

Papers of John Hagan, Irish College Rome (1904-1930)



INTRODUCTION

The collection of the papers of Rector Mgr John Hagan at the Pontifical Irish College, Rome, contains for the most part incoming mail deriving from his vice-rectorship (1904-1919) and rectorship (1919-1930) up to his death in March 1930. The subseries further illustrate his keen interest in both contemporary Irish and Italian politics and in academic history – treated often in his commentary as a counterfoil for contemporary Irish society -, as well as his priestly office.

The following is meant to serve as a basis for approaching the papers. Within the parameters of an archival catalogue, this is based mostly on the papers themselves, not on further archival research, and the bibliography is merely meant to indicate the points of reference available to the cataloguer, and to selectively give suggestions for further reading.

Biographical points

Family and early life

John Hagan was born on 31 May 1873, Ballykillageer, Avoca, son of farmer Francis and of Anne Grannell, and the eldest of nine children; he was baptised 1 June 1873 in Arklow, County Wicklow.¹ He attended Ballycooge National School, the Patrician Brothers school in Tullow², Holycross College, Clonliffe in 1895 and the Irish College, Rome 1895-99. Father Francis died in or before 1912 intestate; the ensuing family settlement signed the family farm in Ballykillageer over to Hagan's brother Charles. This was signed by John Hagan himself, Miss Elizabeth Hagan ('Lizzie' in the papers), Mr. Daniel Hagan, Mrs. Anastasia ('Stasia') Keogh, Mrs. Teresa ('Tessie') Clarke and Mr. Charles Hagan. Two next of kin are abroad, that is Mr. Francis ('Frank') (died in N.Z. in 1917 as a 'young settler') and Mr. Thomas Hagan (in South Africa, and died in N.Z.), and the papers bear some witness to both. Another sibling, Michael, died at age 20 of consumption, while a student of Clonliffe in 1907.³

¹ Baptismal certificate issued 30 August 1893 by John Manning CC, Church of Sts. Mary and Peter, Arklow. Witnesses were Charles Hagan and Mary Grannell (this name is spelled 'Grennell' throughout the Hagan papers). PICR Archives, Rector Kelly 'Students' credentials 1895-1900'.

² Cf. HAG1/ 1928/ 381, where his aunt Sr. Paulinus draws a parallel of Hagan working hard in Tullow, with his protégé and nephew Michael Clarke later in Rockwell College, Cashel.

³ Cf. HAG1/ 1907/ 21- obituary in *Wicklow People*. He had been to Rockwell College, Cashel, then at Skerry's Academy, Dublin. He was buried in the family burial place at Ballycoogue.

The papers also have correspondence from cousins Mother Kevin (Carney), foundress of Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Africa (Uganda), Sr.Mary deSales, Dominican sister in Dunedin, New Zealand, Sr.Celsus (Violet), Sisters of Mercy, Inchicore; further his intrepid aunt Mother Paulinus (Dublin, later Mullinavat); and his nephew and protégé Michael Clarke, attending Rockwell College (Cashel) by 1923, and presumably a candidate for the priesthood.

Seminary and early priesthood

The Irish College Register Book of students (1828-1999) records that 'Ioannes Hagan' entered on 24 October 1895. Of his spell as student at the Irish College there remain three exam results (1895-1898), as well as a note in the hand of his rector, Michael Kelly (2 June 1899): the young Hagan proved excellent in his devotions, and also in studies of ecclesiastical history and in the catechism; he showed laudable discipline, was maybe a little less accomplished in Italian (merely 'bene' instead of 'optime'), and he possibly suffered from a speech impediment that rendered preaching a little difficult. Kelly calls him 'religious, gentle but firm, sensible, intelligent, studious'.⁴ As to former fellow students, it seems Hagan only kept close contact to James Kelly (Ferns, but mostly Dunedin, New Zealand), from whom there are around 50 letters – he is a rather fierce commentator on church personalities in New Zealand and on Irish politics; and with John McShane (St.Columba's Derry) with 23 letters.

John Hagan was ordained to the priesthood on 1 April 1899 at St.John Lateran. He left the College 1 June 1899, and was first deployed as curate in St.Patrick's College, Maynooth, shortly afterwards in Ballytore, County Wicklow, and then in North Anne Street, Dublin. He must have also spent periods in Crookstown, County Kildare, as well as in in Holy Family Church, Aughrim Street, Dublin.⁵

Roman career

In May 1904 Hagan was sent to Rome by Archbishop Walsh of Dublin (and the other three archbishops) to be vice-rector to Rector William Murphy (Dublin). The rector died in 1905, to be succeeded by Michael O'Riordan (Limerick), with whom Hagan shared not only an efficient and close working relationship but also a friendship based on a shared acute interest in politics and on their ensuing collaboration in presenting Ireland to the Vatican and to Italy. In 1908 Hagan was given his theological doctorate degree, seemingly on the basis of his *Compendium of catechetical instruction* (see below). On O'Riordan's death in October 1919, Hagan was made rector on 28 December of that year. On 6 December 1921 he was made a domestic prelate ('Monsignor'), and in late 1929 the National University of Ireland awarded him an honorary law degree. John Hagan suffered from serious recurring bouts of stomach colics; there is talk of operations in 1913 and 1923, and he was particularly ill in 1916⁶, 1921 and 1923. He died on 8 March 1930 of 'double pneumonia', after an intense, three-month illness. His heir was his close friend Fr.E.J.('Ned') Morrissey, who died in May 1931 and left Hagan's remaining properties to Hagan's sister Miss Lizzie Hagan.⁷ He is buried in the Irish College tomb at Campo Verano, S.Lorenzo, Rome.

Publications and collaboration in research

Hagan's most enduring work was his least original, as well as his least political, of a large and –as yet unchartered- number of publications, namely the *Compendium of Catechetical Instruction*

⁴ Same source as baptismal certificate. In one discipline (illegible) he is merely 'passable'.

⁵ Cf. letters by former parishioner M.J.Merlehan, and by former Mass server McEveney in 1928.

⁶ Apart from the correspondence of that year, his 'personal' papers contain a nurse's health chart from 1916.

⁷ The only difficulties arose from the death of Fr.Morrissey before settling Hagan's papers on anybody; see correspondence between the solicitor, O'Hagan, Curran, and Mr.Morrissey (the executor's brother), 1931. The solicitor refers to some classes of papers that are to be split between the postulator of the causes Hagan was involved in, and various private parties. See also note 16 below.

(1906-1910 and 1928)⁸, a catechetical *vademecum* after the style of Fr. Raineri, and in wide use in the English-speaking world until the second Vatican Council. In the field of liturgy-catechetics he further published an English edition of Pius X's *Catechism of Christian Doctrine* (Dublin 1914), and a new edition of the *Breviarum Romanum* with an Irish *proprium* (Dublin 1916). Further, Hagan gave editorial assistance to Fr. Cornelius J. Ryan in his work *Gospels of the Sundays* (1909), for its Italian edition, and dedicated himself to the continuation of that work in the sequel *Epistles of the Sundays*. The latter he took up after Ryan's death, asking members of the House of Missions, Enniscorthy, to follow Ryan's successful template and provide reflective pieces from 1927 onwards (1931).

Two other monographs –in the pamphlet tradition- were *Insula Sanctorum. La storia di un titolo usurpato* (Rome 1910)- taking issue with the misappropriation of the term of praise as a byname for Britain instead of Ireland - and *Home Rule- l'autonomia Irlandese* (Rome 1913)- sketching Ireland's attempts for greater political scope for the benefit of an Italian audience.⁹ The latter work shows the proximity of minds between Hagan and O'Riordan, whose so-called 'Red Book' (*La recente insurrezione in Irlanda*, 1916) was conceived to explain the Irish insurrection in the light of British misrule to Vatican authorities.¹⁰ They generally collaborated in improving knowledge of Irish affairs in Rome, and to counteract a certain pre-dominance of the British point of view.

Other publications mentioned in the papers include the *Martyrs of Rome* [2 vols Catholic Truth Society Dublin, 1907-1910]¹¹, articles in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, one article at least in *La Scuola Cattolica* (Malthusianism in Ireland)¹². He was also a contributor to the *New Zealand Tablet* from 1917.

More consistently, he furnished the Dublin *Catholic Bulletin* with a monthly column "Notes from Rome" under the pseudonym 'Scottus', with reflections on current affairs, local events, and history (1911-1919) – followed by a yet unidentified contributor under the name of 'Stannous'. The *Bulletin* allowed or actively invited expressions of patriotic sentiment and therefore gives essential clues to Hagan, the man, his vice-rectorship at the Irish College and his presence in Rome. Similarly, though along ostensibly strictly historical lines, during his vice-rectorship Hagan gave the *Bulletin* a series on Rinuccini's secretary Massari (1915/1916), besides long-standing monthly instalments on Irish affairs in the period of the counter-reformation, under the title "Wine from the royal pope" – his pseudonym was 'McFaelain'(1925-1930).

Hagan's most fruitful historical achievement was in the nine year-collaboration with the Maynooth Record Society, and the publication of sources of Irish interest from the major archives of Rome in the newly-established *Archivium Hibernicum*.¹³ In the *Archivium*, he was in the good company of historical and literary scholars such as Reginald Walsh OP, Eoin MacNéill, and Paul Walsh. Hagan served as postulator in the cause of Oliver Plunkett (beatified in 1920), and gave assistance to the cause of the Irish Martyrs (beatified 1992) and it seems certain that his application to the causes fed into the *Archivium* publications of sources from the Vatican Secret Archives, the Congregation of the Council, and the archives of Doria Pamphilj. Also, the Irish College archives

⁸ Cf. HAG 4/ 16-19.

⁹ Cf. HAG4/ 2-11 and 12-14.

¹⁰ His friend and writer of his obituary, P.E. Magennis, states that Hagan co-wrote the 'Red Book' with O'Riordan; Magennis "Monsignor John Hagan" in *Catholic Bulletin* vol.xx no.4 (April 1930) 296-304, 301.

¹¹ Cf. HAG1/ 1907/28, HAG1/1909/66 and /67, HAG1/1910/3.

¹² Cf. HAG1/ 1917/30.

¹³ Cf. the series "*Miscellanea Vaticano-Hibernica*" [1420-1631] in *Archivium Hibernicum*, first instalment no.2 (1913), 274-320, beginning with the Vatican Archives and their Borghese collection. The last instalment was published in 1922; in the preface to that last edition Hagan apologises for jettisoning his original plan to publish 'practically all the Roman documents bearing on Irish history' during Gregory XIII's pontificate: he was prevented by 'illness, the shadow of sickness and death in this institution, increased cares and anxieties arising therefrom, not to speak of difficulties and hindrances due to the war ...such as the difficulty of finding capable copyists at a time when the method of the country had had to exchange the pen for the sword...'. *Archivium* 7 (1918-1921) 67-356, 68.

hold 70 volumes of typescripts from various series in the archives of the Propaganda Fide, culled from there as it would seem during Hagan's Roman offices.

It is easy to marry Hagan's fascination with the period of counter-reformation and religious warfare in Ireland with his avid interest in current affairs: commenting on Archbishop Lombard's last chapter of the *Commentarius de Regno Hiberniae* he says 'it was written to drive home to the minds of the Roman authorities that not only had Ireland claims on the Holy See, but that the good of religion in North-Western Europe demanded something more than mere sympathy for the Irish chiefs in their life-and-death struggle to banish the stranger and oppressor from the land'.¹⁴ Hagan's more satirical vein can probably be identified, along similar lines, in a short play written in the year of Archbishop O'Donnell's elevation to the cardinalate, 1925: 'the great Hugh O'Neill' appears to O'Donnell and Irish dignitaries including Cosgrave and Bishop Fogarty, hoping O'Donnell will be one to shake off soon 'the lethargy of many years' and continuing by saying that 'many things have happened because he was silent when an O'Donnell should have spoken out'.¹⁵

Some correspondents of Hagan, such as W.H.Grattan Flood (Enniscorthy), P.Dunne (Castlebridge), Myles Ronan (Dublin), Robert Simington (Dublin), benefitted from his historical and toponymical interests.

Hagan's last academic project, left possibly only in its early stages, concerned his native County Wicklow – the archives hold one box with historical notes on Wicklow, some maps of the county, and a letter of 31 August 1931 by his solicitor refers to the project as an ecclesiastical history of the county. Another manuscript, unspecified, was to be given after his and his executor's death to Robert Simington whose correspondence with Hagan in 1928 does not give any clues as to the nature of the document.¹⁶

Hagan's rectorship from his papers

Administrative role

Much of the correspondence received by Hagan during his rectorships concerned administrative matters. Since Paul Cullen's time (1832-1849), the rectors of the Irish College were the Irish hierarchy's agents in Rome (hence the regular payment of a honorarium to Hagan from each diocese), and the papers witness the constant stream of 'errands' to be run at the Vatican Curia and at the various congregations. This concerns particularly faculties asked by bishops and priests, dispensations asked by bishops and priests for their parishioners, Peter's Pence paid, as well as any matters to be resolved between ordinaries and religious communities in their dioceses (such as the approval of -new constitutions, or any liaison with the Congregation for Religious). The enquiries for marriage dispensations decrease much after the granting of general faculties to the Irish bishops in [1922/ 1923].

The papers are also a source for the establishment and first missionary efforts of the Maynooth Mission to China (Columban Fathers) from July 1919 onwards. One of the more interesting diocesan-religious disputes is that spearheaded by Bishop Codd of Ferns against the Benedictines of Mount St.Benedict, Gorey, their boys' school and their founder, Fr John Sweetman. All parties correspond with Hagan; a petition signed by three widows of 'heroes of 1916', Aine Ceannt, Maude Gonne-McBride, and Nancy O'Rahilly, begs to counteract the bishop's endeavours

¹⁴ 'Some papers relating to the Nine Years' War' *Archivium Hibernicum* no.2 (1913) 274-320, 276.

¹⁵ HAG 1/1925/612. This is a typescript item; only the handwritten amendments are certainly Hagan's. The play is undated but the context places it in mid-December 1925.

¹⁶ Cf. Archives Pontifical Irish College, uncatalogued Hagan papers, 'Hagan's last project' (1 box), containing correspondence [1923]-1928, Down Survey extracts, notes on local families and toponymics, O'Donovan's *Letters* for Wicklow. For solicitor O'Hagan's letter, see Hagan uncatalogued 'personal'; he states that among Hagan's executor Morrissey's papers very little was found concerning the Wicklow history, and that these few papers were given by Lizzie Hagan to 'a clerical student named Clarke' [Hagan's nephew Michael]. A particular manuscript is to be given to R.Simington, to avoid, so a note in Curran's hand, [Fr.Rowan's] involvement (2 July 1931, P.T.Keohane to Mr.Morrisson, Hagan 'private').

to close the school (26 March 1921).¹⁷ The school is closed by 1926 and further campaigns by Sweetman in Rome and the US cannot amend the situation.

As to Hagan's main preoccupation, as the rector of a seminary, the correspondence contains much connected with the admission, pensions, 'clerical career', and the health of students; there is much evidence of students taken over by other (usually British or overseas) dioceses where either bursaries or indeed curacies were not available in Ireland. Bishops write regularly in concern for their students' progress or otherwise (cf. Archbishop Gilmartin, 20 December 1928, asking Hagan to knock the carelessness out of 'Fitzgerald').

Much further correspondence is taken up with prospective or past visitors to the College, including regular pilgrimages such as those organised by the Catholic Truth Society, and most prominently – as well as interesting from a biographical-political point of view – the Irish national pilgrimage to Bobbio in 1923.

Most students' admissions papers were kept separately and can be accessed in other archival collections at the Irish College, and this is also true for accountancy files, however, some items were retained in the rectors' correspondence and have not been filed elsewhere.

Hagan's big building project was an administrative as well as diplomatic feat; diplomacy had also come into play a decade earlier, over the confiscation by Italian troops of the Villa Greci (first item early February 1916 which had a long aftermath, even after the war.

Relations with students

There is a small number of students who kept up a correspondence with Hagan, apart from the merely courteous acknowledgements of 'all you did for us' upon return to the mission in their respective diocese.

With Stanislaus Hughes (Achonry) the young vice-rector must have connected over the course of his short and one could say turbulent priesthood. Ordained in 1910 for Achonry – the Hagan 'private' papers tellingly contain a Mass card of the occasion – he returned to Ireland, and was adopted by Bishop O'Doherty of Zamboanga (Philippines) for his colonial mission. The bishop's failure to give him the vicar generalship (late 1912), and Hughes's temper caused him to leave the mission, and fall into disgrace with his own ordinary, a cousin of the same O'Doherty. With O'Riordan's and Hagan's help he is adopted into Southwark – Bishop Amigo later proved a friend to Hagan not only in politics but also where other 'young priests in difficulties' were concerned – in early March 1913. His correspondence with Hagan breaks off after his last letter (6 February 1916) – he explains his decision for leaving the priesthood, and enters the army via an officer training camp.¹⁸

Not less 'tempestuously', there is much correspondence with another protégé, though not strictly former student, Arthur Murray (1917-1924). Leaving the English College before ordination, and becoming a member, if not active with Sinn Féin in his native Kerry, he spends many years seeking a diocese, and it is only adopted by a Québec ordinary in 1922, to be finally ordained in 1924.

Less dramatically, former student James Sinnott (1912-1929) writes detailed letters on politics and on his work from the House of Missions, Enniscorthy: a year into his new post there he reports to being well accustomed to his work now – 'it doesn't take much out of me to get up and harangue the mob at a short notice' (21 September 1914).

Former student M.L. Browne (1920-1929) also writes to Hagan loyally; he made a career at St. Patrick's College Maynooth from 1922, but stayed in close contact with his native Westport.

¹⁷ Maud Gonne probably visited the College in 1911; there is a letter of introduction to Hagan for her and her son from two clergymen of St. Audeon's, Dublin, who attest that she is a convert and 'I believe, an excellent one', and though born in England, 'she is "more Irish" etc.' (8 April 1911).

¹⁸ The Irish College Register Book of students (1826-2001) adds under his name 'apostate' and 'married in Southwark'.

Being politically close to Hagan, he reports from Maynooth with hints as to which ecclesiastics have their 'hearts in the right place' or not.

Eric Fair or Pádraig Eric MacFhinn was an avid Gaelgeoir student, and was given permission to return to the College for summers 1926-1928, helping with general administration but mostly involved in research for the Irish Martyrs' cause.¹⁹ His reflections on Hagan in the *Catholic Bulletin* obituary issue of April 1930 pays tribute to the rector's promotion of the Irish language at the College, despite his own lack of it.²⁰

Fr.P.J.Roughneen, Achonry, gives reports from his first mission in London and subsequent ones in his native diocese (1916-1926), with commentary on clergy colleagues and current affairs.

Also, former student and Canadian Edward J.Rawlins (1919-1930) writes a series of colourful letters in 1919 from his visits to dioceses and parishes around Ireland, never too careful in expressing his (fervently Sinn Fein) politics, and then intermittently writes from his mission back in St.John's, celebrating in one instance the practical common sense Hagan always strove to teach them, 'which you drove home by the lasting remark- It doesn't matter a dam (sic) to you whether your parish priest chooses to have his punch at 11 pm or 1am'. At the same occasion (5 February 1930) he remembers the feast-day of St.Agatha's as they used to celebrate it in the old College. It is to be hoped that Hagan saw this letter before he died.

Hagan's correspondents and style

The geographical range of correspondence is unsurprisingly wide, stretching across the British Commonwealth. By contrast to his 19th-century predecessors, Hagan was no longer contacted by 'colonial' bishops and clergy (notably northern American, Australian) for curial or congregational business, but contacts with Irish clergy especially in Australia were nonetheless strong, and strengthened by the regular placement of seminarians in the Irish College: of the 349 students entering the College during Hagan's 26 years in office, 71 or a fifth came from the colonies.²¹ Sometimes Irish religious in far-flung missions ask for curial representations or help at Propaganda Fide for their particular missions; most notably his cousin Sr Mary Kevin (Uganda) and Mother Mary Columba (Quetta, India).

There was a certain number of correspondents whose closer connections with the rector allowed them to give explicit expression to their political beliefs and opinions, thereby reflecting Hagan's own views. Apart from the former students of Hagan, a number of these were members of the Irish hierarchy, some were priest friends and some fewer lay friends, with bonds strengthened by repeated visits to Rome paired with Hagan's visits during his annual sojourns in Ireland (usually for a month or more between June and October). His two close colleagues and friends O'Riordan (his rector 1906-1919) and Michael J.Curran (his correspondent from 1911 and vice-rector 1920-1930) stand out in terms of size of correspondence and of their level of frankness: there are around 100 letters from O'Riordan, and circa 470 of Curran, much of them of course concerned with administrative or more 'pedestrian' matters.

Among the members of the hierarchy, Hagan had cordial relations with Bishops O'Donnell of Raphoe and Armagh, Mulhern of Dromore, Gilmartin of Tuam, also Byrne of Dublin²² (also to

¹⁹ Fair's involvement in the Irish Gásra na Féinne at the College is further borne out in the archives, especially the students' *Manuscript Journals*, as is his interest in palaeography (see the College's medieval fragment manuscripts), for his taking medieval fragments from early printed-book bindings to the Vatican for advice.

²⁰ *Catholic Bulletin* 20 No.4 (April 1930) 305-307.

²¹ In Australia, of the 11 dioceses involved, Goulburn and Brisbane stand out (14 and 13 students). In north America only St.John's, Newfoundland, sent students in any way regularly (4); while such U.S. Irish hubs as Boston or New York are not represented at all -other dioceses sending one student each are Ontario, Cheyenne, Los Angeles, San Francisco. In Britain, only Liverpool sends a number of students (3)- others send one student each, Glasgow, Middlesborough, Brentwood, Southwark. The most 'exotic' student was John Little, from Port Elizabeth (South Africa).

²² Byrne is most supportive of Hagan's projects for the new College. That there were otherwise reservations as to his stance and strength of position is clear by E.J.Morrissey's dismissing him as a 'failure' (29 November-1 December 1928), when Byrne was declared too ill to live much longer, and by contrast P.E.Magennis's back-handed compliment

some extent with his predecessor William Walsh), Dignan of Clonfert (from his nomination in 1924), and – to some lesser degree - with O'Doherty of Clonfert, later Galway. There was an obvious cooling of relations with Bishop Fogarty of Killaloe during the Civil War, when Hagan – radicalised by the events of 1916 – tended strongly towards the Sinn Fein side; this only began to heal in the late 1920s. Judging by the many expressions of admiration for Archbishop Mannix of Melbourne in Hagan's papers one feels secure that the two men shared a friendship which would have found expression in their meetings in Rome, for instance in 1920, but Mannix's own letters are usually more businesslike.

Four friends stand out from Hagan's priest correspondents. Edmund 'Ned' J. Morrissey, Dublin (1915-1929) – in a hand difficult to decipher and with an added tendency to use 'code', writing 47 letters – is Hagan's closest friend, and was made executor of his will. Patrick Murphy of the House of Missions, Enniscorthy (1914-1929) likewise does not have qualms giving Hagan his full sense of indignation, or praise, as the occasion demanded- there are 38 letters. The unflagging republican Michael O'Flanagan (1916-1928), on the Sinn Fein campaign trail in Ireland and the U.S. for many years, having come to 'blows' with his Elphin ordinary, covers many topics not only political over 32 letters, including a new patent for bicycle-proof soutanes (24 November 1919) and his formidable involvement in the printing of John O'Donovan's *Ordnance Survey Letters*. Another close friend, in Rome from 1919 onwards as the first Irish Prior General of the Carmelites, was P.E. Magennis o.carm. He seems to have been a regular visitor to the Irish College afternoon gatherings and the only occasions for letter-writing (there are eight items) came when he wrote from his visitations in the U.S. and in Spain. Many other Irish friends in Rome will not be represented because there was no occasion for correspondence. Another commentator worth consulting, though he only wrote sporadically in later years, was S.P. Conry, Achonry (1914-1928).

The lay friends most prominent in Hagan's correspondence are undoubtedly the indefatigable letter-writer Patrick T. Keohane, an employee if not co-editor of the *Catholic Bulletin* at Gill's publishers (c.150 letters both official and private), and the Ó Ceallaighs, Seán T. (1919-1930) and Cáit (1920-1928), with circa 130 letters from Seán T. alone. Keohane was in a central position for passing on the latest news; his office must have been a hub for passing clergy and many prominent members of the hierarchy, as well as republican politicians. When Keohane is seriously ill in 1928, DeValera pays him repeated visits. The latter is represented in eight letters to Hagan only, but it is certain that the men met both in Dublin and Rome on many occasions. Also prominent are Patrick Daniel of the Catholic Young Men's Society (1912-1929), and a family of friends in Belfast and Dublin, the Bradys (1922-1930), whose son and brother Robert (Down and Connor) was a student at the College, and who met Hagan both in Rome and in shared holidays in France. Although not from a close friend, the 25 letters from Donal Hales, a businessman and agent for Sinn Fein living in Genoa (1920-1929), are an interesting source for his unfaltering strong opinions on Irish and Italian affairs.

In times of war and censorship more than one correspondent chose to either send letters by a safe messenger, or to put his words carefully, if not even in code. In 1919, Curran proposes a code which he subsequently does not seem to use (5 February). In 1921 Bishop Mulhern frames his comments on a rumoured papal peace initiative in Latin (9 February). Eamon de Valera, more cautious again, asks Hagan to 'destroy immediately' the copy correspondence and memorandum he sent (22 June 1923). Hagan's close friend Morrissey develops a 'code' allotting everybody politically active, as well as institutions such as Dáil Éireann, a title pertaining to the Little Company of Mary (the 'Blue Nuns'), then also in some state of 'upheaval' (see HAG3/ 80- political papers).

Current affairs and nationalism

It is Hagan's more than commonly deep interest as well as active involvement in the political developments in Ireland that will draw most research interest to his papers. He was 'a strong

for Byrne who is 'bigger than we ever took him to be', although there is a lingering feeling for the 'might-have-been' (1 January 1930).

nationalist' and 'heavily politicised', so Dermot Keogh, and aan de Wiel, drawing a parallel to O'Riordan, called him 'quite radical in his nationalism, flirting with republicanism'²³. His rectorship and particularly his capacity for educating young men was challenged more than once, and particularly during the Civil War- see his defensive letter to Archbishop O'Donnell 10 January 1924). In 1925 he found it again necessary to stand up for the College students' debating society, his own creation, which was not a forum encouraging partisanship as had been alleged - he likewise endorses the tradition of keeping an open house at tea-time for Irish people of all political *couleurs* (30 May 1925 to Archbishop Gilmartin of Tuam).

The following cannot give any appreciation of Hagan's depth of involvement in furthering the Irish cause abroad and at home, being based only on the papers held at the Irish College. Neither is it comprehensive in marking out particular events or pronouncements; choosing instead to give 'a flavour' of the papers.

1904-1913

The first decade of Hagan's vice-rectorship was a phase of 'apprenticeship', and is not marked by strong political sentiments. It is interesting, in the light of his later engagement, that in April 1908 Hagan must have expressed himself in no uncertain terms against the 'priest in politics' in the *American Catholic Review* (see letter taking issue by Owen L.O'Connor, Mauritius, 19 September). His attitude could be said to begin to change gradually from June 1909 with his publications on the misappropriation of the term 'island of saints' by Britain and the ensuing dialogue in the London *Tablet*, and an exchange of letters with interested parties over the next year. There are some expressions of optimism or mere speculation regarding the Home Rule Bill, up to early 1913, a subject Hagan published on (see above) in Italian, with some good effect, so his Roman colleague Fr David Fleming (see 1913/ 94). There are expressions of strong reservations against Larkin and socialism especially in the context of the Dublin lockout (Patrick Daniel, Bishop Fogarty, Cardinal Logue 30 March 1912, 14 and 20 November, 23 December 1913- also O'Riordan 10 December 1913).

1914-1919

In the light of O'Riordan's and Hagan's long-lasting campaign against British preponderance in Italian and Vatican circles and press, it is interesting to note Bishop Kelly of Ross's recommendation of the new rector of the English College, Dr.McIntyre- 'he is a thundering Irishman and will be a tower of strength to you in fighting [Ireland's] battles' (2 February 1914). Hagan's polite but firm letter to Cardinal Gasquet of 29 October 1914 and the latter's friendly reply of the next day are important documents in that respect.

Once the war begins, there is commentary from O'Riordan and Curran on the likely turn of Home Rule affairs, and the surprisingly 'jingoistic' general opinion in Dublin (12 September). O'Riordan first raises the issue of Irish chaplains in the British army on 6 November 1914, and the need to rectify British press statements; there are many further discussions by him, and drafts for the press (e.g.HAG1/ 1916/ 2 as well as 104, 105). Bishop Fogarty's apprehension of Russia's predominance as the likely outcome of a German defeat (27 November 1914) is worth noting. Hagan's correspondence with the papal Secretary of State (5 November- December 1914) in an attempt to get permission to correspond with Ireland outside the reach of censorship is likewise important. Two Irish chaplains, Canice O'Gorman and particularly P.J.Crotty, give impressions from German prisoner camps (from December 1914).

Neither Benedict XV's peace appeal of February nor O'Riordan's initiative and audience with him in March 1915 surface in the papers. The fact that the Irish in Rome have been treated to

²³ Keogh, Dermot "John Hagan and radical Irish nationalism 1916-1930" in Dáire Keogh & Albert McDonnell (eds) *The Irish College, Rome, and its world* (Dublin 2008) 242-257, 245; aan de Wiel, Jérôme *The Catholic Church in Ireland 1914-1918* (Dublin 2003) 262.

second-row seats where ecclesiastical preferment was concerned, is given expression by Magennis: O'Riordan 'has more brains than a half dozen of the other fellows but he is Irish unfortunately' (11 October 1915). The Howard delegation to the Vatican surfaces rarely, beginning with an embassy invitation in November 1914 (cf. [post 1 January 1916] containing a rhyming abecedarius mocking (Secretary [Duncan Gregory]). The new pope, Benedict XV, gives rise to hope for a new era, at least for Fr.S.P.Conry who found that 'the last reign saw too much hole-and-corner business' (6 October 1914).

The events in Easter week, foreshadowed and in earnest discussion afterwards, are treated most fully by Michael J. Curran: (22 April 1916) 'A rash step by a fool on either side will precipitate an outburst. Frankly I do not see how the thing can end without a blaze sooner or later.' (23 April) 'things passed off quietly here today'; (8 May) 'we have had a terrible fortnight since (and) have tasted of the horrors of war (and) don't want any more. It is all like a nightmare (and) I can hardly bear to write about it.'. Other correspondents, like P.T. Keohane, seem to avoid censorship by keeping to business. Hagan receives a copy letter (in circulation) from a Frongoch internee, about circumstances there (13 October 1916). Conscription, Home Rule, and –for the first time- partition are issues raised at intervals during that year (cf. Curran 15 October 1916). Another file of correspondence –between George Gavan Duffy as solicitor and the archdiocese of Westminster- was circulated and reached Hagan, concerning the character and trial of Roger Casement (17 August -23 October 1916). Copies of O'Riordan's *La recente insurrezione* reached Ireland and were welcomed by clergy (cf. the moderate Irish Party man MacCaffrey, Maynooth (20 December 1916) - it will show the cardinals that the rebels were not 'Carbonari'.

Lloyd George's visit to Rome surfaces only in a mocking poem (HAG1/ 1917/16). The Irish Convention, established in 1917, does not generally receive much positive commentary despite House of Commons M.P. William Field's sanguine words to Hagan on the outset (4 July 1917) – O'Riordan finds it was merely set up for the eyes of the Allies (8 September 1917). An entry in the *British Residents of Rome* provokes Hagan to write 'there is no warrant \ancient or modern/ for branding me or my College as British' (HAG1/ 1918/ 17). The elections in 1918 draw some commentary from Curran, concerning the potential embarrassment of a Sinn Fein majority for London, and the female suffrage (23 November 1918), and there are further comments from him and from P.T. Keohane as the results become known. The Irish delegation to President Wilson, and the 1919 US delegation to the Paris Peace Conference surface in the shape of circulars for the Italian press, and in commentary (cf. 28 December 1918, Curran 11 May 1919).

The subseries (HAG2/) of newspaper cuttings and 'political' drafts and articles, in complementation, shows that in 1918 Hagan was highly active in writing memoranda and articles on the Irish situation, its past, present, and future expectations, for both Irish and Italian audiences (cf. HAG2/20-28).

Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh, as delegate to the Peace Conference, begins reporting from Paris on 5 March 1919, sober in his expectations from what President Wilson may do for Ireland (or for Irish America); Annie Vivanti and Gavan Duffy follow suit in giving impressions from their campaign in Paris (cf. also HAG2/ 30). The latter part of 1919 is taken up with speculations as to why Hagan is not nominated immediately rector on O'Riordan's death (cf. Fogarty 14 November). A file in 1921 contains documents in defence of Hagan against accusations of 'modernism'- especially in his association with Roman priest and lecturer Buonaiuti- and notes that the prevarications in appointing him rector had been believed – by Hagan and others – to go back to British legation intrigue against him on those grounds (HAG1/ 611).

1920-1923

The R.I.C.'s stepping up their operations becomes a talking point from January of 1920. This year is also marked by the beatification ceremony for Blessed Oliver Plunkett in May; the Irish College hosted twenty Irish bishops for the event. Before the event, a big 'feast-day' for Irish who travelled to Rome in great numbers, Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh has an audience with Pius XI (see HAG1/ 1920/297

and HAG2/ 69 with Ó Ceallaigh's memoirs). Hagan found it necessary to counter opinions held by some British that the Irish bishops had been reprimanded by Benedict XV for their lack of co-operation in the war (HAG2/ 40).

The Irish bishops' condemnation of British perpetrations of violence of 16 October are translated for Vatican attention by Hagan (8 November 1920). British auxiliary forces, violence and unrest, and arrests such as that of Cáit Ó Ceallaigh's brother James Ryan (26 December 1920), are recurrent items in Hagan's correspondence over 1920 and 1921, and especially in letters from the north (cf. Bishop Mulhern 9 February 1921). In November 1921 and January 1922 (HAG1/ 1921/ 599 and 1922/20) Hagan again acts as interpreter of Irish events to the Vatican, portraying the pitfalls and benefits of the proposed, and accepted, treaty. Bishop Mulhern is one of the moderate voices reacting to the treaty signed and approved, finding that in his diocese 'everybody is sick of fighting' (6 January 1922).

Particularly Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh, Morrissey and Keohane give impressions of the gradually more hostile atmosphere prevailing; over June and July Curran is witness to the fighting at the Four Courts and the destruction of the Record Office. During his own stay in Ireland, Hagan takes matters in his own hands: correspondence between him and Commander-in-Chief Richard Mulcahy as well as Liam Mellows and Rory O'Connor (Mountjoy) witness his attempts to broker a peace between the republican prisoners and the Free State; the two Mountjoy men eventually appreciate that they should all unite against the common enemy but that acrimony prevails at present, preventing a meeting with other prisoners (Barry and Traynor), and a ceasefire (30 August - 11 September).

Papal interference in the shape of a delegate for Dublin is strongly countered by Archbishop Byrne of Dublin on 28 November 1922 and a translation duly made for the Roman authorities; Hagan calls Mgr Luzio, the legate eventually chosen 'the best of a bad lot' (7 February 1923)- the papers give a good impression of the confusion his arrival caused, and the encouragement taken by the republicans from his presence (cf. Cáit Ó Ceallaigh 13 April and E.R.Morrissey 27 April 1923).

Erskine Childers's execution is much commented on, most emotively by Bishop O'Donnell of Raphoe (25 November 1922) - Hagan appreciates O'Donnell's attempts to save him (2 December); Liam Mellows's execution is condemned in starkest terms by his close friend P.E. Magennis (9 December 1922). The papers also hold a copy of the Catholic Appeal Committee's petition for the republican delegation of Murphy and Clery to the pope (10 December 1922), drawn up in French with Cáit Ó Ceallaigh's help.

Hunger strikes and strikers unsurprisingly are a prevailing theme- Cáit Ó Ceallaigh in her usual frankness bitterly speaks of conditions in the prisons where suicides abound - 'real suicide too (and) not hunger striking which is only suicide for certain theologians!' (7 May 1923).

Following the condemnation in October by the bishops of republicans, and imposition of spiritual penalties, Hagan again presents the situation to the Vatican in early 1923, asking for positive intervention with the Irish hierarchy to pave the way for a cessation of hostilities. 1923 also sees the national pilgrimage to Bobbio (around 1 September), drawing representatives from Saorstát Éireann – Cosgrave, FitzGerald, MacNeill; an event not attended by Hagan, preceded by many speculations from Curran as to the potential opportunity for governmental propaganda, and an event surrounded by expressions of indignation from correspondents such as Cáit Ó Ceallaigh, and Curran who was witness to the celebrations.

1924-1930

The nomination of John Dignan to the see of Clonfert, and his first speech in his new office, so Hagan's friend J.Brady (Belfast), opens 'a new era in Irish affairs' (2 June 1924) - M.J.Browne speaks of Dignan's 'great fearlessness' in that pronouncement on republicanism (23 July). Hagan writes a letter to Dignan that 'made me smile!' and causes the bishop to explain he is no politician, but will not sway before gainsayers (3 December 1924). Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh had been released in late December 1923; he comments then in turn when DeValera is released from jail in late July

1922, and when even 'the optimistic' had not anticipated such welcoming masses lining the streets for him (22 July 1924). Ó Ceallaigh reluctantly goes to the US and reports from his fundraising and propaganda campaign from December onwards - 'a terrible country for factions' (12 December 1924).

That campaign is greatly boosted by Archbishop Mannix's application to it, by giving a series of speeches when on his way to Rome and eventually to Ireland (Ó Ceallaigh 16 January 1925). Once Hagan met him in Rome, he imparts to DeValera the archbishop's preferences for a (comparatively) low-key reception in Dublin. Here also Hagan makes reference to a document drawn up by him and tried on Mannix, Magennis and the 'small group' in Rome, who were overall favourable despite the impalatable 'swallowing of the oath', because the alternative might still lead to a split [in Sinn Fein]; the same memorandum is filed under the same date (31 May 1925), using an allegory of madmen upsetting the equilibrium of a ship who need to be pitched overboard. Late that year, Hagan drafts an article, probably for the foreign press 'The present hour and the prospects in Ireland' (HAG2/ 63).

The Boundary Commission, once it publishes its findings, brings many commentators to the fore: a cleric close to Joe Devlin, Francis O'Hare (Omagh), speaks of his fears for the lack of safeguards in place for Catholic Ulster as well as a sense of betrayal by the south (11 November, 19 December), Robert Brennan speaks a little gleefully of the 'bursting of the Boundary Bubble' which will give the Free State cause for thought (21 November) while Bishop Mulhern of Dromore writes in a more resigned tome (7 December 1925); Hagan's old friend and correspondent John Lennon (Portarlinton), however, like a few others, declares himself 'well satisfied with the outcome' (17 December).

In this period, Hagan takes up a role of protector for the exiled Ernie O'Malley, travelling through Spain, France and Italy -adventurously it could be said, having still 'eight pieces of lead in me') - under the name of Cecil Smyth-Howard (3 April 1925- 7 letters between 1924 and 1926).

There is no reference to the secret visit of DeValera and Seán MacBride to Rome in early 1926. The first time the question of entering the Dáil is mooted, many people are shocked (so Mrs.McAuley 18 November 1925); Cáit Ó Ceallaigh reports on how this shock manifested itself at the ardfheis proceedings (19 November). The split with Sinn Fein only becomes apparent through Ó Ceallaigh's reports from New York where nobody saw fit to inform him (15 April 1926). That Hagan has been supporting DeValera's family -presumably during his absence in jail- comes to light in a letter from Sinéad DeValera (25 April). By 11 October Fianna Fáil is spreading rapidly despite lack of funding, so Ó Ceallaigh, though mentioning Hagan's own generous donation.

Over the winter of 1926 and 1927, Curran makes his fundraising trip to the US, and although very ostensibly not on a political mission, he still uses the occasion to sound clergy and hierarchy out, as they probe him for the bona fide-neutrality of otherwise of the Irish College before committing themselves financially (e.g. meeting Bishop Curley of Baltimore in Chicago, 12-16 December 1926).

The murder of Kevin O'Higgins in July 1927 is called a 'massacre' by John Lennon (12 July), but there is only one other commentator. Many well-wishing telegrams arrive at the Irish College for its tercentenary celebrations, including one from DeValera and one from Cardinal Gasquet (20 and 23 October), but the event is overshadowed by Cardinal O'Donnell's death. Very soon afterwards the first speculations as to a possible successor to the cardinalate begin (e.g.M.J.Browne 31 December and Mulhern [late December]) but the process was to be long drawn-out: a 'hat' for Australia is mooted (e.g.Curran 26 October 1928), and when rumours are rife that Fr.P.Murray c.s.s.r. (Rome) is to go to Armagh, he signs Hagan on for support in countering any such rumours or designs (3 May 1928) -eventually, by June, MacRory goes to Armagh.

The Emancipation centenary (celebrated in mid-June 1929) receives some comment- at times sarcastic (Fr.James Brown, Wexford 25 February 1929), but the year is otherwise marked by discussions of a Free State envoy to the pope, and a papal nuncio for Dublin. Ó Ceallaigh still thinks the sending of an envoy unlikely on 3 March, for lack of government funds, though he grows

certain by 8 May, so that by June Curran – for Hagan is in Ireland- is faced with the instalment of Charles Bewley in Rome and the 'treason' of the Augustinian Canice O'Gorman in meeting Bewley together with the British legation (13 June). While Curran receives Bewley and Joseph Walshe in the Irish College and finds the former 'nice' he prefers not to meet him privately for the time being (16 June).

Paschal Robinson, before his despatch to Dublin, seems close to the College - there are visits to Tivoli and other points of contact (cf. 13 August and 9 September 1929). – With another visitor, Curran promises not to 'bite the head off [Richard] Mulcahy'.- Once Robinson's nunciature is made public, there is much speculation as to the degree of interference that might be expected (Bishops Fogarty and Codd 29 November, 4 December, Fr. John Lennon 14 December 1929, and Fr. James Kelly's pejorative comment on Robinson 17 January 1930).

The question of 'the hat' exercises many correspondents, but once Joseph MacRory of Armagh is elevated to the cardinalate comments are mostly positive, even if there is some regret in Dublin. James Lennon comments however that having a cardinal in the north, and a nuncio in the south, emphasizes partition (14 December 1929).

Personal legacy

An obituary in the *Catholic Bulletin* (editorial April 1930) celebrates Hagan 'as administrator and counsellor, as host and comrade, as historian and archaeologist, as benefactor and friend, as, at once, the broad-minded, tolerant friend of humanity, the unflinching, unsleeping advocate of right and truth'. The *Irish Independent* [March 1930] remembers 'his untiring efforts to safeguard the interests of the Irish Church in Rome', and holds that 'Ireland and the Irish cause had no better or abler friend'. This latter sentiment, and taking the 'Irish cause' in its richest political connotation, is reflected in many letters by friends, such as Seán T. and Cáit Ó Ceallaigh, Mr. Patrick Thomas Keohane (of M.H. Gill's publishing house of the *Catholic Bulletin*), Fr. E. J. Morrissey of Dublin, and some others, and most expressively so at times when Hagan's active career, if not life, seemed threatened by illness.

Hagan's most noteworthy legacy, though certainly shared with his not less active vice-rector Michael Curran, is the present Irish College building in Via Santi Quattro. From 1923 onwards, plans were made for leaving the old Irish College (secured by Paul Cullen in 1837) at S. Agata dei Goti, both because of lack of space and because of the Banca d'Italia's determination to purchase it, and finding a new site. The papers reflect the many difficulties and some personal antagonism encountered in doing so, especially very difficult negotiations with Cardinal Bisleti (titular of S. Agata). Some problems may have been exacerbated by envy arising from Pius XI's generous donation of £ 4,000,000 (lire).²⁴ They also illustrate the two extended fund-raising visits to the U.S. and Australia/ New Zealand by vice-rector Curran in 1926 and 1927/1928; the Ancient Order of Hibernians and their Ladies' Auxiliaries raised \$50,000 by way of small subscriptions payable by each member. Curran was in fact absent when Hagan, the students and the Sisters of St. John of God (invited to the College in 1923) moved into the new building in autumn 1926. Spacious, with an impressive façade, and situated just behind the basilica of St. John Lateran, the new College received effusive praise from Irish clergy; many had a first impression of the College when attending the tercentenary celebrations of the College in 1927. This is maybe with the exception of the administration of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, who felt that the Roman College was expanding at their own cost.

There are few expressions of self in the Hagan archives, since the few drafts of outgoing letters are usually those of a serious nature, discussing Vatican business or current affairs. However, his correspondents reflect to some extent his essential character, and the expressions of fondness in

²⁴ The Hagan papers are in this complemented in the archives by three boxes (uncatalogued) 'New College', containing the bank, solicitor and insurance documents, and a few notes on the project in its early stages; also the deed of conveyance from Pius XI (30 November 1924); and a 5-minute film made onsite during construction, 1925.

both the Ó Ceallaighs' letters, and a predilection for irony where writers Patrick Daniel (Catholic Truth Society) and M.H.O'Connor (solicitor, Wexford) are at their most expressive, must reflect certain sides in Hagan which must have complemented otherwise a rather stern, serious personality and the highly critical mind of a trained historian. His good friend Fr.Peter E.Magennis O.C.C. called him "a man of dauntless courage and or iron will, he was he very soul of a fighter in whatever cause he undertook"²⁵ What is a rather mellifluous celebration of Hagan, the *Catholic Bulletin* obituary, also bears credible testimony to his great industry and his lack of fear; an application to what was at hand and most in need of being seen to, and at the same time an unostentatious and simple piety. "One and all who attended at his bedside... have been consoled, strengthened, and edified."²⁶

Archival collection

Arrangement

The Hagan papers fall into seven parts: by far the largest series, HAG1 (21 boxes) holds the correspondence of John Hagan, as collected by him at the College in his capacity as vice-rector of the seminary (1904-1919) and later as its rector (1920-1930). This contains mostly his incoming mail, with no more than 5% of drafts for outgoing letters. There is, however, no documentation of items in fact despatched. The first series is in chronological order, with some items added to each year whose exact date is unclear. Arrangement of HAG1 is chronological. At some point the original order was discarded for a rigid system of chronology, for instance filing items originally enclosed with letters separately. The original order has been restored again in those cases where covering letter and enclosure could be identified with certainty. In some cases corrections of dates by archivists have been followed - as in HAG 1/ 1912/ 2 – unless there was contextual evidence against this. For the first part of the collection, numbers had previously been given to letters which were preserved (under the new codes).

The second series, HAG2 (139 items), consists of undatable items, ordered alphabetically by writer of the letter, with some items added that are unidentified. HAG3 consists of items that were separated at some stage (by an unknown agency) from the bulk of the papers, consisting of 'political' material, that is mostly reports, memoranda, and bulletins, with items either in draft form by Hagan himself, or printed and published items (80 items). HAG4 holds material regarding Hagan's publications, both of an ecclesiastical and pastoral, and of a political nature (34 items). HAG5 consists of research papers, usually of a historical nature (19 items). HAG6 is a collection of Hagan's drafts for homilies and related material meant for parish work (95 items). Finally, this list includes (in the appendix) a box-list of material set aside as 'personal', created presumably after his death.

Complementary collections and other material

For Hagan's period as vice-rector, the papers of Rector O'Riordan are a rich source, both to complement Hagan's papers and for his own letters to his superior, written whenever one of the two was in Ireland or in Tivoli (the College summer residence in Villa Greci). There is comparatively little material in the Curran papers from the years of his vice-rectorship under Hagan (1920-1930). Hagan's letter replies are yet to be traced; certainly his 'mirror correspondence' with the Irish hierarchy (in Ireland and abroad) survives in the respective diocesan archives.²⁷ In a study of his

²⁵ Magennis "Monsignor John Hagan" 298.

²⁶ Ibid. 299.

²⁷ Hagan's letters to the Ó Ceallaighs do not seem to have survived, according to Dermot Keogh (personal communication February 2008). The papers of P.T.Keohane and Fr.E.Morrissey are yet to be located, if they survived.

attitudes to Ireland and Britain, Hagan's "Roman Notes" in the *Catholic Bulletin* will be indispensable.

This archival list - conventions

Where Hagan as the recipient is unclear, he is indicated with round or (in intangible cases) square brackets. He is made domestic prelate in 1921, but his vice-rector Curran received that honour also around 1920, and this results in uncertainty for letters addressed to 'Monsignor' only. To give the character of certain items, adding to the relationship between writer and recipient, sometimes the actual address ('carissimo', 'my dear John') is included, but not as a matter of course.

Vera Orschel 18 September 2008

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