

VERSE TRAVESTY IN
RESTORATION IRELAND
'PURGATORIUM HIBERNICUM'

(NLI, MS 470)

with

'THE FINGALLIAN TRAVESTY'

(BL, SLOANE 900)

Edited by

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IRISH MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION

2013

Dedicated to the memory of

Alan Bliss (1921–1985)
and
Alan Harrison (1943–2005)

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CONTENTS

PROLOGUE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	VII
ABBREVIATIONS	IX
INTRODUCTION	XI
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	XIII
PART 1: 'PURGATORIUM HIBERNICUM'	1
A note on the text	3
'Purgatorium Hibernicum'	5
PART 2: 'THE FINGALLIAN TRAVESTY'	181
A note on the text	183
'The Fingallian Travesty'	185

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INTRODUCTION

The poem that follows exists in three versions, two manuscripts — the ‘Purgatorium Hibernicum’ (c. 1670) and ‘The Fingallian Travesty’ (c. 1686), both of which are now printed for the first time — and *The Irish Hudibras*, printed in London in 1689.¹ The text, which originated in Ireland and is in roughly rhyming English tetrameters (or ‘Hudibrastics’), is a coarsely worded travesty of the sixth book of Virgil’s *Æneid*; parts of the Latin text are given on each page of both manuscript and printed texts so that the reader can compare the vulgar English travesty against Virgil’s elegant hexameters. In all three texts, the story is of Nees, a ‘prince’ of ancient Irish lineage and the Roman Catholic faith who comes from Fingal, that part of the Pale north of Dublin where a conservative form of Irish English (or Hiberno-English) was still spoken in the late-seventeenth century. Nees and his companion Shela, a coarse ex-nun, descend into the underworld where their encounters roughly parallel those of Æneas in book VI of *The Æneid*. Among the ‘shades’ they encounter is Nees’s dead father who prophesies a disastrous future for the Irish race. The poem is violently antagonistic to Irish Roman Catholicism and to the native Irish, exaggerating and ridiculing every aspect of ‘Fingallian’ culture. Most significantly, however, the variety of the English language used in the poem, particularly in passages of direct speech, shows the direct influence of the Irish language, in vocabulary, syntax and grammar, on the spoken English of late-seventeenth century Fingal.

Though the three versions of the text are similar in many ways, each has been distinctively crafted to make direct reference to political or social events relevant to readers at the time of its circulation: the earliest of the three texts, the ‘Purgatorium Hibernicum’, contains references to the enclosing of St Stephen’s Green in Dublin in 1665, to Sir William Petty’s experiments with ‘double-bottomed’ boats in Dublin Bay at about the same time, and to the Court of Claims that sat in Dublin in 1663; ‘The Fingallian Travesty’ refers to Tyrconnell’s arrival in Ireland in 1686, and *The Irish Hudibras* to James II’s progress through Dublin in the spring of 1689. Each text is accompanied by side-notes that draw the reader’s attention to the broad sweep of the text — ‘Description of an *Irish* Cabbin’ for instance — and in some cases bi-lingual jokes in the text are clarified in the Irish language. Notes also refer to histories of Ireland in Latin and Irish as well as in English and ‘explain’ some references, usually in Latin. Scholarly annotation is one of many things being parodied in the text.

The readership (or audience) for each version of the poem was a Protestant one, prepared to enjoy seeing the native Irish and their religion ridiculed and satirized. The location for its reading or performance changed, however, over the years that the poem

¹ The full titles of these texts will be found in the select bibliography that follows this introduction.

was in circulation. The early ‘Purgatorium Hibernicum’ was designed for an audience in Ireland (presumably in Dublin) where ‘New English’ protestants, attempting to gain or retain land in the Irish Court of Claims in 1663, would have enjoyed a poem ridiculing their opponents, the native Irish; however, by the late 1680s, it was Protestants in England who had reason to fear Irish Catholics as they were strengthened under Tyrconnell and James II and might well, with French assistance, launch an invasion of Protestant England. Both ‘The Fingallian Travesty’ and *The Irish Hudibras* are prefaced by a prose introduction ‘for the better understanding of the English reader’, and *The Irish Hudibras* contains a Glossary of ‘Fingallian Words or Irish Phrases’. These adaptations of the poem also contain less detail on the lifestyle and language of the people of Fingal.

Though the chronological sequence of these three texts can be established, it is otherwise difficult to disentangle them from one another, as can be seen in a comparison of almost any passage of the ‘Purgatorium Hibernicum’ with its parallel passage in ‘The Fingallian Travesty’. It is clear, however, that *The Irish Hudibras* is a shortened and updated version of ‘The Fingallian Travesty’ and that the ‘Travesty’ is, itself, a recreation of the ‘Purgatorium’. The last of these only survives in a careless, late seventeenth-century transcript riddled with obvious errors: unfortunately, the only surviving transcript of the ‘Travesty’ (again a late seventeenth-century manuscript) was copied from a different exemplar. The ‘Travesty’ transcript — well punctuated and neatly written — makes that version of the poem much more coherent than the ‘Purgatorium’. However, the ‘Purgatorium’ is textually the most interesting of the three since it represents the poem designed for an audience familiar with Irish English and since it contains nearly two hundred examples of borrowings, coinages and syntactical constructions taken from the Irish language, many of which had been removed by the time ‘The Fingallian Travesty’ was produced. In fact, that text, well punctuated and carefully copied from its (now lost) exemplar, was probably intended for circulation as it stands whereas the ‘Purgatorium’ seems to have been transcribed in a great hurry and never to have been read over, even in a cursory way. So hastily and carelessly was the ‘Purgatorium’ copied that the copyist did not notice that about 180 lines were missing from his exemplar, and copied straight on as if the text made sense without those lines. In addition, there are hundreds of examples of careless copying in the ‘Purgatorium’, all of which are recorded in the text printed here or in the editorial notes.

The name ‘Francis Taubman’ is written at the end of the manuscript of the ‘Purgatorium’, but it is not clear whether this indicates that he was the scribe of the manuscript or the author of the text. In any case, nothing is known of Taubman and scholars agree that this attribution is suspect (Bliss (1979), pp 47–8); all three versions of the poem are best, for the moment, deemed anonymous.

Much interesting work could be done on the language of these three texts and their relationship with late-seventeenth century ‘stage-Irish’ material such as that found in *Bogg-Witticisms* (c. 1687) and the other texts listed in the select bibliography below. So far as modern scholarship is concerned, only *The Irish Hudibras* has been regularly noted by modern scholars, a short listing of whose work appears in the bibliography.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY TEXTS

Manuscript

NLI, MS 470. Purgatorium Hibernicum or the sixt booke of Virgill's Æneis Travestie Burlesque A la Mode de Fingaule.

BL, Sloane MS 900. The Fingallian Travesty: or the Sixt Book of Virgills Ænæids A la mode de Fingaule.

Print

[Anon.,] *The Irish Hudibras, or, Fingallian Prince, taken from the sixth book of Virgil's Ænæids, and adapted to the present times* (London: Richard Baldwin, 1689).

OTHER CONTEMPORARY TEXTS

[Anon.,] *Bogg-Witticisms, or, Dear Joy's Common-Places... collected bee de grete Caare and Painsh-Tauking of oour Laurned Countree-maun Mac O Bonnieclabbero of Drogheda, Knight of the Mendicant Order. Printed for Evidansh swear-all in Lack-Plaush Lane* [1682?]

[Anon.,] *Teague-Land Jestes, or Dear-Joy's Bogg Witticisms* [London, 1689: no printer named]

[Maurice Atkins] *Cataplus: or Æneas his descent to hell. A mock poem, in imitation of the sixth book of Virgil's Æneis, in English burlesque* (London: for Maurice Atkins, 1672)

Charles Cotton, *Scarronides; or Virgil Travestie: a Mock-Poem on the First and Fourth Books of Virgil's Aenaeis in English Burlesque* (London: Henry Brome, 1664)

Richard Head, *Hic et Ubique; or the Humors of Dublin...* (London: R. D. for the author, 1663).

Richard Head, *The Miss Display'd...* (London: several Booksellers, 1675).

PART 1

‘PURGATORIUM HIBERNICUM’

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PURGATORIUM HIBERNICUM: A NOTE ON THE TEXT

NLI, MS 470 contains the only surviving text of the ‘Purgatorium Hibernicum’. The manuscript, which was previously Heber 1568 and Phillipps 8366, was purchased for £8 by the National Library of Ireland in June 1935. It is written in a single, late-seventeenth century, cursive hand and contains 88 leaves of paper paginated 1–176, with running heads and sidenotes throughout. The text consists of 2994 lines of English tetrameter verse travestying the sixth book of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, the text of which is given in Latin throughout, occasionally keyed to the relevant line of the English verse. Both Latin and English text are riddled with errors, most of which (words omitted, confusion of ‘l’ with ‘t’, ‘a’ with ‘o’ etc.) are due to careless transcription from a lost exemplar. The text was clearly prepared in extreme haste and was never checked over so that some passages defy interpretation. Luckily another version of part of the text, ‘The Fingallian Travesty’, survives and this provides unambiguous readings for scores of otherwise unintelligible passages in the ‘Purgatorium’.

The aim of this edition is to provide a reading text of the ‘Purgatorium’, retaining the integrity of content for each page. Side-notes enclosed in angle brackets < > are at the foot of each page and standard seventeenth-century abbreviations (in both Latin and English) have been expanded; obviously missing letters have been supplied in square brackets [] where the sense would be altered without them — though since the copyist preferred the ‘or’ spelling for words like ‘honor’ to the ‘our’ of ‘honour’, that form is used for editorial expansions. Capitals, spelling and punctuation (such as it is) are all retained; there has been no attempt to standardize place or personal names. Where whole words, phrases or lines have been omitted, they are supplied in square brackets, where possible, but transposed letters are retained: thus the manuscript spelling ‘supeing’ for ‘spueing’, ‘Corrouded’ for ‘Surrounded’ and ‘deceases’ for ‘diseases’ are retained; ‘u’ and ‘v’, ‘i’ and ‘j’ have been rendered in their modern forms since they are used indiscriminately in the manuscript. There are many places where ‘o’ is mistakenly transcribed for ‘a’ and ‘t’ for ‘ll’; these are retained but noted. If a word is illegible or cropped, it is represented by a series of colons. Careless transcription must be blamed for the most serious omission from the ‘Purgatorium Hibernicum’, of about 180 lines following line 2783; it seems that the copyist did not notice that a bifolium was missing from his exemplar.

A blank line has been inserted before each new paragraph but catch-words have been omitted. Line numbers refer to the text in English: the Latin text is not numbered.

This edition contains very few explanatory notes or annotations; a sample passage of the fully edited and annotated text is available in Carpenter, ‘Befuddled’ (2012), pp 60–62.

The text contains many borrowings from Irish, in vocabulary, syntax and pronunciation, and (particularly in the passages in 'Fingallian') exaggerates these 'Hibernicisms' by adopting spellings that suggest they should be recited in 'stage-Irish'. Thus 'th' is usually represented as 'd', and 'w' as 'fh' or 'v'; there are many variations, however, and the common word 'de' can stand for 'the', 'they' or 'thee' (depending on the context). Irish English pronunciation is implied throughout so that, for instance, the modern word 'tongues' is spelt 'tongs'. Some of the linguistic implications of these exaggerated Hibernicisms (and of others such as the aggressive use of the consuetudinal present, comic misuse of prepositions and pronouns, and the presence of Irish 'bulls') are discussed by Bliss (*Spoken English* (1979), pp 46–58) and, from a different perspective, by Kelly ('A seventeenth-century variety', 2000). In some places, one word appears as two or vice versa; this suggests that the text may have been copied from dictation. In many places, the text is best understood if read aloud.

The Latin text is seriously garbled in many places and it is not possible to discern what edition of the *Aeneid* was used as exemplar for the transcription.

The scribe made some attempt to write in italic script in places (e.g. for some of the extreme 'Fingallian' and for some proper names) by separating individual letters. This has no textual significance and is not recorded here.

NLI, MS 470
(previously Heber 1568 and Phillipps 8366)

PURGATORIUM HIBERNICUM
OR
THE SIXT BOOKE OF VIRGILL'S ÆNEIS
TRAVESTIE BURLESQUE A LA MODE
DE
FINGAULE

[p. 1] There was a Prince of Antient fame
Bloud of the Teigs Nees was his name¹
A Tory Stout borne in the Marish
Yoalke² of Fingual & Lusk and parish
A Spanciall Guddy-hang could treat³
In Gibbrish naturally as eat
A Sort of English Irish claymes⁴ that
Hotc-potch Fingallian use to Hamper⁵ at
Ith Arts none could with him contend
Profoundly read in his Compend
In lodgice Artificiall⁶
he was well Skild as n[at]urall
with words soe deepe & reason Ballist
Some say he was a naturealist

For Latin twas as ffree with him
As for a Mallard tis to Swyme

10

¹ <Eneas Hib[er]ni Enæs vulgo Nees frequs No:>. This garbled note appears in a more intelligible form in FT: <Ænæas Fingallian Eneas vulgarly Nees a frequent name>.

² FT note on this word reads: <Heart>.

³ <Warlick> i.e. warlike. FT note on 'Guddihang' reads: <Good for nothing but the Gallows>.

⁴ FT 7 reads: 'Clamour'.

⁵ FT 8 reads: 'hammer'.

⁶ <Nees Edu Caitiok>. The equivalent note in FT reads <Neeses Education>.

[p. 2] To Say his Pader he was able
 In Latin & his grace at Table
 His Ave Mary's & his Mattin
 And never blest him but in Lattin 20
 Enough for boord besides he had
 Enough to bring him to his bed
 For Greeke he car'd not Nees his nose
 To th' Athick tone could not compose⁷
 For since the last Gamshoge poore Teige
 With Greeke could never bee in Leigue
 His hebrew roots, were wh', hoow & hum
 And very few did understand 'um
 Such Gibble Gabble that you durst
 Swear was noe Babble but at Lusk 30
 And when himselfe nees went about
 To blow the Bellowes of his Snout⁸
 You'd think that Hydra op't at once
 Her hundred tro[a]ts with diferrent Tones

And yett to make him more Compleat
 Not to Encounter but retreat⁹
 Nature as liberally did store him
 With parts 'bove any went before him
 Proud & Rebellious feinte & mighty
 And valient as e're run from fight he¹⁰ 40
 ffor Nees his Wings did not apply
 To ffight or Sally but to fly

⁷ <No Irish man a Grecian they have forsworne the bible & hate griet brans of ye Septuagine>. The equivalent note in FT reads: <He burnt his Bible and hates Greek because of the Septuagint>.

⁸ <The Irish Speak through nose which makes them to Snuff & they use Snees as Corristers Eggs to cleere voice>. The two corresponding notes in FT read: <The Irish speak thro the nose> and <They use Sneeing as Chorresters do Eggs to clear the voice>.

⁹ <His Crowells & valor>. The corresponding note in FT reads <His Accomplishments>.

¹⁰ <His discipline>.

[p. 3] Nor did he study Macedonian
 Or Countermarch Lacedemonian
 Nor vaine distinction of Rankes
 of fyles or falanges or fflanks
 Nor diferrence in the Sounds of Phrygian
 Of Dorick Æolick or Lydian
 Nor could his trumps or horse heads beate
 One point of Warr save a retreat 50
 ffor Nees had learned his Seavens¹¹ & therefore
 Know how to shion & frapp & wherefore
 And never Studyd Pike or Gun[n]ing
 With soe much Grace as valiant run[n]ing
 Therefore did nature boggs bestow
 To save him from pursueing foe
 When-Ever Nees went to Rebell
 Which were his forts & Cittadell
 He had besides a good Estate¹²
 Of Lough & bogg & Wooden Plate 60
 Marshes & Cantons woods & playnes
 Pooles Stangs Glins Carroughes & Commans
 With a thick Grove of Thorne & haste
 Cabbins & Crates & a Strong Castle
 A tenement possest by th'ratt
 Where you can hardly Swyng a Catt
 Less desolate when Nees was Gone
 Like to a nest when th' bord are flown

¹¹ <The 7 wise m[aste]rs & 7 Champions of Chrisendome ye horses & hesia of Irish Pedancy>. The corresponding note in FT reads: <The Seaven wise Masters and 7 Champions of Christendom, the Hom[er] and Hesiod of ffigallian Pedantry>.

¹² <Estate>.

- [p. 4] ffor Nees more Safely did impone
 In house of wood then house of Stone 70
 Where dreadfull Cannon might not Storme on't
 Or he in case of Strait Lye Dormant
 The woods & boggs to Teig & Shone
 Are Sanctuary both & throne
- His moveables & moveing Crate
 In place of tent raise in a heat
 A bundle of new beaten flocks
 A Stopper & a Sneeing bocks
 All which in Comon with his dutches
 He had besides a paire of Hutches 80
 Keshes & Creele to beare out Dung
 Pottato Platts five Acres long
 And Orchards sett with Lofty Ash
 And Nettle tall beanes & Cabash
 A brace of bullocks & a Cow
 A Wattled Baune & wooden plow
 With teem of horses drawen & ty'd well
 With head to tayle instead of bridle
- besides all this a famous flock
 Of hens & Ducks with a great Stock 90
 Of Seepe¹³ & Garrans with his Geese
 The onely man & who but Nees
 Till Tellick More¹⁴ in a curs't houre
 Coming from Greece did all devour

¹³ sheep.

¹⁴ Tellick More is obscure; the corresponding reference in FT is to <Ulick more>.

[p. 5] And all his flocks put to the Scatter
Poore Nees was force to take the watter

But cause hee's fer mar cha¹⁵ in fight
He had companions in his flight¹⁶
A Valiant Band of Dragoners¹⁷
Hoblers & buttermilk troopers 100
With flying traines of¹⁸ Prollers Boggers
Of Monaghans & Pettyfoggers
Dalrists & Karroghes Seeps & Ashes
Daltins & Kernes & Gallowglasses¹⁹
Black't with a troop of foster-brothers
Gossops & GuddiKangs & others
Who from all parts did flock about him
When blick²⁰ out of house did Rout him
And cause they could noe longer stay
Were force with Nees to fly away 110
soe trusty they swore they would not
leave Nees while he was worth a groat
Arm'd nor with Gorgett or Cutace²¹
With Gantlett frontlett or vinbrace
No Pectorall or Harquebush
To save a wolt or give a push
A Bill & Wattle served in place
Of Bilbo laces & Catace
Nor did they love to load their back
With dragons²² or [with] Cataphract 120
But like true sonnes of Victory
In One whole Armor Cap-a-pe

¹⁵ <One like ye rest>.

¹⁶ <His Army & retinue>.

¹⁷ <A sort of hors[e]men Sr Jo: Dav of Ireland>. The reference is to Sir John Davies, *A discovery of the true causes why Ireland was never entirely subdued* (London, 1612). For Sir John Davies see *DIB*.

¹⁸ The word 'of' is incorrectly repeated here.

¹⁹ <woodkernes – destruction of Irish unto the Ranks. Hollinestead>. The reference is to Raphael Holinshed's 1577 *Irish chronicles* that included Richard Stanyhurst's 'A description of Ireland' (for Richard Stanyhurst see *DIB*).

²⁰ mis-transcription of 'Tellick' or 'Ulick' (see above note to l. 93).

²¹ <thick Armour>.

²² dragons. The rhythm requires the additional word in this line.

[p. 6] To which for Lining many a Lous is
 Which Nees's men ycliped trousers
 A frugall weare where they did Guard
 To cut their Clath to their owne yard
 ffor twix the leggs a poke they pin
 To hang appturtenances in

A Warlick Ornament & Nees
 Himselfe in trousers of blew frees
 About your²³ Shoulders hung a vaile
 A Blew Bracane for Coate of mayle
 Of Rebels Plush & guirded round
 With heart of Oake Nees tore the ground²⁴
 A dreadfull weight nor wanted Nees
 To make him up but a head peece
 Made him soe shamfacd that his Grace
 Durst never looke his foe ith face
 Advancing was his greatest mischance
 ffor he did love to keepe his distance
 And thought not herisy or scisme
 A greater sin[n]e than sinappism
 In feild they open Order Chose
 But in the woods they lay at close
 Made them such Armour chooce the rather
 To fitt them for the bogs & watter
 To w[hi]ch y[e] Prince Bagg & bagargh²⁵
 With store of Roots pavant²⁶ of Cabagh

130

140

²³ mis-transcription for 'his'.

²⁴ <a God he was bogd>. Conjectural reading of an indecipherable sidenote.

²⁵ baggage.

²⁶ Probably a mistranscription of a lost original.