



1 – Thomas Mitchell (attrib.) *A VIEW OF KILKENNY*, c.1757, oil on canvas, 95 x 150.5 cm
(courtesy National Gallery of Ireland)

2 – Thomas Mitchell, *A VIEW OF THE RIVER BOYNE WITH GENTLEMEN AND HORSES BY A STATUE TO WILLIAM III IN THE FOREGROUND, THE BOYNE OBELISK BEYOND*, 1757, oil on canvas, 107 x 175.5cm
(collection Ulster Museum; courtesy Trustees of the Museums & Galleries of Northern Ireland)



A View of Kilkenny

NICOLA FIGGIS

IN THE COURSE OF PREPARING THE CATALOGUE OF *PAINTINGS OF THE IRISH SCHOOL in the National Gallery of Ireland*, volume I, with Brendan Rooney (NGI 2001), this extensive view of Kilkenny (cover, Plate 1),¹ at that time categorised as Irish School,² came under considerable scrutiny. Technical examination by the conservation department revealed that the artist had used a distinctive red underpaint to sketch in outlines of the composition. This particular technique can also be seen in Thomas Mitchell's painting *A View of the River Boyne with gentlemen and horses by a statue to William III in the foreground, the Boyne Obelisk beyond*, signed and dated 1757 (Ulster Museum) (Plate 2). Other aspects of the paintings show strong similarities: the placing of figures and horses in relation to the background, and the treatment of foliage, especially of hanging ivy. On the basis of these comparisons, the National Gallery's *A View of Kilkenny* is now attributed to Thomas Mitchell.

Thomas Mitchell (1735-1790), an English artist who worked as a shipwright in the British Admiralty and held a position in the dockyard at Chatham, is usually known for his marine paintings. He visited Ireland in 1757, when he painted the Ulster Museum landscape, and produced another of *Sir John and Lady Freke with Mr Jeffreys of Blarney by a lake*.³ It is most likely that he painted the National Gallery's *A View of Kilkenny* in the same year.

ENDNOTES

¹ NGI 4467; oil on canvas, 95 x 150.5 cm; provenance: 7th Marquess of Ormonde and the Trustees of the Ormonde Settled Estates; purchased 1983 as attributed to William Ashford.

² For a detailed description of the painting, see *National Gallery of Ireland: Acquisitions 1982-83* (Dublin 1984) 20-1.

³ Eileen Black, *Irish Oil Paintings, 1572-c.1830* (Belfast 1991) 49; Ellis Waterhouse, *British 18th Century Painters* (Woodbridge 1981) 242.