pope “.

For O'Halloran's Protestant audience this assertion of papal authority to dispose of kingdoms would have been anathema. Protestants feared the politico-religious basis of Catholicism, and viewed the pope as the arch enemy of all Protestant countries as mentioned (Sneddon, 2004:38). O'Halloran's explanation of the Bull of Adrian was elaborate and filled one entire chapter of thirteen pages in length. In forthright and critical language O'Halloran (1778a,2:364) condemned the actions of this Pope, and pejoratively described him as “by birth an Englishman, the spurious offspring of a priest”, who had been “deserted by his father”. The Bull of Adrian was portrayed by O'Halloran (1778a,1:366-379) as the work of a manipulative English king and an opportunistic English Pope. O'Halloran was equally severe in his treatment of Pope Alexander III, who issued a confirmation of Adrian's Bull in 1172 (Norgate, 1893:23). O'Halloran (1778a,2:368) condemned the conduct of Alexander and his ministers as indefensible “hypocritical and abominable to the last degree!”. O'Halloran's total and vehement rejection of Papal authority to dispose of kingdoms, in contrast to Keating's acceptance of papal authority, highlights the eighteenth-century context of O'Halloran's narrative and the non-traditional audience towards whom his work was directed

O'Halloran (1778a,2:166) adopted a position of “universal toleration” on religious issues in his public works. This was just one eighteenth-century response to Protestant supremacy. Another response was to argue for a subsidiary position for the Catholic Church within this Protestant structure, and this was the response advocated by Charles O'Connor and John Curry in *Observations on the Popery Laws* (1771).<sup>10</sup>

In fact, in the process of casting off the Catholic aspects of Keating's model, O'Halloran set about constructing a new religious identity for Ireland, based on a Milesian prototype, and one more in sympathy with the emerging imperial ethos of

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<sup>10</sup>Charles O'Connor also adopted a secular approach in his antiquarian writings. See: O'Halloran (2004:25,81).

'toleration' permeating the empire. Notwithstanding the fact that the religion of the British Empire was Protestantism, and Britain conceived of itself as a Protestant empire, which held at its core a common anti-Catholicism, and a common belief that Catholics must be restrained in order to protect the moral and social order, exclusion on religious grounds was simply no longer practical in administering a multidenominational Empire. Expediency would drive the toleration ethos of Empire, which would ultimately be based on the acceptance of a plurality of legal and religious systems (Marshall, 2001:14). O'Halloran's reconstruction of Ireland's identity narrative in the form of a secular myth added to the imperial resonance of his history, and was tailored to appeal to an empire ruling over multi-denominational subjects.

O'Halloran's (1778a,2:166) approach to religious issues in his narrative was to adopt a secular approach, where religious inclination was left to the conscience of the individual provided that the, "*religious tenets are neither injurious to the state, or to individuals*". He held up for emulation the religious toleration exercised by Milesian society on the advent of Christianity in Ireland. His basic argument was that it was not necessary for a king and subject to profess the same religious principles – in contrast to the contemporary situation in Europe, where loyalty to the king was premised on subject and King professing the same religion. In fact, O'Halloran (1778a,2:45) argued that a king who granted religious toleration to his subjects was the mark of a truly civilised society. Or, as he (1778a,2:9) put it elsewhere, "but persecution and death for religious tenets, was never the practice of truly polished people". More specifically, O'Halloran commented, with tongue in cheek, that Christianity, unlike Protestantism, did not need penal laws to encourage devotees:

Such a doctrine [Christianity] preached, and by religious, whose lives and examples added new lustre to it, needed neither miracles from above, nor restraining or penal laws on earth to support it! (O'Halloran, 1778a,2:20)

Although Protestantism is not specifically mentioned in this extract above, for O'Halloran's eighteenth-century audience the meaning would have been understood.

A second feature in O'Halloran's history, which distinguishes his work from the traditional narrative, was his rejection of the genealogical link of the eponymous ancestor Phaenius to the biblical Japheth. O'Halloran (1778a,1:42-43) argued that this linkage was a later interpolation. In the traditional narrative, this link between Phaenius and Japheth had served to connect biblical and native genealogy. Part one of the *Lebor gabála* was totally occupied with the creation and the dispersal of the nations, and assimilating Irish history with biblical history. Keating (1:133-140) also insisted on the accuracy of the biblical tracing of native genealogy from Adam. O'Halloran (1778a,2:18) on the other hand, rejected this connection and attributed "making Phaenius, the son of Baath, the son of Magog, the son of Japheth, in order to reconcile our history to that of Moses", to a "pious fraud" of St. Patrick. O'Halloran (1778a,1:39) declared instead that, "With Phaenius our Ethnic historians began their history, and so shall I". The reason O'Halloran removed this alleged biblical linkage was that for the Protestant bible-reading audience towards whom this work was directed, its inclusion would have undermined the entire narrative:

I shall commence the chronology of the Milesian race with this prince Phaenius. He, it is agreed upon by all parties was our great ancestor: zealous Christians might have traced him by an imaginary genealogy up to Japheth, [...]; and this it is that has furnished moderns with specious arguments, to suppose the very early Irish chronology to have been invented about the time of the introduction of Christianity amongst them.

(O'Halloran. 1778a,1:38-40)

A third element which highlights O'Halloran's deviation from the traditional narrative, aside from the lack of a Catholic perspective and the genealogical linkage to the Bible, was his rejection of contact between the Gael and the Israelites. The assertion of contact between the Gael, in the person of Niul, second son of Phaenius (Niul: 1941) and the Israelites as they escaped their bondage in Egypt, had become a conventional element in the account of early beginnings, and persisted into the eighteenth century.<sup>11</sup> There were four central elements to this assertion. Firstly, Niul was portrayed as sympathetic to the plight of the Israelites. Secondly, Moses healed

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<sup>11</sup>For an example of this tradition, see: Comerford (1742).



Niul's son, Gadel, when he was bitten by a serpent. Thirdly, the Gael were said to have been present at the parting of the Red Sea, and ultimately, although some generations later, under the leadership of Sru (Sru: 2046 Figure 5.1), the Gael were expelled from Egypt, because of the help they once gave to the Israelites (LG, pt.2:59-62; Keating, 2:17-25). O'Halloran (1778a,1:42-43; 2:18) dismissed this account as an interpolation of later times and added that "The glaring anachronism in this tale alone renders it ridiculous".

The insertion of contact between the Gael and the Israelites in the *Lebor gabála* had been an overarching attempt to associate the Gael with the biblical wanderings of the Israelites, an oppressed race favoured by God. O'Halloran's rejection of any contact between the Israelites and the Gael, was not only a desire to cater to his Protestant audience, it was a rejection of the political-religious ethos which underpinned the work of Keating and others in the seventeenth century, when there appeared an identification for the first time between "*cor na hÉireann agus cogadh na hEaglaise Caitlicí*" (Ó Buachalla, 1983:105), or what Morgan (1993:23-4) has called, a "faith and fatherland ideology". The Gaelic intelligentsia drew on the previously concretised biblical image of the Israelites to describe their own plight, in common with many other national groups in seventeenth-century Europe (Ó Buachalla, 1983:115).<sup>12</sup>

Aside from the changes in the migratory routes and the construction of a secular narrative, O'Halloran also made some alterations in the identity characteristics of the early migrants. Within the maze of genealogies, constant migrations, serpentine etymological assertions, which are common to both O'Halloran's history and to the traditional narrative, there is one core political concept regarding the characteristics of the early ancestors, and that is that the Gael were, "a Learned, a Pious and a Warlike people" *ab initio* (O'Halloran, 1778a:55). O'Halloran did not materially alter this traditional identity concept. He did, however, add one new concept that was not in the tradition narrative, and that was the idea of the early ancestors as 'benign coloniser'. The majority of individuals recorded by O'Halloran in the genealogical tables have no function and exist only as cardboard figures or fillers (Figure 5.1).

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<sup>12</sup>For the theme of Israel in British identity, see: Colley (2009:32-33).

Therefore, the most useful approach for analytical purposes is to view these 'individuals' as representatives of the larger cultural identity that O'Halloran wished to establish. For clarity and ease of discussion, I suggest the following paradigm, where the personages below represent a particular element that constitutes the organic identity of the group. These elements are not specifically confined to those categorised, as the entire group embodies these elements in one way or another; what I am suggesting is that they are strongest in the personages I have delineated below.

**Figure 5.2: O'Halloran's *General History*:  
Identity traits of the early migrants**

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Attribute</b>
Phaenius : Niul	Learned
Niul	Learned : Pious
Sru	Coloniser
Breogan : Gollamh	Warlike

For instance, the concept of 'learned' was personified in the eponymous ancestor figure Phaenius Farsaidh, or Phaenius the sage, (LG, pt.1:147). The *Lebor gabála* (pt.2:47) describes him as "one of the sixteen men most learned [and of highest degree] of the seed of Riphath Scot, who brought the Scotie language from the tower". Phaenius, as king of Phoenicia, also embodied the concept of kingship. On his death the kingship passed to his first-born son Neanuill, while the concept of 'learning' passed to his second son, Niul. Niul was noted for the "greatness of his skill, his knowledge, and learning (LG, pt.2:49). Keating (1:231) also stated that Niul's inheritance was "the acquisition of the sciences and of the several languages". Therefore, the concept of learning, which had been embodied in Phaenius, passed to Niul. The origin of the Gael is traced through Niul, not Neanuill. It appears then, that it was the concept of learning, or erudite origins, rather than kingship, that the Gael desired most in their ancestor figure. When the narrative of origin first came into being, at some time prior to its textual manifestation in the twelfth century, the underpinnings of a written history, the 'learned' concept, rather than an oral tradition were of central concern, as they were in O'Halloran's time (LG, pt.1:xxviii). O'Halloran retained this core political concept as it served to underpin the authority and written transmission of the Irish historical record. At the same time, he recast

and strengthened the image. The importance of this figure in the context of providing authority for the Irish historical record is clearly stated by O'Halloran (1778a,1:52), as mentioned, "Will any candid man of letters deny the truth of our early records?", when "the very father of letters, of arts, and of sciences was our great ancestor?" Thus, the erudite origins of the Gael were an important element in providing a written authority for the Irish records from earliest times.

The persona of Niul, son of Phaenius Farsaidh, progenitor of the Gaelic race, is confined to literacy in the traditional narrative (LG, pt.2:11; Keating, 2:9,13-15). O'Halloran (1778a,1:41) expanded on this conventionalised image by adding the designation 'high priest', a designation which significantly altered the original concept. This alteration in the original persona of Niul was an attempt by O'Halloran to compensate for the removal of the Christian connotations from the narrative. It can be recalled that the three interdependent concepts informing the core concept that identified the Gael were: 'pious, learned and warlike'. As a result of O'Halloran's removal of the Christian connotations from the narrative, the concept 'pious' suffered depletion in meaning, and was consequently reduced to 'learned and warlike'. In order to fill the vacuum that had been created, and to rehabilitate the organic whole, an element of moral direction - a role filled by contact with the Israelites in the traditional narrative - needed to be inserted. This function devolved to Niul, who now supplied the colony with leadership and moral direction, by being prince and high priest (Niul: 1941 Figure 5.1), and represented the concept of 'piety, wisdom and learning' (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:41).

The idea of Sru, son of Easru as the benign coloniser of Crete is a new concept introduced by O'Halloran (Sru: 2046 Figure 5.1). The use of the term 'coloniser' is supported in the text where O'Halloran (1778a,1:61) contextualises the various migrations of the Gael in the Mediterranean as "the earliest account of colonisation extant".<sup>13</sup> Sru receives very little attention in the traditional narrative, as the following extract from Keating shows:

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<sup>13</sup>O'Halloran's uses this term to mean the planting of settlements.

Sru [...] proceeded [...] from the mouth of the Nile through the Torrian Sea to Crete, which is now called Candia where he dwelt for a time, and where he died, and where he left succeeding generations of his descendants; and hence, according to the author of our records there are no serpents in Crete as there are none in Ireland. (Keating, 2:31)

The *Lebor gabála* (pt. 2:65) simply records Sru and his son Heber Scot as the leaders of the expedition that left Egypt for Scythia. However, for O'Halloran, Sru personified the important 'benign coloniser' element in the identity composition of the early migrants, whose arrival was described as a "blessing" rather than in terms of conquest:

Crete at once yielded to them its sovereignty. It appeared to the old inhabitants a blessing; for instead of distressing and hunting them down like wild beasts, they introduced amongst them the social arts. They formed them into communities; they instructed them in agriculture, in arts, and manufactures. Cadmus taught them letters, the knowledge of the Deity, the reverence due to him, and the duties they owed to each other, and to society. [...] The Curetes or warriors instructed them in feats of arms, and in the warlike dance. (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:53-4)

The contemporary resonance of this comment, and the covert criticism it contained of the methods used in the English conquest of Ireland, although implied rather than explicit here, would have been readily understood by O'Halloran's readership. The message or lesson that O'Halloran wished to convey is significant, — a coloniser who improves the social, commercial and military life of their subjects is welcomed. Evidence to support this interpretation can be discerned elsewhere in the narrative. For instance, O'Halloran (1778, 1:97) draws an implicit comparison between the "policy and humanity with which the Milesians treated their new subjects" and the "opposite conduct pursued [in Ireland] since the Revolution" (1688). These comparisons further highlight the eighteenth-century context of his narrative.

The martial dynamic of the group is embodied in Breogan and Gollamh. O'Halloran does not materially alter this concept, expect to apply a contemporary

resonance to their exploits. Breogan was a “gallant and warlike prince” (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:58). He was a conquering warrior who subdued Spain, and erected an enduring fortress city named from him Breogan-sciath. Displaying also the maritime and commercial dynamic of the group, Bratha erected a pharos “for the direction of all shipping from Ireland and Britain, with which he had opened a considerable trade” (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:57).

However, the true hero figure of the group is Gollamh, grandson of Breogan, “called by way of pre-eminence Mile-Espaine, or the Hero of Spain” (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:58). Gollamh “impatient of new laurels” sailed to provide military aid to his “Phoenician ancestors” with whom they kept up “constant intercourse [...] for the sake of commerce and other advantages”. Gollamh, in his guise of military supreme, coloniser and statesman, defeated Phoenicia's enemies, extended its borders and ensured a lasting peace. From there he travelled to Egypt to assist the Pharaoh, who was also besieged by invaders, and “so celebrated a commander was received with open arms” (O'Halloran 1778a,1:59). Gollamh was as successful in Egypt as he had been in Phoenicia until finally recalled to Spain to restore order there. “The report of his [Gollamh's] return gave new courage to his people; and in some time he restored peace and happiness to the land” (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:60). Although the warlike element of the group is personified in Gollamh, this element is restrained from degenerating towards barbarism by the balancing concept of ‘learning’. We are reminded that Gollamh brought with him “twelve youths of uncommon learning and abilities, who were directed to make remarks on whatever they found new, either in astronomy, navigation, arts, sciences, and manufactures” (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:59).

The *Lebor gabála* (pt.2:67) account of Gollamh bears little resemblance to O'Halloran's except in the barest of outline. Keating (2:41) provided a clearer account of Gollamh and was slightly more effusive in his praise calling him “a mighty son of renowned deeds”. What sharply separates the traditional narrative from O'Halloran's account of these two heroes, is the manner in which O'Halloran dressed his narrative in a contemporary and political nuanced language. Two instances here will suffice to illustrate this point. In Keating (2:41) Gollamh's trip to Scythia was motivated by a desire to “visit his kinsmen and to serve under them”. In O'Halloran's account (1778a,1:58), Gollamh “impatient of new laurels” went to

“assist [his] Phoenician ancestors, then greatly distressed by continental wars. [...] for the sake of commerce and other advantages”.

A second comparison confirms O'Halloran's altered style of presentation. Keating (2:43) reported that “when Milidh (Gollamh) had passed some time in Scythia, he had much success against rebels and plunderers in that country, so that the inhabitants loved him greatly”. O'Halloran (1778a,1:59) portrayed Gollamh not only as a Phoenician, a military supreme, but also as a statesman. Gollamh “was received with distinguished honours by the Phoenicians” and “he not only repelled and defeated the invaders of the country, but greatly extended their borders, and procured for them a lasting peace”. Therefore, although O'Halloran was drawing from Keating, he deliberately altered the presentation for his eighteenth-century political audience. O'Halloran did not significantly alter the core identity traits of the early ancestors, and what changes he did make were in the nature of a contemporary update. The basic identity concept of the early ancestors as ‘pious, learned and warlike’ was retained.

To summarise, O'Halloran's narrative of early origins diverges significantly from the traditional narrative. He has provided an imperial past for the early ancestors in the Mediterranean by linking them with two ancient empires of that area, the Phoenician and Carthaginian Empires. He has also emphasised the maritime nature of their journeys and omitted the travelogue version of events which is common to the traditional narrative. He has also removed the biblical connections from his narrative and the heavy overlay of Catholicism which had permeated Keating's accounts, in order to tailor his narrative to suit the non-traditional audience towards whom this work was directed. In contrast, he did not make any material change to the identity traits of the early ancestors and the basic identity concept of, pious, learned and warlike was retained.

#### 5.4. Imperial Terminology /A Milesian Empire?<sup>14</sup>

After the successful conquest of Ireland by the Milesian expedition, O'Halloran argued for the existence of a Milesian Empire, rather than kingdom, in Ireland at this time. His argument was based on both terminological and structural innovations in his narrative. This discussion focuses on terminological changes in the narrative and the introduction by O'Halloran, for the first time in his narrative, of an imperial nuanced terminology. This section investigates the manner in which O'Halloran both introduced and justified his use of an imperial nuanced language and how this usage impacted on his narrative. Secondly, this area investigates what O'Halloran's eighteenth-century audience might have understood by this imperial terminology and the possible significance it may have held for his readership.

There is no use of imperial terminology or any reference to the existence of a Milesian Empire in the traditional narrative. The term 'empire' or 'emperor' is never used in the Irish context. The idea of a Milesian Empire is also absent in the writings of Charles O'Connor. In O'Connor's *Dissertations* (1753:102) there is one reference to the term 'empire' in the Irish context where he comments that the *Lia Fáil*, or stone of destiny, was viewed by the pagan and Christian Scots as the "palladium of their empire". Aside from this one comment, there is no indication that O'Connor viewed Ireland's past in terms of empire. As to antiquarians from the Anglo-Irish tradition, there is no hint of an Irish imperial past in the work of Thomas Leland (1773). Charles Vallancey, however, through his linguistics studies did argue for a strong connection between the Gaelic language and the Mediterranean region, in *Essay on the Irish Language* (1772) and *Grammar of the Ibero-Celtic Language* (1773), where his linguistic theory supported the traditional narrative of the Mediterranean, or eastern origin of the Gael (O'Halloran, 2004:42-3). The first reference to empire in the Irish context, and remaining within a similar field to that of O'Halloran's work, did not appear until 1793 in the Rev. James Hely's translated version of O'Flaherty's *Ogygia* (1793). There are three references to the term 'empire' in the Irish context in Hely's narrative. Hely (1793:135,243,272) mentions that: in 3619 Hugony "extended his empire"; "Hibernian Empire" and the three Collas had "a thirst for empire".

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<sup>14</sup>To avoid confusion I retain the term 'Milesian' here throughout, although it could be argued that another term, such as 'Gaelic' or 'Irish' perhaps, might be equally appropriate.

Therefore, the use of imperial terminology sharply differentiates O'Halloran's narrative from the traditional narrative and from the writings of his fellow antiquarians.

To provide textual evidence for the existence of an ancient Irish imperial past, O'Halloran referred to the speech of the English delegate at the Council of Constance (1414-1418).<sup>15</sup> According to O'Halloran (1778a,2:68-9), English advocates seeking voting rights as an independent nation at the Council of Constance claimed that as: "Europe was divided into four empires, [...] the Roman, the Constantinopolitan, the Irish and the Spanish" that they were entitled to rank as a nation as they were a "branch of the [Irish] empire" by way of Henry being monarch of Ireland. However, O'Halloran was not quite accurate in his account of the argument made by the English delegates. The argument given by the English ambassador, Thomas Polton, who cited the writings of the thirteenth-century German Dominican philosopher, Albertus Magnus, and the English Franciscan encyclopaedist, Bartholomew de Glanville, was:

That Europe was divided into four kingdoms, the first of these is the Roman kingdom, the second is the kingdom of Constantinople, the third is the kingdom of Ireland which has now been made over to the English; and the fourth is the kingdom of Spain. From this it is plain that the King of England and his kingdom are among the most noble and ancient kingdoms of Europe: nor can the kingdom of France lay claim to this prerogative.

(Gwynn, trans. 1939/40:220)<sup>16</sup>

The comments of the English delegate confirm the antiquity of Ireland's kingdom status, but the term 'empire' is not specifically mentioned. In the original Latin version of this text provided by Gwynn (1939/40:220 fn.116), the term used is *regna/regnum* which translates as 'kingdom', the term *imperium*/empire is not used.

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<sup>15</sup>The Council of Constance was the 16<sup>th</sup> ecumenical council called by the See of Rome and lasted four years. For an account of this Council and the various arguments as to the voting rights of particular nations, and also the suggestion that the English delegate's comments were fabrication as the writing of Albertus Magnus did not contain this extract, see: Gwynn (1939/40: 183-233).

<sup>16</sup>Gwynn explains that the English claim at the Council of Constance was printed from the Barberini Mss. by Giovanni Mansi, Concilio xxvii 1022-31. Mansi (1692-1769) was an Italian theologian and scholar. The Barberini Mss. is held at the Vatican Library in Rome.



O'Halloran's substitution of the term 'kingdom' with 'empire' is not by chance, or, by error. In his first antiquarian work *Insula sacra* (1770:30), O'Halloran also referred to the Council of Constance. There, however, he used the term 'free kingdom' and not 'empire', although in other respects the substance of the reference is the same as the one used above. Two years later in his *Introduction* (1772a:159), he again referred to the Council of Constance, but this time he substituted the term 'empire' for 'kingdom'. The notion then of Ireland's ancient imperial status, based on the assertion of the delegate at the Council of Constance, is present in the *Introduction*. However, this fact, which was briefly stated there and filled only half a page, was more strongly argued for and extended in the *General History*, where it filled four times more text, and was a vital component in directing the narrative (O'Halloran, 1772a:158-9; 1778a,2:67-69). In the *General History* the concept of an extended Irish Empire and the legitimate entitlement of the high king of Ireland to the title of emperor, in addition to the independence and antiquity of Ireland over all nations of Europe, is argued:

Considered on this ground, [antiquity] Ireland should have the precedence of every other nation in ancient Europe: first, because it is the most ancient kingdom; secondly, because it has been governed by a regular hereditary line of princes, (one instance only excepted) for above 2400 years; thirdly, its monarchs may truly rank as emperors, being the sovereigns of kings; and fourthly, it was the only kingdom in Europe which preserved its independency when the rest were enslaved by Rome. Add to this, the extensiveness of her dominion; *both Britains, the adjacent isles, and part of the continent*, for a considerable time confessing her sway.

(O'Halloran, 1778a,2:68)

Therefore, O'Halloran's use of the term 'empire' rather than 'kingdom' is deliberate rather than accidental, and confirms that his interest was in asserting Ireland's status as an ancient empire, rather than as an ancient kingdom.

One of the most striking aspects of O'Halloran's narrative, in comparison with the traditional narrative, is the imperial nuanced language which permeates his account. O'Halloran supported his use of imperial nuanced language by arguing for

equivalence between the term '*ard ri*' and the term 'emperor'. In the *General History* O'Halloran (1778a,2:68) stated that Ireland's kings or "monarchs may truly rank as emperors, being the sovereigns of kings". Following from this assertion O'Halloran dresses Ireland's high kings of the traditional narrative in the more contemporary style of emperor in his narrative. This alteration significantly changes the resonance of his history. For instance, "Eochaidh the son of Muireadhach [...]" was proclaimed emperor"; "Roderic O'Connor last emperor of Ireland" (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:288,v-vi); "Conal-Claon made emperor" "Laogaire elected emperor"; "in the reign of the present emperor Laogaire"; "Fionachta, called Fleadhach was saluted emperor" (O'Halloran, 1778a,2:98,1,10,105)

Following from O'Halloran's assertion of equivalence between the terms 'high king' and 'emperor', all matters relative to the high king are prefixed with the term 'imperial' in his narrative. For instance, the armies of the reigning monarch are everywhere referred to as either, "the imperial army" or, the "imperial troops", and exist as a constant refrain throughout the narrative, impressing on the reader the 'imperial' status of Ireland.<sup>17</sup> For example, Colman-Rimhidh "defeated the imperial troops in the bloody battle of Sleamhna"; "A most bloody battle is fought at Cuildreimhne; the imperial army is defeated with great slaughter" (O'Halloran, 1778a,2:84,71).

O'Halloran's use of the term 'empire', in his narrative of Milesian rule in Ireland, appears most frequently in the phrase "under the ban of the empire". This phrase implies initially, the existence of an empire, and secondly, the power of the high king/emperor to punish miscreants by banning them from imperial territory. For instance, in AC 118, Eochaidh king of Leinster was "put under the ban of the empire" by the monarch Tuathal (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:223). In AC 154, the monarch Con proposed putting Criomthan king of Leinster "under the ban of the empire" (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:232). Connal Cruachan, king of Connaught was "put under the ban of the empire" by the monarch Cormac in AC 259 (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:267). Moreover, when the monarch Niall died in 406 AC, Daithi, son of Fiachra, "was his successor in the empire" (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:301). O'Halloran's

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<sup>17</sup>For imperial troops, see: O'Halloran, 1778a: 109, 289; II:84, 99 and 314. For 'imperial army' see: 1778a: 172, 174, 194, 195, 233, 264; II: 71, 99, 182, 226, 260, 262, 263, 265, 313, and 314.

use of imperial language as a means of communication, supported by the London publication of this work, identifies his audience as the British Empire, and confirms the imperial rather than the insular direction of his narrative.

In a work that relies heavily on tools of rhetoric, hints and allusions, frequency of imperial terms may seem a rather crude method to emphasise the imperial resonance of a work. However, the manner in which O'Halloran's use of imperial terminology operated within the text can also be demonstrated. For instance, the three texts below respectively describe the accession of Jughaine More (Ugaine Mór) as follows:

Then there took Ugoine Mór s. Eochu Buadach [...] the kingship of Ireland for a year [...] and he took the daughter of the king of France to wife – Cessair Crothach; [...]. Now when Ugoine took the kingship of all Europe, to wit from the Meeting of the Three Waters to the Caspian Sea, and to the Tyrrhene Sea as others say; he divided Ireland among his children (as below).  
(LG, pt.5:271)

Ughaine Mor son of Eochaidh Buadhach, son of Duach Lagrach, [...] held the sovereignty of Ireland thirty years, [...]. He was called Ughaine Mor, as his reign was great, since he held sway over the island of western Europe; and this Ughaine had twenty-five children, namely twenty-two sons and three daughters [...] (Keating, 2:157). Ceasair Chruthach, daughter of the king of the French, wife of Ughaine Mor was the mother of Laoghair Lorc and Cobhthach Caol mBeag.  
(Keating, 2:161)

Jughaine, called More, or the Great, the son of Eochaidh Buadhaigh, the son of Duach Laighreach, of the house of Heremon, was enthroned monarch. His empress was daughter to the French King, and called Caesariasurnamed Crothach, or the Lovely. [...] he equipped a mighty fleet, with which he sailed into the Mediterranean, landed in Africa, and from thence sailed to Sicily, and other islands, and for his great success was saluted with the

glorious titles of, *Monarch of Ireland and Albany, and of all the Western Isles of Europe!* (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:154)

O'Halloran went to some lengths here to insert an imperial resonance, “the empress Caesaria”, which by extension implied that Jughaine (Ughaine/Ugoine) in turn laid claim to the title ‘emperor’. In contrast, the central concern of the traditional narrative was the division of Ireland among Jughaine’s heirs. Having established a basis, however fragile, for his Milesian Empire, O'Halloran was anxious to demonstrate the military power and influence of this empire in a European context.

The idea that Ireland’s dominion had a European context is present in the traditional narrative. However, this is not a central concern of the narrative, and is confirmed by the brevity of the references as shown in the comparison of extracts above. The manner in which O'Halloran emphasised the European dominion and aspect of Jughaine’s military activities in the above extracts shows that his interest was in a show of military power, as his italicisation of Jughaine’s military conquest and titles, confirm. Another example of the disinterest of the traditional narrative in the European dominion of Irish kings is highlighted in the traditional narrative account of Criomthan son of Fiodhach. Of this king Keating (2:368) simply states, “Criomthan gained victories and obtained sway in Alba, Britain, and France”. In contrast, and reflecting O'Halloran’s interest in the aggrandisement of these events, his description of Criomthan’s victories against the Picts and Romans and his invasions of the maritime coast of France, fills two page of text and emphasis his interest in highlight the military capabilities of Criomthan’s European forays. *Lebor gabála* (pt.5:367) gives only the length of Criomthan’s reign and the manner of his death by poison.

An instance in the reign of Moghcorb provides another example of O'Halloran’s interest in confirming the power of his alleged Milesian Empire in a European context. Moghcorb’s mother was a Danish princess, Oiruid. Oiruid’s brothers, princes of Denmark, applied to Moghcorb for protection and help to gain the throne. Moghcorb invaded Denmark, killed the king and placed Oiruid’s two uncles in “joint sovereignty” and “exacts tribute” (O'Halloran, 1778a,1,:279). I can find no reference to this incident in the *Lebor gabála*, although Keating referred to this

incident. A comparison with the tradition narrative highlights the manner in which O'Halloran's interest is in the promotion of the power and influence in his account of the event:

This Mogh Corb, with the manning of 300 ships, went with two brothers of his mother (they were the sons of the king of Lochloinn) to obtain from them the sovereignty of Lochloinn from the king of Lochloinn, whose name was Iarus son of Iarnmhor, and he defeated the king in battle, and slew him and his four sons and his eight brothers, and the majority of the nobles of Lochloinn, and left his mother's two brothers in possession of the country of Lochloinn. (Keating, 2:355-7)

The mother of Moghcorb was a Danish princess, her name Oiruind, called Illchrothach, or the All Lovely. [...] Soon after his two uncles, Danish princes, by name Airid and Osna, came to Ireland to claim his protection, being expelled from their country. Influenced by his mother, he prepares a large fleet, and with a select body of troops, taken out of the Munster and Leinster militia, he invades Denmark. The Dane prepares to meet him. The battle was fierce, bloody, and well fought! The superior discipline of the Irish at length prevailed, the Danes were totally defeated; and there fell on their side, the king of Denmark, his four sons and four brothers, besides numbers of his nobility, and 3000 of his choicest soldiers. Moghcorb, having now the ascendancy, caused his uncles to be proclaimed joint-kings, exacted Cain, or tribute, from the country, and returned home crowned with glory.

(O'Halloran, 1778a, 1:279)

Although O'Halloran's source material here was drawn from Keating, and perhaps in the manner of Keating the above tale could be considered "very silly fictions", his anecdotes like those of Keating, had a strong political and contemporary purpose (Cunningham, 2001:17). The central focus of O'Halloran's accounts here was to emphasise the influence and power in the European context of the Milesian Empire.

A final example of O'Halloran's intent in demonstrating the power of his Milesian Empire can be shown in a further comparison with the traditional narrative.

The landing of the Cruithneach or Picts in Ireland in the reign of Heremon, and their settlement afterwards in Scotland, is common to the traditional narrative and to O'Halloran's history. According to O'Halloran's (1778a,1:104-5) narrative, after Heremon defeated the Cruithneach they "requested that settlement might be allotted to them in Britain", which certainly implies that Heremon had, at this stage, the power to do so and did grant them territory in North Britain. O'Halloran (1778a,1:106) also asserts that during Heremon's reign, the Brigantes, petitioned Heremon "for permission to settle in Britain", and he granted them Cumberland. O'Halloran interprets these events as a confirmation of power and dominion and conjectures that if these colonies:

Were not the tributaries of the Irish, which one would be apt to think, by these last assigning to the Picts, and afterwards to the Brigantes, settlements there, they must certainly dread their power. By establishing these two colonies they at least proved what they could do.

(O'Halloran, 1778a,1:108)

In contrast, the *Lebor gabála* does not mention the Brigantes and as to the Cruithneach settlement in Britain, the *Lebor gabála* (pt. 5:185) states that it was in consequence of Heremon giving them Irish women for wives that, "the pryncedom over the Cruithne-folk comes ever from the Men of Ireland". Keating (2:115) provides a fuller account of the events, and describes how Heremon defeated the Cruithneach and told them "that there was a country to the north-east of Ireland, and "bade them go and occupy it", which does not have the same resonance of power as O'Halloran's narrative imparts. O'Halloran's conjectural observation in the above extract, as to the meaning that can be taken from the granting of settlements by Heremon, verifies his objective in using these instances as a confirmation of the power of his alleged Milesian Empire.

What significance can be attributed to O'Halloran's use of imperial terminology and his assertion of an ancient Milesian Empire in his narrative? The term 'Empire', or, 'British Empire', was a readily-understood concept in eighteenth-century political usage. By British Empire was meant Britain and her overseas possessions as one body politic overseen by the imperial Parliament in London. Books and pamphlets

issuing forth from the public press confirmed this usage by the Irish and British body politic. For instance, in 1770, the British writer, John Huddleston Wynne published a work entitled, *A general history of the British Empire in America: containing an historical, political, and commercial view of the English settlements; including all the countries in North-America, and the West-Indies, ceded by the Peace of Paris*, which provided a detailed list of all British possessions within the prevailing understanding that the British Empire was one political community. In 1778, a pamphlet was published anonymously in London entitled, *An appeal to reason and justice on behalf of the British constitution and the subjects of the British Empire* (Anon, 1778d), where this concept of one body politic is further accepted and confirmed, and where the British House of Commons is accepted as being the “Virtual Commons of all he British Empire” (Anon., 1778:9). In 1782, in a published speech by the Earl of Abingdon, Willoughby Bertie (1740-1799) claiming British sovereignty over the Irish Sea, frequent references are made to “Great Britain and her Empire” (1782:11,13) as consisting of one political community, and the “Parliament of Great Britain” as “the seat of the Empire” (1782:16,17). A similar understanding existed in Ireland as to the one body politic that informed the concept of the British Empire. The debates in the Irish House of Commons on Gardiner’s Catholic Relief Act (1778), as revealed in *Sir Henry Cavendish’s parliamentary diary* (1778) account of these events, can clarify its usage in context in contemporary political parlance. In the debates in the Irish House of Commons at this period, the term ‘British Empire’ or, ‘Empire’, to signify Great Britain and her overseas dominions is used frequently. Although particular territories are not mentioned, the encompassing nature of the term is clearly stated and can be understood from the following examples. For instance, George Ogle expressed his indignation at British Government interference in the debates in the Irish House in the context of Gardiner’s Catholic Relief Act as:

that indignation which every man must have felt who wished well to this Empire, who wishes well to the Royal House of Brunswick; who wishes well to the Constitutions of all the Countries that are dependent upon the Empire of Great Britain. (Ogle in Cavendish: 4 August 1778:160)

Hon. Thomas Connolly contextualised Irish Catholic relief at this period as “a question upon which the whole Empire depends in a very serious manner. (In Cavendish: 4 August 1778: 262). Barry Yelverton, MP for Carrickfergus, placed his pro-relief argument for Catholic relief within the context of British imperial security at this particular juncture:

The British Empire is now pitted against France, is the strength of the British Empire equal to the numbers of Inhabitants it can bring into action against the Common Enemy? (Yelverton In Cavendish: 4 August 1778:215-6)

Therefore, the term ‘British Empire’, to describe the greater body politic which encompassed Great Britain and her overseas dominions, was in common usage among the British and Irish body politic.

There was also a clear connotation and association, for the well-read eighteenth-century reader, between the ancient Roman and contemporary British empires, and there was a contemporary interest in the reasons for the causes of decline of empires. Conversely, the idea of the Milesian Empire, as O'Halloran must have been aware, would have meant nothing to his eighteenth-century audience, which would render his use of imperial terminology rather pointless, and his argument for an Irish historic suitability without potency, unless he could find a strategy to bridge the distance between his audience's understanding of empire and what his narrative strived to convey. To bridge this gap, O'Halloran positioned the Roman Empire, a concept which was familiar to his audience, as the other against whom the excellence of his Milesian Empire was given authority in his narrative.

### **5.5 Roman Empire *vis à vis* Milesian Empire**

The Roman Empire plays a significant role in establishing the military power and influence of O'Halloran's Milesian Empire in his narrative and informs the third part of this discussion. In addition, this section investigates the political significance of O'Halloran's assertion of Irish aid to the Carthaginian during the Punic Wars. O'Halloran's primary concern was to establish parity with Britain's imperial state based on the assertion of a once powerful Milesian Empire, who had wielded the



sceptre of an extended empire, which embraced Britain and part of Gaul, in the pre-Roman period. There was perhaps no better way to demonstrate Ireland's military aptitude than to show how Ireland had successfully withstood the power of the greatest empire of antiquity, the Roman Empire. As mentioned, there was a current British interest in empires, particularly the Roman Empire, and O'Halloran may well have hoped that the juxtaposition of the Milesian and Roman Empires in his history, would have engaged the ear of a British élite audience, who were fully conversant with the latter at least.

In the *General History* the Roman Empire occupies a central position as the Other against whom the military excellence of O'Halloran's Milesian Empire is confirmed. Keating (1:7) also stated that no other people in Europe had been "more valiant than they, [Irish] for contending with the Romans for the defence of Scotland". Keating's (1:17) references to the Roman Empire are brief, but he emphasises that Ireland was never occupied or threatened by any foreign power, even the Roman one. However, the Roman Empire, or Ireland's engagements with the Romans, is not a central concern of the traditional narrative. Therefore, much of O'Halloran's descriptions concerning encounters with the Romans is very much of his own conjecture, and highlights the contemporary direction of his narrative in constructing a powerful military past for Ireland.

The link between Rome and Ireland is established early in O'Halloran's narrative account of the Milesian invasion of Ireland by paralleling the similarities in the establishment of both dynasties. The last battle fought by the Milesian invaders with the Damnonii (Tuatha Dé Danann), who were in possession of Ireland, was at Tailtiu. The decisive point in this engagement, according to O'Halloran, was the fight between the commanders of the opposing armies: the three sons of Milesius and the three sons of Cearmada of the Damnonii, kings of Ireland. At this point in the narrative, O'Halloran (1778a,1:96) interjects to comment that "the fate of Ireland now, like that of Rome in the days of the Horatii, hung on the swords of these contending brothers".

For the well-read eighteenth-century reader the story of the dispute between the city of Rome (Horatii) and Alba Longa (Curatii), was a familiar reference from

Livy's accounts of the history surrounding the foundation of Rome, which like the Milesian account, was the story of three brothers, in this instance fighting on behalf of their cities (Foster, 2005, tran.:33-35). The Horatii (Romans) were successful as were the Milesians. The reason O'Halloran highlighted the similarity between these two encounters was to establish in the minds of his audience an equivalence between the significance of both events. By establishing a link between the foundation of the Milesian Empire and the Roman Empire, or at least with one of the many stories surrounding the foundations of the Roman Empire, he was attempting to transfer some of the significance and iconic resonance that surrounded the Roman event to the Milesian event, by linking it to Rome and the story of the Horatii and Curatii. There is no similar reconstruction of this battle in the traditional narrative. The *Lebor gabála* (pt.5:61) simply states that at the battle of Tailtiu "there fell the three kings and the three queens of the Tuatha Dé Danann". Keating's (2:95) account read "The sons of Cermad were defeated by the sons of Milidh". Therefore, O'Halloran deliberately expanded on this event to establish a linkage between the better-known concept of the Roman Empire with that of a Milesian Empire to construct a linkage in the minds of his audience. Keating's references to encounters between the Irish and Romans are both sparse and insubstantial, as mentioned. In O'Halloran's narrative they occupy a central theme, and his interest is in the military aggrandisement of these encounters.

Equally striking as a demonstration of Ireland's past military power was the manner in which O'Halloran attributed the ebb and flow of Roman power in Britain, to unrest or peace in Ireland. Irish resistance to the rise of Roman power in Britain, O'Halloran argued, was constrained only by domestic unrest at home. For example, in AC 118, during the reign of Tuathal, O'Halloran (1778a,1:222) observed; "The establishment of internal peace and economy gave vigour to the arms of the Irish in Britain; who in conjunction with their Pictish allies reduced the Romans and their British friends to a state of great distress and misery". Or, in AC 137, unrest in Ireland during the reign of Tuathal "accounts well for the Romans extending their bounds, as they did at this time, in Britain" (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:225). In AC 221, "The distress and confusions occasioned by this revolution in favour of Mac Con, will well explain why Severus extended the Roman arms in Britain" (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:249). Similarly, Cormac's harassment of Britain and Gaul in AC 259 was

curtailed only when “intestine commotions demanded all his power and authority to be exerted at home” (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:262).

Therefore, O'Halloran's position was that the Milesian Empire was not just a worthy adversary of the Roman; rather its military power was such that it could have broken Roman power in Britain, if the conditions in Ireland had been right. For instance, in AC 183, O'Halloran (1778a,1:242) commented that so successful were Conaire's attacks against the Romans that “had his reign lasted longer the Roman power over that country would have been totally annihilated”. Moreover, O'Halloran conjectured that in AC 367, the Irish monarch Criomthan, styled “monarch of Ireland and Albany, and leader of the Franks and Saxons” headed the coalition of states against the Romans on the continent known as the ‘Saxon League’ and furthermore, joined with the Picts and Saxons and broke through the Roman wall, “carrying desolation through all her British provinces” (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:291-2). Moreover, the monarch Niall of the Nine Hostages, attacked the Romans not only in Britain but pursued them onto the continent (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:298).

In contrast, the *Lebor gabála* (5:349) statement regarding Niall was sparse, “Níall Noí-giallach took the kingship of Ireland and of the Western World for a space of twenty-seven years”. In Keating's (2:375) account of Niall there was no mention of pursuing the Romans, rather that “Niall [...] sent a fleet to Brittany in France, [...], for the propose of plundering that country [...]; and it was in this captivity that they brought Patrick ....”. Keating's concern here is not with Niall's European forays but in noting that this was the king who first brought Patrick and, by extension, Christianity to Ireland. This comparison further highlights the different political context of both these writers, and the circumstances that subsequently shaped and informed their narratives. O'Halloran's narrative is an attempt to create an imperial past housed within a traditional familiar framework, which lends authority to his narrative, where he expands those elements of the traditional narrative which he considers useful in the political circumstances of eighteenth-century Ireland, and discards those that are not useful. Irish encounters with the Roman Empire act as a counterpoint in O'Halloran's narrative to demonstrate to his contemporary audience the power and influence of his alleged Milesian Empire, and

by extension, the historic suitability of the descendants of this empire as imperial agents.

Another innovation that O'Halloran introduced into his narrative was the idea that troops from Ireland aided the Carthaginians during the Punic wars. This assertion is found only in O'Halloran's *General History*. Although the fact that the Irish may have sent military aid to the Carthaginians does not provide supporting evidence for the existence of O'Halloran's alleged Milesian Empire, it does have a contemporary political resonance which will be referred to shortly. O'Halloran (1778a,1:301,154-171) argued that not only did the Irish prevent a Roman invasion of Ireland by "*giving the Romans so much employ abroad, they thy would never think of bringing the war into their own country*", but that they also actively pursued the destruction of the Roman Empire in their alliances with the Gauls and the Carthaginians in the Punic wars. It may be recalled that O'Halloran laid the basis for this connection earlier, describing the Carthaginians as the descendants of the Laimh-fionn colony who had settled in the area around Carthage prior to the rise of the Carthaginian Empire (Laimh-fionn: 2242 Figure 5.1). O'Halloran's conjecture that the Carthaginians retained a select body of Irish troops in their army is based on a comment by Corinthian mercenaries at Syracuse, and found in Plutarch's *Life of Timoleon*.<sup>18</sup>

Have you so little sense as to suppose, that they [Carthaginians] came hither with an army from Hercules's Pillars, and the Atlantic Sea, to hazard themselves for the establishment of Icetes? (O'Halloran, 1778a,1:155)

O'Halloran identified this army, referred to in the above extract, as coming from Ireland based on the reference to "Hercules's Pillars and the Atlantic Sea" in the narrative. The reason O'Halloran (1778a,1:73-78) made this connection was because his use of classical sources, as mentioned, led him to believe that the famous Atlantic or Hyperborean island mentioned in the fragmented histories of the Mediterranean referred in fact to Ireland. Based on this reference, he conjectured that the Carthaginians retained a select body of Irish troops in their army. He presented his

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<sup>18</sup>Clough's translation of this extract in the *Life of Timoleon* is the same in substance with O'Halloran's translation above. See: Clough (1859:132).

conjecture in a parallel drawn with the presence of Irish soldiers in the service of France and Spain:

From the whole, I think, we may reasonably conclude, that the Carthaginians procured powerful assistance from Ireland, as well as from Spain and Gaul, in their wars with the Romans: nor do I think I should be censured of rashness, if I were to offer a conjecture that the *Sacred Cohort*, the *Delecta & Sacra Cohors* of the Carthaginians, [...] was a select body of Irish troops, whose fidelity and intrepidity could be always depended on, and who were kept in constant pay; if in these days of *distress* and *persecution*, which followed the Reformation the Irish kept up a large body of troops in the service of Spain, as we know they did in the reign of Elizabeth, and long after. And if, since the year 1691, a most respectful corps has been kept up both in France and Spain, whose incorruptible fidelity and *unexampled* bravery, have added new laurels to their drooping country; why doubt the probability and possibility of their lending their troops to the Carthaginians in days of splendour, especially when the country was so full of inhabitants? Nay I persuade myself, that it was a useful piece of state policy in the victorious prince, to engage a restless military in foreign wars, to preserve domestic tranquillity; and this will explain why this body were honoured with the title of *Sacra Cohors*, as being denizens of the *Insula Sacra* [Ireland].

(O'Halloran, 1778a,1:155-6)

The above extract is a useful example of the subscription-list complementing the text of the *General History*. For O'Halloran, this extract had a dual function. Firstly, he is drawing attention to the military accomplishments of his French and Spanish subscribers described in Chapter 4. Secondly, the military success of this group retrospectively verifies the existence of a similar mercenary military body in the Carthaginian army. O'Halloran's linkage of an historical and current military aptitude, in this brief digression, creates the impression of a continuous historical stream of Irish military ability, which might almost be viewed as an indigenous characteristic trait. O'Halloran's message is very clear in this digression and reads like a manifesto for Irish participation in empire: The Irish inherently make good imperial soldiers, and to "preserve domestic tranquillity" this type of martial spirit is

best put to use in war. The linkage in this short extract, between a past and current military aptitude, represents in microcosm the core argument presented in this thesis. The aim of the *General History* was to showcase Ireland's current and historic readiness for an imperial role. And although the assertion that Ireland provided military aid to the Carthaginian Empire does not support the notion of a Milesian Empire in Ireland, this assertion does present the argument that the Irish are capable of aiding the contemporary British Empire by supplying troops, as they have done previously for another empire, the Carthaginian Empire, which provides the contemporary political significance of this aid.

O'Halloran frequently refers in his narrative to Irish aid to the Carthaginians; however, many of these references and others, aside from the Carthaginians, are both tenuous and conjectural, based on his own system of chronology, as mentioned, and classical sources. However, notwithstanding that O'Halloran's observations are conjectural, or perhaps because of it, his comments clearly betray his interest in creating a European military context for his Milesian Empire. For instance, on an observation that in AC 3402 the monarch Eochaidh invaded Greece, without further evidence O'Halloran (1778a,1:146) conjectured that to explain this event "we must, I think, agree [...] that the Irish confederated with the Carthaginians, and frequently assisted them in their wars". Of the reign of Conuig AC 3416, O'Halloran (1778a,1:148) comments, "It is remarkable, that in the beginning of this prince's reign we read for the first time, of the irruptions of the Gauls into Italy. For my own part, I do not entertain the least doubt, but the Irish were deep in these schemes". The significance of O'Halloran's narrative here is not in its historical accuracy, but rather in its efforts to refashion an imperial past and set in train a positive discursive shift in Irish identity that will facilitate an argument for inclusion in the British Empire.

In the contemporary context, Britain considered herself the natural inheritor of the mantle of the Roman Empire, where France replaced Carthage in the Rome/Carthage Britain/France parallel. Therefore, O'Halloran's assertions of Milesian support for the Carthaginians could be interpreted subversively. Leerssen (1986b:100-102), focusing on a particular section of Vallancey's *Essay on the Antiquity of the Irish Language* (1772), identified a similar divisive element where Vallancey commented on the destruction of the great Carthaginian library:

Almost all the Carthaginian Manuscripts were committed to the flames, and the history of this brave and learned People, has been written by their most bitter Enemies, the Greeks and the Romans; in this too they resemble the Irish. (Vallancey, 1772:3)

Clare O'Halloran (2004:43-44) has similarly quoted and drawn attention to this element in Vallancey's writing, but further elaborated that with the passing of time Vallancey adopted a more negative stance regarding the Carthaginian influence on the Irish language. However, this is not the direction of O'Halloran's presentation here, although clearly he was aware that his argument was open to that interpretation. The Rome/Carthage – Britain/ France parallel was in the public domain and was a generally accepted view of the ideological juxtaposition of these empires, as the following extract from the *Freemans Journal* demonstrates:

Nothing can be more clear than that nations have their antipathies and aversions. [...]. This was the case of Rome and Carthage; two great neighbouring commonwealths, jealous of each other, and mutually animated with such implacable hatred, that nothing but an intestine war (which ended in the total destruction of the latter) could extinguish it. The *Romans* were a generous, open, but withal a rigid and warlike people. The *Carthaginians*, on the other hand, were a cunning, subtle, false race of men; [...]. The strongest instance of that national hatred and aversion, after those already mentioned, seems to be that which subsists at present between the *French* and the *English*. I shall not attempt to trace these animosities to their original, nor pretend to decide who gave the first occasion for them; [...] I think the cause of them very evident. (A Whig, 1778a:1)

O'Halloran's assertions here of the antagonistic positioning of the Milesian Empire *vis à vis* the Roman in ancient times could reasonably be translated, in eighteenth-century parlance, to represent the contemporary British/French situation. O'Halloran did fiercely condemn and rail against English injustice in a forthright manner throughout his histories and the following extract is a good example of the unrestrained language and tone that typified O'Halloran's criticisms:

Had the English, better informed and more humane, instead of making Ireland a slaughter-house for near 500 years, by constantly stirring up her sons to war against each other, granted them the laws of Britain, who freely acknowledged Henry for their Ard Righ; and made her the ally, instead of the enemy of Britain, that greatness and power, that they have now attained, thro' her means, they would long since have reached. But thro' an unexampled spirit of absurd oppression and rapacity, while they endeavoured everywhere to destroy the antient legislation of the Irish, they not only neglected, but refused to establish, any other in its place, insomuch that at length the killing of a *Merus Hibernicus*, became no crime! (O'Halloran, 1772a:204-205)

However, notwithstanding that O'Halloran's forthright language here is a blanket condemnation of English rule, his primary grievance is that Ireland has been excluded from the British Empire, rather than indicating a desire to establish an alternative dynasty in its place. This extract marks out both O'Halloran's admiration for Britain as "that greatness and power" but also his antagonism to the treatment Ireland has received. This double move, whereby he claims a place in the British Empire and "made her an ally" yet maintained a critical distance from her "spirit of oppression and rapacity" characterises the complexity of O'Halloran's antiquarian discourse in general. This reading further confirms that O'Halloran's overall argumentation here in the *General History* is directed towards initiating participation in the British Empire predicated on an historical suitability rather than supporting an oppositional stance premised on the ancient Rome/Carthage or a current Britain/France parallel.

To summarise: O'Halloran's alterations to the traditional narrative were structural and terminological and aimed at supporting his assertion of an ancient Milesian Empire in Ireland. O'Halloran's creation of an imperial Irish past is pervasive throughout his narrative and consistently reinforced by layers of evidence. Examples presented in isolation, as they must be here, convey in part only the pervasiveness of the imperial theme in his narrative. However, the political context of his time and Ireland's relation to Britain, informs us why he constructed his narrative as he did. His means of communication and language usage shows his audience to be imperial Britain. He wanted to establish an ancient parity with



Britain's contemporary state and present an argument for inclusion of Irish Catholics in the British Empire, based on an historic suitability for an imperial role.

### 5.6. A Military Manifesto

O'Halloran intended his *General History* as a military manifesto, a documented historical account of Irish suitability for military imperial service. However, it is not possible to say whether his work was ever used in the way that he intended. Catholic numbers into the British army did increase after 1778, and Irish Catholic officers also began to receive commissions into the British army, although this was still strictly illegal (Bartlett, 1993b:71). In the 1830s there were more Irishmen than Englishmen in the British army and between 1825 and 1850, 48% of all troops in the Bengal army were Irish (Jeffrey, 1996:94). Irish service in the British Empire was not confined to military service; many Irishmen carved out successful careers in the Indian Civil Service at the height of the British imperium (Cook, 1987). However, it would be impossible to demonstrate what influence, if any, the *General History* had on these figures.

Nonetheless, there is some evidence to suggest that O'Halloran's *General History* may have been used in the manner he intended by another diaspora some 60 years later. This conjecture arises from a comparison between the republication history of this work in nineteenth-century America with that of the Abbé MacGeoghegan's *Histoire de l'Irlande ancienne et moderne* (1758-1762), and the antiquarian writings of Charles O'Connor. There was substantial demand for O'Halloran's *General History* in the Irish concentrated centres of New York and Boston in the nineteenth century where it enjoyed a long publication history. There was only one edition of the *General History*. However, between 1845 and 1887 the *General History* was republished in full seven times as part of larger historical works on Ireland by various publishing houses in New York and Boston. For instance, in 1845, a work entitled *The history of Ireland, from the invasion by Henry the Second to the present times* was published in New York. O'Halloran's *General History* was republished in full there to describe Irish history from the earliest times to the twelfth century. Responsibility for the undertaking was attributed to "William Dolby; aided and assisted by a committee of admirers of Irish history, natives of different countries, who are now residents or citizens of the United States" (Dolby ed.1845:iii-

iv). Inscribed on the spine of this work is 'O'Halloran's Ireland', so that it is clear to the reader that it is O'Halloran's vision of Ireland, rather than another, that is being promoted there. In a similar manner the *General History* was republished in 1846, as part of a work entitled *Complete history of Ireland: from the earliest times* and again in 1850, under the title *The history of Ireland: from the invasion by Henry the Second to the present times*. The authorship in all cases is attributed to Sylvester O'Halloran and William Dolby. It is likely that these three books are all the same but with different covers, as three editions in five years is unlikely.

There were also three republications of the *General History* in Boston. In 1881 Murphy & McCarthy of Boston, published *The history of Ireland, from its first settlement to the invasion; with a continuation from the invasion to the present time*, with a similar authorship to that of the other works mentioned above. In all cases the combination of names, Sylvester O'Halloran and William Dolby, suggests that, although these publications appear under slightly altered titles, the work is basically the same in substance as that published by Martin in 1845. In 1884, Murphy & McCarthy published *The pictorial history of Ireland: from the landing of the Milesians to the present time*. The first section, as in the other works mentioned above, reproduced O'Halloran's two-volume *General History* to describe the early part of Irish history to the twelfth century. However, in this case, the history is continued with contributions from the nationalist journalist A. M. Sullivan<sup>19</sup> and P.D. Nunan.<sup>20</sup> A second edition of this work appeared from the same publishing house in 1887. This work was further republished by the Office of Catholic Publication New York but the date is uncertain.

Conversely, the works of Charles O'Connor did not appeal to the Irish /American diaspora, and a database search produced no results for an American-based republication of his works. On the other hand, a database search of Mac

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<sup>19</sup>Alexander Martin Sullivan (1829-1884), journalist and nationalist was born in Bantry, Co. Cork. He became a partner in the *Nation* newspaper in 1855 and in 1858 became its sole proprietor and editor. The *Nation* newspaper was originally founded by Charles Gavin Duffy, John Blake Dillon, and Thomas Osborne Davis. Its aim was to create a sense of Irish nationhood based on identity rather than social status or religion. *Oxford DNB*.

<sup>20</sup>P.D. Nunan is not mentioned in the biographical databases. However, the following works of a similar genre amongst others bear his name and that of A. M. Sullivan: Sullivan, A.M. Nunan P.D. (1885) *The story of Ireland: a narrative of Irish history: from the earliest ages to the Fenian insurrection of 1867*; Joyce, W.P. Sullivan, A.M. Nunan, P.D. (1899) *Atlas and history of Ireland: a comprehensive description of each county*. Boston: Murphy and McCarthy.

Geoghegan's *Histoire de l'Irlande ancienne et moderne*, and of which O'Halloran (1765b) commented "I love Mac Geoghegan for his plain dealings", enjoyed a republication history that surpassed that of O'Halloran. The New York Publishing House of D. & J. Sadlier published Mac Geoghegan's work four times in an English translation between 1808 and 1851. From 1868, the republication of Mac Geoghegan's work takes on a form similar to that of O'Halloran's above, where Mac Geoghegan's history is continued on by another author to the present time. For instance, *The history of Ireland, ancient and modern: taken from the most authentic records, and dedicated to the Irish Brigade; with a continuation from the Treaty of Limerick to the present time by John Mitchel*. In this form the work was republished by D. J. Sadlier & Co. in 1868, 1869 and 1878. A third name was added to this work, that of David Power Conyngham in the 1870 edition. Power Conyngham was a novelist and historian of the Irish Brigade in the American Civil War.<sup>21</sup> Four more editions appear of this work bearing all three names in 1884, 1886, 1889 and 1896.

The point of confluence between the works of O'Halloran and Mac Geoghegan, and absent from the works of Charles O'Connor, was an emphasis on Irish military valor and achievement. The *Histoire de l'Irlande ancienne et moderne* was, after all, dedicated to the Irish Brigade and its military achievements in the service of European Catholic powers. Therefore, it appears that it was this element of the work that appealed to the Irish/America diaspora. In the new world, the Irish demonstrated their fittingness for inclusion predicated on their military reputation, as they had done in the old world (Power Conyngham, 1867). The Irish American diaspora joined the Union army during the American Civil War and formed the famous 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment, whose achievements and exploits equaled those of its eighteenth-century counterparts as eulogized by O'Halloran and Mac Geoghegan. It appears then that the success and attainments of the earlier diasporic movement on the European continent appealed to their transatlantic familiars, stimulating a demand for the works of O'Halloran and Mac Geoghegan, in the centers of Irish concentration in New York and Boston in nineteenth-century America, as confirmed by the forgoing publication history of these works. A full investigation of the reasons which surrounded the popularity of works like the *General History* for the Irish/American

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<sup>21</sup>David Power Conyngham ((1825-1885) was born in Co. Tipperary and served as aide-de-camp to General Sherman in Georgia. See: DIB.

diaspora in America is outside the parameters of this study. However, it seems possible that the writings of O'Halloran and Mac Geoghegan provided a literary support framework around which the Irish/America diaspora constructed their political identity, in the same way that these writings had serviced the earlier eighteenth-century Spanish/French Irish émigré society.

### **5.7. Divergent Views: Insular Versus Imperial**

Charles O'Connor and Sylvester O'Halloran mobilised the Gaelic tradition in their appeal for Catholic relief; however, their views as to how this material might be used were fundamentally different. As the forgoing analysis has demonstrated, O'Halloran adopted an imperial perspective. He situated his Catholic relief politics in British imperial discourse and addressed the Catholic relief issue to an audience outside of Ireland by publishing his work in London. O'Halloran viewed the British Empire as a framework of liberty and the site of power to bring about Irish Catholic relief. O'Halloran was the first Irish antiquarian to mobilise the antiquarian tradition in an imperial context, and his imperial perspective sharply distinguishes his approach from that of his contemporaries.

O'Connor's view of the Catholic relief issue was a narrow dichotomy focused on bringing Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants into closer sympathy with each other. He published his works in Dublin, indicating his discourse was directed towards an Irish rather than a British imperial audience. His view on the Catholic relief issue was insular. O'Connor's style was discreet and pleasing rather than vigorous and very aware of the 'sensitivities' of his Protestant audience (O'Halloran, 2004:37). O'Connor focused on the political sophistication of early Irish government and deliberately excluded references to military exploits, as he felt it reinforced the stereotyped barbaric image of the Irish, although he had been less discreet in his earlier work (O'Halloran, 2004:24-25, 110-111).

In contrast, O'Halloran championed the European and military element of early Irish history and origins, and showed no reluctance whatsoever in valorising Irish military prowess, either in the distant past or in the more immediate present. The eulogising of military valour is a pervasive theme in his writings. O'Halloran did not

equate military prowess with barbarity as O'Connor did. O'Halloran equated military proficiency with power. And considering that the British Empire in the post-1763 period was an empire of dominion and conquest, which acknowledged the centrality of military proficiency in securing its dominions, O'Halloran's view, rather than O'Connor's, best reflected the contemporary and imperial situation (Marshall, 1998:7-8). In fact, the imperial careers of O'Halloran's sons are emblematic of an outward-looking imperial context for O'Halloran's thoughts. His second son, John, was a Captain in Colonel Brown's regiment of American Loyalists and secretary to the Governor of the Bahamas.<sup>22</sup> His youngest son, Brigadier-General Joseph O'Halloran spent over fifty years in British service in India and on his eventual return he received a knighthood from William IV.<sup>23</sup>

Both scholars, O'Connor and O'Halloran, had used outside sources in an attempt to separate the history from the fable of the early origin of the Gael in the Mediterranean, however, the results were surprisingly divergent. O'Connor used the chronological scheme of Sir Isaac Newton (1728) to recover that "so long buried in the Rubbish of Fable" (1753:20,15-21; 1776:12-17). O'Connor (1776:22) discounted this early period of the migrations of the Gael in the Mediterranean as "a Fable of the Bards, to render the Original of our Monarchs more august and sacred". Consequently, O'Connor held that the story of the early migrations of the Gael did not have a reliable historical foundation. Rather, O'Connor believed that these tales reflected a common race memory of a once conquering hero, probably Egyptian, but not particular to the Irish, whose deeds and exploits were absorbed into the histories of different nations at an early stage. This hero subsequently appeared under various names in various origin stories. His various names in the Irish account appear as Sru,

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<sup>22</sup>John did not merit an account in the DNB. According to Lyons (1963c:279), John was the second son of Sylvester O'Halloran. He was a Captain in Colonel Brown's regiment of American Loyalists and secretary to the Governor of the Bahamas. This position he certainly occupied by 1787, as I find him listed in the subscription-list to Ferrar's *The History of Limerick* (1787), where he ordered thirty copies of Ferrar's work. John was granted three hundred acres on Long Island in December 1787, and a further five hundred acres in January 1788. He was a Peace Commissioner, a member of the Committee of Correspondence and a very active member of the General assembly.

<sup>23</sup>Sir Joseph O'Halloran (1763-1843) was a Brigadier-General in the East India Company, served over 53 years in India, was knighted by William IV, and appointed an honorary member of the Royal Irish Academy in 1838. A transcript of a letter sent by him to his father in 1799 is provided in Appendix A., letter 16. Joseph converted to the Church of England at some point, as his funeral service was conducted by a Church of England minister. Records at Kensal Green Cemetery, London. See: *Oxford DNB*.

Aghnoin, Tait *et alia*, and were simply different manifestations of the same figure. O'Connor's conclusions then, based on the work of Newton, resulted in a curtailing of the origin myth. Consequently, O'Connor (1776:25) adopted the position that "The Intercourses of the European Iberians with the *Phenecians* and *Egyptians*, [...] were of much more Importance, then their Asiatic Original" in establishing the early literacy of the Milesian colony. Therefore, O'Connor's interest in this period was confined to establishing an early literacy through Phoenician contact.

O'Halloran adopted a different approach and extended the narrative of early origin to meet and reflect the changing face of British imperial ideology by locating Irish history within a formulation more readily accessible to an imperial mindset (Armitage, 2000). O'Halloran (1776b) championed these early migrations in a manner unlike that of many of his antecedents and he commented to O'Connor that, "these Accounts hitherto deemed a kind of Mill stone to Irish History will appear as Invaluable Treasure". O'Halloran's interest was in the imperial and this is demonstrated by the alterations in his narrative, which linked the early Irish ancestors to two ancient empires of the Mediterranean, Phoenicia, and Carthage, and his assertion of an ancient Milesian Empire in Ireland. Therefore, although both of these scholars drew on the same sources, they modified their material to reflect different political agendas, which resulted in two very different interpretations of the Gaelic historiographical tradition.

O'Halloran felt that O'Connor had betrayed Irish history by presenting a watered-down version of events in order to appeal to, or perhaps placate, the Protestant view of events. In fact, Delury (2000:27-28) negatively views O'Halloran's writings as an attempt to "establish a new absolutism of Gaelic monumental history" that signalled the death knell to O'Connor's conciliatory attempts to "create a dialogue across the cultural divide". If the different approaches of these two scholars could be placed in a simple dichotomy, it would probably read as: loyalty versus utility. O'Connor believed that continued assertions and demonstrations of Catholic loyalty, and hence the avoidance of martial prowess in his writings, would gradually argue Protestants out of their prejudices. O'Halloran does not appear to have had a similar faith and he, more pragmatically believed that a demonstration of Catholic utility, as in Irish military proficiency, would best serve

the Catholic issue. This belief underpinned O'Halloran's refutation of Leland's *History of Ireland*, as mentioned, and his eulogising of military valour in the *General History* narrative, confirms this belief.

### 5.8. Conclusions

The forgoing analysis has demonstrated that O'Halloran deliberately modified his source material to construct an historical picture of an ancient Milesian Empire in Ireland. The idea of a Milesian Empire, rather than a Milesian kingdom, is a totally new concept introduced by O'Halloran and sharply distinguishes his work from his contemporaries, and the *General History* from its antecedents in this tradition. The reason that a Milesian Empire, rather than a Milesian kingdom, was important to O'Halloran was because he wanted to demonstrate an ancient Irish parity with the British Empire, and highlight Ireland's historic suitability for an imperial role. O'Halloran's argument for an ancient imperial status for Ireland had a contemporary resonance. Empire was a concept in general usage by the British body politic, and although a Milesian Empire was an unknown concept, he used the contemporary awareness and interest in the Roman Empire to create a bridge of understanding for his audience, however, how successful this strategy may have been is impossible to gauge. O'Halloran created an imperial past for his Milesian empire by linking the early ancestors with two ancient empires of the Mediterranean, Phoenicia and Carthage. He created the image of an ancient Milesian Empire rather than kingdom, by arguing for Ireland's ancient imperial status, and from this assertion and that of the high king/emperor equivalence, emerges the pervasive use of imperial terminology in the text. A comparison between similar events in the traditional narrative with O'Halloran's accounts, has confirmed that his main interest was in the aggrandisement of military exploits and valour. A history of Ireland, narrow in focus and approach, detailing an ancient splendour and origin had no appeal outside the home market. However, to contextualise Ireland's past wealth and military splendour as a barometer of contemporary potential was to highlight its value as an underused commodity of the British Empire. The *General History* was the first attempt by an Irish Catholic antiquarian to introduce an imperial perspective into Catholic relief politics and address his concerns to an audience outside of Ireland. The *General History* was O'Halloran's manifesto or 'job application', which formed the basis of his argument for Catholic inclusion in the British Empire.

## 6. The Reception of the *General History*

### 6.1. Introduction

In previous chapters this study has looked at the circumstances surrounding the composition, subscription-list and publication of the *General History*. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the public reception of the *General History*. While this presents an initial difficulty, due primarily to scarcity of evidence, nonetheless a reasonable understanding of the reception of O'Halloran's *General History* can be gauged by focusing on sources that are available. There are two areas available for investigation here. One area is the reviews that O'Halloran's *General History* generated in the British-based review periodicals. The second is the strong newspaper response this work received in Ireland. Therefore, the central focus of this chapter is to investigate the reception of O'Halloran's *General History* in these two sources. The purpose of this investigation is twofold. Firstly, an investigation of the reception of this work can reveal if Ireland's military suitability for an imperial role, which was the central focus of the *General History*, was registered. Secondly, a comparison of the reception to the *General History*, in these two sources, can shed light on how the different political agendas surrounding the Catholic relief debate in Ireland and Britain has influenced the response to the *General History*.

In Ireland, anti-Catholic penal legislation existed to secure the dominant position of a Protestant minority élite by excluding the majority Catholic population from full participation in the political nation, as discussed in Chapter 1. The continued exclusion of Catholics was justified on the grounds that they represented a security risk to the Protestant establishment in church and state. The primary function of the Irish Protestant Parliament was to protect and safeguard the Protestant interest in Ireland. Works such as O'Halloran's *General History*, which challenged the ideological underpinnings of penal legislation and argued for the repeal of penal restrictions, were viewed as presenting a threat to the Protestant establishment.

In Britain, however, by the 1760s anti-Catholicism had declined among the British governing élite (Bartlett, 1992:67). As discussed, the newly-extended British Empire now contained a large number of Catholics, and the difficulties of maintaining the security of a far-flung empire had forced British ministers to review



their exclusionary policies with regard to Catholics. The British Parliament adopted an imperial perspective on the Catholic issue and maintained a policy of pragmatic toleration, when issues of imperial security demanded it. Catholics were in a minority in England and the passage of a Catholic Relief Act, although reluctantly passed, did not materially impact on Protestant society.<sup>1</sup> The pressure of the British Government on the Irish Parliament to pass a Catholic relief measure, was viewed by that government as a matter of expediency, to provide additional troops to defend the empire. The situation was different in Ireland where Catholics were in the majority. George Ogle, during the period of the debates in the Irish House of Commons put the figure at “at least ten to one against the established Government of this Country” (In Cavendish, June 16 1778:66). A more accurate figure is probably in the region of one to four at this period. However, the passage of a Catholic Relief Act was viewed as presenting a threat to the entire fabric of Protestant society. Therefore, the political agendas surrounding the Catholic relief issue in Britain and Ireland were substantially different and, consequently, gave rise to two very different receptions of the work in each country.

## 6.2. The British-Based Periodical Reviews

O'Halloran's *General History* was published in London on Monday, 1 June 1778, with the first 'This day is Published' appearing in the *London Packet or New Lloyds Evening Post*. Reviews of the work appeared in the following months. Seven reviews of the *General History* appeared in the review periodicals, as mentioned in Chapter 3. Six of these reviews appeared in British-based periodicals. The first appeared in the *Critical Review* for July 1778. In August 1778, a short mention of the work appeared in the *Westminster Magazine; or, The Pantheon of Taste*. A more substantial piece appeared the same month in the *London Review*. The Edinburgh-based *Weekly Magazine, or, Edinburgh amusement* published its review in September 1778. Early in 1779, the *Monthly Review* published a comprehensive review in its January and February editions. The *Monthly Review* is counted as two reviews because the time span of the review drew public attention, not once but twice to the work, in two separate editions.

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<sup>1</sup>For the reaction to the passage of Catholic relief in England and the Gordon Riots, see: Rudé (1956).

Six British-based reviews is a considerable increase on the three British-based reviews that appeared for O'Halloran's first major publication, the *Introduction*, listed previously. In contrast, O'Connor does not appear to have been interested in addressing his antiquarian works to a British audience, as neither his *Dissertations* (1766) nor the *The ogygia vindicated* (1775) was published in London, and no reviews of these works appeared in the London periodical-review literature.<sup>2</sup> Whether these reviews of the *General History* were positive or negative, their numerical superiority and geographical spread, informed a wide audience of its publication and availability. Therefore, the numerical superiority of the reviews to O'Halloran's *General History*, in comparison to that of the earlier and Dublin published *Introduction*, confirm that O'Halloran's strategy to engage a British audience by virtue of the London publication of this work, had succeeded.

Before turning to the opinion expressed of O'Halloran's *General History* via these reviews, some understanding of the nature and composition of review periodicals is required. Of the periodicals listed here, the most influential were the *Critical Review* and the *Monthly Review* (Donoghue, 1996:29-32). Contributors were drawn from the prevailing literary circle, but authorship of review articles was generally anonymous. However, in the close-knit London literary circle this anonymity was impossible to maintain. Periodicals presented a corporate rather than an individual face, and contributors were expected to conform to this corporate view. Ideologically, the *Critical Review* adopted a Tory and High Church perspective, while that of the *Monthly Review*, and its nonconformist owner and publisher Ralph Griffiths, was considered Whiggish. However, these political affiliations were observed in the general rather than in the particular according to Zachs (1998:209n.47). Nonetheless, they are an important consideration in the analysis of book reviews.

There was also free borrowing of material between periodicals, and this is evident in the case of the reviews O'Halloran's work received. For instance, the review published in the *Critical Review* in July 1778 is identical to the review

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<sup>2</sup>O'Connor does not appear to have been interested in engaging a British audience for his antiquarian work. Notwithstanding that the Catholic Committee, with whom O'Connor was intimately involved, recognised the significance of London and employed Dan McNamara as the London agent for the Committee, Edwards (1942:33).

published in the *Weekly, or, Edinburgh Amusement* in September the same year. The review in the *London Review* in August and the review in the Irish-based Exshaw's *Gentleman and London Magazine*, which followed in September, are also identical, which points to the same writers contributing to more than one magazine and reflecting a similar corporate opinion, or the straight 'borrowing' of material between magazines (Hayden, 1969:41).

The review format adopted by all eighteenth-century review periodicals was to open with a general paragraph setting the tone of the review, followed by the reproduction of large extracts of text, with the reviewer's comments positioned at the beginning or end of the extract(s). The length of reviews varied. In O'Halloran's case the reviews ranged from one paragraph to eleven pages.

No comprehensive review of O'Halloran's two-volume history appeared in the review periodicals. All reviews focused on the quasi-historical and pre-Christian period in volume one. The *Critical Review*, and, by extension, the *Weekly, or, Edinburgh Amusement* focused only on the preliminary discourse and Books I and II of volume one, which dealt with the pre-Milesian tribes and the Mediterranean origin of the Milesian race. The *London Review* adopted a similar focus. In fact, the extracts from the text presented by all three afore-mentioned periodicals are the same, albeit shorter and in reverse order in the latter, than those used in the *Critical Review*. Therefore, for the purpose of analysis I take these three reviews as representing one viewpoint. For ease of discussion, I refer to these reviews as the '*Critical et al.*'. The two reviews published by the *Monthly Review* are independent compositions and represent a second viewpoint. The review published in the *Westminster Magazine* was, according to its by-line, inserted by the *Monthly* and the *Critical Reviews*. However, it has the appearance of an independent composition, and although only a short paragraph in length, represents a third viewpoint.

The reviews published by the *Critical et al.* were less than positive and poor in overall content; basing their reviews on two short extracts from the text of the *General History*. However, despite the narrow focus, or perhaps because of it, the extracts selected to be rejected or accepted, out of the varieties that were available to them, are informative. The first extract quoted here and then rejected, was

taken from the ‘Preliminary Discourse’ where O’Halloran argued for a settlement of Carthaginians in Ireland, to explain the international nature of early Irish commerce and the later military aid provided to the Carthaginians by the Irish, during the Punic wars. Linkage between the Carthaginians and the early Irish in the Mediterranean was a central element in O’Halloran’s creation of an ancient Milesian Empire. The reviewer will allow O’Halloran nothing of this and commented that:

The supposition that learning ever flourished in Ireland in very remote times, is entirely repugnant to probability; because no local traces remain of such memorials as in every other country where those were cultivated, have transmitted to distant ages the proofs of their former existence.

(*Critical Review*, 1778:37)

The second extract quoted was also directed towards rejecting any notion of a high civilisation in Ireland. The extract presented related to the arrival of the pre-Milesian Partholanian colony in Ireland from Greece. The reviewer focused sardonically on O’Halloran’s professed ‘surprise’ that Partholan’s retinue included four men of letters, three druids, and a knight, and he commented:

And indeed so should we be surprised too; if we had not adopted, on this occasion, the *nil admirari* of Horace. In the history of a land of wonders we should be surprised at every thing or nothing.

(*London Review*, August 1778:98)

What is striking at this point is the uniformity in viewpoint expressed by all these reviews, despite the initial variety of review sources. The work was denigrated either by sardonic humour, or, by its consignment to the realm of the farcical and, one must conclude, considered irrelevant at this juncture to the British Tory and High Church perspective which these reviews adhered to in the manner of the *Critical et al.*

The *Monthly Review* published a substantial review of O’Halloran’s *General History* consisting of 18 pages in total, published in January and February 1779. Although the reviewer confined his review to volume one, he supplied a comprehensive overview of the content of this volume in some detail. Again the

significant point to be noted is that, the extracts chosen and by extension, disseminated to the reading public, were at the discretion of the reviewer. The extracts chosen by the *Monthly* reviewer reconstructed for his readership a full account of O'Halloran's assertion of early Irish origin and influence in the Mediterranean, including a linkage with the ancient Phoenician and Carthaginian Empires, dressed in imperial terms and presented to the reading public in the manner O'Halloran had intended. Moreover, this reviewer presented a positive opinion as to the later contact between the Irish and the Carthaginians, and entertained the possibility at least, of Irish participation in the Punic Wars. In this regard he commented:

In several succeeding reigns our historian introduces the great connections between the Irish and the Carthaginians, and informs us of the share which the former had in the wars between the latter and the Romans. It would have been an odd found [*sic*] to most of our Readers to say that ancient Rome had been taken by the Irish: but hear what this gentleman, enamoured with the antiquity and glory of his country declares. [...] But whether or not the Milesian Irish might have any share in the taking of Rome by the Gauls, it is not at all improbable that they should maintain some connection with the Carthaginians, and perhaps were parties in some of their wars.

(*Monthly Review*, 1779b:102-103)

This reviewer also registered the political thrust of O'Halloran's text, including the contrast O'Halloran presented between a glorious past under Milesian rule and Ireland's current dejected state, as the following extract demonstrates:

He [O'Halloran] proceeds to tell us of the policy and humanity with which the Milesians treated their new subjects, which he contrasts with what he calls, the opposite conduct pursued since the revolution; but it should be remarked, that he does not, here at least, state those reasons and motives which, when they are properly examined, might possibly give *some* ground for a different mode of policy. [...]. However, this is an argument we do not

undertake to discuss.

(*Monthly Review*, 1779b:99)

The conclusion as to whether O'Halloran's arguments had merit from the perspective of current historiographical thought is left very much to the reader. The reviewer expressed doubts of the matter but, nonetheless, acknowledged the patriotic zeal which inspired the hypothesis:

In the Shandyan phrase, everyman has his hobby-horse. That of Mr. O'Halloran appears to be the antiquity and honour of his country [...] neither can we absolutely reprehend a zeal of this kind, if united with learning and judgment. Under their direction it may help to throw light on ancient history. [...]. It is but justice to this Author, to allow that he writes in a manner that bespeaks him a man of erudition; and we must acknowledge, that the proofs he offers in support of the Irish descent from Milesius, bear the marks of reason and probability [...].

(*Monthly Review*, 1779b:95)

The third view of O'Halloran's *General History* was presented by the *Westminster Magazine*. This piece is more in the nature of a comment rather than a review, and as such is presented in full here:

The Author appears to be a man of ingenuity and imagination, and to possess sufficient talents for a work of this kind; for he has digested and adjusted the legendary materials he had collected in so cogent and perspicuous a method, that there is nothing further requisite, than to evince their authenticity, to render it a complete history.

(*Westminster Magazine*, August 1778:434)

This review is concise. Notwithstanding the author's "ingenuity" and imagination" or the "cogency" in the construction of his presentation, this view relegated O'Halloran's *General History* to the realm of the legendary. The *Westminster* review then, although an independent composition, reflected the view of the *Critical et al.*

The review presented by the *Monthly Review* stands in contrast to the *Critical et al.* in two ways. Firstly, the *Monthly Review* reviewer read volume one of the *General History* in some detail. This is clear from the variety of extracts

reproduced, resulting in a comprehensive and lengthy review. In contrast, the *Critical et al.* confined their reading to the initial chapters of the *General History*, based on the content of the two extracts reproduced in these reviews. This suggests either that the *Critical et al.* in general produced unsatisfactory reviews, or perhaps, that this work, in particular, held little interest for this review periodical and the audience it serviced. The latter would appear to be the case, as a perusal of the *Critical et al.* confirms that substantial reviews on various materials appeared frequently there. There were two reasons that the *General History* attracted little attention in Britain. Firstly, the political subtext, which underpinned the *General History* and challenged the reasons for penal restrictions on Irish Catholics, had little importance in Britain and was therefore not alluded to, except for a brief mention in the *Monthly Review*. Secondly, the hypothesis of an ancient Milesian civilisation /Empire, which underpinned this work, was in opposition to the current historiographical trend which favoured the progressive theory of societal development, as outlined in the works of Hume and Robertson, as mentioned. Therefore, O'Halloran's assertion of an ancient Mileisan civilisation and empire were viewed with sardonic humour, or attributed to an excess of patriotic zeal. Works on Irish antiquities, however, which favoured the progressive model of development and rejected Milesian antiquity, for instance, Edward Ledwich's *Antiquities of Ireland* (1790), received more positive reviews in the British periodical review literature. For instance, the *Critical Review* in its review of this work commented that:

The Antiquities of Ireland have been long neglected, or treated with strong prejudices for ancient fable and strange etymologies. It is with peculiar pleasure that we at length see a rational and learned work upon this subject.

(*Critical Review*, 1792:394)

To summarise: The forgoing analysis has demonstrated that although six reviews of the *General History* appeared in the British-based periodical review literature, the reviews given were less than positive. If the intent of O'Halloran's London publication was to disseminate to a British audience an Irish military aptitude for an imperial role, then the reviews produced by the *Monthly* could be viewed as satisfactory in that regard. The *Monthly Review* also registered the political subtext

which underpinned the *General History*, but refused to comment on the issue. These aspects of the *General History* were either not registered, or simply ignored, by the other reviews mentioned here.

### 6.3. The Irish Newspaper Response

The publication of O'Halloran's *General History* produced a strong newspaper response in Ireland, and this is the only source available at present, to gauge the Irish reception of the work. However, a point to be raised is that the use of newspaper sources in this way poses the question as to the reliability of newspapers as barometers of public opinion. Is the opinion expressed therein a true reflection of public opinion in general, or the opinion favoured by the editor, whose own bias has influenced his selection of the final printed draft? The lack of legal criteria or restrictions, governing the newspaper business at this time, makes this a serious consideration in evaluating newspaper sources. For instance, a newspaper business could be established by anyone, but was generally the offshoot of a printing enterprise. There was no legal licence or registration required (Inglis, 1954:15). Newspaper staff consisted of one or two persons generally, and consequently, newspaper content would reflect the personal bias of the editor/owner (McDowell, 1984:40). Newspapers were costly, their circulation was small and confined to the middle and upper classes in general. There was also the issue of the 'freedom of the press' in Ireland (Inglis 1954:15). For instance, there was no restriction on material prior to publication, but libel charges could be brought at a later stage against the paper. Prior to 1794, when Fox's Libel Act was re-enacted and introduced for Ireland, the decision, as to whether material was defamatory or not, was the prerogative of a judge (Inglis, 1954:15).

O'Halloran's *General History* was published at a politically-charged moment in Catholic relief politics in Ireland. A Catholic Relief Act had been passed in the British House and a similar act was pending in the Irish House of Commons, as mentioned. The reasons for Catholic relief at this period were twofold. Firstly, a measure of Catholic relief was being granted to encourage Catholic recruitment into the British army to provide troops for the war in America. Secondly, there was a need to prevent the disaffection of Irish Catholics in the event of a possible invasion of Ireland from France. Many Irish Protestants blamed the British Government for



mismanagement of the American colonies, which in turn made concessional policies to Irish Catholics necessary at this period. Many Irish Protestants were also angry at British Government interference in Irish affairs. They were also disappointed at the failure of the Irish Parliament to protect the Protestant interest in Ireland as the first link in a series of laws, that maintained their dominant position in Ireland, was dismantled.<sup>3</sup> This sense of anger and betrayal is evident in the newspaper correspondence of the period. Moreover, Volunteer companies were being formed throughout the country to defend against a possible French invasion of Ireland, which added to the general feeling of societal unrest (Burns, 1959).

The following extracts from the newspapers which appeared before and during the passing of Gardiner's Catholic Relief Act, are offered to illustrate the mood of opposition to Catholic relief in Ireland, and as a means to contextualise the newspaper response to O'Halloran's *General History* which follows. There is a perceivable pattern of concern that permeates all of the anti-Catholic correspondence. There are fears for the security of the Protestant church and state should relief be granted to Catholics. A further common belief is that Catholicism is a pernicious doctrine. In addition, there exists the belief that if relief is granted, Catholics will become powerful, rise in rebellion and lands forfeited would be restored. For instance, this fear is represented in the extract here below:

Our holy temple will be rent in twain by the sophistry of Jesuits, and the arbitrary principles of Jacobites. The mischief which this law will introduce will alarm and afflict. The papists will assume an air of importance, to which before they were strangers. [...]. They see their ancient claims on Protestant inheritances strengthened, [...]. The trial by battle will be again renewed in this country, and the deeds by which their property (which was justly forfeited for supporting tyranny) will again be brought into light, and their authenticity restored. (A Protestant, 1778:3)

The following extract, taken from a letter which appeared in the *Freeman's Journal* 29 June 1778, was addressed to Luke Gardiner, who had introduced the

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<sup>3</sup>The failure of the Irish Parliament to protect the Protestant interest would lead to a demand for Irish parliamentary independence. See: Bartlett (1992:91-92).

heads of the Irish Catholic Relief Bill into the Irish House. This correspondent accuses Gardiner of betraying not only his religion, but also, his country. In this context here, the use of the word ‘country’ appears to refer to Ireland exclusively in a Protestant context:

Good God! What foe to mankind, what enemy to the Protestant religion, what patricide to his country could inspire you with such sentiments? [...] Ministry most impotently imagine, that this Bill will induce the Papists of this kingdom to assist in opposing a French invasion, which they now seem so much to dread; and, for a temporary prospect of relief, would sacrifice the interest, and the safety and peace of all the kingdom. Yet, how ridiculous their ideas! And how ignorant does it show them of the principles of Popery!

(An Independent Elector, 1778b:1)

According to a letter from ‘A True Protestant’ holders of pernicious “Popish doctrines” must be restrained by penal laws for the security of the state, or they would rise in rebellion and overthrow the Protestant establishment:

Let them contend for the relaxation of that law, if they are willing to see themselves or their children ruled by a Popish legislator, or substitute another law equally efficacious with this for keeping down the set of people whose principles are so dangerous [...].

(A True Protestant, 1778:4)

Aside from the warnings of fire and brimstone should Catholic relief be granted, one writer blamed the revolt in the American colonies on the newly absorbed and apparently insidious Catholic dynamic into the British Empire. Therefore, although the Quebec Act of 1774 was tangible evidence of the attitudinal shift in imperial thinking, and the Catholic Irish may have pinned their hopes on similar relief, Protestant attitudes generally remain entrenched, evidenced by the opposition to the original three kingdom proposal for Catholic relief (Donovan, 1985). The following extract was published in September 1778, one month after Gardiner’s Relief Act had been placed on the statue books:

I have always thought, and till I shall be better informed, I ever shall be of opinion, that the unnatural war with America, owed its origin and progress to the infamous Québec act, by which Popery was rendered the established religion of Canada, and despotism received the sanction of the British legislature. All other complaints and grievances of our brethren beyond the Atlantic, might have been redressed [...]. (Caractacus, 1778:4)

Sentiments such as these, and driven by self-interest, were widespread in the newspapers at this period. Penal legislation was considered the bulwark of Protestant ascendancy in Ireland. The central concern, expressed in various ways here, was that Catholic relief would bring about the downfall of that Protestant dominance in Church and state which had been established at the end of the Williamite Wars in Ireland.

Pro-Catholic relief letters also appeared, albeit in lesser numbers. Whether this was due to editorial policy, or to the fact that fewer pro-relief letters were actually received by the newspapers, is more difficult to gauge. The pro-relief letters pursued two central themes. Firstly, the utility of Irish Catholics should relief be granted is stressed. One pro-relief correspondent pragmatically emphasised the importance of gaining the good-will of Catholics in the interest of national and imperial security:

In case this kingdom was attacked by any foreign enemy (I will not say by France, or Spain, or any Popish power) we could not expect even the good wishes of the Papists, in our endeavours to defend ourselves, while they are thus so unjustly persecuted; nay, their joining with the invaders could not be condemned by our own avowed principles.

(A true, because a liberal Protestant, 1778:1)

Another pro-relief correspondent emphasised the economic benefits that would accrue to Ireland in general should Catholic relief be granted:

We have got to have long leases on your lands, by which they will be greatly improved, and their value prodigiously raised. We have got liberty to take

securities for our money, by which large sums will be brought into the kingdom. (A Roman Catholic, or Papist 1778:1)

Secondly, a theme common to the pro-relief letters was a desire to ameliorate Protestant anxiety should relief be granted. The following two extracts from a letter which appeared 1 August 1778, demonstrate this point:

That this popery Bill relates merely to the property of Papists, and is only calculated to defend that against the frequent depredations of discoverers and informers; all the Acts formerly made against the exercise of their religion, in other respects, still remaining in full force. (Anon, 1778c:3)

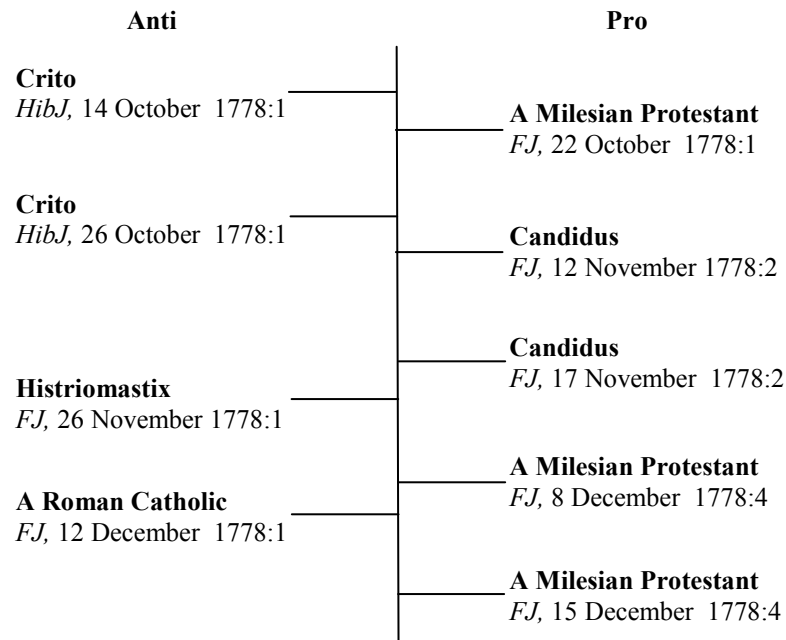
That it is a mistake to say, that this Bill gives undue power and influence to Papists – It only affords them a little common justice, and that is due to all mankind. (Anon, 1778c:3)

This review of pro- and anti-Catholic relief correspondence demonstrates that, prior to the publication of O'Halloran's *General History*, the pending Catholic Relief Bill was a heated topic of debate and controversy in print.

The London-published *General History* arrived in Ireland in July 1778. The subscription-list of this work contained an impressive list of British imperial MPs, many of whom had supported the passage of the English Catholic Relief Bill. In particular, the name of Sir George Savile, who had presented the heads of the English Catholic Relief Bill, provided tangible evidence of British ministerial support for Irish Catholics at this particular juncture. O'Halloran's *General History* then, with its ancient claim to forfeited Gaelic territory, Gardiner's Catholic Relief Act, with its property-related relief measures, and Protestant anger at what many perceived as their betrayal by the British Government, coalesced in the public mind and informed the newspaper response to O'Halloran's *General History*. This anxiety found expression in a series of nine letters published within the period October to December 1778, in the *Hibernian Journal* and the *Freeman's Journal*, almost two months after the passage of Gardiner's Catholic Relief Act. The complexity of the response can be represented here via a diagram which details the correspondents, the

order in which the letters appeared, and the relevant newspapers which published this correspondence.

**Figure 6.1 Newspaper Response O'Halloran's *General History*: Participants**



As illustrated in the above diagram, the use of pseudonyms by newspaper correspondents was common practise and provides some insight into the persona the correspondent wished to portray. However, whether these pseudonyms were an accurate representation of the correspondent, or whether the correspondents fully understood the context from which they drew their pseudonym, is open to conjecture.<sup>4</sup> There is no way of knowing if the nine participants listed are individual participants, or if the same correspondents used a different pseudonym, to give the appearance of variety. For instance, Crito accused A Milesian Protestant of being the

<sup>4</sup>For instance, *The Crito* was a dialogue by Plato consisting of two characters, Socrates and Crito. Their dialogue argued the proper response to justice. Socrates argued that he was bound to abide by the laws of the jurisdiction under which he resided. Crito did not agree. The pseudonym 'Histriomastix' draws on *Histriomastix: The Player's Scourge, or Actor's Tragedy*, a Puritan attack on English Renaissance theatre by the seventeenth-century English Puritan, author and polemicist William Prynne. Prynne argued from the Erastian perspective for state control in religious matters. The pseudonym, Candidus, was used by Samuel Adams, statesman, politician, philosopher and one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. The pseudonyms, A Roman Catholic, or, A Milesian Protestant, are less imaginative but consequently more clear in their intended message. A Milesian Protestant is making the point that Milesian heritage and Protestantism are not mutually exclusive identities.

author O'Halloran in disguise, and in turn, A Milesian Protestant charged Crito of also writing under the pseudonym of A Roman Catholic.

Of the two newspapers mentioned here, politically the *Hibernian Journal* was considered Tory, while the *Freeman's Journal* was considered Whig.<sup>5</sup> The participating correspondents in the newspaper response to O'Halloran's *General History* clearly outline their preferences as to which newspaper they personally prefer. The correspondent under the pseudonym of Crito, who initiated the controversy in the *Hibernian Journal*, favoured its continuation under the auspices of that paper:

I find my Letter in your Paper of the 16th instant, has produced an Answer in the Freeman's Journal of Saturday, signed A *Milesian Protestant*.<sup>6</sup> Had the Writer thought proper to have entered into a fair Controversy, he should have sent his Letter to you, and I doubt not your Candor would have moved you to insert it. *Answers to charges should ever appear* in the very Paper in which the Charges were made, that many of the Readers, who do not take in any other might see it as the Whole of the Attack and Defence. [...]. I own I am averse to answer any Opponent, who does not take the same field of Action with me; but *for once* I will go out of my Way to meet this Champion for a contemptible, partial, and credulous History. (Crito, 1778b:1)

On the other hand, the pro-O'Halloran correspondent Candidus condemned the *Hibernian Journal* as a "vehicle of abuse", and expressed a preference for the impartiality of the *Freeman's Journal*:

Though the author of the letter signed Crito in the *Hibernian Journal* of the 16<sup>th</sup> October, in a subsequent letter, asserts, that the controversy relative to Mr. O'Halloran's History ought to be carried out in the paper wherein his scurrility against O'Halloran originated, yet, convinced of the partiality of that vehicle of abuse and the integrity of the Conductors of the *Freeman's*

<sup>5</sup>For Irish newspapers of this period in general and also Dublin newspapers, see: Keenan (2000).

<sup>6</sup>The issue date for this paper is the 14-16 October. The reference system used here is to refer to the initial date, in this case, 14 October.

Journal, I send this to *your office*, satisfied that you will pay proper attention to the request of every individual, who means to inform, not to abuse or mislead. (Candidus, 1778a:2)

However, it is unlikely that either newspaper here was particularly abusive or impartial in their dealings outside of a personal bias, and this bias was an unavoidable and organic feature of all eighteenth-century newspapers.

A correspondent under the pseudonym of Crito initiated the newspaper response to O'Halloran's *History*, and commenced his criticism by calling his readers to censor:

An Irishman who undertakes to write a history of his native Country, and in the Book, and his Mode of Publication, leads the Reader on a false scent, to the Degredation [*sic*] of the Place that gave him Birth; where he has his constant Residence, and all his connections. (Crito, 1778a:1)

Moreover, according to Crito (1778a:1), O'Halloran's *General History* carried the marks of "Petulance, Credulity, Assurance, Vanity, Shallowness, and a mercenary Design". His history of Ireland was a "palpable Effusion of Fiction", and a "mere Collection of Fairy tales." The London publication of the *General History*, Crito argued, was an unpatriotic act demonstrating disloyalty to Irish manufactures by going to London "to get his Work printed on *English Paper*".<sup>7</sup> He was, furthermore, accused of an immodest and a mercenary nature, by soliciting subscribers amongst the "Nobility and Officers of the Irish Regiments in France and Spain, to get, what he calls *essential Encouragement*" and his "bombast Dedication to the Earl of Inchiquin. [...] plainly shewing [*sic*] him actuated not by an Itch of Writing but of gain". This vindictive attack on both the professional and personal character of O'Halloran, would seem to make a lie of Crito's (1778a:1) assertion, that he had

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<sup>7</sup>Crito's accusation of 'disloyalty' against O'Halloran here is located in the beginnings of a 'buy Irish' campaign. This campaign was the result of the embargoes placed on Irish trade and the failure of the linen and provisions industry during the American War of Independence which led to a severe economic crisis in Ireland. In an attempt to force the British Government to remove trade restrictions there was an increased emphasis on loyalty to indigenous manufactures leading to the an agitation for free trade in 1779. See: O'Brien (1923:564-581); Bartlett (2010:181-186).

“neither Pique against nor Knowledge of the Author”. Crito presented himself as a recent purchaser rather than as a subscriber, to O’Halloran’s *General History*.

Crito’s critique of the *General History* was confined primarily to two chapters at the end of volume two of that work. For the remainder of the history he referred readers to Exshaw’s *Gentleman and London Magazine* (Sept., 1778), where O’Halloran’s *General History* had, he stated, “been well ridiculed”. Of these two chapters, the first contained “An alphabetical list of ancient Irish territory’s, and by what Milesian families possessed, both before and after the invasion of Henry II”, and the second chapter dealt with “Objections to the authenticity of Milesian pedigrees answered” (O’Halloran, 1778a,2:391-424). Therefore, Crito’s objections to the *General History*, despite his initial volley of personal abuse, were primarily focussed on the issue of land title.

The refusal of dispossessed Catholic proprietors to view Protestant land title as other than a transitory phrase, was a source of constant anxiety for many of the Protestant landowner class. The Catholic challenge to Protestant land title manifested in various ways. One of these ways was the retention of property deeds to previous Catholic land holdings. These deeds were passed on from one generation to the next and Catholic obituaries, published in the newspapers, frequently referred to the bequeathing of old titles to the next generation (Whelan, 1996:15,16,21). These obituaries presented a public face to the Catholic challenge to Protestant land title.

The insertion by O’Halloran of these two chapters into his *General History* was, then, in a long tradition of Catholic challenge to Protestant land title. This charting of territory was construed by Protestants as keeping a record, or a mapping of Catholic territory by previous Catholic landowners, in readiness and in expectation of the overthrow of the Protestant state. The inclusion by O’Halloran of these particular chapters as mentioned, indicates that he was not overly concerned with addressing the sensitivities of an Irish Protestant audience. Some of these references by O’Halloran to Milesian estates are vague, others are detailed. For instance:

Pobul-ui-Ceallachan, is the name of a territory in the county of Cork, extending from Mallow westward, on both sides the Black-Water, the



ancient principality of O’Ceallachan. The family were transplanted to Ceil-Chorney, in the country of Clare, by Cromwell, which estate is still preserved entire. (O’Halloran, 1778a,2:400)

Security of Protestant land title was a central concern during the period of discussion prior to the passing of Gardiner’s Relief Act. As mentioned, Richard Longfield, MP for Cork, interrupted the Irish House of Commons during the period of the debate on the proposed Catholic Relief Bill on 16 June 1778, to present a petition from the Protestant landowners of Cork who felt “their property attacked by this bill” and, in particular, by the proposed repeal of the Gavel Act (In Cavendish, 1778, 16 June:60). Protestant anxiety in this regard was not without foundation. After the passage of Gardiner’s Relief Act, Dublin Castle received many petitions from Irish Catholics for the return of forfeited property (Bartlett, 2010:203).

Crito, echoing this re-awakened Protestant insecurity in land title, interpreted O’Halloran’s cataloguing of the topographical landscape as a polemical act of reclamation, and as a challenge to current land ownership title:

What could possibly be that Author’s Intention in filling no less than *thirty two* Pages of his Work with a List of the Irish Estates, and their *real* Owners? Would not any Man Imagine it was done with an Intent to arouse Indignation in the Breasts of the Roman Catholics, by reminding them of the Estates their Ancestors have lost, against the present Possessors of them? Can such a Detail, in the present Posture of Affairs, answer any good Purpose? Can it tend to tranquilize Peoples Minds, or to unite in the Bonds of Cordial Affection, a too much divided People? Would it not rather be thought it was a Design to keep alive dormant Claims, and point out, to those who may be ignorant at present, a Possibility of re-entering forfeited Possessions under any other Government than under that which we now live. (Crito, 1778a:1)

For Crito, then, the security of the Protestant establishment was conditional upon keeping the Catholic population ‘tranquilised’, and/or, in ignorance of their previous status and possessions. Conversely, any work that functioned to alter this state of tranquillity through education and a re-awakening of memories was best forgotten,

according to Crito, as a change in the political consciousness of the Catholic majority would lead to “Indignation” and rebellion against the present government.

Crito’s virulent personal attack on O’Halloran, and his pejorative comment that O’Halloran should not have “troubled” his readers with an account of his own Milesian ancestry as “many think it would be difficult to trace his Grandfather farther”, is reflective of a second issue of insecurity for the Protestant in Ireland: status. This arises in part from the fact that the dispossessed Gaelic landowners had been of nobler birth than the adventurers or the Cromwellian soldiers that had replaced them. As Irish Catholics had rejected the legitimacy of Protestant land title, they also displayed “contempt for the *arriviste* Cromwellian landlords – a gentry by conquest not by blood” (Whelan, 1996:10). Gaelic aristocracy, like its European counterpart, was based on status; however, in Ireland, hierarchy and status were also determined by religion (Ó Ciosáin, 1997:171-184). Therefore, security of land title and the existence of ancient Gaelic nobility on the continent, and of which O’Halloran’s subscription-list was a pertinent reminder, were problematic issues for the Irish Protestant.

A second correspondent using the pseudonym, Histriomastix, entered the debate in a letter published on the front page of the *Freeman’s Journal* on 26 November 1778. This correspondence displayed similar concerns surrounding land and status as Crito’s had previously exhibited. The tone of this letter was less caustic, however, like Crito he dismissed the *General History* as “modern ravings, mixed up with the dreams of the gentleman’s ancestors”. Histriomastix displayed his pique with an aside on an ethnic sense of superiority towards the natives:

I can however, with truth, assure the gentleman, that in France they are heartily tired of the Irish, and that an Englishman is much more respected everywhere on the Continent. (Histriomastix, 1778:1)

This English sense of an ethnic superiority over the native Irish existed outside any religious considerations and from the Norman incursions in the twelfth century, Beckett comments (1976:22), that the settlers had regarded English blood “as a badge of superiority and had a typically colonial contempt for the natives”.

Security of land title was also a central concern for Histriomastix. However, in comparison to the general criticism conducted by Crito, Histriomastix primarily defended the Cromwellian land settlement, and “the characters of those glorious spirits who brought about the Revolution of 1646”. To this end, Histriomastix presented a detailed account of the Cromwell settlement and argued that his Cromwellian land title was more “legitimate” than any other, it “being a mode of purchase,” he argued, “the legality of which *cannot* be questioned”:

The *Cromwellian* estates in Ireland are emphatically called *Debentures*. It is clear then that no English settlers in Ireland, from the period of Henry the 2<sup>nd</sup> and onwards can shew [*sic*] so *honourable* title to their possessions as the *Cromwellians*; [...]. (Histriomastix, 1778:1)

In light of O’Halloran’s explicit reference to Cromwellian land settlement in the extract overleaf, it is not improbable to conjecture that Histriomastix’s estate may have been located in that area of Offaly. Be that as it may, this comment by Histriomastix ,confirms the general insecurity in land title amongst the Protestant landowner class, to the extent that Histriomastix should feel it necessary to argue for a particular degree of legitimacy pertaining to his own entitlement. However, secure as Histriomastix professes to be in the legitimacy of his Cromwellian land title, like Crito, he did not believe his position to be unassailable and was of the opinion that for the stability of the kingdom, the past, which in this instance relates only to the period of Gaelic land ownership, should be forgotten:

Whatever may be the views of the man [O’Halloran] who keeps alive the recollection of a period, which, for the honour of human nature, were better lost in oblivion, the good of society, as established at present in this kingdom, cannot be his object. [...] The period of mutual distrust seems to be passed and gone among us; the Whigs of this country have lately assisted to bring about a repeal of these odious laws, [...], and is this a time to *inflame* fears, so newly *cicatrised*? (Histriomastix, 1778:1)

Therefore, like Crito, Histriomastix' objections to the *General History* focus primarily on land title and status.

The last letter in the newspaper response to the *General History* from the anti-O'Halloran side came from a correspondent who signed himself A Roman Catholic. There is no way knowing if the correspondent was in fact a Catholic or not, however, that was the persona he wished to portray. A Roman Catholic did not focus on land title or status, as Crito and Histriomastix had done in their correspondence. Instead this correspondent adopted the moral high ground and accused the pro-O'Halloran correspondent, A Milesian Protestant, of making his defence of O'Halloran's *General History* a religious issue, rather than confining his opinion to the historiographical merit or otherwise of the book:

It is very singular, and very unfortunate, that the *Milesian Protestant* will not defend Mr. O'Halloran's History, without involving the Roman Catholics in his controversy, who have no concern in this book. [...] Surely, it would be much more pertinent, to let this *historical reverie* of ancient times be supported by its own merit, (if it has any) and to point it out, than, in its aid to recur to modern distracted periods, which every good citizen would have piously draw a veil over. Party reflections ought to be buried under the ruins of the Popery laws. (A Roman Catholic, 1778:1)

What is remarkable here of course is that Crito who had initiated the debate, had clearly linked the *General History* and its author with Popery in his first letter. A Milesian Protestant interpreted this letter as coming from Crito, using a different pseudonym, originating in a desire to exit a debate he could not win.

The letters from the pro-O'Halloran correspondent A Milesian Protestant provide the counterpoint to Crito's farrago of abuse against O'Halloran. The tone of this pro-O'Halloran correspondence is defiant and triumphant; reflecting what must be seen perhaps as a newly-gained confidence in the wake of Gardiner's Relief Act. For A Milesian Protestant, O'Halloran was a man of destiny rather than a harbinger of destruction, who had drawn the wrath of Crito for presuming to write a history of Ireland confirming that:

All that has been published against these [native Irish] for centuries past, serves only to betray the shameful prejudice of the writers, and the extreme iniquity of the times in which they were written.

(A Milesian Protestant, 1778a:1)

A Milesian Protestant (1778a:1) opened his first defence of O'Halloran with this quotation from Horace's Epistles: "*Extinctus amabiter idem*",<sup>8</sup> casting O'Halloran as an iconic figure in the manner of Caesar Augustus, who is the subject matter of this epistle, and whose endeavours on behalf of the national interest will be recognised only after death. Having cast O'Halloran in the persona of a leader – a Caesar – A Milesian Protestant (1778c:4) appointed himself his advocate and defender, and thunders out this warning to all future critics: "*Cave, cave; namque in malos asperrimus parata tollo cornua*".<sup>9</sup> In his persona as a staunch O'Halloran defender, A Milesian Protestant addressed Crito as this "*Oliverian insect*" and sounded out the warning:

This *Oliverian insect* should recollect that this is not a time to pass a sentence upon a whole people, which must be offensive to so many of the first families in the kingdom, who are no longer intimidated from acknowledging their names, origin and the antiquity of their ancestors. To be an old native of Ireland is a sufficient recommendation to all foreign courts - in which high descent is so much regarded, that the very CROMWELLIANS themselves find the addition of an O necessary when they visit the continent.

(A Milesian Protestant, 1778a:1)

Rejecting the charge of dissension levelled at O'Halloran by Crito, A Milesian Protestant interpreted O'Halloran's cataloguing of ancient Milesian pedigrees, as an attempt at reconciliation, motivated by a desire to unite all Irishmen in one common interest:

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<sup>8</sup>The context from which the above is taken is as follows: "The man who is felt by inferior talents to weight on them arouses envy by his brilliance; 'once he is eclipsed, he will be loved'". See: Russell and Winterbottom (eds. & trans.) (1998:91).

<sup>9</sup>"Take care now, take care! For I am utterly ruthless against villains, and now toss my horns in readiness." See: Horace (Rudd, ed. & trans., 2004:289).

If he [Crito] had the candour to give the work he condemns the attention it deserves, he will find many of the names mentioned in the *last pages* still eminent at the bar, in the pulpit, and in the Senate; and, as officers, and soldiers, it is well known that all Europe bears testimony of the fidelity, conduct and courage of the natives of Ireland. [...] Mr. O'Halloran represents the modern Irish as the descendants of the same ancestors with a view to conciliate and unite them in one common interest.

(A Milesian Protestant. 1778a:1)

In reply to Histriomastix's eulogy on Cromwell, A Milesian Protestant referred instead to "the inequity of his [Cromwell's] *slaughter-houses*", commenting that:

At a period when the natural rights and liberties of mankind are the objects contended for, it is very extraordinary that the Cromwellians should value themselves for the predatory wars which their ancestors carried on in this country, or reproach their fellow-subjects for *resisting* a tyrant whom the Covenanters themselves brought to the block.

(A Milesian Protestant, 1778b:4)

For A Milesian Protestant, O'Halloran's history was "an example worthy of the attention of the greatest Princes" and contained a pertinent reminder, for the Protestant establishment, of the instability of fortune for those who abused power:

The reduction of a great people from the rank which they held among nations to the very lowest state of slavery, is a remarkable instance of the vicissitudes of human affairs, and may serve as a lesson of instruction to those who make an ill use of a power which is evidently transitory.

(A Milesian Protestant, 1778a:1)

The assertive and challenging tone of A Milesian Protestant in the above extract, stands in obvious contrast to the gentle persuasive tone, that had permeated the pro-Catholic relief correspondence prior to the passing of Gardiner's Relief Act. This was due in part to a belief that Gardiner's Relief Act had ushered in a period of

present and future change, and as A Milesian Protestant (1778a:1) expressed it, “the first step in the establishment of equal freedom throughout the whole British empire”.

A correspondent who styled himself Candidus (1778a & 1778b) supplied two letters to the pro-O’Halloran newspaper response. In contrast to A Milesian Protestant, Candidus, who also addressed his letters to Crito, adopted initially a rhetoric of impartiality and a more circuitous route in his defence of O’Halloran, by directing his focus towards Crito’s intellectual ability, composition style and general competence as a critic. He (1778b:2) declared that Crito was “scarcely qualified to read it, [*General History*] much less to give a just, a judicious criticism”. Candidus fixed the level of Crito’s language at “a kitchen-maid or a coal-porter”. Although Candidus (1778b:2) stated that his sole purpose was “to shew the impartial public that *you* [Crito] are not a competent judge of the merit of his history, nor, indeed, *any* literary production”, he finally declared in favour of O’Halloran’s *General History*:

But, lest you may think me inclined to become Mr. O’Halloran’s panegyrist, I confess I wish we had a better history of the antient state of Ireland there his, and of its state since the landing of the English in the reign of Henry II then Dr. L –l-d’s,<sup>10</sup> and yet I am of opinion that O’Halloran’s History is a work of considerable merit; this, I am satisfied, you would readily allow, where you sufficiently acquainted with the subject, and free from prejudice and party zeal. (Candidus, 1778b:2)

The style of refutation and the method of argumentation in this letter, focusing as it does on construction and literal meaning, rather than on the content of an argument, is reminiscent of the technique employed by O’Halloran in *Ierne Defended* (1774a) in his critique of Leland’s *The history of Ireland* (1773). However, although the address ‘Sackville-street’ at the close of this letter would appear to make this suggestion unlikely, the address may be as fictitious as the candidness the author accords to himself under the pseudonym ‘Candidus’. The last letter in this debate on O’Halloran *General History* appeared from A Milesian Protestant on 15 December

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<sup>10</sup> Dr. Leland’s *The history of Ireland* (1773).

1778. A Milesian Protestant (1778c), as mentioned, felt he had gained the upper hand in the debate by forcing Crito to publish in the paper of his choice: the *Freeman's Journal* and under the pseudonym of 'A Roman Catholic'. There was no further letter from Crito denying this assumption.

Certain points emerge from the foregoing review of the newspaper response to the *General History*. The main objections to the *General History* raised by the anti-O'Halloran correspondents focused on land title and status. All other aspects of the *General History*, with regard to an ancient Milesian civilisation or military empire, were ignored or dismissed as dreams and imaginary illusion. The emotive language used confirms the strong feelings that surrounded the issues raised. The fragility of Protestant land title was an ever-present concern of the Protestant landed class. This is reflected in the narrow focus of the newspaper response to the *General History*, which centred primarily on the last two chapters of O'Halloran's *General History* where he had recounted Milesian pedigrees and land title prior to Henry II. The anti-Catholic relief letters published prior to the passage of Gardiner's Catholic Relief Act had shown a similar obsession with the security of Protestant land title. Conversely, the pro-O'Halloran correspondence showed a marked note of assertiveness and confidence that had not been present in the pro-Catholic relief letters prior to the passing of Gardiner's Act. This new confidence can be attributed to a sense of euphoria in the wake of the first significant repeal of penal legislation.

#### **6.4. Conclusions**

This chapter has investigated the reception to the *General History* in the British-based review periodicals and the Irish newspapers and the following conclusions are drawn: The *General History* met with different responses in Britain and Ireland because the political agendas which surrounded the Catholic relief issue were fundamentally different in both countries. O'Halloran's *General History* was not an issue of contention for Britain. The British-based review periodical literature based its reviews largely on the historiographical merit or otherwise of the *General History*. The issue of Irish land title, or social status was not raised by the review periodical literature. Conversely, these two issues dominated the newspaper response in Ireland. The *General History* was considered seditious in Ireland because it was interpreted as presenting a challenge to Protestant land ownership title and penal restrictions on



Irish Catholics, which provided the framework and the security for the Protestant ascendant position in Ireland. O'Halloran's inclusion of these two particular chapters in his *General History* indicates a careless attitude towards his Irish Protestant audience. The reason for this attitude was because O'Halloran was aware, that in the final analysis, it was the imperial parliament in London, and not the Dublin Parliament, that would make the final decision in relation to Irish Catholics. This shift in power was necessary to consolidate and secure newly-gained territories after the Seven Years War, and O'Halloran's virtue lay in recognising its significance for Irish Catholic relief.

## Thesis Conclusions

O'Halloran's distinctive contribution to Catholic relief politics in the latter half of the eighteenth century was his conceptualisation of Ireland and Irish affairs within the context of the late eighteenth-century British Empire. His intention was to demonstrate Ireland's suitability/readiness for an imperial role. The impetus which informed this approach was the consolidation and reorganisation of the British Empire in the post-1763 period. Imperial need to supplement its armed forces during the period of the American Revolution, and a possible French invasion of Ireland, created an opportune moment for O'Halloran to agitate for Irish Catholic participation in the British Empire based on an historic and current fittingness, and in terms of reciprocal benefit.

By situating the appeal for Catholic rights in the imperial rather than in the insular context, O'Halloran broadened the discussion of Catholic relief politics. His attempt to engage London and address the Catholic relief issue to an audience outside of Ireland, through a London publication of the *General History*, marked a significant turning point in how Ireland's Catholic élite agitated for Catholic relief, and introduced a new assertive voice into Catholic relief politics. A similar strategy of engaging London directly in Catholic relief politics would not be attempted in this manner until 1792. In this regard, O'Halloran has to be credited as the first antiquarian to recognise the political significance of the newly-extended British Empire to Ireland and Irish affairs, as London began to impose tighter control on her dominions to ensure the security of the empire. O'Halloran's virtue lay in recognising that in the final analysis it was the imperial parliament in London, and not the Dublin Parliament, that would make the final decision in relation to Irish Catholics.

This study has analysed the *General History* as a composite work that operates over three levels: publication-site, subscription-list and textual narrative – were the significance of its publication-site and complexity of its readership complemented and explained the narrative and the political message it embodied. The *General History* was a work shaped and informed by its imperial context. To demonstrate this point, this study has analysed the text of the *General History*, to highlight the

manner in which O'Halloran reconstructed and modified his source materials to reflect the changing face of the newly-extended British Empire. His intent was to indicate Irish historic suitability for an imperial role. This thesis provided an in-depth analysis of the subscription-list and the merits of this approach have been demonstrated on many levels in the foregoing study. This analysis has shown, not only the manner in which O'Halloran constructed his list to demonstrate a current aptitude for Irish participation in the British Empire, but also that this suggestion was partly endorsed by the political élite in London.

O'Halloran embraced the imperial project and can be viewed as a harbinger of a later empire-wide Irish participation in the British Empire on an administrative and officer-ship level. The imperial careers of his sons are emblematic of an outward-looking imperial context for O'Halloran's thoughts. In fact, O'Halloran's *General History* could be viewed as a manifesto for Irish participation in empire and, if this is the case, then the question must be posed: what influence did O'Halloran's discursive shift in national stereotyping here have on Irish success in penetrating the imperial system at administrative and military levels in the nineteenth century? The London publication can also be seen as a forerunner of the nineteenth-century practice of Irish writers publishing in London. By the 1850s it was the general rule rather than the exception for Irish authors to publish in London. Maria Edgeworth, Thomas Moore, William Carleton, and Aubrey De Vere prioritised a London publication of their works. Although O'Halloran did not agree with the Act of Union, and the formal transfer of power which occasioned this shift in publication-sites, he has to be credited as the first antiquarian to have recognised, and acted on the earlier shift in power.

## Appendix A: Correspondence

These letters have been transcribed retaining the form, punctuation and spelling of the originals. Words that had been written over the normal line of writing I have inserted into the text. These insertions are indicated by an \* next to the inserted word.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. John Murray to Sylvester O'Halloran, 3 February 1776. (Murray, 1776a)

Sir

London 3 Feb<sup>ory</sup>. 1776

A multiplicity of business has prevented my answering your Letter of the 8<sup>th</sup> Dec.<sup>m</sup> before this time. I perceive your plan has been a difficult one, & without professing the enthusiasm necessary for such a work you could never have executed it. Your labours however have been laudable, and I shall think it a great pity if the world is not instructed by them. The explanation you have given me of your work interests me in it; but how far the public may be inclined to encourage it I am doubtful; that it will not be encouraged equal to its merit I am certain. The sale of your introduction here was committed to me, and although I can assure you that neither my pains nor public advertising (the latter to the amount of £9) was spared upon it, yet I disposed of no more than about 50 or 60 books. In that performance, tho abounding in merit, there wanted coolness and dispassionate enquiry into facts. The amor Patriae flashed like lightning, but, it was too little under the restraint of Judgement. I do not mean to give you a criticism of the work, I only mention to ~~give~~ you what was said of it by [*sic*] others, and what in my opinion contracted it's sale, & hurt its reputation in Britain. I by no means however censure that ardor & enthusiasm with which you have prosecuted your studies; these have impelled your pen and brought your different works to a conclusion. at this period then I would fairly dismiss these attendants; and in Correcting my performance, I would be guided only by a cool & impartial Judgement. I would even submit my work to any friend near me of whose knowledge & candour & coolness I was convinced, in order to point out to me exceptionable passages; and of these I would certainly cancel some, soften others, & correct many more.

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<sup>1</sup> Letters numbered: 8, 9, 10, and 15 have been published during the course of this research. See: Lyons (2009, 2010).

Your letter shows some confidence in me; and I should be unworthy of it did I not answer it with freedom and give you my honest sentiments concerning the matter to which it relates, and which my regard for you alone prompts me to do.

After having said thus much, I have to acquaint you that I shall be fond to see your work, and you may send it to me by some safe hand when it suits your conveniency. Till this happens, I cannot so well give my opinion concerning the printing. In the mean time I would pass any part printed for a whole. This will not preclude you from continuing it; and the public are not fond of subscribing for broken books. The idea of a subscription I think will answer in Ireland, but it will require some deliberation before it is ventured upon here. However if you transmit me first the previous address, and afterwards the Work, I shall give you my opinion concerning the management of the whole. I am &<sup>c</sup>

To M<sup>r</sup> Silvester O'Halloran

Limeric ✓

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## 2. John Murray to Sylvester O'Halloran, 10 May 1776. (Murray, 1776b)

Dear Sir

London 10 May 1776

In consequence of your letter of the 5<sup>th</sup> I applied to Mr Vaillants successor upon the business you wrote of, and have received from him the inclosed answer, which tho harsh I am necessitated to send to you. I am of M<sup>r</sup> Elmslys<sup>2</sup> opinion indeed respecting M<sup>r</sup> Creeche's<sup>3</sup> report to your son. And I think you may rely upon its being merely a vapouring idle story to enhance Creeches own importance &<sup>c</sup> of the value of the copy of your book which he was imposing at the time upon M<sup>r</sup> O Halloran.

I have not printed your Introduction. As it was written in Haste perhaps the Composition is not correct enough. This Season therefore for publications being over, I shall return it to you according to your directions, as soon as I can procure franks to contain it which are Scarce at present on account of the members going to the Country.

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Elmsly, publisher, shared the same business premises as Paul Vaillant in the Strand London. He was Vaillant's successor and sometimes partner.

<sup>3</sup> William Creech (1745-1815), publisher, Edinburgh.

You have my best wishes for the success of your studies. Pray offer my best  
Compts to your Son, and believe me to remain. Sir

Your &<sup>c</sup>

J. Murray

You had better I can think

Correspond with M<sup>r</sup> Vaillant

himself upon the subject of your work

upon the Gangrene. Direct

“To Paul Vaillant Esq”

Pall Mall

M<sup>r</sup> S. O Halloran✓ London

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**3. John Murray to Sylvester O’Halloran, 3 August 1776.** (Murray, 1776c)

London 3<sup>d</sup> Aug.<sup>t</sup> 1776

Sir

Business and other matters less agreeable have prevented me from noticing  
sooner your sensible and obliging letter of the 10<sup>th</sup> June.<sup>4</sup> I am happy to know you  
have taken well my endeavours to serve you, and I wish for your sake that these  
endeavours had proved in any shape effectual.

At your Request you now have inclosed [*sic*] in two covers Your Manuscript  
which I make no doubt will improve in your hands. I gave you my sentiments in  
former letters concerning the publication of your plan. – And to these I can add  
nothing unless it be to give my best wishes for your success.

Being with Regard

Sir

Y<sup>rs</sup> &<sup>c</sup>

M<sup>r</sup>. S: O’Halloran✓

J. Murray

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<sup>4</sup> The date is not clear, reads as the 10<sup>th</sup> or the 18<sup>th</sup> June 1778.

**4. John Murray to Sylvester O'Halloran, 4 November 1777.** (Murray, 1777b)London Nov<sup>mb</sup> 4 1777

Dear Sir

I am favoured with yours without date two days since, and shall endeavour to answer it.

Mr. Creech was in London within these eight days to whom I offered on very easy terms some copies of your book on the Gangreen [*sic*] which he declined on this Account, and as there appeared to be no demand for it here I sold the copies for waste as had been agreed upon. I have however reserved eighteen which you will please to command, as it does not appear that I shall use them, and this intimidates me from venturing upon a new edition of that performance.

You tell me\* the printing of your work goes on slow; and you send me an incomplete design for a frontispiece to it with a variety of instructions concerning the finishing [of] it.

Were I disposed I could be severe upon you here, For Notwithstanding my attention to you before your visit to London, my disinterested counsel upon your arrival, and my persevering continuance to put you right in all matters regarding your book; - notwithstanding this you employed a printer & designer, and purchased your paper without the formality of evening [*sic*] consulting me in the way of Compliment.

This being the case, you cannot believe that I think myself responsible either for dispatch in the printing of your history or for the Perfection of the frontispiece intended for it,

But in this Matter I will not imitate your example I acquaint you candidly that M<sup>r</sup> Hamilton proceeds with more dispatch in your work than most printing houses in London would, and that in my opinion you in reality have no reason to complain of the printers tardiness.

With regard to the design for a frontispiece I return the one sent me, for it is a very bad one, If your faith had been as a grain of sand to have consulted me, I would have made a point to have got a decent and proper one, but I will not be concerned in repairing a wounded cause. The Gent<sup>m</sup>. who recommended you to M<sup>r</sup>. Wale is the proper person to employ in this business, it would [be] awkward for me at my advanced period of life to become a mere servant.

I have to acquaint you that your nephew (the young Gent<sup>m</sup>. who attended you here) called at my house this afternoon, and delivered to me as coming from you the inclosed Strange letter, I cast my eye over it in the Shop, and afterwards perused it more narrowly in the parlour, when not chusing [*sic*] to publish my suspicions of its authenticity to the young Gent<sup>m</sup>. who delivered it, I only told him that as I had no value of yours in my hand, your draft was premature. If the letter is spurious as I suspect it, the author who fabricated the same ~~should~~ stands upon a perilous precipice and should be most earnestly and fervently told of his danger. he did not exhibit the draft, and I am not sorry that I have not seen it.

I remain

Dear S<sup>r</sup>

~~I sent you a parcel~~

Your Affec<sup>t</sup>. humble Serv<sup>nt</sup>

I sent this day a parcel

J Murray

of your proposals to M<sup>r</sup>

Macnamara.<sup>5</sup> For my own

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part I have not Received a

single subscription to your history.

M<sup>r</sup> S O'Halloran

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**5. Sylvester O'Halloran to Sir James Caldwell, 13 December 1777.** (O'Halloran 1777d)

Limerick Dec<sup>m</sup>. 13<sup>th</sup>. 1777

Sir

I was honoured with your favour of the 5<sup>th</sup>. Instant, last Thursday; & think myself a good deal distinguished, by your favourable opinion, & approbation of some performance of mine; Accept Sir, of my sincere thanks, & be assured that the height of my ambition as a Writer, would be, to merit the applause of Gentlemen of acknowledged Taste & Erudition, like Sir James Caldwell.

You have recommended to me, to postpone the publication of my History to May next, & your reasons are just, & friendly. I have certainly gone to great

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<sup>5</sup> Daniel MacNamara, London agent for the Catholic Committee and subscriber to O'Halloran's *General History*.



expense, as well in the\* procuring Materials for this Work, as in the manner of printing it in a Co<sup>u</sup>ntry like Ireland where Science has few Patrons or Protectors, a Man is Justified in labouring, at least to be no loser by his Works. I shall therefore delay the publication to the latter end of April, or beginning of May, & shall be obliged to you & your friends, for their countenance & support on this Occasion.

The Enclosed Anecdotes respecting your Great grandfather & his Children, are curious & interesting, & are too well authenticated, to admit of the smallest doubt. I have been ever of opinion, that that [*sic*] Gentlemen should be as careful to transmit to their posterity, the Honour's & Exploits of their Ancestors, as their fortunes; that if neither are Improved, they should not be Impaired in the hands of the present Possessor, it is certainly no Complement to you. Sir, to affirm, that your Conduct both abroad & at home , tam Marte quam Minervâ<sup>6</sup> have reflected honours on your Ancestry; & in this you have not been singular. All Germany has been Witnesses to the Exploits, Intrepidity & Military Conduct of Colonel Caldwell, & his loss was universally regretted. Now Sir with respect to your request, be assured, that I have every wish and every\* inclination to gratify it; & you yourself shall Judge with what propriety it maybe introduced. The first Volume of this Book is already printed in London, & the Second about three Weeks in the press. Still I have withheld the Preliminary Discourses, & shall not now send them, as soon as I intended. The Work is Chiefly confined to the antient state of Ireland; & it's History & C<sup>h</sup>ronology, are put on the most solid Bases, & clearest points of View, from these new & interesting lights are attempted to be thrown on the History & Chronology of the Circumjacent Nations, & particularly on these of these [*sic*] of the Two Brittain. tho Hume, Voltaire, & most Moderns deem the Antient State of Europe to be rude, barbarous, & illiterate; yet we have the Evidences of Greek, & Roman Writers, to shew, that they were far removed from that state of barbarity, & Irish History proves they were. If Caesar & Tacitus, are deemed invaluable performances, on account of the lights they throw on the antient state there of Gaul & Brittain; How much, should not the antient Irish history be prized, which so highly illustrates these Accounts? With their liberties were destroyed, the early History of the antient Celtae; but Ireland preserved both, during the rage of Roman Conquests, & from the last, can we

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<sup>6</sup> "As much by Mars as by Minerva": meaning that he has gained his object, as much by his gallantry as by his wisdom. Moore, H. (1831) *A Dictionary of Quotations from Various Authors in Ancient and Modern Languages*. (London), 407.

hope only, to form some certainty of the State of other Nations. The real nature of the Foedal [*sic*] laws, & the true state of Arts & Sciences, in the middle & succeeding ages, will best be explained by our History; & if we have not clearly understood, the nature & spirit of the present constitution, or Extent of Poynings's Law of Parliament, it is from a shameful neglect of the History of our Ancestors!

I have now Sir, Candidly explained to you the nature of the present performance, & possibly by so doing, may abate your Zeal in procuring of\* Subscriptions for it. I shall be in Town about the beginning of February; & if it is your opinion, that the present affair can with propriety be annexed to it, it certainly shall, but if so, it must be in\* an Appendix. I have the Honour to subscribe myself with very great esteem – Sir

Your Most Humble & Obedient Servant

Silvester Ô Halloran

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**6. Letter to the worshipful Mayor of Limerick, 24 July 1778:**<sup>7</sup> (Anon, 1778a)

Please to excuse the liberty a native of the North of Ireland, tho' to you unknown takes in giving you, as the chief magistrate of Limerick, information of a very treasonable book published here some months since, by an Irish Jesuit in disguise, intitled [*sic*] –English Candour and Good Nature &c &c - The Author has had the audacity to prefix his name (Ô Bryan M<sup>c</sup>Mahon) to his rebellious work, and I am sorry to say it is publickly [*sic*] sold in London, and other parts of England. But what causes me and other well-wishers to the Protestant interest of Ireland greatest concern, is the certain accounts we received, that 250 Copies have been last\* week\* shipped off, consigned to a merchant, by a huge French-Irish spy called O Gorman just returned from that kingdom, for Limerick, where, as well as in the adjacent counties, the popish party promise themselves it will further promote their bloody views among the bigots of that persuasion. And, indeed, Sir, it seems but too well calculated to answer their wicked expectations. For the Reformation is everywhere derided by the learned and shrewd, but abusive and virulent author. The House of Commons which raised the glorious King William to the throne he calls the faithless Commons: in pretty clear terms, he recommends a massacre of Irish Protestants: and

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<sup>7</sup> Philip Smyth was mayor of Limerick in 1778. See: Ferrar (1787:288).

the Revolution is, particularly in his 9th Chapter, openly vilified and outrageously declaimed against by him.

The French Spy already mentioned, immediately after putting the books on board, fled to France on the rumour of an intended motion in the House of Lords for prosecuting the author and the underagents [*sic*] in his plots; while he, like a more hardened conspirator, glorying in his iniquity, disdains to quit England, even to hasten the projected insurrection and slaughter in Munster, until he shall be the means of firing Towns or Puck-yards, or perpetrating some still more mischievous villainy in this Country.

In consequence, Sir, of the joint opinion of a score well-attested Countrymen, I undertook to communicate the foregoing intelligence &c thus early, that you as a Magistrate may defeat, at least, a part of the Conspiracy, by seizing the books upon their being landed in your City, and prevent by this timely step some of the evils, they are designed to excite.

The Priests of Limerick and a vain prattling Surgeon of the same place, lately have under the pretence of publishing a book, whose name I do not recollect, are said to be deeply concerned in the Irish part of M<sup>c</sup>Mahon's schemes. They also affirm that he has many relations in Clare, Limeric and other parts of Munster, whom, even such of them as are pretended Protestants, he employs to further his destructive designs. It is thought by some who have been in his company, that the Surgeon, being a loquacious, timid, insignificant creature, would, upon the first menace of commitment confess all he knows.

Having thus, Sir, communicated the result of several respectable Irish Protestants information &c relative to their hellish machinations, I leave it to your discretions, and that of the worthy Corporation, to watch over, and, when more shall be discovered, proceed against the offenders there, in the manner you shall judge most conducive to the preservation of your own and friends lives. Wherefore, begging you will kindly excuse the truth[?] our Zeal for Religion and love for our native Country urged us to give you, I remain, Sir, with much good will and due respect, your most obedient humble servant G R – Ts.

London July the 24<sup>th</sup> 78

**7. Letter to the Right Worshipful Mayor of Cork, 31 July 1778.** (Anon, 1778b)

Please, Sir, to excuse the liberty a native of the North of Ireland, but to you unknown, who is prompted by Zeal for the protestant religion and attachment to his Country, takes in giving you information of a most inflammatory and even treasonable book lately published here by a Jesuit born near Limerick, intituled – English Candour and Good Nature &c &c – The Author has had the unparalleled audacity to prefix his name (Ô Bryan M<sup>c</sup>Mahon) to his work which is filled with the most bitter railing not only against the Reformation but even Revolution, together with the persons of the glorious King William, and his Consort. Nay, what will appear almost incredible to such as have not seen the book, it justifies and recommends a general massacre of Protestants, and is particularly outrageous against those of Ireland, to exterminate whom he takes every possible means of exciting his Popish brethren.

Pernicious as you will judge such a performance to be, you would not, Sir, have been troubled with this long letter, had not several respectable Protestants of our Country, two of whom enjoy a large landed property there the\* fullest reason to know that the publication already mentioned is but part of a very deep and bloody plot, which the Author, in conjunction with his emissaries has been long preparing, and which there is cause to dread will break forth in Ireland, in a few months, unless providentially prevented.

In the first place, Sir, it is Certain that a spy from France, a man an unwieldy size, by name Ô Gorman, one of M<sup>c</sup>Mahon's tools, has been very busy in different parts of Ireland, for upwards of a year past, and that upon his return here about a fortnight since with some fresh recruits, he shipped off a great number of the Jesuit's books for Dublin, Limerick, Cork and other places. It is also certain, that the same French agent, dreading some of his treasonable machinations in Munster and Connaght were come to light, fled to his brother-in-law the noted D'E[on?] in France some days since. – we have likewise full proof, that a Limerick Surgeon, a rebel of very ungentlemanlike aspect and vulgar language, whose name (an old Irish one) I cannot at present call to mind, has been here lately with M<sup>c</sup>Mahon, under pretence at publishing an Irish history, and that he returned home some weeks ago (having previously had an interview with Ô Gormin [*sic*] in some part of Wales) after the Jesuit furnished him with the money and instructions sent by the French Ministry to

forward their projected insurrection. Lastly, it has been incontrovertibly discovered, that as early as the year 61, an information was sworn before a justice of the peace near Rathkeal in the County of Limerick by a capital inn-keeper and several other witnesses, against the Jesuit M<sup>c</sup>Mahon, one Burke, the Limerick Surgeon, the popish Bishop of Waterford, a priest since hanged, and some others, for tampering with the people in that and 2 more Counties, which very business was the prelude to the rising of the White-boys. M<sup>c</sup>Mahon had time to escape to England, before the justice took any step for his commitment; Burke being very injudiciously admitted to bail, immediately quitted the County where his father, friends, and himself had always resided until then; no notice was taken of the other parties, for what reason is not known. This last material, but, as I learn, little known fact, a respectable Gentleman of considerable estate in them parts, who is now in London, promises upon his return to Ireland to disclose more fully to the publick, in the Cork or Limerick papers.

- Hitherto, I mentioned nothing but what can be most evidently proved by several public spirited Gentleman of our Country, who, persuaded that M<sup>c</sup>Mahon had been hatching some wicked project for the destruction of Irish protestants, (now that there are but few forces in that kingdom, and that the American war has cut out work enough for all the men England can spare) have narrowly watched his motions, through his various disguises and removals of Lodgings, during the last fifteen months.

More we have discovered; but as we are not yet furnished with authentic evidence, shall not at present trouble you with it. I must however add, that a certain Physician in or near Cork, nephew to a popish priest, is deeply engaged in M<sup>c</sup>Mahon's plot, tho' most of the Conspirators are, as we learn from every account, and can infer from every circumstance, Tipperary, Waterford, but especially Limerick and Clare men. With the chiefs of these, the Jesuit carries on his correspondence by Cyphers in the hand-writing of a female penitent, directing his packets, to avoid suspicion, to a female relation of his own name, whose place of residence I cannot recollect. -- We thought, Sir, that you, in conjunction with your worthy brethren of the Corporation, and assisted by other loyal magistrates in the already mentioned Counties, might by means of the foregoing authentic particulars, and the hints added thereto, to see this villainous design farther, and thro' your timely endeavours prevent its taking effect. It is at least greatly in your power to stop the circulation of the above wicked books among the Cork papists. We flatter ourselves the importance of the foregoing

intelligence, but especially the patriotic motive which urged us to communicate it, will plead our excuse for having thus troubled you. That we may not, however, be so bold as to offer our advice relative to the most eligible mode of unravelling this dark and alarming affair, nor, indeed, trespass any longer upon your time, I beg leave to subscribe myself in my own name and that of five others, Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant.

London July the 31<sup>st</sup> 78      G--C    R-ts.

P.S.

Should you, Sir, think proper to direct to me by the above initial letters of my name, to the Temple exchange Coffee-house, Fleet-street, your favour shall be immediately answered, with what further information others and I can collect.

*Thom<sup>s</sup>. Owgam Esq<sup>re</sup>. Mayor of Cork*

## **8. Sylvester O'Halloran to an Unknown Correspondent, 2 December 1779.**

(O'Halloran, 1779)

Dear Sir.

As I know you to be, a Gent. of great politeness and good Nature as well, as well<sup>8</sup> as of taste and Erudition, they Encourage me to Request your friendly support - It is now about fourteen years since I published a Treatis[e] on ~~Amputation~~ Gangrene, in which a New Method of Amputation was described. many [*sic*] Attempts, for Centuries had been made to abridge the Cure after Amputation, and to Remedy many Inconveniences Complained of, as Subsequent to it; and it may be with Confidence affirmed, that these Useful discoveries were Reserved for me. I may be permitted to say so, since it has since been Acknowledged, by the Royal Reader[y] of Surgery, at Paris, by the Medical Society of London, as may be seen in the fourth Volume of their works. By M<sup>r</sup>. Bromfield, in the first Volume of his

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<sup>8</sup> Repeated word in text

Surgery etc.<sup>9</sup> Yet so it has happened, that Interesting as this Object is, to the public, particularly, to the Military, and so long and Eagerly sought for, notwithstanding the Recited testimonies in its favor, it has made very little advances, Except under my own hands. Convinced of its great Utility, M<sup>r</sup>. Adair, when I was last in London, Recommended me to Memorial Lord North, Claiming a Public Reward for so Useful a discovery. Which was delivered by Col. St. John. Lord North, wrote to M<sup>r</sup>. Adair, to know if I was Intitled [*sic*], to such Reward; and he gave it, as his opinion, and quoted Authorities for that opinion that I was. Lord Beauchamp wrote me word, that his opinion was, that the Application should be made thro' Parliament; and I was yesterday Honored with a letter from Sir Grey Cooper, pointing out, that to Apply properly and to Succeed, some friend should Apply to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for his Majesty's permission, to move the House on that head, which must be done, by a petition referred to that House. that [*sic*] Rewards, for useful discoveries in Medicine, have been allotted, the voice of antiquity, as well as of modern times, sufficiently proclaim - the Regency [of] Louis the 14<sup>th</sup> is Replete with proofs of this kind, as well as that of his Successor; even the Use of Agaric to stop Hemorrhagies [*sic*] or bleedings, was Royally Rewarded, by this last - In England also, such Rewards have been granted - By adopting my Mode of Practice, the cure of Amputation, is abridged by one half in the thigh, where its defects are most Sensibly felt, by it, the Cure is Completed, in one third of the time, it now takes up. But besides, the Expedition in healing, the bones are so firmly Covered, with solid flesh, that the patient is totally Exempt, from all these effects, complained of in all other methods, and are by a wo[o]den leg, make nearly the same use with the stump, as if no such loss, had been Sustained - All these facts have been sufficiently proved, not only in private practice, but by 14 different Cases, in the Public Hospital of this City. When I first published that work, I had proved it, but in three Cases; yet so eager was I, that the public should benefit by so Useful Practice, that I immediately laid it before them. I have for about twelve months prepared a second Edition, Replete with many new Cases and further Improvements, but I have waited the Issue of my Memorial; as it is but too Evident, that without some Eminent mark of Public Approbation, this second Edition, will no more Engage the Attention of the Faculty, than the former - In Consequence of Sir Grey Cooper's letter, I Write by this post, to

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<sup>9</sup> The work referred to by O'Halloran above is '*Chirurgical Cases and Observations* 2 vols. (1773).

my friend M<sup>r</sup>. Burke to Engage him to make the Required Application, and presentation from me to Parliament, which I hope he will Comply with; and I am sure it will not want your Countenance and Support. Will you, My Dear Sir, be so kind as to see and speak to Mr. Burke on this Matter, and to favor me, with a letter, as soon as Convenient. I think it is Evident, that by Engaging in this Matter, you Essentially serve the public. I shall, if Necessary, attend on the spot, and submit the facts, to the severest Scrutiony[sic]. I hope M<sup>r</sup>. Burke will not decline the task, as I could not presume to Request you to do it. He has the heads of the Intended Petition, which I wish you would see – I shall be Solicitous for a speedy Answer; and I have the Honor to Subscribe my-self, with great Respect and Esteem - Dear Sir

Your most Humble

and obed<sup>nt</sup> serv<sup>nt</sup>

Limeric Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> – 1779 –

Sil: Ô Halloran

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**9. Sylvester O'Halloran to Lord Macartney, 12 June 1781.** (O'Halloran, 1781b)

My Lord.

Limeric June 12<sup>th</sup> 1781 –

The very kind Letter, which your Excellency did me the Honor of writing to me, of the 19<sup>th</sup> of February, I did not Receive till the 24<sup>th</sup>; two days after the departure of the Swallow; and with pleasure and gratitude, I sit down, to Return your Excellency my unfeigned thanks, for this mark of Esteem, and for your Letter to M<sup>r</sup> Walter.<sup>10</sup>

It is true my Lord, that I have hitherto ~~to~~, made no other use of it, but to show to my friends, that proof of your Excellency's generous attention<sup>11</sup> to what Regards the Honor of your Country; and when I do send it to London, I shall be Carefull [sic] not to abuse your Lordships [sic] Liberality. My friend M<sup>r</sup>. Browne, the present prime Sergeant, has lately favored me, with some interesting particulars Relative to the[sic] depriving Irish Lords of their Judicature, from a very scarce work of the late

<sup>10</sup> John Walter of Charing Cross, London, bookseller.

<sup>11</sup> The word 'regard' was written initially but then crossed out and the word 'attention' written over the crossed out word.



Lord Egmont's.<sup>12</sup> Indeed my Lord, this Attempt of mine, Seems every day, more and more Important; and when I Consider the vast fund of Information still to be sought for, and the little Countenance and Attention paid to the Subject by the public, I am often intimidated from proceeding into, at least with that Alacrity, I otherwise should.

I am truely [*sic*] Sorry my Lord, at the very Unfavorable Accounts from India; but I hope that to your Excellency will be Reserved, the glorious task of Repelling foreign Invaders, and Restoring internal peace to that Quarter of the Globe. It would afford me particular pleasure could I be so happy, as to preserve a place in your Excellency's Memory, and to be sometimes Honored with a few lines, when affairs of greater import, did not Interfere –

With the most profound Respect and the warmest wishes for your Excellencies [*sic*] Success in India, and for your safe and happy Return to your Country, and to your friends,

I have the Honor to Subscribe my-self  
My Lord, Your Excellencie's much Obligated,  
and most Obed<sup>nt</sup>.

and most Humble Serv<sup>nt</sup> –

Sil: Ô Halloran

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**10. Sylvester O'Halloran to Lord Macartney, 2 February 1782.** (O'Halloran, 1782a)

My Lord.

2 February 1782

Gratitude for the unlimited order, on your Book-seller, in London, and [I] am high [*sic*] sense[ible] of the Honor of your Excellencies kind letter accompanying it, just before your quitting Tarbot, stimulated me, to return you my thanks; which I did by the Trial Packet last June. The same Vessel being now ready to sail from the Shannon, I again take the liberty, to Request [if] your Excellency, will accept of my

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<sup>12</sup> John Perceval (1711-1770) 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Egmont was a British politician, pamphleteer, and genealogist.

grateful Acknowledgment and permit me the wishes, to preserve a place in your Memory.

The Letter I Enclosed to [Mr.] Walter, last August; but hitherto have made no further use of it, than that of proclaiming your Excellencies generous Intentions - the truth of it is, My Lord, tho' I am far advanced in that work, and have Laid it out, on a broad and a generous Scale, yet so Little Curiosity do I see, in my Country-men, that I apprehend it would scarce quite caste, much Sub (?) reward a man, for his Labor and Trouble. As for the Ancient History; my love for my Country, my Ardor to Rescue it, from the many Calamities, which ignorance and Malice had thrown on it; and administer our great Ancestors, with some degree of dignity, due to their virtues, were [*sic*] superior to Every other Consideration. In the present incidence I do not feel my-self quite so much interested; and for what I can see, the Public bestow Little thought on the Matter. I am never the less persuaded, that if it was to goe [*sic*] on with Alacrity, it would not be the Case. Now I [am] sure of your Excellencies [*sic*] Countenance and Protection I would certainly persevere in work, which I flatter my-self, would ultimately tend, to the Credit and Honor of Ireland.

With the warmest wishes for your Excellencies [*sic*] Success in India, and for Every thing that can add to your happiness, I have the Honor to Subscribe my-self – My Lord – Your Excellencies [*sic*] much Obliged, and most obed<sup>nt</sup>. Humble Serv<sup>nt</sup>.

Sil: Ô Halloran

Limeric Feb.<sup>y</sup> 2<sup>d</sup>. 1782 –

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**11. Sylvester O'Halloran to Willoughby Bertie, Earl of Abingdon, 25 July 1782.**  
(O'Halloran, 1782b)

My Lord,

The reasons to justify your intended bill, may be reduced to three: - 1<sup>st</sup>. The English nation for above 17 centuries, being absolute, acknowledged Sovereign of the British seas. – 2d. Ireland not only under the sovereignty of the imperial Crown of Britain, but – 3dly. The western, sea, in which Ireland is included, being a part of the maritime empire of the Kings of England.

As to the first of these reasons, I respectfully demand of your Lordship, what existence had this pretended sovereignty in the days of Domitian, and a century later

than the time fixed on, when Julius Agricola over-run [*sic*] all Britain, and when the Roman fleets triumphantly circumnavigated your isle? In what instances did it appear, when the Irish navies from time to time after this period, invaded your defenceless coasts with impunity? And to demonstrate how weak your pretences to the dominion of the sea, does not the Poet Claudian celebrate the glories acquired by Theodosius and Stilicho, for their protecting your country from some further invasions of these Irish?

Is the letter addressed by the Britons to Actius, the Roman General, in the middle of the fifth century, a proof of naval power? – The Barbarians, say they, “chase us into the sea, the sea throws us back on the Barbarians, and we have left only the cruel alternatives of perishing by the sword, or by the waves.” When the Saxons, from the friends, declared themselves the conquerors of Britain, where were your fleets to oppose the invasions of these strangers? Were they conspicuous in the Danish invasion; or when the bastard of Normandy insulted your coast, and over run your country? The truth of the matter is, my Lord, the reign of Elizabeth was the first dawn of British naval power.

No Irishman, my Lord, has asserted that this country was ever under the sovereignty of the imperial Crown of Great Britain; nor is there the smallest fact in history to countenance the assumption. Ireland has ever been a distinct imperial kingdom, and the most ancient at this day in the world! True it is, that in the decline of the twelfth century, the people of Leth Mogha, or Southern Ireland, elected Henry their King; but did this imply a power in the English nation to legislate for Ireland? It could not; it did not; nor can the smallest proof be adduced to the contrary.

Even the few English who settled in the Barony of Fort, and these others who from time to time came over, when they formed a little a independent State, to this day known by the name of the Pale, their Parliaments and Legislation were totally independent of England, though the King's Deputy presided and confirmed their decrees. They even made peace and war, and often invaded Britain,

Gentibus, inquit munivit Stilicho; totam eum *Scotis Iernam* movit, & infesto spumavit remige Thelys.”

The Irish Sea, by the early ancients, while sometimes called *Mare Hyperboreum*, as the sea properly belonging to Ireland, it being the Hyperborean Island of the Greeks. It was also called *Mare Vergivium*. Now this last word is manifestly of

Celtic origin, and therefore Cambden and Lhind justly derive it from the Irish *phairge*, or the sea; and this seems plainly to denote, that the Romans, though they bestowed on the sea the epithet *Mare*, yet they added to it its native expression latinized, to point it out as a sea, the peculiar dominion of Ireland.

Need I add more to this subject, than to say, that the Romans, who acted offensively against the rest of the world, where constantly on the defensive, with respect to Ireland: - That the Irish constantly invaded the Roman provinces of Britain, from the landing of Caesar there, to their final dereliction of the country; and, that the Romans fought only to defend themselves, and never once attempted to make a descent on this kingdom. It will not be said that they did not think it an object worthy their attention, because Tacitus clearly shows what a great acquisition to Rome the reduction of Ireland would prove.

I am to apologise to the Public, and to your Lordship, for the hastiness of this production - the matter I know is good, but my respects to both would make me wish the manner and language were a little more correct. Had the grounds on which you took up your arguments been more general, or better known, I would certainly have left the subject to be discussed by abler heads, but, having a retrospection to these parts of our history least known, and least cultivated by the natives, and yet, without a knowledge of which the late *Independence* of this kingdom cannot be supported, I have ventured on this hasty production, to supply new arguments to my Country's cause, on this trying occasion.

I have the honour to subscribe myself,

with great respect,

your Lordship's most humble,

and obedient servant,

Ô H.

Limerick, July 16, 1782.

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**12. Sylvester O'Halloran to Sir Vere Hunt, Bart., 23 March 1786.** (O'Halloran, 1786a)

Dear Sir.

When I did myself the honor to apply for your support towards the Appointment of Surgeon to the County jail, under the Act now pending I had not the most Distant Idea, that such Application, would be deemed injurious to any man – M<sup>r</sup>. Knight as [*sic*] acted for many years as surgeon on the old Regulation; if none other had been introduced, no one would think of soliciting for it, at least I should not. But the legislature has taken the matter into their own hands; & by the present Act have appointed Surgeons with salaries for the jails, eligible by the Grand Juries -If an Election takes place, does it\* not necessarily imply Candidates for it\*? Is it not in fact a call upon men of Abilities, of Activity & Attention, to offer their services? It surely is! Can then the friends of this Gent. when the affair is properly Considered, with propriety complain, that I have acted an improper party by offering my-self a Candidate for an Employment altogether new? sure I am, that if I thought there was the smallest impropriety in it, I should never have thought of it. So Careful have I been, in the Discrimination, that when I found that the act has not yet\* passed into a Law, I did not make any further Application; but I do mean it, as soon as that Event takes place.

Will you my D<sup>er</sup>, be so good as to convey these sentiments, with my most profound Respect to the Grand-Jury.

I have the Honor to Subscribe my-self - Dear Sir,

Your most Humble & Obed<sup>nt</sup>. Serv<sup>nt</sup>

Sil: Ô Halloran

Quay March 23 – 1786 –

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**13. Sylvester O'Halloran to Sir Vere Hunt, Bart. ( O'Halloran, n. d.)**

Dr. Ô Halloran presents his Respectful Complim.<sup>ts</sup> to Sir Vere Hunt - did not

come home yesterday in any time to wait on him, having spent the day abroad; but he called a little after twelve today, at the Bishops, & waited some time for admission, but no one appeared, owing he supposed to his Lordships [*sic*] illness. With Respect to the particular business of Sir Vere,\* the Dr. is by no means prepared for an explicit answer. the more he has resolved it, in his mind, the more difficult it appears to him; & he wished that Sir Vere, would not delay the Execution of his plan, one minute on his account; but Sir Vere may always rely on D.<sup>r</sup> ÔH - steady friendship & attachment –

Friday two o'clock

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**14. Sylvester O'Halloran to J. Brown, Mount Brown, 31 March 1788.**

O'Halloran, 1788b)

Dear Sir.

Limric March 31 – 1788

I yesterday finished a very long letter, or rather Dissertation on the Subject of the Sword, the Axe & Slings Ball &c in your possession, Addressed to Lord Charlemont, which went of [*sic*] by the post. I told his Lordship, (agreeable to your Information) that you would be in town in a few days, & deliver up to his Lordship the different Articles, to be deposited, in the Museum of the Royal Academy. I can have no doubt of your Compliance with an object, which will rebound [*sic*] much to your honour; & the pleasure, I feel in adding on this Occasion to the Respectability of a Gent. Who I always entertained the warmest friendship for, amply Compensated for the great trouble & reading I have had, to paint these objects in their proper context<sup>13</sup> – I beg my Respectful Complim.<sup>ts to</sup> M<sup>r</sup>. Brown & the young Ladies, & Subscribe my-self, with great truth & affection –

Dear Sir

Your most Humble

& Obed.<sup>n</sup> Serv.<sup>nt</sup>

Sil. Ô Halloran -

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<sup>13</sup> Illegible word scribbled out and over this written 'context'.

**15. Sylvester O'Halloran to James Barry, 27 May 1791. (O'Halloran, 1791))**

Limerick, May 27, 1791.

Dear Sir – I have long proposed to myself the pleasure of addressing a letter to you. I avail myself of the present opportunity to put it in execution. It is of a twofold nature – a claim on your friendship, and a call on your patriotism. Young Mr. Russell, who will deliver you this letter, is the son of a very worthy and amiable couple, and from the little attempts he made here, aided by his own genius *only*, his friends form great expectations. He must be known, and not improbably, a pupil of yours. Your scientific and penetrating eyes will soon see whether he has the talents necessary to become a master, and, if so, I persuade myself, from your patriotism and love for the fine arts, *you will fan this generous flame*. Our country wants not for men of genius in every department of science as well as in the fine arts; but we have not Maecenases, and an English government seems not very forward to call forth the exertions of genius amongst us, since, in the long swell of our pension list, not a single instance can be produced, of the smallest favor bestowed on men of genius and abilities. See, then, the necessity of encouraging the fire of genius in each other.

Your Venus rising from the sea I greatly admired; the thought was happy, and the execution bold and masterly; when presented at Gloucester-house, I was shown one purchased at a high expense at Rome, but by no means equal to yours. After I left London I heard with great pleasure that you were appointed to paint the rise and progress of the arts, this surely was paying the highest compliments to your genius, abilities, and execution, and your employers were not disappointed. Shall I fondly attempt, my dear sir, to beseech you to bestow some part of your talents on your native history. May I hope to see *Irish heroes* glow on canvass [*sic*]? I know of no history more replete with noble and generous deeds; shall I point to you two or three out of numerous instances where genius and execution would have a vast expanse? I cannot suppose that you – tho' it is too much the case with our countrymen – can be unacquainted with your native history. I shall therefore, without further prefacing, enter on the business.

## AN HISTORY PIECE

About the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century two competitors appeared for the Crown of Munster-Cenedi of the house of Thomond, and Callachan of Desmond, from which the present O'Callachan is descended; the power of Cenedi prevailed. The estates of Munster met at Cashel to salute him King. In the midst of their deliberations the mother of Callachan appeared: respect and silence immediately succeeded; animated by maternal love and the glory of her race, she addressed Cenedi in a speech replete with dignity, boldness, and truth; she remonstrated against infringement of the laws of alternative succession; she acknowledged the force of his power, and then pointed out the glory he would acquire by giving up to justice what could not be wrested from him by force. The *Feis*, or assembly, were astonished – all eyes were directed to Cenedi. He paused for a couple of minutes, relinquished his claim, and declared the young Callachan King of the Province. This is the only instance in Irish history of a woman appearing to solicit for a son, an [*sic*] husband, or a brother. However high the spirit of chivalry appeared in these days, in the respect paid to the fair, yet the sacrifice like this present is unexampled in history.

## AN HISTORY PIECE

The surrender of the Crown of Ireland by Melaghlín the 2d to Brian Bóroimhe (Boru). The story – Brian being called upon by a large majority of the people to assume the monarchy, sent ambassadors to Malachie to surrender the crown to him, or to meet him on a certain day on the plains of Dublin, where he would be at the head of 25,000 chosen men. This was the language from the remotest antiquity. To collect forces sufficient at the time appointed, Malachie sent ambassadors to Brian requesting a month longer, at the expiration of which he pledged himself that if not in force to meet him, he would peaceably surrender the Imperial crown into his hands. Unable to oppose force to force at the day appointed, he waited on Brian at the head of 12,000 cavalry, made a formal surrender of his crown with a speech on the occasion. Brian, melted by the distress of his rival, embraced him, replaced the crown on his head, and gave him a further time of twelve months to try to retrieve his affairs, but even then not prepared to oppose so powerful an antagonist, he made a formal surrender of the crown to Brian in the presence of the national estates, who was then formally inaugurated Monarch of Ireland; and this, by the bye, is the only instance in Irish history of a peaceable abdication of the Crown.



I have now finished what I intended to say; it only remains to know in what light you will consider my proposals, but at worst I shall console myself with the purity of my intentions.

I remain, dear Sir,  
Your most humble and obliged servant,  
Silr. O'Halloran.

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**16. Letter from Captain Joseph O'Halloran to his father Sylvester O'Halloran.  
(O'Halloran, J. 1800)**

From Captain O'Halloran commandant at the Department of Dynapore (Bengal), to his Father in Limerick, dated April 25, 1799.

I know not what baneful planet at present seems to be preside, but tumults and disturbance appear in almost every quarter of the globe: its malignant influence reigns triumphantly even in this obscure part; for these three months past we have had nothing in this province but disorder, outrage and cruelty. To prepare the minds of men for mild and equitable laws, they must have arrived to a certain stage of thinking and reflection, when they can, through a just focus, see and enjoy the benefits that result from them. To overrun the manners and habits of ages is much more difficult than speculative politicians are aware of; and although their intentions in introducing foreign laws proceeds from the noblest principles, yet where people from habit and custom are bigoted to their own, it is doing them an essential injury to lay them aside, and put others in force—When the Noble Marquis, our late Governor, introduced a decennial settlement of revenue, it was manifestly his intention to ameliorate the situation of the inhabitants.—With difficulty was he able to prevail on the Zeminders (or principal landholders) to acquiesce, though it must be a self evident truth, that paying a fixed revenue, on the average of the ten preceding years, is preferable to an annual bundibull (or settlement) however, they agreed at last. The period of decennial settlement is now expiring, and they wish to return to the ancient mode; to accomplish this, they have confederated, and their Ryoth (or peasantry), are in obedience to their orders, have been for some time ravaging the country, and

murdering every poor creature that falls in their way. Another ground of complaint, and one of the causes of the present disorders, is, the mildness of the laws, which they say tend more to promote confusion and disorder, than to repress either; because, by the present system, it is a much more difficult matter for a man to get hanged, even for the most atrocious offences, than it would be almost to call up spirits from the watery deeps. Formerly justice was prompt, and death almost immediately followed the perpetration of a dark crime; this had a powerful effect, and restrained the licentious and abandoned but now criminals are tried only by the Judges circuit twice a year, and the greatest punishment that is inflicted, is irons for a certain time. This is a period of enjoyment to culprits, for they get food, have nothing to do, and seemingly are happy. This is holding out encouragement with a vengeance, and in consequence, our jails are full, and men commit crimes to enjoy a state of such enviable tranquillity.

A third cause operates in this province, which is, in the antient Governments in each district a proportion of land was allotted to a certain description of men, who were bound in consideration of this land, to pay a very small revenue, and to keep the peace of the district, and protect it from the depredations of Choners and marauders; Government about three years ago, on the suggestion of one of the Collectors, resumed these Pykal lands, as he represented, that the Pykes rather aided than repressed the Choners, and that by resuming them, it would increase the revenue of the Jungle Mahlis, or districts. The lands were in consequence resumed, and about four or five thousand men sent adrift completely. In consequence of the foregoing causes, several of the Zeminders confederated, to extort from Government the restoration of the Pykal lands, and to abrogate the decennial settlement. As the head of this Confederacy was the Rannee, or Princess of Midnapore, a woman advanced in years and deep in iniquity. First of the Confederates, who were jungle Zeminders, sent a strong force of Choners (men who inhabit the jungles and forests, wild as their brethren the tygers [*sic*], bears and leopards, and equally cruel and ferocious, a distinct race from the Bengallees, in short, stout made flat noses, and curly hair and speak a different language to ravage the open country about Midnapore and towards Burdwan. They timed it remarkably well, though we had not 100 men in our lines, and if attacked with spirit, would have been hard pushed. These savages who were joined immediately by all the Rancee's people and the cruelties they committed are too horrid to marinate; judge of them by the following:

They took and plundered Anundpore, a large and wealthy town, about twelve miles from this, and after murdering as many of the men as they could lay hold of, and burning the town, they seated all the older women of family or respectability naked on pots filled with fire, and after burning them in the most inhuman manner, they drove them perfectly naked through the country; you can easily imagine they are capable of any thing shocking after that.

Whilst these scenes of iniquity and inhumanity were going forward, the Rancee pretended to be under great apprehension, and applied to the Magistrate for a guard to protect her; and to carry the joke farther, she quitted her fort of Corringhur and came to another called Hauwass Ghur, about a mile from our lines. We had pretty good intelligence of all her movements, and of the several interviews she had with her principal leader of the Choners, (Mohun Bauboo). All this Government was apprised of, and an order came down to arrest her; by some means she received information of it, and was preparing to fly into the heart of the jungles, and join Mohun Bauboo, who had retired there for a few days with his plunder.

About seven o'clock on the night of the 5<sup>th</sup> of last April, one of the spies we had out came in with information that she would be off about 12 o'clock, that she had everything in readiness to move, and about 400 men armed in her fort, to escort her. As the public officer of the station, it was my duty to seize the lass, and I immediately went on parade, took all the Sepoys I could get ready, about 70 men, and as I knew, if I went direct to Hauwass Ghur, she would have protection. I dived into the jungle, placing a guard at the entrance of the road to prevent any person marking where I was going. Knowing all the paths and roads I was enabled to take a small circuit, and about eight o'clock arrive at Hauwass Ghur. I surprised and seized Rancee and about sixty men, amongst which number was one of her principal advisers, named Chunce Lolt Rhawn, before they were apprised of my approach, and before they could make any resistance. A great number escaped in the darkness of the night through avenues and apertures we were ignorant of; but after leaving a strong party to occupy the post, I brought her and the rest into cantonments. A quantity of matchlocks, loaded with hammered iron bullets, pikes, bows, quivers of arrows, shields, talwers, daggers, &c. were taken and locked in the magazine. The seizing of this old Demon had a considerable effect on the Confederates, and disconcerted their measures very much; they drew off from the immediate vicinity of Midnapore for some days, and at last returned with the declared intention of

attacking the town. The consequence of this was, the greater part of the wealthy inhabitants who could fly made off, and the remainder waited the event, with a desperate, calm resignation.

Our spies brought us intelligence were the Choners meant to attack the town, and about ten o'clock at night, leaving the guards of the station ready to turn out, and the guns ready in front, I took about seventy men to cover the town, which I did so effectively from the posts I planted them on, that they were foiled completely in their intentions and they gave it over. Three times after they had their spies in town, to see if there was a possibility of carrying it; but the rascals found, if they attempted it, that they would be cut to pieces. Matters wearing so alarmingly an aspect, two of the out commands, About 300 men, were received from Barrackpore, and this addition enabled us to act on the defensive.

We now have about 200 men and two six-pounders in the Jungle districts belonging to the disaffected Zeminders, and in three engagements they have been routed with great loss. The fellows know so little of fear, that they attacked the line repeatedly on the march, and disputed every inch of ground so well, that the detachment was two days marching twelve miles. If striking examples were made of refractory Zeminders, it would tend more to restore tranquillity than anything else, for they all laugh at our laws and regulations, and mistake mildness and mercy for imbecility and folly. One of the Confederates is a most infamous miscreant, Durgeoning Zeminder, of Rypore. This man's lands were confiscated about two years ago and he was seized and brought into Midnapore for trial. He found out who the witnesses were, and those he had waylaid and murdered, in number about 20; the consequence was, he was acquitted for want of evidence, and it was not for a length of time after, that the circumstances was known of his murdering the evidence; He is now an outlaw, and the most active of the Confederates, as well as the most cruel.

So much, my dear Father, for Jungle politics and operations, which I imagine will tire you pretty handsomely.

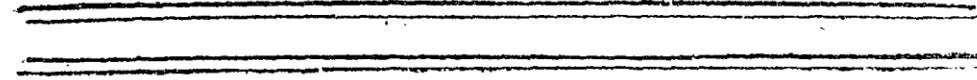
## Appendix B: Sylvester O'Halloran: Subscriber

O'Halloran is listed as a subscriber in the following works which are presented in chronological order:

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- Roberts, G. (1763) *Juvenile poems on various subjects*. By George Roberts. Limerick.
- Ferrar, J. (1767) *An history of the city of Limerick. Containing, I. some account of its antiquity and present State....* Limerick.
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- O'Flaherty, R. (1645) *Ogygia, or, a chronological account of Irish events*. Hely, J. Dublin (trans.) (1793) 2 Vols. Dublin.
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## Appendix C: Sylvester O'Halloran's *General History* 1778: Subscription List



# A L I S T O F T H E S U B S C R I B E R S.

### A

**S**IR Fitz Gerald Aylmer, bart.  
James Aylmer, esq. col. of the regi-  
ment Ultonia, in the service of Spain  
Thomas Arthur, esq.  
Richard Anketill, M. D.  
John Anketill, esq. captain in Ultonia's  
Richard Anketill, esq. lieutenant in ditto  
Lieutenant Francis Anketill  
William Ayres, esq. Dublin  
Mr. Christopher Allen, merchant, Dublin  
John Archibold, merchant, Water-  
ford

### B

Dowager Countess Barrymore  
Earl Bedford  
Bellamont  
Count Bere Haven  
Right Hon. col. William Burton, 2 fets  
Vol. I.

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Edmond Butler, Dunboyne  
Sir Lucius O'Brien, bart.  
Patrick Bellew, bart.  
Charles Burton, bart.  
John Brown, bart.  
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William Burke, esq.  
Richard Burke, esq.  
William Burke, esq. Bally-Dugan  
Thomas Burke, esq. Marble-Hill  
Richard Burke, esq. captain in the regi-  
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James Barry, esq. captain in Ultonia's  
John Browne, esq. Mount Browne  
Ivory Browne, esq.  
Lancelot Browne, esq. Hampton Court

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Clement Zouch, esq.

A P R E.

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### **Irish and British Periodicals and Magazines**

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### **Irish and British newspapers**

*Anglo-Celt; Dublin Evening Post; Dublin Journal; Finn's Leinster Journal; Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser; General Advertiser and Morning Intelligencer; General Evening Post; Limerick Chronicle; Limerick Gazette; London Chronicle; London Packet or, New Lloyds Evening Post; Morning Chronicle and London*

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