

Progress, challenges and opportunities in early modern gender history, c.1550–1720

CLODAGH TAIT*

Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick

ABSTRACT. *Following some of the themes of the original ‘An agenda for women’s history in Ireland, 1500–1900’ and others that were not as prominent, this article considers progress since 1992 and highlights opportunities for the further development of Irish early modern women’s and gender history. It considers aspects of the life cycle of women and men, especially birth, youth and marriage; the economic roles of women, especially when it came to work and property; and the importance of movement to and from Ireland in both personal biographies and wider contexts. It also reflects on some of the ways in which understandings of early modern politics and of religion and belief for the period c.1550–1720 have been transformed by consideration of the role of women. While the ‘Agenda’ noted the potential of buildings and spaces, there has been a new emphasis on ‘things’ as remnants of lives and labour, expressions of cultural norms and tools in the construction of gender, selfhood and social status. Very early on, the ‘Agenda’ strongly stated that ‘the history of women is also the history of men’, and this article also notes the green shoots of the history of masculinity in early modern Ireland.*

John Blake of Galway headed to Barbados in the 1670s to assist his brother Henry who was developing a tobacco business in Montserrat. John’s wife followed him in 1675, with a servant who caused significant disquiet among the family. Henry Blake had credible information that she was a ‘whore’, and feared that ‘she might be the occasion of [John’s] confusion by her seducement’. Their brothers Robert and Nicholas had ‘advised him to put her out of the company of his wife by telling her quality, and he would not; a strange alteration in one that hated the name of a whore as much as any in the world’. A few months later John himself justified keeping on the ‘wench’. He had thus far found her ‘viciousless’, and had her under ‘severe correction’. His wife was of ‘very weak constitution, cannot discharge all herself; for washing, starching, making of drink, and keeping the house in good order, is no small task to undergo here’. He could not be without a white maid ‘until a “neger” wench I have be brought to knowledge’.¹ In these tiny asides in the wider correspondence between the Blake men, we get vivid

* *Department of History, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, clodagh.tait@mic.ul.ie*

¹ M. J. Blake, *Blake family records 1600–1700* (London, 1905), pp 111–13; D. H. Akenson, *If the Irish ran the world: Montserrat, 1630–1730* (Quebec City, 1997), pp 68–9, 150–51; Aubrey Gwynn, ‘Documents relating to the Irish in the West Indies’ in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 4 (1932), pp 139–286.

glimpses of life among the Irish colonists in Barbados: the difficulties of familiar household tasks, concerns about adequate domestic help, racism, slavery, patriarchal authority, and how the — skilled — labour of women contributed to the creation and consolidation of empire.

Alexandra Shepard, John Walter and Steve Hindle point out that ‘the practice of patriarchy’ was ‘a multi-lateral matrix of power built on the (gendered) differences *within* each sex as well as the differences between them’.² This variety and contingency of experiences is vividly evident in the case of the Blakes. They were in the Caribbean as part of a project to restore the family’s fortunes, diminished by war and the losses of lands and influence suffered by the Catholic Old English in the 1640s and 50s. The men’s father, also John, felt the blow to his fortunes keenly: his place as family patriarch was irretrievably compromised. However, his sons did pretty well in their new homes, and John Blake Jr appears in 1678 as ‘one of the largest slave owners’ in Montserrat. John Jr’s wife was unwell, but was in a position to be unwell, and to hire or force other women to assist her. The unnamed white ‘wench’ who had accompanied her mistress to Barbados was socially in a different league to the black enslaved ‘wench’ being trained to take her place, but was still subject to ‘severe correction’. Reading the sparse records in which these three women flash briefly into and then out of view, I wonder and worry about what happened to them all.

The much-compromised state of the sources means that wondering is of course often the fate of historians of early modern Ireland. Given that it was families with the greatest wealth and clout who were more likely to produce and preserve more comprehensive archives, those (wonderfully welcome) monographs that have been published in recent times about early modern women have tended to focus on the aristocracy.³ Though over the last thirty years huge strides have been made in collecting and cataloguing sources that survived 1922, and making them available,⁴ huge difficulties remain when it comes to making sense of the period and in reconstructing ordinary lives. That said, Mary O’Dowd has noted how Irish social historians have ‘begun to focus on the positive and to identify the potential of the sources that have survived’. She characterises the fragments as a ‘dispersed archive’ that allows us to look at families and communities as well as religious, legal, political and social structures and processes of change.⁵ Patricia Palmer, in a thoughtful reflection on the historian’s encounters with those, like John Blake and his household, ‘caught, almost accidentally, in the unsteady lantern-beam of history’, points out that ‘women figured disproportionately among those who lived outside the identity-confirming realm of public record’. However, despite the ‘perfectly understandable desire to extrapolate from these one-off

² Steve Hindle, Alexandra Shepard and John Walter, ‘The making and remaking of early modern English Social History’ in idem (eds), *Remaking English society: social relations and social change in early modern England* (Woodbridge, 2013), p. 34.

³ Rachel Wilson, *Elite women in ascendancy Ireland, 1690–1745* (Woodbridge, 2015); Ann-Maria Walsh, *The daughters of the first earl of Cork: writing family, faith, politics and place* (Dublin, 2020); Damien Duffy, *Aristocratic women in Ireland, 1450–1660: the Ormond family, power and politics* (Woodbridge, 2021).

⁴ For an overview of the development of digital resources, see Marie-Louise Coolahan, ‘New technologies for research and digital interpretation for early modern Irish studies’ in *Irish University Review*, 1, no. 1 (May 2020), pp 175–86.

⁵ Mary O’Dowd, ‘Men, women, children and the family, 1550–1730’ in Jane Ohlmeyer (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Ireland: ii, 1550–1730* (Cambridge, 2018), pp 299–300.

appearances and to fit such stray individuals into broad categories and classes', she also suggests that in encountering such 'fugitive sightings' we should 'suspend for a moment the larger questions'.⁶ Doing so can encourage us to approach the sources and the practice of writing differently, and perhaps to begin to make peace with what cannot be known.

This article considers women and gender in early modern Ireland between about 1550 and 1720, to highlight both progress since the 'Agenda for women's history in Ireland' was published in 1992 and (deploying examples and 'fugitive sightings' from different corners of the 'dispersed archive') some areas where further research on women's history and the history of masculinity may be possible. Since the 'Agenda' significant strides have been made towards making women's and gender history integral rather than optional within the practice of writing about early modern Ireland. Much of this is down to Mary O'Dowd's 2005 *A history of women in Ireland, 1500–1800*. Her other key contributions on women's and gender history include work on law and gender and on childhood and girlhood (and a new project on ageing).⁷ Her chapter in the *Cambridge history of Ireland* considers 'the loves and lives of men, women and children'.⁸ With Margaret MacCurtain, the other key pioneer of early modern Irish women's history from the 1970s, O'Dowd also co-edited *Women in early modern Ireland*, with its iconic pink cover, whose presence on the shelves made those of us in college in the 1990s believe that women's history was 'a legitimate [and exciting] field of study.'⁹ (In U.C.C., Donnchadh Ó Corráin's lectures on medieval Irish women also naturalised women's history for me and many others). Further essay collections, edited by O'Dowd, Christine Meek and their colleagues, were also important contributions in the 1990s and early 2000s, highlighting possibilities and challenges, their combination of Irish and European topics locating Irish women in broader international context.¹⁰

The work of the other 'Agenda' author, Maria Luddy, while focusing more on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, has also been significant to early modernists. With O'Dowd she has co-written *Marriage in Ireland 1660–1925*.¹¹ She, O'Dowd and MacCurtain were the main editors of the early modern sections of

⁶ Patricia Palmer, 'Fugitive identities: selves, narratives and disregarded lives in early modern Ireland' in Eve Campbell, Elizabeth Fitzpatrick and Audrey Horning (eds), *Becoming and belonging in Ireland, A.D. c.1200–1600* (Cork, 2018), pp 313–27.

⁷ Mary O'Dowd, 'Women and the colonial experience in Ireland' in Terry Brotherstone, Deborah Sidmonton and Oonagh Walsh (eds), *Gendering Scottish history* (Glasgow, 1999), pp 156–71; eadem, 'Women and the law in early modern Ireland' in Christine Meek (ed.), *Women in Renaissance and early modern Europe* (Dublin, 2000), pp 95–108; eadem, 'Women and the Irish chancery court in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries' in *I.H.S.*, xxxi, no. 124 (Nov. 1999), pp 470–87.

⁸ O'Dowd, 'Men, women, children', pp 298–320.

⁹ Margaret MacCurtain, and Mary O'Dowd (eds), *Women in early modern Ireland* (Edinburgh, 1991).

¹⁰ Mary O'Dowd and Sabine Wichert, *Chattel, servant or citizen: women's status in church, state and society: Historical Studies XIX* (Belfast, 1995); C. E. Meek and M. K. Simms (eds), 'The fragility of her sex'? *Medieval Irish women in their European context* (Dublin, 1996); Christine Meek and Catherine Lawless, *Pawns or players? Studies on medieval and early modern women* (Dublin, 2003); Meek (ed.), *Women in Renaissance and early modern Europe*.

¹¹ Maria Luddy and Mary O'Dowd, *Marriage in Ireland 1660–1925* (Cambridge, 2020).

volumes iv and v of the *Field Day anthology of Irish writing*.¹² Luddy led the Women's History Project in the late 1990s that produced a *Directory of sources for women's history in Ireland* that highlights many collections relevant to women's and family history. As the main database was produced on CD Rom it has been difficult to access in recent times. However, the Irish Manuscripts Commission plans to make it available.¹³

Following some of the themes of the original 'Agenda' and highlighting some others that were not as prominently considered, this article considers how colleagues have built up the field of Irish women's history to the point where it now does 'pose a major challenge to mainstream Irish history'; indeed, has become mainstream. It will look at how our understanding of early modern politics and religion (and 'belief' more broadly) has been further transformed by attending to women. The economic roles and work of women, especially when it came to work and property, are another theme. This contribution also considers aspects of the life cycle of women and men, especially birth, youth and marriage, and highlights the importance of movement to and from Ireland in both personal biographies and wider contexts. As part of my own interest in reconstructing and making use of the 'dispersed archive', I hope to indicate the kinds of sources available for further exploration, especially the strong body of recent work on material culture. While the 'Agenda' noted the potential of buildings and spaces, there has been a new emphasis on things as remnants of lives and labour, expressions of cultural norms and tools in the construction of gender, selfhood and social status. The women associated with John Blake would likely often have worn and used very different things and would have moved through the spaces of their shared dwelling in different ways.

Very early on, the 'Agenda' strongly stated that 'the history of women is also the history of men'. John Blake risked being 'unmanned' by the women connected with him: in a new land, his reputational and, therefore, his financial credit were more than usually vulnerable. Misbehaviour would risk both his respectability and that of his family members. His maid had limited power other than that situated in her whiteness and the power to 'confuse' or overthrow John's claims to honesty in both its financial and sexual forms. It has been slow in coming, but early modern Irish history has increasingly begun to incorporate explorations of masculinities.¹⁴ As early modern historians of Britain and Europe are increasingly revealing, male authority and manliness could be contested, anxious, variable and vulnerable. Thus, '[r]eading for gender' and 'making masculinity a more effective tool of historical analysis' can 'yield new insights on old questions'.¹⁵ This article will note some of the green shoots of the history of masculinity in early modern Ireland and again suggest some possible avenues for research.

¹² Angela Bourke *et al.* (eds), *The Field Day anthology of Irish writing*, iv & v: *Irish women's writings and traditions* (2 vols, Cork, 2002).

¹³ Diane Urquhart, Maria Luddy, Catherine Cox and Leanne Lane, *A directory of sources for women's history in Ireland* (CD-ROM, Dublin: 1999). Thanks to John MacCafferty for a copy of the CD and to Catherine Cox and Rosemary Raughter for information on the project.

¹⁴ Rebecca Anne Barr, Sean Brady and Jane McGaughey, 'Ireland and masculinities in history: an introduction' in *idem* (eds), *Ireland and masculinities in history* (Basingstoke, 2019), pp 1–18.

¹⁵ Kenneth Gouwens, Brendan Kane and Laurie Nussdorfer, 'Reading for gender' in *European Review of History*, xxii, no. 4 (2015), pp 527–35.

I

Attention to individuals at different stages in their lives can highlight the varied experiences of men and women and between social groups. While better understanding of the lives of older people awaits Mary O'Dowd's forthcoming work, childbirth and youth are areas where, despite the sparse sources available, some progress has been made since 1992 and where further research is possible. Family papers, state papers, ecclesiastical records and baptism registers give some clues of experiences of childbirth.¹⁶ Mary O'Dowd has considered some of the evidence relating to childhood and the education and care of children,¹⁷ and Jane Ohlmeyer has looked at aspects of the upbringing especially of aristocratic men.¹⁸ My own work has brought together some of the sources that hint at cultural practices surrounding the rearing of young children, especially the extensive use of wet-nursing among the middling and upper sorts, and the politics and practice of fosterage.¹⁹ Other forms of child exchange sent older children and teenagers to be brought up in households of similar or higher status to their own. Wardship was the centre of significant debates. It was used as a tool of anglicisation and proselytism, one writer suggesting that 'The King's wards there [in Ireland] should not be allowed to live with their mothers or friends, who are recusants, but to be taught the principles of religion by which they may be made good citizens'.²⁰ Other deals led to the raising of young people in anglicised households too. Who can forget the image of the young Barnaby/Brian Fitzpatrick, Baron of Upper Ossory, in his Tudor court finery (thrusting codpiece and all), a poster-boy for the programme of surrender and regrant which aimed to turn savage Irish lords — and, thereby, their communities — into civil citizens. Some young men's struggles in navigating the dual role of Gaelic lord and English subject highlight the challenges in reconciling fundamentally incompatible landholding and legal systems, state demands and local opinion, and differing constructions of honour and male behaviour.²¹

Further research is possible on experiences of childhood, military training of boys, and the participation and suffering of children and teenagers in warfare — Naomi McAreavey and Dianne Hall have shown the way, using the rich sources for 1640s Ireland to consider children's experiences of, and active role in, the

¹⁶ Clodagh Tait, 'Safely delivered: childbirth, wet-nursing, gossip-feasts and churching in Ireland, 1530–1670' in *I.E.S.H.*, xxx (2003), pp 1–23; Salvador Ryan (ed.), *Birth and the Irish: a miscellany* (Dublin, 2021); Phil Gorey, 'The episcopal and institutional regulation of midwifery in Ireland, c.1615–1828' in John Cunningham (ed.), *Early modern Ireland and the world of medicine* (Manchester, 2019), pp 102–22.

¹⁷ O'Dowd, *History of women*, part 1.

¹⁸ Jane Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English: the Irish aristocracy in the seventeenth century* (New Haven, 2012).

¹⁹ Tait, 'Safely delivered'; Clodagh Tait, 'Kindred without end: wet-nursing, fosterage and emotion in Ireland, c.1550–1720' in *I.E.S.H.*, xlvii (2020), pp 10–35.

²⁰ Victor Treadwell, 'The Irish court of wards under James I' in *I.H.S.*, xii, no. 45 (Mar. 1960), pp 1–27; H. F. Kearney, 'The court of wards and liveryies in Ireland, 1622–1641' in *P.R.I.A.*, 57c (1955), pp 29–68; *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1625–70*, pp 98–9.

²¹ David Edwards, 'Collaboration without anglicisation: the MacGiollapadraig lordship and Tudor reform' in P. J. Duffy and David Edwards (eds), *Gaelic Ireland c.1250–1650* (Dublin, 2001), pp 77–97.

violence of the period.²² Many young people would have trained for future roles as apprentices and servants. Though it is difficult to reconstruct their lives in the same way as, Leanne Calvert has done for the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,²³ young people are found in the sources behaving well and badly, working, gathering, carousing and even rioting.²⁴ For example, the Dublin corporation order of 1606 that masters prevent their apprentices from wearing ‘long haire fashioned lyke ruffians, an unmet thing to be permitted [in any civil cittie]’ gives a tiny glimpse of whatever passed for male ‘youth culture’ in Ireland’s cities. They were also prevented from playing stoolball (a bat and ball game related to cricket and rounders), quoits, tennis, ‘cudgielles’ or other ‘unlawful games’ in the streets on Sundays and holy days.²⁵ Formal education, especially the education of boys, has received some attention, but this could be further expanded. There are glimpses of the schooling of girls here and there, especially from the later seventeenth century. Contemporary accounts can highlight the role of schools and schoolteachers in fostering masculine (and feminine) character as well as accomplishments. For example, the ‘statutes’ of the school set up by Viscount Weymouth in 1703 in Carrickmacross cautioned the master to instruct his pupils ‘by his good example at all times’.²⁶

Family papers from the middling sort and gentry allow glimpses of interactions between parents and children, especially sons in their later teens and early twenties, providing insights into the formation of young people and expectations of them. Intergenerational tensions can be visible. In June 1688, Sir Patrick Trant wrote from London to Sir Thomas Cosbie in Ardfert, County Kerry on behalf of Crosbie’s son, Walter, ‘who has been heare for some time industriously struggling with his bare condicion, to Improve what he has already laboured In with successe, which was his studies abroad . . . soe as to make him selfe capable of being usefull to himself, to his family & his Country’. Trant asked that Crosbie offer Walter some support, saying that ‘I am Morally sure soe good a father & soe good a friend as you are will not be guilty of any thing of unkindnesse to soe dutifull & soe deserving a son’.²⁷ These kinds of comments can hint at the emotional side of family relationships and expectations about behaviour and reciprocal duties between parents and children, all areas deserving of further exploration. And what was it like for young men and women to come of age following the ravages of the seventeenth century that had so altered the fortunes and authority of their families’ patriarchs (for the good in the case of the Crosbies; for the bad in the case of the Blakes; in complex ways in the case of the Trants)?

²² Naomi McAreavey, ‘Children’s experiences of violence during the Irish rebellion of 1641’ and Dianne Hall, ‘“Joy among the Irish children that . . . there will be war”’: Irish children and seventeenth-century wars’ both in *Parergon*, xxxviii, no. 2 (2021), pp 71–103 and 105–129.

²³ Leanne Calvert, ‘Apprenticeship, adolescence and growing up in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ulster’ in *I.E.S.H.*, xlv (2018), pp 70–89.

²⁴ Tait, ‘Society, 1530–1690’ in Ohlmeyer (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Ireland*, ii, pp 288–90.

²⁵ John T. Gilbert and Rosa Mulholland Gilbert (eds), *Calendar of ancient records of Dublin* (19 volumes, Dublin, 1889–1944), ii, p. 459; *ibid.*, iii, p. 20.

²⁶ M. Quane, ‘Viscount Weymouth Grammar School: Carrickmacross’ in *J.R.S.A.I.*, lxxxvi (1956), pp 27–51.

²⁷ Patrick Trant to Sir Thomas Crosbie, 23 June 1688 (N.L.I., Talbot Crosbie Papers, MS 50,545/1/1).

II

The ‘Agenda’ pinpointed several areas for development around the history of women and religion, and historians have responded to its calls for the investigation of areas like domestic religion, popular belief and women in Protestant communities. In recent times Mary O’Dowd and Bronagh McShane have been pioneers on the subject of Protestant and Catholic women, considering their roles in leading domestic religion and as exemplars of piety. Women might control ecclesiastical property and act as key patrons of clergy.²⁸ The importance of domestic religion at a time when the possibilities for public Catholic worship were increasingly circumscribed has been discussed by Colm Lennon, and he has shown that men and women both enthusiastically joined Catholic confraternities. Catholic domestic religion was not necessarily conservative: ritual practices such as the saying of the rosary expanded during this period, new Catholic religious associations developed, and women were often key patrons of new religious orders.²⁹ As noted by the ‘Agenda’, women were likewise often prominent in dissenting communities, and some of their personal and spiritual writing survives.³⁰ Crawford Gribben has explored debates about the ecclesiastical role of women among Independents and other radical groups in the 1640s and ’50s, and especially the worldview of the Quaker, Elizabeth Avery.³¹ Kevin Herlihy meanwhile has looked at women Baptists in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (he uses Ann Fowkes’s memoir as a key example), noting their importance in sustaining that community.³²

²⁸ O’Dowd, *History of women*, pp 153–86; Bronagh Ann McShane, ‘The roles and representations of women in religious change and conflict in Leinster and south-east Munster, c.1560–c.1641’ (Ph.D. thesis, Maynooth University, 2015); Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, ‘Theory in the absence of fact: Irish women and the Catholic Reformation’ in Meek and Lawless (eds), *Pawns or players?*, pp 141–54; Brian Mac Cuarta, ‘Catholic ownership of tithes: a County Wexford widow’s dispensation, 1595’ in *I.H.S.*, xlii, no. 162 (Nov. 2018), pp 336–44.

²⁹ Colm Lennon, ‘Mass in the manor house: the counter Reformation in Dublin, 1560–1630’ in James Kelly and Dáire Keogh (eds), *History of the Catholic diocese of Dublin* (Dublin, 2000), pp 112–26; idem, *Confraternities and sodalities in Ireland: charity, devotion and sociability* (Dublin, 2012); Rachel Moss, Colmán Ó Clabaigh and Salvador Ryan (eds), *Art and devotion in late medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 2006). For the piety and religious patronage of late medieval women see Marian Lyons, ‘Lay female piety and church patronage in late-medieval Ireland’ in Brendan Bradshaw and Dáire Keogh (eds), *Christianity in Ireland: revisiting the story* (Dublin, 2002), pp 57–75; Dianne Hall, *Women and the church in medieval Ireland, c.1140–1540* (Dublin, 2003).

³⁰ David Hempton and Myrtle Hill, ‘Women and Protestant minorities in eighteenth-century Ireland’ in MacCurtain and O’Dowd (eds), *Women in early modern Ireland*, pp 197–211; R. L. Greaves, *God’s other children: Protestant nonconformists and the emergence of denominational churches in Ireland, 1660–1700* (Stanford, 1997); Phil Kilroy, *Protestant dissent and controversy in Ireland, 1660–1714* (Cork, 1994); Phil Kilroy, ‘Memoirs and testimonies: nonconformist women in seventeenth-century Ireland’ in Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day anthology*, iv, pp 480–89.

³¹ Crawford Gribben, *God’s Irishmen: theological debates in Cromwellian Ireland* (Oxford, 2007), pp 151–74.

³² Kevin Herlihy, ‘The Irish Baptists, 1650–1780’ (Ph.D. thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1992), pp 150–87.

Some young people were educated abroad for religious reasons. The formation of young seminarians in Irish Catholic colleges on the continent could be further explored.³³ Girls might also travel for education, though they are even less visible in the sources — Patrick Trant’s daughters were educated in a Paris convent.³⁴ While many histories and biographies of Catholic, Church of Ireland and dissenting clergy have been published, further work could be done on these men as men, especially in the context of growing interest in clerical masculinity and the interactions between clergy and their parishioners. For example, Mark Sweetnam has considered the Church of Ireland clergy the mid-seventeenth century, considering the ‘complexities of the minister’s social status’.³⁵ Likewise Bronagh McShane’s work on clerical wives notes their anomalous and sometimes precarious position among their majority Catholic neighbours.³⁶

McShane’s thesis also considers interconfessional marriage, which was more common than might be expected in this period, while David Edwards has noted the role of interconfessional (and interethnic) marriages in the conversion of Protestant settlers, as well as the rapid integration of English Catholic immigrants with local gentry families.³⁷ McShane’s work on Irish nuns in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries also explores the disruptions caused by the Reformations and how women carved out space for the pursuit of religious vocations.³⁸ Bernadette Cunningham and Marie-Louise Coolahan have discussed the lives and writings of nuns, especially the Poor Clares.³⁹ Though the moral behaviour and discipline of their congregations remained a priority for all denominations, few records of ecclesiastical discipline survive. However, Leanne Calvert has

³³ For an introduction to the colleges, see Liam Chambers and Thomas O’Connor, ‘Introduction’ in idem (eds), *Forming Catholic communities: Irish, Scots and English College networks in Europe, 1568–1918* (Leiden, 2017), pp 1–11.

³⁴ J. Gillow, *The diary of the Blue Nuns or Order of the Immaculate Conception at Paris 1658–1810* (London, 1910).

³⁵ Mark Sweetnam, ‘“Sheep in the midst of wolves”? The Protestant ministry in the 1641 depositions’ in *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*, vi (2013), pp 71–92; Raymond Gillespie, ‘The Church of Ireland clergy, c.1640: representation and reality’ in T. C. Barnard and W. G. Neely (eds), *The clergy of the Church of Ireland, 1000–2000* (Dublin, 2006), pp 59–77.

³⁶ Bronagh Ann McShane, ‘Clerical wives in Tudor and early Stuart Ireland’ in Sarah Covington, Vincent Carey and Valerie McGowan Doyle (eds), *Early modern Ireland: new sources, methods, and perspectives* (London, 2019), pp 64–78.

³⁷ David Edwards, ‘A haven of popery: English Catholic migration to Ireland in the age of Plantations’ in Alan Ford and John McCafferty (eds), *The origins of sectarianism in early modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2005), pp 95–126; Bronagh Ann McShane, ‘Inter-confessional marriage in early modern Ireland’ in Salvador Ryan (ed.), *Marriage and the Irish: a miscellany* (Dublin, 2019), pp 53–5.

³⁸ Bronagh Ann McShane, *Irish women in religious orders, 1530–1700* (Woodbridge, 2022); eadem, ‘Negotiating religious change and conflict: female religious communities in early modern Ireland, 1530–1641’ in *British Catholic History*, xxxiii, no. 3 (May 2017), pp 357–82.

³⁹ Marie-Louise Coolahan, *Women, writing, and language in early modern Ireland* (Oxford, 2010); Bernadette Cunningham, ‘Nuns and their networks in early modern Galway’ in Salvador Ryan and Clodagh Tait (eds), *Religion and politics in urban Ireland, c.1500–c.1750* (Dublin, 2016), pp 156–72.

used the Presbyterian kirk session records to consider sexuality, marriage, bigamy and marriage breakdown within that community (see also her further consideration of the topic in this volume).⁴⁰ Catholic clergy involved themselves in correcting sinful behaviour, but their activities are difficult to reconstruct. Sources such as the *Jesuit annual letters* do indicate the varied roles of some churchmen — the Jesuits are credited with intervening in marital and other disputes and regularising marriages.⁴¹ The surviving Killaloe consistory court records, dating from the 1670s to the 1750s or so (the subject of forthcoming work by Mary O’Dowd), also demonstrate the Church of Ireland’s concern with regulating unchristian and immoral behaviour like fornication, adultery, breach of promise, defamation and ‘profaning the sabbath’, but only scraps from other Anglican church courts survive.⁴²

Given the limitations of the surviving sources, the question of gender and supernatural belief and experiences is less easy to explore in Ireland than elsewhere in Western Europe. Magical practices are sometimes evident in documents like William Good’s contribution to Camden’s *Britannia*, where he talks of the charms used by certain women ‘Against all maladies and mischeifs whatsoever’ and practices for the protection of infants and of men in battle.⁴³ Andrew Sneddon’s work on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century witchcraft beliefs has revealed a range of witchcraft accusations and the gender, religious and social factors that influenced them.⁴⁴ Alma O’Donnell’s forthcoming work on Irish Catholic possession and exorcism also promises to look at the gendering of cases of possession: she has found that a comparatively high number of Irish victims were male.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, male and female Cromwellian nonconformist accounts of dreams, encounters with the devil, possession, ghosts and angels, reveal both understandings about the supernatural and anxieties about salvation and heresy.⁴⁶ The publication of a greater range of sources, especially those produced by Catholic clerics who recorded aspects of Christian ritual, as well as reactions to practices seen as superstitious or diabolical, may open up new avenues for research. For example, the *Jesuit Annual letters* indicate some of the devotional practices of women, especially during childbirth, when successful outcomes might be attributed to the use of relics and other religious objects.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Leanne Calvert, ‘“He came to her bed pretending courtship”: sex, courtship and the making of marriage in Ulster, 1750–1844’ in *I.H.S.*, xlii, no. 162 (Nov. 2018), pp 244–64.

⁴¹ Vera Moynes (ed.), *Irish Jesuit annual letters 1604–1674* (2 vols, Dublin, 2019).

⁴² Some (garbled and disorganised) portions of the Killaloe records are published in Patrick Dwyer, *The diocese of Killaloe from the Reformation to the close of the eighteenth century* (Dublin, 1878).

⁴³ William Good, ‘Ireland’ in William Camden (ed.), *Britannia* (London, 1610).

⁴⁴ Andrew Sneddon, *Witchcraft and magic in Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2015); idem, ‘Florence Newton’s trial for witchcraft, Cork, 1661’ in *I.H.S.*, xliii, no. 164 (Nov. 2019), pp 298–319; idem, ‘Witchcraft belief and trials in early modern Ireland’ in *I.E.S.H.*, xxxix (2012), pp 1–25; idem, *Possessed by the devil: the real history of the Islandmagee witches* (2013); idem, *Representing magic in modern Ireland: belief, history, and culture* (Cambridge, 2022).

⁴⁵ Alma O’Donnell, ‘Irish exorcists in the Catholic Reformation’ (Ph.D. thesis, University College Cork, 2020).

⁴⁶ Crawford Gribben, ‘Angels and demons in Cromwellian and Restoration Ireland: heresy and the supernatural’ in *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, lxxvi, no. 3 (2013), pp 377–92; idem, ‘Inexpressible horror: the devil and Baptist life writing in Cromwellian Ireland’ in *Church History*, lxxxix, no. 3 (Sept. 2020), pp 531–48.

⁴⁷ Moynes (ed.), *Irish Jesuit annual letters*.

III

In the ‘Agenda’ and elsewhere, Mary O’Dowd has highlighted the various ways in which, while being excluded from political office, women ‘wielded considerable political influence and helped shape political events’, and the complexity of changes to women’s political and legal standing as the anglicisation of government and law progressed.⁴⁸ Her call for consideration of the wives of the lords deputy is now bearing fruit: significant work is in progress on the later seventeenth- and eighteenth-century vicereines.⁴⁹ In both new and old communities, marriage furthered group cohesion and built networks linking the up-and-coming to the already established. For example, close studies of urban elites highlight their interconnect-edness and the complexity of their religious and ethnic identifications.⁵⁰ Charlene McCoy has demonstrated the importance of marriage in the cohering of Fermanagh’s plantation settlers, noting that ‘While marriage formed an essential bond at the top of the social scale, uniting families of a similar background, it served as an equally important link between the lower social ranks.’ Church of Ireland clergy and their families also intermarried.⁵¹ I have pointed out the role of intermarriage among the settlers in the second Munster Plantation in ‘weaving together a web of support and mutual obligations’. Meanwhile, David Edwards has revealed in absorbing detail the importance of Richard Boyle, earl of Cork’s first marriage to Joan Apsley, daughter of an English settler and an Old English member of the Limerick Browne family. Though Joan died after the birth of their stillborn child, Boyle continued to cultivate his Browne/Apsley (Catholic) connections, creating an influential ‘affinity’ and feeding his own relatives into Munster marriages to further increase his reach.⁵²

Gendered dimensions to popular politics can also be considered. Crowd actions expressed collective grievances, giving space to protest injustices that cut to the heart of male and female roles and rights, and allow us to further problematise standard pictures of who got involved in politics. For example, Stephen Carroll charts the disturbances surrounding the parliamentary election in Dublin in 1613, when the Catholic freemen attempted to defend their rights to elect MPs, at one point calling for the tholsel bell to be rung to ‘gather the young men and apprentices

⁴⁸ O’Dowd, *History of women*; eadem, ‘Politics, 1500–2000’; eadem, ‘The political writings and public voices of women, c.1500–1850’ in Bourke *et al.* (eds), *Field Day anthology*, v, pp 1–5.

⁴⁹ Margaret MacCurtain, Mary O’Dowd and Maria Luddy, ‘An agenda for women’s history in Ireland, 1500–1900’ in *I.H.S.*, xxviii, no. 109 (May 1992), p. 8; Myles Campbell (ed.), *Vicereines of Ireland: portraits of forgotten women* (Dublin, 2021); Rachel Wilson, ‘The vicereines of Ireland and the transformation of the Dublin court, c.1703–1737’ in *Court Historian*, xix, no. 1 (2014), pp 3–28. See also Frances Nolan’s *The Jacobite duchess: Frances Jennings, duchess of Tyrconnell, c.1649–1731* (Woodbridge, 2021).

⁵⁰ Colm Lennon, *The lords of Dublin in the age of Reformation* (Dublin, 1989); Patricia Stapleton, ‘The merchant community of Dublin in the early seventeenth century’ (Ph.D. thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2008).

⁵¹ Charlene McCoy, ‘War and revolution: County Fermanagh and its borders, c.1640–c.1666’ (Ph.D. thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2008).

⁵² Clodagh Tait, ‘Good ladies and ill wives: women on Boyle’s estates’ and David Edwards, ‘The land-grabber’s accomplices: Richard Boyle’s Munster affinity, 1588–1603’, both in David Edwards and Colin Rynne (eds), *The colonial world of Richard Boyle, first earl of Cork* (Dublin, 2018), pp 166–88, 205–22.

together, that they may pluck [the Protestants] out by the ears'.⁵³ The involvement of young men in such 'tumults' is notable, as is the regular involvement of women in popular protest. Understandings of law and gender roles were played upon to pressurise those in authority to accede to crowd demands, and cultural resources such as the keen were marshalled to draw attention to grievances.⁵⁴

Petitions fill the state papers and are found elsewhere as well, offering opportunities to study how women and men took advantage of the language of deference and expectations that those with power would show care and concern for the vulnerable — these expectations were often fulfilled.⁵⁵ British work on petitioning, especially 'The Power of Petitioning in Seventeenth-Century England' project, will provide useful models and comparisons.⁵⁶ Marie-Louise Coolahan has used petitions by aristocratic women in the state papers, as well as petitions to the Spanish authorities by Irish women refugees there, elegantly showing how women's petitions 'display a knowing and strategic mining of gendered stereotypes to achieve their own ends'.⁵⁷ Widows often show up petitioning because of financial hardship, giving some sense of their circumstances. They also petitioned about their children. Dame Martha O'Neill petitioned Charles I in 1639 on behalf of four of her children whom she described as 'mere naturals' (intellectually disabled) and, therefore, unable to 'govern their own affairs'. Other women sought to draw attention to mistreatment, as in the case of Ellen ny [nī] Driscoll Barry and Gennet Grant who complained in the 1620s that Walter Coppinger of Cork (a notoriously awful man, even by the standards of the time) had defrauded and assaulted them, causing Grant to be imprisoned and throwing Barry off a cliff when she was pregnant so that she 'lost her burthen and continued sick four years after'.⁵⁸

Women were of course often the victims of — and actors in — political unrest, warfare, violence and atrocity. A significant literature now surrounds the gendered experience of the 1641 rebellion, and the ways in which women and men represented those events.⁵⁹ The women protagonists and victims of the Nine Years

⁵³ Stephen Carroll, 'The Dublin parliamentary elections, 1613' in Maura Cronin and William Sheehan (eds), *Riotous assemblies: popular protest in Ireland* (Dublin, 2011), pp 50–63. See also Stephen Carroll, 'Government policy, strategies of negotiation and the politics of protest in early seventeenth-century Ireland' (Ph.D. thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2013).

⁵⁴ Clodagh Tait, 'Broken heads and trampled hats: rioting in Limerick in 1599' in Liam Irwin and Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh (eds), *Limerick: history and society* (Dublin, 2009), pp 91–111; eadem, 'Riots, rescues and "grene bowes": Catholics and protest in Ireland, 1570–1640' in Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin and Robert Armstrong (eds), *Insular Christianity: alternative models of the church in Britain and Ireland, c.1570–1700* (Manchester, 2013), pp 67–87; Clodagh Tait, 'Disorder and commotion: urban riots and popular protest in Ireland 1570–1640' and Mark Empey 'A study of the Cook Street riot, 1629', both in Cronin & Sheehan (eds), *Riotous assemblies*, pp 22–49, 64–79.

⁵⁵ See Mark Empey, 'Petitioning women to unruly women: warrants as a resource' (<https://recirc.nuigalway.ie/2016/03/from-petitioning-women-to-unruly-women-warrants-as-a-resource>) (all websites accessed 29 Apr. 2022).

⁵⁶ <https://petitioning.history.ac.uk/>.

⁵⁷ Coolahan, *Women, writing and language*, pp 102–39.

⁵⁸ *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1647–1660*, pp 163–4, 229.

⁵⁹ Naomi McAreavey, "'Paper bullets": gendering the 1641 rebellion in the writings of Lady Elizabeth Dowdall and Lettice Fitzgerald, Baroness of Offaly' in Thomas Herron and Michael Potterton (eds), *Ireland in the Renaissance, 1540–1640* (Dublin, 2007), pp 311–24; eadem, 'Re(-)membering women: Protestant women's victim testimonies during

War have recently been discussed by Jim O’Neill.⁶⁰ Harold O’Sullivan’s short biographies of a number of Louth women vividly illustrate their individual tribulations and the ways they negotiated trauma, dispossession and social and political change in the 1640s and ‘50s.⁶¹ Reluctance on the part of victims to speak about rape mean it is difficult to recover the extent of sexual violence, and narratives of rape are sometimes ‘about’ men rather than women — emblematic of the extremity of the violence suffered, or used ‘to impugn the masculinity of Irish men’.⁶² The ‘dispersed archive’ that can allow us to explore violence against women and its personal impact is being combed by Valerie McGowan Doyle, Elizabeth Malcolm and Dianne Hall.⁶³ Some horrific stories survive. For example, in 1661 a proclamation offered a reward for the capture of Halsey and Walter Butler who were accused of robbery and murder in Waterford and Tipperary, including having ‘ravished [a] woman til she died’.⁶⁴

This example, and the petitions above, come from the state papers. As well as their references to women, accounts of military campaigns and the letters and petitions of military men in the state papers are already providing insights into the negotiation of ideas about male honour and masculinity. Rory Rapple has discussed the competitive and defensive nature of English military masculinity in Ireland and the ‘touchiness and swagger’ of the captains.⁶⁵ That swagger was threatened when bodies were compromised. Men presented their wounds in the monarch’s service as testimony to their loyalty and expected recompense for their suffering, but being severely maimed could damage a man’s career and undermine his authority and masculinity.⁶⁶ Recusancy was another ‘debility’ that might pull men in

the Irish Rising of 1641’ in *Journal of the Northern Renaissance*, ii (2010), pp 72–92; Coolahan, *Women, writing and language*, pp 142–79; Clodagh Tait, “Whereat his wife took great grief & died”: dying of sorrow and killing in anger in seventeenth-century Ireland’ in Michael Braddick and Phil Withington (eds), *Popular culture and political agency in early modern England and Ireland: essays in honour of John Walter* (Woodbridge, 2017), pp 267–86; Dianne Hall, ‘Fear, gender and violence in early modern Ireland’ in Michael Champion and Andrew Lynch (eds), *Understanding emotions in early Europe* (Turnhout, 2015), pp 215–32.

⁶⁰ James O’Neill, ‘Spouses, spies and subterfuge: the role and experience of women during the Nine Years War (1593–1603)’ in *P.R.I.A.*, 121c (2021), pp 249–72.

⁶¹ Harold O’Sullivan, ‘Women in County Louth in the seventeenth century’ in *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society* xxiii, no. 3 (1995), pp 344–74.

⁶² Dianne Hall and Elizabeth Malcolm, “‘The rebels’ Turkish tyranny”: understanding sexual violence in Ireland during the 1640s’ in *Gender and History*, xxii, no. 1 (Apr. 2010), pp 55–74; Morgan T. P. Robinson, ‘An act “soe fowle and grievous”: contextualising rape in the 1641 Rebellion’ in *I.H.S.*, xxxix, no. 156 (Nov. 2015), pp 595–619; Joan Redmond, ‘Memories of violence and New English identities in early modern Ireland’ in *Historical Research*, lxxxix, no. 246 (Nov. 2016), pp 708–29.

⁶³ Valerie McGowan Doyle, *The Book of Howth: Elizabethan conquest and the Old English* (Cork, 2011), pp 28–33; see McGowan Doyle’s forthcoming work on early modern violence against women, as well as Dianne Hall and Elizabeth Malcolm (eds), *Gender and war in Ireland, 1200–1900* (forthcoming).

⁶⁴ *Cal. S.P. Ire, 1660–1662*, pp 415, 419.

⁶⁵ Rory Rapple, *Martial power and Elizabethan political culture* (Cambridge, 2009).

⁶⁶ Clodagh Tait, ‘Finding meaning in wounding during and after the Nine Years War’ in Mathew Woodcock and Cian O’Mahony (eds), *Early modern military identities 1560–1639* (Woodbridge, 2019), pp 197–213; Dianne Hall, “‘Most barbarously and inhumane maner butchered’”: masculinity, trauma, and memory in early modern Ireland’ in

different directions — Ruth Canning and others have discussed the increasing pressure on Old English Catholic men in particular.⁶⁷ Much more could be done on how loyalty might be reconciled with corruption, and the emotional, as well as the physical and financial, toll of service. Given that the stories of servants of the state in Ireland often ended in shame and squabbling, how did men's sense of self survive failure? And what can be learned about how authority was exerted and competition and animosity between men contained and expressed?

Using the state papers, as well as a host of literary and other sources, Brendan Kane's work on honour politics in early modern Ireland highlights the differences in Gaelic and English aristocratic cultures of honour, and the difficulties inherent in the negotiation of shifting relationships between the state, the Gaelic nobility and gentry, and New English settlers and administrators. At the same time, both Kane and Ohlmeyer have noted the flexibility of discourses of honour, and the ways in which 'older' building blocks of honour, such as lineage and martial prowess, might increasingly become allied with 'newer' ones such as service to the crown in peace as well as war, and notions of 'civil' masculinity, expressed through dress, deportment and the public restraint of emotions and appetites.⁶⁸ Unmanly Irish men would be civilised by force if not by persuasion by the manly and martial English. Meanwhile, Kane highlights the extent to which the 'effective collapse of the Gaelic order ... brought revolutionary change to Irish masculine identity and action'. The reconquest 'challenged Irish definitions and expectations of masculinity', but Kane characterises this as a process of negotiation as well as coercion.⁶⁹

More could be done to pinpoint Gaelic and Old English notions of masculinity via their self-presentation and reports of their behaviour. Sarah McKibben's work on Gaelic Bardic poetry has considered elite masculinity and homosociability. The poets upheld and enhanced their patrons' power and prestige and 'justified the individual authority of their patrons, hierarchy in general, and the social norms that upheld it, while perpetuating the system whose beneficiaries they were.' They were rewarded for doing so, creating a 'mutually reinforcing circuit bolstering elite male privilege'. In the context of the profound changes wrought by reconquest and dispossession, and the feminising rhetoric of colonialism, the poets in turn interpreted acculturation and accommodation as emasculation and urged resistance.⁷⁰

Fionnuala Dillane, Naomi McAreavey and Emilie Pine (eds), *The body in pain in Irish literature and culture* (Basingstoke, 2016), pp 39–56.

⁶⁷ Ruth Canning, 'James Fitzpiers Fitzgerald, Captain Thomas Lee, and the problem of "secret traitors": conflicted loyalties during the Nine Years' War, 1594–1603' in *I.H.S.*, xxxvi, no. 156 (Nov. 2015), pp 573–94; Ruth Canning, 'The Palesmen's petitions during the Nine Years' War' in Covington *et al.* (eds), *Early modern Ireland*, pp 166–79.

⁶⁸ Brendan Kane, *The politics and culture of honour in Ireland, 1541–1641* (Cambridge, 2010); *idem*, 'A world of honour: aristocratic *mentalité*' in Ohlmeyer (ed.), *Cambridge history of Ireland*, ii, pp 482–505; Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English*, pp 64–83.

⁶⁹ Brendan Kane, 'Masculinity and political geographies in England, Ireland and North America' in *European Review of History*, xxii, no. 4 (2015), p. 611. The corresponding feminisation of Ireland is discussed by Clare Carroll, *Circe's cup: cultural transformations in early modern Ireland* (Cork, 2001); Anna Suranyi, 'Virile Turks and maiden Ireland: gender and national identity in early modern English travel literature' in *Gender and History*, xxi, no. 2 (Aug. 2009), pp 241–62.

⁷⁰ Sarah McKibben, 'Queering early modern Ireland' in *Irish University Review*, xliii, no. 1 (May 2013), pp 169–83; *eadem*, *Endangered masculinities in Irish poetry, 1540–1780* (Dublin, 2010).

IV

The local and national politics of marriage has already been noted, and the mechanisms of the making of marriage are reasonably well known. However, much more could be done on the experience and negotiation of courtship and marriage, female property in marriage and widowhood, and the transfer of property to and by women more generally. As might be expected, the emotional and personal side of the making and experience of marriage is most evident in the correspondence of aristocratic families, and again is an area that has been discussed by Jane Ohlmeyer, Rachel Wilson and others. Some glimpses from the middling sort and gentry could be further explored. For example, Nicholas Langton of Kilkenny in his contribution to a family memoir describes how he ‘contracted’ his marriage to Lettice Daniell in 1587, aged twenty-five, but as they were third cousins they had to await a dispensation to marry. Lettice’s death of plague in 1604, leaving seven of her eleven children alive, says Nicholas, ‘was to me a doleful day having lost the rarest jewel of a wife that any man of my rank had time out of mind.’⁷¹ Such statements of emotion are rare but can help build portraits of certain marriages. In the extraordinary account of Jacques/James Fontaine, a Huguenot minister who settled in Ireland in the 1680s, we hear a lot about the role of his ‘beloved wife’, Anne Elizabeth Boursiquot, in their family life and business affairs. He reflected on her beauty and intellect, called her ‘my greatest earthly comfort and consolation’ and admiringly recounted instances of her stoicism, courage and capability during times of hardship and danger (including during attacks on their house in Bearhaven by French privateers in 1704 and 1708). He was shattered when she died.⁷²

The fact that the different churches in Ireland had their own rules on marriage made for some confusion at the time, as well as for historians, and more work on the operation and implications of such rules would be welcome. Anomalies might be exploited by individuals seeking to end their marriages or used as a means of harassing minority congregations or partners in interconfessional marriages.⁷³ Further study of separation and divorce in Ireland also would be fruitful, though the post-1660 situation has been significantly illuminated by Mary O’Dowd.⁷⁴ Traditionally Gaelic lords, and some high-status women, might when it suited them engage in strategic serial marriages: spouses might be ‘put away’ when they became older or in order to symbolise shifting alliances. Though some divorced wives would have received their dowries back on the ending of the marriage, Grace O’Malley complained that this often did not happen.⁷⁵ While Catholic churchmen claimed the right to annul certain marriages, by the sixteenth century how this was accomplished or justified is unclear, especially in the context of disruptions to the appointment of Catholic bishops and Tridentine restrictions on divorce. Meanwhile, though the Anglican church early on closed

⁷¹ ‘Memoirs of the Family of Langton’ in *J.R.S.A.I.*, v, no. 1 (1864), pp 87–9.

⁷² F. L. Hawks (ed.), *A tale of the Huguenots or memoirs of a French refugee family* (New York, 1838); E. P. Alexander, *The journal of John Fontaine: an Irish Huguenot son in Spain and Virginia 1710–1719* (Williamsburg, 1972).

⁷³ See Ryan (ed.), *Marriage and the Irish*; Art Cosgrove (ed.), *Marriage in Ireland* (Dublin, 1985).

⁷⁴ Mary O’Dowd, ‘Marriage breakdown in Ireland, c.1660–1857’ in Niamh Howlin and Kevin Costello (eds), *Law and the family in Ireland 1800–1950* (London, 2017), pp 7–23; see also eadem, ‘Men, women, children’.

⁷⁵ Clodagh Tait, ‘Serial marriage’ in Ryan (ed.), *Marriage and the Irish*, pp 44–6.

down most avenues for the dissolution of marriage, the fragmented surviving ecclesiastical court records suggest that official separations (where remarriage was not allowed) and even divorces were occasionally being granted well into the eighteenth century. The records of the court of chancery also contain suits related to marital disputes, and occasionally hint at official procedures. For example, Ellen Power of Inch, County Cork, whose husband, Philip Barry of Ballyfoyle, had procured a separation from the archdeacon of Cork, claimed that despite having brought a substantial dowry to the marriage, she had received no maintenance.⁷⁶

Some Irish people, especially powerful men, picked and chose their approach to matrimonial law. As late as 1628 the Irish Protestant, Baron Laurence Esmonde, ‘repudiated’ his wife without, it seems, any formal process, in order to remarry.⁷⁷ No wonder early seventeenth-century Irish parliaments refused to pass bigamy legislation.⁷⁸ Plantation, especially from Scotland, added further complications, since Scots law recognised wider grounds for dissolution of marriage than English law. In a 1616 will Sir James Hamilton of Bangor, County Down (later Viscount Clancuboye) set out provisions for the payment of £100 ‘during her life’ to Alice Penicook, his former wife, who was instructed to ‘carry herself without troubling of my ... wif and son’.⁷⁹ Later, the Presbyterians seem to have been more amenable to sanctioning separations and divorces than the other churches in Ireland.⁸⁰

The dowry or ‘portion’ that women brought to marriage was often balanced by contributions from their husbands’ families to help the setting up of self-sufficient households. Wills and marriage settlements provide evidence on the size and composition of portions, evidencing changes by the seventeenth century — livestock come to play a lesser part in transactions over time. Under English law, widows were entitled to dower of one-third of their husbands’ moveable goods for life or jointure arrangements might formally set out other provisions. Thus, there is significant room to consider further the transactions that underpinned the making of marriage. For example, the 1627 ‘marriage articles’ of John O Birne of Dangin, County Roscommon, and Jane ny Jordan of Balintogher, Co Mayo, signed by eight men, set out a portion of £60 plus thirty-nine cattle, twenty-two horses and a jointure financed from ‘the quarters of Dunyne and Cloonsallagh’. Should there be ‘no issue male’, a portion of £1,050 was promised ‘for the daughter or daughters to be born of the marriage’ (presumably in recompense for the passing of the family lands to the nearest male heir).⁸¹ The papers of Thomas Arthur, a Limerick physician, provide details about the marriage of his young daughter Mary to Bartholomew Stackpole. In 1636, Thomas undertook to pay Bartholomew’s expenses at the Inns of Court in London. Lands were set aside to

⁷⁶ Maria Luddy, ‘Property, work and home: women and the economy, c.1170–1850’ in *Field Day anthology*, v, p. 486.

⁷⁷ J. J. N. McGurk, ‘Esmonde, Laurence, first Lord Esmonde’, *O.D.N.B.*, xviii, 601–02; John O’Donovan, *Annals of the kingdom of Ireland* (6 vols, Dublin, 1848–51), iii, p. 2497.

⁷⁸ Tait, ‘Serial marriage’.

⁷⁹ J. Hamilton, ‘The Hamilton manuscripts (continued)’ in *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, iii (1855), pp 242–5, v (1857), p. 28.

⁸⁰ Calvert, “‘He came to her bed’”.

⁸¹ John Ainsworth and Edward MacLysaght, ‘Survey of documents in private keeping: second series’ in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 20 (1958), pp 21–2; Bríd McGrath, ‘A Blake/Joyce marriage agreement from 1652’ in *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, lxx (2018), pp 52–67.

form Mary's jointure should the marriage be consummated or to repay Thomas if not. The payments to Stackpole eventually totalled over £650.⁸² But evidence of much humbler dowries also survives.

Correspondence and family papers can potentially uncover other aspects of the entitlement of women, especially widows, to land. They might need to be proactive in defending their rights: Lady Barbara Barret, widow of John St Leger of Doneraile, was accused by Warham St Leger of withholding 'my fathers letters patents and severall other deedes and papers which properly belong to me'.⁸³ Given the possibility of clashes, it is unsurprising to find many references in the earl of Cork's documents to deals with widows to buy them out of legacy entitlements and to ensure his unencumbered ownership.⁸⁴ The issue especially of jointure and dower lands also proved thorny elsewhere. For example, Lord Deputy Arthur Chichester reported on the case of the widowed mother of Cuconnacht Maguire, left behind when her son accompanied Hugh O'Neill to Rome, forfeiting his lands in Fermanagh. The 'very Aged' lady was claiming 'the third part of the whole Country as in right of jointure, as she is taught by her Learned Council and enabled to doe by course of the Common Laws', the implication being that without the interference of an enterprising lawyer she would not have known to make a claim. Chichester proposed paying her off.⁸⁵ The question of women's rights over lands forfeited by their menfolk recurred, especially in the 1660s and 1690s. Frances Nolan has considered the efforts of women to retrieve forfeited property on behalf of themselves and their families as 'innocent papists', and the exasperation and opposition this continued to cause.⁸⁶ Her co-edited publications of records from the court of claims and Patrick Walsh's work on the Registry of Deeds will have further important implications for our knowledge of Irish women's property-ownership and entitlements, the nature of women's claims, and their interaction with legal and political institutions.⁸⁷

As O'Dowd points out, measures were increasingly taken to exclude women from control of landed property. A move away from jointures based on land to fixed annuities gave widows far less autonomy over their incomes. Instruments such as entails, that mandated the inheritance of certain types of property in the male line only, were also used to prevent the passing of lands to female heirs. Again, a clearer picture of these changes would be welcome.⁸⁸ Women's financial difficulties are occasionally visible in family archives. For example, though Patrick Lattin of Morrinstown, County Kildare set out large dowries for his daughters, on his death one contracted dowry remained unpaid and three younger daughters were owed sums of £600, £400 and £200 respectively, which could not be managed

⁸² Edward MacLysaght and John Ainsworth, 'The Arthur Manuscript Continued' in *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, vii, no. 1 (1953), pp 169–71.

⁸³ Ainsworth and MacLysaght, 'Documents in private keeping', pp 78–80.

⁸⁴ Tait, 'Good ladies'.

⁸⁵ R. Dudley Edwards, 'Letter-book of Sir Arthur Chichester' and T. W. Moody, 'Ulster plantation papers', both in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 8 (May 1938), pp 158–9 and p. 297.

⁸⁶ Frances Nolan, "'The cat's paw': Helen Arthur, the act of resumption and *The Popish pretenders to the forfeited estates in Ireland, 1700–03*' in *I.H.S.*, xlii, no. 162 (Nov. 2018), pp 225–43; eadem, 'The representation of female claimants before the Trustees for the Irish Forfeitures, 1700–1703' in *Hist. Jn.*, lxiii, no. 4 (Dec. 2019), pp 836–61.

⁸⁷ C. I. McGrath and Frances Nolan (eds), *A list of the claims, 1700* (forthcoming, I.M.C.).

⁸⁸ O'Dowd, *History of women*, pp 73–110.

without compromising the widow's dower and the estate's viability.⁸⁹ But family papers also allude to women with significant control over their finances — Dame Ellis Aylmer Roch of Finglas, County Dublin, widow of Captain Philip Roch, controlled £2,000 of stock in the (slave-trading) South Sea Company in 1714, according to a deed arranged 'in consideration of her intended marriage' to Luke Dillon of Clonbrock. Dillon mortgaged lands in County Meath to 'Ellinor Kennedy of Dublin, singlewoman, for £300' in 1708.⁹⁰ And other archives indicate the means open to women to secure their financial interests — for example, Patricia Stapleton draws attention to their use of the Dublin Tholsel Court in the 1620s and '30s to recover small debts.⁹¹

V

Such debts were often outstanding payments for services rendered. The 'Agenda' nodded to some avenues for the study of business and employment in the eighteenth century in particular, and Mary O'Dowd has discussed 'Women and paid work in rural Ireland' from 1500 to 1800.⁹² The limited development of this area probably testifies to the fact that, despite being central to early modern lives, work is especially invisible in the sources. Certain professional occupations have received some recent attention — for example, in the case of soldiers, lawyers, clergy and nuns, and physicians and midwives. However, the craft, waged, domestic and organisational work of women, young people and poorer men leaves far less trace. While acknowledging how little we can know, this section suggests some kinds of sources where 'work', broadly defined, can be found, allowing us to begin to construct a more detailed picture of the lives and economic roles of men and women.

Women's work can sometimes be sensed or momentarily illuminated by 'fugitive sightings', and through considering the invisible work that would have been needed to make visible work possible. For example, in Thomas Arthur's record of the expenses for improvements to his property in Limerick at various points in the 1620s and 1640s, we find numerous named men employed to move earth, dig cellars, break stones, build walls, hew corbels, chimney pieces, windows and doorframes, haul beams, lay floors, level stairs, carve doors and shutters, slake lime for plastering, plaster, and forge tools, bars, hooks and nails. The only mention of a woman's work in conjunction with the construction is Arthur's payment to his mother, Anstace Ryce, of £5 for 'bearecorne to make malte of for her to make drinke thereof for the woorkemen' and £2 'for the bakehouse wherby to helpe her to get the woorkemen breade'.⁹³ However, butter, meat and herrings were also bought, and most of the men recorded as being employed on the project in 1620 and 1621 were given both wages and 'meate and drinke'. Though there is no other mention of the inevitable role of women in making food and ale, not to

⁸⁹ Ainsworth and MacLysaght, 'Documents in private keeping', p. 111.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 43–4.

⁹¹ Stapleton, 'The merchant community of Dublin', pp 199–201. See Bridget McCormack and Toby Barnard (eds), *Archives of the Tholsel Court Dublin* (forthcoming, Dublin, 2023).

⁹² Mary O'Dowd, 'Women and paid work in rural Ireland, c.1500–1800' in Bernadette Whelan (ed.), *Women and paid work in Ireland, 1500–1930* (Dublin, 2000), pp 13–29.

⁹³ MacLysaght and Ainsworth, 'The Arthur manuscript continued', pp 168–82.

mention the fetching, carrying and cleaning the works must have involved (all the while attending to childcare and quotidian tasks), the shades of Anstace Ryce and the other women working alongside her are present in Arthur's documents all the same.

Sources that list people sometimes list occupations. For example, the calendars of the Tudor fiants provide glimpses of sixteenth-century communities and their tailors, fullers, tanners, fishermen, smiths, butchers, physicians, goldsmiths and jack-makers (jacks were quilted leather protective tunics for soldiers).⁹⁴ Regular pardons of military men indicate differentiations in military occupations between soldiers, kern, horsemen and, increasingly, gunners. Those Dublin parish registers printed before they were destroyed in 1922 sometimes list occupations. The inhabitants of St Nicholas Without in the 1710s included weavers, tanners, butchers, carpenters, joiners, pinmakers and 'poor' — various of the recent archaeological excavations of the Liberties area have come across remnants of some of these occupations, which usually involved the input of whole families.⁹⁵

Though limited in volume, accounts and letters, especially from the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, reference women's and men's work. For example, as well as detailing his own activities, the 1660s accounts of John Bellew, agent for the earl of Carlingford, note numerous payments for Carlingford's household necessities that obliquely reveal both the domestic work of his countess and the labour of other households. A Mrs Mottam, perhaps a housekeeper, regularly went to the market and made payments to a variety of providers such as the milk woman, the butter woman, and 'the woman that supplies the house with apples and such like'. We also encounter payments to 'Mrs Hoggsie, the brewer's wife', the glazier's wife, the butcher's wife, the joiner's wife and 'Hunter the baker's wife', indicating how women were involved in their husbands' businesses. Various servants — the butler, footman, grooms and maid — and other tradesmen are also mentioned.⁹⁶

References to women and men in leases and legal records can also sometimes indicate their activities. For example, there were five or six inns in 1680s Carlow, some with women named in the leases. 'The Red Cowe Inne, house plot and buildings soe called in Dublin St' and other properties including a malthouse were leased 'for the lives of Joane Masters, Katherin Nevill, Joane Beaver'. The Blackmoore's Head Inn was leased for the lives of Richard, Mary and Alice Jones, and the White Horse Inn was leased by Margery Quigley, Adam Seix and Maurisse Cranbrough. Richard and Sarah Jones and Thomas Bridge leased a house and brewhouse on a corner of Dublin Street and Castle Street.⁹⁷ Wills and surviving legal and taxation documents, especially from urban settings, also highlight women's work and professions, especially in the making and retailing of alcohol. Greg Fewer has considered medieval and early modern female 'brewsters' in

⁹⁴ Fiona Fitzsimons, 'Tudor Fiants' in *History Ireland*, xxiii, no. 4 (July/Aug. 2015). The fiants were first published in the *Reports of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records* series in 1875–90, and republished as *The Irish fiants of The Tudor sovereigns* (Dublin, 1994).

⁹⁵ J. Mills (ed.), *The register of St Nicholas Without, Dublin 1694–1739* (Dublin, 1912); W. O. Frazer, 'Newmarket and Weaver's Square' (2009) (https://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/2018-06/Newmarket_Final_lo-res_1__31.3.09.pdf).

⁹⁶ Harold O'Sullivan, 'Land ownership changes in the County of Louth in the seventeenth century' (2 vols, Ph.D. thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1992), ii, appendix G.

⁹⁷ T. Clarke, 'Land Lease Records (NLI)' in *Carloviana: Journal of the Old Carlow Society* (1989–90), pp 25–9.

Kilkenny and Waterford.⁹⁸ The will of George Looby of Cork, who died in 1714, showed he had taken up his mother's profession as a brewer⁹⁹ and other Cork women were heavily involved in brewing and related trades into the eighteenth century. In a lawsuit of 1730, Alicia Phaire declared she had been in the malting business for many years and had 'procured a comfortable and happy subsistence for herself and her family'.¹⁰⁰ More than a hundred years earlier, Barnaby Rich had complained of the significant role of women in brewing and selling ale in Dublin — 'every householder's wife is a brewer' he said, and the aldermen were willing to 'winke at' the high prices of beer, the bad wine and the 'young idle huswives ... most of them known harlots' employed to vend it, because of the profits that such activities brought in.¹⁰¹ It seems that married women, single women and widows dominated the Dublin 'drinks industry' as both makers and sellers, and Christina Wade has shown that they continued to be prominent until at least the end of the seventeenth century.¹⁰²

Urban records may allow for the further exploration of the lives and work of urban women and men, rich and poor. For example, a fragment of the 1635 minute book of New Ross hints at the role of women both as taxpayers and in the politics of the town in objecting to local taxes.¹⁰³ Brid McGrath has considered the role of women in urban trade guilds: she notes that 'Irish guilds admitted both women and men', and finds women members in some guilds in Dublin and elsewhere. She also highlights the role of wives of guild members, such as the fact that wives 'were included in apprenticeship agreements and had to fulfil all the obligations if their husbands died and they carried on his business.' She has found several examples of women apprentices.¹⁰⁴ Apprenticeship opportunities for women may have expanded from the later seventeenth century. George Looby's will provided for his niece, Susanna Evanson, to be 'apprenticed to some woman tailor'.¹⁰⁵

Galway Corporation records highlight how the town elites sought to defend the authority of the aldermen, and to regulate the behaviour and work of the 'com-brethern' or the 'brother[s] and neighbour[s] of Galwey' and their relationships with the 'outlanders', 'outlandish' men, 'country men' and strangers beyond its walls.¹⁰⁶ The privileges of urban freedom were cherished by the men (and some

⁹⁸ T. Greg Fewer, 'The brewster in medieval and early modern Kilkenny and Waterford' in *Ossory, Laois and Leinster*, vi (2015), pp 55–102.

⁹⁹ Society of Genealogists transcripts, (P.R.O.N.I. T581/3, f. 369), with thanks to Leanne Calvert.

¹⁰⁰ W. H. Welply, 'The art and mystery of brewing in Cork' in *J.C.H.A.S.*, lxii (1957), pp 102–10.

¹⁰¹ Barnaby Rich, *A new description of Ireland* (London, 1611), pp 69–74.

¹⁰² Christina M. Wade, "'Most filthy queanes': analysing female brewers in early modern Dublin, c.1500–1700' in *Dublin Gastronomy Symposium* (2018), pp 1–7 (<https://arrow.tudublin.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1161&context=dgs>).

¹⁰³ Brid McGrath, 'A fragment of the minute book of the Corporation of New Ross, 1635' in *J.R.S.A.I.*, cxliv/cxv (2014–2015), pp 100–12. See also McGrath's work on other urban corporations, especially Clonmel and Coleraine.

¹⁰⁴ Brid McGrath, 'Fraternities and mysteries: early-modern provincial Irish guilds and trade companies' in *J.R.S.A.I.*, cl (2020), pp 232–4.

¹⁰⁵ Society of Genealogists transcripts, (P.R.O.N.I. T581/3, f. 369).

¹⁰⁶ John T. Gilbert, 'Archives of the Town of Galwey', *HMC Tenth Report, Appendix, Part V* (London, 1885), pp 380–520.

women) who inherited or achieved them: men might also share or delegate such privileges to their wives. For example, the Londonderry Corporation accounts record payment to various widows of the town, some of them widows of office-holders. The ‘pensioners’ for 1676/7 included the widows Wilkison, Frampton, Goffe, Davis, Underhill, Sennet, and Mutter.¹⁰⁷ Widows and orphans were given primacy in urban charity, and further work on poor relief and gender will reveal more of their experiences. In Cork in the mid 1660s, recipients of charity included ‘Johane that sits at the cross, and another lame woman’, and Rose Hadwick who was given 4s. 3d. to shroud and bury her child.¹⁰⁸

VI

The significance that things could play in historiography was not yet fully appreciated in 1992. But in addition to, or in the absence of, other records, material culture is allowing us to appreciate more keenly what mattered to people in the past. Archaeological remains, surviving buildings and traces of objects, spaces and landscapes, sometimes extant just in images and documents, all provide glimpses of the early modern communities that fashioned them and, in doing so, fashioned themselves.¹⁰⁹ As is regularly pointed out, though perhaps not as yet as fully explored as they could be in Ireland, objects produce gender: clothing, utensils and the ordering of spaces underlined gender identities, not to mention ethnicity, profession and social hierarchies. When James Fontaine and his wife Anne Elizabeth surrendered to the privateers who attacked their home in Bearhaven in 1708, Anne Elizabeth challenged their commander to prove himself a ‘man of honor’ and handed over her keys, the symbol of a female householder’s authority, in return for his promise to treat them considerately. James sought unsuccessfully to secure his books, irreplaceable items in west Cork, and emblems of his learning and his calling as a minister.¹¹⁰

Jessica Cunningham and Tony Barnard have discussed the acquisition of luxury goods and their role on ‘making the grand figure’ for men and women. By the time Bartholomew Stackpole married Mary Arthur in about 1643 (the negotiation of the marriage is mentioned earlier) he had sent her some fancy gifts, including a cross, three rings, fifteen pairs of gloves, ribbons, lace, hoods, shoes, fabric, combs, a fan, a silver seal and ‘a smale case of instruments’.¹¹¹ Such items signalled

¹⁰⁷ Londonderry Corporation Minute Book, 1673–86, f. 27 (P.R.O.N.I.) (<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/corporation-minute-book-volume-1-1673-1688>).

¹⁰⁸ R. Caulfield, *The register of the parish of the Holy Trinity (Christ Church), Cork* (Cork, 1877), p. 11.

¹⁰⁹ See especially Audrey Horning *et al.* (eds), *The post-medieval archaeology of Ireland* (Dublin, 2007); W. J. Smyth, *Map-making, landscapes and memory* (Cork, 2006); Campbell *et al.* (eds), *Becoming and belonging*; Clodagh Tait, ‘Writing the social and cultural history of Ireland, 1550–1650: wills and example and inspiration’ in Covington (ed.), *Early modern Ireland*, pp 27–48; Susan Flavin, ‘Domestic materiality in Ireland, 1550–1730’ and Jane Fenlon, ‘Irish art and architecture’, both in Ohlmeyer (ed.), *Cambridge history of Ireland*, ii, pp 321–45 and 346–84; Jane Fenlon (ed.), *Clanricard’s Castle: Portumna House, Co. Galway* (Dublin, 2012); eadem, *Goods and chattels: a survey of household inventories in Ireland* (Dublin, 2003); Crawford Art Gallery, *Portraits and people: art in seventeenth-century Ireland* (Cork, 2010).

¹¹⁰ Hawks, *A tale of the Huguenots*, p. 222

¹¹¹ MacLysaght and Ainsworth, ‘The Arthur manuscript continued’, pp 169–71.

Bartholomew's regard and helped Mary prepare materially for her role as a wife of a member of the Limerick elite.¹¹² Funerary monuments are another useful source. Images and inscriptions on monuments were designed to publicly recollect the deceased's public exploits, connections and personality. Men emphasised birth, military prowess, service, professions, wealth and experience; women's honour and reputation depended on the men with whom they were associated, and their virtuous performance of piety, charity, chastity and maternity.¹¹³ Heidi Coburn's work on the material culture revealed by the 1641 depositions discusses how the 'things' of seventeenth-century plantations (and buildings like mills) reveal gendered identities and social and economic changes.¹¹⁴ Susan Flavin has carefully uncovered the practicalities of trade, the making of clothing, and the preparation and serving of food and drink. She considers the increasing range of goods available to sixteenth-century Irish people and changing sartorial and dining practices, highlighting the meaning and gendering of clothing and food cultures.¹¹⁵

Both Flavin and Coburn note that clothing and possessions reflect how men and women wanted to be seen and were viewed by their contemporaries, and how the theft and destruction of clothing did violence to people's sense of themselves (the humiliation and threat being heightened in cases of thefts of women's clothing). Clothing styles were markers of ethnicity and civil femininity and masculinity: Gaelic clothing, especially male clothing, was increasingly regarded as indicating seditious intent and 'degeneracy'. Hair was another marker of ethnicity, and Irish male hair and beard styles likewise prompted curiosity, allegations of barbarism and effeminacy, and attempts at regulation. That said, Coburn has noted 'a degree of hybridisation' of clothing cultures in the seventeenth century.¹¹⁶ Bríd McGrath's work on civic dress discusses the role of ceremonial clothing in identifying (male) town elites and underlining their authority.¹¹⁷ The public display of civil masculinity was also important for military captains and other public servants. Captain Thomas Wingfield's will (c.1602) indicates that despite lengthy service he owned very little other than 'accompts dewe to me from the Queene' and modestly fabulous clothes: he bequeathed three velvet cloaks, a silk grosgrain cloak 'lined with figured satten', a silk-lined cloth cloak with silver buttons, satin doublets, and various pairs of silk stockings and garters, which he left to his brother, Sir

¹¹² T. C. Barnard, *Making the grand figure: lives and possession in Ireland, 1641–1770* (New Haven, 2004).

¹¹³ Clodagh Tait, *Death, burial and commemoration in Ireland, 1550–1650* (Basingstoke, 2002), pp 118–28.

¹¹⁴ Helen Coburn, 'The built environment and material culture of Ireland in the 1641 depositions, 1600–1654', (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 2016).

¹¹⁵ Susan Flavin, *Consumption and culture in sixteenth-century Ireland* (Woodbridge, 2014).

¹¹⁶ See also Horning, 'Clothing and colonialism: the Dungiven costume and the fashioning of early modern identities' in *Journal of Social Archaeology*, xiv (2014), pp 296–318; J. R. Ziegler, 'Irish mantles, English nationalism: apparel and national identity in early modern English and Irish texts' in *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, xiii, no. 1 (2013), pp 75–95; Clodagh Tait, 'Civilising the hairy savage in 16th-century Ireland' (<https://wayback.archive-it.org/16107/20210313095249/http://blog.wellcomelibrary.org/2015/11/civilising-the-hairy-savage-in-16th-century-ireland/>); Sparky Booker, 'Moustaches, mantles, and saffron shirts: what motivated sumptuary law in medieval English Ireland?' in *Speculum*, xcvi, no. 3 (July 2021), pp 726–70.

¹¹⁷ Bríd McGrath, 'Looking the part: dress and civic status and ethnicity in early-modern Ireland' in *J.R.S.A.I.*, cxlviii (2018), pp 101–21.

Edward Maria Wingfield, half-sister and brother-in-law.¹¹⁸ Paintings of other Elizabethan captains also indicate the role of apparel, as well as skill, in masculine self-presentation. Hoping to gain favour and financial reward and to advance socially as a result of their service, the captains needed to ‘fake it to make it’. This went for their leaders as well. William Fitzwilliam’s accounts catalogue the fine clothes and jewellery he purchased in 1587 to kit out his household before a renewed stint as lord deputy: fine fabrics and trimmings, jewelled buttons, gold jewellery and ornamented weapons (down to a ‘night gowne of tawny silke grogeram’ and a ‘night cap lined with sarsenet’).¹¹⁹

Family papers and standing remains can give some sense of the gendering of space within gentry households and estates. For example, elite male business was done in studies: Richard Boyle carefully arranged his to store his papers, and chronicles some of the business and sociable activities that happened there. Some homes had room for a closet, often a private space where the woman of the house kept valuable objects, read, wrote or prayed.¹²⁰ Their privacy made closets somewhat suspicious: the pamphleteer, Barnaby Rich, accused Catholic women of hiding priests in their closets with the apricots. He also complained of women taking up public space, both by attracting the eye with fashionable clothing, and by making a commotion in the streets so that ‘we are not able to know a Lady from a Landresse, wee cannot distinguish between those women that bee on honour, from those that are but base in parentage, whose best bringing up hath been in washing, in starching, in scraping of trenchers, in filling the pot, yet not crosse the streets but in a coach’. He had plenty of scorn too for unmanly ‘roaring boys’ swaggering in the streets, sporting ‘Devilish’ fashions, smoking, drinking and idling.¹²¹ The spaces of Irish homes and streets have more to tell us about gender.

The in-between places do too. For example, inns/taverns and stables were places of male sociability and display. The work of Flavin and Audrey Horning is beginning to allow us to look at drinking cultures and their place in male sociability in particular.¹²² Richard Boyle, earl of Cork, and his nemesis, Thomas Wentworth in Dublin Castle, both upgraded their stables, Boyle ordering that his in Youghal be finished ‘veery strongly and gracefully’.¹²³ The exchange of horses, hawks and dogs, as well as other products of gentry estates, greased the wheels of friendship and patronage. For example, Colonel Daniel O’Brien sent Lord Arlington a gelding for hunting in July 1670, along with detailed instructions about his handling and feeding, neatly segueing to a complaint about the barrenness of his land and the level of his quit rents.¹²⁴ Women were also important to the exchange of goods and gifts. The earl of Antrim wrote to a ‘Sweet Mrs Porter’ in 1627, asking her to come to Ireland and for a cheese: women’s gifts, often emblematic of culinary and textile skills, also helped to bolster interpersonal connections.¹²⁵ The exchange

¹¹⁸ Will of Captain Thomas Wingfield (T.N.A., PROB 11/97/291).

¹¹⁹ ‘Fitzwilliam manuscripts at Wilton, England’ in *Anal. Hib.*, no. 4 (Oct. 1932), pp 287–326.

¹²⁰ Lena Cowen Orlin, *Locating privacy in Tudor London* (Oxford, 2009).

¹²¹ Barnaby Rich, *The Irish hubbub; or, the English hue and cry* (London, 1618), p. 54.

¹²² James Kelly, ‘The consumption and social use of alcohol in eighteenth-century Ireland’ in *P.R.I.A.*, cxv (2015), pp 219–55.

¹²³ Alexander Grosart (ed.), *The Lismore papers* (5 vols, London, 1886), i, p. 73; Elizabeth Cooper, *The life of Thomas Wentworth, earl of Strafford* (2 vols, London, 1874), i, pp 168–9.

¹²⁴ *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1669–1670*, pp 205–6.

¹²⁵ *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1625–1670*, p. 92.

and preservation of culinary and medical recipes and the passing on of recipe books between women from the mid seventeenth century has been discussed by Danielle Clarke, Regina Sexton and Madeline Shanahan — Sexton talks of the intergenerational passing on of recipes, as well as how their borrowing, sharing and consumption could ‘build culinary capital within a group.’¹²⁶ It should be possible to look in more detail at social capital, sociability and female and male networks and friendships, and how these were supported and extended through the personal mobilisation of fine, desirable and useful things, as well as through gift-giving and the exchange of news and information.

VII

Early modern Irish history is a transnational history. Increasing attention is being paid to migration to and from Ireland, and how its economy was shaped by colonisation. Though less visible in the sources, women as well as men were key to colonising projects within Ireland and beyond. Some of the detailed estate archives, as well as other papers relating to families who settled in Ireland, highlight the identities and roles of women within the Irish plantations — as leaseholders, as workers in the difficult process of transforming the landscape, as domestic servants, and as producers of goods and purveyors of services. They were integral to the human networks that linked Ireland and Britain: maintaining and leveraging connections across the Irish Sea; encouraging others to follow; sending goods and gifts. Marie-Louise Coolahan uses the example of Susan Montgomery, wife of the bishop of Derry, whose few chatty, newsy letters are a rare surviving example of how colonist women understood their place, naturalised Ireland in the imaginations of their correspondents, and encouraged others to follow them.¹²⁷ And the Montgomery and Trevelyan papers and other records of ‘planters’ still have more to say about gendered roles in plantation communities.

Those settling in Ireland did not just come from Britain. Various European entrepreneurs and traders are found in seventeenth-century Ireland. Irish soldiers brought back wives from their time in foreign wars, like Barbara, wife of Teige Connor, an ‘outlandish’ woman from ‘Nerneberk’ (Nuremberg) who sought leave sometime in the 1630s to go abroad to find out what had happened to her husband, who had disappeared after supposedly going to sort out an inheritance she had received (he may in reality have returned to soldiering).¹²⁸ Later continental disturbances, especially the renewed persecution of the Huguenots in France in the

¹²⁶ Danielle Clarke, ‘Dorothy Parsons of Birr: writing, networks, identity, 1640–1670’ in *The Seventeenth Century*, xxxvii, no. 1 (2022), pp 23–45; Regina Sexton, ‘Food and culinary cultures in pre-Famine Ireland’ in *P.R.I.A.*, cxv (2015), pp 257–306; eadem, ‘Elite women and their recipe books: the case of Dorothy Parsons and her Booke of Choyce Receipts All Written down with Her Owne Hand in 1666’ in Terence Dooley, Maeve O’Riordan and Christopher Ridgeway (eds), *Women and the country house in Ireland and Britain* (Dublin, 2017), pp 236–56; Madeline Shanahan, *Manuscript recipe books as archaeological objects: text and food in the early modern world* (London, 2015).

¹²⁷ Coolahan, *Women, writing and language*. See also other female networks in Julie A. Eckerle and Naomi McAreavey (eds.), *Women’s life writing & early modern Ireland* (Lincoln, NE, 2019).

¹²⁸ *Cal S.P. Ire., 1625–1670*, p. 281. Thanks to Steve Murdoch and Nikolas Funke for discussing this example with me.

later seventeenth century, led to the arrival of refugees like Jacques Fontaine and his wife Anne Elizabeth, whose exploits and companionable marriage are mentioned above. The Irish in turn might flee to Europe as refugees, or move to trade, work, be educated, pursue religious vocations, sightsee or pilgrimage, fight or serve. As the work of Thomas O'Connor, Marian Lyons, Ciaran Scea, Bronagh McShane and others is increasingly demonstrating, a range of sources is available to help reconstruct the lives of Irish men and women and their descendants in Europe.¹²⁹ For example, Lyons has used a variety of documents to trace how Irish female dependants of Jacobite soldiers who went to France in the 1690s and early 1700s went about navigating their changed circumstances.¹³⁰ Meanwhile work on the British in Europe — to take one example, Steve Murdoch's study of the wills and widows of Scotsmen fighting in the Thirty Years War¹³¹ — again highlights the sources available and the kinds of information they reveal. Individual biographies of members of the Irish diaspora and broader accounts of their (gendered) experiences of adaptation to the social norms of their adopted home are both possible. For example, Olive or Olivia Trant, daughter of Sir Patrick Trant (also mentioned earlier) whose family went into exile in France after the defeat of James II, was a prominent enough personality to be noted by Richard Hayes in his 'Biographical dictionary of Irishmen in France', and she and families like hers are worth further consideration.¹³²

Increasing emphasis has been placed Ireland's westward enterprises, the involvement of Irish people as colonisers in the Caribbean and the Americas and, even in the case of those who never left the island, their economic support for colonisation and profits from it. Some migrants were forced to the colonies by circumstances, as indentured servants or prisoners, and are extremely difficult to track in the records. However, others with some capital or connections behind them could have considerable success. Yet again, imperial expansion was often a family or highly networked affair. There is potential to further look at the to-and-fro of these family connections, especially in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. We have already seen the collective effort on behalf of the Galway Blakes to revive their family fortunes through tobacco trading, and the role of women in their efforts. Likewise in Cork, we see the women and men of middling-sort families like the Gambles and Loobys involved in provisioning ships bound for the Americas (they were part of the transformation of the Cork brewing trade), processing Caribbean products like sugar, and acquiring landed interests in Antigua and elsewhere.¹³³ The sources may support some consideration of the use and social meaning of commodities like sugar, tobacco and rum and how they were employed within cultures of gendered sociability.

¹²⁹ See for example the Irish in Europe project, <https://irishineurope.ie>.

¹³⁰ Mary Ann Lyons, "'Digne de compassion": female dependents of Irish Jacobite soldiers in France, c.1692–1730' in *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, xxiii (2008), pp 55–75.

¹³¹ Steve Murdoch and K. Zickermann, 'Bereft of all human help?: Scottish widows during the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648)' in *Northern Studies*, 1 (2019), pp 114–34.

¹³² Richard Hayes, 'Biographical dictionary of Irishmen in France: part XX' in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, xxxvi, no. 142 (June 1947), pp 223–4.

¹³³ Clodagh Tait, 'From beer and shoes to sugar and slaves: five Baptist Loobys in Cork and Antigua' in Terence Dooley, Mary Ann Lyons and Salvador Ryan (eds), *The historian as detective: uncovering Irish pasts. Essays in honour of Raymond Gillespie* (Dublin, 2021), pp 135–7.

Profits made internationally — garnered in large part through exploiting the labour of enslaved people — might be repatriated to Ireland. Even the Irish poor benefitted from the profits of empire and slavery. In his 1702 will Francis Browne of Galway and Montserrat ordered that two ‘negroe’ men, William and Dick, and a boy called Harry, be sold so that money for his bequests could be returned to Ireland: £6 of this was to go to the poor of Galway. In 1723 Henry Blake of Montserrat left the majority of his estate equally between his brother and two sisters, and bequeathed £10 to the ‘poor Widows and Orphans and others the poor’ of Galway. A monument in Youghal recalls the bequest of £300 to the poor by John Perry (d.1712) who made his own fortune in Antigua and South Carolina.¹³⁴

VIII

Like the Perrys of Youghal, the Fontaines of Bearhaven and Dublin, and the Blakes of Galway, Ellen Poore of Waterford had travelled. We catch sight of her via her will, made in England in 1629. In it she requested ‘Christian buriall’ and left her daughter Margaret ‘my Chaine with my Jewell’ and £13, and her daughter Joane £9. Her sister Elizabeth Poore was left twenty shillings ‘if that shee be livinge’, otherwise the money was to go to the poor of Clonmel. Ellen named as executor her cousin Ellen Roache (a widow from Cork) who was to bring the bequests to her children and divide any remaining items between them. Roache witnessed the will with her mark as did Hellen Hurleigh, Margaret Zolowen (Sullivan?) and Margaret Lidden. Three men, including Edward Loring, ‘Tytheingman’, also signed.¹³⁵ A tithingman had functions similar to a constable, dealing with policing matters, especially the policing of vagrancy. Roache, Hurleigh, Zolowen, Lidden and Poore may have been passing through Loring’s unnamed parish.

The original ‘Agenda’ provided a defence of and starting point for the flourishing of women’s and gender history that has since begun to unfold, both in the areas and via the sources identified by O’Dowd, MacCurtain and Luddy, and by other means as well. Over the last thirty years we have been taught to trawl the ‘dispersed archive’ at home and abroad, and digitised resources and new methodologies are giving new kinds of access to it. We have been learning to make the most of ‘fugitive sightings’, and to centre the humanity and agency of all women and men — those who just flit briefly in and out of the surviving sources as much as those who we can discover a bit more about. The development of alternative forms of publication may also continue to provide further impetus and opportunities. Greater online accessibility can now guarantee a wider readership. Blogs, edited collections of shorter articles and journals accepting articles below the 8,000-word standard (including the greater online availability of local history journals) can draw attention to ongoing research or allow for the exploration of

¹³⁴ Will of Francis Browne; Will of Henry Blake (T.N.A., PROB 11/464/138; T.N.A., PROB 11/599/169); J. O’Shea, ‘At home and away: the Perrie family of Youghal and Antigua’ in *J.C.H.A.S.*, cxxii (2017), pp 78–90.

¹³⁵ Will of Elizabeth Poore (T.N.A., PROB 11/155/291).

incidents, case-studies and ‘fugitive sightings’.¹³⁶ We probably will never know what Poore’s group of Irishwomen — Munsterwomen? — were doing or where they were going. But her modest will, like our brief glimpse of John Blake and his wife, servant and enslaved girl, does have things to say about their experiences: about tasks performed by women, about bonds and divides between them, about the fragile authority of men, about the importance of things and about the international movement of Irish people, hinting too at the ‘hostile environment’ of the English Poor Law (and the Caribbean colonies). As the tithingman looks on and the ‘lantern-beam of history’ flickers, Ellen Poore’s ‘Chaine with my Jewell’ momentarily catches the light.

¹³⁶ Examples include blogs (‘Perceptions of Pregnancy’, <https://perceptionsofpregnancy.com/>), short articles (Salvador Ryan, *Birth, Death and Marriage and the Irish* books) and periodicals like *History Ireland* and the Women’s History Network’s *Women’s History*.