INTRODUCTION

The following memoir by an Irishman (of English parents settled in Elizabethan Ireland) recounts his journey from Dublin to Rome in 1595, through the Low Countries, Germany, and northern Italy. He lists many of Rome's churches, and describes religious processions together with some of the city's antiquities, and includes an account of the battle of Lepanto (1571) before relating his journey north towards Genoa, giving a detailed presentation of the pilgrimage site of Loreto. Arriving in Alicante in Spain, he proceeded to Valladolid, and thence to Seville, from where he returned to Ireland in late 1598.

At one level, therefore, this work may be located within the genre of Elizabethan travel literature featuring the Continent, particularly Italy.[1] However, the present text is distinguished by its explicitly Catholic perspective, a rare example within that literary corpus.[2] For the author's motivation in undertaking the journey, as he relates, was spiritual. Piers was brought up in the established church, a denominational identity reinforced by a marriage alliance with a leading Protestant family in colonial Ireland. Moved by doubts arising from what he experienced of the diversity among Protestant groupings, he was encouraged to explore Catholicism by encounters with some Catholic laymen. Leaving wife, lands, and a position as seneschal, he decided to travel to Rome, helped by recusant connections spanning the Irish Sea. His conversion to Catholicism on arrival in Rome, his sojourn in the city, and his subsequent movements in Spain occurred within the network of the English Jesuit exiles on the Continent.

[1] For an overview of this literature as regards Rome, see Thomas Frank, 'Elizabethan travellers in Rome', in Mario Praz (ed.), *English Miscellany: A Symposium of History Literature and the Arts*, 4 (Rome, 1953), 95–132, reference to Piers at 127. See also Edward Chaney, '"Quo vadis?" Travel as education and the impact of Italy in the sixteenth century', in Edward Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour: Anglo-Italian Relations since the Renaissance* (London, 1998), 58–101; on the Elizabethan era, see 72–86.

[2] In 1581, the English priest Gregory Martin composed a description of Rome, devotional and apologetic in tone, based on his stay there in 1576–1578; treating of churches, relics, and processions, followed by religious houses, colleges, and hospices; the text remained unpublished until 1969, Gregory Martin, *Roma Sancta (1581): Now First Edited from the Manuscript*, ed. George Bruner Parks (Rome, 1969); Gregory Martin (?1542–1582), *ODNB*.

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A leitmotiv of the memoir is gratitude to God for blessings received, and especially for the author's embracing of Catholicism. Thus the text may be viewed as a Catholic conversion narrative. In line with this genre, he relates relationships through which that new denominational adherence came about; in describing various situations he loses no opportunity to make a polemical defence of Catholicism against the objections of the reformers.[3] This narrative includes his struggle to overcome Roman suspicions regarding his English and heretical family background, resulting in an appearance before the Inquisition.

Describing his life in the English College from 1595 to 1597, the memoir affords a layman's view from the epicentre of one of Elizabethan Catholicism's long-standing internal disputes. In the details of daily life in the college, his account complements the anti-Catholic perspective of another young Elizabethan, Anthony Munday, who lived there for over two months in 1579. There is no clear evidence that Piers engaged with the earlier work; however, as a Catholic loyalist, Piers was at pains to refute the assertion, widespread in England, and strongly represented in Munday's portrayal, that the English scholars in Rome were engaged in traitorous conversation against the Elizabethan regime.[4]

The memoir concludes with the relatively shorter narrative of his year in Spain (1598), which illuminates the stresses and tensions experienced by Irish and English merchants living there during the Anglo-Spanish War (1585–1604).

Henry Piers's Irish Background

In order to introduce the travel memoir of Henry Piers (1567–1623),[5] it is necessary to situate him within the political and cultural context

[3] For a discussion of this genre, together with a guide to the secondary literature, see Molly Murray, ' "Now I ame a Catholique": William Alabaster and the early modern conversion narrative', in Ronald Corthell et al. (eds), *Catholic Culture in Early Modern England* (Notre Dame, IN, 2007), 189–215.

[4] Anthony Munday, *The English Roman Life*, ed. Philip Ayres (1582; 1590; citations from Oxford, 1980), 22, 44, 65; Anthony Munday (1560–1633), *ODNB*; for a reading of this work in terms of the situation of Catholics in England, see Donna Hamilton, *Anthony Munday and the Catholics, 1560–1633* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT, 2005), 47–51; 'A discourse of HP his travelles written by him selfe' (Bodleian, Rawlinson MS D. 83) [henceforth 'Discourse'], 118–119; for William Allen's rebuttal of this negative representation of the exiles, see Mark Netzloff, 'The English colleges and the English nation: Allen, Persons, Verstegen, and diasporic nationalism', in Corthell et al., *Catholic Culture*, 240–244.

[5] Henry Piers (1567–1623) is to be distinguished from his near-contemporary namesake, Henry Piers (Pierse) (d.1638), who served as secretary to Lord Deputy Chichester, and was

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of late Elizabethan Ireland. He was born of an English military officer settled in Ireland since the mid sixteenth century, and his English wife, and until about 1574 the family was living in Carrickfergus, in north-east Ulster, where Henry's father, William, was constable of the castle. From about 1580 they were resident on the property of a dissolved monastery at Tristernagh in Co. Westmeath, located just beyond the Pale, on the southern border of Ulster.[6] Thus far the family's profile fits that of the New English, those recent arrivals from England and Wales, usually Protestant, who served the expanding Tudor state in Ireland both in central government and, chiefly as military figures, in various localities hitherto little touched by anglicization.

While Piers spent time in England as a young man, there is no documentary evidence that he frequented one of the inns of court, or attended Oxford or Cambridge.[7] Although his parents were English, adherents of the established church, the evidence of his memoir suggests that Henry himself identified with the old-established colonial community in Ireland, who traced their origins to the twelfth-century conquest, and who into the sixteenth century designated themselves as 'the English of Ireland'. As a youth, Piers came under the influence of the leading magnate in his area, Christopher Nugent, 14th Baron Delvin,[8] head of one of the foremost English noble families of Ireland, who himself had studied at Cambridge in the mid 1560s, and at that time composed an Irish grammar for Queen Elizabeth. Writing not long after the baron's death, Piers expressed his appreciation of his wide culture, prudence, hospitality, and Catholic faith; their acquaintance dated to when Henry was aged about eighteen, for in late 1585 the peer returned from confinement in England to live in his castle in Delvin, Co. Westmeath, which lay on the route between the Piers house and Dublin; Piers may have spent some time in the Nugent household.

granted lands in Co. Cavan under the Ulster Plantation, Henry Piers, *DIB*, sub nomine; a descendant of the Tristernagh family, yet another Henry Piers, wrote 'A chorographical description of the county of Westmeath' in 1682, published in Charles Vallancey, *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis* (Dublin, 1786), 1–126.

[6] Petition of William Piers to Queen Elizabeth, n.d. [*c.* July 1574], *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1571–1575*, 627–628; William Piers acquired a lease of the property in 1562, A. Gwynn and R. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: Ireland* (London, 1970), 196–197.

[7] There is a reference to one 'Henry Peers' who at Easter 1585 matriculated from Jesus College, Cambridge; while the author was about 17 by that date, and had spent some time in England as a young man, it is not possible to link this reference with certitude to the subject, John Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, Part I, Vol. III (Cambridge, 1924), 328.

[8] Christopher Nugent, 14th Baron Delvin (1544–1602), *DIB;* on Delvin's Irish grammar, see Denis Casey, *The Nugents of Westmeath and Queen Elizabeth's Irish Primer* (Dublin, 2016).

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The Pale marcher areas were Irish-speaking; while pursuing education in England and cherishing humanist culture, the Nugent family was renowned for involvement in Gaelic literary life; the baron had a library, to which he was devoted; in a reform treatise from the mid 1580s he decried the lack of a university in Ireland.[9] In this magnate, Piers encountered a model of learned civility, colonial loyalism, and devotion to the old faith that the young man found attractive; doubtless Nugent's example encouraged him on the road to Catholicism. Piers's admiration for the Nugent lineage prompted him, while he was in Rome, to visit Francis Nugent, the Capuchin friar, who arrived in the city in about September or October 1596.[10]

Young Piers also acquired the musical education which was standard at this social level in contemporary England, and enjoyed singing and could perhaps play the lute: while travelling through Padua in September 1595, captivated by 'verie sweete musicke' he heard by chance at a doorway, he was invited inside to spend an evening of song with the household, indicating that he was used to singing madrigals.[11] Passing through Bologna he encountered John Dowland, the Elizabethan musician, though Piers made no reference to this meeting.[12] His delight in music was further in evidence when in Rome, where on occasion he noted how he was moved by the choirs he heard.

Growing up in the marcher area straddling south Ulster and the northern Pale, he also had direct exposure to the Gaelic world. Down to the onset of peace in 1603, the Piers were the solitary New English family of any standing settled on the north-western marches of the Pale. County Westmeath, though originally part of the medieval colony, by the mid sixteenth century had become gaelicized.[13] Outside a narrow social elite, knowledge of English was rare.

[9] On the political and literary worlds of the Nugent family in the late 16th century, linked via the Fitzgeralds to a kin network in England, see the biography of William Nugent (1550–1625), brother of Christopher Nugent, 14th Baron Delvin, Basil Iske, *The Green Cockatrice* (Meath, 1978); on the family's bilingualism, see Vincent Carey, ' "Neither good English nor good Irish": Bi-lingualism and identity formation in sixteenth-century Ireland', in H. Morgan (ed.), *Political Ideology in Ireland, 1541–1641* (Dublin, 1999), 45–61.

[10] 'Discourse', 72–73.

[11] 'Discourse', 25; madrigals were sung by four voices, each voice reading from the partbook, in a domestic setting, Alfred Einstein, *The Italian Madrigal* (Princeton, NJ, 1949), 244–245.

[12] John Dowland to Robert Cecil, 10 Nov 1595, from Nuremberg, Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of … Marquess of Salisbury*, 24 vols (London, 1883–1976), V, 447.

[13] Their landed neighbours in the mid 1590s in the barony of Moygoish, Co. Westmeath, included the Tuite, Nangle, and FitzGerald families, Anglo-Norman names, 'A perambulation

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Irish was the normal language. While serving in north-east Ulster over many years, Captain William Piers (Henry's father) functioned in a Gaelic environment; he continued to draw on that skill on moving to Co. Westmeath, and inculcated it in his son. The Gaelic lordship of the O'Farrells lay just a few miles west of the Piers house. As a boy Henry was fostered there with the family of Gerald O'Farrell and his wife Elizabeth Tankard.[14] An echo of that early upbringing was his joy in meeting Brian McFargus O'Farrell, then a clerical student, when Piers was staying in the English College in Valladolid.[15] That Piers noted this encounter was itself significant, all the more so in that he expressed his appreciation of Brian as a man of learning who had died by the time Piers was writing his memoir.

In 1590, then aged about 22 or 23, Piers acquired the position of seneschal of 'Daltons' Country', a territory in Westmeath adjacent to the Piers estate. The seneschal role, a crown appointment, involved assembling the inhabitants for defence, and some judicial responsibilities, and in return the septs were to contribute levies in kind to cover the seneschal's expenses.[16] It implied an ability to engage with the local population, and was clearly linked to the military and official standing of his father in the eyes of the crown. Young Henry was thus fully integrated into the social, political, and cultural world of this marcher area west of the Pale.

Piers displayed a sensitivity to the varying identities within the Elizabethan world. In the 'Discourse', he differentiated between Irish and English in referring to the people he met from the Tudor realms. In presenting himself to the English College in Rome, he indicated that he was Irish, but of English parents.[17] Thus he fully identified with the land of his birth, referring to 'this realme of Eirland', 'this commonwealth', and 'oure contrimen'.[18] His focus was on religious issues in question between the confessions, and, apart from a brief note on his disputing the religious motivation of the Irish revolt (on his arrival in Rome), he made no explicit reference to the Irish political

of Leinster, Meath and Louth, of which consist the English Pale' [1596], *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts*, 6 vols (London, 1867–1873), III, 188–196, at 192.

[14] Elizabeth Hickey, 'Some notes on Kilbixy, Tristernagh and Templecross and the family of Piers who lived in the abbey of Tristernagh in Westmeath', *Riocht na Midhe* 7 (1980–1981), 52–76.

[15] 'Discourse', 199.

[16] 'Fiants Ireland, Elizabeth', No. 5431 (1 July 1590), *Sixteenth Report of Deputy Keeper of the Public Records of Ireland* (Dublin, 1884), Appendix, 120.

[17] 'The Pilgrim-Book of the English College', in Henry Foley SJ (ed.), *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus*, Vol. VI (London, 1880) [henceforth Foley, *Records*, VI], 567–568 (gives 19 names for 1595). This designation rendered him eligible for admission, which the college statutes specified was reserved to those of English parentage.

[18] 'Discourse', 2, 4, 13.

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scene.[19] His outlook was defined by English culture and loyalty to the crown, in common with his family, which included the connections in the Irish military represented by his father; in the 1580s and 1590s Piers senior was a trusted government figure in Westmeath, and was one of the most prolific writers of treatises on Tudor Ireland.[20]

Reinforcing the family's New English identity, by about 1593 Henry had married Jane, a daughter of Thomas Jones (1550–1619), who became Church of Ireland bishop of Meath and member of the Irish Privy Council in 1584.[21] By this marriage Henry became part of a broad and influential network of mainly New English families in late sixteenth-century Ireland, for Jones himself was married to a sister-in-law of his predecessor as prelate and chancellor, Adam Loftus.[22] In the years of Piers's conversion to Catholicism, his father-in-law was noted as a consistent advocate of a severe anti-recusant policy. Family pressures against embracing the old faith were real. However, in terms of political identity, Piers clearly opposed Tyrone's campaign in the 1590s, a stance that caused him grief on arrival in Rome. His lands and properties in Co. Westmeath suffered the depredations associated with intensification of the war in the wake of Tyrone's military success at the Yellow Ford in August 1598. Thereafter the midlands region was engulfed in military strife, as the Irish attacked the homes of leading English loyalists.[23]

A formative experience in shaping his religious outlook was his exposure through preaching to the varieties of English Protestantism in the later Elizabethan period. His stay in England (at some stage from the mid 1580s to the early 1590s) coincided with the appearance of radical preachers, especially in London, as dissatisfaction with the limited nature of the Anglican reform coalesced into the various puritan groupings.[24] It was a theme which interested him; open-air preaching was a lively if not rowdy popular

[19] 'Discourse', 31.

[20] One of his tracts, *c.*1594, is reproduced in David Heffernan (ed.), *'Reform' Treatises on Tudor Ireland* (Dublin, 2016), 323–325.

[21] Thomas Jones became archbishop of Dublin and lord chancellor of Ireland in Nov. 1605, *DIB*.

[22] The Loftus connection included the military families of Bagenal, Colley, and Warren, together with the Usshers, a prominent Dublin family, Adam Loftus (1533/4–1605), *DIB*.

[23] 'Discourse', 210–211; on the attack on the home of one midland settler family at this time, see B. Mac Cuarta (ed.) 'Sir John Moore's Inventory, Croghan, King's County, 1636', *Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society* 19 (2000–2001), 206–217.

[24] Proclamation against unlicensed preachers in London, 26 Mar. 1589, Robert Steele, *A Bibliography of Royal Proclamations of the Tudor and Stuart Sovereigns … 1485–1714*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1910), I, 89; on how laity engaged with preaching, see Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590–1640* (Cambridge, 2010), especially ch. 2, 'The art

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occasion; he became conversant with the range of conflicting views on church and theology. In this regard, later, in summer 1595, while travelling through the town of Naarden in the Low Countries, he noted the presence of various English sects (he referred to the followers of Robert Browning, and Henry Barrow, leaders of Independency, and Congregationalism, persecuted in the early 1590s) who had fled to the Netherlands and found refuge there. This clash of religious positions left him unsettled, and he sought a locus of ecclesial unity; from these experiences he was drawn to the Roman church.

Writing some years after his return to Ireland from the Continent, Piers offered several motives for why he continued his spiritual exploration by means of the journey to Rome. His reflections exemplified some of the social pressures within the New English community in the 1590s against converting to Catholicism. His extensive family network was almost exclusively Protestant, and his father-in-law was the powerful Thomas Jones, subsequently archbishop of Dublin, and lord chancellor of Ireland. Piers was conscious of the power exercised by this connection, and their strong opposition to any move towards Catholicism on his part. That these fears were not groundless was indicated by developments in the years after Piers's return home. At the end of the 'Discourse', he referred to 'the troubles crosses or damadges wch I have sustained since I came into this land [1598] for that they are alreadye sufficiently knowen to moste of this contrie'. He was alluding in part to the fractious relationship with his father-in-law regarding the religious upbringing of the young couple's children.[25]

This sense of isolation and disapproval within the extended family was reinforced when he considered his public role. As a prominent crown appointee within his own locality (seneschal of Daltons' Country), which placed him among the elite of county society, Piers shared the concern, widespread among men of rank, of losing their office as a consequence of becoming Catholic. As a result, as Piers observed, in Ireland men of this condition deferred their conversion so as to avoid the loss of position and prestige. A third motive

of hearing'. On situating contemporary theological disagreement, especially on predestination, in a preaching context, see ibid. 342–372.

[25] In 1607–1608, Thomas Jones was attempting to win control of the Tristernagh properties, having ensured that the couple's eight children were being brought up in his own house, Archbishop Jones to Salisbury, 1 June 1607; same to same, 24 Feb. 1608, *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1606–8*, 155, 425; on 5 Dec. 1608 Jones acquired a royal grant of the priory, J. Erck (ed.), *A Repertory of the Inrolments on the Patent Rolls of Chancery in Ireland* (Dublin, 1852) I, Part II, 513; the subsequent legal title is unclear, but Tristernagh remained in the possession of the Piers family.

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adduced for not wanting to explore his leanings towards Catholicism while in Ireland was the little credibility, in his view, of the majority of Catholics (lay and clerical) he encountered there. The scandal of their lives, so he reasoned, would inhibit him from embracing Catholicism.

Henry Piers and a Recusant Network: England and Ireland

However, Piers initially found Catholicism attractive in some laymen of his acquaintance in Ireland; these too were actively supportive of his desire to travel to Rome. As already noted, the life, conversation, intellectual curiosity, and Catholic piety of Christopher Nugent, Baron Delvin made an impression on the young Piers. A more intimate and continuous influence, as he relates, derived from his sister Mary's marriage with 'a Catholicke gentleman', Thomas Jans. From the late 1580s, once Piers turned about twenty years of age, he was drawn through this connection into the extended English recusant community, which was decisive in leading him towards Catholicism. Against the backdrop of the Anglo-Spanish war (1585–1604), and arising from increasing government pressure on recusants in England, a support network was emerging, involving families and clergy, and spanning the Irish Sea. In the 1580s, individual English Catholics, occasionally with families, began moving to Ireland (often for a limited duration), because anti-recusant measures were less severe there.[26]

One key figure in facilitating this migration was James Jans, a prominent Dublin merchant and alderman, who had served as the city's mayor in 1593–1594; his brother Thomas had married Mary Piers, Henry's sister. The alderman's father Robert Jans had moved from England to Dublin by the 1540s, and the family maintained contact with their English kin. Their household in Dublin was a centre of new-style recusant Catholicism, where returned missionary clergy were sheltered; in this setting converts among English people residing in Ireland were made.[27] Here also refugee Catholics from England were welcomed. While the measures against recusants were less severe

[26] David Edwards, 'A haven of popery: English Catholic migration to Ireland in the age of plantations', in A. Ford and J. McCafferty (eds), *The Origins of Sectarianism in Early Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2005), 95–107.

[27] On the Jans household as recusant centre, see Thomas [Jones], bishop of Meath, to Sir Robert Cecil, 23 Oct. 1599, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of … Marquess of Salisbury*, IX, 375–376; James Jans (d.1610), Dublin alderman from 1588, 'Prosopography of aldermen, 1550–1620', in Colm Lennon, *The Lords of Dublin in the Age of Reformation* (Dublin, 1989), 258.

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in Ireland than in England, the alderman experienced imprisonment for his Catholic activities: Piers relates that James Jans suffered 'a longe imprisonment to his great hinderance' for helping with Henry's travel arrangements, and he was probably one of those Dublin aldermen who refused to attend the established church as requested by the Ecclesiastical High Commission in the winter of 1602–1603, and who were imprisoned briefly as a result.[28] The marriage in the late 1580s of Mary Piers to Thomas Jans, brother of the alderman, brought Henry into regular contact with this vibrant recusancy, with strong English connections; on Piers's visit to England at about this time, he may have furthered his acquaintance with recusants there through the Jans connection.[29] The alliance between these two families contributed to making north Westmeath into a particularly dynamic centre of revived Catholicism, for in the early years of the seventeenth century the alderman facilitated the renewal of the Franciscan presence in their convent of Multyfarnham, not far from the Piers house at Tristernagh.[30]

In this clandestine world, there existed the risk of infiltration by informers. Like other Catholic families with relations in both countries, the Jans family in Dublin had their own cross-channel network based on their English kin, who could validate the identity of those arriving in Ireland. In the case of some exiles, however, recognized recusant figures in England provided letters of recommendation.[31] Visiting English recusant clergy, though few in number, were active in households of the elite, and Piers was doubtless exposed to their preaching and conversation; he may have met the English priest Richard Haddock (whom he later encountered in Rome) on one of Haddock's pastoral visits to families in Ireland. By their English culture, and continental theological formation, these priests (rather than the clergy then active in Ireland) were more suited to engaging with individuals of Piers's English background.

[28] 'Discourse', 3; lord deputy and council to Privy Council, 24 Feb. 1603, *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1601–3*, 569; in May 1606 Jans was one of three Dublin aldermen fined for their recusancy in the court of castle chamber, Jon Crawford, *A Star Chamber Court in Ireland: The Court of Castle Chamber, 1571–1641* (Dublin, 2005), 488–489.

[29] After the death of Thomas Jans, Mary Piers married firstly Gilbert Gardener, and then one Lannen, 'Memoirs of the family of Sir Henry Piers of Tristernagh in the County of Westmeath', National Library of Ireland, MS 2563.

[30] Piers, 'A chorographical description of the county of Westmeath', in Vallancey, *Collectanea*, 68–69.

[31] Among those who provided recommendations for English recusants travelling to Ireland in the mid 1590s were Henry Garnet SJ ('Father Whalley'), superior (leader) of the Jesuit mission, and George Blackwell, archpriest, *Cal. S.P. Dom., 1595–1597*, 14.

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After arrival in the east-coast ports of Dublin or Drogheda, the exiles had to be assigned to suitable households. Through his mercantile contacts, and the high status he enjoyed as a Dublin alderman, James Jans was ideally placed to allocate new arrivals to families in the Pale and adjacent territories. Thus it happened that the Piers house in the former priory at Tristernagh, Co. Westmeath – a particularly remote and inaccessible location in the marcher area beyond the Pale – became part of the nexus of gentry and noble households which sheltered recusants from England.[32] Reflecting this temporary migration, in 1595 a young Englishman, Philip Draycott, then aged about 22, had been placed as a servant with Henry Piers in Ireland. From a staunchly recusant gentry family in east Staffordshire (with properties in adjoining counties), by spring 1595 Draycott had decided to enter the English College in Rome (founded 1579), to become a missionary priest.[33] He had just spent some time at the recently established English Jesuit college for boys in St Omer (founded 1593), in the Spanish Netherlands.[34] Given this schooling, and Draycott's intention to proceed to a continental seminary, a Jesuit in England (possibly the superior, Henry Garnet) may have been involved in directing the young man, and in facilitating the travel arrangements. Thus it would appear that Philip's Irish sojourn with Henry Piers, in the short interval between finishing at St Omers, and proceeding to the English College, Rome, was organized with travel to Rome in mind.

Draycott's decision to follow a seminary formation, and Piers's resolution to explore Catholicism free from the pressures of his home environment, drew them both to travel to Rome. Acquaintances formed over several years with those he had met through the Jans connection helped prompt Piers's Roman journey and his formal conversion once he arrived there. These influences, however

[32] Piers's services to refugee Catholics were noted by Cardinal Sega: report on visitation of English College, Rome, 1596, in Foley, *Records*, VI, 45.

[33] John Dracot (or Draycott) was one of the leading Staffordshire Catholics; the family featured repeatedly in government anti-recusant measures from the mid 1570s onwards, and in 1601 both John and his son Philip were suspected of harbouring priests, William R. Trimble, *The Catholic Laity in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge, MA, 1964), 76–80, 139, 144, 159, 172; for the late 1580s, see Timothy McCann (ed.), *Recusants in the Exchequer Pipe Rolls 1581–1592*, Catholic Record Society, 71 (1986), 53; for the 1590s, see M.M.C. Calthrop (ed.), *Recusant Roll No 1, 1592–3*, Catholic Record Society, 18 (1916), 301–8; and Hugh Bowler (ed.), *Recusant Roll No. 3 (1594–1595) and Recusant Roll No. 4 (1595–1596)*, Catholic Record Society, 61 (1970), index, sub nomine; Anthony Draycote, an archdeacon who had been deprived by 1560, when he was imprisoned, was also of this connection, Joseph Gillow, *A Literary and Biographical History, or, Bibliographical Dictionary of the English Catholics*, 5 vols (London and New York, 1885–87), II, 105.

[34] Geoffrey Holt (ed.), *St Omers and Bruges Colleges, 1593–1773: A Biographical Dictionary*, Catholic Record Society, 69 (1979), 89.

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compelling, were not sufficient for Piers to go against his family, and break with the established church by embracing the Roman denomination. This resolve arose from his religious restlessness over the past number of years, together with a realization that his life in Ireland did not offer a suitable setting for his inner quest. Aged 27, married with a young family, and heir to a sizeable estate, and holding a prominent position in local government, Henry Piers decided to travel to Rome. In this decision he could draw on the advice and support of lay Catholics he respected. In particular Alderman James Jans, drawing on his continental mercantile experience, was helpful in facilitating travel details, and in the financing of the journey.[35]

It was arranged that Piers and Draycott were to travel together: thus the 'Discourse' is also in part an account of how one Elizabethan seminarian travelled from England to Rome.[36] Draycott, travelling as Piers's servant so as to deflect the attention of the authorities, probably accompanied Piers from the beginning of the journey in Dublin. Proceeding across England from Chester to London, among the staging posts was the home of Draycott's father, in Sedsdale [Sedsall], Derbyshire;[37] henceforth, as Piers himself noted, the young man's status changed from Piers's servant to travelling companion.

The journey overland from Ireland to Rome took several months (for Piers and Draycott, from 9 June to 25 September 1595), and was hazardous, with a real risk of robbery and other mishaps. From England they travelled via the Netherlands, Germany, and Austria, so as to avoid France, then in the throes of the wars of religion. The support and solidarity of trusted companions was desirable. For young men destined for Catholic centres on the Continent, within the recusant community informal systems were in place to facilitate travel. Beyond the normal hazards, in England in the 1590s youths

[35] In 1595, before his departure, in the case of several townlands in Co. Westmeath, Henry Piers sold the tithes in corn for that year's harvest ('forty couples of tithe corn') to Alderman James Jans, presumably in view of financing his continental journey, Chancery pleadings, National Archives of Ireland, I, 166.

[36] Under a proclamation of 1581 against seminary education, it was illegal to travel abroad without special licence, Steele, *Bibliography of Royal Proclamations*, I, 81; for Piers and Draycott, no record survives of any licence to travel sought or issued, for the registers of the Privy Council are not extant for the period 26 Aug. 1593–1 Oct. 1595, J.R. Dasent, *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, NS, 46 vols (London, 1890–1964), XXIV [1592–1593], preface; for another account of a journey by English seminarians, see Martin Murphy (ed.), 'William Atkins, A Relation of the Journey from St Omers to Seville, 1622', in Royal Historical Society, Camden 5th ser., Miscellany XXXII (London, 1994), 191–288.

[37] In the mid 1590s a messuage in Sedsall, in Derbyshire, was among the properties of Philip Draycott, of Cheadle, Staffordshire; Sedsall is located on the River Dove, on the border with Staffordshire, about a mile south of Rocester; this holding was occupied by Philip Draycott, son of George Draycott, gentleman, Bowler, *Recusant Roll*, 40, 43.

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travelling to and from the Continent for Catholic education also faced the added threat of scrutiny by the authorities and exposure by informers. Those setting out on the journey were doubtless schooled on how to reply to prying officials.[38] For young Draycott, it was advantageous to have a master and patron for this long journey.[39] As befitted Piers's standing as a gentleman, the pair travelled with several pieces of luggage, and each had a pistol. A man of independent means, Piers had access to sufficient funds for horses and waggons at various stages of the journey, in addition to accommodation at inns.

Arrival in Rome, September 1595

The English College in Rome was their destination. The college was constituted in 1579 as a seminary for the training of Englishmen (including Welsh students) as priests who would serve on the mission in their homeland. However, the English presence in this location was much older. Founded in 1362, the English Hospice in via di Monserrato had been sheltering English pilgrims to Rome for over two hundred years. The hospice had decayed in the mid sixteenth century, as a consequence of the volatile ecclesial situation in England. Because of growing numbers at the English seminary established in 1568 in Douai, in the Spanish Netherlands, a new educational establishment was deemed necessary. Thus in 1579 the English College in Rome emerged, and the premises of the hospice were assigned by papal decree to the newly established college. In addition to its role as a seminary, the college assumed the functions of the existing hospice for visiting English pilgrims.[40] Established by a group of exiles from the college in Douai and endowed with a charter by Gregory XIII, by 1595 the college in Rome was staffed by Jesuits and had been preparing English and Welsh students for service as priests on the English mission for some years.

In undertaking their journey, Piers and Draycott were transgressing the war-time Elizabethan ordinances against travel to Rome

[38] On the discovery by officials of English recusant schoolboys travelling to the Continent via Ireland in the 1590s, see Edwards, 'A haven of popery', 95–96; Piers and Draycott, faced with questioning on their religion from an innkeeper in Jena, 'because he was no magistrate we refused to answeare directly to any of his questions', 'Discourse', 15–16.

[39] Reflecting on bonds forged during their travel together and strengthened by both adhering to the loyal minority in the English College disturbances, Piers referred to Draycott's 'offices of gratitude and faithfulness towards myself', 'Discourse', 163.

[40] On the transition from medieval hospice to Tridentine seminary, see Anthony Kenny, 'From hospice to college', in 'The English Hospice in Rome', *The Venerabile Sexcentenary Issue* (May 1962), 218–273.

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and Spanish-held territories, which contributed to the paucity of English visitors to the city, relative to the numbers visiting other Italian regions to the north.[41] Catholic authorities, too, created inhibitions on English travel to Rome. By the early 1590s, an indication of the suspicion surrounding newcomers from the Tudor and Stuart realms on their arrival in Rome were the procedures required for entry into the English College, whether as pilgrims in the hospice, or as students.[42] In the wake of the papal excommunication of Elizabeth in 1570, it was considered necessary to protect against English government spies: several agents posing as students had gained access to the college, with devastating consequences for the mission in England. Because of this risk, no one could be received at the college without letters of recommendation, or they had to be known personally by some English or Irish residents of Rome. It regularly happened that those without the requisite recommendation were refused admission.[43]

Thus on arrival in the city on 25 September 1595 in the company of some Italian gentlemen, one of these accompanied Piers and Draycott to the English College. Not having letters of recommendation, the English Jesuit whom they met sent them to an Irish priest, Dr Fagan, native of Waterford, so that Fagan could vouch for them. There they met Richard Haddock, an English priest who in the 1580s had spent regular sojourns among the older colonial community in Ireland; thus Haddock and the newly arrived Piers had acquaintances in common. The English priest was delighted to meet Piers (they may have met in Ireland), and asked after his friends there, naming in particular one Gerard Dillon, who was among those with whom he stayed. Haddock then facilitated the admission of Draycott and Piers as pilgrims in the hospice of the English College, for the customary period of eight days.

During these days the two newcomers followed the conventional programme for pilgrims: they were reconciled with the Catholic

[41] On the considerable numbers of Elizabethan Englishmen who studied at Padua, see Jonathon Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors: English Students in Italy, 1485–1603* (Cambridge, 1998); on the place of travel in shaping English Catholic identity in the Elizabethan era, see the perceptive essay by Netzloff, 'The English colleges and the English nation', 236–259.

[42] On English visitors to Rome in the later 16th century, see Frank, 'Elizabethan travellers in Rome', 95–132; for a succinct overview of society and infrastructure in 16th-century Rome, see Mark Girouard, *Cities and People: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1985), 115–136.

[43] In 1616, Francis Lea, of Yorkshire, was not admitted as a pilgrim, but received food and alms; similarly in 1626, Patrick Swetman of Northamptonshire, 'being unknown' was not admitted, but received alms, Foley, *Records*, VI, 595, 603.

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Church, and went to confession in St Peter's; they received holy communion; and they visited the seven major ancient churches of Rome (the devotion known as the *Sette Chiese*). Writing almost ten years after the event, Piers recalled the powerful experience of the sacrament of reconciliation by means of the designated confessor for English-language pilgrims, Father Richard Coolinge SJ, member of the multi-national community of Jesuit confessors in Rome.[44]

Henry Piers and the Roman Inquisition

Notwithstanding these rites of conversion, Piers's early days in Rome gave evidence of the routine suspicion of Protestantism with which individuals of English background (together with Welsh and Scots) were regarded. The taint of heresy, inconvenient at least, and bearing the possibility of an appearance before the Roman Inquisition, was intensified in Piers's case by the ingrained mutual antipathy which characterized Irish and English Catholics in exile.[45] News of Piers's arrival in the city spread quickly. Within about a week he was experiencing opposition from a section of the Irish in the city: tensions arising from the revolt of the Ulster lords against the crown were threatening to disrupt his stay. By autumn 1595 the war in Ireland had been underway for over a year; in June 1595 Hugh O'Neill, earl of Tyrone, had been proclaimed a traitor, and he had just taken over as leader of the confederate forces. Already some of the Irish in Rome, partisans of Tyrone, were highlighting the confessional motivation of the struggle, framing it for a Roman audience in terms of the contemporary religious wars in France.[46]

[44] Richard Coolinge SJ (1562–1618), 'Cowlinus', served as English-language confessor in the 'Collegio Penitentiariorum' at St Peter's, 1593–1596, and lived in the English College. Thomas McCoog (ed.), *Monumenta Angliae: English and Welsh Jesuits*, 3 vols (Rome, 1992–2000), I, 99–100; II, 277–278.

[45] On tensions between English and Irish Catholic exiles on the Continent in the late 16th century, see Christopher Highley, *Catholics Writing the Nation in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2008), 119–121.

[46] This grouping inspired a tract, published in Rome in 1596, recounting the Irish military victories in 1595, highlighting Tyrone's defeat of Sir John Norris, south of Armagh, in September; the confederate army was always referred to as the 'Catholic League', *Relatione della Guerra d'Hibernia, tra la Lega de'Catholici di quel regno, e l'asserta Reina d'Inghilterra. Dove s'intende i progressi maravigliosi fatti da essa Lega contro gli heretici, Dal principio dell'anno presente 1595. Che presero l'armi, fino al mese d'Ottobre. Et particolarmente una segnalata vittoria, ottenuta dal Conde di Tyron Generale di detta Lega, contro Giovan Noris Generale d'Inghilterra. A di 19 di Settembre* (Roma, 1596); the tract is listed in Douglas Hyde and D.J. O'Donoghue (eds), *Catalogue of the Books and Manuscripts … of Sir John Gilbert* (Dublin, 1918), 687.

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Lacking a firm institutional base (in contrast to the hospice and college of the English community) the Irish presence in the city at the end of the sixteenth century remains shadowy. There was a small grouping on Piers's arrival there in September 1595. The most significant cluster was associated with the cardinal protector of the Irish, Girolamo Mattei (1547–1603), dating from some time after his creation as cardinal in November 1586. By 1595, if not before, there was an informal college of Irish priests and students ('scholars') living in commodious premises adjacent to the church of Santa Lucia, and close to the cardinal's palace.[47] Those at Santa Lucia were ecclesiastics, including students, and diocesan priests, some of whom may have been functionaries in various curial institutions. One of these was probably Dr Fagan, mentioned by Piers, of the Waterford clerical family. Among the Irish clerics resident in Rome in 1595, several were natives of Tyrone's lordship in Ulster, and may be identified with those promoting the confederates' cause: Arthur MacGuckin was ordained that summer, and Arthur O'Donnelly on 3 December.[48]

Shortly after his appearance in Rome, presumably under questioning from Irish clerics eager to have news of their homeland from one newly arrived, Piers let his political views be known; reflecting the loyalism of his background in Ireland, he challenged the interpretation presented by some Irish émigrés (Piers gave no names), that the conflict was a Catholic crusade against a heretical government. He may have offered an alternative analysis, along the lines that the revolt was a regional conflict, a reaction by some traditionalist lords against the power of the crown. However, Piers's motivation for visiting Rome was spiritual, not political; in his 'Discourse' he focuses on the merits of Catholicism, and seeks to refute the arguments of Protestant reformers against different aspects of Catholic life. His interests were apologetical; writing in 1604–1605 just after the end of the war, he is largely silent regarding the recent revolt of the Ulster lords, save to note the devastation of his own estates, and the difficulties of Irish merchants in Spain.

[47] 'Discourse', 68; Girolamo Mattei (1547–1603), created cardinal 1586. Miranda, *The Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church* http://www2.fiu.edu/~mirandas/bios1586.htm, accessed 29 Jan. 2018. It has not been possible to locate this church with certainty; the Mattei family had a cluster of palaces in the Rione Angelo, and there, in the early 17th century, the cardinal's brother constructed the building known as Palazzo Mattei del Giove; the informal hospice probably formed part of the prelate's extended household, for the average size of a cardinal's household was about 150 people (significantly more in the case of cardinals from richer families), see chapter on 16th-century Rome in Girouard, *Cities and People*, 115–136.

[48] Both of Armagh diocese; these two are the only Irish ordinations listed for 1595; fourteen Irishmen were ordained at Rome between 1572 and 1595, Hugh Fenning, 'Irishmen ordained at Rome, 1572–1697', *Archivium Hibernicum* 59 (2005), 7–8.

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This stance quickly created difficulty for the newly arrived layman. Within days, some already-established Irishmen (probably the two Ulster clerics already noted) denounced him to the Roman Inquisition; the political activities of Piers's father, a crown agent for over forty years initially in north-east Ulster, and subsequently on the marches of the Pale, were well known, as was the aggressive Protestantism of Henry's father-in-law, Bishop Thomas Jones. In the case of the cleric Arthur O'Donnelly, antipathy towards Henry Piers was doubtless sharpened by the memory of William Piers's role in dishonouring the Gaelic Ulster warlord Shane O'Neill (d.1567); as a boy Shane had been fostered with the O'Donnellys (a clan subservient to the princely O'Neills), thus creating an intimate and lifelong bond between them; it was Piers senior who had the head of Shane O'Neill sent to Dublin Castle.[49] Thus Henry's initial difficulties in Rome were increased by his father's involvement in Ulster politics over several decades. The Ulstermen's suspicions regarding Henry's background were heightened by his utterances on the contemporary Irish conflict.

Irish political sensitivities were reinforced by Roman practice. From the mid sixteenth century, an appearance before the Inquisition was normal for a foreigner resident in Rome of whom there was a suspicion that he was not an adherent of the Catholic Church. The city's institutions were charged with probing the religious identity of aliens, so as to preserve the religious purity of the population; this concern was accentuated by the large numbers from northern Europe coming into Italy in the last decade of the century.[50] Delation to the Inquisition of aliens suspected of heresy was expected. Thus by the early 1580s it was habitual for those arriving in Rome from England and Scotland to be examined for heresy by the Inquisition.[51]

[49] As constable of Carrickfergus castle, William Piers sent the head of Shane O'Neill (*c.*1530–1567), the turbulent Gaelic leader, to the crown authorities in Dublin; later, from his base in Tristernagh, William participated in parleys with the Ulster confederates in autumn 1594, *Cal. S.P. Ire., 1592–1596*, 280, William Piers (d.1603), *DIB*; Shane O'Neill (*c.*1530–1567), *DIB*.

[50] On aliens' experience of the Roman Inquisition at the turn of the 16th century, see Irene Fosi, 'Conversion and autobiography: Telling tales before the Roman Inquisition', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 17 (2013), 437–456; on Irishmen before the Spanish Inquisition, see Thomas O'Connor, *Irish Voices from the Spanish Inquisition: Migrants, Converts and Brokers in Early Modern Iberia* (Basingstoke, 2016); in Aug. 1600, some forty 'English, Scotch, Genevese and Germans' were brought in procession to St Peter's and publicly recanted their heresy, Victor von Klarwill (ed.), *The Fugger News-Letters, Second Series (1568–1605)* (London, 1926), 326.

[51] There is no mention of Henry Piers in the records of the Roman Inquisition which are conserved in Trinity College Dublin (MSS 1224–1230). Sentences and abjurations arising from appearances there, including cases of heresy ('proposizioni eretiche'), have survived

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However, there was also a specifically Irish dimension to how Piers was brought to the Inquisition's attention. Those making the denunciation doubtless highlighted the English and Protestant background of his family, and their wide-ranging involvement in government and ecclesiastical service; these considerations would raise the suspicion that Piers, in addition to being a heretic, may also have been a spy in the service of England, liable on his return to damage Catholic networks in Ireland and England. Presumably those Irish people in Rome who were desirous of papal support for the northern revolt were keen to enlist the voice of one just recently arrived from the distant isle, and were commensurately angry at his open challenging of their interpretation. Piers's position in Rome was thus precarious.

In this threatening situation he turned to the man who was fast becoming his mentor, the Englishman Richard Haddock (*c.*1552–1605). By the mid 1590s Haddock (or Haydock) was one of the leading figures in the small English clerical community in Rome. Born in about 1551 or 1552 near Preston, Lancashire, his uncle was William Allen, founder of the English colleges in Douai and Rome, who was created cardinal in 1587. Haddock was among the first generation of recusant refugees in Douai, arriving there in 1573. Ordained four years later, in 1578 he moved to Rome to help in establishing the English College there and was among its first students.[52] He was deeply involved in the early disturbances between the Welsh rector and the largely English student body, as a result of which the direction of the nascent college was entrusted to the Jesuits.[53] Returning to England in 1580 he spent the following decade as a missionary priest there, with periodic visits to households in Ireland. In 1584 his younger brother George, likewise a priest, was executed, and his sister Aloysia Haydock was imprisoned for recusancy.[54] In summer 1596, in a memorandum to the Spanish authorities, the Jesuit Robert Persons described Haddock as an English priest then resident in Rome, who had 'lived in Ireland many

from 1564 to 1582. References to Englishmen and Scotsmen begin in 1582. Entries covering the years 1583 to 1602 are not extant. There are volumes for 1603, 1607, and 1615, each of which contain references to English and Scottish examinees. See T.K. Abbott, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College Dublin* (Dublin and London, 1900), 243 et seq.

[52] For a short biography of Haddock, see Foley, *Records*, VI, 130–131; his will (undated, but written shortly before his death in Rome in 1605), Archivum Venerabilis Collegii Anglorum de Urbe (AVCAU), Chronologia Monumentorum ab ann. 1589 ad 1605, vol. vi, 341; he became doctor of divinity from the Roman university (Sapienza).

[53] For Haddock's account of these events, see Haddock to Dr William Allen, from Rome, 9 Mar. 1579, printed in M.A. Tierney, *Dodd's Church History of England*, II (London, 1839), cccl–ccclxi.

[54] 'Richard Haydock DD', in Gillow, *A Literary and Biographical History*, III, 221–226.

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years and has many gentlemen relatives and acquaintances there, and in Lancashire, his native province'.

In 1590 Cardinal Allen summoned him to Rome as his domestic chaplain, where he lived in the prelate's house close to the English College. A friend and supporter of Robert Persons, he worked to sustain the pro-Jesuit students in the college disturbance of the mid 1590s. Haddock's acquaintance with Ireland led Persons to suggest him as a possible candidate for archbishop of Dublin, in the case of a Spanish invasion of Ireland. According to Persons, Haddock was 'well known to the [Spanish] ambassador in Rome as being a firm adherent of his majesty'.[55] In this regard Haddock received a titular appointment as dean of Dublin some time before 1602. Resuming his earlier engagement with Catholics in Lancashire and Ireland, in October 1602 he travelled there via Douai, and returned to Rome in August the following year. Owing to this intermittent pastoral contact, Haddock was one of those English priests who from about the early 1580s found temporary refuge among the gentry of the Irish Pale, a milieu familiar to Henry Piers. A further service to the English Catholic community was his translation of Cardinal Bellarmine's large catechism from Italian into English, published in 1604.[56] The English cleric died in Rome in 1605.

Thus Haddock's involvement with Piers from September 1595 until October 1597, when Piers was in Rome, formed part of the Englishman's ongoing interest in Catholic life in English-speaking Ireland. Fluent in Italian, with long experience of Rome, Haddock was ideally placed to guide and befriend the young man recently arrived from Ireland. In Haddock, Piers had a confidant who was familiar with Ireland, with considerable personal experience of the older colonial community, Catholic and loyalist, based on extended visits there. Faced with the Roman partisans of the Ulster insurgents against the crown, Piers had found an ally in distancing himself from their ultra-Catholic interpretation of the conflict, thereby supporting him in eschewing political activism while in Rome, and leaving him free to pursue his spiritual development. In recognition of Haddock's pivotal role in supporting him during his Roman sojourn, Piers dedicated the 'Discourse' to the English priest.

[55] Both quotations, Persons to Martin De Idiaquez, [summer] 1596, *Cal. S.P. Spanish, 1587–1603*, 628–633.

[56] On his travels in 1602–1603, see Godfrey Anstruther, *The Seminary Priests: A Dictionary of the Secular Clergy of England and Wales 1558–1850*, 4 vols (Ware, 1969–), I, 159–160; the translation of the Bellarmine catechism is entitled, *An ample declaration of the Christian doctrine: Composed in Italian by the renowned cardinal: Card. Bellarmin etc. Translated into English by Richard Hadock, Doctor of Divinitie* (Douai, 1604); several other editions of the translation were published up to 1624.

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Faced with a delation to the Inquisition by the Irish of the confederate line, Haddock advised Piers to present himself voluntarily to the tribunal. This counsel reflected Inquisition practice. Those who of their own initiative presented themselves (a category known as the *sponte comparentes*) were subject to a briefer and milder legal procedure (the *processo sommario*) than the fuller and more formal process.[57] Piers had journeyed to Rome in order to embrace the Catholic faith, a consequence of which was abjuring his previous upbringing in the established church. The Inquisition was a mechanism by which conversions from heresy were given official validation. The overwhelming majority of those appearing before the Inquisition for the purpose of conversion took the initiative themselves; among these were a number of English and Scottish residents, and Piers may be accounted in this category.

The procedure was doubtless similar to that of a certain John Scot, a 21-year old from Tweeddale in Scotland who appeared on 17 May 1607, and whose sentence and signed abjuration have survived.[58] In the sentence it was noted that the young man had presented himself to the Inquisition of his own accord. He deposed that he was born of Calvinist parents and brought up in that denomination, and had hitherto held various heresies. However, his abjuration, attached to the sentence, was wholly written in his own hand, and the usual penances were imposed. As a rule, the proceedings followed a rigid and formulaic course, led by the inquisitor, and recorded by the notary. The convert took an oath before the notary; he made a review of his life and sentiments, indicating his father's name, his country, and the religion of his family; he gave information on his education and instruction in heresy; and he recounted how and why he converted to the Catholic Church. The notary ensured that this formal abjuration was properly documented and certified. When facing interrogation by the authorities in Seville in 1598, Piers was able to present testimonials acquired in Rome vouching for his religious orthodoxy; among these may have been a certificate from the Inquisition.

As a result of this process, the Roman Inquisition exonerated Piers from any charge of heresy. He made a positive impression on the inquisitors; his relatively elevated social background, together with an ability to present his strong spiritual quest, doubtless distinguished him from the majority of aliens appearing before the

[57] On the summary procedure arising from a spontaneous appearance before the Inquisition at this time, see Fosi, 'Conversion and autobiography'; Christopher Black, *The Italian Inquisition* (New Haven, CT, and London, 2009), 60–63.

[58] Trinity College Dublin, MS 1229, fos 198r–200v.

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tribunal. As a result of these contacts the leading inquisitor, Cardinal Domenico Pinelli,[59] invited Piers for a private conversation. The prelate rejoiced at his coming to Rome in order to convert; on reading the lives of the English saints (perhaps in order to deepen his understanding of the religious situation of northern Europe), Pinelli related that he was saddened by the contrast with the current state of religion there.[60] Piers formed a cordial relationship with the cardinal: on the layman's departure from Rome in October 1597, he carried letters from Pinelli for his brother in Genoa. Piers's dependence on Haddock for advice in negotiating the Roman scene points to the role of clerics long-established in Catholic centres in assisting more recently arrived laity, when these faced possible threats from the authorities. The almost immediate delation of Piers to the Inquisition on arrival in Rome underlines how political and ethnic divisions in war-torn Ireland were replicated in a continental setting.

Admittance to the English College, Rome, October 1595

At the end of these eight days as a pilgrim, it became clear that Piers was willing and able to study, and to avail himself of the opportunity of furthering his grasp of Catholicism which the English College afforded. Richard Haddock made representations on behalf of the two arrivals (Piers, and Philip Draycott) to Cardinal Enrico Caetani, cardinal protector of the English, who had a supervisory role in relation to the college; following the normal procedure, Draycott was accepted as a scholar (or seminarian).[61]

The case for admitting Piers was more problematic. While the mission of the college was to prepare priests for the English mission, exceptionally some laymen were accepted to facilitate their conversion to Catholicism. Although the category of *convictor* (or resident lay student) was provided for in the college's statutes, and apparently designed for those like Piers who were seeking conversion, single men were doubtless intended; Piers was after all a married man.[62]

[59] Cardinal Domenico Pinelli (1541–1611); he was involved in the process against Giordano Bruno in 1600, *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/domenico-pinelli_(Dizionario-Biografico)/, accessed 20 Jan. 2018.

[60] 'Discourse', 31–32; Pinelli was referring to the lives of the medieval English saints.

[61] 'Discourse', 32; Cardinal Enrico Caetani (1550–1599), *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/enrico-caetani_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/, accessed 20 Jan. 2018.

[62] Examples of men admitted as *convictor*: John Jackson, admitted for one year, from July 1603, Foley, *Records*, VI, 577; William Alabaster, arrived 23 Jan. 1609, ibid. 585; four

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A further peculiarity of Piers's presence in the college was his Irish background. Admission was reserved for Englishmen; Piers was one of a small number of those accepted up to 1641 who, though born in Ireland, were designated 'of English parents'.[63] In favour of admission, however, it was advanced that he had sheltered many English Catholics at his own expense, presumably on his estates in Ireland, and that he had given up his lands to become a Catholic.[64] His high social standing, his support of the English recusant network in Ireland together with a demonstrably fervent desire to make progress in absorbing Catholicism all favoured his case. Thus with the knowledge and approval of the cardinal protector, and through the intercession of Richard Haddock, Piers was admitted to the college as a *convictor*. After the probationary period, on 12 October 1595 Henry Piers and Philip Draycott formally entered the college, and donned its uniform.[65] Once his status changed from pilgrim to student, as for all students, his accommodation costs (which included clothing from the college tailor) were met by the college.

Student in the English College, Rome

Piers was to spend two full years (October 1595 to October 1597) in the English College in Rome. By autumn 1595, the college (located in the premises of the English Hospice, standing on the same location in via di Montserrato since its foundation in 1362) comprised 47 students, 8 Jesuit priests, 2 prefects, and 19 domestic staff. The student programme normally lasted seven years, the initial years spent on philosophy before proceeding to divinity. However, due to the student unrest in the college since October 1594, studies had been greatly disrupted.[66] For the duration of his stay, Piers followed the courses offered in logic and physic. The first year was generally devoted to logic. Just prior to Piers's arrival, pleading the disruption, the students had sought and been granted an extension of the logic course from one to two years; in an indictment of the prevailing

noblemen admitted 'for sake of conversion', *c.* Jan. 1630, ibid. 606; Francis Slingsby and Mr Sprewley, his friend, 2 Feb. 1639, ibid. 618.

[63] In Nov. 1628, Gerard Birmingham stayed several days; one Mr Morris was given alms in Oct. 1629; both were born in Ireland of English parents, Foley, *Records*, VI, 604–605.

[64] Foley, *Records*, VI, 45.

[65] Foley, *Records*, VI, 567; Draycott subsequently left the English College and entered the Jesuit novitiate in Rome on 12 Apr. 1598, and died there on 14 Aug. of the same year, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Rom. 172, fo.25r; Historia Societatis, vol. 42, fo.11r.

[66] Report (in English translation) on the English College in Rome, by Cardinal Philip Sega, Mar. 1596, in Foley, *Records*, VI, 1–66, at 48, 62–63, 65.

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disorder, Cardinal Sega, the official visitor, insisted that this concession be reversed immediately, 'as if instead of punishment, encouragement should be awarded to their indolence'.[67]

By his own account Piers took a full part in the life of the college. He gives an overview of the regime prevailing in the various national colleges, including the English College.[68] The students used to rise at 4.30 a.m. Every week the English students enjoyed a recreation day spent at their college's vineyard on the Palatine hill;[69] athletic pursuits were followed by an extra-fine meal. In the case of a few of the more exceptional students, at the conclusion of their studies a public disputation was held, to which externs including some cardinals were invited; there was one such event yearly for philosophy, and one for theology; the proceedings ended with a festive meal.[70]

The academic year was punctuated by a series of cultural and social events. During carnival (the days preceding the start of the Lenten season) it was habitual to present a dramatic event prepared by the students, to which friends of the college were invited as guests.[71] Tragedies were also staged. The college marked two particular feasts, recalling the patrons of the earlier hospice. External musicians, paid by the college, animated these gatherings, and in the mid 1590s, in addition to the English residing in Rome, other local people were invited, giving a total of over two hundred guests.[72] In early summer, the liturgical feast of Trinity Sunday was the occasion of a college celebration. The Christmas season included several days with particular resonance for the English collegians: the feast of the college's patron, St Thomas of Canterbury (otherwise known as Thomas à Beckett) on 29 December had a special place, and, reflecting the contemporary association of the English Catholics with martyrdom, on St Stephen's Day (26 December) a seminarian of the English College habitually preached in Latin before the pontiff and his cardinals.[73]

As noted, on his arrival in Rome a section of the Irish clerical group denounced Piers to the Inquisition as one of suspect background in Ireland. Simultaneously, Piers also faced opposition from within the English College. In addition to the conventional antipathy between

[67] 'Discourse', 116; Sega report, Foley, *Records*, VI, 63.

[68] 'The Rulles of the Colleadges', in 'Discourse', 111–118; for an English Catholic account of life in the college in *c.*1579, see Martin, *Roma Sancta*, 109–114.

[69] 'Discourse', 133.

[70] Foley, *Records*, VI, 46.

[71] Foley, *Records*, VI, 41–42; during carnival 1596 the college guests included Richard Haddock and Gabriel Allen (brother of the late cardinal).

[72] Foley, *Records*, VI, 65.

[73] 'Discourse', 117.

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Irish and English, Piers's experience arose in part from the college's troubled recent history. While still a candidate for admission, he became yet one more focus of contention by the anti-Jesuit faction among the students in their campaign to have the fathers removed from the college administration. Thus his first months coincided with another of the internal disturbances which had convulsed the student body at intervals since even prior to the college's formal foundation. In Lent 1579 tensions had erupted between the rector, the Welshman Morys Clennog, and the largely English student body. Shortly thereafter Gregory XIII acceded to the requests of the English students, and in April 1579 the college was established by papal decree.[74] Owen Lewis and Morys Clennog, both Welsh, and both instrumental in starting the seminary, left Rome. Thereafter it was entrusted to the Italian Jesuits. A further dispute necessitated the intervention of Cardinal Philip Sega as visitor in 1585; there followed several years when an English Jesuit was in charge.

On the death of Cardinal Allen, cardinal protector for England and college patron, in October 1594, friction between English and Welsh students threatened to flare up once again. The occasion was an attempt to gain the college's support in favour of Owen Lewis's nomination as protector. The Jesuit rector summoned the respective leaders and effected a reconciliation.[75] A short time later, however, a faction emerged, comprising some secular priests and seminarians, focused on the allegedly too severe regime of the Jesuits within the college, and on a belief that the Society was trying to dominate the nascent English mission. In August 1595 the students sought an audience with Clement VIII, which was not granted. However, Clement responded by ordering an official visitation. This intervention had little effect, and the students continued to petition the pope. In November 1595 four students were expelled, but Clement quickly revoked the decision, and the men returned. The then cardinal protector of the English, Enrico Caetani (Caietan), who was responsible for the college, had been entrusted with a papal diplomatic mission in Poland. In his place the pope appointed Cardinal Philip Sega[76] as vice protector of the English, and asked him to conduct an official visitation of the college once again, and to

[74] On the Welsh use of early medieval historic claims in this late 16th-century dispute with the English in Rome, see Jason Nice, 'Being "British" in Rome: The Welsh at the English College, 1578–1584', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 92 (2006), 1–24.

[75] Foley, *Records*, VI, 11, 36; for a defence of Owen Lewis against the critical assessment contained in Cardinal Sega's visitation report from 1596, see Godfrey Anstruther, 'Owen Lewis', in 'The English Hospice in Rome', 272–294.

[76] Cardinal Filippo Sega (1537–1596), Miranda, *The Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church* http://www2.fiu.edu/~mirandas/bios1591-ii.htm, accessed 19 Jan. 2018.

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report on the disturbance; this visitation took place in the winter of 1595–1596.[77] In this time the cardinal administered the sacrament of confirmation in the chapel to a number of students, including Henry Piers.[78]

By the end of September 1595 (when Piers and Draycott arrived) the college had been in severe internal disruption for almost a year, and instability continued for much of their first year there.[79] Sega's report enables us to survey the acrimonious relationships that characterized the college community at that time. The students were bitterly divided between the majority who opposed the Jesuits, and the minority who sided with the administration; among the latter were Piers and Philip Draycott.[80] There was universal agreement that an academic year had been 'wasted in strife and contention'; as a result students were demanding that an extra year be added at the end of their course to make good the time lost.[81] Discipline had collapsed; faced with the insubordination of a majority of the student body, the fathers had discontinued the normal practice of imposing penances for infringements of rules.[82] Student homilies in the refectory had to be abandoned, as these had become occasions for the opposing factions to trade invective and ridicule.[83] From the beginning of his sojourn, it was inevitable that Piers (like other new students arriving for the academic year 1595–1596) would be drawn into this conflict, and compelled to declare allegiance between the competing parties.

In this acrimonious situation, Piers's national identity became an issue in the struggle between the disruptive students and the college administration. Despite his English parentage, the anti-Jesuit

[77] Sega listened to the students' complaints and requests; he received individual signed written statements of grievance ('lengthy and rambling memorials') from the 37 who formed the opposition (Foley, *Records*, VI, 18–19); he summarized their complaints, and received written replies to these from the college's Jesuits; he also received written observations from those loyal to the administration; his report, addressed to Clement VIII, was concluded on 15 Mar. 1596, Foley, *Records*, VI, 1–66; this report provides contemporary details on college life during Piers's sojourn.

[78] 'Discourse', 34.

[79] For a detailed account of the 1594–1597 dispute in the English College in Rome, see Thomas McCoog, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England, 1589–1597* (Farnham, Surrey, and Rome, 2012), 259–272; the role of Edmund Harewood SJ, the college's minister, in relation to the students, features in Arnold Pritchard, *Catholic Loyalism in Elizabethan England* (London, 1979), 102–119.

[80] Cardinal Sega named ten students 'who have remained dutiful', and thirty-seven who opposed the administration, Foley, *Records*, VI, 3.

[81] Foley, *Records*, VI, 28.

[82] Sega referred to 'a wholescale neglect of discipline and subversion of order', Foley, *Records*, VI, 30.

[83] Foley, *Records*, VI, 44.

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grouping focused on his birth in Ireland, and dismissed the newcomer as an 'ignorant Irishman'; the fact that he was not born in England, in their view, disqualified him from admission, which was restricted to Englishmen. They protested to the college authorities, alleging that the students were unanimous on his exclusion; the fact that he was married was for them further grounds for rejection.[84] Their opposition endured, for at the time of the visitation they demanded that no Irishman be admitted to the college.[85] The authorities, however, defended his admission, asserting that English parentage (not birth in England) was the relevant criterion; accepted as a *convictor* (as distinct from a scholar, or seminarian), Piers was not obliged to take the missionary oath to be ordained for service on the English mission.

Instability was increased by the rapid turnover of interim protectors: Sega died in May 1596; he was replaced by Cardinal Francisco Toledo ('Tollett') (although a Jesuit, he was inimical to Acquaviva's leadership as general of the order, but was reconciled with the Society shortly before he died) who in turn died in September 1596; Piers attended this cardinal's obsequies in the Jesuit Chiesa del Gesù. Cardinal Camillo Borghese succeeded as vice protector.

While not formally a member of the college administration, Richard Haddock interacted incessantly with the students, urging an end to the turbulence and support for the authorities. Haddock was one of those intended by the dutiful minority, who acknowledged 'the authority of certain men of piety, learning, and practical good sense, who, when present, by private counsel, or when at a distance, by letters, sought to warn students, and to deter them by many sound reasons, from taking part in these disturbances and quarrels'; in an indication of his persistence and ability in diffusing the stirs, the recalcitrant party demanded that he be banned from contact with the college.[86]

In the student revolt, Piers's loyalty to the administration was never in doubt. While he may have been isolated as one of the minority within the student body, he enjoyed warm relations with some key figures in the college. Bonds of loyalty and gratitude – for his admission as a *convictor*, and for advice leading to the successful outcome of his recent encounter with the Inquisition – made Piers susceptible to

[84] Sega summarized their objection to Piers's admission: 'Despite the objections of all the students, an ignorant Irishman, who moreover has been married, was admitted in violation of the College statutes', Foley, *Records*, VI, 23.

[85] 'No Irishman whatever should be received into the College', Foley, *Records*, VI, 27.

[86] Foley, *Records*, VI, 29–30.

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Richard Haddock's prompting, and similarly his erstwhile travelling companion Philip Draycott was loyal to Piers, on the basis of their long and eventful journey together. Another student, Reginald Bates, a young priest, was also of the minority group; with Bates, too, Piers forged an enduring friendship; in October 1597, Piers travelled as far as Milan with the party setting out from the college, which included Bates, 'a man of great virtue and my special frende'.[87] More generally he was deeply appreciative of the support and spiritual counsel he received from the English Jesuits in Rome, and was a firm admirer of the Society of Jesus.[88]

While he noted Richard Haddock's efforts to bolster support for the administration among the students, Piers acknowledged the decisive role of Robert Persons SJ in bringing the unrest to a conclusion. From early 1596 there had been a rumour that an English Jesuit would be sent to Rome to help settle the disturbance. Robert Persons was selected. Despite pressing commitments in Spain, he travelled to Rome, arriving at the end of March 1597. On Easter Saturday (2 April 1597) Persons spoke to the assembled students at the college, outlining his view of the disturbances, and indicating his proposed solutions. To facilitate engagement with the recalcitrants, at the pope's request Persons went to live in the college. There followed a period of intense negotiations between Persons and the disaffected seminarians. An amicable outcome ensued. A settlement was reached between the student representatives and the Jesuit negotiator. The vice protector approved of the articles of agreement. On Ascension Day (15 May 1597), Cardinal Camillo Borghese as vice protector attended celebrations in the college to mark the conclusion of the disturbance and the reconciliation of the parties.[89]

Piers enjoyed a cordial relationship with Persons, and they conversed during the time both were residing in the college, from the Jesuit's arrival in early April 1597 until the Irishman's departure in mid October of the same year. Piers noted the controversy which erupted at that time between secular clergy and the Jesuits within the wider English Catholic community, of which the disturbance in the college in Rome was a part, and in which Persons was a central figure; without entering into discussion of the issues at stake, Piers

[87] 'Discourse', 193.
[88] 'Discourse', 32.
[89] This summary of Persons's involvement in the resolution of the disturbance draws on the account given in McCoog, *The Society of Jesus*, 356–65; the articles of agreement, dated 15 May 1597, are given in Thomas Graves Law (ed.), *The Archpriest Controversy: Documents relating to the Dissensions of the Roman Catholic Clergy, 1597–1602*, Camden Society, NS, 2 vols, 56, 58 (London, 1896, 1898), I, 16–17.

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merely remarked that the ensuing series of publications against the Jesuits was damaging to the cause of the English Catholics.[90] In his account of the tumultuous period which he lived through in the college, Piers emerges as an uncritical supporter and admirer of Robert Persons. Prompted by conversations with the celebrated founder of the Valladolid and Seville colleges, Piers decided to visit those establishments after leaving Rome. Showing that he had learned from his encounter with the Roman Inquisition, before departing Piers took care to procure written testimonials to his Catholic orthodoxy. Further, that he had acquired letters of introduction from Rome (most likely from Persons) was implicit in the range of Jesuit contacts on which he could draw while on his travels in Spain.

Henry Piers in Spain, 1597–1598

On 15 October 1597 he set off from the English College in Rome, together with a number of English priests who, having finished their studies, were returning to the mission in England. Among these was Reginald Bates ('Batty'), ordained in 1594, whose friendship Piers particularly valued.[91] The group spent three days at the sanctuary of the holy house of Nazareth at Loreto, near Macerata, at that time the most important Marian shrine in the Catholic world: pilgrims to Rome (including those from Ireland) first visited Loreto. The layman noted the ministry of the international group of Jesuit confessors established at the sanctuary. He parted from his English travelling companions at Milan.[92] Arriving at Genoa, Piers encountered a group of English seminarians whom Robert Persons was sending from Rome to Spain, in the wake of the Jesuit's campaign to restore stability to the college in Rome.

The former Roman student's destination was the English College in Valladolid; during the year he spent in Spain, Piers moved within the English Jesuit network established there by Persons from the late 1580s. On 22 November Piers set sail from Genoa, arriving at Alicante, in the kingdom of Valentia, on 11 December 1597; Cardinal Penelle (his Roman inquisitor) paid for his passage, because Piers had carried letters from Rome to the cardinal's brother in

[90] 'Discourse', 35–36; on the conflict between the Appellants and the Jesuits, see McCoog, *The Society of Jesus*.

[91] On Reginald Bates, see footnote, 'Discourse', 193.

[92] 'Discourse', 163, 193.

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Genoa. The convert's fellow-travellers on this voyage were of varied nationalities: English, French, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, Irish ('some of or own contrie men'), two Turks, and some Jews in disguise.[93] From Valentia he travelled to Madrid. While there he was received graciously at the Jesuit college and met the English exile, Thomas Fitzherbert, then living as a royal pensioner of the Spanish court, who, together with Joseph Creswell SJ, was acting as lobbyist for the English community with the authorities in Spain.[94]

After the Christmas festivities Piers proceeded to the English College in Valladolid. Founded by Robert Persons in 1589 to prepare priests for service on the mission in England and Wales, by the time of Piers's visit St Alban's College contained approximately sixty to seventy seminarians.[95] He stayed there from 7 to 21 January 1598 as guest of the English Jesuits.

While in Valladolid he chanced to meet an Irish cleric, a native of Piers's home region in Ireland. There were about twenty Irish students at the university in the years 1588–1596.[96] Brian McFergus O'Farrell had been there since about 1590, studying humanities and theology; his academic renown was such that in 1601 Hugh O'Neill, earl of Tyrone, sought to have him nominated to the Irish diocese of Meath. Piers wrote of the scholar's 'great learninge gravetie and good liffe, whose untymely deseace hathe bene an infinitt losse unto his native contrie'.[97] The Gaelic lordship of the O'Farrells was located just a few miles west of the Piers estate at Tristernagh, Co. Westmeath. As a boy, Piers had been fostered with Garret O'Farrell and his wife Elizabeth Tankard; for some years prior to his departure from Ireland Piers had been serving as seneschal in a territory contiguous

[93] 'and as it was thought certaine Jewes wch because they were passing into Spayne went disguised for that they are prohibited to resort thither', 'Discourse', 195.

[94] A Jesuit college was established in Madrid in 1560, L. Koch, *Jesuiten-Lexikon* (Paderborn, 1934), 1139; for the career of Joseph Creswell (1556–1623) in Spain, see A.J. Loomie, *The Spanish Elizabethans: The English Exiles at the Court of Philip II* (New York, 1963), 182–229; Thomas Fitzherbert (1552–1640), *ODNB*.

[95] For brief information on students admitted 1589–1598, see Edwin Henson (ed.), *Registers of the English College at Valladolid 1589–1862*, Catholic Record Society, 30 (1930), 1–49; on the college in the 1590s, see M.E. Williams, *St Alban's College, Valladolid: Four Centuries of English Catholic Presence in Spain* (London and New York, 1986), 9–22.

[96] See appendix, 'Irish students in Valladolid (1588–1661)', in Karin Schüller, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Spanien und Irland im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert: Diplomatie, Handel und die soziale Integration katholischer Exulanten* (Münster, 1999), 244–245.

[97] 'Discourse', 199; 'Bernard O Ferail' was described as *sacerdotem theologum* at Valladolid in 1601 for 'seven continuous years'; he studied letters at the University of Valladolid where he spent a further four years studying theology, Benjamin Hazard, *Faith and Patronage: The Political Career of Flaithrí Ó Maolchonaire, 1560–1629* (Dublin, 2010), 172–173; from the details above O'Farrell died *c.*1602–1604.

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to the O'Farrell lordship.[98] Thus he was familiar with the priest's wider kin, and may indeed have known Brian McFergus before he left for studies in Spain; they were of a broadly similar age. The warmth of Piers's appreciation is suggestive of earlier acquaintance, and the encounter points to the Gaelic world in which Piers was partly raised.

The traveller visited the royal palace at Escorial on his return journey from Valladolid to Madrid. While in the city he was in contact with Joseph Creswell SJ. Leaving the new capital on 9 April 1598 after a stay of over two months, and with some travel money provided by Creswell, Piers arrived in Seville on 18 April, with the intention of joining the English College there, and continuing the philosophy studies begun in Rome. There is no explicit reference as to why Piers became a student at Seville, as opposed to Valladolid. Candidates were allocated to one or other of the various English colleges according to the places available at the time; presumably this was also the case when Piers requested admission. There were complaints of overcrowding in the college in Valladolid: between 1592–1598, forty seminarians were sent from St Alban's to the recently founded establishment in Seville.[99] In the 1590s those arriving at Valladolid generally had already started their ecclesiastical studies elsewhere; for those needing to study philosophy, the southern college was deemed more suitable. St Gregory's in Seville accommodated lay students of various ages, which does not appear to have been the case in Valladolid. Thus academically, and in terms of the student body, the Seville college was probably more appropriate for a man of Piers's background.

The English College in Seville (St Gregory's), was founded by Robert Persons in 1592. While established to prepare priests to serve on the English mission, lay youths and young men were also admitted, ranging in age from twelve to the late twenties.[100] In April 1598 Father Richard Walpole SJ admitted Piers as a boarder ('*convictor*'), after which he wore the student uniform; having studied logic and physic in Rome, in Seville he proceeded to the metaphysics course until he left the college after five months, about mid September 1598.[101]

By 1598 there were just under sixty students at St Gregory's. The Jesuit staff comprised the Andalusian rector, Francisco de Peralta,

[98] Elizabeth Hickey, 'Some notes on Kilbixy, Tristernagh and Templecross, and the family of Piers', 62.

[99] Williams, *St Alban's College Valladolid*, 21, 26.

[100] On the early history of the Seville college, see Martin Murphy, *St Gregory's College, Seville, 1592–1767*, Catholic Record Society, 73 (1992), 1–25, and Martin Murphy, *Ingleses de Sevilla: El Colegio de San Gregorio, 1592–1767* (Sevilla, 2012), 5–46.

[101] 'Discourse', 205; for a short biography of Richard Walpole SJ (1564–1607), see Henry Foley, *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus* (London, 1883), VII, 809–810; in 1597–1598 he was serving as prefect of studies at the English College in Seville.

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and several English fathers. In that year, the chapel was completed; it was paid for by Dona Ana de Espinosa, widow of Alvaro de Flores, who had been commander of the Fleet of the Indies.[102] The college was housed in a fine building, constructed in 1595, in a central location beside the palace of the duke of Medina Sidonia. The new premises were adjacent to St Hermenegild's, the house of studies of the Andalusian Jesuits founded in 1584, where the collegians attended courses in philosophy and theology. There were four theology professors, three professors of philosophy, and teachers of scripture, moral theology, Hebrew, and Greek; St Hermenegild's enjoyed a fine reputation for its modern teaching, and the curriculum ranged from grammar and rhetoric through to theology.[103] At St Gregory's drama was also cultivated; in 1598 three performances were given of a certain 'tragicomedia', and among those attending were the archbishop of Seville,[104] the Marques de Tarifa and the duke of Alcala.[105]

While in Seville, Piers was part of the vibrant Elizabethan exile community in the city and its environs. Seville was then the largest city in Spain, the gateway to the riches of the New World, and traditionally enjoyed strong trading contacts with England and Ireland. Piers has left no particular testimony to the spiritual impact his time in Seville may have made on him, by contrast to the sojourn in the college in Rome. He enjoyed a number of contacts with merchants (both Irish and English) and other English-speakers while in Seville. Several encounters point to his range of acquaintances. At San Lucar de Barrameda, a town lying downriver from Seville which had served as the city's seaport until the mid sixteenth century, control of the property of the English merchant confraternity of St George (a church and residence) had been transferred in 1591 to a newly formed college or corporate body of English secular clergy. Henceforth the premises served as a hospice for students and priests departing for or arriving from England.[106] Piers visited the San Lucar residence as he was preparing for the return journey to Ireland. At Puerto de Santa Maria,

[102] Murphy, *St Gregory's College, Seville*, 8.

[103] Murphy, *St Gregory's College, Seville*, 15; for an internal Jesuit view on the college's foundation and early years to 1595, see McCoog, *The Society of Jesus*, 113–116, 213–215.

[104] Rodrigo de Castro Osorio (1523–1600) became archbishop of Seville in 1581, and was created cardinal in 1583; supporter of Robert Persons SJ in establishing the English College in Seville. Miranda, *The Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church* http://www2.fiu.edu/~mirandas/bios1583.htm#Castro, accessed 20 Nov. 2017.

[105] Jesuit annual letter, Provincia Baetica, for 1598, extract given in Murphy, *St Gregory's College, Seville*, 124.

[106] The Confraternity of St George, comprising English merchants trading in Seville, had been established in 1517; for an account of this residence in the 16th century, see Williams, *St Alban's College Valladolid*, 269–270.

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just prior to departing from Cadiz for Ireland, Piers met an Englishman who had served in the Spanish army and navy for many years, Captain Cripes; Cripes gave Piers a gift of a precious stone, suggestive of a friendship between them.[107] At about the same time, needing accommodation in Jerez, he stayed with an English wine merchant long established in that city, John Fletcher,[108] member of the Confraternity of St George.

More regular contacts arose during his time at the English College. At St Gregory's the staff and students engaged in various ways with the numerous Englishmen who were living in Seville, for a shorter or a longer period: merchants, sailors, prisoners of war. The fathers participated as interpreters when the Inquisition was examining Englishmen. Disputations with visiting Protestants took place in the college; the students regularly frequented the gaols to converse with English inmates, who were generally prisoners of war, and to seek their conversion to Catholicism.[109] In visiting and interceding for Irish prisoners, Piers was following the practice of the staff and students of St Gregory's.

The Irishman's contacts with fellow-countrymen in the Seville area may best be understood in the context of trading between Ireland and south-west Spain at the time of the Anglo-Spanish war (1585–1604), a boom time for Irish merchants. The Andalucian ports received about twenty-three per cent of Irish trade with the Iberian peninsula. Traders from Waterford predominated, followed by those from Dublin and Drogheda.[110] As a result Seville hosted a significant network of Irish residents. A few prominent merchant families – including the Comerfords of Waterford, and the Blakes of Galway – had been active in this trade for several generations. Wine was the major commodity transported from Andalucia to the Irish ports.

The presence of English-speakers in sixteenth-century Seville was complicated by the religious issue. There had been a purge of native Lutherans in Seville in 1559–1560, when a number were burnt,

[107] 'Discourse', 215; this Cripes may be identified with Edward Crisp, a pensioner in Stanley's regiment in 1589, who by 1604 had served in the army and navy, Loomie, *The Spanish Elizabethans*, 164, 247.

[108] On John Fletcher, see note, 'Discourse', 215.

[109] On the 70 English sailors captured in 1590, and lodged in Seville, who converted to Catholicism due to the ministry of Robert Persons SJ, see Albert Loomie, 'Religion and Elizabethan commerce with Spain', repr. in A. Loomie, *Spain and the Early Stuarts, 1585–1655* (Aldershot, 1996), 36.

[110] For a brief overview of the presence of Irish merchants in the Iberian peninsula at the end of the 16th century, see O'Connor, *Irish Voices from the Spanish Inquisition*, 34–38; for a statistical analysis of Irish trade with the Iberian peninsula during the Anglo-Spanish war (1585–1604), see Schüller, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Spanien und Irland*, 75–92.

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thereby ending Lutheranism as a phenomenon within indigenous society. As a result of an informal arrangement made in 1576 (the Alva-Cobham accord), English merchants in Spain were not to be prosecuted by the Inquisition merely for being Protestant.[111] However, official anxiety regarding Protestantism remained, and English-speakers arriving in the Seville area were viewed as a potential threat to religious purity.

The Anglo-Spanish war of 1585–1604 formed the political backdrop to Piers's sojourn in Spain; the consequent heightened suspicion of English-speaking aliens, and the disruption experienced by merchants from the Tudor realms impinged on Piers in various ways. The plight of some in the city's Irish community touched him; as a result he was exposed at first hand to the wartime stresses and deprivations experienced by Elizabethan merchant exiles who were generally perceived as enemy aliens and as heretics ('Lutherans'). Arising from intensive trading contacts involving English and Irish merchants and the Andalucian ports, an English merchant community had been established in the Seville area, from the beginning of the sixteenth century. The outbreak of war in 1585 had an immediate impact on the English merchants: an official trade embargo against Englishmen was imposed by the Spanish crown in May of that year. Tensions were increased by Essex's raid on Cadiz in June 1596, just over a year prior to Piers's arrival. However, as Pauline Croft has indicated, English traders continued to operate covertly. One strategy was to use the services of foreign factors or commercial agents resident in Andalucia; these aliens actively protected Englishmen at times of coercion. One of these was a Frenchman, William Anors, based in Seville; in 1585 he sheltered an Englishman in his house for four months. In September 1598, on leaving St Gregory's, and prior to his departure for Ireland at the end of November, Henry Piers stayed in the home of a Frenchman in the city; in this it would appear he was following a practice well-established among English merchants.[112]

Although the embargo in Spain was limited to English traders, their Irish counterparts too became the object of suspicion and, on occasion, of punitive measures. Faced with the prospect of exclusion from the lucrative Andalusian trade, a further strategy of English merchants was to pass themselves off as Irish or Scottish. An Irish guise was

[111] On the Inquisition's treatment of English merchants and sailors in the Andalucian ports during the Anglo-Spanish War, see Albert Loomie, 'Religion and Elizabethan commerce with Spain'; on the religious context in 16th-century Seville, see Murphy, *St Gregory's College, Seville*, 1–11.

[112] Pauline Croft, 'Trading with the enemy 1585–1604', *Historical Journal*, 32 (1989), 286.

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particularly convenient, given that in Spain the Catholicism of the Irish, and their antipathy to the English, were well known. Arising from anti-English antagonism by officials, and their frequent inability to distinguish between English and Irish, difficulties were also experienced by some Irish traders, with bases in Irish towns and long-established trading links with southern Spanish ports. Ships and merchandize were confiscated by royal officials, and occasionally the merchants themselves were incarcerated. The prominent Galway merchant Valentine Blake was arrested in Seville in 1598 on the presumption that he was an English trader, and was imprisoned; Blake persistently denied he was English, but the authorities refused to believe him, since his vessel's artillery was English, and a crew member was married to a Londoner. Piers used visit Blake in prison; by April 1599 Blake had been released, and thereafter he returned to Galway.[113] A further effect of war was that Irish merchants were also under suspicion of being spies for the English enemy.[114]

Piers's association with Irish traders while in Spain derived partly from his family's networks in late Elizabethan Ireland. He was familiar with mercantile circles in the seaports of Dublin and Drogheda, not least through the family alliance with Alderman James Jans of Dublin, who himself had traded in La Coruña and Seville in 1591.[115] While in Seville, it was from a Drogheda merchant (Sebastian Fleming) operating in Jerez that he received a loan to pay his college accommodation, and it was with him he arranged his return passage to Ireland; these contacts exemplify the web of relationships linking the outer reaches of the Pale, where the Piers family home was located, with the Drogheda merchant community.

A further point of affinity was that Piers shared the political loyalism characteristic of the leading ports in Ireland. Irish traders in Spain faced inconveniences from being identified as English on occasion, but also from the extension to Spain of ethnic and political enmities arising from war in Ireland. Irish refugees from the Desmond wars of the 1570s and 1580s, already established in Spain, formed a lobby in support of the Irish confederates during

[113] Croft, 'Trading with the enemy', 287; Valentine Blake (1560–*c.*1634), a merchant trading with Spain and Portugal, was reputed to be the richest man in Galway in 1592, *DIB*; after his imprisonment Blake left Spain on 21 Apr. 1599, and reached Galway on 10 May of the same year, Blake to Sir Conyers Clifford, 12 May 1599, TNA, SP 63/205/58; in 1611 he was elected mayor of Galway, but was deposed that year for refusing to take the oath of supremacy, M.D. O'Sullivan, *Old Galway* (Cambridge, 1942, repr. Galway, 1983), 18.

[114] Karin Schüller, 'Special conditions of the Irish-Iberian trade during the Spanish-English war (1585–1604)', in Enrique García Hernán et al. (eds), *Irlanda y la Monarquía Hispánica: Kinsale 1601–2001* (Madrid, 2002), 464–468.

[115] Schüller, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Spanien und Irland*, 231.

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the subsequent Nine Years War (1594–1603) against the English crown. In the 1590s these exiles were wont to condemn Irish merchants as representatives of the loyalist anglophile towns in Ireland which refused to support the revolt. Exiles lobbying on behalf of Tyrone and his allies were denouncing these merchants to the Spanish authorities; Tyrone's supporters accused the urban oligarchies of aiding the English forces in the military struggle. As a result in Spain the traders suffered confiscation of their goods and other inconveniences.[116]

Piers was predisposed to help the merchants, and to do so was willing to draw on his English Jesuit contacts. After the death of Sir Francis Englefield in autumn 1596, the role of intermediary with the Spanish crown for English exiles seeking a royal pension fell to Father Joseph Creswell SJ, together with Thomas Fitzherbert.[117] Returning from Valladolid to Madrid in late January 1598, Piers was in contact with Creswell, an associate of Robert Persons, and already resident for several years at court and lobbying for royal support for the nascent English colleges. Given Creswell's growing prominence in court circles, and his exceptional energy as administrator, this role was understood more broadly to include the welfare of English exiles in Spain.

Thus it was natural that Piers should seek Creswell's intervention with the royal authorities on behalf of several Irish merchants whose ships and goods had been confiscated for the king's use. Creswell's representations were successful, for a ship of Nicholas Weston, the Dublin entrepreneur and alderman, was released, and a similar, though unspecified favour was granted to a member of the prominent Comerford merchant family of Waterford. In Seville, as earlier in Madrid, Piers continued to prevail on resident English Jesuits to intercede with the civil authorities for individual merchants, presumably to verify that they were Irish, and not English. Among many instances, Piers recounted the case of Richard Skerrett of Galway; Father Richard Walpole SJ, of the English College, made representations to the city governor, and as a result Skerrett's goods were returned to him.[118]

[116] 'Discourse', 202; on the various waves of Irish migration to the Iberian peninsula to the mid 17th century, see Karin Schüller, 'Irish migrant networks and rivalries in Spain, 1575–1659', in T. O'Connor and M.A. Lyons (eds), *Irish Migrants in Europe after Kinsale, 1602–1820* (Dublin, 2003), 88–103.

[117] Loomie, *The Spanish Elizabethans*, 28; on the career of Joseph Creswell SJ (1556–1623) in Spain from 1592 to 1614, ibid. 182–229.

[118] 'Discourse', 205.

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On several occasions Piers experienced this official suspicion at first hand. Towards the end of his stay in Spain, in September–November 1598, Piers himself had several potentially burdensome encounters with the law. Significantly these occurred after he had left St Gregory's; by then he no longer had the status of a collegian, identifiable by his attire, and so was at risk of being taken for an enemy alien. This hazard was increased by his residing with a Frenchman, probably known as one who sheltered English merchants. Piers was arrested in his dwelling place, accused of seeking to pervert an English youth (a page in the service of the city regent, or governor) from Catholicism to Protestantism. Suspected of being a Lutheran, or member of some heretical sect, Piers was brought before the regent; in response to these charges, Piers presented 'my passports, which I brought from Rome', testifying to his Catholic credentials.[119] The regent's attitude was transformed, and he asked for Piers's forgiveness.

A more threatening incident occurred in September 1598, when Piers inadvertently became embroiled in the fallout from the escape of Captain Richard Hawkins,[120] an English seaman then incarcerated in Seville. Hawkins absconded but was shortly afterwards recaptured. In the search for the prisoner, Piers was arrested under suspicion of being an accomplice, based on his regular visits to the prison, and on being found carrying food and wine on the day of the escape. The Irishman was interrogated, and a session on the rack was scheduled for the following morning; only the capture of Hawkins, and the testimony of Father Walpole saved Piers from this fate.

Even when setting sail on his return voyage to Ireland, Piers was still subject to official harassment. From Cadiz he departed for Ireland on 28 November 1598 with Sebastian Fleming, a merchant of Drogheda; reflecting the place of St Malo in the Irish trade with southern Spain, Fleming had freighted a vessel (the 'Little Delphin') from the French port and had laden it with wines. Just as the ship was leaving Cadiz, an official boarded the vessel, and was about to arrest Piers, accusing him of being an Englishman, and a spy, notwithstanding the testimony to his Irish identity of those present; the encounter suggests that Piers may have been under surveillance as an enemy agent for some time before his departure. In conventional fashion Piers dealt with the situation by paying a bribe.[121]

[119] 'Discourse', 213.

[120] Richard Hawkins (*c.*1560–1622), *ODNB*; while in prison in Seville, Hawkins converted to the Catholic Church, thanks to Fr Walpole, who also gave him 200 crowns, 'Discourse', 210.

[121] 'Discourse', 215; in the late 16th century, Seville Inquisition officials regularly boarded ships to search for heretical books, O'Connor, *Irish Voices from the Spanish Inquisition*, 29–31.

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The ship experienced a severe storm, and was chased by Dunkirk pirates, circumstances which led the author to reflect, once again, on divine providence. The sailors also had difficulty in recognizing the southern Irish coastline; after more than four weeks at sea, they landed at Howth, a village outside the city of Dublin, on 28 December 1598.

Contents of the 'Discourse'

A chronological account of the author's travels provides the framework of the 'Discourse': from Dublin to Rome; his sojourn in Rome; from Rome via Genoa to Spain, where he visited the English College in Valladolid, prior to travelling to Seville and residing at the English College; his voyage from Cadiz to Ireland, landing at Howth, Co. Dublin.

Within this structure, the first section covers the journey from Dublin to Rome, in which Philip Draycott, the young candidate for the English College in Rome, accompanied him. The middle section is dedicated to his stay in Rome. He devotes just over half of the entire text (pp. 38–155) to a description of Rome under various headings: its churches (he has entries for seventy-three); religious processions; some of the national colleges established from the mid sixteenth century for training clergy, together with an outline of the daily routine and the rules which prevailed; the city's seven hills, thermal springs, gates, highways, bridges, aqueducts, amphitheatres, market places, triumphal arches, palaces, courts, and magistrates. Here, as elsewhere in the 'Discourse', his apologetical intent is evident. In the account of each church, he notes the festive days on which indulgences may be gained by the faithful who visit. In the antiquity of Christian Rome, he sees an argument in favour of the contemporary sixteenth-century Roman Church as the uniquely authentic expression of western Christianity.

When listing the city's hills, he includes an excursus on the battle of Lepanto (October, 1571); here he draws on the just-published book by Richard Knolles, and makes a plea for Christian unity against the Ottoman empire, the latest expression of the Islamic threat to the Christian world. He concludes the Roman section with a laudatory and uncritical account of the pontificate of Clement VIII (1592–1605); prior to his departure from Rome in October 1597, Piers had an audience with the pontiff, who gave him the 'viaticum', the travel money normally granted by the Holy See to seminarians from Protestant countries who were returning to minister in their homelands at the end of their studies.

The final section of the 'Discourse' treats of Piers's journey from Rome via Genoa to Spain. In terms of content, next to Rome,

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Piers devotes most attention to the Marian sanctuary of Loreto, near Ancona, on the Adriatic coast, north-east of Rome. He devotes over ten per cent of his text (a total of twenty-seven pages) to Loreto, reflecting the enormous popularity of the devotion to the Holy House of Nazareth within contemporary piety, and its attraction as a pilgrim destination. Here Piers includes another excursus, giving a summary history of the sanctuary by offering an abridgment of the work by the Italian Jesuit Orazio Torsellino first published in 1598. To the account culled from Torsellino, Piers adds much detail from his own observation. Together with his travelling companions from the English College in Rome, he spent several days (20–23 October 1597) at this shrine.[122]

Leaving Loreto, they proceeded to Milan; there Piers parted with the English travellers, and he continued to Genoa, where he took ship for Alicante in Spain. His destination was the English College at Valladolid (St Alban's College), where he stayed for two weeks as a guest of the English Jesuits. On the return journey to Madrid, he visited El Escorial, the palace recently built by Philip II, and he gives a description in the 'Discourse'. He remained in Madrid from late January to April 1598. Thereafter he travelled to Seville, where he lived as a student in the English College there (St Gregory's College), from mid April to early September 1598. He devotes ten pages (pp. 205–215) to his time in Seville, in which encounters with the Irish community and the Spanish authorities feature prominently. The 'Discourse' concludes with his account of the sea voyage from Cadiz to Ireland. As an appendix he attaches a table giving the distances in miles between the various towns and cities through which he travelled.

Outline of the Contents of the 'Discourse'

Here follows an outline of the contents of the 'Discourse', giving the author's marginal headings; editorial headings are inserted within square brackets; page references are those given in the manuscript:

'The Dedicatorie Epistle' [to Richard Haddock], p. 1

'The preamble to the followinge Discourse', pp. 2–3

[122] Travelling from Donegal, Hugh O'Neill, earl of Tyrone, together with other exiled Ulster lords, arrived in Rome in Apr. 1608, and visited Loreto; for an outline of Tadhg Ó Cianáin's account (in Irish) of their journey, see N. Ó Muraíle, 'An insider's view: Tadhg Ó Cianáin as eyewitness to the exile of Ulster's lords, 1607–8', R. Gillespie and R. Ó hUiginn (eds), *Irish Europe, 1600–1650: Writing and Learning* (Dublin, 2013), 44–62.

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[Account of journey from Dublin to Rome, 9 June 1595–25 September 1595], pp. 4–30:

Dublin–Emden, pp. 1–8
Emden–Trent, pp. 8–20
Trent–Rome, pp. 20–30

[Arrival in English College in Rome], pp. 30–38

'A Breefe description of the best churches in Rome' [73 churches], pp. 38–76

'A Description of certaine processions wch I sawe when I was in Rome', pp. 76–100

'A description of the chifest Colleadges in Rome', pp. 100–120

'Spiritual exercise', pp. 102–104
'The Rulles of the Colleadges', pp. 111–118

'A description of the seaven hills whereupon Rome is builte', pp. 120–135

'The battell of Lepanto', pp. 121–133

'The description of other antiquities in Rome and first of the thearms and bathinge houses', pp. 135–136

'The principall gates of Rome', pp. 136–138
'The highe ways of Rome', pp. 138–139
'The Bridges of Rome', pp. 139–141
'The Aquaeductes of Rome', pp. 141–142
'The Amphitheators and other theators of Rome', pp. 142–143
'The markett places of Rome', pp. 143–144
'The triumphant Arkes of Rome', pp. 144–145
'The pallaces of Rome', pp. 145–148
'The Courtes and Senackles of Rome', pp. 148–149
'The maiestratts of Rome', pp. 149–151
'The Antiquitie of Rome', pp. 151–155

'The virtuose life and worthie acctions of Pope Clement the eyght', pp. 155–160

'My Jornie from Rome hom[e]wads', pp. 163–220 [He left Rome, 15 October 1597.]

'An abridgement of the holy house of Laurettas historie', pp. 164–178
[His observations on his visit to Loreto], pp. 178–190
[Ancona–Milan–Genoa], pp. 190–195
[Genoa to Alicante, Spain], pp. 195–196

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[Alicante to Valladolid], pp. 196–199
[Valladolid–El Escorial–Madrid], pp. 199–205
[Madrid to Seville, and sojourn in Seville], pp. 205–215
[Cadiz to Howth, Co. Dublin, 28 Nov. to 28 Dec. 1598], pp. 215–220

[Table of miles between cities and towns mentioned in the 'Discourse'], pp. 222–224.

Sources used in the 'Discourse'

It is clear from internal evidence that Piers had several printed books (or extracts made from these) at his disposal while compiling his 'Discourse'. He made frequent quotations from the Vulgate Latin version of the Bible, approved for Catholic use, a revised version of which was published in 1592. He quotes mainly from the psalms, with a few stray references to other parts of the Old Testament (Genesis, the prophet Jeremiah), and the gospels. In each instance the Latin quotation is followed by an English translation. Given that in the period 1595–1598 Piers lived for two years in the English College in Rome and for five months in the English College in Seville, it was likely that he attended the regular daily worship that formed part of seminary life. In this setting he would have become familiar with the recitation of the psalms in Latin. While a student, he may have copied out those passages which he deemed relevant to his spiritual journey, and in this way was able to use these verses in composing the 'Discourse'. At that time, there was no English translation of the entire bible authorized for use by Catholics.[123] The accuracy of the Latin quotations, together with the biblical references, indicate that Piers had access to the text of the Vulgate Bible, either as a student, or later, on his return to Ireland, when he was writing the 'Discourse'. He may have possessed a breviary, or a Latin psalter, in book form. Ownership of a printed Latin breviary (a prayer book containing the psalms and other prayers) was normal for seminarians in the continental colleges at that time.[124]

[123] An English Catholic translation of the New Testament was published in Reims in 1582, in 1 vol. with extensive commentary and notes; the Old Testament in English was published in 2 vols in Douai, 1609–1610; the translations were from the Latin Vulgate, F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone (eds), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford, 1997), 504.

[124] For example, of two students accepted into the Irish College, Salamanca in 1606, one brought four books (unspecified) while the other brought a breviary, Karin Schüller, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Spanien und Irland*, 154.

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He mentions three printed works by name. At the conclusion to his description of the various categories of buildings in Rome, he refers the reader to the book by 'Hierom Francis', entitled *The antiquities and marvellous things of Rome.*[125] This is Piers's English version of author and title referring to the volume in Italian by Girolamo Francini, *Le Cose Maravigliose dell'Alma Città di Roma* (Venice, 1588). Ten editions in Italian appeared from 1588 to 1595, making it among the most popular guides to Rome in the 1580s and 1590s.[126]

It was for the descriptive section on the churches and antiquities of Rome ('Discourse', pp. 38–76, 120–155) that Piers drew most extensively and consistently on published material. About one-third of the text of the 'Discourse' (73 pages) was based chiefly on Francini, *Le Cose Maravigliose,* together with the description of the battle of Lepanto (1571) from the book by Richard Knolles (to be discussed). Piers drew on Francini's guidebook in several ways. This publication (Francini, pp. 106–127) incorporated a work by the renowned architect M. Andrea Palladio (1508–1580) on Roman antiquities entitled *L'Antichità di Roma.*[127] From the range of themes offered by Palladio, Piers selected several for inclusion in his 'Discourse': the seven hills, 'thearmes and bathinge houses', the principal gates, highways, bridges, aqueducts, amphitheatres and theatres, marketplaces, triumphal arches, palaces, courts and magistrates, and some remarks on the antiquity and population size of the city. Piers followed Palladio closely in structure and content, giving summary lists, and shortening Palladio's entries. Occasionally Piers updates Palladio by inserting contemporary details: regarding the hills, Piers adds a description of statues on the Capitoline; on aqueducts, he appends a note on the reconstruction by Sixtus V; for the marketplaces, he includes the Piazza Navona, the custom of placing scurrilous texts at the Pasqui monument, and the burnings of heretics at Campo de'Fiori; to the section on palaces, Piers adjoins Castel Sant'Angelo, and the residences of various recent cardinals.

A second major use of Francini was in regard to the churches in Rome. Piers listed seventy-three[128] in which he gives information on saints, relics, Lenten station days, and other festive days on which

[125] 'Discourse', 162.

[126] Sergio Rossetti, *Rome: A Bibliography from the Invention of Printing through 1899*, I: *The Guide Books* (Florence, 2000), 49–51; I was able to consult the 1588 copy of Francini conserved in Special Collections, Christ Church Library, Oxford; for an early 17th-century Irish account of Rome in the context of contemporary publications, see M. Mac Craith, 'An Irishman's diary: Aspects of Tadhg Ó Cianáin's Rome', in Gillespie and Ó hUiginn, *Irish Europe, 1600–1650*, 63–84.

[127] Originally published in Venice in 1554.

[128] 'Discourse', 38–73.

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indulgences may be gained by visiting the church in question; further, on revising the later entries[129] he subsequently inserted details regarding indulgences, omitted in the first draft. The focus on saints, their relics, and indulgences highlights the convert's attention to features of Catholic piety which were vehemently contested by the reformers. This editorial emphasis conforms to the author's overarching polemical concern to present the distinctiveness of contemporary Catholicism, in opposition to the objections of its Protestant adversaries. For these notes Piers closely followed the section on Roman churches given in Francini.[130] From the 141 churches presented by Francini, Piers selected 66; in drafting his own entries Piers normally summarized those of Francini.

In several cases Piers supplements Francini's account, drawing on his own observations or what he had heard while in Rome regarding the church in question. For St Peter's Basilica, the visitor described a papal mass, and added remarks on the papal residence and garden, and the Vatican Library. Touching the complex at Santo Spirito, Piers noted the attached hospital or orphanage, and a procession of children there. Regarding the basilica of St John Lateran, Piers recounted that in it one of the church councils was held, which issued decrees on heresy; the author proceeded to decry contemporary church disunity, and comment approvingly on procedures against heretics. When listing the church of S. Maria Maddalena ('Delle convertite'), he included remarks on contemporary measures against courtesans in the city. In describing the Gesù church, drawing on his contact with English Jesuits in Rome he offered a sketch of the global reach of the Society of Jesus in the 1590s, and some of its governing procedures. For his entry on S. Maria sopra Minerva, the Dominican headquarters, Piers introduced an excursus on the Roman Inquisition, relating some recent celebrated cases against heretics.

Piers included a small number of churches (up to six) which do not appear in the 1588 edition of Francini. The Irish dimension featured in several: regarding S. Lucia he noted the adjacent commodious residence for Irish students, under the patronage of Girolamo Mattei, cardinal protector of the Irish; he also included S. Bonaventura, the Capuchin church, where he went to meet his fellow-countryman, Francis Nugent, recently arrived in Rome. For S. Maria della Pace, to Francini's account Piers added that St Patrick, the Irish apostle, stayed there while in Rome, presumably an assertion current among the Irish community in the city.

[129] 'Discourse', 67–73.
[130] *Le Cose Maravigliose*, 5–71.

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The publication dates of Francini's Roman volume suggest that the visitor acquired a copy while in Rome; he took detailed notes, though with occasional errors;[131] he may have done so while in Rome, or he may have brought the book back with him to Ireland; at any rate Francini's guidebook became his major resource in compiling the Roman section of the 'Discourse'. To the account of churches and antiquities, Piers appends the story of the conversion of Emperor Constantine.

Complementing this treatment of Rome drawn from Francini, Piers adjoins several themes derived from his own sojourn in the mid 1590s: an extensive description of processions he witnessed, an account of the rule of Pope Clement VIII, and remarks on the regulation of the Jewish community. Given that most national seminaries in Rome at this time were entrusted to the Jesuits, his survey of these colleges[132] may have been based in part on conversations with English Jesuits resident in the city.

The naval battle of Lepanto (7 October 1571), in which the Catholic confederates (Venice, Spain, and the pope) defeated the forces of the Ottoman emperor, Sulemein II, was of particular fascination for Piers. Living in Rome in the mid 1590s, Piers absorbed the contemporary Christian European preoccupation with the territorial expansion of the Ottoman Turks. The victory at Lepanto was still fresh in popular memory, and the prominence of the princely Colonna family in Rome – Marcantonio Colonna was the papal admiral at the battle – added to the continued interest in the event. The author interrupts his description of the hills of Rome to make an excursus on the encounter, decisive in halting the Ottoman advance in the Mediterranean. At some time in 1604 or early in 1605, he consulted the section on Lepanto contained in a massive volume on the centuries-long struggle with the Turks, published in London towards the end of 1603. Entitled *The generall historie of the Turkes, from the first beginning of that nation to the rising of the Othoman familie: with all the notable expeditions of the Christian princes against them … digested into one continuat historie until this present yeare 1603*, it was by the Englishman Richard Knolles.[133] The account of Lepanto is to be

[131] Regarding the basilica of St John Lateran ('San Giovanni Laterano'), in one sentence Francini refers to 'heretics', and in the next he notes that Pope Nicholas IV refurbished the building (*Le Cose Maravigliose*, 5). Piers conflates these details, and refers to 'the nicholayetane hereticke', 'Discourse', 38.

[132] 'Discourse', 100–120.

[133] The author's introduction was dated 30 Sept. 1603; the book comprises 1152 pages, plus appendices; there were six editions in the course of the 17th century; Richard Knolles (late 1540s–1610), *ODNB*.

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found in the section entitled 'The life of Selymus, the second of that name, fift emperor of the Turkes' (reigned 1566–1574).[134]

In his presentation of the battle, Piers summarizes this published history, but focusing on action, and omitting speeches, and discussions on strategy, given by Knolles. While broadly an accurate summary, occasionally Piers misspells names, and in some details, through errors in transcription, inadvertently distorts Knolles's text.[135] Just after this excursus, Piers links the description of the battle to his central theme of the unity incorporated in the Roman church, with a reflection on the need for a united political stance against the Ottoman threat, and decrying once again the religious divisions arising from the Reformation. In this digression, he refers to two fifteenth-century Christian military figures who fought against the Turks, indicating that in addition to the section on Lepanto, he had perused other parts of Knolles's compendious volume.[136] Henry Piers emerges as one of the earliest readers of this influential work.

For his extensive treatment of the pilgrimage sanctuary of Loreto, near Ancona in Italy ('Discourse', pp. 164–190), the traveller offered a brief synopsis of the history by the Roman Jesuit Orazio Torsellino,[137] *Lauretanae Historiae Libri Quinque*, a Latin work first published in Rome giving the year 1597, but with an approbation from Clement VIII dated January 1598. Thus the volume appeared after Piers's departure from the papal city. In drawing on Torsellino, he focused on giving an outline of the story of the Holy House of Nazareth in the medieval period, and on the privileges and favours bestowed by various popes, omitting Torsellino's accounts of miracles and donations by individual nobles.

The publication dates for the works by Knolles and Torsellino indicate that Piers consulted these in Ireland while composing his 'Discourse', in the period from late 1603 to summer 1605, during the years of the initial recovery after the destruction wrought by the Nine Years War (1594–1603). By early 1603 the military threat was over, those loyalists expelled from their properties during the war had returned, and the process of reconstruction was underway, suggesting that by then (if not earlier) Piers had come back to his father's house, the former abbey of Tristernagh, Co. Westmeath.

[134] This section comprises pp. 827–916 of the book; Lepanto is treated on pp. 870–884.

[135] Notable deviations from Knolles's publication will be indicated in the footnotes of the 'Discourse' text.

[136] Piers refers ('Discourse', 131) to Scanderbeg (1405–1468), and 'Captain Huniades', otherwise Janos Hunyadi (*c.*1387–1456): both names receive extensive entries in the index of the Knolles volume.

[137] Orazio Torsellino (Torsellini) (1544–1599), *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jésus*.

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These bibliographical details throw some light on the circulation of English and continental books among the landed gentry in Ireland in the early years of the seventeenth century.

The detailed itinerary given for various stages of his journeys, indicating places and dates, suggests that in composing the 'Discourse' Piers could draw on notes – now lost – made while travelling.

The 'Discourse' was completed in 1605, as indicated on the title page. A date in the summer of that year may be posited, for in the text the election of Pope Paul V (which occurred on 16 May 1605) was noted; Piers dedicated his work to Richard Haddock, who died in Rome on 13 July 1605,[138] and typically it took several weeks for any news from Rome to arrive in Ireland; hence the text was probably concluded some time between June and August 1605. The author's aim in writing, as he indicated in the preamble, was for his own enjoyment, and for the benefit of others, 'travellers or others, which shall peruse the same'.[139]

Description of the Manuscript

Only one manuscript of the text is extant (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson D. 83). The parchment cover is possibly original. It dates to at least 1648, and is probably earlier. On the spine 'Vol 24 Hi[st]' has been written, corresponding with the entry in the catalogue of books belonging to the Irish antiquarian Sir James Ware in 1648;[140] Ware ordered his books under five headings, one of which was history. The pages measure 29.5 cm by 18.5 cm (11.6 inches by 7.3 inches). The watermark – in the centre of the page, clearly visible on the blank pages at the end of the manuscript – is uniform throughout. There is continuous pagination on the top right-hand corner, from 1–221, probably contemporary with the manuscript. Page 18 is blank. There is no p. 220, merely a blank page. For the table of distances between towns (at the end of the manuscript) there is a foliation numbering 222, 223, and 224, and there follow five blank folios. There is a line drawn under the final line of text on pp. 133, 137, 141, 151, 159, 163, 169, 175, 210.

An insert, measuring 17 cm by 14 cm (6.7 inches by 5.5 inches), has been placed between pp. 100 and 101. This paper has been pasted into the spine at the upper part of p. 101. It was attached by a pin, which remains on the insert, and was originally pinned to the

[138] Anstruther, *The Seminary Priests*, I, 159–160.
[139] 'Discourse', 3.
[140] Sir James Ware (1594–1666), antiquarian and collector of MSS, *DIB*.

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lower left-hand margin of p. 101, where the marks or holes left by the pin are visible. Thus this paper was probably pasted onto p. 101 at the final stage of preparing the codex, prior to binding. It contains 14½ lines of text. In content it is an addition by the author, as he explains, in which he underlines the antiquity of practices of piety and mortification, against the 'Lutherans Calvenistes and other suche sectories [who] did by there vaine and pernitious inventions hinder the laudable continuance of the same'. It exemplifies Piers's concern to defend Catholic practices against the challenges of the Protestants, a leitmotiv in his memoir. The insert indicates that the author re-read the manuscript and made changes, corrections, and insertions. A Protestant reader wrote an acerbic comment on p. 16 (where Piers indicated his intention to become a Catholic) which was subsequently struck through.

Several hands may be identified in the body of the text, signifying that a number of scribes were involved; these were presumably working from notes or drafts of individual sections provided by the author. From the frontispiece to the heading on p. 4, inclusive, was written in an italic hand. The main body of the text (pp. 4–221) is in a secretary hand. In the appendix giving the table of distances between towns (pp. 222–224) an italic hand re-appears, similar to that of the initial few pages.

Of all the sections, that on the Roman churches (pp. 38–74) shows evidence of the most intensive revision, arising from the pilgrim's especial interest in churches, saints, and relics. Often the emendations are minimal; occasionally, however, the author decided to add more information to the entries, generally on the indulgences associated with visiting particular churches. Several insertions may be noted on p. 54: there is an addition to the entry on S. Pancrazio's church, giving details on the saint, and the stations (or special devotions); to the standard entry for the church of S. Onofrio, he added a note on the recent papal prohibition against removing relics of the martyrs; for S. Spirito, he gave more details on relics and reliquaries (most likely recalled from his visit there) together with indulgences. For entries in the latter part of the section on the churches (pp. 67–74), details on feast days and the associated indulgences were systematically inserted, possibly by Piers himself.[141] In this way the author may have been correcting the draft prepared for him by a copyist.

Another phase of revision may be posited for the marginal material, comprising headings and scriptural references. These are in

[141] Confirming this authorial procedure, at the conclusion of the section, with reference to indulgences Piers inserts the observation 'as in particular hath beene mentioned' (p. 74).

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several italic hands, different from the body of the text. One is continuous throughout the manuscript: the sub-headings on pp. 76, 100, 120, 135–163 are also in this hand. In addition, further hands made a smaller number of entries throughout, but especially on pp. 154–174, and on a few pages towards the end (208, 213, 215). For the psalm quotations in Latin on pp. 217–218, an italic hand was used.

Inside the front cover there is written 'Vol. XXIV', referring to the Ware catalogue of 1648; the catalogue reference '(12901)' is to the Bodleian Summary Catalogue, prepared in the nineteenth century. Adhering to the inside of the cover there is also an insert (in the form of a bookplate).[142] Underneath this insert appears 'Rawl. Mss D.83'.

Provenance of the Manuscript

A key moment in the survival of the manuscript was its acquisition by the Irish antiquarian Sir James Ware (1594–1666). Given the close marriage alliances between the Ware and the Piers families, it is not surprising that Sir James acquired the text.[143] The Piers memoir does not appear in the list of Ware's manuscripts dating from about the late 1620s. In 1648, however, Ware entered it in the catalogue of his books which was published in Dublin in that year.[144] Thus it came into Ware's possession after the author's death, probably at some stage from about 1630; in the maelstrom of Irish revolt in the winter of 1641–1642, planter dwellings (including the Piers household in Tristernagh) were attacked and the contents destroyed; books and written materials were a particular target.[145] Thus the Piers memoir probably passed to Sir James Ware some time between *c.*1630 and

[142] 'Sigillum Univ. Oxon. Diplomati Ric: Rawlinson Pro gradu Doctoris Legum Appensum' [Woodcut of seal].

[143] The antiquarian's brother John Ware married Elizabeth Piers, daughter of Henry Piers; his sister Martha Ware married Sir William Piers (d.1638), son and heir of Henry, TCD MS 1216, fo.29r–v; see also National Library Ireland, Genealogical Office, MS 68, fo.56; the antiquarian's younger son Robert married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir William Piers and his wife Martha Ware, 'Memoirs of family of Sir Henry Piers of Tristernagh' [1748], National Library of Ireland, MS 2563.

[144] In this catalogue the Piers memoir is indicated thus: 'XXIV. Itinerarium Henrici Peirs nuper de Tristernagh Armigeri, inceptum anno Dom. 1595. in fol.', given in William O'Sullivan, 'A finding list of Sir James Ware's manuscripts', *Proceedings Royal Irish Academy*, 97, Section C (1997), 90.

[145] For the destruction of the Tristernagh properties, see deposition of Dame Martha Peirce, 22 Dec. 1642, Trinity College Dublin, MS 817, fo.26; on the burning of books and papers in 1641, see B. Mac Cuarta, 'Religious violence against settlers in south Ulster, 1641–2', in D. Edwards, P. Lenihan, and C. Tait (eds), *Age of Atrocity*: *Violence and Political Conflict in Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2007), 154–75.

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1641; the note on the title page, giving the death of Henry Piers in December 1623, is in his hand.

Another manuscript associated with Henry Piers has also survived by the same route. Owing to his interest in the previous history of the dissolved monastery of Augustinian canons at Tristernagh, the properties of which formed the estate acquired in 1562 by his father, in 1618 Henry commissioned a neighbour, Christopher Fitzgerald of Laragh, to transcribe the chartulary of the medieval foundation. This transcript too was acquired by Sir James Ware.[146]

The antiquarian's son Robert sold the Ware manuscripts to Henry Hyde, second earl of Clarendon, when the latter was serving in Dublin as Irish viceroy in 1685–1687. Thereafter the Ware collection was brought by Clarendon to England. At the sale of the Clarendon collection in 1709, James Brydges, subsequently first duke of Chandos, purchased the library, including the Ware materials. The duke died in 1744, and his library was auctioned in 1747. Richard Rawlinson bought the Piers memoir, along with other Ware materials, and in 1755 presented it, as part of his manuscript collection, to the Bodleian Library, Oxford.[147]

The Dublin antiquarian Sir John Gilbert (1829–1898) was responsible for a partial transcription of Henry Piers's memoir which was undertaken in spring 1891; this transcript (preserved in the Gilbert Collection, Dublin City Library) covers merely the first fifty-six pages of the original manuscript (a quarter of the total).[148] Gilbert had intended to edit the entire text, but this project probably fell

[146] Entitled 'A coppie of the register of the lands tythes and other commodities belonging to the priorie of Tristernagh taken out of the original and written in the yeare 1618', this text is located in Oxford, Bodleian, MS Rawl. B 504; it was listed by Ware in his 1648 catalogue, O'Sullivan, 'A Finding List', 88; on the provenance of the medieval register, see M.V. Clarke (ed.), *Register of the Priory of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Tristernagh* (Dublin, 1941), vii–xxiii.

[147] For the provenance of the Ware MSS in the 17th century (including the present text), see O'Sullivan, 'A finding list'; Rawlinson paid 5 shillings for the Piers travel memoir: see Rawlinson's copy (with prices for items purchased) of the auction catalogue, Mar. 1747; for the sale of the Chandos library, see Oxford, Bodleian, Mus Bibl. III 8o, 44; the Piers memoir is listed in Gulielmus Macray, *Catalogi Codicum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae Partis Quintae Fasciculus Tertius … Ricardi Rawlinson* (Oxford, 1893), column 45; Macray identifies Ware's handwriting in the note on the MS's title page.

[148] The transcript, handwritten in ink, consists of 75 loose leaves, and ends abruptly in mid-sentence; on the reverse of p. 72 there is an address and postage stamp, bearing postal frank 'Oxford MY 20 91', with address as follows 'J.T. Gilbert Esq Villa Nova, Blackrock, Dublin'; the transcript has as reference, Dublin City Library, Pearse Street, Gilbert MSS, MS 177 (Box 11); there is no reference to Henry Piers in Douglas Hyde and D.J. O'Donoghue (eds), *Catalogue.*

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victim to his propensity to undertake several academic projects simultaneously.[149]

The only previous edition of the full manuscript was undertaken by Thomas Frank (1925–1990) in the early 1950s, and issued in his unpublished BLitt thesis at St Catherine's College, Oxford.[150] One extensive excerpt from Piers's account has been published. This refers to his time in Seville in 1598 (pp. 205–215 of the 'Discourse') and was reproduced as an appendix in Martin Murphy (ed.), *St Gregory's College, Seville 1592–1767* (Catholic Record Society, 73, 1992), 135–141.

Note on this Edition

In the present edition, the original pagination is given by a number set within round brackets. Marginal material on the manuscript is reproduced here in italic within square brackets, placed in the body of the text where the insertion can best aid comprehension. Erasures, insertions, and emendations have been indicated in footnotes; where a hand different from that of the body of the text can be identified in the insertions, this is noted in the relevant footnote. Regarding place names, and names of rivers, the modern version (where this can be identified) has been given within square brackets. Spelling, capitals, and abbreviations are as in the original. In general, in the discursive sections of the manuscript, breaks or paragraphs are infrequent; to facilitate reading, paragraphing (denoted by indentation of the first line) has been inserted throughout the text.

[149] Gilbert declared this intention in the course of his short entry on Henry Piers, in Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (eds), *The Dictionary of National Biography from the Earliest Times to 1900*, Vol. XV (London, 1885–1900); on Gilbert's habit of engaging with many contemporaneous projects, see Rosa Mulholland Gilbert, *Life of Sir John T. Gilbert* (London, 1905), 36; on Gilbert's contribution to Irish historical studies, see Toby Barnard, 'Sir John Gilbert and Irish historiography', in Mary Clark et al. (eds), *Sir John T. Gilbert 1829–1898: Historian, Archivist and Librarian* (Dublin, 1999), 92–110.

[150] Thomas Frank (ed.), 'An edition of A discourse of HP his travelles (MS Rawlinson D. 83), with an introduction on English travellers in Rome during the age of Elizabeth', unpublished BLitt thesis, University of Oxford, 1954; for an obituary of Thomas Frank (including list of publications), see E.F.K. Koerner, 'Thomas Frank: Obituary', in D. Stein and R. Sornicola (eds), *The Virtues of Language: History in Language, Linguistics and Tests: Papers in Memory of Thomas Frank* (Amsterdam, 1998), 3–10.

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