Robin Usher

PROTESTANT DUBLIN,

1660—1760

Architecture and Iconography

Early Modern History: Society and Culture

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Protestant Dublin, 1660–1760

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Illustrations

Abbreviations Used in Notes

Barnard, *A new anatomy*: T.C. Barnard, *A new anatomy of Ireland: the Irish Protestants, 1649–1770* (New Haven and London, 2003)

Barnard, *Making the grand figure*: T.C. Barnard, *Making the grand figure: lives and possessions in Ireland, 1641–1770* (New Haven and London, 2004)

BIGS: *Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*

BL: British Library

Bodl.: Bodleian Library, Oxford

Burke, 'Dublin, 1600–1800': N.T. Burke, 'Dublin, 1600–1800: a study in urban morphogenesis' (PhD diss., TCD, 1972)

CARD: J.T. Gilbert and R.M. Gilbert (eds), *Calendar of the ancient records of Dublin* (19 vols, Dublin, 1889–1944)

Carpenter (ed.), *Eighteenth-century verse*: A. Carpenter (ed.), *Verse in English from eighteenth-century Ireland* (Cork, 1998)

Casey, *Dublin*: C. Casey, *Dublin: the city within the grand and royal canals and the circular roads* (New Haven and London, 2005)

Clark and Gillespie (eds), *Two capitals*: P. Clark and R. Gillespie (eds), *Two capitals: Dublin and London, 1500–1850* (Oxford, 2001)

Connolly, *Religion, law, and power*: S.J. Connolly, *Religion, law, and power: the making of Protestant Ireland, 1700–1760* (Oxford, 1992)

Craig, *Dublin, 1660–1860*: M.J. Craig, *Dublin, 1660–1860: the shaping of a city* (8th edn, Dublin, 2006)

CSPD: F.H. Blackburne Daniell, F. Bickley, and M.J. Everett (eds), *Calendar of the state papers domestic: Charles II* (28 vols, London, 1860–1939)

CSPI: J.P. Mahaffy (ed.), *Calendar of the state papers relating to Ireland* [1647–1670] (5 vols, London, 1903–10)

DCLA: Dublin City Library and Archives

Delany: A. Llanover (ed.), *The autobiography and correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs. Delany*, first and second series (6 vols, London, 1862)

DHR: *Dublin Historical Record*

Dudley, 'Dublin's parishes': R.V. Dudley, 'Dublin's parishes, 1660–1729: the Church of Ireland parishes and their role in the civic administration of the city' (PhD diss., 2 vols, TCD, 1995)

ECI: *Eighteenth Century Ireland*

Gilbert: J.T. Gilbert, *History of the city of Dublin* (3 vols, Dublin, 1854–9).

GSR: *The Georgian Society records of eighteenth-century domestic architecture and decoration in Dublin* (5 vols, Dublin, 1909–13)

Hill, *From patriots to unionists*: J. Hill, *From patriots to unionists: Dublin civic politics and Irish Protestant patriotism, 1660–1840* (Oxford, 1997)

HMC: Reports of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, as follows: *Charlemont* (2 vols, London, 1891–4); *Egmont* (2 vols, London, 1905); *Ormonde*, O.S. (2 vols, London, 1895–9); *Ormonde* [N.S.] (8 vols, 1902–20); *Portland* (10 vols, London, 1891–1931); *Rutland* (4 vols, London, 1888–1905); *Stopford-Sackville* (2 vols, London, 1904–10); *Various* (8 vols, London, 1901–14)

HLQ: *Huntington Library Quarterly*

IADS: *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies*

IAR: *Irish Arts Review*

JRSAI: *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*

Kelly, 'The glorious and immortal memory': J. Kelly, ' "The glorious and immortal memory": commemoration and Protestant identity in Ireland, 1660–1800', *Proc. RIA*, C.94/2 (1994): 25–52

King (ed.), *A great archbishop*: C.S. King (ed.), *A great archbishop of Dublin: William King, D.D., 1650–1729 – his autobiography, family, and a selection from his correspondence* (London, 1906)

McParland, *Public architecture*: E. McParland, *Public architecture in Ireland, 1680–1760* (New Haven and London, 2001)

Milne (ed.), *Christ Church*: K. Milne (ed.), *Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin: a history* (Dublin, 1999)

Monck-Mason, 'Collections': W. Monck-Mason, 'Collections for a history of Dublin', 7 vols, DCLA, Gilbert Mss. 63–70

NAI: National Archives of Ireland

NHI: F.J. Byrne, A. Cosgrove, J.R. Hill, F.X. Martin, T.W. Moody, and W.E. Vaughan (eds), *A new history of Ireland* (9 vols, 1976–2008)

NLI: National Library of Ireland

PRONI: Public Records Office of Northern Ireland

Proc. RIA: *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*

RCB: Representative Church Body, Dundrum, Co. Dublin

Reg. Deeds: Registry of Deeds, Dublin

Rep. D.K.: *Report[s] of the deputy keeper of the public records in Ireland* (53 instalments, London, 1869–1921)

Swift: H. Williams (ed.), *The correspondence of Jonathan Swift* (5 vols, Oxford, 1963–5)

TCD: Trinity College, Dublin

TNA: The National Archives, London

Acknowledgements

Introduction

One of the most amusing skits on Irish Protestant dissent of the eighteenth century describes the adventures of a pair of Ulster ship hands who arrive in Dublin on a Saturday evening. After a night spent unpacking a cargo of corn at Aston Quay, these devout northerners decide to find an appropriate place of worship. The ship's master, familiar with the layout of the 'Great City', offers a bewildering set of directions to the nearest Presbyterian meetinghouse, sending the crew on a lengthy trek through the streets of the capital. The journey takes them past an equestrian statue of William III at College Green, a couple of hundred yards away from the Tholsel, or city hall. Near there, the sailors lose each other in a crowd of civic officials waiting to accompany the lord mayor to weekly service in Christ Church Cathedral. The smarter of the travellers, regaining his bearings, soon discovers a 'New Light' conventicle on Usher's Quay, whilst his friend, encouraged by a local, ventures into the cathedral. Taken aback by the sumptuousness of his surroundings, he spends the service sneering at pompous, bewigged clergymen, over-elaborate liturgy, and shrill organ music, a spectacle he dismisses as a profanation of the Lord's Day.[1]

Sectarian concerns aside, the piece, sometimes attributed to Jonathan Swift, provides a rare narrative of early-modern Irish urban space. While traversing Dublin's streets, the pedestrian encounters a sequence of visual signs, including representations of the state (King William's statue), municipal government (the Tholsel), and ecclesiastical order, embodied by the city's premier church. The impression given is that Ireland's largest urban conurbation consisted of a set of fixtures symbolic of institutional authority, which could yield measurable responses from their audiences.

Of course, the notion of meaning-laden urban terrain represented in the squib was hardly unique to Dublin. Since the Italian Renaissance,

almost every substantial European town or city contained a series of modern iconographical devices that were prominent enough to attract the notice (and opinions) of visitors and indigenes alike. Statues of notables stood at important nodes in the street network. Public buildings, though varying in architectural finesse, provided monumental focuses in their localities. Civic ceremonial, designed to perpetuate local traditions and self-image, bulked out the ritual calendar. As individual entities, many of these components of urban representational culture have been studied intensely. Indeed, civic ritual, by its nature an activity specific to towns, has a burgeoning following among scholars of historical anthropology, political ideas, and social behaviour.[2] But only recently has the iconography of the entire topography of a given area become an object of study in its own respect, and even then the pioneers, as will be seen below, have come from fields ranging from architecture to human geography, rather than history. Yet for historians of early-modern Britain, Europe, and Ireland, the pursuit of similarly conceived work has the potential to reveal much about the aesthetic dimensions of power relationships and authority, as well as the history of cultural paradigms and the role of the collective imagination in society.

This book, adopting an ecumenical approach to methodology and grounded in extensive archival research, is the first survey of Dublin's landscape iconography in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, a period of urban growth and renewal demarcated by the restoration of a viceregal court in 1662 and the formation of a centrally-administered planning agency (the Commission for Wide and Convenient Streets) in the 1750s. As suggested earlier, the book, written on the fault lines that separate (but also connect) a variety of disciplines, is a belated product of the so-called Cultural Turn in historical studies, partaking of a now well-established awareness among scholars of how early-modern societies conceived of their surroundings as a web of symbols that aided their understanding of their institutions, belief systems, and their physical environment.[3] More specifically, the book is an exercise in urban (instead of local or regional) history and seeks to address the methodological difficulties inherent in the interpretation of the cityscape. By utilising the semiological approach of cultural geographers, the symbolic relevance of space and place is brought to bear on the reading of urban terrain. What follows is also, inescapably, a work of Irish (and, territorial sensitivities aside, British) history, and as such, it measures the significance of discrete political and socio-economic conditions for the reading of the city's street network. As the work of

at least one distinguished scholar of the eighteenth century has shown, Irish exceptionalism, a regular theme in much of the secondary literature, can no longer be easily presumed.[4] As a means of testing common assumptions that Irish Protestant culture (and, within this remit, Dublin's iconography) was somehow 'colonial', European cities, as well as those in Britain, appear in comparative contexts.

The book's principal goal, nonetheless, is to show how the physical environment conveyed meanings relating to institutional authority. Discourses of state power, political representation, Anglican denominational superiority, and the convoluted matter of social hierarchy were expressed, with varying degrees of coherence and consistency, in Dublin's architecture and spatial arrangement. Consequently, the main focuses for investigation are acts of architectural patronage by the public bodies based in the capital, comprising the viceregal court, the municipality, the guilds, and the Church of Ireland. For these groups, the artefactual base consists of buildings, outdoor statues, aspects of the decorative arts, and non-material, ritual activities, including both grand occasional spectacle and everyday ceremonial protocols. Additionally, there is an important non-institutional dimension. By bringing together demographic and architectural history, the thesis contends that social level, as manifest in domestic buildings, has an iconography. However, before the narrative can begin, it is necessary to define the central concepts, review the secondary literature, and outline in greater detail the main features of the period and the place under review.

I. Symbolic topographies

Every city is more than just a constellation of administrative and economic functions. Dotted with statues and public buildings, early-modern urban space was abundant in signifiers of institutional power. Indeed, the very act of causing monumental alterations to the urban landscape involved inscribing a profound and enduring representation of authority. To Denis Cosgrove, a leading landscape semiologist, 'all landscapes carry symbolic meaning because all are products of the human appropriation and transformation of the environment. Symbolism is most easily read in the most highly-designed landscapes – the city, the park and the garden'.[5] Yet the treatment of urban landscape as a symbolic matrix has made few inroads into mainstream urban history. This is disappointing, given that the sub-discipline of 'iconography', the interpretation of meaning in architecture and the visual arts, has been successfully used

as a lens for viewing a number of topics of socio-political relevance, such as the art of the royal courts of the British and European *Ancien Régime*. In focussing on individual grandees, 'cultural' biographies have appeared for Louis XIV, Charles I, and – interestingly, given the representational challenges he faced – Oliver Cromwell. The lure of political elites for iconographical enquirers is further visible in readings of room hierarchies and symbolic thresholds in royal domiciles.[6] In general, however, the emphasis on discrete symbolic devices (for example, portraits, coats of arms, and court costume) prohibits anything more than occasional spatial awareness.

The corrective, at least for work of an urban character, lies in historical geography, a cognate discipline in which iconography has become a frontline technique for unravelling the meanings inherent in, and ascribed by past societies to, the historical town and city. In a useful recent formulation, iconography is defined as 'the symbolic analysis of visual images that takes into account the cultural context of their production in time and space.'[7] The practice itself originated in the intellectual histories of renaissance art generated in the 1930s by Erwin Panofsky, which attempted to correlate pictorial content with sacred or devotional texts, though early practitioners rarely pursued matters political.[8] In the present day, cultural geography has substituted real, inhabitable spaces for 'images' and enquired about the ideological imprints perceivable in designed urban space.[9] Always created by minority wealth and opinion, cities inevitably invite interpretations framed in the language of power, authority, and (especially in studies of Foucauldian hue) social control.[10]

The new place of iconography in cultural and historical geography deserves further exposition. Statuary and the buildings of state, always particular favourites, are treated as 'texts of power', and their place in identity formation has been convincingly established in texts that scrutinize political principles and attitudes as incorporated into the built environment.[11] David Harvey's 1979 study of the *Sacré Coeur* in Paris, the initiator of the genre, relates this popularly maligned monument to the reactionary nineteenth-century political caste that brought about its construction, and notes how its siting, taking in a Marian pilgrimage site, was calculated to appeal to discontented right-wing Catholics. Moving on from denoted, or intended, meanings, Harvey touches on the connotative realm, in which unanticipated interpretations accumulated around the monument. (The locality became a place for radical rendezvous, because the basilica had been built near a vineyard where members of the Commune of 1871 were executed.)[12] Adopting a similar

strategy, and developing on their own innovations, Denis Cosgrove and David Atkins have charted the imperialist and nationalist ideologies that underpinned Rome's vertiginous neoclassical memorial to King Victor Emmanuel III, erected in 1911–35 and appropriated by the Fascist regime before facing post-war derision, vandalism, and the compartmentalised urban phenomena of drug-dealing and commercial sex.[13]

Bigger spatial remits have been adopted in some subsequent studies, and their line of questioning is again political, if in a very broad sense of the term. In an article published in 2000, the stately and cosmopolitan iconography of early St Petersburg, counting royal statues and ingratiating street nomenclature among its fixtures, is contrasted with the symbolic terrains of Moscow, which sported the distinctively Eurasian polychromatic architecture of the Kremlin and St Basil's Cathedral.[14] Venturing into the contemporary, Melbourne's waterfront, once regarded as a reproach to Australia's wealthiest city, receives attention in a book that posits a link between the neo-liberal ethos of economic growth and the bland, inoffensive style of the modernist buildings erected around the harbour.[15] In other works, city-wide studies of car parks and public toilets, as well as the predictable equestrian princes and tree-lined avenues, re-emphasise the ideological allusions of urban form, broaching such issues as the discourses of nation and state, cultural elitism, the sexualisation of space, and the zoning of wealth.[16]

There are snags in the types of texts just reviewed, especially the historically orientated. Many examples of urban iconography written by geographers are restrictive in their chronological spans and theoretical apparatus and can be stylistically aggravating. Typically, they either examine single monuments (preferably dwelling on any controversies involved) or stick to urban conurbations where some process of symbolic erasure followed regime change. In the latter, often dealing with extra-European cities, the critique is arbitrated by conflict-centred colonial and postcolonial models, usually citing the deletion of statues of deposed governors and soldiers and their replacement by nationalist or revolutionary icons. The symbolic reconfigurations of New Delhi, Hong Kong, and Sri Lanka (alternatively Ceylon) have each been probed; the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq in 2003, culminating in a careful choreography of destruction in Firdos Square in Baghdad, will surely invite the same kind of exegesis.[17] The relevant chronological points are thus taken to be implantation and destruction; the period in between, and the possibility of an earlier lack of controversy, are seldom considered: the 'headline' approach appears to suffice.

Conflict looms less large in some of the iconographic expeditions undertaken by architectural historians, though these still have problems, mostly of accessibility. Thomas Markus's monograph of 1993, *Buildings and Power*, demonstrates how historical public buildings achieved local acceptance through the appropriation of particular past idioms. Repeatedly, England's nineteenth-century town halls, reconstructed in modish Gothic dressage, made subtle reference to their predecessors, either in shape, general spatial disposition, or surface texture: only this sort of topographical memorialisation ensured that the new could blend seamlessly with memories of the old, and thereby operate with some level of symbolic potency. Too often, regrettably, Markus's results, sometimes gathered in spider diagrams illustrating the stratigraphy of social processes lying between the viewer and the viewed, are couched in uncompromisingly abstract terms, which may inadvertently confuse rather than illuminate.[18] Another promising title, Kim Dovey's *Framing places: mediating power in built form* (1999), anatomises the creative conflict inherent in the architect-client relationship in commercial and residential spaces in developed cities across the globe, contending that the architect, whatever about their personal benevolence, is inevitably implicated in the generation of city spaces that exclusively represent the demands of a client who has little real interest in the aesthetic or environmental sensitivities of the wider urban populace. The value of Dovey's approach is that it complicates the matter of symbolic agency, demonstrating how the simple inscription of denotative meaning must be mediated by the parameters of architectural convention and the artistic ambitions of the designer; but the stumbling blocks inherent in applied architectural theory remain. The key concepts in Dovey's method of spatial investigation, namely 'power' (or the ability to control the behaviour of other people) and 'authority' (the institutional concentration of power), assume a curiously insidious character whose apparently exploitative intent cannot always be convincingly documented by empirical, viewer-response means.[19] And again, the reliance on the theoretical clouds the potentially plausible suggestion that power, and its institutionalisation in the mechanisms of authority, is neither monolithic nor abstract, but multifaceted, as well as a potential source of moral energy, whatever the ideological load of its architectural representation.[20]

Dublin's historical fabric has not been immune to the research agendas mapped here. The findings, however, are subject to highly schematised frameworks and lack an extensive empirical base. Yvonne Whelan's *Reinventing modern Dublin: streetscape, iconography and the*

politics of identity (2003), a highly original piece of Irish cultural geography concentrating on the evolution of Dublin's iconography before and after national independence, is an isolated semiology of an Irish city, but its brief treatment of the 1700s describes the statues and public buildings of Georgian Dublin as propaganda tools designed to remind the seditious of who was in charge.[21] The issues of agency, impetus, and changes in iconographic meaning (aside from the disdain – and the nocturnal violence – that British-themed public monuments endured in the 'postcolonial' state) are quickly passed over. Andrew Kincaid's far cruder take on 'postcolonial' Dublin, applying Antonio Gramsci's theories of dominance to the topic of centrally-administered urban improvement, arrives at comparable conclusions.[22]

Moving away from the geographical, Irish art history, a very conservative field, is rarely affected by colonial paradigms, and the publications that adopt them are simplistic in their historical grasp and ultimately unpersuasive. Whereas Fintan Cullen's *Visualising Ireland* aggressively seeks out evidence of colonial anxiety in eighteenth-century portraiture and landscape painting,[23] a monograph on the decorative arts in Hanoverian Britain and Ireland declares that eighteenth-century Dublin was essentially 'an England where the Reformation never quite happened', populated by a 'Protestant Herrenvolk' responsible for an 'increasingly sophisticated city',

> where (…) rents could be spent, not only on high living (…) but on prestige projects of architecture, charity and education: anything which would assert the national identity of that artificial and basically insecure inner nation of the religious élite.[24]

The internal variety of Protestant Ireland, extensively fleshed out by Toby Barnard, Sean Connolly, David Dickson, and Raymond Gillespie, is thus lost in a narrative shaped by the assumption that Irish architecture and visual culture can be comprehensively explained as a function of socio-religious enmity. In the sections below, which review the period and the place, a more reasonable slant is proposed.[25]

II. Dublin, 1660–1760

Despite the temptation to make rash assumptions about the civil divisions of early-modern Irish society and the supposed homogeneity of its Protestant components, it has never been seriously doubted that Ireland was a country whose built environment (especially in Dublin) was

moulded by anglicised elites. Following the defeat of Catholic insurgency and the consolidation of a Protestant (and wholly Anglican) body politic, first in the civil wars of the 1640s and again in 1689–91, Dublin was confirmed as an administrative, political, and economic capital, and accommodated a set of public bodies and social groups defined by their adherence to, and willingness to defend, the established church and the English (later British) monarchy. Civic institutions, like the corporation of Dublin and the trade and craft guilds, were Protestant strongholds, and almost all of the private entrepreneurs who developed the urban estates were Protestant in their orientation. If it is possible to write about Dublin's symbols of authority, the institutions of *Protestant* Dublin must be broached. Dublin's iconography, though stylistically European in its rendering, was – at least at the level of basic agency – a Protestant creation.

While Barnard, Dickson, Gillespie, and Hill have done a good deal to reconstruct the *mentalités* of Ireland's and Dublin's Protestants, the secondary sources for the urban and architectural endeavours of the latter are abundant, and provide an almost complete picture of the city's appearance during its transition from a tatty English outpost in the 1600s to a set-piece Georgian capital.[26] Nuala Burke's celebrated Ph.D. thesis on the city's development charts urban growth and infrastructural change in extreme detail and remains the standard reference work. However, most of the valuable modern research – usually found in periodicals such as the *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* and the *Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society* – can be classified as formalist architectural history, which treats principally of building chronology, reflecting only momentarily on questions of meaning. Excluding the highly textured work of David Dickson and Edward McParland, the book-length overviews that consider both the formal and the contextual (for instance, Maurice Craig's *Dublin, 1660–1860*) rely on anecdote.[27] Nonetheless, what all of the surveys agree upon is that the Restoration, where the narrative of this book commences, was a decisive juncture in the infrastructural and institutional history of the city. Dublin grew exponentially between 1660 and the middle of the eighteenth century, and the chief monumental structures erected in the opening part of the period – the Tholsel and the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham – were designed in a cosmopolitan dialect new to Ireland. In the modernisation of Irish architecture, the institutions of rule were the innovators: the Castle, a showcase of the quasi-regal ethos of the Restoration lords lieutenant, was envisioned as a Baroque palace on a par with Whitehall, and the city's churches,

tended to by ambitious vestries, owed more to contemporary London than local example.

Progress in the domestic sector was equally precocious and just as dependent on a small number of entrepreneurs. City landowners, mostly with a stake in political life, applied systems of regularity and symmetry to the plans of their residential suburbs. The developmental precedents of the eighteenth century, itself far better covered in the secondary literature, were set. So, too, were the agencies of infrastructural development. In the new century, the municipal corporation, the Church of Ireland, the private urban estates, and the viceroyalty (now encumbered by a system of parliamentary governance) remained the key builders.

What strikes most forcibly about post-Restoration Dublin is the pace of its expansion. Louis Cullen describes the city's swelling as 'astonishing' and proposes that the capital bears comparison with continental cities of similar scale, such as the North Sea ports.[28] In the same way, Connolly views Dublin's enlargement as something best understood against an international backdrop, citing the fact that its population in 1744 made it the eleventh largest city in Europe. The demographic estimates are certainly instructive: the hearth tax returns indicate that the early Restoration city had a population of about 40,000, about twice what it had been in 1600, but still only a fraction of that of London, Paris, or Vienna. This figure rose to 60,000 in 1700, making Dublin almost as populous as Amsterdam.[29]

As is frequently pointed out, there were several causes for the increase. Dublin contained the seat of government (cemented in 1672 by the abolition of the provincial presidencies), the houses of parliament, the higher law courts, and the country's sole university. It was also the island's premier trading centre, handling about 50 percent of customs receipts by 1700, comfortably displacing Drogheda as the main port on the eastern seaboard. Finally, internal migration climbed when the commercialisation of the eighteenth-century agricultural economy attracted the rural poor to the capital in search of work.[30]

The city's population growth naturally had physical manifestation. By the time Charles Brooking surveyed it in 1728, the walled medieval town was ensconced by suburbs. Growth had seeped over the River Liffey to its north bank, and was integrated in plan with the older suburban settlement of Oxmantown. Alongside the residential developments, the terrains of the official city were incrementally improved. The viceroyalty persisted in building at the Castle and at its semi-rural demesne at the Phoenix Park, and Irish MPs, now a prime legislative

force, if never a totally submissive one, re-housed themselves in a structure then considered one of the finest in Europe. The city's churches, erected or re-erected at the behest of William King, an exceptionally industrious metropolitan, appeared in enduring architectural guise. In 1762, a Dubliner boasted that his birthplace has 'risen in little more than a century and a half from the lowest ebb of wretchedness and contempt to almost the summit of elegance…'[31]

The break-off of Dublin's renaissance – and the coverage of this book – is hazy, but can be approximated. There is evidence, unearthed by Dickson, to suggest that rates of population growth tapered off from the middle of the eighteenth century. Yet, as confirmed by the abstracted titles to property in the Registry of Deeds, building continued at an artificially high pace, with landlords pushing their holdings further and further away from the core of the old mercantile city. Of the monumental interventions, the most notable were the Royal Exchange of 1769–79 and James Gandon's Custom House, constructed from 1781 to 1791.

There were two major differences between the Dublin of *c.*1700–70 and the postcard 'Georgian' city. The first was qualitative. As in Berlin and Paris, both directly administered by central government, Dublin's architecture and planning in the later eighteenth century took their cues from a novel stylistic idiom, originating in France and northern Italy: neoclassicism.[32] This, characterised by abstract bareness and antiquarian allusions, made older, bittier styles seem unlettered and finicky. Whereas Thomas Cooley's Royal Exchange has an arresting starkness, the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham and the Tholsel, with their tack-on heraldic ornaments, looked naive by comparison. The street network, steadily reordered on neoclassical principles by the Wide Streets Commission after 1757, was now sutured by elongated axes arranged so that they terminated in public buildings. In the Dublin of the Stuart lords lieutenant and their successors in the reigns of George I and George II, overarching streetscape improvement was never more than a vague aspiration, and attempts at axial planning were isolated.

The second factor differentiating the later period from the earlier was political culture. By 1770, the obsequious world of the duke of Ormond, viceroy in 1662–9 and 1677–85, would have been recognisable only in some of the more arcane features of its ceremonial. In the eighteenth century, political awareness, cultivated by print, descended the social pyramid. Protesting crowds, literate in politics of more than purely local importance, agglutinated frequently, arousing government

paranoia about French military conspiracy.[33] Moreover, at the summit of political life, government style changed drastically. The ability of the executive to rule depended increasingly on negotiated partnerships with elected public representatives, which in turn generated a culture of opposition. The distinction between the 'English' and the 'Irish' (that is, Anglo-Irish) interests had crystallised by the controversial lieutenancy of Viscount Townshend in 1767–72, and the parliamentary politics of the remaining decades of the century, influenced by the costs of Britain's wars, led to disputes about the country's constitutional standing. As Murray Fraser has argued, this effected how official architecture was commissioned. Lacking money and adequate autonomy, the traditional City fathers declined as architectural patrons. More pertinently, the viceroyalty was no longer in a position to act independently of the legislature. The building of the Custom House and the Royal Exchange, each litigious, came about following contention and resulted in the alienation of one or more of the interested parties.[34]

With its generous ordonnance of official architecture, Dublin's suitability as a subject of iconographical analysis is patent. Within Ireland, its validity is incontestable, and goes well beyond constitutional status as set out in legal documents and city charters. In large conurbations, the audiences for representational culture could display a more interesting mix of responses than the inhabitants of smaller towns, where social structures were more clear-cut, and the incidence of urban adornment less.[35] Additionally, large cities aid the study of urban iconography for the rather prosaic reason that a better selection of documentary evidence is likely to survive. In orthodox iconographic enquiry, aiming at a synthetic view of symbolic meaning by merging the denotations of basic, easily identifiable symbols with the local contexts that affected their reception, ample written sources of local relevance are a fundamental demand. Thankfully, Dublin's city corporation, once responsible for the administration of an area of several square miles, has the fullest municipal archive in the country. The Irish state papers at the National Archives in London and the correspondence sets relating to particular lords lieutenant both narrate and elucidate the motives underlying viceregal protocol. Other documents, including leases, rentals, guild records, church registers, and vestry minutes, are copious enough to compensate for gaps in the alternative sources. One underused type of source pressed into service in this book is verse, which as Tom Dunne, Éamonn Ó Ciardha, and Breandán Ó Buachalla have asserted, can provide a window into social and political attitudes otherwise seldom committed to paper.[36]

Most of the sources germane to Dublin's iconography originate in specific organizations or institutions, and it is around these that the book is structured. Chapter 1 introduces the topographical ties and representational strategies of Dublin's most powerful iconographic authors, the city corporation and the viceroyalty. The ideological freight of the Tholsel, the Castle, the Royal Hospital, and a constellation of lesser structures, is identified and evaluated. Chapter 2 considers the symbolic thrust of ecclesiastical buildings, and besides a number of case studies, brings the narrative into the eighteenth century by examining the church architecture associated with the episcopate of William King in 1703–29. Outdoor statuary, perhaps the most explicitly symbolic component of the urban terrain, is examined in Chapter 3, which concentrates on the city's equestrian statues of William III (1701), George I (1722). and George II (1758). Chapter 4 turns again to the viceregal court, and suggests how developments in political culture coloured the meanings of the capital's buildings of government. In Chapter 5, the final section, attention shifts to the privately-owned accommodation of Dublin's politically-active elites, and it argues that the domestic architecture of the era generated a visible geography of social level.

Although the chronological scope of these chapters is set over a *longue durée*, a common thread emerges. Dublin's symbolic topographies, it shall be shown, were less a harmonised 'given' than the product of a multitude of locally-orientated interest groups. Only by breaking the city into its institutional parts can its iconography be properly understood.

1
Court and City in Restoration Dublin

King Charles II's Ireland is no longer a gaping cavity in the secondary literature. The politics and socio-economic developments of the era have been anatomised in a range of theses and monographs, and are the subject of a recent essay collection.[1] But coverage is still unsystematic. Excepting work by Toby Barnard (on commodities),[2] Jane Fenlon (on aristocratic patronage of the visual arts),[3] Raymond Gillespie (on the book),[4] Nuala Burke (on urban growth), and Rolf Loeber and Edward McParland (on architecture),[5] few have investigated the material footprints of the period which, as the sources show, left their strongest impressions on the capital.[6] A letter from the philosopher William Molyneux to his brother in 1684 illustrates the changes. Molyneux's younger sibling, studying in the Netherlands, is told that 'we are come to fine things here in Dublin, and you would wonder how our city increases sensibly in fair buildings, great trade, and splendour in all things, – in furniture, coaches, civility and housekeeping'.[7] With the economic stabilisation of the 1670s and immigration from Britain and the rural hinterland, a market for non-staple goods sprouted; simultaneously, fresh architectural styles, European in origin, spread to the city's residential and public spaces.[8]

However, the cultural life of the official, Protestant city had a dimension that cannot be evaluated in narrowly formalistic or quantitative terms. The representational forms harnessed by the municipality and the viceregal court, Dublin's principal institutional authorities, gave ideological thrust to the symbols and spaces of the city's streetscape. Civic and state ritual celebrated what its proponents optimistically portrayed as an epoch of harmony, Protestant unity and the resuscitation of the proper order in government and society.