

OLD ENGLISH OR GAEL? PERSONAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL IDENTITY IN DERMOT O'MEARA'S *ORMONIUS*



By Keith Sidwell

Dermot O'Meara's didactic-epic Ormonius, published in 1615, focuses upon the military career of the 10th Earl of Ormond, Thomas Butler. In doing so, however, it also negotiates, sometimes subtly, sometimes rather bluntly, serious problems of identity, personal, cultural and political (national) caused by the peculiar circumstances of those, like Butler and his poet O'Meara, born in the Kingdom of Ireland, with strong local ties and an affection for the Irish language, in a period when the policies of the English government were more and more inclined towards centralisation and Anglicisation.

Until I started to think about this paper and look at Dermot O'Meara's five book epic didactic poem of 1615 from the perspective demanded by the theme of the 2010 *Texts and Contexts* conference, if asked "what is *Ormonius* about?", I would probably have replied "the military career of "Black" Tom Butler, 10th Earl of Ormond".¹ In one sense, of course, this is true. The poem's narrative takes us from his earliest success, against Sir Thomas Wyatt, the Kentish knight who led a rebellion against Queen Mary in the south of England in 1554, through his suppression of various Irish rebellions from the 1550s to the 1580s, to his military contribution to the crown's victory in the Nine Years War in Ireland in the late 1590s and early 1600s. If asked "what was it written for?", I would have reiterated the view of David Edwards, my historian co-author on the edition of the poem to appear later this year as *Officina Neolatina I* from Brepols Publishers, and answered "to publicize the claim of Ormond to have played a major part in the defeat of Hugh O'Neill and thereby to help prop up the position in Ireland of the Butler family under a new dynasty, the Stuarts": for although Ormond's mili-

¹ For Thomas Butler's life see Edwards 2004.

tary career fell wholly within the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth, the poem was written (between 1609 and 1614) under the rule of King James I of England (the VI of Scotland).²

What I had not really begun to examine before, though, was precisely *how* O'Meara attempted to get across this vital message in support of an Irish noble, in a period when English policy in Ireland was increasingly one of an Anglicization and centralization of government even more pronounced than that of Elizabeth I.³ The answer to this question is in fact completely bound up with the issues of identity – personal, religious and political – which O'Meara was obliged to confront. In the first place, the Irish were largely reckoned politically untrustworthy, whether they came from the original Gaelic-speaking population or from the descendants of the 12th century Anglo-Norman conquerors usually referred to as “Old English”. Secondly, both of these types of Irish people had remained stubborn adherents of Catholicism, despite the English realm's increasing acceptance – and then imposition – of Protestantism and this increased the general prejudice against all inhabitants of Ireland. Thirdly, rebellion against the crown appeared endemic in Ireland and even where there was support for the monarch, it was still largely based upon the self-interest of those who held power in a system of independent jurisdictions – like Ormond's Tipperary Liberty – which English policy now sought increasingly to limit by subjection to Vice-Regal authority, exercised from Dublin. In order to state Ormond's case effectively, then, O'Meara had to find a way of appeasing the basic prejudices of his projected audience – probably the courtiers of King James and even the King himself, a pupil of Buchanan, who was well versed in the learned language. He also needed to equip both himself (as poet) and Ormond (as the subject of his epic) with identities which would do justice to their sense of place, language and culture, but not conflict with the religious and political ideologies and policies of the crown. In one very real sense, then, *Ormonius* can really be said to be *about* identity and its negotiation.

The main categories which are crucial to an understanding of the *Ormonius*' treatment of identity are basically three – as I suggested above – personal, religious and political. But the first has several components, not all of which can be properly evidenced from the poem or elsewhere for either the poet or his subject, let alone the target audience. Under this head I would count the following: name, place, language and culture. The second category – religious identity – has only two possible poles within the Irish-

² For an account of the poem and its purpose see Edwards & Sidwell 2009 and 2011, *Introduction*, 9–38.

³ For the political background in the specific context of the Ormond Lordship, see Edwards 2003, 201–332.

English-Scottish context: Catholic or Protestant. Political identity, however, is more potentially varied. There is the independent Irish Gael, who does not accept the authority over him of the English crown. Then again, there is the independent Scottish Gael, who sees his history as stemming from Ireland, but likewise spurns the Scottish and English authorities. There is the Old English Irishman, who does generally accept the authority of the crown, but may be resistant to centralization. And there is his counterpart, the Gaelic Irishman who is submissive to English rule, but likewise is volatile if his local independence is threatened and linguistic Anglicization is imposed. Finally, there is the New English settler in Ireland, who naturally accepts both the authority of the crown, the centralization of governmental control and the policy of linguistic Anglicization. Let us now discuss these categories in turn in relation to the poet, the subject, Thomas Butler, and (at the end) the target audience.

Let us look first of all at how the poet himself locates his personal identity. His choice of how to name himself is interesting: *Dermitius Meara*.⁴ He keeps the Irish forename (Dermot) in a form which closely imitates the Gaelic form of the word, Diarmuid, with the ending *-itius* reflecting the vowel *-i* and the narrow consonant *-d*, but conforming to classical stereotypes (e.g. Vettius). But he foregoes the derivative prefix (Ó “from”) which normally (along with Mac “son of”) identifies surnames as Gaelic Irish. That he did not have to do this is shown clearly enough by the citation of his name as *Omearius* by John Lynch in the *Alithinologia* of 1664.⁵ His choice is, however, in conformity with that of Anthony Wood when he lists Irish alumni of Oxford in his *Athenae Oxonienses*.⁶ It’s reasonable to suggest, I think, that O’Meara not only Latinizes, he also Anglicizes his surname. However, when we turn to notions of *place*, O’Meara is not at all shy. On the Title Page he announces himself as: *Dermitius Meara Ormoniensis, Hybernus*. This shows him proudly claiming in *Ormoniensis* a local affiliation to Ormond, Butler’s territory in the south of Ireland, but also a national identity as *Hybernus* Irishman. In the prefatory *Letter to Thomas Butler* and *Ad Lectorem*, O’Meara intensifies the local aspect by admitting the indebtedness of himself and his family to the present Earl of Ormond and his ancestors.⁷ O’Meara’s vernacular linguistic identity is, of course, subordinated

⁴ *Ormonius*, Title Page.

⁵ Lynch 1664, p. 19: *Omearius in ormonio*.

⁶ E.g. Elias Sheth (= O’Shee), Wood 1813–1820, i, 386.

⁷ *Letter to Thomas Butler* l. 31–35: “Cumque decus omne meum meorumque, quantum cumque sit, ab Amplitudinis tuae illustriumque tuorum Maiorum benignitate acceptum obliuisci nequirem, meum esse duxi praeclaras illas tuas laudes, quas admiranda virtute comparasti, aeternae consecrare memoriae”. (And since I could not forget that my whole standing, and that of my family, little as it may be, was received through the benignity of

in a Latin work to his membership of the *Respublica Litterarum*, but as I have shown elsewhere, he delights in flaunting – for those in the know – his native language, Irish.⁸ He clearly also knows English, however, and uses it, for example, in a marginal note to clarify the English name of the River Blackwater.⁹ And he announces his pride in his Oxford education on the Title Page by the phrase *Insignissimae Oxoniensis Academiae quondam alumnus*. I am not certain how well he knew the English language at this point, however. He uses an English word “pricevine” which I have been unable to find in the Oxford dictionary (the usual term even then was “prisage”).¹⁰ Of course, his studies in Oxford would not have been affected by inadequate English, since Latin was the University’s spoken and written language, though his dealings with fellow-students and especially with Oxford locals (and in Oxford locals!) might have. The main point is that here he makes an effort to be even-handed in his use of the two languages of Ireland, demonstrating that he does not hold one in favour over the other. As for culture, apart from this poem and a medical treatise on hereditary diseases published (in Latin) in 1619,¹¹ we have not enough knowledge of his other activities to do more than place him where he places himself, at the heart of an educated European elite whose inspiration reaches back into the age of Cicero and beyond.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, O’Meara’s treatment of Ormond’s personal identity is not dissimilar from his own, *mutatis mutandis*. Though the name most often used in the poem is O’Meara’s newly coined *Ormonius* (usually *Ormondus* in Irish Latin prose and poetry) and relates to his Earldom, his birth name, Thomas Butler, is given in various headings and appears many times in the Latinized form *Butlerus*, used as an adjective (e.g. *Butlera iuventus*) or a noun.¹² But it is also made clear in Mercury’s speech in book 1 where he displays to Ormond his ancestors and explains his lineage, that the Butlers are of English origin, as is clearly indicated by the fact that Butler is

your Greatness and that of your glorious ancestors, I considered it my part to consecrate to eternal memory those outstanding praises which you have gathered through your admirable courage.) *Ad Lectorem* l. 10–11: “Ormonij Comititis (cui me meosque omnes omnimode deuinctos fateri oportet)” (the Earl of Ormond [to whom I should admit that both I and all of my family are bound in every way]).

⁸ Sidwell 2010. E.g. *Ormonius, Argumentum II*, l. 16–17: “apud Campanae villam (Hybernice baille in chluig)” (at the town of Ballyclug [in Irish *baille in chluig*]).

⁹ *Ormonius* 5, 461 margin.

¹⁰ *Ormonius, Argumentum II*, l. 6–7: “Vinorum etiam vectigalia (vulgo pricevine)” (The taxes on wines [in the vernacular “pricevine”]).

¹¹ *Pathologia haereditaria generalis*, Dublin 1619.

¹² *Ormonius* Title Page: *Thomas Butlerus*. Cf. l. 1, 325: “Butlerae stirpis” (Of Butler’s line).

the English for *pincerna*.¹³ This English origin is important, because it establishes a *prima facie* case for Ormond's loyalty to the English crown. It also recurs in passage *Ormonius* 2, 15f., where Morpheus disguised as Hibernia herself makes play with it. When we turn to place, however, we can see from *Ormonius* 2, 9–12 that just before the mention by Hibernia of Butler's English origin, she makes it quite clear that he is a native born Irishman.¹⁴ O'Meara plays up this Irish identity in book 1 and its *Argumentum*, where he is called variously *Hybernus satrapas*, *Hybernus dux*, *Hybernorum decus*, *Iernorum decus* and *ductor Iernus*.¹⁵ It is also significant that these appellations occur only here, in the English book, where Ormond is in London and takes (according to O'Meara anyhow) a crucial role in defeating the completely *English* Wyatt. As for local connections, Ormond's various titles, written in headings or offered in poetic form (*Carrigiae dominus*, *Ormoniae Comes*, *Satrapas Tiperarius*) underline, like O'Meara's own *Ormoniensis* on the Title Page, Thomas Butler's identification with a quite specific set of places and lands in Ireland.¹⁶ The poem does not reveal anything specific about the Earl's linguistic or cultural identity, but we can make some inferences from the passage from *Ormonius* 1, 168–174, which refers to Ormond's education alongside Prince Edward at Henry VIII's court.¹⁷ Latin will have been the prime medium of schooling, but his com-

¹³ *Ormonius* 1, 324–328: “Walterum natus sequitur Theobaldus, origo/Butlerae stirpis, Domini donatus honore/Butleri hic primus, regno pincerna quod esset/Regis in Hyberno (pincernam idiomate namque/Denotat Angligenum Butler)” (Theobald follows Walter, origin/Of Butler's line: he was the first bestowed/The honour of the Butler Lord, because/He was King's steward in Hibernia's realm./For in the language of the Englishmen, “Butler” denotes *pincerna*).

¹⁴ “Nate, decus viresque meae, mea gloria magna,/Tantane te subito cepere oblivia nostri,/Tantane Brutiadum telluris gratia, post hac/Vt non nativas digneris visere sedes?” (My honoured son, my glory great,/My strength, has such a great forgetfulness/Of me so sudden taken hold of you?/Is pleasure in the land of Brutus' sons/So great that after this you will not deign/To visit more the place where you were born?)

¹⁵ Respectively *Ormonius*, *Argumentum I*, l. 23; 1, 583–584; 1, 621; 1, 698; 1, 632; 1, 670.

¹⁶ Ormond's local titles: *Baro de Arkelo*; *Carrigiae dominus*; *Comitatus Palatini Tiperariae Dominus*; *decus Ormoniae*; *ductor/dux Ormonius*; *Dynastas Ormoniae*; *Ormoniae dominus*; *Ormoniae et Osoriae Comes*; *Ormoniae Comes*; *Ormonius*; *Satrapas Tiperarius*; *Tiperarius Heros/ductor*; *Viscomes de Thurles* (see *Index nominum* in Edwards & Sidwell 2011 for specific references).

¹⁷ *Ormonius* 1, 168–174: “At ante alios omnes quo sanguine cretus/Et quibus addictus studijs quasque imbibit artes,/Inter regales primis nutritus ab annis/Brutigenum Musas Henrici regis in aula/Octavi et sexti Edvardi sociusque comesque/In studijs quae prima petit secreta iuventus,/Ormoniae monumenta comes dat aperta”. (And yet,/Before all others, of what blood begott'n,/What studies imbued with, what skills he'd drunk down,/Nourished from youth among the Muses royal/Of Brutus' offspring in King Henry's court/[The

panions – the future King included – will have spoken English in private and indeed the very reason for his presence at court was to ensure that he was Anglicized linguistically and culturally (as well as politically). David Edwards’ remarks in the *Introduction* to our edition make it clear, however, that Ormond was also fluent in Irish and the presence of an important Gaelic servant in his retinue shows that his parents had no intention of allowing him to forget this tongue while he was in England.¹⁸ Later, when he inherited the Ormond titles, he became in fact a well-known patron of poetry. However, he was known as a patron both of Irish-language verse and of English poetry. There are many poems in Irish which laud the achievements of the Earl, for example *Eolach mé ar mheirge an iarla* “Well do I know the flag of the Earl” (written after his death).¹⁹ As for English, a well-known poem (the *Faerie Queene*) written by a member of the New English settlement in Cork (Edmund Spenser) was dedicated in one version to the Earl in the hope of favour, with the most lavish praise of his poetic interests. Note especially: “Not one Parnassus, nor one Helicone/Left for sweete Muses to be harboured,/But where thy selfe hast thy brave mansione”.²⁰

On the personal side, then, O’Meara deliberately gives the impression of himself and his subject as being placed in, and identifying with, a specific part of Ireland, and of being, by birth, Irishmen – and proud of it! His use of Irish underlines the sense of belonging also to what was largely regarded in England as a barbarous linguistic underclass (one with which we know Ormond also identified). Yet he also makes it clear that the English language is an important part of the Irish landscape²¹ and that Ormond is in fact of English stock, with an English name. Both belong as well as to these two disparate identity groups (born and raised in Ireland, educated in England) to the class of the Latinate, and it is important to stress this alongside, as it were, vernacular identity because the use of Latin for such purposes as those of O’Meara (and Ormond) in *Ormonius* of itself made a claim of identification with its potential *audience* which that audience would be expected to register.

eighth], Edward the Sixth’s companion/And friend in studies first sought in youth’s safe sloth,/The Earl of Ormond gave an open proof.)

¹⁸ Edwards & Sidwell 2011, 12.

¹⁹ MS. Maynooth C. 63.

²⁰ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, 1596, dedicatory poem (Roche & O’Donnell 1978, 28).

²¹ See also *Ormonius* 2, 215–217: “immo nec discere quisquam/Angla loqui vellet, nulla ut commercia prorsus/Exosa cum gente forent”. (nor wished/To learn to speak in English, that there be/With that most hated race no intercourse.)

When we move on to religious identity, things become – on the surface at least – a good deal simpler. Though Irish people of both Gaelic and Anglo-Norman origin remained on the whole resolutely Catholic – the Ormond family were not clearly Protestant for example until James Butler (1610–1688), twelfth Earl and first Duke of Ormond – to espouse such an identity publicly would not have been prudent. O’Meara makes it clear that he himself is a Christian by his prayers.²² And the word *Christicola* is used of Ormond in the storm-scene of book 3 which imitates Vergil *Aeneid* 1 and Ovid *Metamorphoses* 10.²³ Beyond these explicit references, however, all we have of a religious nature in the whole poem are O’Meara’s appeal to *Summe Theos* to inspire his work (1, 11–13) and Ormond’s recantation of his Aeneas-like despair during the storm at sea in Book 3 (707f.).²⁴ All that can safely be said of these is that they are addressed directly to God and do not use intermediaries. They are not, then, specifically *Catholic*, at least, even if they are not overtly Protestant. In other respects, where religion might have been an issue (for example in Wyatt’s rebellion against the Catholic Queen Mary), O’Meara avoids it – like the plague it certainly could have been had he touched on it in any other way than he did.

Far the most important identity negotiated and specifically worked out by the poem, however, is the political one. There are five main points I want to make.

²² *Ormonius, Letter to Walter Butler*, l. 62–64: “Interea ut boni omnis et sapientiae fons ille faecundissimus Christus Deus tuo semper honori et faelicitati consulat, propitiam ipsius omnipotentiam quam suppliciter precor”. (Meanwhile, that that most fecund source of all good and wisdom Christ our God may always look after your honour and happiness, I pray most humbly to His propitious omnipotence.) *Ormonius, Letter to Thomas Butler*, l. 61–63: “Cui ut te Christus Optimus Maximus quam diutissime incolumem seruet, et post huius vitae cursum ad gaudia ducat aeterna, diuinam Maiestatem quam suppliciter posco”. (for which I humbly beseech the divine majesty that Christ, Best and Greatest, keep you safe as long as possible and lead you after this life’s race to the eternal joys.)

²³ *Ormonius* 3, 705.

²⁴ *Ormonius* 1, 11–13: “Lux ô clarissima mundi,/Summe Theos, caeptis tua non finita potestas/Adsit, et ipse mei foelix sis carminis Author”. (O highest God, the world’s most brilliant light,/Let your infinite power assist my words;/Be Thou propitious author of my song.) *Ormonius* 3, 707–712: “O coeli rector pontique solique,/Parce precor dictis subito nimis ore profusis./Si mea vis Scotico submergi corpora ponto,/Nec mihi das crudis ulcisci funera telis,/Me tibi summitto supplex fiatque lubenti/Velle mihi vestrum”. (O ruler of /The sky, of sea and of the earth, forgive,/I pray, my words, poured forth too suddenly./If thou shouldst wish my body to be drowned/In Scottish waters and thou dost not grant/My bloody sword requital of my death,/I, suppliant-like, submit myself to thee./And pray thy will be done to willing me.) On the latter passage, see further Sidwell 2007, 210–212.

The first is that the poem makes its political perspective absolutely clear in a number of passages. In sum they state that the so-called “Norman” conquest in 1169 and following was legitimate, if violent (*Ormonius* 1, 123–126); that Ireland and England, despite the initial compulsion, are now so closely tied together that an attack on Ireland can be considered an attack on England (*Ormonius* 2, 17–21); and that the submission of Ireland to Henry II made by some Gaelic chieftains in 1171 is irreversible (*Ormonius* 3, 195–196). This is to say, the poem not only accepts the authority of the English crown over Ireland, but it also *justifies* it.

The second point emerges from a long passage in book 5. Despite the increasing reality of an Ireland regarded as troublesome and pretty far down the pecking order, O’Meara represents England and Ireland as *sisters*: note especially “Hac ubi germanam sensit marcescere cura/ Anglia” (But when England knew/Her sister was enfeebled by this care: *Ormonius* 5, 67–68). Once England realises how upset Ireland is about her inability to grant her hero Ormond appropriate honours for what he has done for her, she runs at once to Queen Elizabeth (*Elissa*) and pleads Ireland’s case before her. The Queen at once consents to honour Butler (he was elected to the Order of the Garter in 1587 and installed at Windsor Castle in 1588). This image of sisterhood, while accepting both the reality of submission to the English crown and the superiority of England, nonetheless seeks to blunt the potential resentment of the Irish by stressing the *care* England takes of her weaker sibling.

The third and fourth points will give some context for this manoeuvre. The poem sets itself clearly and strongly against rebellion. This can be seen at its most virulent perhaps in book 2, where Shane O’Neill’s Ulstermen are “Barbara adhuc” (still barbarian: *Ormonius* 2, 213) and violently opposed to English manners, titles and language (*Ormonius* 2, 213–217). In the speech given to Shane O’Neill (*Ormonius* 2, 395–396), the Ulster leader even calls Ormond’s loyal attempts to suppress Irish revolts a subjection to “Anglo/servitio” (English servitude).²⁵ But, though disapproving, O’Meara does show some insight into the rebel mind, because he envisages it as sharing with him a passionate love for the land which no longer belongs to the exiled original settlers. At *Ormonius* 3, 114–133, his Mercury disguised as the earliest King of Ireland, Herimon, attempts to arouse in the MacDonnell

²⁵ *Ormonius* 2, 393–397: “Haec aequa si fers opprobria mente,/Non prius absistet Satrapas Ormonius armis/Te premere, aeternum quam te subiecerit Anglo/Seruitio, mihi crede, nouas vel quaerere terras/Impulerit”. (For if ye bear these ills/With equanimity, then Ormond’s Lord/Will never cease to press by force of arms/Until he has to English servitude/Eternal made you subject, or has forced/You all to find, believe me, pastures new.)

leaders a desire for a war of re-conquest by praising the island's natural advantages: soil, temperature, honey, cattle, rivers, fish, birds, wild animals, metal deposits – and the lack of poisonous creatures, such as snakes (banished by St Patrick, according to legend). The rebel, then, has as his motivation the absolute desirability of Ireland as a *place* and paradoxically this underscores the importance of Ormond's military prowess: he has saved this Garden of Eden for the English crown by his unstinting efforts. But O'Meara does not neglect to reflect contemporary English prejudices against the Irish. The first Butler – Theobald Walter – is given in book 1 a reflection on the Irish proclivity for rebellion (1, 339–340).²⁶ More sinister, perhaps, is the fact that while Ormond is busy trying to defeat the *English* rebel Wyatt, two English nobles go to the Queen and claim that he has defected. Significantly, they call him (*Ormonius* 1, 670) “Ductor Iernus” (The Iernian lord). All this serves, of course, to emphasise Ormond's extraordinary qualities: though an Irishman, he nonetheless fights loyally for Queen and country, even as an English knight rebels.

There is one final factor in the definition of political identity in O'Meara's poem which emerges from consideration of the space given to Ormond's skirmishes against the MacDonnells. This clan, settled in the Western Isles of Scotland – which at that time included Rathlin Island, now part of Northern Ireland, caused some trouble in the 1550s by constant raids into Ulster. But my co-author, David Edwards, says that these raids were of little consequence at the time. In fact, they are little reported in the contemporary sources and not at all well known among modern Irish historians of the period. The reason for their prominence (much of books 2 and 3 and a section of book 5 are devoted to details of Ormond's dealings with them) is to be found in the target audience for the poem. These were not now just an offshore annoyance from an alien kingdom to the English authorities in Ireland (and some of the Gaelic chieftains too). Since Elizabeth's death in 1603, the kingdoms of England and Scotland had come under the same monarchical jurisdiction, with the ascension to the English throne of King James VI of Scotland as King James I of England. O'Meara is in a sense rewriting Ormond's history in the light of this event and also in the knowledge of strenuous efforts made by the Stuart King to subdue the rebellious clans of the Western Isles to his centralised control. The MacDonnells, then, now stand anachronistically as rebels against the Scottish/English crown: note how Sorley Boy is called “dux Scoticus” (Scottish leader: *Ormonius* 5, 15). But these rebels have, like their Irish counterparts, already been bested

²⁶ *Ormonius* 1, 339–340: “motus/Quam proni ad varios Hyberni” ([Pondering within] how prone th' Hibernians were/To various revolts.)

by Ormond. The inference the King should draw is obvious: he ought now look to Ormond's heirs to continue their great predecessor's loyalist work.

The set of identities which O'Meara negotiates in *Ormonius* leaves perhaps in the end a slight puzzle. Several passages have O'Meara and his Ormond speak of Ormond's loyalty to a *patria*.²⁷ Is this Ireland, where both were born and to which both claim local and island-wide adherence as *Hiberni*? Or is it England, which governs Ireland legitimately, as it has for more than four hundred years, and whose Queens and now King Ormond has served loyally for more than fifty years? I think the answer must be that O'Meara wishes the term to encompass both, though if pressed he would have been obliged to opt for the politically safer response "England". But what O'Meara is attempting to represent in his negotiations of identity is, I think, somewhat against the grain of contemporary English/Scottish thought and aspiration. His Ireland is a junior partner to England politically, yes, but the relationship is not of master to servant (as Shane O'Neill is made to assert in the poem). It is, rather, a familial one, in which the older sister shows real compassion for her weaker sister. It is also a place than which there is no better on earth (for though he puts these words into a rebel King's mouth, he is reflecting views which can be seen in the late 16th and early 17th centuries from across the spectrum of Irish Latin writers²⁸). Hence, the local and Hibernian identity he gives to himself and his subject stresses that difference from Englishness exists, but is not necessarily in any way threatening to the political status quo: look after all at what Ormond has achieved *both* in England, against Wyatt, *and* in Ireland (sometimes against his own relatives) in loyal support of the crown. His and Ormond's interest in the Gaelic language and its poetic culture fit into this sense of Irish identity under the crown quite snugly: so long as room is given by the Irish not only to English royal power, but also to the English language, what harm can it do to allow the continuation of the native linguistic culture? However, none of these positions maintained by O'Meara – some subtly, some with a sledgehammer – was ultimately acceptable to the English, or to the new Scottish King of England. The story of the 17th century in Ireland continued as a struggle by the English to impose Anglicization in governance, law, relig-

²⁷ *Epistle to Walter Butler*, l. 41: "pro patriae tutela" (in protection of his fatherland). *Ormonius* 3, 686–687: "Hostibus in medijs sacra pro principe pugnans/Et patria" (amidst/The enemy, fighting for my sacred Queen/And land). *Ormonius* 3, 712–715: "Tantum tua numina votis/Supplicibus posco, ut nostra de stirpe domoque/Succedat nostri vivax imitator, amico/In patriam et fasces animo". (One thing with suppliant prayers I ask your powers,/That from my stock and house there shall succeed/A long-lived imitator of myself,/Of friendly disposition towards his land/And to the crown.)

²⁸ See e.g. Philip O'Sullivan-Beare's *Zoilomastix*, book 1 (O'Sullivan (ed.) 2009, ch. V–VI, 34–55; ch. LV, 259; ch. LXII, 267).

ion, manners and language and a refusal to accept that loyalty could be expected or trusted from Irishmen if any of these criteria was left unfulfilled.

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