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5 'Lacking Ware, withal': Finding Sir James Ware among the Many Incarnations of his Histories

Mark Williams

In 1846, Thomas D'Arcy McGee, contributor to Young Ireland's *The Nation* and an already prolific writer of histories of Ireland, wrote and arranged for the publication of a compendium of biographies of seventeenth-century Irish writers. An ardent Catholic and strong believer in the instructional and inspirational value of history, McGee found the writers of the seventeenth century especially illuminating on the problems of his age, offering a valuable model for an Ireland which, lacking a sense of nationhood, suffered 'not only [...] politically, but in literature, in art, in science, in the tenderest recesses of character and in the most sensitive stages of intellect'.¹ Published in Dublin as part of James Duffy's 'Library of Ireland' series, this was to be another contribution to the development of a middle-class, nationalist perception of a distinctly Irish past which was the sum of its many parts rather than a violent contest between them.²

Unsurprisingly, McGee's enterprise demanded some tactical lapses in memory. In writing the book, McGee was, as he openly acknowledged, heavily reliant upon the writings of Sir James Ware (1594–1666), the Dublin-born seventeenth-century antiquary whose 1639 publication *De Scriptoribus Hiberniae* had documented the lives of Irish writers up to the early seventeenth century. For McGee, however, Ware provided another model for his historical reimaginings: reflecting upon Ware's life, McGee praised his subject for being free from the influences of 'evil hopes[,] [...] fears' and the dogmatism of the age, preferring instead 'pure information' from its original sources. True, McGee conceded, the sectarianism of the seventeenth century had had an impact upon Ware's writings, without which Ware 'would have grown thoroughly Irish with a strong Celtic bias'. However, Ware, in spite of these influences, had pursued an objective truth and his 'national history and character for



1 Ireland' made him a 'Herculean pillar' among his contemporaries and
2 the 'sole authority' amid 'clumsy and dishonest jobbers'.³

3 In writing this biography, McGee had drawn from, and expanded
4 upon, representations of Ware which were decidedly removed from
5 their original subject. Most were the product of authors who, like
6 McGee, were more eager to manipulate and employ the legacy and
7 authority of Ware and his works rather than negotiate their contradic-
8 tions and ambiguities. In McGee's case, this was not simply a matter of
9 seeing the past through green-tinted lenses; rather, it had its roots in
10 the cultures of print which had variously arisen, expanded and changed
11 between the time of Ware's historical output and the nineteenth centu-
12 ry. One example is immediately evident: instead of drawing upon
13 Ware's original Latin texts, McGee had employed the translations of the
14 eighteenth-century historian Walter Harris, thereby circumventing the
15 challenges posed by the increasingly rare original editions, but subject-
16 ing McGee's imagining of Ware to a host of other issues woven into
17 Harris's text.⁴ This was only one of the filters through which Ware's role
18 in the formation of Irish notions of history had been established: the
19 monolithic contribution which Ware had made to the understanding
20 of Ireland's antiquity, and the substantial manuscript collections which
21 he assembled and subsequently left to posterity, made engaging with
22 his work and person unavoidable for those seeking an authoritative
23 foundation for their rendition of the Irish past. Crucially, however, the
24 persistence of these works, manuscripts and representations of Ware as
25 an antiquarian did not make Ware immutable. Rather, as this essay
26 will illustrate, the various confluences and divergences of Ware's texts,
27 manuscripts, biography and reputation provide a means of assessing
28 how the print cultures of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth
29 centuries impact upon our understanding of the ways in which ideas of
30 textual authority were transmitted and negotiated as print shifted from
31 the scholarly medium of Ware's age to the medium of the masses in
32 McGee's. In doing so, it emphasises the need to treat the particular print
33 cultures of these ages alongside the parallel and overlapping influences
34 of other media and sources of authority in the formation of opinions
35 regarding Ware and the Irish past.

36 The historical record has left little detail regarding Ware's life.⁵ Born
37 in 1594, Ware was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, where he fell
38 under the significant influence of then Vice-Provost James Ussher. This
39 sparked Ware's interest in antiquarianism, providing him with access to
40 Ussher's collections while also offering *entrée* into the scholarly elite of
41 Ireland, Britain and continental Europe. Ware's extant journal entries

1 reveal an unwavering fascination with the documentation of manuscript
2 materials, the acquisition of books new and old, the collection of exist-
3 ing library catalogues, observations on government officers past and
4 present, and the history of Irish bishoprics.⁶ Both Ussher's influence and
5 Ware's desire to establish the antiquity of the Church of Ireland brought
6 about the publication of his history of the archbishoprics of Cashel and
7 Tuam in 1626.⁷ In 1633 Ware edited and published a volume entitled
8 *A History of Ireland*, consisting of Spenser's *View of the Present State of*
9 *Ireland* (its first printing), Meredith Hanmer's *A Chronicle of Ireland* and
10 Edmund Campion's *History of Ireland*.⁸ While unabashedly forwarding a
11 Protestant, Anglo-Irish take on this history, there was, even at this stage,
12 a more moderate view evident in Ware, who inserted marginalia into
13 texts such as Spenser's to assure his reader that the violence of these
14 past ages had been put to rest by the reign of James I, thereby antiquat-
15 ing their extremism.⁹ These projects proved only a prelude to Ware's
16 masterpiece, his *De Hibernia et antiquitatibus eius disquisitiones*, generally
17 known as his *Antiquities*, first published in 1654 and again in 1658, both
18 times in London. Written and published at the close of the Civil Wars,
19 the *Antiquities* was a monumental discourse on the ancient origins of
20 Ireland, placing its legal, political, artistic and religious history within
21 the context of continental European development through the writings
22 of both classical and contemporary writers. It was, as Ware prefaced
23 it, a bold attempt to illuminate the dark mists of antiquity.¹⁰ This was
24 followed in 1656 with Ware's study of the life and works of St Patrick,
25 and in 1664 a compilation of the annals of Henry VII through to Mary I
26 (expanding upon earlier editions published in 1656 and 1662) as well as
27 a study of the Venerable Bede and Egbert of York.¹¹

28 Beyond Ware's publishing output, however, the details of his life,
29 thought and work patterns remain remarkably obscure. Through William
30 O'Sullivan's invaluable work, we know that Ware was in London in the
31 late 1640s and early 1650s, reading the Cotton, Carew and Ussher manu-
32 scripts.¹² Ware himself acknowledged in the preface to his 1658 edition
33 of the *Antiquities* that he had been separated from his library in Dublin
34 for the first edition; subsequent access had allowed him to expand on
35 some of the content. Academic affiliations have been traced through
36 the collection and printing of the correspondence of not only Ussher,
37 but also Ware's friend and patron, James Butler, marquis of Ormond. In
38 the latter case, Ormond's vast surviving manuscript collection allows us
39 to trace Ware's likely connection while in exile to Samuel Bochart, the
40 Huguenot polymath of Caen, through Ormond's residence as Bochart's
41 guest in the early 1650s.¹³ We also know something of Ware's place

1 within these academic circles. For instance, in a letter of November
2 1658, Ware responded to an enquiry from fellow antiquary William
3 Dugdale regarding the draining of Irish bogs. Ware recommended the
4 recently published work of Gerard Boate to Dugdale, though he added
5 his own comments on the valuable role which peat bogs served to the
6 local Irish. He concluded by assuring his 'affectionate friend' that he
7 hoped to see him in London next spring, offering to send in the mean-
8 time a history of the foundation of the Abbey of Conall.¹⁴ Something
9 of Ware's linguistic abilities, or the limits thereof, has been revealed
10 through study of his amanuensis, Duaid MacFirbisse, whose transla-
11 tions of Irish texts – or perhaps confirmations of Ware's translations –
12 have been traced to the mid-1660s.¹⁵ We are also relatively aware of the
13 history of Ware's extensive manuscript collections following his death
14 in 1666, which were first passed on to his second son, Robert, and then
15 bought by Henry Hyde, 2nd earl of Clarendon before being bought
16 by the duke of Chandos, and, ultimately, deposited in the Bodleian
17 and British Libraries.¹⁶ Scattered catalogues of both Ware's library and
18 manuscript collection in their various incarnations have also survived.¹⁷

19 What these necessarily brief notes on Ware's broader academic milieu
20 reveal are the tantalising ambiguities which presented themselves to
21 subsequent generations who would variously read, reject or reimagine
22 Ware's person and works. By virtue of both the products of his pen and
23 the nature of his affiliations, Ware could and did lend himself to being
24 cast as a historian of many Irelands, while also the creator of a long-
25 standing, and often poisoned legacy of manuscripts vital to Ireland's
26 past. Authority on all fronts was both easily conveyed and warped
27 by virtue of these relationships between print and personality. At the
28 centre of these problems lies the question of the material form adopted
29 not only by Ware's original publications – their language, dissemina-
30 tion, audience, and so on – but also the perception of his manuscripts
31 as representing an alternative material form with an intrinsic, often
32 'purer' authority.¹⁸ That these manuscripts survived provided an allur-
33 ing foundation upon which either to reiterate old arguments regarding
34 Ireland's past or to build a novel case independent of Ware's published
35 works, but still grounded in his historical legacy. In the nineteenth
36 century, debates over the interpretation and value of Ware's works and
37 manuscripts were carried into yet another form: mass-circulated news-
38 print, in which neither the materiality of Ware's publications nor his
39 manuscripts lent authority, but rather the weight ascribed to them by
40 the discussants and the form of the newspaper itself.¹⁹ As will be shown,
41 this resulted not only in a greater degree of public ownership of Ware's

1 legacy, but also heated exchanges over the multiple meanings of Ware's
2 texts. Such factors, variously coalescing and separating over the centu-
3 ries, helped to lend significant longevity to Ware's reputation, offering,
4 in effect, a version of Ware for almost every purpose.

5 In the initial decades after Ware's death, printed engagements with
6 his legacy reflected these ambiguities. As Raymond Gillespie has estab-
7 lished, Ware's death occurred at a major turning point in the print
8 trade for both Ireland and the Three Kingdoms generally. Beyond the
9 fertile printing grounds of London, the expansion of the press in Ireland
10 beyond Dublin meant that, by the 1680s, the distribution of print to
11 otherwise inaccessible and largely unprofitable corners was increasingly
12 feasible.²⁰ As debates over the Irish Remonstrance, the Exclusion Crisis,
13 the Popish Plot, and the 1688 Revolution circulated, the need to engage
14 with and disseminate politicised notions of the past was grafted onto
15 the authority of Ware's antiquarian studies. Unsurprisingly, among the
16 first to do so were Protestants eager to employ Ware's chronologies of
17 the ancient Church: in 1687, for instance, the future archbishop of
18 Dublin, William King (then Minister of St Werburgh's in Dublin, where
19 Ware was buried in 1666 along with his mother and father²¹) drew upon
20 Ware in defence of the Established Church. King referred his readers to
21 the smooth successions noted in Ware's *De Proesulibus* in order to refute
22 the claims of Peter Manby, former Dean of Derry and recent convert to
23 Catholicism, that the Reformed Church lacked authority.²² Sir Richard
24 Cox, in his 1689 *Hibernica Anglicana*, credited Ware with being the first
25 to abide by a realistic chronology in his Tudor annals. Like King, Cox
26 put Ware's account of the Norman legacy in Ireland to a decidedly
27 Protestant use: Cox cited Ware's *Antiquities* in order to establish that
28 'most of the Abbeys and Cathedral Churches' in Ireland were built by
29 English settlers rather than the native Irish, and drawing upon Ware's
30 transcriptions of English Acts of Parliament relating to Ireland in order
31 to chart the progress of the settlement and reform of Ireland.²³

32 Along with the increasing value placed upon the authority of Ware's
33 published works came a growing interest in employing his substantial
34 manuscript collections in published debate. The Dublin printer Samuel
35 Dancer, finding Sir John Davies's *A Discovery of the True Causes why*
36 *Ireland was Never Intirely Subu'd* to be 'rarely now to be got, and much
37 sought after by many', edited and published the work 50 years after its
38 first edition after having borrowed one of the few extant copies from
39 Ware's collection.²⁴ This ensured the preservation of a text which Sean
40 Connolly has recently characterised as 'a vision of cultural assimila-
41 tion'.²⁵ It would be incorrect, however, to assume that Ware's legacy

1 was perceived only through the print and dissemination of Protestant
2 polemic: among the few Catholic writers whose works managed to
3 reach the press within the Three Kingdoms during this period was the
4 Benedictine monk Hugh Serenus Cressy. Operating under the protection
5 of Queen Catherine of Braganza, Cressy employed references to Ware
6 throughout his 1668 *Church History of Brittany*. As Gabriel Glickman has
7 noted, this piece was intended to chart the contribution of the monastic
8 orders to England's religious past in order to encourage a reunion with
9 Rome: in Ware's antiquarian compilations, Cressy had found many
10 tracts of the ancient Church in Britain and Ireland 'rescued from the
11 dust and darknes' and thereby employable for the reimagination of the
12 Church.²⁶ Such histories would become invaluable to Cressy's efforts
13 to reconstruct a historicised vision of Christianity in England upon
14 which he could campaign for the reconciliation of a Gallican version of
15 Catholicism with the Church of England.²⁷

16 The growing authority and value of Ware's works and manuscripts
17 to subsequent writers of various confessional and cultural affiliations
18 nevertheless posed problems for contemporaries. One was the rarity
19 of Ware's texts. Ware's accomplishment ensured that his Latin works
20 remained a respected staple of the scholarly community, being read
21 by Trinity College students well beyond the 1680s.²⁸ Such persistence
22 did not, however, guarantee that the texts remained accessible to all
23 those who desired to read them: even for the enthusiastic collectors,
24 copies of Ware's most substantial texts remained elusive. An anonymous
25 Franciscan travelling in London in the early 1650s, while Ware
26 was still alive, lamented that he could not find a copy of the antiquarian's
27 books anywhere to bring back to Rome, but continued to make
28 'diligent search for them'.²⁹ Decades later, in 1684, an acquaintance of
29 the antiquary Ralph Thoresby despaired at not having found a copy of
30 the *Antiquities* in Dublin, resolving instead to transcribe from the copy
31 of another.³⁰ The *Antiquities* was, evidently, not among the vast collections
32 which Ralph's father, John, had gone to great lengths to acquire in
33 prior decades: the elder Thoresby, a wealthy wool merchant, had made
34 extensive purchases in France – including forbidden works of Calvinist
35 theology – as well as transcribing Beza's studies of Calvin.³¹ Limited
36 print-runs and the inaccessibility of desirable books relating to Ireland
37 continued to frustrate even the most persistent and well-positioned of
38 collectors: Edmund Borlase, for instance, wrote to Justinian Isham in
39 1679 from Christ Church, Oxford, requesting that he bring back 'any
40 foreign book relating to Irish affairs' from his trips around the continent.
41 Isham turned up only one in these searches, despite professing

1 to have made every effort: John Callaghan's 1650 Paris publication
 2 *Vindiciae Catholicorum*. Isham, however, remarked that purchasing the
 3 text would perhaps be of 'small importance' to Borlase, as the latter had
 4 already 'gratified the world with [his] long expected history' of the Irish
 5 rebellion.³²

6 In Ware's case, however, this scarcity, combined with the growing
 7 authority of his works, created incentive for the abuse and manipula-
 8 tion of his reputation by opportunists: in particular, his son, Robert,
 9 whose contribution to history, grounded upon misrepresentations of
 10 his father's authority, has recently been characterised by Diarmaid
 11 MacCulloch as a 'pollution'.³³ As the inheritor of his father's manu-
 12 scripts, Robert used the authority which they and his father's name
 13 held to provide the foundations for his own anti-Catholic polemic.
 14 Ware's long-standing relationship with Ussher was put to use in a
 15 1678 pamphlet which claimed that the illustrious archbishop – whose
 16 reputation as a prognosticator had, in itself, been abused on previ-
 17 ous occasions³⁴ – had predicted the Popish Plot back in 1655. Robert
 18 manufactured and then added manuscripts to his father's curiously
 19 expanding collection in order to find evidence for a 1679 pamphlet
 20 tellingly entitled *The Examinations of Faithful Commin Dominican Fryer,*
 21 *as Sir James Ware had them from the Late Lord Primate Usher,* which
 22 employed the fictitious friar as a sixteenth-century fifth-columnist
 23 to stoke contemporary fears generated by the Popish Plot.³⁵ Robert's
 24 best-known work, *Foxes and Firebrands,* would extend these elabo-
 25 rately manufactured historical wares for an English audience, citing
 26 Sir James, and through him Ussher, as the authoritative sources for
 27 his own forays into the origins of Catholic efforts to undermine
 28 Protestant monarchy. While the extent of this publication's distribu-
 29 tion and its readership remains debatable, it nevertheless sparked two
 30 interesting interpretations of their validity. John Williams, bishop of
 31 Chichester, used the piece to defend Protestantism in the face of per-
 32 ceived Catholic intrusions: in his 1688 book *Pulpit Popery,* Williams
 33 reiterated Robert Ware's account of Faithful Commin in order to
 34 uphold ideas of Catholic conspiracy. Williams explicitly recapped the
 35 origins of Robert Ware's claims to authenticate them for his own audi-
 36 ence, stating:

37
 38 This Narrative is an Extract out of the Memorials of the Lord Cecil,
 39 and was transmitted to Bishop Usher; and among his Papers came
 40 into the hands of Sir James Ware, late one of His Majesties Privy
 41 Council in Ireland, and published by his Son Robert Ware, Esq[.]³⁶

1 Others, however, were more sceptical as to the authority of these
2 manuscripts and their implications: in 1700, the free-thinker Anthony
3 Collins published an attack on Dr John Scott, whose own 1684 pub-
4 lication³⁷ had drawn upon the Faithful Commin story in *Foxes and*
5 *Firebrands*, by noting that Robert Ware's Elizabethan documents were
6 a known forgery. With remarkable incisiveness, Collins recounted the
7 abuse of Sir James's authority:

8
9 So then, here are Papers, which in their Original are pretended to be
10 but Extracts (by we know not whom)[.] [T]hese Extracts, are 116 Years
11 Old (wrote in Paper) never that we heard of discovered by Bishop
12 Usher all his Life Time, but coming, none knows how, or when, to Sir
13 James Ware, (who is not said to be the Bishops Executor) neither did
14 Sir James communicate them, but Dies. At length, 'tis pretended one
15 Mr. Robert Ware his Son, hath obliged the World, not by Publishing
16 them himself, but by communicating them to the Author of *Foxes*
17 *and Firebrands*.³⁸

18
19 This brilliant display of logic by Collins in the face of both Robert
20 Ware's forgeries and their subsequent regurgitations indicates not only
21 the enduring potency of their claims, but also the perceived necessity
22 for others to debate their authenticity. The manuscripts, like the texts,
23 remained disputed ground for as long as the conscription of the past
24 into current debates was desirable. Consequently, for as long as James
25 Ware was believed to be the most authoritative voice on ancient Ireland,
26 the need to ensure that renditions of the past drew upon that authority
27 would be achieved at all costs, even at the expense of authenticity.

28 The developing print culture of the eighteenth century would simul-
29 taneously answer and add to these problems of authority and authen-
30 ticity. The blossoming print trade in Ireland offered not only a means
31 by which to disseminate Ware's works further, but also an expansion
32 of the media through which perceptions of his contributions could
33 enter into public consciousness. The sale of books by a growing num-
34 ber of merchants beyond Dublin offered the tantalising prospect of
35 profiting through print. The increasingly popular nature of print, while
36 instigating a broader desire to control popular politics through cheap
37 pamphlets and broadsides, also suggested that the sale and acquisition
38 of texts could be more fluid than they had been when Borlase had
39 relied upon scholarly scouts.³⁹ To this was added a broader fascination
40 with the incorporation of authoritative texts into the wider culture of
41 improvement which had taken hold in Ireland. As Toby Barnard has

1 shown, an expanding interest in the collection and preservation of
2 ancient texts coalesced with efforts to improve Ireland morally and
3 materially, while ideally turning a neat profit in the process.⁴⁰ To newly
4 published editions of Keating and Ussher, the compiled letters of Orrery
5 and Clanricarde, the memoirs of Castlehaven and Carte's *Life of Ormond*
6 were added attempts to make Ware profitable.⁴¹ Thus, as Raymond
7 Gillespie has pointed out, a 1705 Dublin compilation and translation
8 of Ware's works attempted to convince its readership of their continu-
9 ing relevance, as well as ensure a subsidy from Dublin Corporation, by
10 attaching a copy of the Roman calendar and lists of numerous magis-
11 trates and officers in Dublin as of 1704 onto the more substantial annals
12 and antiquities.⁴² Equally telling in terms of their intended audience
13 was the appearance of Sir John Davies's *Discovery of the Cause why Ireland*
14 *was Never Intirely Subu'd* as an appendix to this edition of Ware, once
15 again revisiting Ware's collection upon his printed afterlife. The editors
16 of the text cited as their motive not only the scarcity of the original
17 texts, but also their instructive value, remarking on the priority given
18 by Ware to fact rather than to the 'fables and legends' which dominated
19 the works of most Irish writers. In this, Ware offered not only a foun-
20 dation upon which to ground more heated polemical debate, but also
21 carried enough authority to make his works seem an essential addition
22 to any respectable library. An expanding associational culture likewise
23 adopted Ware into debates over the nature of Irish antiquity: when the
24 antiquarian J. C. Walker presented a paper to the Royal Irish Academy
25 in 1788 on the antiquity of the Irish stage, he noted that James Ware's
26 'little skill in polite literature' had probably given undue credit to the 'rude
27 moralities of our Ancestors' by equating Irish rejoicings at the accession
28 of Henry VIII with classical comedies.⁴³ Walker's later investigations
29 into Irish antiquity, including the bards and the dress of the ancient
30 Irish, would prove invaluable, resonating as they did with Ware's own
31 interests in elevating the integrity of Irish antiquity to that of Scotland,
32 England and Europe more generally.⁴⁴ However, on this particular front,
33 the foundations provided by Ware for the study of antiquity were found
34 remarkably wanting. Ware, in short, required improvement.

35 These emergent influences of eighteenth-century print culture were
36 ultimately embodied in what would become the most accessible – and
37 yet most problematic – embodiment of Ware's works: Walter Harris's
38 edited and expanded editions of 1739 and 1745. Both Toby Barnard
39 and Eoin Magennis have illuminated much of Harris's intentions in
40 reproducing Ware's text, articulating themes which had their origins in
41 the late seventeenth century: tracing the origins of the Irish Protestant

1 interest, the tactical preservation and circulation of ancient manuscripts,
2 and profit.⁴⁵ Harris's marriage into the Ware family, while not bringing
3 about the sort of inheritance which Robert Ware had abused, never-
4 theless provided valuable *entrée* into the scholarly world and a motive
5 to revisit the works of his in-law. Though Harris would profess to his
6 readers that he did not aim at 'revising or improving' Ware's works,
7 the published texts unabashedly employed Ware's original work as an
8 authoritative springboard for his own antiquarian interests, bloating
9 the original works with over 400 articles. Arrangement of the original
10 text was tailored by Harris to an English reading audience: for instance,
11 removing Ware's discourse on the monastic life of ancient Ireland and
12 transplanting it into another volume out of professed sensitivity to
13 English aversion to such subjects.⁴⁶ To such disfiguring splices and
14 transplants was added a greater desire to extend Ware's history into
15 the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in a manner which Ware had
16 clearly avoided: when Ware actively redirected his reader away from
17 the present age and towards antiquity, saying 'but these are examples
18 of more modern times', Harris extended discussion into the Elizabethan
19 period.⁴⁷ Harris employed the language of improvement throughout
20 these additions, commending the introduction of weights and measure-
21 ments into Ireland by its conquerors, and more generally grafting into
22 the text elongated citations of scholarly material which Ware had only
23 seen fit to cite rather than transcribe. Ware's *Writers of Ireland* was most
24 affected: added to the list of writers were Harris's largely negative opin-
25 ions of Keating (whose recent resuscitation by Dermot O'Connor had
26 been condemned by Harris – apparently without irony – for having been
27 over-expanded), Philip O'Sullivan, Charles Fitzsimmons (whom Harris
28 also condemned while professedly sharing the opinion of Ussher), and
29 Nicholas French. Looming large in Harris's edition were references
30 to festering Protestant memories which were noticeably absent from
31 Ware's writings – among them the 1641 Rising and the Civil Wars which
32 followed, both of which had been intimately familiar to Ware but were
33 largely absent from his academic studies.⁴⁸ This was, in a sense, the
34 natural by-product of a growing print trade and an attempt to popula-
35 rise history for an expanding audience: it negated Ware's assumptions
36 of a scholarly readership and instead offered the reader either familiarity
37 with esoteric works or, as was the case in Harris's citations of Ussher,
38 Molyneux, Cox and others, an incentive to purchase recently printed
39 books. Looming throughout these commentaries was, as the shadow
40 of 1641 hints, the supposition of Ware's opinion and the presumption
41 of his authority: Harris prefaced his edition of the *Writers of Ireland* by

1 stating that a document of Ware's in his possession had outlined the
2 author's intention to create an expanded edition. Harris had therefore
3 only realised the antiquary's professed desires.⁴⁹

4 Harris's publications were not a financial success. However, within a
5 market increasingly aware of Ware's value as an antiquarian authority
6 but largely unable to access the original texts, Harris's edition provided
7 yet another point of access which many were quick to seize upon after-
8 ward. The English antiquary William Cole, for instance, after being
9 given a copy of Harris's volume by Henry Bromley, Lord Montfort,
10 took occasion to comment on both Ware's original history and Harris's
11 additions, incorporating references to published materials unknown or
12 unavailable to either author in an effort to track his broader interests.⁵⁰
13 Ware's works, and Harris's rendition of them, thus became a framework
14 through which to engage with the broader historical debates circulating
15 across Ireland and Britain more generally.

16 By the nineteenth century, however, as the shifts brought about by
17 the Act of Union and rising tides of Irish nationalism combined with
18 popular print, Ware was once again coerced into a wide range of textual
19 references. The past was again plundered as it had been in previous cen-
20 turies, but the varied format of print and changing targets for readership
21 altered the version of Ware which was to be presented. Already noted
22 was the appropriation of Ware by Young Ireland. Tom Dunne's studies of
23 Irish romanticism have shown that the assimilation of an ancient Gaelic
24 tradition by the various strands of 'Irishness' for the sake of variously
25 elevating or questioning Irish culture necessitated the survival of texts
26 such as Ware's *Antiquities*.⁵¹ Thus, Young Ireland, while envisioning
27 an Irish nation comprised of these strands and forwarding a united
28 'Irishness', drew upon Ware's conveniently ambiguous authority as a New
29 English author, writing with Protestant overtones, but unearthing inval-
30 uable Gaelic documents. Other Young Irelanders, including C. P. Meehan
31 and Thomas Davis, found Ware's authority indispensable when remark-
32 ing on such topics as the Franciscan monasteries of Ireland: Meehan
33 acknowledged that Ware, 'his Protestantism notwithstanding', embodied
34 the harmonious appreciation of a collective, national Irish past by virtue
35 of his having collected and preserved invaluable manuscripts. This
36 made his authority 'unquestionable'.⁵² Martin O'Brennan, editor of the
37 *Connaught Patriot*, managed to triangulate between Harris, an 'enemy
38 to Catholicity', and 'the impartial Ware' in order to substantiate his
39 claims regarding St Patrick.⁵³ Scholars such as William Reeves, Church
40 of Ireland bishop of Down, Connor and Dromore, annotated copies of
41 Harris's edition of Ware with mounting criticism, writing 'Nonsense!' in

1 the margins when he found himself disagreeing with Harris's additions.⁵⁴
2 This interest in establishing the 'pure' Ware – perhaps the consequence
3 of the professionalisation of history – gave rise to a Latin edition,
4 intended largely for private circulation, of Ware's *Antiquities* in 1860
5 by the Dublin printer Alexander Thom alongside works by Boate,
6 Molyneux and others.⁵⁵ Among the scholarly, therefore, Ware's contri-
7 butions to debates over Irish antiquity were being traced to their origins
8 in the 1650s, juxtaposed with the findings of new societies devoted
9 to archaeological and antiquarian pursuits: minutes of the Kilkenny
10 Archaeological Society, founded by the editor of the *Kilkenny Moderator*
11 J. G. A Prim, included in 1850 a correction to an error made in Ware's
12 works regarding St Canice's Cathedral,⁵⁶ of which Prim himself was
13 a historian. Others found the connection between Ware and Duaid
14 MacFirbisse to be a useful means of qualifying Ware's interactions with
15 the Gaelic Irish in a harmonious, yet scholarly way.⁵⁷

16 The fact that many of these appreciators of Ware were intimately
17 connected to the expanding newspaper trade adds a further and final
18 point of consideration, which is the introduction and dissemination of
19 Ware's reputation in newsprint and wider public consciousness beyond
20 the scholarly. Like seventeenth-century references to Ware, it is unusual
21 to find specific textual references. However, where it might be supposed
22 that writers of the seventeenth century assumed familiarity with Ware
23 among their readers, nineteenth-century publishers appear to have
24 more readily employed Ware for a readership far less likely to own
25 or have read the original text than their eighteenth- or seventeenth-
26 century scholarly predecessors. As early as the *Dublin Penny Journal* of
27 the 1830s, one finds frequent mention of Ware with reference to topics
28 as varied as the ruins of Barrow, the history of Ross, and the whiskey-
29 making trade in Ireland – some corrective, others deferential to Ware's
30 opinions.⁵⁸ *The Irish Times*, as one might expect, employed Ware as
31 a point of reference for the history of Christ Church Cathedral and
32 College Green, while also listing Ware alongside William Petty, John
33 Davies and others in charting Ireland's progress (or lack thereof) in the
34 course of industrialisation.⁵⁹ In stark contrast, *The Catholic Layman* cited
35 Ware repeatedly while charting the succession of ancient bishops in
36 Ireland, soliciting its readership to contribute to an equally expansive
37 list of the Catholic succession using Ware as a model.⁶⁰ The author-
38 ity of Ware, though rarely cited chapter and verse, was undoubtedly
39 expanded by this dissemination through newspapers and into popular
40 consciousness in Ireland as well as Britain and the wider Irish com-
41 munity. At the January 1863 meeting of the Massachusetts Historical

1 Society, for instance, it was noted with great pride that a letter had
2 been found by the Society's president linking his family to Ware – it
3 was subsequently noted that the Boston Public Library housed a 'fine
4 copy' of Harris's two-volume edition.⁶¹ Ware's *Life of St Patrick* proved
5 particularly popular among the scattered Catholic populations: publi-
6 cations of the saint's life in London, New York, Baltimore and Dublin
7 drew upon the authority of Ware. This included a study by the Poor
8 Clare, Margaret Anne Cusack (with the aid of the Irish language scholar,
9 W. M. Hennessy), which cited Ware's manuscripts and life of St Patrick
10 to substantiate the legitimacy of the saint's *Confessions*.⁶² By 1879,
11 Reverend J. H. MacMahon was employing the medium of print – in this
12 case *The Irish Builder* – to solicit interest in having a monument to Ware
13 built in St Patrick's Cathedral, adding that 'No Irish writer of history
14 ever was more conscientious, either in the investigation or use of facts.'
15 The editors responded kindly, inviting responses to this 'fitting honour'
16 for 'so distinguished a native antiquary'.⁶³

17 Newspapers also became a forum for debate regarding the legitimacy
18 of Ware's manuscripts in light of Robert Ware's contaminations. When
19 Reverend T. E. Bridgett published his *Blunders and Forgeries* in 1890,
20 the Jesuit circular *The Irish Monthly* praised Bridgett for removing the
21 additions of the 'unworthy son' to his father's invaluable manuscripts.
22 Bridgett's exposures, reputedly hailed by none other than William
23 Gladstone, were seen to be one further strike against the 300-year-old
24 'conspiracy against the truth'.⁶⁴ For others, however, charges of con-
25 tamination laid at the feet of Robert Ware posed an immediate threat.
26 In April 1901, Father Herbert Thurston, SJ wrote a terse letter to the
27 *Ladies' League Gazette*, objecting to the publication's recounting, in
28 their previous instalment, an oath supposedly sworn by the Jesuits
29 since their founding. The oath was alleged to permit them to adopt
30 the guise of Protestants in order to further facilitate the propagation
31 of Catholicism and undermine Protestant monarchs. Thurston's letter
32 to the editor not only asserted that no such oath had ever been taken,
33 but that numerous Evangelical journals on the Continent had 'frankly
34 acknowledged its spuriousness'. The editor of the *Gazette*, however,
35 reiterated the genuineness of the oath, citing its numerous appearances
36 in print 'during the last two centuries'. In a flurry of citations, the editor,
37 lacking the incisiveness of Anthony Collins, traced the original manu-
38 script of the oath back to none other than Robert Ware's 1680 edition
39 of *Foxes and Firebrands* and, originally, Sir James Ware's aforementioned
40 inheritance of Ussher's manuscript collection. Authenticity could be
41 assured, according to the editor, not only by the frequency with which

1 the oath was then cited in a dozen subsequent publications (many of
2 them avowedly anti-Jesuit), but also the corroboration of Dublin and
3 Oxbridge academics who could attest to their genuineness.⁶⁵ Matters
4 deteriorated in the coming year as other publications took exception
5 to the perceived insults of Thurston and the Jesuits more broadly. In
6 1902, the Reverend Bernard Vaughan, SJ launched a libel suit against
7 *The Rock* – later described by Vaughan’s lawyer, Sir Edward Clarke, as
8 a paper which ‘seemed to live on libels on Roman Catholics’⁶⁶ – after
9 it published an incendiary attack against Thurston for his denigration
10 of ‘our most eminent men of letters’.⁶⁷ Thurston’s exposure of Robert
11 Ware as a ‘convicted forger’ – 11 years after Bridgett’s publication – drew
12 intense ire from the editor of *The Rock*, who insisted that the authen-
13 ticity of Sir James Ware’s manuscripts had never been questioned ‘by
14 their own contemporaries, at home or abroad’. The Jesuits, however,
15 were supposed by the angered author to maintain an inveterate hatred
16 and dread of such men of letters, instead opting to incite rebellion in
17 Ireland through their status as international ‘outlaws’ and imposition
18 of Canon Law. Citing the cries of ‘Death to the Jesuits!’ in 1688, the
19 author denied the rights of Jesuits in England and instead called for a
20 rejoinder to be written by the editor of the *Gazette* to Thurston’s allega-
21 tions. In the ensuing lawsuit, Vaughan was granted £300 in damages
22 from *The Rock*.⁶⁸

23 The use of Ware’s name and authority in the nineteenth century
24 nevertheless did little to ensure the survival and availability of his works.
25 A correction in *The Scotsman* of 1870, for instance, noted that a copy of
26 Harris’s 1745 edition of Ware was acquired at auction by Trinity College
27 Dublin for £450. Harris’s text had once again been the subject of amend-
28 ments: in this case, the librarian and scholar Dr J. H. Todd had made his
29 own ‘copious and valuable’ manuscript additions to the text, increasing
30 the value at auction and once again emphasising the enduring, if com-
31 plicated, engagement with Ware’s legacy across a variety of media.⁶⁹ As
32 this chapter has argued, the survival of printed texts and the resonance
33 of Ware’s name and authority were by no means contingent upon one
34 another; in fact, one might argue the inverse, as, by the nineteenth
35 century, inherited notions of the authority of Ware, his works and his
36 manuscripts played as important a part in the dissemination of his repu-
37 tation as the actual process of print and distribution. Numerous factors
38 preserved this authority in spite of such scarcities: the perpetuation and
39 remedy of sectarianism, romanticism and nationalism forced continued
40 engagement with Irish antiquity. Ware’s status as Ireland’s pre-eminent
41 antiquarian ensured that his writings, his manuscripts and his person

1 remained at the forefront of such debates. This pre-eminence drew not
 2 only from the dissemination of printed text, but also from authority
 3 transmitted through broader discourses regarding Ware's manuscript
 4 material, personality and lasting relevance. These factors combined to
 5 provide readers from the seventeenth through to the nineteenth centu-
 6 ries with multiple access points from which to draw historical authority
 7 for their own purposes through the ambiguities of their antiquarian
 8 predecessor. As forms and meanings coalesced and diverged, so too did
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10 Notes

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- 17 3. McGee, *Irish Writers*, pp. 73–82.
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- 19 5. See Mark Williams, 'History, the Interregnum and the Exiled Irish', in Mark
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14. Ware to Dugdale, 3 November 1658, Dublin, in HMC Bath (Longleat), vol. 2
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15. Nollag Ó Muraile, *The Celebrated Antiquary: Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh
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- 1 16. O'Sullivan, 'A Finding List', pp. 78–83; Toby Barnard, *Improving Ireland?*
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