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Nomenclature and religion in North Tipperary

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Between about 1818 and 1855 a large exodus of about 775 Protestant families emigrated to Canada from the North Tipperary region. As defined by Elliott (1988: p. 12, Map 2), this region included most of Tipperary North Riding, the Co. Offaly “panhandle” baronies of Clonlisk and Ballybritt and some adjoining parishes in counties Laois, Limerick and Clare. Elliott states that of these emigrants:

“Several dozen emigrant Protestants also bore the names of Irish Catholic families long resident in the North Tipperary region, though often single families account for the appearance of these names in the list. Such families descend from ancestors who conformed to the Church of Ireland for secular reasons during the penal time or converted as a result of intermarriage in the late eighteenth century when religious tolerance was widespread and before the 1798 Rebellion and deteriorating economic conditions again sharpened social cleavages.” (Elliott, 1988: p. 20).

Elliott lists 32 of these “Irish Catholic” surnames borne by Protestant emigrants. Table 1 compares Elliott’s surnames with the official lists of converts to the Established (Anglican) Church of Ireland between 1703 and 1838. Almost all of Elliott’s names have been associated with his study area for centuries, but only 17 of his 32 surnames can be traced in the convert lists to even a single convert with an address either within his study area (nine – all of them in Tipperary North Riding) or reasonably close to it (another eight).

There were 35 converts recorded in King’s Co. (Offaly). The barony addresses of six of these were unidentified, four of them having left the area. Of the remaining 29, only six were located in the baronies of Clonlisk (2) and Ballybritt (4) within Elliott’s study area. None of these six surnames was on Elliott’s list. One of them was a priest. The occupations and marital status of the other five (including two females) are unknown. Of the remaining 23 (seven of whom were female), nearly all were in the west of the county and two of Elliott’s surnames account for eight of these, viz., Mooney (4) and Coghlan (*sic*) (4).

Two of Elliott’s surnames occur among the 36 converts who gave Queen’s Co. (Laois) addresses – Fitzgerald (2) and Walsh (1) – but only one or two of the 36 came from the west of the county bordering northeast Tipperary and the two Offaly baronies. A half-dozen or so came from southeast Laois. Most of the remainder came from the Mountmellick-Portarlinton area near the northeast Laois-southeast Offaly border. The 36 included two priests; they converted in 1781 and 1784 respectively and were among the last four Laois converts.

TABLE 1

“Irish Catholic” surnames of 19th century Protestant emigrants to Canada from the North Tipperary region, compared with surnames of officially registered converts to the Established Church, 1700-1838.

Elliott's list	Convert Rolls (O'Byrne)
Beynon	No Beynon convert (or [O'] Bannon, etc. variants) listed in all Ireland.
Butler	None of the 39 Butler converts was definitely in the study area, although one was not far below it (near Thurles); 2 more were in TSR, another 3 were in either TNR or TSR, and a further 4 were simply assigned to the Cashel diocese.
Carroll	3 or 4 (all Co. Tipp.) of the 20 Carroll[] converts were in the study area.
Caughlin	5 (all King's Co.) of the 13 Coghlan (<i>sic</i>) converts were in or near the study area.
Cavanagh	0 of the 14 Cavanagh/Kavanagh converts were in the study area.
Collins	0 of the 10 Collins converts were in the study area.
Delahunt(y)	0 of the 8 converts (incl. Dullahunty etc) were in the study area; 1 in TSR.
Doolan	The 1 Doolan convert in Ireland has no given address.
Dooley	The 1 Dooly (<i>sic</i>) convert in Ireland was in west Co. Clare.
Fitzgerald	2 (both Queen's Co.) of the 101 Fitzgerald converts were in or near the study area; 4 in TSR.
Flynn	0 of the 14 Flynn/Flinn/Fling converts were in the study area.
Gallagher	0 of the 6 Gallagher converts were in the study area.
Gleeson	2 (both Tipp.) of the 7 Gleeson/Glis[s]on/Glyssan converts were definitely in the study area; 4 of the 5 others were somewhere in Co. Tipperary.
Guilfoyle	1 Guilfoyle (<i>sic</i>) of the 2 converts was in the study area.
Hanley	0 of the 2 Hanley but 2 (both Tipp.) of 21 Hanly (<i>sic</i>) converts were in or near the study area.
Hayes	0 of the 8 Hayes/Hays/Haws converts were in the study area; 1 Haws in TSR.
Healey	1 of the 6 Healy (<i>sic</i>) converts was near the study area (Inch). No Healey converts listed; 0 of the 3 Hely converts (2 from Rathdrum, probably Co. Cork) were in the study area.
Heeney	The 1 Heeney (<i>sic</i>) convert in Ireland was in Co. Westmeath.
Hogan	2 (both Tipp.) of the 26 Hogan converts were in the study area; 1 other in “Killaloe diocese”.
Kennedy	3 or 4 (all Tipp.) of the 30 Kennedy converts in the study area; also, Cashel diocese 3; TSR 4
Keough	No Keough converts listed. 0 of the 5 Keogh (<i>sic</i>) converts were in the study area.
Kilduffe	No Kilduffe converts (or variants) but some emigrants may have been RCs (Elliott).
Lynch	0 of the 57 Lynch converts were in the study area.
Maher	The 1 Maher convert was in the study area if “Ballinaugh” is Ballina TNR or Ballynagh QC. The 1 Magher (<i>sic</i>) convert was near the study area (Thurles). 0 of the 10 Meagher converts were in the study area; 2 in TSR.
Mooney	0 of the 10 Mooney converts were in the study area, though most were in King's Co.
Moran	0 of the 10 Moran converts were in the study area.
Morris	1 of the 7 Morris & 1 of the 3 Morres (<i>sic</i>) converts were in or near the study area (TNR).
O'Brien	2 of the 70+ O'Brien converts (or variants) in or near study area (ex-“Duharrow”; Thurles).
O'Neil	0 of the 27 O'Neil converts (or variants) were in the study area.
Ryan	1 of the 41 Ryan converts was near the study area; also TSR 7; Cashel diocese 4; Co. Tipp. 3.
Scully	No Scully converts listed in all Ireland.
Walsh	1 of the 34 Walsh converts was in the study area (TNR); TSR 2; QC 1; Cashel diocese 1.



Sources: Elliott, 1988 (pp 12, 262 – Map 2 and note 67); O’Byrne, 1981 (lists and appendices).

Note 1: TNR and TSR = Tipperary North Riding and Tipperary South Riding respectively; KC = King’s Co. (Offaly); QC = Queen’s Co. (Laois)

Note 2: With a few possible exceptions, all of the names above are associated with Co. Tipperary North Riding, Co. Offaly, and adjacent eastern parts of counties Limerick, Clare, Galway and south Roscommon (see surname books by MacLysaght). The possible exceptions are Cavanagh (a Wexford name), and Gallagher and O’Neill, which are primarily Ulster names. South Tipperary O’Neills still trace their origins to medieval Ulster migrants. Co. Clare O’Neills may be indigenous or of Ulster origin.

Thirteen of Elliott’s surnames account for 23 of the 77 converts who were traced to Tipperary North Riding; but, as already stated, only nine of these surnames were (strictly speaking) within his study area. Although 19 of the 77 converts had already left the area (almost all for Dublin), 72 were traced to a definite barony *and* parish in TNR (see Table 2). While all baronies were represented, two-thirds of the 79 TNR parishes had no registered converts. Most of the traced converts were in two groups of contiguous parishes based on Thurles and Nenagh.

The Thurles group comprised 34 converts in an almost unbroken arc of eight parishes – Thurles (19), Ballymureen-Rahelty-Shyane-Ballycahill (5), Inch (4), Glenkeen (4), Latteragh (2). The Nenagh group comprised 35 converts in thirteen parishes – Nenagh (10), Kilmore (5), Lisbunny-Kilruane-ModreenyArdcroney (4), Borrisokane (5), Lorrha-Loughkeen (5) and the Shannon-Lough Derg parishes of Kilbarron-Killodiernan-Youghalarra-Templeachally (6). Seven of the Thurles group and thirteen of the Nenagh group converted before 1760. The last traced TNR convert (in 1810) was a priest.

Many of the converts listed in O’Byrne do not have identifiable addresses. Some give no address at all. Others give only the county and/or the diocese, which can cover a number of counties and parts of counties. Others give just a local placename, many of which are common to a number of places within one or more counties, and often do not specify whether it is a barony, parish, townland, town, or even a house name.

It is not always clear whether addresses in urban centres such as Dublin or Ennis are genuine addresses (permanent or temporary), or used as convenient covering addresses. In addition, converts moved into and out of the area after conversion for a variety of reasons, as did other members of their families, including widow[er]s and children. It is not always clear whether spouses converted before or after they married and/or moved to their nuptial home.

It is often not clear whether converts are single or married/widowed, with or without children, and whether they (were) registered under their original name and address or those of their spouse. It should also be noted that some converts may have been Protestant before 1703. Others may not have registered their conversions. Still more may have registered formally for a particular reason while continuing to practise and/or rear some or all of their children as Roman Catholics. Others may have been non-Anglican Dissenters (Methodists, Quakers, etc.).

The picture is further complicated by variations in spelling. For example, we cannot confidently place John Maher, “late of *Ballinaugh*” in *Ballina*, Templeachally parish, Owney and Arra barony, TNR; or in *Ballina*, Offerlane parish, Upperwoods barony, Queen’s Co (the only two of 22 Ballinas that are within Elliott’s study area); or in *Ballynagh*, Ballycowan barony, King’s Co (outside but not too far from the study area); or even in *Ballynoe*, a parish far away in Co. Cork. Nor can we confidently place Edmond Griffine, gent, *Loghanenyfoyle*n, Killaloe diocese, in *Loughannaeweelaun*, Inchiquin, Co. Clare, or in *Loughwheelion*, Clonlisk, King’s Co. (Both of these are in Killaloe diocese, but only the latter is within the study area.)

The same applies to surnames – e.g. dropping or adopting the “O” in O’Brien, etc. There are considerable problems involved even in the case of apparently uncomplicated names. Gleeson, for example, is easy to identify in its various guises and spellings, and concentrated in its historical homeland of north Tipperary. All registered Gleeson converts, with possible variants of the name, are listed below in alphabetical order. (The ellipses ‘...’ are merely dates of conformity, registration, and certification.)

Gleeson , Edmund, Dublin, ... Now of Dublin ... of Kilmore parish, Co. Tipperary.	Glissane , John, Curraglass, Co. Kerry ...
Gleeson , Edmond, farmer, Lisduff, Co. Tipperary ... Son of Morgan Gleeson (<i>sic</i>) of Lisduff, farmer, ... Yeoman.	Glissnan [or Glissman?] (<i>sic</i>), John, Waterford diocese ...
Gleeson , Margaret, Lismore, Co. Waterford ...	Glisson , [a.k.a. Gleeson] (<i>sic</i>), Roger, carpenter, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary ...
Glison , Edward, Dublin ... of Co. Tipperary ...	Glyssan , Daniel, of Fynekillly, Co. Tipperary ... of Vinekillv farmer ..
Glison , James, Tincranna, Co. Tipperary ...	

MacLysaght’s assertion that the form of the name in Kerry is “Glissane” is questionable, but it is probably safe to assume that John Glissane, Curraglass, Co. Kerry, who registered in 1790, was a Kerryman.

With regard to **Margaret Gleeson**, Lismore, Co. Waterford, it is noteworthy that Lismore *parish* lies just below the Waterford/Tipperary county boundary, contiguous with an area of south Tipperary where many conversions took place, and that both sides of the county boundary in that locality are part of the Lismore *diocese*.

In other words, perhaps Margaret Gleeson was only technically in Co. Waterford, but really “of south Tipperary”. We are not told whether Margaret registered under her maiden name, or whether she was a lifelong native of Lismore. Was she perhaps related to the **John Glissnan** [or **Glissman?**] (*sic*), of the Waterford diocese who conformed eight years later and who may be a botchily transcribed Glissan? He is the only recorded convert of that name and the name does not appear among the thousands of surnames and their variants recorded by MacLysaght in his various works on the surnames of Ireland.

All of the remaining Gleeson converts were definitely “of Tipperary”, but problems remain. **Edmond Gleeson**, Lisduff, Co. Tipperary was a yeoman farmer; but there are six Lisduff townlands in Co. Tipperary, four of them in the North Riding. Moreover, there are three in Co. Offaly as well, one of them in the barony of Clonlisk, between two of the Tipperary NR Lisduff possibilities. **Daniel Glyssan** of Fynekillly/Vinekillly was another farmer, but there is no such townland, town, parish, or barony in Ireland.

The nearest phonal equivalents within Elliott’s study area are unlikely, viz. Monaquill (Upper Ormond), Tinnakilly (Lower Ormond), and Tinekelly (Ikerrin). The address of **James Glison** (occupation unknown) is given as “Tincranna, Co. Tipperary”, but the nearest phonal equivalent, the official townland of Tinacrannagh, is many miles to the northeast of Tipperary, just north of Portarlinton (HMSO, 1861). **Edward Glison**, who conformed over 30 years earlier, is merely stated to have been “of Tipperary”.

Roger Glisson (also recorded as Gleeson), a carpenter of Nenagh, and **Edmund Gleeson**, occupation unknown, “of Kilmore parish, now of Dublin” are thus the only converts on the list whose parish can be definitely located within Elliott’s study area. However, we do not know



whether Edmund ever returned from Dublin, or whether he – or Roger, or any of the others – reared any children as Anglicans. To pursue even this pair could require tedious research through a variety of sources, without any guarantee of worthwhile results.

Incidentally, we know the occupations of only three of the nine individuals listed above. This is despite the fact that all of them (except the Kerryman) conformed between 1743 and 1774, when such ancillary data were more plentiful than in the later period (1773-1838), for which data are “very scanty” (O’Byrne, p. xv).

While this article highlights the dangers of automatically equating nomenclature with religious affiliation, the data nonetheless reveal many interesting patterns and suggest tantalising hypotheses. These include the distribution of conversions over time and space and some potentially fascinating research into family and other relationships. Why, for instance, did John Cullen, wigmaker, and Roger Glisson, carpenter – two Nenagh men and the only “tradesmen” in Table 2 – both convert on the same day and (apparently) remain in Nenagh? More generally, it would be interesting to discover how many of those with ostensibly “non-Irish Catholic” surnames had “Irish blood” in their veins, and whether they converted from Roman Catholicism or from some non-Anglican Protestant denomination.

Why were only three of the 77 Tipperary North Riding converts in Ikerrin barony, between Laois and Offaly? Why was the largest concentration of converts in and around Thurles, the centre of the revitalised Roman Catholic church? What influence, if any, had the conversions of apostate Roman Catholic priests? How many individuals who gave no indication of their marital or occupational status, or who moved out of the area, can be traced in other sources such as church records, periodicals, the abstracts of wills the King’s Inns Admission Papers, etc.?

In tandem with such research however, it would be desirable to trace many more of the converts with vague addresses to more precise locations. It is hoped that this article will stimulate persons more familiar than the present author with local history and nomenclature (surnames and placenames) to delve deeper into these and other fascinating topics.

TABLE 2

Tipperary North Riding (TNR) converts 1700-1838, by barony and civil parish
*Surnames listed by Elliott shown in **BOLD**. p. = civil parish.*

Year	Convert's Name	Status	Address	Parish	→ gone to/now in
IKERRIN					
1759	KEATING, Michael,	<u>gent.</u>	Castleleiny,	Templeree	
1765	GILLFOYLE , Wm.,	<u>farmer.</u>	Lismakin,	Corbally	
1766	FITZPATRICK, Cicily (al. Palmer),			Roscrea	
LOWER ORMOND					
1731	KENNEDY , Daniel,	<u>gent.</u>	Kilcarren,	Lorrha	
1731	KENNEDY , Mary,	<u>spinster.</u>	Kilcarren,	Lorrha	
1772	YELVERTON, Thomas,	<u>gent.</u>	Portland,	Lorrha	
1810	MURRAY, Patrick,	<u>priest.</u>		Lorrha	
1766	CARROLL , William	<u>gent.</u>	Arrabeg,	Loughkeen	→ Dublin
1758	STANLEY, Eliz.,	<u>spinster.</u>		Borrisokane	
1763	CLEWEN, Patrick,	<u>gent.</u>		Borrisokane	→ T.C.C.
1770	EGAN, Darby			Borrisokane	
1773	STONEY, Eliz.,			Borrisokane	
1777	CARROLL , Martha,			Borrisokane	→ Dublin
1750	MURPHY, James,	<u>yeoman.</u>	Kilbarne ? =	Kilbarron	
1749	HOGAN , Daniel, Finogh, of Coolagorane,		p. Ardcroney	(p. Finnoe adjoins p. Ardcroney)	
1749	HOGAN , Eliz.,	<u>spinster.</u>	Kil[la]dangan,	Killodiernan	
1778	SMYTH, Eliz.,		Urre,	Killodiernan	
1706	LALOR, Patrick,	<u>gent.</u>	Modrinny,	Modreeny	
OWNEY & ARRA					
1769	QUINLAN, John,	<u>gent.</u>	Youghal,	Youghalarra	
1775	WALSH , Edmond,		Templecalla,	Templeachally	
1792	BOYLE, John,		Temple Ichally	Templeachally	
PARISHES SPLIT BETWEEN LOWER AND UPPER ORMOND					
1728	MEARA, Ann,	<u>spinster.</u>	Nenagh		
1744	BURKE, Toby,	<u>gent.</u>	Nenagh		
1756	HANLY , Patrick,	<u>esq.</u>	Nenagh		→ Dublin
1764	CORBAN, Martin,	<u>farmer.</u>	Nenagh		
1768	CLANCHY, Henry,		Nenagh		→ Dublin
1769	CULLEN, John,	<u>wigmaker.</u>	Nenagh		
1769	GLISSON, Roger,	<u>carpenter.</u>	Nenagh		
1776	BUCKLELY (<i>sic</i>) Richard,	<u>gent.</u>	Nenagh		→ Dublin
1776	SHARKEY, John,		Nenagh		
1777	DUGGAN, John,		Nenagh		→ ?
1766	BURKE, Milo,	<u>gent.</u>	Rapla,	Kilruane	
UPPER ORMOND					
1770	DONNAGHUE, Edmd.,		Ballintotty,	Lisbunny	



TABLE 2 (Continued)

Year	Convert's Name	Status	Address	Parish	→ gone to/now in
1706	CARROL , James,	<u>gent.</u>	Tulla,	Kilmore	
1720	STANLY, Margaret,			Kilmore	
1758	DALTON, Michael,	<u>gent.</u>		Kilmore	
1762	GLEESON , Edmund,			Kilmore	→ Dublin
1775	COMERFORD, Ml.,		Silvermines,	Kilmore	
1726	MORRIS , John Senior,	<u>gent.</u>		Latteragh	
1786	KENNEDY , Mary,		Gla[=e]naguile	Latteragh	
KILNAMANAGH UPPER					
1730	LYNCOLN, Walter,		Burresleagh,	Glenkeen	→ Co. Cork
1761	MATHEW, James,	<u>gent.</u>	Borresleagh,	Glenkeen	
1768	BOURKE, Michael,		Glenbreedy,	Glenkeen	
1778	BURKE, Walter,		Curaghnaoola	Glenkeen	
ELIOGARTY					
1762	MATHEW, Thomas,	<u>esq.</u>	Annfield,	Inch	→ Dublin
1763	HANLY , John,	<u>gent.</u>	Mt. Catherine	Inch	
1770	HEALY , Mrs. Bridget,		Annfield,	Inch	→ Dungarvan
1773	HAMELL, James,		Lissaroon (?)	Inch	
1770	FOGARTY, James,	<u>esq.</u>	Castlefogarty,	Ballycahill	→ Dublin
1740	MAGHER , Charles			Thurles	
1743	HUGHES (née English) Mary	(widow of Sam Hughes),	Seskin,	Upperchurch TNR)	
1762	GRANT, Patrick,			Thurles	
1762	PURCELL, John,	<u>esq.</u>		Thurles	→ Dublin
1763	THOMPSON, Wm.,	<u>gent.</u>		Thurles	
1765	O'BRIEN , Redmond,	<u>priest.</u>		Thurles	
1765	PURCELL, Michael,	<u>gent.</u>		Thurles	
1768	MATHEW, Charles,	<u>esq.</u>		Thurles	→ Dublin
1769	BROWNE, Mark,			Thurles	→ Dublin
1772	SWYNY, Edmund,	<u>gent.</u>		Thurles	
1773	SWEENEY, Mathew,	<u>gent.</u>		Thurles	→ Dublin
1778	BUTLER , Richard,		Ballycarran[c],	Thurles	
1778-9	MATHEW, Mary,	<u>spinster.</u>		Thurles	
1778-80	ROWE, Pierse,			Thurles	
1785	MURPHY, Thomas,			Thurles	
1788	BURKE, William,			Thurles	
1788	DEVERE (Dwire) Bridget and John,			Thurles	
1778	GLASCOCK, Ellinor,			Thurles	
1740	MORRIS , John,	<u>gent.</u>	Rossestown,	Shyane	→ Dublin
1763	RYAN , John	<u>gent.</u>	Rossestown,	shyne	
1704	GRACE, Oliver,		Callinstown (sic)	(son of James Grace of Cassistown, p. Rahelty)	
1742	BAKER, Margt.,		Ballymorin? =	Ballymureen	

Unidentified "possibles" likely to be from Tipperary North Riding

1744 PARKER, Margaret (wife to Francis Parker esq., Killaloe diocese), Newtown, Co. Tipp. (If TNR, either adjoining p.Bourney/p.Corbally, Ikerrin; or adjoining p.Templeachally/p.Youghalarra, Arra area).

1767 BYRCH, Mary, Carrick, Co. Tipp. (This could mean Carrick-on-Suir; but there were families of Protestant Birches in TNR. If TNR, probably Ormond Lower but possibly Upper).

1771 LONG, Redmond, esq., Killoran. (If TNR, either p.Moyne, Eliogarty or p.Castletownarra, Arra) —> Dublin 1.

1776 CARROLL, Daniel, Boulebane, Co. Tipp. (If TNR, either Boolabane, p.Templederry, Upper Ormond; or Boolabaun, p.Bourney, Ikerrin).

1779 O'BRIEN, John, "late of Duharrow" [? = Duharra, or Arra half-barony, TNR].

Notes to Table 2

The summary by baronies is based on 77 converts who could be traced to Tipperary North Riding. Persons with vague addresses such as Killaloe diocese, Cashel diocese, or Tipperary, are excluded. "Possibles" refer to the five TNR converts who gave no parish/townland (1) or one common to two baronies (4). Because the latter four are counted twice, the figures for the baronies total 81, not 77.

The summary by **parishes** is based on 72 converts (77 minus the five "possibles"). Some baronial borders run through parishes and some parishes are physically fragmented anyway. The only serious case for present purposes is the border between the two Ormond baronies, which runs through Nenagh parish. Nenagh parish is consequently shown separately in both lists.

Summary by Baronies: Ikerrin (3 plus 2 possibles); Eliogarty (28 plus 1 possible); Kilnamanagh Upper (4 – all in p.Glenkeen); Owey & Arra (3 plus 3 possibles); Ormond Upper (8 plus 2 possibles); Ormond Lower (16 plus 1 possible); Nenagh parish (10).

Summary by Parishes: Roscrea (1), Corbally (1), Templeree (1); Lorrha (4); Loughkeen (1); Borrisokane (5); Kilbarron (1); Ardcroney (1); Killodiernan (2); Modrinny (1); Kilruane (1); Lisbunny (1); Nenagh (10); Kilmore (5); Youghalarra (1); Templeachally (2); Latteragh (2); Glenkeen (4); Inch (4); Thurles (19); Ballycahill (1); Shyane (2); Rahelty (1); Ballymureen (1).

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