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THE EXILIC BURIAL PLACE OF A GAELIC IRISH COMMUNITY AT SAN PIETRO IN MONTORIO, ROME

Prof. Elizabeth FitzPatrick, School of Geography and Archaeology, NUI Galway, Ireland. elizabeth.fitzpatrick@nuigalway.ie

This paper presents the findings of a survey of the funerary monuments and burial vault of an exiled community of Gaelic Irish who were interred, 1608-23, at San Pietro in Montorio, Rome. The site of their burial and commemoration had an eventful history that resulted in loss, fragmentation and alteration of the ledgers of elite members of the group, including those of the respective chiefs and earls of the Ulster lordships of Tyrone and Tyrconnell in Ireland. The original form and layout of the ledgers and their inscriptions is proposed and they are examined in the context of their setting in a Franciscan church patronised by Philip III of Spain. The ledger inscriptions commemorate both the suffering and Counter-Reformation confessional identity of the Gaelic Irish as Catholic exiles. They indicate tension between the complex political circumstances of the exiles' lives in Rome and a concern to provide an appropriate burial site publicly reflecting their status and piety. [1]

INTRODUCTION

The church of San Pietro in Montorio is the most significant early modern Irish diaspora site in Europe (Fig. 1). In the early seventeenth century it became the burial place of the exiled Gaelic

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Irish chiefs and earls, Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone and Rory O'Donnell, Earl of Tyrconnell. The history of the Irish relationship with the church has mostly been written by Catholic clergymen, without whose interventions and commentary there would be fewer threads of evidence to pursue (Moran, 1864:466; Meehan, 1868; Healy, 1908: 36-51; Jennings, 1953; Silke, 1975: 42-4; Ó Fiaich, 1989; Ó Fearghail, 2007-8; Ó Fearghail and Troy, 2010). Current historical approaches view the exile of O Neill and O Donnell in terms of pan-European concepts of honour and nobility and their fashioning as European aristocrats (Carroll, 2007; Kane, 2010: 135; Mac Craith, 2010; O'Connor and Lyons, 2010). However, that perspective seems sometimes incongruous with the reality of the Roman period of their exile. A more nuanced picture of the relationship between the exiles and San Pietro in Montorio is presented by the funerary monuments and vault of the small Irish community, and their setting within the church. In tandem with the documentary evidence and the European context of Catholic exile, the burial site successfully evokes the political atmosphere of the Gaelic Irish expatriate experience in early seventeenth-century Rome.

 The Irish became associated with San Pietro in Montorio because it was patronised by the Spanish Habsburg king, Philip III (d.1621), who was nominally the benefactor of the exiles in Rome. A Franciscan church would have been an appropriate place of burial and commemoration for Gaelic Irish elite. The ruling families of O Neill and O Donnell in Ulster had a long history of patronage of the Franciscans. Rory O Donnell was the principal benefactor of an Observant house in Donegal in northwest Ulster, between 1602 and his departure from Ireland in 1607 (Lacy, 1983: 330-32; Ó Clabaigh, 2012:69). The family of O Neill had been patrons of the Friars Minor house at Armagh in south Ulster where they had burial rites from as early as the thirteenth century (Lynn, 1975: 61, 63).

O Neill and O Donnell left Ireland for Spain in September 1607 because government investigations into their Ulster lordships had intensified prior to the Jacobite Plantation of Ulster (1610) and because they feared that their plot to ally with Spain against James I had been discovered (Morgan, 1998: 201). They were accompanied by the south Ulster chief, Cuchonnacht Maguire, in a party of approximately 99, including family members, court and household officials (Ó Muraíle, 2013: 44-5). They were driven into a Normandy port in a storm. A political embarrassment to the French and the authorities in Spanish Flanders where they sought asylum, the exiles were re-directed to Rome arriving in April 1608. Their transfer was favoured by Philip III of Spain who sought more amicable terms with James I. To keep the Irish in Rome, he became their benefactor although his allowances to them, supplemented by papal pensions, constituted meagre incomes up to the time of O Neill's death in 1616 (Kerney Walsh, 1986: 81-4).

The political context of the lives of O Donnell and O Neill in Rome has been examined by Kerney Walsh (1986; 1996: 79-87) based on correspondence between O Neill, Philip III, his secretary of State and Spanish ambassadors in London and Rome. An incomplete Gaelic chronicle, *Turas na nIarladh as Éire* (Journey of the Earls from Ireland) is also revealing. The *Turas*, by O Neill's secretary, Tadhg O Keenan,[2] may have been written for the Irish Franciscans at Leuven and perhaps for an audience in Ireland too (Kane, 2010: 131; Mac Craith, 2013: 84). The Leuven community, in this period, undertook a 'multi-dimensional historiographical enterprise' contrived to establish the indivisible Catholic identity of the Gaelic peoples of Ireland and to place them in a 'pan-national unity centred on Rome' (Ó hAnnracháin, 2015: 68). O'Keenan's *Turas* can

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[2] Tadhg was a member of the family of Ó Cianáin, hereditary chroniclers to the Maguire lords of Fermanagh in south Ulster.

be viewed as a contribution to that enterprise, with the implication that it had broader political purpose. Janssen (2013: 84) has questioned how exactly such efforts in national self-invention related to identification with the international Church of Rome and cautions that literature produced by exiles was often propaganda that 'sought to propagate more national commitment and internal agreement than may have existed'.

It has also been suggested that the *Turas* should be reconsidered as an attempt to portray the Ulster chiefs as 'members of an international cohort of aristocrats' engaging in a grand tour to seek support (Kane, 2008: 1143, 1153-4). However, even if the exile experience nominally served to fashion Gaelic Irish elites as members of a European-wide aristocracy, as 'Godly princes' representing an Irish Catholic nation among the Catholic nations of Europe (Mac Craith, 2013, 84), the reality of the Rome sections of O Keenan's chronicle, which narrate events in the lives of the exilic community[3] between April 1608 and November 1609, is often set aside in historical discourse. Indigence and illness marked the lives of the largely male Irish community, three of whom died within the first year, and O Keenan in 1610 (Ó Fearghail, 2007-8: 73-4). They were also mostly without their families in Rome. The climate and conditions of the city and the population imbalance that favoured single men made it a difficult and unattractive place for women to live (Nussdorfer, 2014). Of the eleven women who left Ireland in 1607 (Mooney, 1954-6:194-205; Casway, 1980-82:42-62; O'Dowd, 2013:43-5), Catherine Magennis, Countess of

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[3] Binasco, M. (2012) La comunità irlandese a Roma, 1377-1870, 355-6, provides useful commentary on the early seventeenth-century historiography for the study of the Irish community in Rome.

Tyrone was the only noble woman of the community to permanently reside in Rome until 1616. Her failing health encouraged her husband, Hugh O Neill, to seek a safe journey for her to Flanders. Always concerned to control the movements of the Irish exiles, Philip III re-directed her to Naples where she died in 1619 (Kerney Walsh, 1986: 372).

EXILE AND ENGAGEMENT WITH COUNTER-REFORMATION CULTURE

The Gaelic Irish were in Rome at a high-point of Catholic triumphalism when the city had been dramatically reinvented as the hub of the first world religion and redeveloped as a setting for the devout spectacle of Counter-Reformation Catholicism (Ditchfield, 2005: 167-9). Their engagement with post-Tridentine Rome is best perceived in the context of the rise of Catholic identity in early modern Europe and the relationship between more peripheral Catholic societies and Rome, as discussed by Pollman (2013: 165-82), Lotz-Heumann (2013: 33-53) and especially by Ó hAnnracháin (2015). The social behavior of the 'Catholic-in-exile' which, as Janssen (2013; 2014: 9) has shown had a formative impact on Counter-Reformation culture, is particularly relevant to the Irish in Rome. It has been observed that the earls and their community self-fashioned themselves 'Spanish style' as advocates of Roman Catholicism (Mac Craith, 2010). This, of course, may also be attributed to their hope of getting support for their political cause from the papacy and Philip III of Spain.

Visible involvement in the Counter-Reformation culture of the city was an imperative of Catholic nobles. As Catholics in exile, O Neill and O Donnell were extended papal invitations that included receptions, processions, pilgrimages, indulgences and other liturgical ceremonies in Rome (Ó Muraíle, 2007:574, 594; Carroll, 2007:58-9; Mac Craith, 2013). Within a short time of their arrival

they had undertaken a pilgrimage to the Seven Churches, a ritual often involving in excess of 1,000 people at any one time (Ditchfield, 2005: 172). It generally took the form of a one-day or less arduous two-day tour between the early Christian basilicas. The itinerary of the *c.* 20km pilgrimage of the Irish in 1608 included the Seven Churches and Chiesa dell'Annunciattella, San Paolo alle Tre Fontane and Scala Coeli on the Laurentian Way, with a picnic stop at Caffarella (Ó Muraíle, 2007: 274-5, 300-301). Their almost immediate engagement with the pilgrimage reflects the fact that it was an essential rite of passage into polite society of the city for any visiting Catholic elite.

During their first year in Rome, five of the Irish party became ill, caused it seems by a sojourn in the Roman coastal town of Ostia west of Rome, where they had retreated 'to make holiday and take a change of air' in July 1608 (Walsh 1916, 238-9). Their holiday was probably spent in the Renaissance Borgo of Ostia adjacent to the Tiber, the salt marshes and a large pond (Gallico, 2000: 3, 66-73), a confluence of water bodies that undoubtedly attracted mosquitoes. O Keenan, observed that Ostia was 'most unhealthy for climate in all Italy'. He described the sickness of Rory O Donnell and his brother Caffar, their servant Muiris, Hugh O Neill's son, Hugh, Baron of Dungannon, and the clergyman Donal O Carroll, Vicar General of Killaloe, as 'hot, fiery violent fever' (Walsh, 1916: 238-9). The city of Rome was also an unhealthy place to live. Surface drainage was poor because the ancient drainage system barely functioned. As a result, pooling water on the city lands was 'an ideal incubator for mosquitoes and malaria' (Rinne 2012: 186). Ten Irish died in the months from July to late September, between 1608 and 1623, which suggests that the cause of death was malaria, a disease most virulent in high summer (Table 1).

FUNERARY RITES

Philip III's patronage of San Pietro in Montorio and a tradition of benefaction to the Franciscans in Ireland ensured burial for the Gaelic Irish males in the church, and their interment in the Franciscan habit (Ó Muraíle, 2007: 240-1). As far as can be established, there were no Irish women buried there. Rory O Donnell was the first Irish interment in July 1608 (Ó Muraíle, 2007: 370-73). O Keenan described his funeral on the feast of St Martha, as 'large and splendid … in grand procession … ordered by his Holiness the Pope, and on either side of the body there were large numbers of lighted waxen torches and sweet, sad, sorrowful singing'. Allegedly, Caffar's funeral in September 1608 also included a 'splendid cortege accompanying him in procession' to San Pietro in Montorio (Ó Muraíle, 2007: 372-3). If O Keenan's chronicle was intended to project the Ulster earls as members of a court of European Catholic-in-exile nobles, he may have taken some license in his descriptions of both funerals. Funeral processions of nobility in seventeenth-century Europe were elaborate events, characterised by status display. The remains of the deceased were brought to the church in a horse-drawn carriage, and a procession of mourners led by a herald carried a banner detailing the arms of the person and their ancestors (Harding, 2002: 210). Rory O Donnell's procession may have passed south from the Borgo district where he had lived, along Via della Lungara on the west bank of the Tiber to San Pietro in Montorio. Mourning was observed after his death. Lord Cornwallis reported on 7 September 1608 that the death of O Donnell in Rome was confirmed by 'the mourning vestures of the agents and followers of him and his traitorous company that are here'. He noted that O Donnell's agent, Matthew Tully, walked the streets 'in black weeds, in fashion of a grandee, followed by two pages, and accompanied by four others of his countrymen in the like attire' (Russell and Prendergast, 1874:

669). When Hugh, Baron of Dungannon died in 1609, Conde de Castro, Spanish ambassador to Rome 1609-16, paid out 400 crowns for the funeral because the Earl of Tyrone could not afford the cost of his son's obsequies. The ambassador remarked that 'having considered that, when the Earl of Tirconel died, the Marqués de Aytona gave his sister 300 crowns and that this occasion was of more considerable moment than the other, I took it upon myself to send the Earl of Tiron 400 crowns towards the expenses of the funeral on behalf of his Majesty' (Kerney Walsh, 1986: 99).

The Irish were dependent on the charity of successive Spanish ambassadors to give their elite members funerals appropriate to their rank. When Hugh O Neill died in 1616, the support of the ambassador was more tacit. A letter of 27 August 1616 from the Council of State to Philip III explained that 'As the Earl left no funds for his burial, Cardinal Borja spent what was necessary at the expense of the Embassy…; but in doing this he endeavoured to cover what appearances might cause difficulties in the relations of Your Majesty with the King of England' (Kerney Walsh, 1986: 379).

SETTING

The church of San Pietro in Montorio is on the Janiculum at the western limit of the walled city. It has an unconventional alignment, built to a single nave plan terminating at the west-southwest end in a polygonal apse (Fig. 2). The position of the entrance, at the east-northeast end of the building, was contrived to capture the expansive view east over the city. From the terrace, the mountains of the Apennine range, the Alban hills and the key sites of the 'Seven hills' can be seen. The church was re-established as a major ecclesiastical landmark in Rome in 1472 when

Pope Sixtus IV ceded it to his Confessor, Amadeus Menez di Silva of Portugal, for his own ascetic congregation of Friars Minor, the Amadeites (Reeves, 1999:101; Jungić, 1988:70). The Amadeites undertook a new building programme in order to commemorate what they, erroneously, held to be the site of St Peter's execution (Cantatore, 2007:17). Their new church was consecrated on 9 June 1500 by the Spanish pope, Alexander VI. By 1608, when the first of the Irish were buried in the church, St Pietro in Montorio had been transformed into a prestigious Spanish domain of the city attracting some of the most significant artistic and architectural works of the period. These included Bramante's Tempietto designed for the cloister garth of the Franciscan convent in 1502, Raphael's Transfiguration placed on the reredos of the high altar in 1522, notable frescoes and paintings in the side chapels including del Piombo's Scourging of Christ and his Transfiguration (1524) in Cappella della Flagellazione di Gesu (Pierfrancesco Borgherini's chapel), Pomerancio's Madonna of the Letter (1564) in Cappella de la Madonna della Lettera, and Romano's Saint Ann with Virgin and Child (*c*. 1500) in Cappella Santa Anna (Cantatore, 2007:103-118; Jungić, 1988; Hirst, 1981:49-63).

Three years before the arrival of the Irish exiles, Philip III had enhanced the setting of the church at its eastern end by landscaping and fortifying the hill (Cantatore, 2007: 119; Vannicelli, 1971:47). The result was an attractive piazza commanding a view east over the city and a central fountain designed by Giovanni Fontana. A double staircase led up to the entrance to the church, and plaques were placed on the parapet commemorating the completion of the works by the king and his ambassador to Rome, the Marquis of Villena (Fig. 1; Cantatore, 2007:121-3).

The nave of San Pietro in Montorio is divided into five bays, each housing a dedicated chapel and altar (Fig. 2). The largest of these, Capella San Giovanni Battista, and Cappella San Paolo, are positioned at the junction of the nave and sanctuary in the manner of transepts. The surviving funerary monuments of the Irish are a pair of adjoining ledgers situated in the church floor immediately north of Capella San Giovanni Battista at the west-southwest end of the nave. They overlie the approximate area of the vault where the exiles were interred. The northern ledger commemorates Rory and Caffar O Donnell, and the southern one, Hugh O Neill, Baron of Dungannon. Both ledgers are framed by inlaid borders. They carry lengthy Latin inscriptions in Roman hand and heraldic arms in decorative stone inlay. The ledger of Hugh O Neill, Earl of Tyrone, has been missing since the nineteenth century and is presumed to have been a casualty of the repaving of the church floor *c.* 1851. A portion of what is possibly the former ledger of Eoghan Mac Mahon (also known by his anglicised name Eugene Matthews), Archbishop of Dublin, has been identified beside Cappella della Presentazione Di Gesù al Tempio, at a remove from its primary location (Fig. 2, no. 17).

There was a hierarchy of space in this Franciscan church that dictated where the Irish would be buried. The visibility of a funerary monument was an expression of social status, with the most desirable places for burial near the high altar or adjacent to an altar in a chapel where Mass was celebrated (Harding, 2002:164-5; Tait, 2002: 107). In their original setting the Irish ledgers were overlooked by the high altar in the polygonal apse (Fig. 3). Proximity to the high altar would have been a concession to their noble status, but it may have been Raphael's Transfiguration that predicated the position of their burial vault. With its prophetic message it became an important reference for Counter-Reformation Catholicism. It has been argued that the Transfiguration,

placed on the reredos in 1522, was inspired by di Silva's Book of revelations, *Apocalypsis Nova*, discovered in 1502 by the Spanish Cardinal, Bernardino Carvajal, in a 'cavern' at San Pietro in Montorio (Bruschi, 1969: 990). The *Apocalypsis* was claimed to have been dictated to di Silva by the Angel Gabriel in a cave on the Janiculum. Its core message was based on earlier Joachimist prophecies that an Angelic Pope would come to renew the Church after it had come through a period of great darkness (Wilkinson, 2007: 60; Reeves, 1999: 101; Jungić, 1988: 68, 80-1).

The turbulent modern history of San Pietro in Montorio is evident in both the disappearance and displacement of inscribed ledgers throughout the church. There were three periods when the church and convent fabric were damaged during conflict with the French. The site was bombarded during the French occupation of Rome in 1798 and again in 1809, but it was during the Risorgimento of 1849 when the French and Garibaldi's republican forces battled on the Janiculum throughout June that the worst harm occurred to the fabric of the building; the convent and the apse, belfry, roof and floor of the church were left in need of extensive repairs (Vannicelli, 1971: 45, 51). This eventful history variously resulted in loss, fragmentation and alteration of the Irish funerary monuments. They were renewed in 1844 and damaged again during the Risorgimento of 1849. The intervention of the Irish Dominicans of San Clemente prevented the ledgers of Rory O Donnell and Hugh O Neill, Baron of Dungannon, from being cut up for paving and they were re-set in the floor *c*. 1851 (Meehan, 1886: 340).

LEDGERS

In the churches of early modern Europe the ledger was the most common form of funerary monument, designed to mark the vault of the deceased in the crypt and to create a focus of

remembrance for the family. It was regarded as the least imposing and most economical in terms of both cost and space (Harding, 2002: 164). Free-standing tombs and wall-fixed memorials, some of which were multi-storied, were preferred for higher-ranking deceased. Early seventeenth-century Ireland conformed to those norms, with mural monuments, altar tombs and ledgers the principal types (Cockerham 2009, 245). Renaissance and Counter-Reformation ideals encouraged monumentality in commemoration of the dead and the continued popularity of the wall tomb and tomb chest for the highest-ranking members of Irish society (Loeber, 1981, Gillespie, 1994; Tait, 2002). Ledgers, on the other hand, tended to be the memorials of minor elite, merchants and tradesmen (Cockerham, 2009: 255-6).

One of the earliest references to the inscribed ledgers of the Gaelic Irish at San Pietro in Montorio is by the Gaelic poet Eoghan Rua Mac an Bhaird who travelled into exile with Rory O Donnell in 1607 (Kerney Walsh, 1986: 290, 294). His poem '*A bhean fuair faill ar an bheart*' ('O woman that hast found the tomb unguarded') addresses Nuala, sister of Rory and Caffar O'Donnell and aunt of Hugh, Baron of Dungannon, who visited Rome after their deaths. She is portrayed keening prostrate over their ledgers: 'Did the fighting men of Erin see those two stones above, the reading of their inscriptions would awaken the grief of our soldiers' (Knott, 1960: 161-71).

The most important and non-partisan record of the ledger inscriptions and their position in the church floor was published in 1664 by Gasparo Alveri in *Roma in Ogni Stato*. His two-part guide to modern Rome, one of many that coincided with the pontificate of Alexander VII (1655–67), explored the streets, buildings, families and more specifically the churches, with their altars, inscriptions, paintings and sculpture. It was one of a long-established tradition of guides to the

city (Parshall, 2006), a genre that reached its apogee during Alexander's papacy. But, *Roma in Ogni Stato* was exceptional among those produced at that time. It was unrivalled for its collection of early modern inscriptions from the churches of the city and it is regarded as the 'official guide to Alexander VII's Rome' (Connors and Rice, 1991: xviii-xix).

Alveri's work is especially important to this enquiry. It confirms that the extant Irish memorials at San Pietro in Montorio (Fig. 4) rest in the approximate positions into which they were originally placed and it provides the earliest readings of their inscriptions before they were renewed in 1844 (Alveri, 1664: 313-4). He also documented the inscriptions on the subsequently lost memorial of Hugh O Neill (d. 1616), Earl of Tyrone and on the displaced ledger of Eoghan Mac Mahon, Archbishop of Dublin (d. 1623).

Alveri recorded a total of 90 inscriptions, ranging in date from the late sixteenth century to 1654, on the early modern wall, floor and chapel memorials. He did not record any pre-1500 memorials. Their exclusion may explain why some of the rows of ledgers he describes are very short, containing no more than three or four memorials. By the time he made his record, the burial vaults would have been densely populated with Italian gentry, and the nave floor covered with inscribed ledgers marking the approximate area of their respective vaults in the crypt. The pseudo-transepts and side chapels were the preserve of high-ranking nobles and churchmen.

At the time the first of the Irish, the brothers Rory and Caffar O Donnell, were buried in 1608, there were already over 30 early modern ledgers and an unknown quantity of medieval funerary monuments in the floor of the nave. The early seventeenth-century context of those slabs can be determined from Alveri's systematic approach to recording the ledger inscriptions in 1664. He

began his account at Cappella San Giovanni Battista by stating his exact position – 'nel pauimento della Chiesa principiando dalla parte dell'Evangelio dell' Altar Maggiore accanto alla Balaustrata della Capella di S. Giovan Battista, nella prima sepoltura del primo ordine si legge …', 'in the pavement of the church starting on the Evangelist side of the high altar next to the balustrade of the chapel of St John the Baptist the first tomb in the first row reads …' (Alveri, 1664: 312). From there, he worked from left to right (south to north) down through each of the ten rows of early modern inscribed slabs that extended to the entrance at the eastern end of the church. In his scheme he placed the ledger of Hugh, Baron of Dungannon, at the beginning of the second row and beside it that of Rory O Donnell. The ledger of Hugh O Neill, Earl of Tyrone, headed up the third row, with the memorial to the Archbishop of Dublin beside it. Although there is no certainty that the rows of ledgers corresponded to each other, it is likely that the Irish memorials were arranged in a set of four — Hugh O Neill's ledger adjoining the east-northeast edge of that of his son, and the Archbishop's memorial adjoining Rory O Donnell's ledger on the same side. The burial vault allocated to the Irish was positioned in the approximate area marked by the ledgers.

The Irish ledgers were bounded on their western, eastern and northern sides by Italian memorials of mostly sixteenth-century date. North of the ledger inscribed to Rory and Caffar O Donnell there were four ledgers dated 1566, 1571, 1580, 1620. The third row in Alveri's scheme consisted of just three early modern ledgers – those dedicated to Hugh O Neill and Eoghan Mac Mahon and to the Italian Franciseo Beltramello who died in 1631 (Alveri, 1664: 314). It is probable that there were some medieval slabs and corresponding burials in that row too. The clustering of the Irish memorials at the southern end of the second and third row was intentional – the ledgers were concentrated over the location of the vault that had been designated for the O Donnell brothers

in 1608 and, as it transpired, for several other males of the Irish community who died in Rome between 1608 and 1623. The fourth row, ranging along the eastern side of the O Neill and Mac Mahon memorials, comprised six ledgers dating between 1521 and 1621 (Alveri, 1664: 314-5).

MEMORIAL OF RORY AND CAFFAR O DONNELL

The memorial for Rory O Donnell who died in 1608 was not made until sometime after the death of his brother in 1609 (Ó Muraíle, 2007: 374-5). O Donnell's servant, Muiris, and the Vicar General of Killaloe, Donall O Carroll, died in August of 1608 (Ó Muraíle, 2007: 372-3) but if they were buried in the Irish vault, their burials were not marked by inscribed ledgers that would otherwise have been noted by Alveri. The elite, only, among the group were commemorated with inscribed memorials. Hugh O Neill, Baron of Dungannon, died in the autumn of 1609. An inscribed ledger was also made for him and placed on the southern side of his uncles' memorial. The pair of ledgers, as they are presented in the floor with a shared border (Fig. 4), give the appearance of a unitary memorial, but an examination of the detail of each ledger suggests that they were made at different times and that both were originally without borders. There was a hatch beside the ledgers for repeated access to the vault beneath.

The memorial to Rory O Donnell (hereafter ROD) is a composite monument of three separate parts (Fig. 4); a ledger (2.7m x 0.94), the long axis of which runs west to east, flanked on its northern and southern sides by detached marble borders (2.7m x 0.24m). The ledger of 'Carrara' grey-white marble with pronounced grey veins has an attached western border, an inscription, the O Donnell coat of arms and an attached eastern border (Fig. 5). The considerably varied white

marbles of the Apuan Alps in Tuscany were widely used in ecclesiastical architecture for paving,

statuary, ledgers and inlay work (Price, 2007: 64-5).

Heraldry

In Ireland, as elsewhere in early modern Europe, heraldry was integral to families of high rank. A

well-executed coat of arms on a funerary monument instantly conveyed the identity and position

of the deceased (Tait, 2002: 117-8). The arms of Rory O Donnell are positioned beneath the

inscription and occupy 0.45m^2 of the lower eastern end of the ledger (Fig. 5). They are incised

and inlaid with five different types of decorative stone. The crest is a coronet jewelled with

Tunisian Giallo antico and Greek Rosso antico inlays (Price, 2007: 90-91, 122). The shield is framed

by a scrolled Baroque-style cartouche which is decorated with Spanish broccatello and held aloft

by a lion and bull rampant, both finely crafted in Giallo antico. Within the heater-shaped shield,

a sleeved right arm in Italian breccia, bent at the elbow, holds upright the Cross of Saint

Columcille inlaid in Rosso antico marble. The early medieval Columcille of Iona had his origins in

the Cinéal Conaill people of Donegal and was venerated by the O Donnell ruling family (Ó Riain,

2011: 211-14).

Borders

The west or upper border of the ROD memorial is part of the main body of the slab (Fig. 5),

demarcated by a pair of incised lines and by *memento mori* inlaid in Giallo antico limestone and

half-circle motifs of Carrara black and yellow limestone (Fig. 6, Table 3). The east or bottom

border is likewise part of the ledger, indicated by cross bones of Giallo antico limestone.

Ornamental stone settings on the northern border include Verde antico, Carrara black and

yellow, Spanish broccatello, Travertine and possibly Breccia di Seravezza (Fig. 6, Table 3). The corresponding south border, which is detached from the ledger and separates it from the adjoining memorial of Hugh, Baron of Dungannon, presents the same sequence of cruciform, half-circle, rhombus, circle and cusped rectangle inlays. However, the cruciform inlays at the western and eastern ends of the border strip are Travertine and one of the circle inlays, probably a repair of 1844, breaks the design by using fossiliferous limestone (Fig. 6, Table 3). The north and south borders are both separate from the ledger and not part of the original scheme (Fig. 5). Nevertheless, they are seventeenth-century work and must have been added somewhat later, probably when the Irish Franciscan, Luke Wadding, was at San Pietro in Montorio between 1618 and 1624 (Jennings, 1953: 19-20). At that time, the Earl of Tyrone's ledger may have been made and borders designed to surround both his and O Donnell's memorials. In its original state the ROD ledger consisted of just the slab with its attached west and east borders (Fig. 5). The imperfect junction of the northern border with the ledger suggests that it was crudely re-fitted, probably in 1851.

Inscription

The greater part of the surface of the slab (*c*.1.30m^2) is occupied by a Latin inscription of 36 lines (192 words) incised in Roman hand, as though the ledger was contrived as a manuscript or book page (Fig. 5). Three different font sizes were used for emphasis. The size of the slab was obviously dictated by the intentionally lengthy polemical epitaph that links the house of O Donnell with Counter-Reformation Catholicism, the papacy and the Spanish crown. In a confessional tone, the inscription lauds the virtues of the deceased. It is a very public document about the Catholic politics of Rory and Caffar O Donnell and their eldest brother, Red Hugh, who had died in exile at

Simancas in Spain on 10 September 1602 and was buried in the Franciscan church at Valladolid (Kerney Walsh, 1986: 22-5). With its emphasis on martyrdom and exile, the inscription is typical of the genre of Catholic-in-exile, Counter-Reformation funerary rhetoric in stone, which memorialised resolute suffering for the Catholic faith (Janssen, 2014: 152).

The inscription (Fig. 7) was renewed in 1844 by Restaldi, the *scalpellino* of the Irish Neo-classical sculptor, John Hogan. It was part of a project undertaken by Hogan to refurbish the Irish ledgers in the church for James Molyneux Caulfeild (1820-92), 3rd Earl of Charlemont (Turpin, 1982: 87-8, 144-5; NLI, MS 4179). As reported by the Irish newspaper, The *Nation*, (20 December, 1845: 152), Caulfeild, whose mother was a lineal descendant of the O Donnells of Tyrconnell, had travelled to Rome in 1843 to inspect the condition of the Irish memorials. Finding the 'precious marbles and inlayings broken and removed' and the inscriptions 'much defaced', he 'procured copies of the originals from the archives of the convent' and raised a subscription among the Irish in Rome to pay for the restoration of the memorials (FitzPatrick, 2010).

A comparison between the text of the ROD renewed inscription and Alveri's (1664: 313-4) record of it indicates some discrepancy between the two readings (Fig. 7). This means that either Alveri, or the convent archivist, were inaccurate in their record-making, or that some licence was taken by Hogan and Restaldi. Rough repairs made to the ledger in 1851 also altered the inscription. Most of the differences between Alveri's reading and the ledger inscription as it is today occur on lines eighteen to twenty, the more significant of which is on line eighteen where Alveri's AETATIS VERO ANNO XXX ['in fact 30 years of age'] reads as AETATIS SVAE XXXIII ['at the age of 33'] (Fig. 7). Alveri's record suggests that O Donnell was 30 when he died but the renewal of the

inscription in 1844 changed his age to 33, an attempt, perhaps, in the 1844 version, to equate

the age at which O Donnell died with that of Christ. There are additional minor differences in

Alveri's reading, highlighted in Fig. 7. There is some evidence to suggest that the northern and

southern edges of the ROD ledger were trimmed, probably during post-Risorgimento repairs. The

nuances between Alveri's recorded inscription and that on the extant ledger are unlikely to be

attributable to errors on Alveri's part. He was a careful record maker and the inscription would

have been legible to him 55 years or so after it had been laid. The inscription on the ledger was

quite eroded by 1844. Where letters were missing, a certain amount of guess-work may have

been done or perhaps an opportunity was taken to introduce new content.

There is no record of any other transcriptions having been made between Alveri's, and Restaldi's

renewal of the inscription in 1844. Meehan's record of the inscription, which he published in all

three editions (1868, 1870, 1886) of his *Fate and Fortunes*, is often cited as an accurate pre-

renewal record of it (Ó Muraíle, 2007: 589-90). However, while it conforms to Alveri's version in

respect of the spelling of particular words, in the more crucial issue of Rory O Donnell's age at

death, Meehan (1886:341-2) correlates with the renewed inscription of 1844. The inscription

would have been quite worn at the time Meehan first saw it, sometime between 1828 and 1835,

when he was a seminarian at the Irish College in Rome.[4] He appears to have copied this

inscription after it had been renewed but he corrected some of the Latin. In conclusion, Alveri's

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[4] Entry for Patricius Meehan in the registry of seminarians, Irish College, Rome (Pontifical Irish College Rome Archives).

(1664: 313-4) appears to be the authentic reading of the original on the ledger of Rory and Caffar O Donnell (Fig. 7).

In translation it reads:

To God the Best and Greatest

To Prince Roderic O'Donal, Count of Tirconallia in Ireland, who died for the Catholic religion under the gravest dangers, in both uniform and civil dress equally a most constant promoter and defender of the Apostolic Roman faith, which he fled his fatherland to defend and preserve, visiting Italy, France, and Belgium, especially the monuments of the saints there, and was received in those places with the singular love and honour of christian princes, also with the paternal affection of the most holy father and lord Pope Paul V, with the greatest wishes of Catholics for his happy return. His untimely death, which he underwent on 30 July in the year of salvation 1608 at the age of 33, brought the greatest grief and sorrow to all orders in this city.

As soon as he was free of care, his brother Calfurnius, as he enjoyed the same path with the same happiness, the companion of his exile and dangers, in the highest hope and expectation of good things from the nobility of his spirit, which virtue and the best character adorned, left his desire and sorrow to his co-exiles on 14 September in the next year [1609] at the age of 25.

The first-born brother Prince Hugo went before them in age and order of fate, whom Philip III, king of Spain, piously thinking for both the Catholic faith and the

fatherland, cherished while alive and in the prime of life and took care that, after

they died, should be honorably buried at Valladolid in Spain, on 30 August in the

year of salvation 1602.[5]

The author of the inscription is not recorded but the obvious attention to genealogical detail, the

knowledge of the itinerary of the exiles and the characterisation of the earl and his brothers as

champions of Roman Catholicism suggests that it is likely to have been Tadhg O Keenan. The text

of the inscription would fit within the manuscript pages of his narrative *Turas na nIarladh as Éire*

and is in keeping with recent interpretation of that narrative as a kind of address to the exiled

members of the post-Tridentine Irish Catholic nation in Europe (Mac Craith, 2013:84)

MEMORIAL OF HUGH O NEILL, BARON OF DUNGANNON

The funerary monument of Hugh O Neill, Baron of Dungannon (hereafter HBD) consists of four

separate pieces that include a Carrara marble ledger (2.26m by 0.96m) and three individually cut

ornamental borders enclosing it on the west, south and east sides (Fig. 4). The ledger is set out

in three registers that include the main inscription, the coat of arms of the Baron of Dungannon,

and a final short inscription (Fig. 8).

Heraldry

The arms of the Baron of Dungannon dominate the ledger, filling an area of $0.61m^2$ in the lower

half (Fig. 8). An incised coronet, jewelled with Giallo antico and Rosso antico inlays, surmounts a

scrolled cartouche decorated with Giallo antico and Spanish broccatello inlays. The cartouche

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[5] Translation, Mark Stansbury.

frames a shield bearing two lions rampant that hold aloft the Red Hand of Ulster. The lions and hand are executed in Rosso antico. The O Neills adopted the Red Hand badge as a propaganda device in the fourteenth century and it was used in their heraldry thereafter (Simms, 1983: 142-9). A body of water, represented by grey fossiliferous limestone inlay at the base of shield, is incised with the *ichthus* or Christian fish symbol.

Borders

Discrepancies in the relationship of the HBD slab to the border segments enclosing its west, south and east sides indicate that they are not original to the funerary monument (Fig. 6), but undoubtedly seventeenth-century work. The mismatch of ledger and borders is untypical of Restaldi's work and is more likely to be the result of the 1851 hurried repairs. The three border pieces are of dark-grey bardiglio limestone. They are too short for the original slab (Fig. 8) which had to be trimmed along its northern length in order to accommodate them. The border pieces are near identical in design to those framing the ROD ledger and must therefore have been positioned around a smaller ledger – probably that of Hugh's father, the Earl of Tyrone. The west or upper border is distinguished by *memento mori* of winged skull and cross-bones, inlaid in Giallo antico limestone, flanked by half-circle inlays of Carrara black and yellow limestone, with a cruciform inlay of Verde antico marking the southern end of the border (Fig. 6, Table 3). The long south border, in imitation of the north border of the ROD slab, is decorated with half circles of Carrara black and yellow limestone, rhombus inlays of Spanish broccatello, Travertine circles and a cusped rectangle of possible Breccia di Seravezza. *Memento mori* of Giallo antico cross-bones, on the eastern border, are set off against an incised bow and trailing ribbon, flanked by two half-

circles of Carrara black and yellow limestone, with a cruciform inlay of Verde antico at the southern terminus of the border (Fig. 6, Table 3).

Geometric patterns of decorative stone inlay comparable to those in the HBD and ROD ledgers were used elsewhere on the walls and piers of chapels, and on wall-fixed funerary memorials, in the churches of seventeenth-century Rome. The external engaged piers of Cappella Santa Anna, in San Pietro in Montorio, were inlaid with Verde antico, Giallo antico, Breccia di Seravezza and Rosso antico *c*. 1603 for Carlo Cattaneo de Carrara, patron of the chapel. The style, however, can also be seen in Santa Maria Sopra Minerva and at the apse end of Santa Maria in Trastevere where the authors of some of the respective works are known. The Aldobrandini Chapel in Santa Maria Sopra Minerva is striking in its use of geometric patterns of decorative stone inlay, work completed by Carlo Maderno who is also attributed Cappella della Pieta (1615-20) in San Pietro in Montorio (Montijano Garcia, 1998: 43).

Inscription

The Latin inscription incised in Roman hand is in two parts (Fig. 8). The first, in twenty lines, occupies *c*. 0.96m^2 of the surface of the slab. The second part consists of three lines positioned below the heraldic arms. It records the month and year that Hugh died and his age at death. The exact date of Hugh's death is not given in any version of the inscription, but the Spanish ambassador to Rome, El Conde de Castro, reported the death on 13 October 1609, as having occurred 'within the last few days' (Kerney Walsh, 1986: 250).

There is very little disagreement between Alveri's (1664: 313) record of the inscription and the renewed version of 1844 (Fig. 9). Meehan's (1886: 342) record of it conforms to that of Alveri but he also made spelling changes of his own that are not represented in either Alveri's or Restaldi's versions.

The inscription as provided by Alveri (Fig. 9) translates as:

> To God the Best and Greatest
>
> To Hugo Baron of Dongana [Dungannon], the first-born son of Hugo the Great O'Neill, Prince and Count of Tirona, [who with] his father and uncle Count Roderick of Tirconallia, freely left their own estates and became exiles for the Catholic faith, which they vigorously defended for many years against the heretics in Ireland, followed to the common haven of Catholics, the city of Rome, on account of his own piety toward God and his family. His untimely death took away the great gifts of body and spirit perceived by all and from him the hope of sometime restoring the Catholic religion in those regions and he joined the aforesaid late uncle Roderick in similar fate.
>
> He died October 1609 at the age of 24, lamentable not only for his [family] but also for the whole curia.[6]

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[6] Translation, Mark Stansbury.

The confessional tone of the inscription is comparable to that of the O Donnell ledger, emphasising the exile experience as a self-imposed virtue, an act of martyrdom, with the intention of returning to restore the standing of the Catholic religion in Ireland. Hugh's father is addressed as a Prince and Count, implying, perhaps, that O Keenan, the suggested author of both inscriptions, used those titles to align O Neill and O Donnell with European nobility. Although they had English titles as earls, the surname (the O Neill, the O Donnell) was used as the formal title of authority and formula of address to Gaelic Irish leaders in Ireland (Simms 1987: 33-5).

LOST MEMORIAL OF HUGH O NEILL, EARL OF TYRONE

O Neill's funeral was a discrete affair in deference to Philip III's entente with the English king (Kerney Walsh, 1986:379). The inscription on his ledger, D.O.M. HUGONIS PRINCIPIS ONELLI OSSA ('To God the Best and Greatest, the bones of Prince Hugh O'Neill') was also understated (Alveri, (664: 314). It has been suggested that the use of the term *ossa* could imply that O Neill's burial place remained unmarked for a significant period after his interment in July 1616. The inscribed ledger may not have been prepared for him until the Irish Franciscan, Luke Wadding, came to live at the convent of San Pietro in Montorio between *c.* 1618 and 1624 (Jennings, 1953: 19-20; Ó Fearghail, 2007-8: 79-81). This may have happened in 1623 when Eoghan Mac Mahon was interred in the Irish vault (Ó Fearghail, 2007-8: 83). A curious but uncorroborated seventeenth-century reference in the Martyrology of Donegal (Meehan, 1886: 316-7; Ó Fearghail, 2007-8: 81-3) implies that the remains of the Earl of Tyrone were translated from the church in that year, perhaps when the vault was opened to bury Archbishop Mac Mahon. If the translation did in fact occur, the Martyrology does not cite the location to which the earl's remains were removed.

Meehan (1868: 477), who made frequent visits to San Pietro in Montorio between 1828 and 1835, did not refer in his first edition of *The Fate and Fortunes* (1868), to seeing O'Neill's memorial in the church in that period. He made it clear at the time he was writing in 1868 that there was no doubt that the ledger had been re-used in repairing the floor of the church. He also read O Neill's epitaph as 'D.O.M. HIC. QUIESCUNT. UGONIS. PRINCIPIS. O'NEILL. OSSA' (1868: 446), which is a version not found in Alveri or in the convent archives. Therefore, it must be concluded that it his attempted reading of a worn inscription before the renewal of the Irish memorials by Restaldi in 1844, or that it reflects his inclination to improve the Irish inscriptions. There is no suggestion in the few records relating to the repairs of 1844 that the ledger was already missing. The principal damage to the church in 1849 was to the apse, belfry, roof and floor (Vannicelli, 1971: 44; Cipriani, n.d:107). With the Irish memorials and burial vault situated just 2m from the choir, they must have been disturbed at that time. The restoration work to the church in 1851 involved repaving the church floor with marble slabs (Vannicelli, 1971: 45), at which time broken memorials would have been discarded or cut up for paving. If any portion of O Neill's ledger had survived after 1851, the tread of feet would have long since eroded the brief inscription.

DISPLACED MEMORIAL OF EOGHAN MAC MAHON, ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN

Eoghan Mac Mahon, Archbishop of Dublin from 1611-23, was not among the exiles who accompanied O Donnell and O Neill from Ulster in 1607 (Millett, 1965: 17-18). He came to Rome in 1621-2 and died there 1 September 1623. His ledger inscription emphasises his Catholic martyrdom and role as a negotiator for the faith in Ireland. According to Alveri (1664:314), his

ledger was the second in the third row of the nave and on the northern side of the ledger of the Earl of Tyrone (Fig. 2, no. 17). The brief Latin inscription reads:

D.O.M.

Eugenio Matthei Archiepiscopo Dublinien(sis) doctrinae claritate natalium splendore fide in Deum pietate in patriam singulari qui postquam soliciti pastoris diuturno ac difficili te(m)pore in Hibernia numeros omnes adimplesset sub Gregorio xv. Romam venit ubi ab opt(ime) Pontifice beinigne habitus dum patriæ suæ negotia promoveret extremu(m) diem clausit Kal(endas) Septem(bris) MDCXXIII

The inscription translates as:

To God the Best and Greatest

To Eugene Matthews [Eoghan Mac Mahon], Archbishop of Dublin, a man distinguished in doctrine and shining in faith, with singular piety toward God and his fatherland, who, after he had completely fulfilled the daily cares of a shepherd and after a difficult time in Ireland, came to Rome under Gregory xv, where he was received kindly by the best pontiff while he furthered negotiations with his fatherland. He finished his final day on 1 September 1623.[7]

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[7] Translation, Mark Stansbury.

A modern memorial to the Italian Azzurri family (Fig. 2, no. 5), inserted in the nineteenth century, and a hatch entrance to the vault of Franciseo Beltramello occupy the approximate floor space where Mac Mahon's ledger was originally laid (Fig. 2, no. 6-7). A ledger fragment at the base of the western pier of Cappella della Presentazione di Gesu al Tempio may be a surviving portion of the Mac Mahon memorial (Fig. 2, no. 17). It is devoid of inscription, but ornamented with incised heraldic mantling. What is visible of the mantling consists of five tassels which, presumably, were matched by five others and draped around a heraldic shield. Ten tassels are indicative of archbishop status. Part of the border of the ledger is also visible and is decorated with an early modern-style incised running foliage motif. The authenticity of the identification is reinforced by the fact that Alveri did not record any other early modern archbishop's memorial in the floor of the church in 1664.[8]

The need to renew the church floor after the Risorgimento created an opportunity for nineteenth-century Italian families to secure burial rights in vaults that had been cleared, and to mark their place of interment with inscribed ledgers. Comparison between the inscribed ledgers in the nave floor recorded in 1664 and those in the floor today reveals the degree of change in burials and accompanying ledgers (Fig. 2, Table 2). Just four of the ledgers noted by Alveri remain in their approximate original positions, including the ROD and HBD ledgers in the second row, and others in the fourth and sixth rows (Alveri 1664: 315, 316). The new positions and fragmentary state of some of the ledgers confirm that they were cut up and re-used as paving

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[8] The only episcopal memorial recorded by Alveri (1664), *Roma*, 312, was the ledger of Galcerando, Bishop of Bisarcen (d. 1499), the third ledger in the first row of memorials in the nave floor, but which did not survive the Risorgimento.

c.1851. The migration and breaking up of the Bononiensi (Alveri 1664: 312; Fig. 2, no. 13) and Sigismundus (Alveri 1664: 316; Fig. 2, no. 18) ledgers, for example, are a good indication of that process and help to explain the present-day position of the proposed Mac Mahon ledger, and the disappearance of the Earl of Tyrone's memorial.

Some conclusions can be drawn about the original form and layout of the Irish ledgers and the course of events that altered them. In their original state in 1609, the ROD and HBD ledgers were borderless (Fig. 5, 8). After Hugh O Neill died in 1616, his burial, as suggested by the inscription, may have been left unmarked for a period of time. Luke Wadding, perhaps, undertook to mark O Neill's interment in 1623-4 (after Eoghan Mac Mahon had died) and added borders in fashionable style around his ledger and that of Rory O Donnell, in an attempt to distinguish them from all of the others in the floor. In 1844 the inscriptions were renewed, with some of the text altered in the process (Fig. 7, 9). During the Risorgimento the ledgers of the Earl of Tyrone and Eoghan Mac Mahon must have been damaged and cut up and re-used as paving stones when the church floor was resurfaced in 1851. The intervention of the Irish Dominicans of San Clemente prevented the same fate for the ROD and HBD ledgers, and the surviving border of the Earl of Tyrone's ledger was reset around that of his son (Fig. 4).

BURIAL VAULT

Beneath the nave, a crypt containing approximately six bays of vaults, runs north-west to south-east between the pier abutments and continues beneath the sanctuary. At San Pietro in Montorio, as in many Continental churches, there are hatches in the floor to individual burial vaults but no general access to the crypt from the church. There was constant pressure on burial

space in crypts, and San Pietro in Montorio was no exception. Brick divisions were used to subdivide or enlarge vaults. In that way a greater number of deceased could be interred in the crypt. Typical of Continental practice, coffins were not sanitised with clay (Cox and Kneller 2001, 3).

A single vault was designated for the small Irish community. Two accessible burial vaults in the vicinity of the Irish ledgers were explored (FitzPatrick, 2007).[9] Both vaults are 2.95m in depth and rectangular in plan, 3.37m by 2.2m, their long axes aligned west-northwest/east-southeast (Fig. 10). The roofs are barrel-vaulted, springing from rubble and brick walls daubed with a thick brown mortar. The vaults had the capacity to hold about twelve stacked coffins. Apart from the O Donnells and O Neills and the Archbishop of Dublin, Gaelic court officials and household servants may have been interred there too (Table 1).This is suggested in a seventeenth-century necrology of San Pietro in Montorio, which refers to the interment of O Keenan (Ó Fearghail and Troy 2010). However, only the elite were memorialised.

The hatch through which the Irish vault was reached was sealed over during the repaving of the nave floor in 1851. At that time, prominent Italian families seized the opportunity to secure prestigious burial places in the vaults. One of those families was the Azzurri. The Azzurri memorial occupies the approximate position of the O Neill and Mac Mahon ledgers (Fig. 2, no. 5). In preparation for the burial of the first family member in 1860, a new hatch was cut into the repaved floor to access the Irish vault (Fig. 10). Looking up at the hatch from inside the vault, the

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[9] In 1989, two Irish clergymen, Cardinal Tómas Ó Fiaich and Rev. Fearghus Ó Fearghail, entered the Azzurri vault in search of Hugh O Neill's burial. See Ó Fearghail (2007-8), The tomb of Hugh O'Neill, 74-5, 84.

line of an earlier hatch, sealed over during the post-Risorgimento repaving, can be seen. Six burials of the Azzurri now rest in the vault. A second vault, adjoining the north side of the Azzurri's, was also investigated in order to ascertain whether the Irish burials were redeposited there. The vault, entered through a hatch beside a worn ledger is the burial place of Franciseo Beltramello (Fig. 2, no. 6, 7) according to Alveri's (1664: 314) scheme. However, it houses decomposing timber coffin debris and badly degenerated, scattered human bone from many former individual burials, which makes it impossible to stand in the vault. Erect coffin lids and the strewn nature of the remains indicate that they were probably re-deposited there after having been cleared from nearby vaults.

CONCLUSION

The location of the burial place of the Gaelic Irish, overlooked by the Transfiguration on the high altar, was ostensibly prestigious, but the form of memorial used to mark the interments of the their elite members was inconspicuous, both in the context of their noble status and the topography of power that San Pietro in Montorio represented in early seventeenth-century Rome. The most visible memorials are those in the pseudo-transept chapels and the wall-fixed memorials in the nave. The more numerous ledgers were in many respects humble, vulnerable and ephemeral forms of commemoration, as exemplified by the life history of the early modern ledgers recorded by Alveri. The use of decorative stone inlay was one way of making a ledger stand out and this was perhaps the intention behind the posthumous creation of ornamental borders around the memorials of the earls.

There were political reasons for the understatement of the Irish memorials. The penury of the Irish made reliance on the agency of successive Spanish ambassadors essential to obtaining anything more than their maintenance between 1608 and O Neill's death in 1616. The concern of the ambassadors to avoid ostentation predicated the type of memorial chosen for the Earl of Tyrconnell and the Baron of Dungannon. By 1616, covering 'what appearances might cause difficulties' in the relations of Philip III with James I, seems to have resulted in no memorial being made for the Earl of Tyrone in the short term (Kerney Walsh, 1986: 379). With despondency, thinly disguised as triumph, the chroniclers of O Neill's obituary in the *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland* wrote: 'Although he died far from Armagh, the burial-place of his ancestors, it was a token that God was pleased with his life that the Lord permitted him a no worse burial-place, namely, Rome, the head of the Christians' (O'Donovan, 1856, iv: 2373). Had O Neill and O Donnell died in Ireland, they would have been respectively interred in the Franciscan churches at Armagh and Donegal and commemorated by elaborate altar-tombs or by three-dimensional multi-storied mural monuments incorporating a sarcophagus or chest tomb carrying iconic Catholic Counter-Reformation symbolism (Cockerham, 2009: 268, 274-5).

In conclusion, the principal finding of this research is that the burial place of the Gaelic Irish at San Pietro in Montorio tangibly conveys the predicament of their exile. It is reflected in the very eclecticism of the ledgers, with their combination of continental design and Irish biography, Baroque-style heraldry in exotic stone and medieval Gaelic insignia. The manuscript-quality inscriptions reveal how those charged with commemorating the earls chose to project them and their political allegiances. References to their acts of piety and suffering for faith and fatherland,

to entering exile in order to defend their faith and to the hope of return, convey a confessional identity and conscious Catholic fashioning. Such commemoration of the forbearance that accompanied the Catholic exile experience, in the very public medium of funerary monuments, was shared by Catholic elite in exile elsewhere in Europe and reflects a penchant for martyrdom in the Counter-Reformation Church.

The funerary monuments of the Irish reveal that they were not treated in death as European nobility, but the inscriptions represent them as agents of Counter-Reformation, with a specific identity as Catholic-in-exile aristocracy from Ireland.

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