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‘Publick and solemn acknowledgements’: occasional days of state-appointed worship in Ireland, 1689–1702

Since the English Reformation, occasional days of thanksgiving, prayer and fasting were appointed by royal authority in response to an array of exceptional circumstances varying from outbreaks of disease to bad weather, and popish conspiracies to military successes. Details of these days of religious observance, their inspiration and purpose were communicated to the public by printed proclamation and reinforced by the publication of specially prepared forms of prayer for use in Anglican services on these occasions. The reign of William III (1689–1702) saw these days of occasional fasting and thanksgiving take place with unprecedented frequency. For the most part, this intensification of state-appointed public worship corresponded with the king’s struggle against Louis XIV during the War of the Grand Alliance (1688–97). Such days of occasional fasting and thanksgiving provided an opportunity for the Williamite court to promote the legitimacy of the new regime as part of a larger strategy of ‘courtly reformation’.¹

Occasional feasts and fasts remain a neglected area of study, particularly in an Irish context.² This article aims to bring attention to their observance in Ireland with particular focus on the reign of William III. Although consideration of the immediate events that instigated the appointment of fasts and thanksgivings serves to explain their timing, frequency and purpose, it is useful to consider the manner in which occasional worship was organised, communicated and observed in seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Ireland, before focusing on the period 1689–1702. This approach cannot wholly reveal the impact of state-appointed worship on the lives of those expected to participate in it, but it does provide a chronology and context for these events that is necessary for better

¹ Tony Claydon, *William III and the godly revolution* (Cambridge, 1996), pp 100–5.

² A few studies of fasts, thanksgivings and state-ordered worship exist in an English context. Henry Ippel’s article, ‘Blow the trumpet, sanctify the fast’ in *Huntington Library Quarterly*, xlv, no. 1 (Winter, 1980), pp 43–60, looks at eighteenth-century fast sermons and discusses evidence of contemporary attitudes towards fasting. Philip Williamson’s article, ‘State prayers, fasts and thanksgivings: public worship in Britain 1830–1897’ in *Past and Present*, no. 200 (2008), pp 121–74, is particularly valuable as it is one of the first fruits of the British State Prayers Project underway at Durham University. Little exists on the topic in an Irish context with the exception of Peter Gray, ‘National humiliation and the great hunger: fast and famine in 1847’ in *I.H.S.*, xxxii, no. 126 (Nov. 2000), pp 193–216. A section entitled ‘Fasts and thanksgivings’ in Claydon, *Godly revolution*, pp 100–9, provides a good background to the period.

understanding the messages conveyed by the state to the public on these occasions.

However, it is important to point out that these messages were primarily targeted at members of the Protestant established church in Ireland. As such, this article is primarily concerned with Anglican observance of these events. Of course, members of other Christian denominations observed occasional days of fasting and thanksgiving as well. For example in June 1695, the lord deputy, Henry, Baron Capell, noted that Irish Catholics had observed a fast, which 'they pretend is for a general peace'.³ Obviously, these occasions were neither approved of nor appointed by the state. Indeed, with the bulk of the population attached to Roman Catholicism and, moreover, politically hostile to the purpose of the fasts and thanksgivings that took place during the period, observance of state-appointed public worship was a practice necessarily limited to the Protestant minority.⁴ However, it is essential to add an important caveat in this regard. While instances are known where dissenting Protestants in Ireland observed occasional days of state-appointed worship, this was despite non-conformist hostility to state-appointed liturgies in general, presumably in most cases extending to a rejection of the officially-backed occasional forms of prayer.⁵

I

Although occasional days of state-appointed prayer had long been a feature of Anglican worship in Ireland, the increased frequency with which these occasions were appointed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries may be associated with the court-led strategy of 'godly reformation'.⁶ Other manifestations of this policy in Ireland, such as the impact of the 'Reformation of Manners' and the reinvigoration of annual Protestant commemorations, have already received a good deal of attention from historians. Extant sermons have generally provided the basis for such studies, offering as they do many insights into Irish Protestant political thought, particularly in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution (1688–9).⁷ In contrast, only a handful of printed sermons relating to occasional feasts and fasts from seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Ireland are extant. As such, it is necessary to examine the relevant proclamations and forms of prayer in order to understand the impact of occasional worship on the lives of Irish Anglicans during the period in question.

³ *Cal. S.P. Dom. 1694–5*, p. 494.

⁴ For further discussion of the political allegiance of Irish Roman Catholics during this period see Éamonn Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite cause, 1685–1766: a fatal attachment* (Dublin, 2004), pp 95–105.

⁵ Raymond Gillespie, *Devoted people: belief and religion in early modern Ireland* (Manchester, 1997), p. 49; Ralph Lambert, *An answer to a late pamphlet, entitl'd A vindication of marriage* (Dublin, 1704), p. 26.

⁶ Claydon, *Godly revolution*, pp 104–6.

⁷ For Irish annual Protestant observances see T. C. Barnard, 'The uses of 23 October 1641 and Irish Protestant celebrations' in *English Historical Review*, cvii, no. 421 (Oct., 1991), pp 889–920; S. J. Connolly, 'The Church of Ireland and the royal martyr: regicide and revolution in Anglican political thought c.1660–c.1745' in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, xlv (2003), pp 484–506.

This material can have certain advantages as evidence in comparison to other forms of contemporary print, particularly in terms of assessing the extent to which contemporaries were exposed to it. We know, for example, that the proclamations and forms of prayer were produced for distribution around the country by government and church officials.⁸ Furthermore, this material was intended for oral dissemination at Church of Ireland services, thereby transcending, to some extent, the financial and educational barriers that typically restricted access to print. Indeed, ministers were frequently instructed to read proclamations appointing a feast or fast aloud at Sunday services prior to an upcoming day of occasional worship, as a reminder to their congregants.⁹ Of course, such a circulation network depended heavily on the timely distribution of the relevant publications to churches around the kingdom, the inclination of individual ministers to carry out their instructions, and the willingness of the laity to attend church services.

Where such willingness might be lacking on the part of Irish Anglicans or their ministers, coercion could be employed to compel observance. Many of the proclamations appointing occasional days of public worship explicitly threatened punishment against those who failed to participate to an acceptable level in these events.¹⁰ This primarily involved attendance at church services, but it also obligated abstinence from activities such as work, travel and sports, or in other words, treating occasional days of state-appointed prayer in much the same manner as Sundays.¹¹ For example, proclamations in 1666 and 1672 explicitly ordered that the people ‘abstain from labour, and from pleasure, and from the ordinary works of their callings’ in order to better dedicate themselves to the day of fasting.¹² The canons of the Church of Ireland stipulated that churchwardens and their assistants in every parish ‘shall diligently see, that all the parishioners duely resort to their Church, upon all Sundayes and Holydayes, and there to continue the whole time of Divine Service’.¹³ In the 1690s, churchwardens of the

⁸ For discussion of the circulation of Irish proclamations in the seventeenth century see Raymond Gillespie, *Reading Ireland: print, reading and social change in early modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2005), pp 106–7; D. B. Quinn, ‘Government printing and the publication of the Irish statutes in the sixteenth century’ in *Proc. R.I.A.*, xlix, sect. C (1941), pp 48–63.

⁹ As there is often little to distinguish proclamation titles from one another, for the sake of brevity and clarity the issue date of each proclamation has been included in their first citation and subsequent references will simply refer to that date. *The declaration of Sir Hardresse Waller, major general of the parliaments forces in Ireland, and the council of officers there*, 28 Dec. 1659 (London, 1659[60]); *We the lord lieutenant and council, do order, command and proclaim publick humiliation*, 8 June 1666 (Dublin, 1666); *By the lord deputy and council. Arran. It having pleased Almighty God by his wonderful providence ...*, 13 Aug. 1683 (Dublin, 1683); *A proclamation for a solemn and publick thanksgiving*, 10 Aug. 1685 (Dublin, 1685).

¹⁰ For example, every extant proclamation from 1693 until the conclusion of the peace in 1697 contained such a threat. See Appendix.

¹¹ *An act for the better observation of the Lord’s Day, commonly called Sunday* (7 William III, c.17). See also *Cal. S.P. Dom. 1693*, p. 260; *Cal. S.P. Dom. 1696*, p. 347; Claydon, *Godly revolution*, p. 109; Ippel, ‘Blow the trumpet’, p. 53; Williamson, ‘State prayers’, p. 122.

¹² *Proclamation*, 8 June 1666; *We the lord lieutenant and council, do command and proclaim publick humiliation*, 27 Mar. 1672 (Dublin, 1672).

¹³ *Constitutions, and canons ecclesiastical, treated upon by the archbishops, and bishops, and the rest of the clergy of Ierland [sic]* (Dublin, 1669), p. 54.

diocese of Dublin were specifically reminded to present anyone in their parish who profaned 'the Lord's Day, or other appointed Holy-days, by using their continual weekly labour, or otherwise, contrary to the Ecclesiastical Laws of this Land'.¹⁴

Of course, the extent to which these requirements were enforced in the light of the structural and practical difficulties faced by the Church of Ireland during the period in question is difficult to ascertain. The war of 1689–91 had a devastating impact on the condition of the established church as financial difficulties hindered efforts to repair church property ruined, damaged or neglected during the war. Widespread abuses such as absenteeism, pluralism, lay impropriation of church revenue and clerical negligence prevented the provision of adequate pastoral services to Church of Ireland adherents, to varying degrees, throughout the country.¹⁵ However, it certainly cannot be said that all Church of Ireland bishops and ministers were negligent in their duties.¹⁶

Even if the authorities charged with publicising these occasions did fail in their duties, there is plenty of evidence to indicate that these publications were available for purchase and private consumption. Throughout the seventeenth century, the title page of many of the occasional forms of prayer indicated their availability for purchase at the king's printing-house in Dublin. Additional vendors of the occasional forms of prayer were also named: the bookseller Joseph Wilde sold at least one such form of prayer in 1683 and another bookseller, Samuel Helsham, was named as a seller of occasional forms of prayer in 1685, 1686 and 1688.¹⁷ The proclamations were also consistently available for purchase from the king's printer until 1690. After this date, individual vendors were not explicitly advertised on the publications themselves, but it is likely that they continued to be sold in the same manner.

Another sign of the private consumption of the occasional forms of prayer can be found in the colophon of a form of prayer from 1721, which indicated that it had been 'Printed at the Rein Deer in Monrath-Street, where the Poor will be Supply'd with this Prayer at Half-Pence a Piece'.¹⁸ This particular form of prayer

¹⁴ *Articles of visitation and inquiry to be made within the several parishes of the [— —] of Dublin* (Dublin, [1698]), p. 5.

¹⁵ See J. G. Simms, 'Protestant ascendancy, 1691–1714' in T. W. Moody and W. E. Vaughan (eds), *A new history of Ireland*, iv: *Eighteenth-Century Ireland, 1691–1800* (Oxford, 1986), pp 21–2.

¹⁶ S. J. Connolly, 'Reformers and highfliers: the post-revolution church' in Alan Ford, James McGuire and Kenneth Milne (eds), *As by law established: the Church of Ireland since the Reformation* (Dublin, 1995), pp 153–4; Philip O'Regan, *Archbishop William King, 1650–1729, and the constitution in church and state* (Dublin, 2000), p. 62; J. C. Beckett, 'The government and the Church of Ireland under William III and Anne' in *I.H.S.*, ii, no. 7 (Mar. 1941), pp 283–4.

¹⁷ *A form of prayer. To be used on Wednesday the 28th of May* (Dublin, 1679); *A form of prayer with thanksgiving, to be used on Sunday September the 9th* (Dublin, 1683); *A form of prayer, and solemn thanksgiving* (Dublin, 1685); *A form of prayer with thanksgiving, to Almighty God; to be used ... upon the sixth day of February* (Dublin, 1685[6]); *A form or order of thanksgiving, and prayer, to be used in Dublin, and ten miles round it on Sunday the 19th* (Dublin, 1687[8]); *A form of prayer with thanksgiving for the safe delivery of the queen, and happy birth of the young prince* (Dublin, 1688).

¹⁸ *A form of prayer to be used ... on Friday the eight of December next* (Dublin, 1721), *English short title catalogue (E.S.T.C.)* citation no. T183090.

was unusual because the printer was not identified on the colophon, it was printed in octavo format and the price was advertised.¹⁹ Indeed, a more usual version of the same form of prayer, printed by the king's printer in the typical quarto format, is also extant.²⁰ Quarto editions were generally more expensive to produce which may explain why the octavo format edition was specifically targeted at 'the Poor'. The existence of two editions of the same form of prayer suggests particular demand for the form of prayer, while the absence of any publisher details on the octavo edition indicates that this publication was an unauthorised reprint.

Contemporary newspapers also played a role in notifying a wider public of these events. One issue of the *Dublin Intelligence* advertised a monthly fast in May 1693 through complete reproduction of the relevant proclamation.²¹ In February 1709, a later incarnation of the *Dublin Intelligence* notified its readers that a proclamation had been published for a thanksgiving which was 'to be religiously observ'd by all Her Majesties dutiful Subjects, on Thursday the 17th of March next, for his great Blessings to the Arms of Her Majesty and Her Allies the last Campaign'.²² In March 1710, the same newspaper notified its readers of a 'Publick Fast and Humiliation' due to take place later that month.²³ After 1705, many relevant proclamations were fully reproduced in the government-sponsored journal, the *Dublin Gazette*.²⁴

Instances of public display and celebration such as bell-ringing, vice-regal processions, fireworks or bonfires provided further publicity for days of thanksgiving.²⁵ For example, in June 1688, the thanksgiving appointed for the birth of James Edward, the Prince of Wales and Catholic heir to the English throne, took place in Dublin in 'grand style'.²⁶ The lord deputy led a procession of nobility and gentry through the town which was attended by kettle-drums and trumpets. Meanwhile 'the Conduits ran with Wine' and money was scattered amongst the 'great Crowds' of observers. The festivities concluded with fireworks, the firing of guns and a ball 'which lasted till the Morning'.²⁷ The *Dublin Gazette* described the celebration of a more typical thanksgiving in December 1707:

On Tuesday last, being the day appointed for a Thanksgiving, for the Successes of her Majesty's Arms and her Allies, the Last Campaign; Their Excellencies the Lords Justices went in State to Christ-Church, accompanied by most of the Nobility ... [and] at noon the

¹⁹ Mary Pollard attributes the publication to the printer Richard Fitzgerald. See Mary Pollard, *A dictionary of members of the Dublin book trade, 1550–1800: based on the records of the Guild of St Luke the Evangelist, Dublin* (London, 2000), p. 211.

²⁰ *A form of prayer to be used ... on Friday the eight of December next* (Dublin, 1721), E.S.T.C. citation no. T183089.

²¹ *Dublin Intelligence*, 29 Apr.–11 May 1693.

²² *Dublin Intelligence* (Dickson's), 26 Feb. 1708[9].

²³ *Ibid.*, 7 Mar. 1710.

²⁴ See for example *Dublin Gazette*, 18–22 Mar. 1706/7, 21–24 Aug. 1708, 22–26 Feb. 1708/9, 2–6 June 1713.

²⁵ For discussion of public celebrations relating to annual Protestant commemorations see James Kelly, "'The Glorious and Immortal Memory": commemoration and Protestant identity in Ireland 1660–1800' in *Proc. R.I.A.*, xciv, sect. C (1994), pp 25–52.

²⁶ J. G. Simms, *Jacobite Ireland, 1685–91* (London, 1969), pp 44–5.

²⁷ *Ibid.*; *London Gazette*, 12 July 1688.

Great Guns of the Castle [were] fired, and the Evening concluded with ringing of Bells, Illuminations &c.²⁸

Similar descriptions of thanksgivings recur in many subsequent issues of the *Gazette*, to the extent that in June 1708 it was deemed sufficient to report a thanksgiving as having been ‘observed in this City as usual’.²⁹ It is therefore possible to conclude that some degree of public display – processions, fireworks, the ringing of bells – was the norm for thanksgivings, in Dublin at least.

Fasts received less consistent coverage. A news-letter reported in June 1696 that ‘Friday the 10th instant, appointed for the fast by an order from the Lord Justice, was observed with great strictness’ in Dublin.³⁰ In 1707, the *Gazette* reported that a public fast was observed ‘with all Solemnity’ in the city.³¹ Similarly succinct accounts of occasional fasts are also evident in government correspondence. For example, on 19 February 1704, the Irish chief secretary, Edward Southwell, merely noted ‘General fast yesterday’ in a letter to London and, on 11 May 1705, he simply reported that a fast had been observed that day ‘with great strictness’.³² In a diary entry for 3 July 1691, Narcissus Marsh, then bishop of Ferns and Leighlin, recorded the single line: ‘Was a day of publick Fasting & holy communion with God’.³³ Marsh also recorded preaching a fast day sermon on 20 August 1692, which was the date for the second of the monthly fasts appointed by proclamation the previous 1 July.³⁴ Another journal kept from March 1689 to September 1690 provides a bit more insight into how fasts were observed. Rowland Davies, dean of Ross, recorded his observance of fast-days during his time in London, and as chaplain to Colonel Cutts’s regiment in Ireland from May 1690. Davies records attending sermons, preaching sermons and dining with company on these occasions, including one instance where he ‘supped on fish’.³⁵

In terms of understanding how these events came about, it seems that the English executive played a primary role in arranging occasional worship in Ireland. There do not appear to be any extant Irish printed forms of prayer for the period before 1679, although a proclamation from 1625 instituting a weekly fast in Ireland for the plague in England referred to the circulation of ‘a prayer or prayers to every minister as some of the Cleargie cannot Preach’.³⁶ Extant Irish proclamations from the period 1660 to 1672 do not refer to the preparation of forms of prayer at all, nor are there any such publications recorded on the *English short title catalogue*.³⁷ Although Irish printed prayers are extant from 1679 onwards, proclamations issued in August 1683, August 1685, January 1686, and

²⁸ *Dublin Gazette*, 31 Dec.–4 Jan. 1707.

²⁹ *Dublin Gazette*, 26–29 June 1708.

³⁰ *Cal. S.P. Dom.* 1696, p. 278.

³¹ *Dublin Gazette*, 8–12 Apr. 1707.

³² *Cal. S.P. Dom.* 1703–4, p. 537; *Cal. S.P. Dom.* 1704–5, p. 265.

³³ Raymond Gillespie (ed.), *Scholar bishop: the recollections and diary of Narcissus Marsh, 1638–96* (Cork, 2002), p. 36.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

³⁵ Richard Caulfield (ed.), *Journal of the Very Rev. Rowland Davies, LL.D. dean of Ross* (Camden Society 68, London, 1857), p. 103; see also *ibid.*, pp 21, 88, 115.

³⁶ R. R. Steele (ed.), *Tudor and Stuart proclamations, 1485–1714* (2 vols, Oxford, 1910), ii, 29.

³⁷ *Proclamation*, 28 Dec. 1659; *Proclamation*, 8 June 1666; *Proclamation*, 27 Mar. 1672.

February 1688 instruct the use of the English prayers for all of those occasions. So, although it is unclear whether or not the printed editions of the English forms of prayer were imported into Ireland prior to 1679, after that date it is possible to observe that the forms of prayer were composed in London and transmitted to Ireland for reprint with very minor changes.³⁸

A short-lived disruption to this procedure appears to have occurred in the early 1690s. This was due partly to the war in Ireland. In 1690 and 1691 for example, three days of state-appointed worship were observed in Ireland alone, presumably necessitating the preparation of forms of prayer by the Irish clergy.³⁹ However, in November 1690, the English secretary of state, Daniel Finch, earl of Nottingham, wrote to Henry Compton, bishop of London, in response to a request from the Irish lords justices that English forms of prayer be dispatched to Ireland, 'that they may be dispersed in convenient time'.⁴⁰ Although Nottingham procured a copy of the English form and forwarded it to the lords justices, he added that the 'Bishop of London thinks yours should be prepared by the Irish clergy'.⁴¹

The outcome of this communication is somewhat unclear. Irish printed forms of prayer used in July 1691, July 1692 and May 1693 were similar, or almost identical, to the corresponding English publications. For example, the Irish form of prayer for the monthly fast commencing on 3 July 1691 had a slightly different title, contained an additional prayer and was shorter in length than the corresponding English form of prayer, but only because it referred the reader to the *Book of Common Prayer* where appropriate rather than reproducing text from it in full.⁴² However, the Irish forms of prayer used in November 1690, 1691 and 1692 and December 1693 were quite different from their English counterparts, although it should be noted here that the forms of prayer must be regarded as compilations of material rather than wholly original compositions.⁴³ For example, the form of prayer used in Ireland for a thanksgiving observed on 10 and 24 November 1692 bore little resemblance to the corresponding English form of prayer, as it contained a number of different prayers and psalms.⁴⁴ By April 1696, a return to the earlier procedure is evident in government correspondence as the form of prayer for an upcoming thanksgiving was transmitted to Dublin expressly for reprint and use throughout Ireland later that month.⁴⁵

³⁸ For discussion of the reprinting of the proclamation and prayers in 1683 see *Cal. S.P. Dom. 1683*, pp 229, 267.

³⁹ Those appointed by proclamation on 6 July 1690, 15 Aug. 1690, and 28 July 1691. See Appendix.

⁴⁰ *Cal. S.P. Dom. 1695 & Add.*, p. 160; *Cal. S.P. Dom. 1690–1*, p. 156.

⁴¹ *Cal. S.P. Dom. 1690–1*, p. 157.

⁴² *A form of prayer to be used on Friday the third day of July* (Dublin, 1691); *A form of prayer to be used on Wednesday the twenty ninth day of this present April* (London, 1691).

⁴³ Future research and analysis of the differences between the Irish and English forms published since the Reformation may well have more to reveal on this issue.

⁴⁴ *A form of prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God, To be used ... upon Thursday the Tenth of this Instant November* (Dublin, 1692); *A form of prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God ... on Thursday the 27th day of this instant October* (London, 1692).

⁴⁵ *Cal. S.P. Dom. 1696*, p. 119. A number of Irish bishops complained that they were not consulted regarding the composition of a form of prayer for a thanksgiving appointed on 1 Aug. 1715 for the peaceful accession of George I. See Marie Léoutre, 'Life of a Huguenot exile: Henri de Ruvigny, earl of Galway, 1648–1720' (Ph.D. thesis, University College, Dublin, 2011), p. 305.

Instruction from London is also evident with regard to the appointment of festivities and fasting in Ireland, although the Irish executive had input into the timing of these events. For example, the Irish lords justices were instructed to appoint a thanksgiving in October 1691 but were also told that the ‘King leaves to you the naming the day’.⁴⁶ In June 1692, the lords justices received similar instructions for the appointment of a monthly fast.⁴⁷ Instructions from London are also evident in September 1695, March 1696, November 1697 and March 1699.⁴⁸ Indeed, by early in Anne’s reign, direction from London with regard to the appointment of these events appears to have been firmly established. For example, in December 1703, the Irish chief secretary, Edward Southwell, wrote to Nottingham, ‘I see the Queen has appointed January 12 for a fast. His Grace desires to know if she would have it observed here; as it is usual to signify it when intended.’⁴⁹

II

Regardless of their source, state-appointed fasts and thanksgivings must have been of particular interest to Irish Protestants during the period 1689–1702. In March 1689, James II had landed at Kinsale hoping to secure Ireland as part of an attempt to recover his throne, lost the previous winter to his son-in-law and nephew, William of Orange. Following his defeat at the Boyne in July 1690, James had fled Ireland, returning to the exiled Stuart court at the Chateau de Saint-Germain-en-Laye, provided by his cousin, Louis XIV. In the autumn of 1691, following a decisive victory for the Williamite forces at Aughrim on 12 July, negotiated surrenders with the remaining Jacobite garrisons were concluded at Galway and Limerick.⁵⁰ In late March 1692 the war was officially declared to be at an end.⁵¹ However, the war in Ireland had been only part of William III’s larger struggle against Louis XIV in Europe which would continue for another five years. During this time French privateers beleaguered Irish coasts, frequently raising Protestant concerns for trade and defence. Rapareeism remained a constant threat in some areas such as Cork and Kerry, serving as an ongoing reminder to Irish Protestants of the greater Jacobite threat.⁵² Rumours and news of Jacobite plots and French invasion attempts, most notably in 1692 and 1696, reignited Protestant fears, while simultaneously sparking Catholic hopes of a Jacobite restoration.⁵³ These events became the focus for the fasts and thanksgivings that took place during the period.

⁴⁶ *Cal. S.P. Dom. 1690–1*, p. 533.

⁴⁷ *Cal. S.P. Dom. 1691–2*, p. 308.

⁴⁸ *Cal. S.P. Dom. 1695 & Add.*, p. 65; *Cal. S.P. Dom. 1696*, p. 86; *Cal. S.P. Dom. 1697*, p. 477; *Cal. S.P. Dom. 1699–1700*, p. 101.

⁴⁹ *Cal. S.P. Dom. 1703–4*, p. 235.

⁵⁰ For the war in Ireland see Simms, *Jacobite Ireland*; W. A. Maguire (ed.), *Kings in conflict: the revolutionary war in Ireland and its aftermath, 1689–1750* (Belfast, 1990); Richard Doherty, *The Williamite war in Ireland, 1688–1691* (Dublin, 1998).

⁵¹ *Proclamation. Declaring the war in Ireland to be ended* (Dublin, 1691[2]).

⁵² Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite cause*, pp 90–1.

⁵³ See also C. I. McGrath, ‘Securing the Protestant interest: the origins and purpose of the penal laws of 1695’, *I.H.S.*, xxx, no. 117 (May, 1996), pp 25–46.

From January 1690 until his defeat at the Boyne in early July the same year, James II had controlled the Dublin press through his Catholic printer-general, James Malone.⁵⁴ On 30 May 1690, William and Mary had issued a proclamation at Whitehall appointing a monthly fast in Ireland to help secure ‘a special blessing’ on the intended ‘Royal Voyage’ to the kingdom. This proclamation was printed in London, presumably for transmission to Ireland.⁵⁵ However, the arrival of the English printer-general, Edward Jones, along with his own printing press as part of William III’s expedition in June 1690, must have improved the ability of the Williamite authorities to publicise such events in Ireland.⁵⁶

Accounts of the king’s expedition to Ireland also shed some light on the role of the Church of Ireland clergy in the appointment of and preparations for occasional days of worship. On 6 July, following his victory at the Boyne, the king ‘rode in great splendour’ to Dublin in order to attend a thanksgiving service held in St Patrick’s cathedral.⁵⁷ Two days later, on 8 July, Anthony Dopping and Simon Digby, the bishops of Meath and Limerick respectively, along with a ‘great body’ of Church of Ireland clergy, attended the king at his camp at Finglas. There, the king appointed a day of thanksgiving and, at Digby’s request, granted them leave to prepare a form of prayer for the occasion.⁵⁸ Neither the proclamation nor the form of prayer appears to be extant, although it is probably safe to assume that Digby and Dopping were involved in the preparation of the prayers on that occasion.⁵⁹

It seems that Dopping was also involved in the appointment of a fast shortly thereafter. According to Richard Mant, Dopping wrote to Sir Robert Southwell on 24 July 1690 advising the appointment of ‘a general fast every Friday during the wars, to be ordered by his Majesty’s proclamation and letters to the primate and Bishop of Meath’.⁶⁰ On 1 August a proclamation was issued from the court at Chapelizod appointing a weekly fast in order to implore God to bring about ‘a speedy Enjoyment of Peace’.⁶¹ On 3 August, Southwell forwarded a copy of the

⁵⁴ Pollard, *Dictionary*, p. 395.

⁵⁵ *Proclamation*, 30 May 1690.

⁵⁶ According to the *English Short Title Catalogue*, Jones was responsible for printing six proclamations and one form of prayer while in Ireland. See also Pollard, *Dictionary*, p. 321.

⁵⁷ Southwell to Nottingham, 6 July 1690, in H.M.C., *Finch MSS* (5 vols, London, 1913–2004), ii, 346; Anthony Hewitson (ed.), *Diary of Thomas Bellingham* (Preston, 1908), p. 133.

⁵⁸ Davies, *Journal*, p. 126; H.M.C., *Finch MSS*, ii, 356; George Story, *An impartial history of the wars of Ireland* (London, 1693), p. 91; J. S. Ryan, *The life of William the third* (Dublin, 1836), p. 219; Richard Mant, *History of the Church of Ireland* (2 vols, London, 1840), i, 732.

⁵⁹ The other five Church of Ireland bishops who remained in Ireland during the war were Michael Boyle, archbishop of Armagh; Thomas Otway, bishop of Ossory; Edward Wetenhall, bishop of Cork and Ross; John Roan, bishop of Killaloe; and Hugh Gore, bishop of Waterford and Lismore (Mant, *History*, i, 699).

⁶⁰ Mant cited descriptions of letters contained in a publication described as ‘Mr. Thorpe’s “Catalogue of Books and Manuscripts, illustrating the History of Ireland”’ (Mant, *History*, ii, pp v, viii). I have not been able to locate a copy of this catalogue.

⁶¹ *By the king and queen’s most excellent majesties, a proclamation for a fast, 1 Aug. 1690* (Dublin, 1690).

proclamation to Dopping.⁶² Mant commented that the ‘synchronism between the Bishop of Meath’s letters and the ordering of the form is remarkable’.⁶³ However, while the proclamation explicitly stated that the ‘archbishops and bishops of this kingdom’ were directed to prepare a form of prayer for the fast, it is difficult to say with complete certainty that Dopping was involved in its preparation.⁶⁴

This weekly fast was discontinued four months after it had commenced with the appointment of 16 November as a day of public thanksgiving for the ‘Great and unexpected Success’ of royal forces at Cork and Kinsale. This time the relevant proclamation was printed by Andrew Crook, who had technically been the Irish printer-general since 1686.⁶⁵ Indeed, Crook printed all subsequent occasional forms of prayer and proclamations during the period under consideration.

On 15 June 1691, to mark the beginning of the new season of campaigning in Ireland, the lords justices issued a proclamation ordering a day of ‘publick fasting, prayer and humiliation’ to be observed on Friday, 3 July, and thereafter to be observed on the first Friday of every month. In it, Irish Protestants were reminded that King William had delivered them ‘from the miserable Effects of that Violent and Arbitrary Power under which they lately groaned’.⁶⁶ Commenting on the king’s military successes in Ireland the previous summer, the proclamation also expressed a hope of further Williamite gains ‘if the progress and continuance of these blessings be not obstructed by the impiety and prophaneness of the people’.⁶⁷ An appropriate form of prayer was directed to be prepared and published for use on the fast-days ‘for the better preparing and instructing their Majesties subjects of this realm in their Duty’.⁶⁸ The form of prayer issued for the occasion reinforced sentiments expressed in the proclamation, emphasising a sense of communal responsibility for the success of the king’s forces: ‘And we are yet so far from being wrought upon, by the late signal deliverance which thou hast afforded us by thy servant king William, that we have relapsed into those sins that have brought thy judgements upon us, and are daily provoking thee.’⁶⁹

The correspondence of William King, then bishop of Derry, provides some insight into the distribution of the proclamations and forms of prayer on this occasion. In a letter dated at Londonderry on 16 June, King expressed concern that he had not yet received an order ‘for a monthly fast at least’ and asked his correspondent, Samuel Foley, to speak to Dopping about the matter.⁷⁰ On 26 June, King was sent thirty-five proclamations for the fast, and as many forms of prayer, with a covering letter instructing that he should ‘take care that they may

⁶² Robert Southwell to Anthony Dopping, 3 Aug. 1690 (Armagh Public Library, Dopping MSS, no. 164).

⁶³ Mant, *History*, ii, pp vii–viii.

⁶⁴ *Proclamation*, 1 Aug. 1690.

⁶⁵ *By the lords Justices of Ireland, a proclamation*, 22 Oct. 1690 (Dublin, 1690). See also Pollard, *Dictionary*, pp 129–31.

⁶⁶ *By the lords-justices and council. A proclamation*, 15 June 1691 (Dublin, 1691).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *A form of prayer to be used on Friday the third day of July, and on the first Friday of every month during the expedition of their majesties forces against the publick enemy in their kingdom of Ireland* (Dublin, 1691).

⁷⁰ William King to Samuel Foley, 16 June 1691 (T.C.D., MSS 1995–2008/137).

be timely distributed amongst your Clergy and made use of by them, as by the said proclamation'.⁷¹ King later complained to Foley that he had not received the forms of prayer until the Tuesday prior to the fast and the proclamations had not arrived until the morning of the occasion.⁷² Despite these delays, King noted that the fast 'was observed in most places and pretty regularly in Derry'.⁷³

It was not long before these prayers appeared to be answered. Before the first of the appointed monthly fasts took place, Williamite forces took Athlone on 30 June. Indeed, it appears that a thanksgiving for these events took place in Dublin on 3 July instead of the appointed fast. In a letter to William King dated 4 July 1691, Michael Boyle stated 'yesterday was our thanksgiving day, 3 volleys & 42 cannon thrice discharged'.⁷⁴ Thereafter, the army had advanced towards Aughrim where an engagement with the Jacobite army under St Ruth took place on 12 July resulting in the decisive Williamite victory.⁷⁵ Within days, the lords justices appointed 28 July to be observed as a day of solemn thanksgiving for the four recent victories against the enemy, the last of which at Aughrim had left them 'entirely defeated and dispersed'. The thanksgiving was to be observed around the country, with the exception of Dublin where it had already taken place on 16 July.⁷⁶ Protestant spirits were high as an overall victory for the Williamite forces now seemed inevitable.⁷⁷ Although all of their majesties' subjects were invited to demonstrate their praise and thanksgiving to God 'with all zeal and fervency of spirit', the proclamation warned that this was to be done with 'Order and Regularity', hinting that the thanksgiving might inspire unruly observation.⁷⁸ Reference was also made to preparations underway 'for the composing, printing and publishing of publick prayers' and plans for their dissemination to various places of public worship.⁷⁹ On this particular occasion, only the collect for morning prayer was published, rather than the entire service.⁸⁰ It was appropriately tailored to celebrate recent events, describing how God's favour had ensured that every place the Williamite forces had trodden 'be theirs; from Derry to the Boyne, Baltimore, Athlone, and lastly in Connaught'.⁸¹

⁷¹ Michael Boyle to King, 26 June 1691 (T.C.D., MSS 1995–2008/141).

⁷² King to Foley, 10 July 1691 (T.C.D., MSS 1995–2008/152). The postmaster split the delivery of the orders and forms of prayer in two. See Boyle to King, 4 July 1691 (T.C.D., MSS 1995–2008/147).

⁷³ King to Foley, 10 July 1691 (T.C.D., MSS 1995–2008/152).

⁷⁴ Boyle to King, 4 July 1691 (T.C.D., MSS 1995–2008/147).

⁷⁵ Harman Murtagh, 'The war in Ireland, 1689–91' in Maguire (ed.), *Kings in conflict*, pp 87–8.

⁷⁶ It would seem that the Dublin thanksgiving took place on 16 July as the only surviving prayer book related to it is so dated, *A collect to be used in the morning-service on the sixteenth day of July* (Dublin, 1691). Anthony Dopping also preached a thanksgiving sermon in Christ Church on this date. See Anthony Dopping, Sermon 'On the thanks for the victory', 16 July 1691 (T.C.D., MS 1688/2, ff 54–72).

⁷⁷ Murtagh, 'The war in Ireland, 1689–91', p. 89.

⁷⁸ Similar instructions are evident in a number of thanksgiving proclamations. See for example *Proclamation*, 10 Aug. 1685.

⁷⁹ *By the lords-justices and council, a proclamation*, 16 July 1691 (Dublin, 1691).

⁸⁰ The covering letter accompanying the prayers and proclamations sent to William King on this occasion specified that 'collects' had been enclosed. See Boyle to King, 21 July 1691 (T.C.D., MSS 1995–2008/155).

⁸¹ *Collect to be used in the morning-service*.

Following the conclusion of the Treaty of Limerick in October 1691, another proclamation, dated 9 November, discontinued the monthly fast appointed by proclamation on 15 June, noting that it had since pleased God 'in answer to the Prayers offered up on that occasion' to protect the king and ensure the success of his arms in the reduction of Ireland. Instead, a thanksgiving was appointed to take place on 26 November.⁸² Though the occasion was celebratory in nature, the link between the nation's sins and the war was again emphasised in the form of prayer: 'Most Glorious Lord God, who for our manifold sins and horrid impieties didst send the destructive Judgment of a War upon us, whereby the Sword hath devoured thousands amongst us, and had raged longer and destroyed more, had not thy good providence prevented it.'⁸³

Such sentiments were also evident on days appointed for fasting or prayer. A proclamation on 1 July 1692 expressed the government's thinking that it was 'above all things necessary, to implore the divine assistance' for the safety of the king and his arms against 'the unjust designs of the French king', and to that end, a day of fasting and humiliation was appointed for 20 July which was to be repeated on the third Wednesday of every month thereafter.⁸⁴ The usual collect for the day was replaced with a prayer expressing concerns that communal sin had provoked God's 'wrath and indignation' for which the congregants had 'cause to fear that thou shouldst give us up to the will of our Enemies'. Furthermore, congregants beseeched God to 'Pour out thy abundant Blessings upon our Gracious King and Queen [*and their Great Council now assembled in Parliament]'.⁸⁵ The liturgy on this occasion also included 'A Prayer for the King to be constantly used while His Majesty is abroad in the Wars'.⁸⁶ These particular prayers, for the king and parliament, were used in occasional services on a number of subsequent occasions.⁸⁷

As the war had moved further away from Ireland, both the proclamations and forms of prayer began to follow a more repetitive formula. A monthly fast was appointed to commence in May 1693 for 'the preservation of Their Majesties sacred persons, & the prosperity of their arms both at land and sea'.⁸⁸ On 22 November, a general thanksgiving was appointed to be observed on 3 December in Dublin and everywhere else the following week.⁸⁹ Due to the continued war with France, a 'general and Publick' fast was appointed to be observed on 13 July 1694 in Dublin and elsewhere on 27 July.⁹⁰ In an almost identically worded proclamation the following year, a general fast was appointed to be observed

⁸² *By the lord-justices and council, a proclamation*, 9 Nov. 1691 (Dublin, 1691).

⁸³ *A form of prayer and thanksgiving to God ... To be used on Thursday the 26th of November* (Dublin, 1691).

⁸⁴ *By the lords-justices and council, a proclamation*, 1 July 1692 (Dublin, 1692).

⁸⁵ A marginal note in the text indicated that the words in brackets were to be used 'when the Parliament sits' (*A form of prayer to be used on Wednesday the twentieth of this instant July and every third Wednesday in every month* (Dublin, 1692), [n.p.]).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Dublin Intelligence*, 29 Apr.–11 May 1693; *A form of prayer to be used throughout the whole kingdom, on Fryday the twelfth day of July next* (Dublin, 1695).

⁸⁸ *Dublin Intelligence*, 29 Apr.–11 May 1693.

⁸⁹ *By the lords-justices and council, a proclamation*, 22 Nov. 1693 (Dublin, 1693).

⁹⁰ *By the lords-justices of Ireland and council, a proclamation for a general fast*, 2 July 1694 (Dublin, 1694).

throughout the kingdom on 12 July.⁹¹ In September 1695, a thanksgiving for the taking of Namur was appointed to take place on 8 October in Dublin and 27 October elsewhere. The proclamation specifically referred to the general fast that had taken place on 12 July that year, attributing Allied success to God's 'Infinite Goodness' and 'in Answer to the Prayers humbly and Devoutly offered up to him'.⁹²

Two sermons preached on the occasion of the Namur thanksgiving were subsequently printed. Edward Walkington, bishop of Down and Connor, preached before the House of Lords in Christ Church cathedral, Dublin. His sermon considered the purpose of the custom of thanksgiving, emphasising the 'reasonableness and necessity of Piety'.⁹³ Meanwhile, the House of Commons heard their chaplain, John Travers, preach in St Andrew's church. Travers expressed concern that he 'should sin against the design of the Day, should I entertain you with the melancholy Scene of the miseries the War brought upon us', before going on to do just that, expressing his wish that all the sorrows of war remained 'so fresh in memory as to influence us to vow and perform perpetual gratitude to our Gracious Benefactor'.⁹⁴ Travers also summed up nicely the reasons for continued Protestant interest in the war as it unfolded in Europe: 'Tho the War be remov'd far from us, yet we are all concern'd and interested in the success of it; the cause is the same still, and the same terrible Evils which we felt, or fear'd, would ensue upon its miscarriage.'⁹⁵

One printed sermon from the thanksgiving to mark the end of the War of the Grand Alliance in 1697 is also extant. The sermon, preached by Edmund Arwaker, rector of Drumglass and chaplain to James Butler, second duke of Ormond, amounted to a panegyric to William III, 'in whom 'tis Evident God Delighted, to set him on his Throne; and whom, because he loved us, he made King over us'.⁹⁶ The sermon was preached in St Ann's church in Dungannon, County Armagh, and as such, provides a rare glimpse into the observation of these events outside the capital.

Although these printed sermons undoubtedly provide another insight into the manner in which occasional state-appointed fasts and thanksgivings were observed and understood, they cannot be regarded as a representative sample of sermons preached in Ireland on these occasions.⁹⁷ Indeed, it is worth noting that

⁹¹ *By the lord-deputy and council, a proclamation, for a general fast*, 24 June 1695 (Dublin, 1695).

⁹² *By the lord-deputy and council, a proclamation, for a publick thanksgiving*, 30 Sept. 1695 (Dublin, 1695).

⁹³ Edward Walkington, *A sermon preached in Christ-Church before his excellency the lord deputy, and the honorable House of Lords* (Dublin, 1695), p. 6.

⁹⁴ John Travers, *A sermon preached in St Andrew's-Church, Dublin; before the honorable the House of Commons the 8th day of October, 1695* (Dublin, 1695), p. 3.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁹⁶ Edmund Arwaker, *God's king the people's blessing. A sermon preached on the day of thanksgiving for peace, at St Ann's church in Dungannon, in the diocess of Armagh* (Dublin, 1698), pp 13–14.

⁹⁷ I have identified four extant sermons on the *English Short Title Catalogue* relating to occasional fasts and thanksgivings, including William King, *A sermon, preached at St Patrick's church, Dublin, on the 16th of November, 1690* (London, 1691). A sermon entitled, Dr K., *Ireland's day of rejoicing come* (London, [1690]), may be a copy of another sermon preached by King at St Patrick's cathedral on 6 July 1690, the thanksgiving day appointed to celebrate the Williamite victory at the Battle of the Boyne.

both of the extant printed sermons for the thanksgiving on 8 October 1695 were published by order of parliament.⁹⁸ While Arwaker published the 1697 thanksgiving sermon of his own accord, he sought to ‘shelter’ the publication by dedicating it to Michael Boyle, archbishop of Armagh.⁹⁹ It is not surprising therefore to find that material of a more contentious nature survives in manuscript form only. For example Anthony Dopping used the occasion of a fast on 16 July 1691 to discuss the hardships faced by those who had fled Ireland during the war and those who, like Dopping himself, had remained under the Catholic administration. He called on his audience at Christ Church to agree that God had ‘made us all alike by sending one common and undistinguishing judgment among us’.¹⁰⁰ More controversially, Dopping used his thanksgiving sermon on 26 November 1691 to express his disapproval of the recently concluded Articles of Limerick by preaching ‘the most bitter invectives against the whole body of the Irish’.¹⁰¹ As a result, the bishop was suspended from the privy council.¹⁰² In January 1692, Henry Compton advised Dopping to acknowledge the bad timing of the sermon and apologise for it to the king.¹⁰³ Dopping appears to have acted on this advice and in response, at a cabinet council meeting, the king ordered Sydney to restore Dopping to ‘all the marks of his favour’ when Sydney arrived in Ireland.¹⁰⁴ However, Sydney did not act on the original order and Dopping was actually restored to the privy council pursuant to a later order issued on 1 September 1692.¹⁰⁵ While Dopping’s unpublished sermons indicate that occasional fasts and thanksgivings afforded preachers an opportunity to express their political concerns in public, it would be unwise to confine consideration of tensions between the clergy and government to the few sermons that exist for occasional days of fasts and thanksgivings.

III

By the end of the war in Europe in 1697, at least nine days of thanksgiving, four individual fast-days and five substantial periodical fasts, had been appointed in Ireland.¹⁰⁶ To clarify the latter point, in 1690 weekly fast-days had taken place

⁹⁸ *L.J.I.*, i, 511, 519, 520; *C.J.I.*, ii, 74, 83.

⁹⁹ Arwaker, *God’s king the people’s blessing*, [n.p.].

¹⁰⁰ Dopping, Sermon ‘On the thanks for the victory’, 16 July 1691 (T.C.D., MS 1688/2, ff 66–7). For Dopping’s sensitivity on this issue, see M. E. Gilmore, ‘Anthony Dopping and the Church of Ireland, 1685–1695’ (M.A. thesis, Queen’s University, Belfast, 1988), pp 87–107.

¹⁰¹ Anthony Dopping, Sermon ‘On the day of the thanksgiving’, 26 Nov. 1691 (T.C.D., MS 1688/2, ff 77–140); Lords justices to [Nottingham], 30 Nov. 1691, H.M.C., *Finch MSS*, iii, pp 304–5.

¹⁰² *Cal. S.P. Dom. 1691–2*, pp 27–8.

¹⁰³ Compton to Dopping, 23 Jan. 1691[2] (Armagh Public Library, Dopping MSS, no. 180).

¹⁰⁴ Compton to Dopping, 12 Mar. 1691[2] (Armagh Public Library, Dopping MSS, no. 183).

¹⁰⁵ *Cal. S.P. Dom. 1691–2*, p. 430. See also Gilmore, ‘Anthony Dopping’, p. 136; Felix Waldmann, ‘Anthony Dopping’s restoration to the Privy Council of Ireland: A correction’, *Notes and Queries*, cclv, no. 1 (Mar. 2010), pp 69–70.

¹⁰⁶ See Appendix.

for at least four months of the year, in 1691 monthly fast-days had taken place for six months of the year, in 1692 monthly fast-days had occurred for five months of the year, while 1693 saw fortnightly fast-days take place for seven months of the year. From 1694–7 three more fast-days and three more thanksgiving days took place. In contrast, during the remaining five years of William III's reign, only three more fast-days were observed.¹⁰⁷ With at least one summer fast and one winter thanksgiving taking place annually during the war, correlating with the timing of the campaigning season, it can be argued that these events had become regular rather than 'occasional' occurrences during the period 1690–7.¹⁰⁸

Although it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which occasional state-appointed fasts and thanksgivings were observed by ordinary Anglicans, particularly outside Dublin, it is clear that significant effort was made by both the government and the established church to ensure that these events were communicated to as wide an audience as possible. Evidence that these events were referred to in newspaper reports, often involved conspicuous instances of public display, necessitated attendance at church services or interrupted work suggests that they were likely to have been indirectly communicated to the wider population, at least in urban areas. It is also clear that occasional days of state-appointed worship played a role in communicating foreign and domestic news to Irish Anglicans attending the relevant church services. Focus on these events during the reign of William III particularly highlights this aspect of occasional prayer, as the progress of the War of the Grand Alliance may be traced in the proclamations and forms of prayer from the Boyne to Barfleur and from Namur to Ryswick.

More importantly, the proclamations and forms of prayer helped to ensure that an official interpretation of such events reached as wide an audience as possible. Indeed, the real strength of the messages conveyed by the state through the proclamations and forms of prayer did not lie in the novelty of ideas or information communicated therein, but in the consistency and repetition of those messages on so many occasions. Aside from the repeated use of specific proclamations and forms of prayer in the case of periodical fast-days, particular phrases and prayers were regularly reused and recycled on days of fasting and thanksgiving throughout the entire period. The legitimacy of the Williamite regime and the dangers posed by Roman Catholicism or France were presented as accepted truths in all of this material. William III was repeatedly referred to as 'the happy Instrument' of providence; the divinely appointed 'Deliverer' of Protestants in Ireland and England.¹⁰⁹ Although references to 'Popery and arbitrary power' or the 'common enemy' recurred regularly in the proclamations, the precise threat that individuals such as James II or Louis XIV posed received little by way of elucidation.¹¹⁰ Nor were the forms of prayer exploited to spell out the exact details of the dangers presented by Rome or France. At extremes,

¹⁰⁷ See Appendix.

¹⁰⁸ Thanksgivings generally took place in October, November or December with the exception of two, those for the battle of Aughrim in 1691 and the Jacobite plot of 1696. See also Claydon, *Godly revolution*, p. 106.

¹⁰⁹ For example, see the forms of prayer used on 28 July 1691, 7 Nov. 1692, 12 July 1695.

¹¹⁰ For example, see the proclamations dated 1 Aug. 1690, 15 June 1691, 2 July 1694.

mention was made of 'Antichristian idolatry, Superstition and Cruelty' or 'wicked and blood-thirsty men' who might threaten the king's life.¹¹¹ Meanwhile, the war was justified through repeated reference to the king's 'righteous undertakings' on the continent in the pursuit of a 'firm and lasting peace' or a 'firm and lasting tranquillity'. It was emphasised time and again that the 'common safety' of Ireland, England and Scotland 'wholly' depended on the success of the king's arms. Mention of the king's ongoing war was regularly followed by the phrase 'together with most of the princes and states of Europe', thereby accentuating the idea of a collective struggle against France.¹¹²

Promulgation of this particular concept was served by highlighting the plight of other Protestant communities. This was more evident in the forms of prayer than the proclamations. For example, most of the occasional forms of prayer included a 'Prayer for the reformed churches' or a 'Prayer for all mankind, especially the reformed churches'.¹¹³ However, the issue was particularly stressed during the peacetime fast day appointed in May 1699 for the sole purpose of seeking divine assistance for those suffering abroad for the Protestant religion. Clergy, church-officials and local magistrates, in Ireland and England, were instructed to take advantage of the occasion to encourage the public to contribute 'freely and cheerfully' towards the financial relief of the some 3,500 Vaudois, or Waldensian, refugees who had been banished from their native lands in France and northern Italy 'through popish cruelty'.¹¹⁴

However, at the core of all of these proclamations and forms of prayer was a determined effort to persuade church-goers of the link between their collective sins and instances of divine judgement or deliverance. While annual thanksgiving commemorations provided preachers with an opportunity for 'burnishing memories' of well-established examples of historical deliverances, the proclamations and forms of prayer for occasional thanksgivings provided a solid framework for interpreting much more immediate events as fresh evidence of God's providential intervention in favour of the faithful.¹¹⁵

Meanwhile, the occasional fasts were represented in the proclamations and forms of prayer as opportunities to foresee and to forestall visitations of divine wrath, but only if the public acquiesced in these appeals to engage in thorough and true repentance and reformation.¹¹⁶ Such an emphasis sought to instil in Anglicans a sense of communal responsibility for their future safety and

¹¹¹ For example, see the forms of prayer used on/from 10 May, 3 Dec. 1693.

¹¹² For example, see the proclamations issued on 7 Nov. 1692, 2 July 1694, 30 Nov. 1697.

¹¹³ For example, see the forms of prayer used on/from 15 Aug. 1690, 16 Nov. 1690, 10 May 1693, 12 July 1695.

¹¹⁴ *C.S.P.D. 1699–1700*, pp 92–4; *William the third by the grace of God ... To all and singular archbishops, bishops, arch-deacons, deans and their officials, parsons, vicars, curates, and all other spiritual persons...* (Dublin, 1699).

¹¹⁵ Barnard, 'The uses of 23 October', p. 891.

¹¹⁶ This aspect of occasional state-appointed worship was particularly evident in a fast-day sermon preached in 1704, where a preacher based in Ireland sought to assure his audience that a great storm in London was a warning sign of God's growing displeasure at 'that open profaneness, and of that publick contempt of Religion which appears among us'. See Benjamin Pratt, *A sermon preach'd before the honourable House of Commons, at St Andrew's church, Dublin; February the 18th. 1703* (Dublin, 1704).

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prosperity which was explicitly tied to the future success and survival of the Williamite regime.¹¹⁷ Of course, if the pious believed that it was possible to influence the outcome of war in this way, it is possible that the occasional fasts and thanksgivings added a peculiar urgency and purpose to contemporary efforts to stem public immorality, evident in the activities of the societies for the reformation of manners and the passage of acts for the better observation of the Lord's Day and the 'more effectual suppressing' of profane cursing and swearing in Ireland during the period.¹¹⁸

By presenting recent military or diplomatic successes as further evidence of divine favour for William III and his Protestant subjects, occasional days of state-appointed public worship served to reinforce both the legitimacy of the regime and a 'providential interpretation' of the events that had brought it into being. Given their unique experience of the Glorious Revolution, it seems reasonable to suggest that Irish Protestants were an audience particularly receptive to such concepts.¹¹⁹

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¹¹⁷ See Gillespie, *Devoted people*, pp 40–62.

¹¹⁸ *An act for the better observation of the Lord's Day, commonly called Sunday* (7 William III, c.17); *An act for the more effectual suppressing profane cursing and swearing* (7 William III, c.9).

¹¹⁹ This research was funded by an Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship. This article is based on a paper first presented at the Irish History Students' Association Annual Conference in 2010 for which it was awarded the Church of Ireland Historical Society Prize. I am also very grateful to Dr Charles Ivar McGrath for his comments on various drafts of this paper.

Appendix

Unless otherwise indicated, the following table is based on information from extant proclamations, forms of prayer, and Steele (ed.), *Tudor and Stuart proclamations 1485–1714, ii: Scotland and Ireland*.¹²⁰ This volume was published in 1910 before the destruction of the Irish Public Record Office, and with it many of the proclamations in question. Fortunately, for the period 1690–1702 on which this paper is focussed, almost every proclamation and form of prayer is extant.

Table: *Fasts and Thanksgivings in Ireland, 1659–1714*

Proclamation	Occasion	Purpose	Observation date(s)	
			Dublin only	General
<i>Charles II</i>				
28 Dec. 1659	Thanksgiving	Return of long parliament	3 Jan. 1660	17 Jan. 1660
	Fast-day ¹²¹	General Convention		9 Mar. 1660
15 Apr. 1661	Fast-day	Parliaments of Scotland, Ireland & England		2 May 1661
22 June 1665	Thanksgiving	Naval victory		4 July 1665
24 July 1665	Monthly fast	Plague in London		2 Aug. 1665
8 June 1666	Fast-day	Blessing on the army and fleet	20 June 1666	27 June 1666
20 June 1666	Thanksgiving ¹²²	Thanksgiving for naval victory		
25 July 1666	Thanksgiving ¹²³	Thanksgiving for naval victory		
15 Aug. 1666	Thanksgiving	Naval victory on 25 July 1666		6 Sept. 1666
22 Sept. 1666	Fast-day	Great Fire of London		10 Oct. 1666
27 Mar. 1672	Fast-day	Blessing on army and fleet		17 Apr. 1672
14 May 1679	Fast-day	To defeat popish conspiracies		28 May 1679
13 Aug. 1683	Thanksgiving	Delivery from Monmouth conspiracy		9 Sept. 1683
<i>James II</i>				
10 Aug. 1685	Thanksgiving	Victory over rebels		23 Aug. 1685
8 Feb. 1688	Thanksgiving	For the Queen's pregnancy	19 Feb. 1688	26 Feb. 1688
23 June 1688	Thanksgiving	Birth of the Prince of Wales	1 July 1688	8 July 1688
<i>William III</i>				
30 May 1690 [London]	Monthly fast	Blessing on William III's expedition to Ireland		25 June 1690
19 June 1690	Fast ¹²⁴	For Ireland's deliverance from popery		
	Thanksgiving ¹²⁵	Victory at the Boyne	6 July 1690	

cont.

¹²⁰ Steele, *Tudor and Stuart proclamations*, ii. I am grateful to Professor James Kelly who kindly allowed me to view the forthcoming Irish Manuscript Commission's volumes of Irish Proclamations.

¹²¹ Samuel Coxe, *Two sermons preached at Christ-Church in the city of Dublin, before the honourable the general convention of Ireland* (Dublin, 1660).

¹²² *Twenty-third report of the deputy keeper of the Public Records* (Dublin, 1891), p. 31. I am grateful to Dr Alasdair Raffae for bringing this source to my attention.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹²⁵ Mant, *History*, i, 732.

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1 Aug 1690 [Chapelizod]				
22 Oct. 1690	Thanksgiving	Reduction of Cork & Kinsale Discontinues weekly fast	16 Nov. 1690	23 Nov. 1690
15 June 1691	Monthly fast	Bless their Majesties' forces during war		3 July 1691
16 July 1691	Thanksgiving	Four victories over enemy	16 July 1691	28 July 1691
9 Nov. 1691	Thanksgiving	Return of the king Recovery of Ireland from France Discontinues weekly fast		26 Nov. 1691
1 July 1692	Monthly fast	Safety of king's person Success in war with France		20 July 1692
7 Nov. 1692	Thanksgiving	Naval victories at Barfleur & La Hogue Delivery from Jacobite plot	10 Nov. 1692	24 Nov. 1692
28 Apr. 1693	Fortnightly fast	Preservation of king & queen Prosperity of arms both at land & sea	10 May 1693	17 May 1693
22 Nov. 1693	Thanksgiving	Preservation of king & queen against designs of their enemies	3 Dec. 1693	10 Dec. 1693
2 July 1694	Fast-day	Continuing war with France Lasting peace	13 July 1694	27 July 1694
24 June 1695	Fast-day	Continuing war with France Lasting peace		12 July 1695
30 Sept. 1695	Thanksgiving	Taking of Namur	8 Oct. 1695	27 Oct. 1695
6 Apr. 1696	Thanksgiving	Delivery from Jacobite conspiracy Delivery from French invasion		23 Apr. 1696
17 June 1696	Fast-day	Continuing war with France Lasting peace		10 July 1696
30 Nov. 1697	Thanksgiving	King's safe return Peace of Ryswick	12 Dec. 1697	19 Dec. 1697
5 Apr. 1699	Fast-day	Those suffering abroad for the Protestant religion		5 May 1699
7 Apr. 1701	Humiliation			2 May 1701
22 Dec. 1701	Fast-day	God's blessing on the English parliament		16 Jan. 1702
<i>Anne</i>				
20 July 1702	Fast-day	Threats to kingdom and Protestant religion		14 Aug. 1702
20 Nov. 1702	Thanksgiving	Victory in the Low Countries, Vigo and the West Indies	3 Dec. 1702	17 Dec. 1702
15 Jan. 1704	Fast-day	Great wind Blessing on Her Majesty's arms		18 Feb. 1704
29 Aug. 1704	Thanksgiving	Victory at Blenheim	7 Sept. 1704	21 Sept. 1704
2 May 1705	Fast-day	For success in the war	11 May 1705	25 May 1705
17 Aug. 1705	Thanksgiving	Marlborough's victory in Netherlands	28 Aug. 1705	6 Sept. 1705
10 June 1706	Thanksgiving	Victory in Castille, Brabant & Catalonia		27 June 1706
3 Dec. 1706	Thanksgiving	Successes in the war		31 Dec. 1706
18 Mar. 1707	Fast-day	Assistance in the war		9 Apr. 1707
15 Apr. 1707	Thanksgiving	Union of Scotland & England Establishment of the Protestant Succession		1 May 1707

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1 Dec. 1707	Fast-day	Assist arms of England and Allies Peace	14 Jan. 1708
2 June 1708	Thanksgiving	Disappointment of planned invasion	27 June 1708
19 Aug. 1708	Thanksgiving	Victory at Audenard (Oudenarde)	16 Sept. 1708
21 Feb. 1709	Thanksgiving	Capture of Lille, Ghent, Bruges	17 Mar. 1709
21 Oct. 1709	Thanksgiving	Victory at Blaregnies, near Mons	22 Nov. 1709
4 Mar. 1710	Fast-day	War against France	29 Mar. 1710
2 June 1713	Thanksgiving	Peace	16 June 1713